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House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 28, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J.H. ''JOE'' SCHWARZ to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Our God and Savior, You are eternal love, and all peoples are embraced by Your spirit. Show Your love to this Congress, shower Your wisdom upon all who work in public office for the good of Your people to build a just society.

Draw us closer into Your love and peace. Teach us to follow Your ways, that we may become capable of true love ourselves and be a fountain of living water in the midst of a thirsting world.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. BLACKBURN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 17, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.:

That the Senate concur on House amendment to the bill S. 2275.

That the Senate passed S. 166.

That the Senate passed S. 1608.

That the Senate passed S. 2447.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 350.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4826.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 361.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

DEMOCRATIC SECURITY PLAN

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, Roll Call reports that the Democrats are going to unveil an ''ambitious security plan'' tomorrow.

Well, bless their hearts. If they have not noticed, those of us on this side of the aisle have been focused on the issue and passing security legislation for more than 5 years now.

President Bush has made national security his priority mission. House Republicans have been talking about it for months. We have been working with our leadership on it. They consider national security priority number one, not a political tactic to trot out 7 months before an election.

We passed the PATRIOT Act to target terrorists. The Democrats voted against it. We passed the REAL ID Act to make it harder for potential terrorists to use valid State-issued identification documents. They opposed that.

We are pushing a border security bill to strengthen our border control, and Democrats in the Senate are threatening a filibuster. Mr. Speaker, Americans are going to see right through their last-ditch effort to look engaged on security.

EXTEND THE MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN DEADLINE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as this calendar shows, the countdown continues to an outrageous tax congressional Republicans and the Bush administration plan to inflict on American seniors.

If Washington does not act before May 15, millions of seniors who have yet to choose a prescription drug plan will face a 1 percent tax that will be added onto their drug premiums for every month that they wait to sign up.

So if a senior, for example, does not choose to sign up for a plan until September, that senior would be forced to pay a 5 percent tax on top of their monthly premium every single month for the rest of their lives.

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President Bush has already admitted that his prescription drug plan is complicated and confusing, and yet the President refuses to give seniors more time to sign up for a drug plan without facing a penalty. If the President refuses to act, Congress must step in.

Congressional Democrats want to extend the deadline until the end of the year, giving seniors 7 additional months to navigate the complexities of the plan.

As we mark off another day on the calendar, Mr. Speaker, time is running out for congressional Republicans to join us in supporting this extension. America's seniors cannot afford a Bush prescription drug tax.

TRIBUTE TO BUCK, SCOUT WAR DOG

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, during the President's State of the Union address, a military working dog was among the honored guests, sharing box seats with First Lady Laura Bush.

While serving alongside a soldier in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, this dog searched for explosives and saved the lives of many American soldiers. Since World War II, dogs have served and protected our troops on nearly every battlefield, and today they help detect terrorists in the global war on terrorism.

For many years, Johnny Mayo and his dog, Buck, of Lexington, South Carolina, worked tirelessly to promote the dedication of America's military war dogs.

An inspiration for the book, ''Buck's Heroes,'' Buck, a 15-year-old Siberian Husky, touched the lives of many people throughout our Nation. Last Thursday, Buck passed away at home. Today I am honored to recognize his unique service for all American military dogs, which is especially needed in the war on terrorism.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

IMMIGRATION AND THE LOS ANGELES RALLY

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, as a proud daughter of immigrants, I rise today to echo the message of immigrant families across America in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

This past weekend, I took part in the largest demonstration that has ever taken place in California, in the area of Los Angeles, since the Vietnam War. Half a million people, if not a million, marched peacefully to let the Senate know that an enforcement-only border protection approach will not solve our broken immigration system. Nearly 40,000 students across Southern California and some from my district even marched to defend human rights and immigration reform.

I urge them to return to their classrooms and empower themselves through education to make a difference in their future. President Bush said, ''Immigration is an important topic. We need to maintain our perspective. At its core immigration is a sign of a confident and successful Nation.''

Our Nation needs laws that protect our borders, embrace our families, and provide earned legalization for law-abiding immigrants. Immigrant families are an important part of our social fabric and economy. Our Nation should not turn its back and ignore their needs.

THE NEW YORK TIMES GOT IT RIGHT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I never thought I would stand on our House floor and say the words I am about to say, but here goes: the New York Times got it right.

Yes, you heard me correctly. Over the weekend, the New York Times ran an article touting the success of the new Medicare prescription drug program with the headlines: ''For some who solve the puzzle, Medicare drug plan pays off.''

It is about time that the mainstream media started reporting on the success of the Medicare program. For months Republicans have been holding town halls and coming to this floor to discuss how this historic program is helping America's seniors save money on their prescription drugs.

But the media and Democrats have turned a blind eye. They have ignored folks such as Virginia Shores who thought she heard her pharmacist wrong when he told her that with her new Medicare prescription drug card the cost of her prescriptions was only $50, down from $250.

Well, I suppose every once in a blue moon the mainstream media gets something right. Perhaps now is the time for Democrats to take time off from their demagoguery and actually listen to seniors.

It is amazing what you can learn. Just look at the New York Times.

THE SENATE NEEDS TO PASS THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my thoughts on our Nation's need for passing the comprehensive Water Resources Development Act by this Congress.

On July 14 of last year, H.R. 2864, the Water Resources Development Act, passed here in this House by a resounding 406–14. The measures authorized major flood control, navigation, environmental restoration, and other water resource projects.

Yet once again, similar to years past, this vital legislation has become bogged down by our colleagues in the other body. It is critical that we return to a 2-year cycle to provide continuity for vital water-related infrastructure. Infrastructure investment has been and will continue to be the bedrock foundation of our economic growth and public safety.

A water resource bill is critical to the protection of our environment and the public safety, and the Nation needs this one right now.

MEDICARE PART D IS WORKING

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about the good news that is spreading across the country. Medicare part D is working. Seniors are signing up for a drug benefit through Medicare for the very first time.

According to recent studies, seniors could save as much as $1,100 annually. This is real savings for our senior population. Over 27 million Medicare-eligible beneficiaries now have drug coverage, a 25 percent increase from February, a 25 percent increase in 1 month.

Medicare's initial goal for the first year of enrollment was between 28 and 30 million beneficiaries, and they are well on their way there. In my home State of West Virginia, over 226,000 beneficiaries now have coverage, a 6 percent increase just in the month of February.

72,000 of those live in my district. This is real success. I sat next to John the other day at a dinner. He informed me with his new Medicare prescription drug coverage he is going to save $4,000 this year.

This is good news. There is much more work to be done. We must pull together to work with our constituents to find the best plans for their individual situations.

A TALE OF TWO YALE SPIES

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Yale University proudly boasts it has among its students a so-called former Taliban leader. The Taliban promotes treating women like property, intolerance for religious diversity, hate for freedom, and death to America.

Has Yale let a Taliban spy into its midst? Has elitist Yale University lost its way? But Yale did have a spy graduate from its university over 200 years ago. He was a 21-year-old. His name

was Nathan Hale. He was a schoolmaster, a volunteer in the Continental Army, and a spy for George Washington.

While Hale was gathering intelligence on the British in 1776, he was betrayed by Tories in New York City, captured and hung by British General Howe without a trial.

Though Hale is rarely mentioned in U.S. history books any more, his last words before being hung were: ''I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.''

Yale University would do well to recruit and honor students like Hale, instead of Taliban radicals who are villains to freedom. And, Mr. Speaker, that is just the way it is.

□ 1415

RECOGNIZING ARIELLE CHIKOVSKY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call your attention to an extraordinary young woman from South Florida, Arielle Chikovsky.

As a young girl, Arielle learned that she suffered from Ushers Syndrome, a genetic disease which causes the hearing-impaired to lose their eyesight. Yet Arielle has not let her condition detract her from her daily life. Remarkably, last year, at the age of 22, Arielle graduated from law school.

Arielle is a finalist in the American Eagle Live Your Life Essay Contest. If named the winner, she plans to donate the $25,000 reward to Hope for Vision. Hope for Vision is a nonprofit organization dedicated to discovering treatments and cures for retinal degenerative diseases.

I congratulate Arielle, who sets an example for everyone she encounters, and I support Hope for Vision and its leader, Isaac Lidsky, for their efforts to find a cure for this disease.

60 MINUTES AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the first amendment guarantees freedom of the press, and with that freedom comes responsibility. But we all remember the 60 Minutes II report during the last campaign which used partisan sources and forged documents to assert that the President of the United States had not fulfilled his duty in the National Guard, a report that was proven to be false.

Well, here we go again. Recently I saw a 60 Minutes segment in which a scientist claimed that his views on global warming were being censored by the administration. Of course, they did not report that this man had received a $250,000 grant from the foundation controlled by Theresa Heinz Kerry. They did not report that this man had endorsed John Kerry. They did not report that he has served as a consultant for Al Gore nor that he had made similar claims against President Bush's father in 1989.

The first amendment gives freedom of the press, but the truth is the foundation for credibility.

60 Minutes should tell both sides of the story in a fair and balanced way, or they should simply air this disclaimer: ''60 Minutes brought to you by the National Democratic Committee.''

MEDICARE PART D

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was pleased to join with Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY, Representative DAN LIPINSKI, a grass-roots community group known as Citizens Action, a large number of senior citizens, as well as a group of retired workers, calling for the redesign and redevelopment of part D of the Medicare program.

As a matter of fact, the seniors who were there all condemned everything that they had come into contact with relative to the terrible frustration. I hope that Americans all across the country would join with us to revise Medicare part D.

MEDICARE PART D SUCCESS STORY

(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, every day we are hearing success stories from seniors who are saving money with Medicare part D. Two of these seniors are Mary and Jerry O'Brien of Cobb County, Georgia.

I want to share with you a letter Jerry O'Brien wrote to my office. He said, ''I went to medicare.gov and I found a comparison of various programs. I chose one for my wife for $70 a month, which has no deductible. We had no prescription insurance before and find Medicare part D to be very effective. We saved enough, in fact, on the first prescriptions to pay for 2 months' worth of premiums. I realize the program got off to a shaky start, but as far as I am concerned, it is now working well.''

Mr. Speaker, Mary O'Brien saved enough money for 1 month of prescriptions to pay for 2 months of premiums. For the O'Briens, Medicare part D is literally paying for itself.

I hope seniors will hear the O'Brien story and go to www.medicare.gov and find out how much money they could save with a Medicare part D plan. The initial enrollment period ends May 15, so I want to encourage all seniors to sign up now and start their savings immediately.

GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the benefits of having a physical or virtual fence along the 2,000-mile Mexican-U.S. border to crack down on illegal immigration.

I recently returned from a week-long trip to the Mexican-California border, and I am convinced of one thing. Good fences make good neighbors. First, we need to complete construction of the double fence for 700 miles along the border near highly populated urban areas.

For example, San Diego saw a steep reduction in crossings from 500,000, now down to 130,000, when the double fence was completed there. Second, for the remaining 1,300 miles along the border, where mountains and rugged terrain make completion of a double fence impossible, we need to have a virtual fence which consists of infrared cameras that allow our Border Patrol agents to see the entire border.

Mr. Speaker, the House recently passed a tough border security bill that authorized the appropriate border security fence, but the Senate yesterday cleared a bill out of the Judiciary Committee that did absolutely nothing to build this border security fence. It is now time for the full Senate to get serious about border security.

CONGRATULATING GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY ON ITS APPEARANCE IN THE FINAL FOUR

(Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, George Mason University hosts two Nobel Prize winners, a top 25 law school and the most ethically diverse student body in the world. But today, Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to honor the George Mason University men's basketball team for overcoming incredible odds to make it to the 2006 NCAA Division I Final Four.

George Mason is only the second team with a double-digit seed to advance to the Final Four and the first to do so since 1986. George Mason is also the first team in Colonial Athletic Association history to advance this far in the tournament. Under the guidance of Coach Jim Larranaga and assistants Chris Caputo, Scott Cherry and James Johnson, the Patriots have shown America that with hard work, dedication and, most importantly, teamwork, any goal, no matter how farfetched it may seem, can be reached.

They provided several heart-stopping moments throughout the tournament

while relying on their wonderful sense of teamwork, which should be an example to all of us. Twice they rallied from double-digit deficits in both the round of 32 and the round of 8 against the Nation's top-ranked teams to accomplish this historic feat.

Members of the 2005–2006 Patriots include Tony Skinn, Jordan Carter, Makan Konate, Gabe Norwood, Tim Burns, Jesus Urbina, Lamar Butler, John Vaughan, Will Thomas, Chris Fleming, Folarin Campbell, Sammy Hernandez, Charles Makings and Jai Lewis.

Mr. Speaker, the George Mason University men's basketball team will be one to remember for the entire Mason community, from the student athletes who achieved this amazing feat, to the coaches, to the students and the entire Northern Virginia region.

I wish them the very best in this weekend's tournament in Indianapolis.

HOLLY'S LAW/RU–486

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month two more women died after using the abortion drug RU–486.

A premature death is always tragic, But the deaths of these women are even harder to bear because they simply did not have to happen.

We already knew RU–486 to be dangerous and life-threatening. These are not the first deaths linked to it. Yet, despite this knowledge, neither the drug's manufacturer nor the FDA, has been willing to pull it from the market.

Faced with this reluctance, Congress has the duty to take action.

We often hear advocates of abortion promote their cause in the name of women's rights and women's health. If they want to protect women, then they should add their support to H.R. 1079, Holly's Law, offered by my colleague from Maryland, Mr. BARTLETT. This common-sense bill would withdraw FDA approval of RU–486 and subject it to a thorough review to measure its health risk.

Mr. Speaker, we should act in the best interest of women's health. Let us pass Holly's Law.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ON ITS FINAL FOUR APPEARANCE

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Florida Gators men's basketball team on their third Final Four appearance and the second in the past 5 years.

Now, at the beginning of the season, not much was expected of these young Gators. However, they rose to a number two national ranking on the strength of a 17-game winning streak, and they continued that success through the post-season, winning the Southeastern Conference Tournament and then advancing to the Final Four with a 75–62 win over the top-seeded Villanova Wildcats.

Mr. Speaker, this Saturday in Indianapolis, the Gators will face the George Mason University Patriots whose Cinderella story has been equally inspiring. In recognition of this event, I have offered a friendly wager of a case of Gatorade to my colleague, Tom Davis.

Gatorade's creation in 1965 by Dr. Robert Cade at the University of Florida has marked the success of the University of Florida's athletic teams through the past decades and will hopefully aid in victory in the 2006 Final Four.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, when enrollment began for the new Medicare prescription drug plan last November, most American people heard only about what was wrong with the program. Now, after 3 months in the new program, have you heard the good news?

Last week, the Department of Health and Human Services announced that more than 27 million individuals are now receiving prescription benefits under the plan, when before they received none, 1.9 million new folks just in the last month alone.

As more seniors sign up, they are seeing the benefits of the new program. A recent report of the New York Times included comments from individuals who have signed up and seen their prescription drug costs drop dramatically.

One woman saw her monthly costs drop from $476 to $100 a month. A February HHS report announced that the average premium had fallen from an estimate of $37 per month to $25 per month in actual cost.

As this plan moves forward, Congress must make sure that flexibility exists to respond to patient needs. We should also share the good news because it is the right thing to do.

REMEMBERING CASPAR WEINBERGER AND LYN NOFZIGER

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember two great Americans, former Secretary of State Caspar Weinberger and former advisor and press secretary to Ronald Reagan, Lyn Nofziger. Both Californians, both true patriots and both World War II veterans, both dedicated public servants and both notable contributors to the Reagan revolution and legacy.

President Reagan's vision of peace through strength found the perfect advocate and architect in Secretary Weinberger. He rebuilt and revitalized a military that had suffered from underfunding and underappreciation. His success laid a foundation for the end of the Cold War and for the military might we rely upon today.

He recognized that a strong defense would not only secure the peace, but would protect our freedom as well. Cap said, ''Peace alone is not enough. Peace can mean even slavery sometimes. Peace and freedom is what we have to have.''

Lyn Nofziger is probably best known for his off-color humor and his dedication to his long-time boss, Ronald Reagan. As a spokesman for the Governor and the President, he communicated on behalf of the Great Communicator.

During the dark hours after the attempt on President Reagan's life, it was Lyn who relayed to the world Reagan's famous line, ''Honey, I forgot to duck.''

What Lyn valued most, though, was freedom and the pursuit of it. On his Web site, which is still up and where you can still read his musings, he said that he was a Republican ''because I believe freedom is more important than government-provided security.''

Mr. Speaker, these were remarkable men who so strongly valued freedom that they fought for it, and so fully believed in the promise of the United States that they gave voice and policy to a President who made our country more prosperous and our world more free.

We honor the service and tremendous contributions of Caspar Weinberger and Lyn Nofziger. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 23, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 23, 2006, at 1:56 p.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 83.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 28, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1259.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, Speaker pro tempore Aderholt signed the following enrolled bills on Friday, March 17, 2006:

H.R. 4826, to extend through December 31, 2006, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits;

S. 2275, to temporarily increase the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for carrying out the National Flood Insurance Program;

S. 2320, to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

□ 1430

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL VISITOR CENTER ENFORCEMENT ACT

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4882) to ensure the proper remembrance of Vietnam veterans and the Vietnam War by providing a deadline for the designation of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4882

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Enforcement Act''.

SEC. 2. SITE.

Section 6 of Public Law 96–297 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) SITE.—The visitor center authorized by subsection (a) shall be located in the open land in the triangular area between Henry Bacon Drive, NW, 23rd Street, NW, Constitution Avenue, NW, and the Lincoln Memorial.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4882, introduced by Resources Committee Chairman RICHARD POMBO, along with Ranking Member NICK RAHALL, Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN and myself, would locate the congressionally approved underground visitors center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on land adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial.

Chairman POMBO felt compelled to take this unusual action in direct response to what he and I and others believe is the unreasonable bureaucracy choreographed by the National Capital Planning Commission.

In November of 2003, the President signed the bill into law authorizing the creation of the visitors center. For 3½ years, this project has been under way with the National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund having promptly met all requests for environmental and related information on the siting of the center. Yet, the commission demands more.

Last November, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the National Park Service gave the commission an extensive traffic analysis and met other information requests for a December 1 meeting at which the commission was expected to approve the site. However, without any notice to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the commission removed the visitors center from the meeting agenda and requested an extensive and unprecedented environmental analysis.

There is no need for an additional analysis. In compliance with the Commemorative Works Act, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund commissioned a site selection study environmental analysis in June 2005 that recommended the most appropriate site, which is cited in H.R. 4882, as amended. Site A, as it is known, would not interfere or encroach on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or other memorials and protects the open space and visual sight lines of the National Mall as required by the authorizing legislation.

As a Vietnam veteran, I believe the visitors center is a long overdue complement to the most visited memorial in Washington, DC. While ''the Wall,'' as it has become known, certainly provides a visitor with an intense and solemn experience, it lacks personal context. Our brave soldier, sailors, and airmen desperately need something more, an experience that can help them heal while bringing closure. Their objectives were honorable and their sacrifice was exemplary. Yet their heroism remains unnoticed by younger generations.

As today's participants in the military, young men and women, fight the war on terror, there is no better way to reassure them that America will honor their sacrifice, no matter what the Nation feels. The greatest thing that we can do to reassure them is to honor our Vietnam veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. RAHALL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join Chairman POMBO as an original cosponsor of this measure, along with the ranking member on our Parks Subcommittee, Representative DONNA CHRISTENSEN. We urge our colleagues to approve H.R. 4882.

While the fighting ended more than 30 years ago, our work as a nation to reconcile with all that took place during the Vietnam Era continues.

Just as the Revolutionary War gave birth to our liberty, and the survival of our Union through the Civil War and two World Wars gave us strength, the lessons of the Vietnam War can grant us wisdom; and while the emotions stirred by that war in the hearts and minds of Americans are many and varied, the journey this Nation has taken with regard to Vietnam resembles nothing so much as a journey of grieving.

We grieve for the fallen, for the bereft families, for the survivors and their painful scars, and for the wounds inflicted on the country and the people of Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, the experts tell us that there are stages to the grieving process. In those 30 years, we have experienced them each in turn.

The process began with denial and with anger. For a time, we denied Vietnam its rightful place in American history as we denied those who fought and died their rightful place in the pantheon of American heroes. And Lord knows we have felt the anger. To our shame, we directed much of that anger at those who served.

We have also lived through what the experts call the bargaining phase. We

have wished, we have hoped, and we have prayed that things might have turned out differently, that we might, as a nation, have responded differently. We have tried to negotiate away our failures.

And we have surely endured the next phase, the depression that comes with war and with death. Those who returned from Vietnam and the families of those who did not have felt the deep darkness of painful loss. And our Nation, as a whole, has endured a lingering sadness for so much that was lost during that time.

But, finally, Mr. Speaker, we reached the last stage; and it is here that the Vietnam Memorial plays such a powerful role. We have achieved some level of acceptance. We have, however belatedly, begun to treat those who sacrificed for their country in Vietnam with the reverence they have earned, and we have begun to heal. The Vietnam Memorial is a powerful symbol of that healing and an emotional catalyst for it.

The Wall's designer, the amazingly gifted Maya Lin, described her idea for the Wall as a ''rift in the Earth.'' The Wall literally stands as a deep, dark scar on the land, and it represents the deep scar we carry as a nation; but a scar is an important part of healing.

The National Park Service describes the goal of the memorial as ''nourishing national reconciliation,'' and in achieving reconciliation, the Memorial has succeeded beyond even the wildest dreams of its most ardent supports.

More than 20 million people have made the journey to the memorial and the journey through the memorial, leaving millions of personal items in tribute and in memory; and they have felt some measure of healing, of acceptance. Perhaps more important, the Wall, and the reaction to it by the millions who have seen it, has begun to make Vietnam veterans and their families feel some measure of acceptance as well.

The leadership of the House Resources Committee has pledged to work together in a bipartisan fashion to ensure that this process of healing and acceptance continues.

A visitors center will broaden and deepen the experience of those who come to the Wall. A visitor center will educate. Visitors can learn about the 57,939 names that were inscribed on the Wall when it was built and the more than 300 that have been added since. The center can offer information regarding the 151 people listed on the Wall who, in making the ultimate sacrifice for their country, were awarded the Medal of Honor, or the 16 clergy members, or the 120 people who hailed from foreign countries. We still have many lessons to learn.

A visitors center can help interpret as well. The center will provide space for a small sampling of the enormous volume of memorabilia left at the Wall, and as more and more visitors bring with them less and less personal experience of the war, a visitors center will provide them invaluable context and meaning.

Fittingly, Mr. Speaker, one end of the Vietnam Memorial points directly toward the grand statue of our 16th President housed inside the Lincoln Memorial. Written on the wall of that memorial are words from Lincoln's second inaugural address, which also speak to the role of the Vietnam Wall:

''With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the Nation's wounds.

''To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.''

H.R. 4882 will help finish the work we are in regarding Vietnam. It will help continue the healing provided by the memorial. It will help bind up the Nation's wounds, and we urge its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman for his comments and would note that in this past week I was able to tour a brand-new school in my district, the 2nd District of New Mexico, that is named after the Bataan March.

The Bataan Death March occurred because the Nation forgot a small increment, a small group of soldiers, most of them in the New Mexico National Guard. Those people were taken captive, and now I find young school members, school kids today understanding the sacrifices that were made in that Bataan March back in World War II.

I was in Vietnam when the Nation turned its back on the young soldiers of the Vietnam Era. I was there as we were spit on and cursed as we came back. Right now, most Vietnam veterans look for only one greeting, that is, welcome home. Even today, those words are enough to satisfy the Vietnam veteran to whom a nation turned its back.

For the National Capital Planning Commission to turn its back on our veterans from Vietnam one more time is beyond belief. I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4882, as amended.

H.R. 4882, legislation I introduced along with Resources Committee Ranking Member Congressman RAHALL, National Parks Subcommittee Chairman PEARCE and Subcommittee Ranking Member CHRISTENSEN, would locate the congressionally approved underground visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial.

I felt compelled to take this unusual action in direct response to what I believe is the unreasonable bureaucracy choreographed by the National Capital Planning Commission, NCPC. After having met with the NCPC chairman, I believed more than ever that I had to take such action when I asked him the simple question: When will the commission complete its unusually long evaluation for the placement of the center? His answer was that the commission was still collecting information and that he could not give me a day, month, week or year.

Following years of failed attempts to secure an authorization for the visitor center, I was able to get legislation to the President in November 2003. It is now March 2006 and the National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund have promptly met all NCPC requests for environmental and related information on the sitting of the center and yet the commission wants more. Enough is enough.

As late as November 2005, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the National Park Service gave the NCPC an extensive traffic analysis and met other NCPC requests for a December 1 NCPC meeting. The commission was to approve the site for the center at this meeting.

Instead, without any notice to the National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the NCPC removed the visitor center from the meeting agenda and requested an extensive and unprecedented environmental analysis.

I do not believe there is a need for additional analysis. In compliance with the Commemorative Works Act and the NCPC policies and procedures, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund commissioned an environmental analysis/site selection study in June 2005. The recommended site for the visitor center is cited in H.R. 4882. Site A, as it is known, would not interfere or encroach on the Lincoln or Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and protects the open space and visual sightlines of the Mall as required by the authorizing legislation.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to thank John Reese and Scott Randall of the city of Danville, CA, and Mike Weber of the city of San Ramon, CA, for their service to this country and their leadership and strong support for the visitor center.

Finally, if there was any doubt as to the need for this important legislation, one should take a look at the article that appeared in the March 23, 2006, edition of the Washington Examiner. A spokeswoman for the NCPC is quoted as saying the commission is concerned that "you could end up with a four- or five-story building next to the Lincoln Memorial."

How is that possible when the visitor center is required by statute to be located underground? I think that quote sums up the agenda of the staff of the NCPC and their unfounded opposition to the visitor center.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4882, as amended.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise some serious concerns about H.R. 4882, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Deadline Enforcement Act. I think everyone in this body, myself included, believes strongly that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial should have a visitors center. That is why Congress passed H.R. 1442 2½ years ago with unanimous support.

That bill authorized the visitors center to be constructed on Federal land in the District of Colombia. It also required that the design and construction of the center comply with existing

Federal law governing the placement of memorials, museums, and other facilities on the Mall. As I am sure Members know, the construction of new facilities on the Mall is a difficult and often contentious issue where the competing interests of particular advocates sometimes conflict with the need to protect the sightlines and openness of the Mall itself.

In order to deal with these issues fairly, ensure that all interested parties have a voice, and protect what is truly a national treasure, Congress has created the National Capitol Planning Commission, over which the Government Reform Committee has jurisdiction. It has also established in law a process for the consideration and approval of new facilities on the Mall in the Commemorative Works Act.

The bill before us, H.R. 4882, short-circuits that process in two ways. First, it would create an arbitrary deadline for the visitors center's approval—30 days from the date of enactment. Second, the bill designates the sight on which the center will be built—a small triangle of land between the Vietnam Veterans and Lincoln Memorials. This seems like the kind of micro-management that could be avoided if the Commemorative Works Act process was followed.

One of the requirements of current law is for an environmental assessment to be done on all new facilities on the Mall. It is my understanding that the lack of a completed environmental assessment for the Vietnam visitors center is what has held up the approval for the facility by the Nation Capitol Planning Commission. This assessment will provide critical information needed for final site approval, and it is my further understanding that this assessment is currently underway.

I believe that this approval process should be allowed to reach its own conclusion, without mandated deadlines and site selection. The National Capitol Planning Commission is working in good faith with the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, the government of the District of Colombia, and Vietnam Veterans groups to reach a timely conclusion to this approval process. They should be allowed to do so.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4882, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Deadline Enforcement Act.

I want to thank the chairman of the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), and also our ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), for their leadership in bringing this legislation to the floor.

In 2003, Congress authorized the construction of a visitor center for the Vietnam Memorial to help provide information and educate the public about the memorial and the Vietnam War.

Unfortunately, over the past three years, progress in selecting a location for the visitor's center has stalled due to bureaucratic redtape. The legislation we are considering today will bring the site-selection process to a close by designating both a location for the center's construction and a deadline for its completion.

I believe an Educational Visitors Center will serve as an important learning tool for the millions of visitors who visit the Wall each year, especially those too young to remember Vietnam.

I strongly support this effort to at last make the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center a reality and I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this legislation.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there is no place more sacred for me than the Vietnam Memorial. A close second is the Lincoln Memorial. I visit and run by these poignant places on our National Mall on a nearly daily basis when Congress is in session.

When changes to the Mall are planned it is critical to have a process in place to protect the integrity of the memorials that honor our history. I'm appalled that a bill such as this is coming before Congress, which short circuits the well-functioning process currently in place.

This isn't about bureaucracy and the environment. This is about respect for two sacred places.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4882, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

H. GORDON PAYROW POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4786) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 535 Wood Street in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, as the ''H. Gordon Payrow Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4786

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. H. GORDON PAYROW POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 535 Wood Street in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, shall be known and designated as the ''H. Gordon Payrow Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''H. Gordon Payrow Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 4786 to honor H. Gordon Payrow, a man who was wise beyond his years. He was a man who challenged the process and brought new and innovative ideas and policies to his community. In his early years, he attended Bethlehem High School and Allentown Preparatory School. After graduation, he went on to study at Lehigh University where he earned a degree in business.

After his marriage to Dorothy Parker in 1943, he was elected to the Bethlehem City Council in November of 1951. It was not long after that he was elected as mayor and named the first ''strong mayor'' to emerge from the mayor-council form of government first authorized in 1957.

At his inauguration in 1962, Mayor Payrow declared: ''Today marks the end of the North Side, South Side, and West Side. From here on we will only think of Bethlehem,'' thus bringing together a melting pot of cultures and proclaiming a new unity for the city. Payrow was extremely popular with both Democrats and Republicans, which led him to hold office for three consecutive terms.

During his tenure, Mayor Payrow never retreated from tackling controversial issues. Under Payrow, Bethlehem hired its first female police officer and began the construction of a new city hall. He oversaw the creation of the city's Fine Arts Commission, the Beautification Committee, and the Environmental Conservation Commission. He was also instrumental in laying the groundwork for a massive revitalization of Bethlehem's downtown area.

Further, during his three terms, the mayor worked to construct several fire stations, to demolish blighted housing developments, and to oversee the replacement and construction of several bridges critical to the transportation infrastructure of the city of Bethlehem.

Gordon Payrow was a man of great integrity and skill who believed in his city and in his constituents. The city of Bethlehem is a better place because of his influence, and it is only fitting and proper that a postal facility in the city be named after him.

I urge all Members to join me in honoring a great man that promoted excellence in government by passing H.R. 4786.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Government Reform Committee, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 4786, legislation naming a postal facility in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, after H. Gordon Payrow.

□ 1445

This measure, which was introduced by Representative CHARLES DENT on February 16, 2006, and unanimously reported by our committee on March 9, 2006, enjoys the support and cosponsorship of the entire Pennsylvania delegation.

H. Gordon Payrow, Jr. served three terms as mayor of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, from 1962–1974. A dedicated public servant, Mayor Payrow was committed to improving the infrastructure of the city and beautifying the community. He was also instrumental in the construction and development of the Bethlehem City Center Plaza. After leaving office, Mr. Payrow continued his involvement in local issues and community service projects. He passed away in April 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is altogether fitting and proper that we honor his life and his work by naming the postal facility after him, and I urge swift passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think I am going to have any additional requests, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I too have no further speakers at this time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4786.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DR. JOSE CELSO BARBOSA POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3440) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Avenida RL Rodriguez in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, as the ''Dr. Jose Celso Barbosa Post Office Building.''

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3440

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DR. JOSÉ CELSO BARBOSA POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Avenida RL Rodríguez in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, shall be known and designated as the ''Dr. José Celso Barbosa Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Dr. José Celso Barbosa Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3440, offered by the distinguished gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. FORTUÑO). This bill would designate the post office in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, as the Dr. Jose Celso Barbosa Post Office Building.

Dr. Barbosa received both his primary and secondary education in Puerto Rico. After graduating from the seminary, Barbosa tutored private students in order to save money to attend college. In 1875, he moved to New York to attend prep school, where he learned the English language in only 1 year. In 1876, he was admitted to the University of Michigan Medical School where he graduated valedictorian of his class in 1880.

On returning to Puerto Rico to set up his practice, he learned the Spanish Government would not recognize Barbosa's degree because it was not from one of the prestigious European universities. It took the American consul to intervene for Mr. Barbosa's degree to be recognized, and he became the first person on the entire island with an American medical degree. Barbosa practiced medicine across Puerto Rico and introduced the idea of employers paying a fee for the future health care needs of their employees, a very early health insurance system.

As well as being a respected physician, Barbosa was also an esteemed political activist. He formed the prostatehood Puerto Rican Republican Party on July 4, 1899, as an aftermath of the Spanish-American War in which Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States. In 1900, Barbosa became a member of the executive cabinet up until 1917 and a member of the Senate from 1917–1921.

In 1907, he established the newspaper El Tiempo, the first bilingual newspaper on the island. His daughter, Pilar Barbosa would one day become a renowned historian and a political activist who would carry on her father's work. Jose Celso Barbosa died in San Juan in December of 1921.

I urge all Members to come together to honor the perseverance and courage of Dr. Barbosa by passing H.R. 3440.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Government Reform Committee, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 3440, legislation naming a postal facility in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, after Jose Celso Barbosa. This measure was introduced by Representative LUIS FORTUÑO on July 26, 2005, and unanimously reported by our committee on September 15, 2005.

Jose Celso Barbosa was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, in 1857. Dr. Barbosa was the first Puerto Rican to graduate from the University of Michigan, where he received his medical degree and graduated as valedictorian in 1880.

Upon returning to Puerto Rico, Dr. Barbosa worked in his private medical practice, became a professor of medicine in Puerto Rico, and entered political life as a firm defender of negotiating increased autonomy for Puerto Rico from Spain.

In 1899, after Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States after the Spanish-American War, Dr. Barbosa formed the Republican Party of Puerto Rico, which advocated for Puerto Rican statehood. He was the founder of the newspaper El Tiempo, and active in Puerto Rican politics, serving in the executive cabinet and, later, the Senate. He died in San Juan in 1921.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge swift passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the passage of H.R. 3440, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3440.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENE VANCE POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4805) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 105 North Quincy Street in Clinton, Illinois, as the ''Gene Vance Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4805

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. GENE VANCE POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 105 North Quincy Street in Clinton, Illinois,

shall be known and designated as the ''Gene Vance Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Gene Vance Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of H.R. 4805, offered by the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JOHNSON). The bill would designate the post office in Clinton, Illinois, as the Gene Vance Post Office Building.

After winning an All-State selection in 1940, Clinton High School star Gene Vance committed to the University of Illinois to start his incredible basketball career. His days as a fighting Illini are what he has become known for. As a member of the famed ''Whiz Kids'' of the Illinois basketball team, Andy Phillip, Jack Smily, Ken Menke, Art Mathison, and Vance formed one of the Nation's premier teams in the early 1940s. Their fast-break style and ability to run the floor assured them 25 of 27 wins in the Big Ten Conference from 1941–1943, rightly earning them two Big Ten titles.

After the 1943 season, Vance and the rest of the ''Whiz Kids'' were called to military duty for World War II. Following the final regular season game, the entire team entered the war effort. After the war, they picked up right where they left off in 1947 and led the Illini to a second place finish.

After graduation, Vance was drafted by the Chicago Stags of the Basketball Association of America, which eventually became known as the National Basketball Association, or the NBA, as we know it today.

After his basketball career had ended, Vance turned to coaching. He returned to his home State to lead the LaSalle-Peru Cavaliers to a regional championship. He later became the athletic director at the University of Illinois and was recently voted 1 of the 20 greatest Illini basketball players of the past century.

I urge all Members to join me in saluting this dedicated and honorable man by passing H.R. 4805.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. As a member of the House Government Reform Committee, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 4805, legislation naming a postal facility in Clinton, Illinois, after Gene Vance.

This measure, which was introduced by Representative TIMOTHY JOHNSON of Illinois on February 28, 2006, and unanimously reported by our committee on March 9, 2006, enjoys the support and cosponsorship of the entire Illinois delegation.

Gene Vance was a member of the 1942–43 University of Illinois basketball team known as the ''Whiz Kids.'' The ''Whiz Kids'' included Gene Vance, Jack Smily, Ken Menke, Andy Phillip, and Art Mathisen. The team earned the chance to compete for the NCAA Championship after being 17–1 during the season. But the Army drafted three of the ''Whiz Kids'' for service in World War II, and in a show of unity the team decided if all the ''Whiz Kids'' could not compete together, they would not compete at all.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is altogether fitting and proper that we would name this postal facility after Mr. Vance and urge passage of this legislation.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the passage of H.R. 4805, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4805.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF ''NATIONAL MPS DAY''

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 85) supporting the goals and ideals of ''National MPS Day''.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 85

Whereas mucopolysaccharidoses and mucolipidoses (commonly known as ''MPS disorders'') are genetically determined lysosomal storage disorders that result in the inability of the body to produce certain enzymes needed to break down complex carbohydrates;

Whereas in individuals with MPS disorders, complex carbohydrates are stored in virtually every cell in the body and progressively cause damage to the cells, affecting multiple systems, including the bones, heart and other internal organs, respiratory system, and central nervous system;

Whereas the cellular damage caused by MPS disorders results in mental retardation, short stature, corneal damage, joint stiffness, loss of mobility, speech and hearing impairment, heart disease, hyperactivity, chronic respiratory problems, and, most importantly, drastically shortened life span;

Whereas the nature of MPS disorders is usually not apparent at birth, and, without treatment, life expectancy is usually very short;

Whereas the multisystemic damage that is caused by MPS disorders makes the disorders ideal models for many other degenerative genetic disorders;

Whereas recent research developments have resulted in limited treatments for some MPS disorders, and promising advancements are underway in pursuit of treatments for additional MPS disorders;

Whereas treatments and research advancements for MPS disorders are limited by lack of awareness about the disorders, even within the medical community;

Whereas the development of early detection and intervention techniques, effective treatments, and a potential cure for MPS disorders can be accomplished by research, data collection, and information distribution;

Whereas increased public and professional awareness and continued public funding will assist in the development of new techniques, treatments, and cures for MPS disorders, which will greatly enhance the quality of life for individuals with MPS disorders;

Whereas the National MPS Society, Inc., a group ultimately dedicated to finding a cure for MPS disorders, has designated February 25 of each year as ''National MPS Day''; and

Whereas the designation of ''National MPS Day'' provides an opportunity to increase public and professional awareness about mucopolysaccharidoses and mucolipidoses, and to encourage research for early diagnosis, effective treatments, and a potential cure for MPS disorders: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives supports the goals and ideals of ''National MPS Day''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise today in support of House Resolution 85, introduced by the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

This resolution would support the goals and ideals of ''National MPS Day.'' MPS and related diseases are rare genetic diseases that cause cells to form improperly, wreaking havoc among all the body's systems. Enzymes which normally break apart damaged cells fail to produce, resulting in progressive damage throughout the body, affecting the heart, bones, joints, respiratory system and the central nervous system. It can cause stunted growth, stiff joints, speech and hearing impairment, breathing problems, mental retardation, and a dramatically shortened life span.

All the symptoms of these diseases are not always apparent at birth. They develop slowly as damaged cells accumulate, many times resulting in death before the teenage years. Currently, there are no cures for these dangerous diseases.

I was unaware of MPS until Les Sheaffer, one of my constituents, came to talk to me about his daughter Brittany, who has MPS III, or Sanfilippo Syndrome. My staff and I were touched by Brittany's story and the Sheaffer family's resolve. Brittany's condition underscores the difficulties facing families coping with these dreaded diseases.

The occurrence of MPS in the general population is thought to be about 1 in 25,000 births. Increased public and professional awareness are important to further the development of treatments and techniques to help cope with and eventually cure these diseases. Because MPS diseases are not commonly known and well understood in the medical community, diagnosis is often delayed. Early detection and intervention can help to improve the quality of life for children like Brittany.

I applaud the efforts of the National MPS Society to support research, to support families, and to increase public and professional awareness of these diseases. This legislation would build on the National MPS Society's work by raising awareness of these devastating diseases and increasing support for the disease's victims and their families. For this reason, I ask all Members to join me and Mr. KIND in passing House Resolution 85.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1500

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National MPS Day. MPS disorders affect primarily children and reduce their ability to produce certain enzymes that clear the body of toxins. The resulting effect of this enzyme deficiency manifests itself in a number of ways: mental retardation, physical malformations, small stature, corneal damage, chronic physical pain, and a shortened and difficult life span. This disease affects our Nation's children and has a dramatic ripple effect that impacts all who know and love them.

MPS disorders are hereditary and there is no cure, but significant advancements have been made or are on the horizon. This is just one reason why MPS Day is so important. We must keep the public informed about the disease and in searching for a cure.

This resolution will help bring the struggles of those affected by MPS disorders into the public arena and will signify that we hope to do everything within our power to fight it.

MPS Day was commemorated on February 25 of this year, but it is a daily struggle for those affected with the disease. If MPS affects one family, it affects too many; and we should continue to raise awareness and do all we can to help the families and the victims of MPS. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 85.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in favor of H. Res. 85, supporting the goals and ideals of National MPS Day. MPS and ML, or mucopolysaccharidoses and mucolipidoses, are genetic disorders caused by the body's inability to produce specific enzymes. Most individuals suffering from this disease are children; and they endure a variety of ailments, including problems with the bones, heart, joints, and the respiratory system. Most devastatingly, they have drastically shortened life spans.

Because of a lack of information and understanding about these disorders, even among the medical community, children often receive delayed or wrong diagnosis. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that we increase research and work for a cure. At the same time, we must increase awareness of these disorders that affect so many families. February 25 of every year is National MPS Day, and I believe we in the House of Representatives could do a great service to the MPS community by passing this resolution to honor this day and their work.

I am very pleased the Senate passed such a resolution, and I extend my thanks to my colleague and friend, Mr. DENT, as well as Mr. DAVIS, along with the 57 cosponsors who were instrumental in bringing this resolution to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I first became aware of MPS because of Allison Kirch, a student in my district who suffers from such a disorder. Her parents, Susan and Larry, and her sister Helen are tireless in their care for Allison and their dedication to furthering the cause of MPS patients.

It is because of people like Allison and Helen, Susan and Larry that I feel so strongly about MPS disorders. Allison, now 10, was first diagnosed at the age of 3. Today she is a happy fifth grader at Spence Elementary School in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. The Kirch family, along with Les Sheaffer, Kym Wigglseworth, and Sissi Langford of the MPS Society, have done so much to educate me and others about this cause and issue.

Today's resolution is just a small part of furthering awareness of MPS disorders. There is so much more that can and must be done. As Members of Congress, we must take the lead in authorizing funds for research of MPS and ML disorders. As citizens, we must advocate tirelessly on behalf of the families who selflessly and tirelessly care for their loved ones. On behalf of Allison and her family, I am proud to advocate for this resolution on the House floor and hope my colleagues will join me in honoring such a worthy cause today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support adoption of H. Res. 85, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 85.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF WELLINGTON TIMOTHY MARA

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 517) recognizing the life of Wellington Timothy Mara and his outstanding contributions to the New York Giants Football Club, the National Football League, and the United States.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 517

Whereas Wellington Timothy Mara was born on August 14, 1916, in New York City;

Whereas Wellington Mara graduated from Loyola High School in New York and proceeded to Fordham University, from which he graduated in 1937;

Whereas Wellington Mara was closely involved with the Fordham University football teams of 1936 through 1938, which at one point won 25 straight games, and it was at Fordham University that Mara befriended future National Football League Hall of Fame coach Vince Lombardi;

Whereas Wellington Mara was a vital participant in the New York Giants Football Club since its inception and inclusion in the National Football League in 1925 under the original leadership of his father Timothy;

Whereas, in 1930, Wellington Mara acquired part-ownership of the New York Giants when his father divided the team between Wellington Mara and his brother Jack;

Whereas under the co-leadership of Wellington and Jack Mara, the New York Giants appeared in five National Football League Championship games between 1958 and 1963, and Wellington Mara was in charge of accumulating the player talent that engineered this remarkable accomplishment;

Whereas, by supporting the agreement to share television revenues equally among the teams of the National Football League, Wellington and Jack Mara gave up significant revenue for their own team, but put the National Football League on the path to collective success;

Whereas, after the untimely death of his brother Jack in 1965, Wellington Mara became the principal owner of the New York Giants;

Whereas, under his leadership, the New York Giants have 26 postseason appearances, 18 National Football League divisional championships, and six National Football League championships, including the Super Bowl XXI and Super Bowl XXV titles;

Whereas the only time Mara was away from the New York Giants was during World War II, when he served honorably in the United States Navy in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters and earned the rank of Lieutenant Commander;

Whereas, in addition to his outstanding leadership of the New York Giants, Wellington Mara also made outstanding contributions to the National Football League as a whole, including serving on its Executive Committee, Hall of Fame Committee, and Competition Committee;

Whereas Wellington Mara has been inducted into the Fordham Athletic Hall of Fame, and, in 2002, he was honored at the Fordham Founder's dinner, which is Fordham's highest honor;

Whereas Wellington Mara was inducted into the National Football League Hall of Fame in 1997;

Whereas Wellington Mara served his community as a member of the board of the Giants Foundation, a charitable organization founded by the New York Giants to provide financial and social support for disadvantaged youths in the New York Metropolitan Area; and

Whereas, on October 25, 2005, Wellington Mara succumbed to cancer at his home in Rye, New York: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives, on the occasion of the death of Wellington Timothy Mara—

(1) expresses its deepest condolences to his wife of 61 years, Ann, his 11 children, and his 40 grandchildren; and

(2) recognizes the outstanding contributions that Wellington Timothy Mara made to the New York Giants Football Club, the National Football League, and the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 517, introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL). This resolution recognizes the life of Wellington Timothy Mara and his contributions to the National Football League.

Wellington Mara was a co-owner and co-CEO of the NFL's New York Giants and one of the most influential and important figures in the history of the National Football League. The son of Timothy Mara, who founded the Giants organization in 1925, Mara is an alumnus of the Jesuit schools, Loyola School and Fordham University in New York City.

During the early 1960s, Wellington and his brother Jack, the owners of the NFL's largest market, agreed to share television revenue on a league-wide basis, dividing the amounts of money available in cities like New York with smaller market teams, like the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Green Bay Packers. This concept of revenue sharing allowed the NFL to grow and is still being used today.

Along with his many other lasting contributions to the game, Mara lead the Giants to six league championships, including two Super Bowls, nine conference championships, and 13 division championships. As an Eagles fan, that breaks my heart. Also, the Giants have accumulated the third highest number of victories in National Football League history. To commemorate his outstanding career, he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1997. I urge all Members to come together to honor this pillar of the football community by adopting H. Res. 517.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution to recognize the life and accomplishments of an NFL institution, Wellington Timothy Mara. Mara spent nearly his entire life with the New York Giants, holding several positions from ball boy at the age of 9 to treasurer and team president.

Professional football and the New York Giants were in Mara's blood: his father founded the New York Giants. Father and son built one of the most successful franchises in league history.

Mara's passing this past October dealt an emotional blow to the Giants organization and the league at large. Mara was extremely involved with the team right up until his passing. He showed up at practice nearly every day and shared his wisdom with the players.

Although Mara was associated most intimately with the Giants, it was more than his dedication to the Giants that led to his induction into the Professional Football Hall of Fame. In the 1960s, when the Giants earned a dominant portion of television revenues garnered by professional football, Wellington and his brother Jack made the generous decision to split television revenues with poor-performing teams. This revenue division allowed teams in smaller markets to stay afloat until a substantial fan base and the development of a nationwide television market would enable these teams to stand on their own feet. If it were not for the generosity of the Mara family, the National Football League would not be where it is today.

Mara will be missed by many and was mourned by his family, his team, and the entire National Football League. A demonstration of the loss was witnessed when the Giants honored Mara by winning a decisive game over the Washington Redskins the same week of his passing.

Mr. Speaker, I am in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), the sponsor of the resolution.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman DAVIS, Ranking Member WAXMAN, Mr. DENT, and Mr. DAVIS for their help in bringing this resolution honoring the life of Wellington Mara to the floor.

This is not about sports, though. This is about a gentleman in sports who lived his life on and off the field as an outstanding American. With the retirement of Paul Tagliabue as the commissioner of the NFL, I hope this is not an era that is passing because this is an era which was an inspiration to all professional sports, and we will miss them all.

I rise today in strong support of this resolution honoring Mr. Mara, a fellow Fordham University alumnus who passed away just a short time ago at the age of 89. He is survived by his wonderful wife, Ann, four sons, seven daughters, 41 grandchildren, and the family has been recently blessed with his first great grandchild. He was not always on the football field.

To football fans of the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, Mara is synonymous with our beloved New York Giants, the team he owned for most of his life. Born in the city on August 14, 1916, Mara was introduced to professional football at an early age, as was just stated a few times.

He would later recount a story from that inaugural season of overhearing head coach Robert Folwell telling his team to ''give them hell out there.'' It was at that moment that this 9-year-old young man realized how tough football is, and fell in love with the game forever.

In 1930, Timothy Mara, Wellington's father, gave the team to his two sons. Jack was 22 years of age, and Wellington was 14. That is pretty remarkable. He became the youngest owner in the league. In the late 1930s, Wellington Mara attended Fordham University, my alma mater. That was when Fordham had a proud team, a team that went on to great heights: the seven blocks of granite, Vince Lombardi. He befriended Vince Lombardi.

Upon graduation, Mara joined the New York Giants as a full-time member of the team. With his brother in charge of the business, Wellington soon took control of all player personnel decisions. That is why even though there have been many problems in the NFL, like many sports, there is something very different about the National Football League. It is a family operation and the more it becomes that, the more we avoid the problems and pitfalls we have seen in organized sports.

He integrated the Giants at a time when much of the league remained all white. He drafted running back Frank Gifford and offensive tackle Roosevelt Brown and then traded for quarterback Y.A. Tittle, all future Hall of Famers. He was the architect of the dominant Giant teams of 1958–1963. No one surpassed him, paralleled perhaps by Dan Rooney of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

During World War II, Mara briefly left his beloved Giants and joined the Navy. He served in the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters. He earned the rank of lieutenant commander. He returned to the Giants following the war.

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In the early 1960s the Giants were the most valuable franchise in the league, and television was the next great revenue stream. You have already heard, Mr. Chairman, how we shared the revenue to make sure that the league survived.

In the late 1970s, Mara further strengthened the team by hiring George Young as the general manager, who became the architect of the dominant Giant teams of the late 1980s.

All told, in Mara's 81 years, 81 years with one football team, they appeared in 26 post seasons, won 16 division championships and six NFL titles. Those six championships represent the third most, as my friend from Pennsylvania pointed out.

In 1972, Fordham University inducted Mara into the Athletic Hall of Fame, and in 2002, he was honored at the Fordham Founders Dinner, the university's highest honor.

In 1997, Mara was introduced into the National Football League Hall of Fame, an honor he reluctantly accepted. He believed that since players and coaches made the game great, the Hall of Fame should be reserved for them and not for owners.

Mara was so highly regarded by his fellow owners that just yesterday the National Football League renamed their official game ball ''The Duke,'' the nickname given to Mara as a child by the New York Giants players.

I am proud to have authored House Resolution 517 honoring the life and work of Wellington Timothy Mara. I respectfully urge my colleagues join me and support the passage of this resolution of not only a great football player, great owner, but a darn great human being.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory and legacy of Wellington Mara, former co-owner of the National Football League's New York Giants franchise and League businessman extraordinaire, and in support of Congressman PASCRELL's resolution recognizing the life of Wellington Mara and his outstanding contributions to the New York Giants football club, the National Football League and the United States of America.

Wellington Timothy Mara was a man among men. Wellington Mara was a man whose entire lifetime was dedicated to the National Football League and his family-owned Giants. Mara, who was given the nickname ''The Duke'' as a youngster by Giants players, joined the Giants in 1937 as a part-time assistant to the president, started working full-time in 1938 as a club secretary and later served as vice president before becoming the team's president after the death of his brother, Jack.

Mara's extensive experience in organization, player personnel, trading and drafting helped produce 16 NFL/NFC divisional titles (two came after his induction into the Hall of Fame) and four NFL championships during his 68–season tenure that began with his graduation from Fordham in 1937. He engineered trades throughout the League solidifying deals with such stars as Frank Gifford and Roosevelt Brown—both future Hall of Famers—to mold the Giants into a dominant team in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

From 1956 to 1963, the Giants won six divisional championships and the 1956 NFL title. Mara's Giants went on to win Super Bowls XXI and XXV.

From 1984 to 2005, he served as president of the National Football Conference. He was inducted into the National Football League Hall of Fame in 1997 and into the Fordham Athletic Hall of Fame.

In spite of a busy, grueling schedule Wellington Mara always found time to serve his community as a member of the board of the Giants Foundation, a charitable organization founded by the New York Giants to provide financial and social support for disadvantaged youths in the New York Metropolitan Area.

Wellington Mara, who was born on August 14, 1916, in New York City, was respected as one of the most knowledgeable executives in pro football. He passed away on October 25, 2005. He leaves to cherish his memory his wife, Ann, his 11 children and his 40 grandchildren. He also leaves a legion of devoted admirers, friends and colleagues.

The NFL game ball was known as ''The Duke'' from 1941 to 1969. The NFL first used a ball in honor of Mara at the suggestion of Chicago Bears owner George Halas, who along with Tim Mara, Wellington's father, arranged for Wilson to become the league's supplier of game balls. ''The Duke'' ball was discontinued before the start of the 1970 season. The NFL owners recently voted unanimously to bring back ''The Duke'' game ball with the logo written on all game-day footballs.

I believe it is more than befitting that the National Football League pay tribute to the memory of this outstanding gentleman by bringing back ''The Duke'' football named in his honor and that this House pay him tribute with the passage of this Resolution today.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to honor Wellington Timothy Mara.

Mr. Mara, a longtime constituent of mine from Westchester County, was a pioneer in the sports world who has left an indelible mark on the National Football League.

Having been closely associated with the New York Giants since its inception in 1925 and having assumed partial ownership of the team at the age of 14, Wellington Mara played a critical role in helping the Giants become one of the cornerstone franchises of the NFL. Under his leadership, the Giants achieved greatness—26 postseason appearances, 18 divisional championships, and six league championships, including two Super Bowl victories.

In his almost 80 years associated with the Giants, Wellington Mara attended almost every Giants practice and home game until falling ill last spring. In fact, the only extended time he ever spent away from the team was in brave service to his country. While serving in the Navy during World War II, Wellington Mara proudly achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander while serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters.

It was Wellington Mara's vision and leadership in the 1960's that may provide the most lasting impact on the NFL. His willingness to share television revenue from the largest television market with smaller market teams enabled a balanced economic playing field which continues in the NFL today.

In addition to his leadership in the NFL, Wellington Mara was a generous, caring man whose compassion can be summed up in one phrase: once a Giant, always a Giant. He was well known for providing medical care for current and former players and their families, including finding doctors and covering their medical expenses. Additionally he often kept advisors and scouts on payroll long after their service to the team ended, simply as a means of showing appreciation for their service.

Simply put, Wellington Mara was football in America. A member of the NFL's founding generation, Mara served on the NFL's Executive Committee, Hall of Fame Committee, and Competition Committee and was elected to the Hall of Fame himself in 1997.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer my condolences to the entire Mara family, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at the moment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the adoption of House Resolution 517.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 517.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING THAT ATTORNEYS EMPLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATORY TIME OFF FOR TRAVEL

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4057) to provide that attorneys employed by the Department of Justice shall be eligible for compensatory time off for travel under section 5550b of title 5, United States Code, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4057

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. COMPENSATORY TIME OFF FOR TRAVEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Attorneys employed by the Department of Justice (including assistant United States attorneys) shall be eligible for compensatory time off for travel under section 5550b of title 5, United States Code, without regard to any provision of section 115 of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000 (as enacted into law by section 1000(a)(1) of Public Law 106–113 and reenacted by section 111 of the Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2001 (as enacted into law by appendix B of Public Law 106–553)).

(b) APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (a) shall apply with respect to time spent in travel status on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4057 as amended. I want to thank the leadership for bringing this important legislation to the floor.

This bill, which has been introduced by myself, Government Reform Committee Chairman TOM DAVIS, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. DAVIS from Illinois and Mr. VAN HOLLEN, is intended to clarify that the Department of Justice attorneys are eligible to receive compensatory time off for time spent in travel status like all other General Schedule employees.

In 2004, Congress approved this government-wide ''comp time for travel'' in the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act. After the bill had passed, the Department of Justice determined that the bill as written did not give it the authority to waive certain limitations imposed on its attorneys by a previous appropriations measure. H.R. 4057 now, through the technical assistance of the Justice Department, unequivocally clarifies congressional intent.

This bill would allow Justice Department attorneys to be compensated for travel time during nonbusiness hours. This would greatly assist those employees who take early morning flights in order to attend to business away from the home office, but don't currently get compensated for their dedication. In light of the fact that quality-of-life programs are among the most effective recruitment and retention tools, I believe that Federal employees should receive compensation while traveling to do the Government's business.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you once again for your attention to this bill, and I urge passage of H.R. 4057 as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join Representatives DAVIS, WAXMAN, PORTER and VAN HOLLEN in introducing H.R. 4057, which would make attorneys employed by the Department of Justice eligible for compensatory time off for travel.

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act which provided compensatory time off to Federal employees when they travel on official business during nonworking hours. If an employee must travel on a Sunday to attend an out-of-town meeting on Monday, that employee can receive credit for giving up his weekend to travel on official government business.

The Office of Personnel Management issued interim regulations that went into effect on January 28, 2005, allowing Federal workers to receive equal time off in exchange for work-related travel outside of regular business hours.

In February of last year, the Justice Department issued guidelines barring DOJ attorneys from receiving the benefit. In support of its decision, the Department cited provisions in its fiscal year 2000 appropriations, which banned overtime pay to Justice Department attorneys. However, those provisions sought to limit overtime pay for attorneys, not compensatory time.

H.R. 4057, which has bipartisan and bicameral support, will clarify that DOJ attorneys are entitled to compensatory time off. And therefore, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in introduction and urge passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that I am going to have any additional requests for time, and I would yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4057, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING DR. I. KING JORDAN FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY AND THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITY

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 680) recognizing Dr. I. King Jordan for his contributions to Gallaudet University and the deaf and hard of hearing community.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 680

Whereas in 1988, Dr. I. King Jordan became the first deaf President of Gallaudet University, and the first deaf president of any institution of higher education in the United States;

Whereas Gallaudet University grants more bachelor's degrees to deaf people than any other institution of higher learning in the world, is the only such institution serving primarily deaf and hard of hearing students, and provides groundbreaking research in the field of deafness;

Whereas deaf and hard of hearing graduates of Gallaudet University serve as leaders around the globe;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan graduated from Gallaudet University in 1970 with a B.A. in Psychology, and received both a master's degree and a doctorate in Psychology from University of Tennessee by 1973;

Whereas before his appointment as president, Dr. I. King Jordan served as the Chair of the Department of Psychology and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Science at Gallaudet University;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan was a research fellow at Donaldson's School for the Deaf in Edinburgh, Scotland, an exchange scholar at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, and a lecturer at schools in Paris, Toulouse, and Marseille, France;

Whereas from 1997 to 2001, Dr. I. King Jordan led the first comprehensive capital campaign for Gallaudet University and successfully raised nearly $40,000,000, which was used by the University to strengthen academic programs, increase the endowment, and construct the Student Academic Center;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan established the President's Fellow program to increase the number of deaf and hard of hearing faculty members by providing support for deaf and hard of hearing college graduates to complete their terminal degree;

Whereas in 1988, Dr. I. King Jordan proclaimed to the world, ''Deaf people can do anything, except hear.'';

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is a strong advocate on the national and international level for deaf people and people of all disabilities, and was a lead witness in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) during a joint session of Congress prior to the passage of ADA;

Whereas in July 2005, Dr. I. King Jordan received the George Bush Medal for the Empowerment of People with Disabilities, an award established to honor those individuals who perform outstanding service to encourage the spirit of ADA throughout the world;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan served in the Navy from 1962 to 1966;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan has shared nearly 38 years of marriage with Linda Kephart, with whom he has two children, King and Heidi;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is a strong supporter of physical fitness and has completed more than 200 marathons and 40 100-mile marathons;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan will retire as the first deaf president of Gallaudet University on December 31, 2006; and

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is an accomplished, respected leader who devoted his life to Gallaudet University and efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and individuals with disabilities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates Dr. I. King Jordan on his retirement; and

(2) expresses appreciation to Dr. I. King Jordan for his many years of dedicated service to Gallaudet University, to the deaf and hard of hearing community, and to all individuals with disabilities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 680.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H. Res. 680, which recognizes the contributions of Dr. I. King Jordan to Gallaudet University and the deaf and hard of hearing community. Dr. Jordan retires as president of Gallaudet at the end of this year, and this resolution provides us the opportunity to acknowledge his significant achievements. I want to thank the resolution's author, Mr. KIND, for drawing our attention to Dr. Jordan's accomplishments and his status as one of America's leaders in the fields of higher education and disability policy.

When Dr. Jordan was appointed president by the Gallaudet Board of Trustees in 1988 he became the first deaf president of the university. Dr. Jordan's leadership of Gallaudet has heightened awareness of the contributions made by the university and the issues facing the deaf and hard of hearing community. During his time as president, Dr. Jordan has been a visible spokesman for the university and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, as well as a tireless advocate for people with disabilities.

Dr. Jordan has been a leader in national efforts to address the needs of people with disabilities. In 2001 he was awarded the Presidential Citizen's Medal. This award, conferred by the President of the United States in recognition of individuals who have performed exemplary deeds or service for the country, acknowledged Dr. Jordan's efforts to promote self-determination and full integration of all people with disabilities.

I want to extend my congratulations to Dr. Jordan and wish him well in his retirement. I know that Gallaudet University will miss his leadership, and I can only hope that he will continue to be involved as an advocate for people with disabilities.

I want to, again, thank Mr. KIND for bringing this resolution forward and providing us this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Jordan's achievement.

I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. KIND asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the ranking member, Mr. KELLER, as well as the chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee, Mr. MCKEON, for their help in bringing the resolution before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a great American, I. King Jordan, who has dedicated his life to helping others. On December 31, at the end of this year, 2006, Dr. Jordan will retire as the first deaf president of Gallaudet University located here in Washington, D.C., the only institution of higher learning in the world serving primarily deaf and hard of hearing students. I am pleased to author this resolution with my colleagues Mr. OXLEY, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. LAHOOD, and I thank them and the other cosponsors of this resolution for their support.

King Jordan's service to others began more than 4 decades ago when he served in the United States Navy from 1962 until 1966. He attended college at Gallaudet University after a car accident at the age of 21 left him deaf. He then went on to receive a doctorate in psychology in 1973, joined the faculty of Gallaudet University, and in 1988 he became its president. During his tenure at Gallaudet, Dr. Jordan raised nearly $40 million to grow the university endowment and to construct the student academic center. Also, he established the President's Fellow Program to provide support for deaf and hard of hearing college graduates to complete their advanced degrees, thus increasing the number of deaf and hard of hearing faculty members.

In addition to his work in academia, President Jordan was a lead witness before Congress supporting the Americans with Disabilities Act; and he continues to advocate on both the national and international levels for deaf people, as well as all people with disabilities.

In 2005, Dr. Jordan received the George H.W. Bush Medal honoring outstanding service under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Dr. Jordan is an inspiration to all Americans and his years of dedication to others undoubtedly deserve the recognition of this House of Representatives. We will miss his terrific leadership and his advocacy on behalf of all the students at Gallaudet University.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Jordan and his wife, Linda Kephart, for their many years of dedicated service and wish them a very long and happy retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. KELLER and I especially thank Mr. KIND for introducing this. This was really RON's idea to honor President Jordan; and I know that the university and the people there are very, very appreciative, RON, of your thinking to honor Dr. Jordan.

I also want to thank the chairman of the full committee, Chairman MCKEON and his staff. I want to thank the majority leader's office. The truth is, ordinarily we don't do these kinds of resolutions, but because of the importance of the work of Dr. Jordan, the chairman of the full committee and the majority leader's office agreed that we could have this resolution brought forward.

This resolution will be presented tonight by some of us who will be at a fund-raiser at Gallaudet University where some very outstanding Republican basketball players and some outstanding Democratic basketball players will be participating in a basketball game at Gallaudet University. And I hope that some of us, including Mr. KIND and LYNN and others, will have a chance to present this resolution to Dr. Jordan.

□ 1530

Dr. Jordan became the first deaf president of Gallaudet University in 1988 after the students and people in the community came forward and said they wanted a deaf president. And at the end of the protest, the Gallaudet board named Dr. Jordan president.

He is from Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania. He spent 4 years in the Navy after high school.

Dr. Jordan, as was mentioned, was in a car accident when he was 21 years old that left him deaf. He received a BA degree in psychology from Gallaudet in 1970. In 1971, Dr. Jordan received his MA in psychology from the University of Tennessee. He also received his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Tennessee in 1973.

Once he completed his education, Dr. Jordan began teaching in the Gallaudet Department of Psychology. He became chair of the department in 1983 and dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 1986.

Dr. Jordan has also been a research fellow at the Donaldson's School for the Deaf in Edinburgh, Scotland; an exchange scholar in Krakow, Poland; and a visiting scholar and lecturer at schools in Paris, Toulouse, and Marseille, France.

He lobbied for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and was a lead witness in support of the ADA during a joint session of Congress. President Jordan, as was mentioned, has raised nearly $40 million for Gallaudet between 1997 and 2001. The money has been used to strengthen the academic program, increase the endowment, and construct the Student Academic Center.

He also established the President's Fellow Program. The program is designed to increase the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing faculty members by providing support for deaf and hard-of-hearing college graduates to complete their degrees.

He has received 11 honorary degrees and numerous awards, including the Presidential Citizen's Medal and the Washingtonian of the Year Award. Dr. Jordan has also served as the chair and vice-chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. In July 2005, he received the George Bush Medal for the Empowerment of People with Disabilities.

He will retire in December of this year, and his true partner in all of the work that he has been doing at Gallaudet has certainly been his wife, Linda. They have been married for almost 38 years.

I have had the privilege, along with a Democratic Member of the House, of serving on the board of directors of Gallaudet University. I was first appointed by Speaker Gingrich. In my district there is a school for the deaf, the only school for the deaf in Illinois, in Jacksonville, Illinois. So many of our students come here to Washington, and my interest in the school for the deaf in Jacksonville led to my interest in Gallaudet, and I have had the privilege of working with Dr. Jordan during the time of my tenure on the board of the directors at Gallaudet University, and what a privilege that it has been to work with him.

He is a true marathoner. Dr. Jordan has completed more than 200 marathons, 26 miles for a marathon, and 40 100-mile marathons. But he has completed the marathon of his life by doing the job that I am sure he always wanted, to be president of Gallaudet University; and he has been an inspiration for deaf people.

Each year I try to go to Gallaudet and visit with the students, and I can tell you he is an inspiration to the students there; and he is an inspiration, I think, to all of us and should be an inspiration to all Americans, that even with disabilities, you can do great things, and he surely has done great things.

So I want to add my congratulations to Dr. Jordan for a job well done, and I know he will not fade away. I know he will continue to work with the disability community and work around Washington, D.C. and do all that he can to improve those who have disabilities, particularly those who are hearing impaired.

And, again, Mr. KIND, thank you for your consideration in introducing this resolution.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I also want to extend my thanks to Mr. LAHOOD, who has been instrumental in getting this resolution here to the floor today and for his tireless support for all the students at Gallaudet University.

The only thing I would add is that the Democratic team will be trying to defend our title on the parquet floor this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), one of the members of the board of trustees of Gallaudet University.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution to honor Dr. I. King Jordan.

Dr. Jordan is retiring as Gallaudet University's president at the end of this year, having become our Nation's first deaf university president where he has served since 1988, the first deaf individual to be the president of any higher education institution.

Dr. Jordan is both an accomplished, respected educator and a personal friend. During his tenure at Gallaudet, he has been an able, caring leader, propelling the university forward and advocating for deaf students. Among his accomplishments are Gallaudet's first-ever capital campaign, a campaign that supported construction of the state-of-the-art Student Academic Center on campus. He also paved the way for an increase in scholarships and academic programs, and he established a fellows program to provide support for deaf college graduates to complete their terminal degrees and become faculty members.

Dr. Jordan has been a strong advocate for individuals with disabilities all around the world. His testimony to Congress played a critical role in the passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.

I am proud to have had a chance to work with Dr. Jordan these past years, most recently as one of the three Members of Congress who sit on Gallaudet's board: Congressman LAHOOD, Senator MCCAIN, and myself. We have experienced a career of accomplishments for Gallaudet's students under Dr. Jordan's leadership. They are a testament to his inspirational words, words he spoke in 1988. He said: ''Deaf people can do anything, except hear.''

I wish Dr. Jordan much happiness in his retirement as he looks forward to traveling with his wife, Linda, spending more time with his family. But believe me, his compassion, his vision, and his service will be greatly missed.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), the true representative for Gallaudet University.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for his working with the chair to get this bill to the floor.

I am not on the committee of jurisdiction; so I want to particularly thank the committee for the honor. It is an unusual honor. We do not do this very often, what you do in bringing this resolution to the floor. And I want to give my thanks to Mr. LAHOOD and Ms. WOOLSEY, both, for the service they perform by serving on the board of this very important institution. The fact that there are two Members of Congress on the board of Gallaudet perhaps speaks for itself as to the importance of Gallaudet, chartered by the Congress of the United States and still an institution of great importance to the Congress.

I do want to say to the gentleman from Wisconsin and to those of you, if you are one of them, Mr. LAHOOD, who are going to be at the game this evening, I always come to this wonderful game. As it turns out, I am having a reception myself tonight for the National Teacher of the Year, the first time since the award was given. It was set up in 1952, that the National Teacher of the Year comes from the District of Columbia. So you fellows are going to have to get along without me.

When they asked me to come, they first asked me to be a member of the team. They really did not know what they were saying. I did volunteer to come, however, to be there to do whatever I could. In fact, if this reception is over, I do intend to stop by and to thank you also for that very important work.

As you have heard, Gallaudet is really one of a kind. It is an institution without peer, the only institution for people who are deaf and hard of hearing of higher education throughout the world. So it is very precious to those of us in the District of Columbia who then see people come from all over the world to come to this singular institution.

Now, there has got to be great sadness on the campus of Gallaudet even as we express our appreciation today. Dr. I. King Jordan was not simply an extraordinary educator. He came to his post through a vote of confidence before he even got there from the students who had a demonstration; and as a result of that demonstration, the board of trustees at that time thought about their decision, and Dr. Jordan became the first disabled person to head the university.

It is hard to overemphasize what this meant to us in the District of Columbia. We saw it as wonderful history-making for a history-making institution, but that paled besides the joy of the students. You can imagine if you are going to a university for the deaf and the hard of hearing to see a person of such accomplishments head your own university. It was invaluable, I am sure, in ways that we shall never understand and shall never know.

But then it was up to Dr. Jordan to prove himself, and I am here to tell you as a person who is very familiar with all the institutions, he continues to be a tenured professor of law at Georgetown, where I taught full time before coming to the Congress, and under Dr. Jordan this institution has prospered and grown to even more admiration than it already enjoyed.

In order for that to happen, Dr. Jordan had simply to show that he could do what presidents do, and he has done that to a fare-thee-well, from fund raising, which may be the most difficult to do especially since this university does receive some funding from the Federal Government.

But as my colleagues know from their own State university, that does not matter that much today. Presidents are supposed to get out here on the hustings the way everybody else does, the way that private universities always have. And here when Dr. Jordan did it not only like everybody else does but did it in extraordinary ways, you see evidence of it in the new construction on the campus. You see evidence of it in the way in which the excellence of the institution has even improved. It already had a stellar reputation, and you see it in a very important expansion for graduate education for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Dr. I. King Jordan has performed with the excellence that the students expected. They knew what he could do. They knew from his academic reputation, they knew from his background, what he could do. He has performed up to that standard and well beyond.

The resolution that my colleagues bring forward today could not be more well deserved, and I thank you once again for it. And I thank you for myself and I thank you for the residents of the District of Columbia, including the disabled students who, of course, are resident there during the time they attend Gallaudet.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume just to conclude.

I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for her very warm and gracious remarks on behalf of Dr. Jordan here today. I also know that my predecessor, Representative Steve Gunderson, who also served on the board at Gallaudet University, would join us today in honoring the career of Dr. Jordan. It was Steve Gunderson who first introduced me to the wonderful work that is taking place at that university under the terrific leadership that I have personally witnessed throughout the years, and I know he joins us in support of the resolution.

Finally, I would mention too that the minority whip, Mr. HOYER from Maryland, who has been a good friend of Dr. Jordan, a strong supporter and friend of the university, was hoping to come down here and personally extend his warm remarks for Dr. Jordan's retirement. He is tied up right now.

□ 1545

I am sure he will be extending his remarks for the record. With that, I thank the gentleman for his support of the resolution.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise to honor Dr. I. King Jordan upon his retirement as president of Gallaudet University on December 31, 2006. Dr. Jordan is a native of Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, a small town near Philadelphia, in the 7th Congressional District which I represent.

Dr. Jordan made history in 1988 when he became the Nation's first deaf university president at the world's only liberal arts university for the deaf—Gallaudet University. He also claims the distinction as the first deaf president of any institution of higher education in the U.S. The important message that Dr. Jordan sent to the world upon his appointment in 1988 was that deaf children brought up in a world that too often tells them that they can't do, now see they can do anything and that the only limit to their achievements is their ability to dream.

The year 1988 was a pivotal one for the deaf and hard of hearing. The year began when the students and faculty of Gallaudet University protested the decision by the board of trustees to bypass two qualified deaf candidates for president and choose instead a hearing candidate. Called Deaf President Now (DPN), the week-long protest was a watershed event. Their persistent, but nonviolent demonstrations captured the hearts of the Nation and their victory resulted in the selection of Dr. Jordan—a selection which was applauded by hearing and nonhearing Americans alike.

Dr. Jordan was not only a strong advocate for the Gallaudet community, but for individuals with disabilities across this Nation. One of his many proud accomplishments is the work he did to assist with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which I supported. He was a leading witness in support of the ADA and delivered significant testimony not only in Congress, but across the country during the deliberations of this bill.

Dr. Jordan's presidency has paralleled a time of great accomplishments for deaf persons, and all individuals with disabilities. Their needs and abilities have come to the forefront of public debate. He is far more than a symbol of ability over disability, he is a sensitive and caring individual, and a strong and forceful leader.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Dr. Jordan and his wife, Linda, much happiness as they anticipate and begin a new chapter in their lives. I am proud to list Dr. I. King Jordan in the "Who's Who of the 7th Congressional District of Pennsylvania." His strong, forceful, compassionate leadership and service will be greatly missed.

Mr OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to salute the outstanding service of Dr I. King Jordan to Gallaudet University. Through his personal and professional accomplishments and contributions to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, he has become a role model for all.

After serving in the Navy from 1962 to 1966, Dr. Jordan graduated with a B.A. in psychology from Gallaudet in 1970. He received his doctorate in psychology from the University of Tennessee in 1973. Afterward, he returned to Gallaudet and served as chairman of the Psychology Department and later as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Science. Tapped as Gallaudet's first deaf president in 1988, Dr. Jordan became the first deaf president of any institution of higher education in the country.

Over the past 18 years, Dr. Jordan has forged a strong relationship between Gallaudet and Congress to improve the quality of life for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals and those with disabilities. He is known and respected by his colleagues as an amiable and admired leader. Because of his passion for Gallaudet's mission, Dr. Jordan has always gone above and beyond his official duties to help others.

I've come to know and admire Dr. Jordan through the Gallaudet University Congressional Basketball Classic, a biennial event pitting Republicans against Democrats in our own version of "March Madness." The game celebrates Gallaudet's years of service to the deaf and hard-of-hearing, with proceeds from the game going to support the invaluable programs offered at the school. I'm proud to note that Republican members hold a 6–5 advantage in the Classic, which dates back to 1987—but clearly the students of Gallaudet are the real winners.

Tonight's 12th biennial Congressional Classic will be my last, as it will be Dr. Jordan's last as president of Gallaudet University. He has been a stalwart supporter of the game over the years and a tireless advocate of Gallaudet's mission in his outreach efforts to the nation at large. I join my teammates and the whole House in honoring this dedicated and exceptional man as he concludes nearly 19 years of distinguished service at Gallaudet's helm.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 680.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPREME COURT GROUNDS TRANSFER ACT OF 2005

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2116) to transfer jurisdiction of certain real property to the Supreme Court.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 2116

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION OVER CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY TO THE SUPREME COURT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "Supreme Court Grounds Transfer Act of 2005".

(b) TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Jurisdiction over the parcel of Federal real property described under paragraph (2) (over which jurisdiction was transferred to the Architect of the Capitol under section 514(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (40 U.S.C. 5102 note; Public Law 104–333; 110 Stat. 4165)) is transferred to the Supreme Court of the United States, without consideration.

(2) PARCEL.—The parcel of Federal real property referred to under paragraph (1) is

that portion of the triangle of Federal land in Reservation No. 204 in the District of Columbia under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the Capitol, including any contiguous sidewalks, bound by Constitution Avenue, N.E., on the north, the branch of Maryland Avenue, N.E., running in a northeast direction on the west, the major portion of Maryland Avenue, N.E., on the south, and 2nd Street, N.E., on the east, including the contiguous sidewalks.

(c) MISCELLANEOUS.—

(1) COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER LAWS.—Compliance with this section shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of all laws otherwise applicable to transfers of jurisdiction over parcels of Federal real property.

(2) INCLUSION IN SUPREME COURT GROUNDS.—Section 6101(b)(2) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the period ''and that parcel transferred under the Supreme Court Grounds Transfer Act of 2005''.

(3) UNITED STATES CAPITOL GROUNDS.—

(A) DEFINITION.—Section 5102 of title 40, United States Code, is amended to exclude within the definition of the United States Capitol Grounds the parcel of Federal real property described in subsection (b)(2).

(B) JURISDICTION OF CAPITOL POLICE.—The United States Capitol Police shall not have jurisdiction over the parcel of Federal real property described in subsection (b)(2) by reason of such parcel formerly being part of the United States Capitol Grounds.

(4) RECORDING OF MAP OF SUPREME COURT GROUNDS.—The Architect of the Capitol shall record with the Office of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia a map showing areas comprising the grounds of the Supreme Court of the United States that reflects—

(A) the legal boundaries described under section 6101(b)(1) of title 40, United States Code; and

(B) any portion of the United States Capitol Grounds as described under section 5102 of title 40, United States Code, which is contiguous to the boundaries or property described under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall apply to fiscal year 2006 and each fiscal year thereafter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 2116.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

S. 2116 transfers jurisdiction of a small parcel of land from the Architect of the Capitol to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Most of my colleagues will recognize this property as the small triangular piece of land between the Hart Senate Office Building and the Supreme Court. For the past few years it has been surrounded by security fencing and covered by construction trailers and equipment supporting the Supreme Court Modernization project.

The small parcel of land is bordered by Constitution Avenue on the north, Maryland Avenue on the west and south, and by Second Street on the east.

This transfer also includes realigning the jurisdictional boundaries of the United States Capitol Police and the United States Supreme Court Police to reflect this land transfer.

The transfer will also enable the Supreme Court Police to have control over the grounds within the bollards that are currently under construction.

The Supreme Court Land Transfer Act of 2006 is a simple and sensible solution that provides a more distinct boundary between the Capitol grounds and the Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the subcommittee with whom I have worked so closely for making sure that this small bill got to the floor and got done.

Mr. Speaker, S. 2116 is a bill to transfer the parcel of property currently under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the Capitol to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The parcel of land is a small triangle of land bounded by Constitution Avenue Northeast, Maryland Avenue Northeast, and Second Street Northeast.

Once the parcel is transferred from the Architect to the Supreme Court, the Capitol Hill Police will no longer have the security responsibility for the parcel; and, further, the definition of the Capitol grounds will be amended to show that the parcel has been deleted from the definition of the Capitol grounds.

The Supreme Court requested this transfer in order to enhance its perimeter security program. Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and urge its passage.

Mr. Speaker, before I yield back the balance of my time I do want to say that this bill brings to mind, especially since it is being transferred for security reasons, the fact that we are operating under an old 19th century organization of the police that guard the complex of most important Federal building in the District of Columbia, the Supreme Court Police, the Library of Congress Police, and the Capitol Hill police.

Mr. Speaker, at the moment we have some jurisdiction over this Federal police force. But the jurisdiction I am speaking of, which has already been passed by the Congress of the United States, is not under our jurisdiction, but because of the security which is the reason for the transfer, I do want to say that what we have with this complex of buildings that are within sight of one another, are very different police forces.

We have a police force that is trained differently for the three most important buildings in this vicinity. The Library of Congress is trained differently. It is as if these were the police forces of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, that is dangerous. That is nothing short of dangerous. We have so shored up the Capitol, that any terrorist on the lookout for something to do in this vicinity is surely going to go to places that she may believe is less well guarded, like the Library of Congress, and like, if I may so, the Supreme Court of the United States.

I have met with the Marshal of the Supreme Court of the United States and the Library of Congress. I am familiar with both their police forces. But now that this bill has been brought to the floor, I urge that we all respond to what has now become public, because the Library of Congress Police have raised the question again.

There was an article in Roll Call just a few days ago that there were real security problems with the Library of Congress and its police. I have not heard the same thing about the Supreme Court.

But I do not think we should rest well knowing that we have shored up the Congress of the United States and we hope everything is well with the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress. I think it is our obligation to make sure that it is, in fact, the case.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support this commonsense piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass Senate bill, S. 2116.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MILK REGULATORY EQUITY ACT OF 2005

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2120) to ensure regulatory equity between and among all dairy farmers and handlers for sales of packaged fluid milk in federally regulated milk marketing areas and into certain non-federally regulated milk marketing areas from federally regulated areas, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 2120

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Milk Regulatory Equity Act of 2005''.

SEC. 2. MILK REGULATORY EQUITY.

(a) MINIMUM MILK PRICES FOR HANDLERS; EXEMPTION.—Section 8c(5) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 608c(5)), reenacted with amendments by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(M) MINIMUM MILK PRICES FOR HANDLERS.—

''(i) APPLICATION OF MINIMUM PRICE REQUIREMENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a milk handler described in clause (ii) shall be subject to all of the minimum and uniform price requirements of a Federal milk marketing order issued pursuant to this section applicable to the county in which the plant of the handler is located, at Federal order class prices, if the handler has packaged fluid milk product route dispositions, or sales of packaged fluid milk products to other plants, in a marketing area located in a State that requires handlers to pay minimum prices for raw milk purchases.

''(ii) COVERED MILK HANDLERS.—Except as provided in clause (iv), clause (i) applies to a handler of Class I milk products (including a producer-handler or producer operating as a handler) that—

''(I) operates a plant that is located within the boundaries of a Federal order milk marketing area (as those boundaries are in effect as of the date of the enactment of this subparagraph);

''(II) has packaged fluid milk product route dispositions, or sales of packaged fluid milk products to other plants, in a milk marketing area located in a State that requires handlers to pay minimum prices for raw milk purchases; and

''(III) is not otherwise obligated by a Federal milk marketing order, or a regulated milk pricing plan operated by a State, to pay minimum class prices for the raw milk that is used for such dispositions or sales.

''(iii) OBLIGATION TO PAY MINIMUM CLASS PRICES.—For purposes of clause (ii)(III), the Secretary may not consider a handler of Class I milk products to be obligated by a Federal milk marketing order to pay minimum class prices for raw milk unless the handler operates the plant as a fully regulated fluid milk distributing plant under a Federal milk marketing order.

''(iv) CERTAIN HANDLERS EXEMPTED.—Clause (i) does not apply to—

''(I) a handler (otherwise described in clause (ii)) that operates a nonpool plant (as defined in section 1000.8(e) of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph);

''(II) a producer-handler (otherwise described in clause (ii)) for any month during which the producer-handler has route dispositions, and sales to other plants, of packaged fluid milk products equaling less than 3,000,000 pounds of milk; or

''(III) a handler (otherwise described in clause (ii)) for any month during which—

''(aa) less than 25 percent of the total quantity of fluid milk products physically received at the plant of the handler (excluding concentrated milk received from another plant by agreement for other than Class I use) is disposed of as route disposition or is transferred in the form of packaged fluid milk products to other plants; or

''(bb) less than 25 percent in aggregate of the route disposition or transfers are in a marketing area or areas located in one or more States that require handlers to pay minimum prices for raw milk purchases.

''(N) EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN MILK HANDLERS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, no handler with distribution of Class I milk products in the marketing area described in Order No. 131 shall be exempt during any month from any minimum price requirement established by the Secretary under this subsection if the total distribution of Class I products during the preceding month of any such handler's own farm production exceeds 3,000,000 pounds.''.

(b) EXCLUSION OF NEVADA FROM FEDERAL MILK MARKETING ORDERS.—Section 8c(11) of the Agriculture Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 608c(11)), reenacted with amendments by the Agriculture Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C), by striking the last sentence; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) In the case of milk and its products, no county or other political subdivision of the State of Nevada shall be within the marketing area definition of any order issued under this section.''.

(c) RECORDS AND FACILITY REQUIREMENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, or the amendments made by this section, a milk handler (including a producer-handler or a producer operating as a handler) that is subject to regulation under this section or an amendment made by this section shall comply with the requirements of section 1000.27 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, or a successor regulation, relating to handler responsibility for records or facilities.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION.—The amendments made by this section take effect on the first day of the first month beginning more than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. To accomplish the expedited implementation of these amendments, effective on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall include in the pool distributing plant provisions of each Federal milk marketing order issued under subparagraph (B) of section 8c(5) of the Agriculture Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 608c(5)), reenacted with amendments by the Agriculture Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, a provision that a handler described in subparagraph (M) of such section, as added by subsection (a) of this section, will be fully regulated by the order in which the handler's distributing plant is located. These amendments shall not be subject to a referendum under section 8c(19) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 608c(19)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA) each will control 20 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule XV, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) will control 20 minutes in opposition to the bill.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture, who I understand is on his way, and in his absence the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA), to have control of time for 10 minutes, and that they be permitted to yield blocks of that time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2120. My original interest in this legislation was to address a loophole created in the interface of the Federal Milk Market Order System with individual State milk marketing arrangements.

Under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1993, the Secretary of Agriculture protects dairy producers from predatory pricing by setting a minimum price that must be paid by processors who distribute fluid milk within a Federal Milk Market Order Area.

While a majority of the country is covered by one of 10 Federal orders, some States, California in particular, have enacted legislation which authorizes State agencies to regulate minimum milk price for intrastate sales.

Herein lies the dilemma. Milk processed and distributed in the neighboring State of Arizona, which operates under a Federal order, is subject to the Federal minimum pricing regulations. However, milk processed in Arizona and then sold in California is exempt from the Federal existing regulations.

And since the commercial product originates from outside the State, it is exempt from California State regulations. Because of this loophole, milk produced in Arizona and sold in California is not subject to any minimum pricing regulations. This creates an unfair advantage for out-of-state fluid milk processors.

This situation was first brought to my attention by the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES) and I agreed to help resolve this issue.

The solution simply directs the Secretary to apply the minimum pricing regulations of the Federal order system to any covered milk handler if they sell a significant portion of their fluid milk production in States that have established minimum milk pricing regulations.

Mr. Speaker, as all of our colleagues can attest, Federal dairy policy is among the most complicated and politicized of all of our programs. Indeed, the main reason that it has taken as long as it has to bring this bill to the full House for consideration is because often the simplest dairy bills tend to act as magnets and attract all kinds of unrelated pieces that are in many ways controversial.

This legislation is no exception. While the original intent was to remedy a situation that has caused great concern to the California dairy industry, two additional provisions have been added to this legislation to address concerns elsewhere.

Admittedly, I was reluctant to include these provisions; but after meeting with members of the dairy industry and hearing their near universal support, I decided to move forward with the legislation as drafted.

The two provisions that were added simply exempt Clark County, Nevada from the existing Arizona-Las Vegas

Milk Market Order and create a 3 million pound-per-month cap on the exemption for producers who process and distribute their own milk within the Arizona-Las Vegas Order.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that some Members may have concerns about one or more of these provisions. As I indicated, I too had some reservations. But as I stated, there is near unanimous support within the dairy community, both the producers and the processors, for these changes. I therefore urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to rise and challenge the chairman of the authorizing committee regarding a dairy issue.

He and I have talked about this on many occasions; and frankly, much of that which he suggests as a potential solution to the California-Nevada-Arizona problem I am in total agreement with.

My difficulty is that I have reviewed with great care all of those suspensions that are on the floor today. This is the controversial suspension. And indeed, rather than talking policy, I will talk policy all that my colleagues would like today, I would prefer to discuss the violation of procedure that is involved here.

Under our rules, suspensions are to be addressing issues that are not controversial, that Members on both sides of the aisle are able to largely agree upon. There are minor exceptions to this. But in this case, we are talking about a violent exception.

□ 1600

It is clearly understood by people operating with this bill on both sides of the aisle that I have had very strong opposition and others have had opposition to this policy. And yet to have it come to the floor as a suspension with no notice whatsoever, I mean, I learned last Friday by accident that this bill was going to be on the floor.

Frankly, I might be on a plane today, otherwise; and it is hardly the way to treat Members on either side of the aisle dealing with a fundamental question of procedure. So for that reason initially I have expressed my very strong opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds. Just to respond to the gentleman, I certainly respect the gentleman's concerns. I too learned about the measure last Thursday or Friday, but this is very common with the scheduling of suspensions.

As the gentleman is well aware, we have been discussing this issue, and it has been on the cusp of coming to the floor for a long, long time. We need to attempt to resolve these differences, and I think the consensus, on the part of many, is that we need to proceed with this debate today. I think that is the best way to get to the heart of what is going on here.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Without objection, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) will control the time previously allocated to the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA).

There was no objection.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the bill before us, and I would like to thank Chairman GOODLATTE and the other members of the committee for their hard work and cooperation. I would also like to acknowledge the gentlemen from California, Mr. NUNES, Mr. BACA, Mr. CARDOZA and Mr. COSTA, who have worked diligently to bring this important issue to the attention of the House.

Though this bill is not perfect, Mr. Speaker, it will begin to solve an imbalance in our regulatory structure. However, it ignores the fact that the real solution is for California to join the Federal Dairy System. Right now, one handler in Yuma, Arizona, is using a loophole in the current system to sell from a Federal milk market area into California and is not paying the minimum milk price that either institution has in place. This practice is disrupting the marketplace and undermining the goal of fairness that the regulatory system should encourage.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this bill offers a piecemeal approach when dairy policy really needs a more comprehensive adjustment. The bill will begin to address the problem more immediately, but will leave more work to be done for a later time.

Mr. Speaker, even as one part of this bill is written to ensure that the Yuma handler is on the same regulatory playing field as his competitors, the bill's second provision completely exempts Nevada processors from regulation. So one provision requires that similar rules apply to all handlers, while the other gives special status to handlers in Nevada.

It may be that the exemption for Nevada will allow the Yuma handler to regain unregulated status that the bill is meant to take away. Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that the goal of this bill is to level the playing field between producers and handlers, which is what I hope it will do despite the fact that it is not a particularly comprehensive solution.

Without feedback from hearings and from the USDA regarding implementation of this bill, we cannot be sure that it will resolve the problem that is occurring now with the plant in Yuma, Arizona. Who is to say that the same issue will not arise elsewhere? Are we going to legislate milk price regulation every time a new milk processing plant opens? I hope not.

Finally, I must reiterate that the entire problem addressed by this bill could be solved if California belonged to the Federal order system. We need our policy to recognize that no State, even California, is isolated from the dairy marketplace. Each day raw milk and processed dairy products cross the California border in both directions. Despite that fact, California has taken various actions to isolate itself; most notably, in 2003 the Supreme Court ruled unanimously against California's position that its system was protected from scrutiny under the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution.

California has attempted to stop the flow of raw milk from Nevada to California processors by requiring that the processors pay an extra fee into the California pool, a contribution that was not shared with producers supplying that milk.

Mr. Speaker, that California even felt the need to tax incoming milk in that way is a sign that the system is becoming unsustainable.

Although this bill before us today is needed and is not perfect, I just have to say that it does little to address the broader problems that arise from the two systems operating side by side. So I am here today to support this bill because it will give us a short-term solution to the problem. And I look forward to working with my colleagues as we move ahead, my colleagues in the dairy industry, to develop a more sensible plan for the long term.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that I find this discussion rather interesting today. We have a bill before us which essentially objects to a producer from Arizona, because he is doing to California what California has done to the rest of the country with respect to milk marketing orders for quite some time.

It seems to me that if we are going to be dealing with this issue, we ought to be dealing with it generically, with all of its ramifications. I don't think this bill belongs on the suspension calendar. I think if we are going to take care of somebody's side problem, we ought to take care of other problems that are associated with the milk marketing order system as well.

What this process reminds me of is something that happened a number of years ago when Mr. Gingrich was Speaker and Steve Gunderson, a Republican from Wisconsin, was chair of the Dairy Subcommittee. Steve had expected to be able, on the farm bill, to offer an amendment to the committee product dealing with milk marketing orders. He wasn't allowed to do that,

even though he was the chairman of the subcommittee handling the bill,

Instead, what happened is that there was an insider's fix between then-Speaker Gingrich and then-chairman of the Rules Committee, Mr. Solomon. They guaranteed that in return for their sweetheart deal, Gunderson wouldn't even be able to offer his amendment on the floor.

We have seen all too much of that for the past years around here, and so I have no illusions about what is going to happen to this bill, but I for one want to object to the fact that it is on the suspension calendar. I want to object to the fact that if we are going to take care of this little discrete problem that we are not, in the process, taking care of the broader issues that confront us on the whole area of milk marketing order systems.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to respond to the gentleman from Wisconsin regarding the concern that this legislation is targeting one or two individual producer handlers to the benefit of the rest of the dairy industry.

We are here today to discuss how to keep the current Federal milk market order, something very important to the people of Wisconsin and other States, operating in a fair and equitable manner. I do not fault companies for their success. In fact, I applaud them for it.

When one or two companies' success, however, is based on a gap in the regulatory system, I believe we have an obligation to respond. In this particular case, millions of pounds of unregulated milk flows in your State commerce in direct competition with regulated milk. This certainly has the potential to impact markets.

I support this legislation because I believe that this milk should be treated the same way by the Federal Government that we treat milk that is in direct competition with it.

This is not about punishing individuals. It is about ensuring a level playing field for competition.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA).

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of S. 2120, the Milk Regulatory Equity Act. For those familiar with dairy policy, there is never an easy fight in dairy policy, and this legislation is no different; it will be familiar.

Throughout the years, there have been more obstacles thrown in the path of this worthy legislation than I can count. I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Devin Nunes, for his tireless leadership and pursuit of correcting this problem. I also want to thank Senator FEINSTEIN and the chairman and ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee for their support in moving this legislation forward.

Our dairy industry is extremely regulated and for good reason. Dairy products are both highly perishable and critical to the dietary requirements of Americans. Without a formal process for pricing, pooling and processing, the entire chain of production from producers through consumers is at risk. Dairy policy works because all players, including processors, producers, co-ops, distributors and buyers adhere to the same rules. Rules and regulations keep the dairy markets stable and allow orderly distribution of high-quality milk, cheese and butter products.

This bill will close a dangerous loophole that allows a few large producer handlers to escape all these carefully crafted Federal and State regulatory requirements. It would require those operations physically located in a Federal order, but shipping entirely into a State order, to comply with the regulations governing dairy policy in the order where their plant is located.

Do these individuals who are exploiting this loophole want to maintain it? Absolutely. However, due to the unique characteristics of a commodity like dairy, it cannot be allowed to continue. The foundation of this legislation is that all dairy organizations should be governed by the same rules. One group should not have an unfair competitive advantage over another.

The Milk Regulatory Equity Act ensures production and price of milk is fair and equitable. This is an extremely important bill for my home State of California, but also for the entire country. History has shown that things that happen first in California then spread east.

This loophole has the opportunity to affect every milk marketing order across the country. Let us stop it now before that happens. This is a good bill and one that deserves our support.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I will speak just for a moment, for the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA) talked about a loophole. The loophole that he is talking about really is a part of an existing law. But if there is a loophole, it is handled by a regulation that has been handled by the Department recently.

That very regulation is currently being challenged in the courts, and people are attempting to codify that regulation in order to bypass my constituents' opportunity in the courts. They were due to appear in court tomorrow to defend their interest, and this bill is on the floor today, making it not just a very controversial issue, but violating our very fundamental process.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the House to be very reserved about using the suspension process in this fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT).

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2120, the Milk Regulatory Equity Act, which would amend an outdated regulatory exemption within the Federal milk marketing order. I commend Chairman GOODLATTE and the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES), the author of the bill, for their work in moving this legislation forward.

Years ago, the United States Department of Agriculture exempted small producer handler dairy farmers from regulation because they owned and milked their own cows and sold their own products directly to local consumers. Today, some of these unregulated producer handlers collect U.S. Government subsidies and have grown to be among the largest dairy processors in the country with significant market shares.

This is an unfair advantage, and this exemption can adversely affect the prices other farmers receive. Consumers also suffer as unregulated producer handlers eliminate competition. This bill eliminates the loophole that allows now large producer handler operations to be unregulated and requires equal application of the law. It still allows family producer handlers to be exempted if their product is less than 3 million pounds per month.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 2120 and ask for your support of this bill. I too want to thank Chairman GOODLATTE and Congressman NUNES and Congressman CARDOZA for their efforts on this important piece of legislation that eventually, I think, will lead to an important part where we need to focus on comprehensive dairy policy as we look toward the 2007 farm bill.

But I rise to speak very simply about something that is complicated, that, as most of you know, is dairy policy.

□ 1615

Your support of this bill does not require the detailed knowledge of the myriad pacts that govern the dairy industry and demand a historical analysis of what is going on throughout the country and individual States.

S. 2120, though, is about fairness. Is it fair today in California some of the world's most productive dairymen and women are being undercut by a legal loophole between the Federal and State dairy programs that permits some dairies to skirt all the rules?

Is it fair that by exporting these programs, some dairies avoid all regulations, enabling them to sell to retailers at well below well-regulated dairies?

Is it fair that this bill, which has passed the United States Senate with

unanimous consent with overwhelming, obviously bipartisan support, has had to wait 3 years to be considered by the House?

Is it fair that one of the few dairies in this country that opposes this legislation claims he is simply using the free market system, while accepting nearly $1 million a year in Federal dairy support payments?

No, it is not fair. Your support of S. 2120 will bring fairness back to dairy farms. If we are going to ultimately craft an even-handed dairy policy throughout the country, and we have competition abroad, we need to first take this first step.

I urge you to support S. 2120.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, responding directly to my colleague from California's point, indeed it has been suggested that we are dealing with dairy policy in a major way here on the floor. If that is the case, clearly we should not be handling that very policy by way of a suspension matter. It is a fundamental violation of that process.

This bill has had a number of years for possible consideration in the authorizing committee; and, yet, the authorizing committee has never held a hearing on this subject, the subject of the Senate bill that is before us today.

I would suggest to us that our authorizers need to, in a fundamental way, look at national dairy policy and not let California continue to take such advantage of the country, as my colleague, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), suggested. In this case, we have California divided against itself, the central valley against my district.

I must tell you, a long time ago, I tried not to have to deal with dairy policy because of problems in the past, but I can tell you also you can never quite satisfy dairy people in California because any kind of competition is a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT), the chairman of the Dairy Subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, this has been a very interesting debate; and if you want to get into hot water, just start debating dairy policy. It not only gets very complicated very fast, but it gets very heated.

This is not a new issue. This has been percolating around this Capitol now for at least 2½ years. I was first made aware of it by the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES) and others on a trip to California. I have learned more about this issue than I think I really ever wanted to know; and, frankly, I think most Members of the House do not really want to know too much about this.

Our colleague from Ohio, I think, said it well. This is really an example of where the laws were originally designed to protect small producer-handlers, and here we have a large producer-handler who has found this, and I do not want to get into a fight here over the term ''loophole,'' but he has found this opportunity and he is exploiting this opportunity.

Now, we have said repeatedly to our colleagues in California, this essentially is a California issue, why do you not work it out. I think there was a good-faith effort on both sides of this argument to try and do that; but, unfortunately, they failed.

This is a very complicated issue, but I think all of the speakers who have preceded me have said it well, that we have a responsibility to have a Federal milk system that is fair to everybody. What we have right now is one particular producer who is trying to use the best of both worlds, who is situated right on the border; and, frankly, I think we have a responsibility to close that loophole.

Let me point out that this is not an issue, while generally milk issues divide geographically, they divide between the people who produce the milk, the dairy farmers and the processors, this is one where virtually everyone in the dairy industry, from all corners of the United States, whether they are dairy farmers large or small, whether they are processors large or small, or whether they are in the marketing side or the manufacturing side, almost universally they support this legislation.

So with all due respect to our distinguished colleague and chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I think this is an idea that has percolated for a very long time. It is time for the House to take action. I strongly support the bill, and I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting it as well and pass it here today on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Subcommittee with jurisdiction over dairy programs and policies, I want to express my support for this legislation and reiterate the comments made by the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee.

As he said, the federal milk marketing order system has served the dairy industry well. But we have this situation where a processor from outside California can undermine the market there by under pricing the regulated competition.

Mr. NUNES and a number of others have worked to address this, and the legislation before us today would direct USDA to apply the minimum pricing regulations of the federal order system to milk processed in a federal order area and distributed into states that have a statewide system.

While we're aware that some Members have concerns with this legislation, it's important to point out that it has the strong support from nearly the entire dairy industry, both producers and processors.

Again, as Chairman of the Dairy Subcommittee, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is pretty apparent for those who have been listening that this is not a simple matter. I mean, dealing with national dairy policy by way of a suspension bill, with the presumption this is a very simple, noncontroversial item, at best, distorts the process.

Let me share with my colleagues that there is a regulation in place that covers the problems that have been raised here on the floor. The department has recently done that. That regulation is being challenged in court, and it is supposed to be heard tomorrow. So the opponents are choosing to bring the bill up today to undermine that opportunity for a family business to have an opportunity to expand their business.

I would suggest to my colleagues perhaps we should be supporting small producer-handlers across the country who would wish to expand their business, and those who have not chosen to follow that line, if it is so profitable, why do they not follow that line themselves? They, too, could become producer-handlers.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I have just one speaker remaining, and I believe we have the right to close.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have any additional speakers, and so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield the remaining balance of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES).

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Ag Committee, BOB GOODLATTE, and Ranking Member PETERSON for this ongoing 3-year debate.

I find it interesting when we come to Washington, you learn that people like to use politics instead of policy. If you notice, the opposition to this bill, they did not talk or discuss the policy of this matter. They talked about the politics of it.

So since they went down that road, I would like to say that this bill is not controversial. This bill has been debated for 3 years. The Senate passed it unanimously. The Senate authorizers have said that this needs to get done. The House authorizing committee, we have the chairman of the Dairy Subcommittee who recognizes this needs to be done.

The opposition to this bill, who is a good friend of mine, but this has unanimous support across California, unanimous. Every dairy farmer in the State of California has sent letters to their Congressman, and every dairy industry, not only the dairy farmers, this is

not just about dairy farmers, this is dairy processors. This is grocery stores, and it is not only California. It is across the entire country. This has national implications to let producer-handlers game the system. This is about gaming the system.

So it is not confusing. It is not controversial, and if you look at the fact that they talk about a constituent being in California in a lawsuit that is being brought forth, that is simply not true. The lawsuit has been brought forth in Texas, and the person claims to be a constituent of Texas.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. NUNES. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman involved is a constituent of mine. I can take you to his farm anytime you like, in California.

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, all I am saying is the court case you cited is filed in a Texas court, and he claims to be a resident of Texas.

Mr. LEWIS of California. One of his major farms is in my district, and all the farmers around him in California are supporting his position.

Mr. NUNES. Well, I thank the chairman for that, but I do have to say that we have a differing opinion here, and I can provide the chairman with letters, if he would like, at a later date.

But with that, I want to thank, again, the House leadership and the ranking member and especially Chairman GOODLATTE for bringing this forward, and I hope that the House will pass Senate bill 2120 as quickly as possible.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition of S. 2120. Although I acknowledge there is merit to the original intent of this bill, I am unable to ignore the harm it may cause for the small business dairy industry in light of recent developments. As this industry is an integral economic contributor to my district, and indeed Oklahoma as a whole, it would be negligent of me to endorse this bill and rely on good luck to protect my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the dairy industry is complex and there are many legitimate competing interests. With this in mind, I commend my colleagues in both bodies of Congress who diligently worked to build a rare consensus while crafting this bill. I have no doubt in my mind that the original intent of this bill was narrow in scope, focused on regulating aspects of the milk industry in certain western states. In addition, I have no doubt that the crafters of this bill believed they were protecting smaller dairy farmers, processors, and producer-handlers outside of those states from falling under similar regulations in the future.

However, Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Department of Agriculture acted before Congress, issuing a final rule on February 24, 2006, establishing similar regulations as would be established by S. 2120. I must admit Mr. Speaker, this begs the question: Why is it necessary for Congress to now duplicate what has already been legitimately addressed by the USDA? I fear the only outcome may be to codify this regulation, thereby inherently suggesting that Congress will endorse similar such regulations in the future. This is a precedent which I can not support. I believe in our government's regulatory process Mr. Speaker, and as such, I believe there is no longer any need for Congress to act upon this particular issue. Had the USDA not taken this action, I also have no doubt I would have felt much more comfortable with this bill.

Mr. Speaker, S. 2120, although originally well-intentioned and carefully crafted to insulate dairy farmers, processors, and producer-handlers outside of these particular western states from unintended consequences, has been outdated by the regulatory actions of the USDA. Should Congress pass S. 2120, it may only serve to set a dangerous precedent which could severely harm an important part of America's dairy industry in the future.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2120, The Milk Regulatory Equity Act of 2005.

Mr. Speaker, this bill comes before us today with the full support of the leadership of the House Agriculture Committee and the nearly unanimous support of the entire dairy industry.

As Ranking Member of the Department Operations, Oversight, Dairy, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee of the House Agriculture Committee, I can speak to how rare it is for a bill to achieve such wide consensus and agreement among government officials and industry representatives.

This bill is good legislation that will close an unintended loophole created by past federal regulations. While most states determine their milk prices based on their Federal Milk Market Order Area, certain states have enacted legislation which authorizes state agencies to determine milk prices for intrastate milk sales. This then allows some out of state milk processors to be completely exempt from any minimum price regulations and creates an unfair market advantage. S. 2120 will fix this problem and place all milk processors on a level playing field.

Dairy operators in the Inland Empire of California, including Chino and Ontario—in or near my district—are being hurt by this loophole. Hard-working farmers all across America are facing the same situation, and we owe it to them to provide regulatory action that will help all dairy processors.

I want to commend Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member PETERSON of the full Committee for their excellent work on this legislation.

I also want to thank Chairman GUTKNECHT of our Subcommittee for his leadership on this matter.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill and continue the federal government's tradition of offering American consumers consistently priced high quality milk.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to S. 2120, the Milk Regulatory Equity Act.

I think there well may be a need for Congress to consider legislation dealing with Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMOs). But the subject is too important to be handled the way this bill has been.

The suspension calendar is supposed to be reserved for bills that the relevant committees have reviewed and that are not controversial, which is why debate is limited and no amendments are allowed.

However, there has been no hearing on this bill and it has never been approved by any Committee—in either the House or Senate—so there has been no opportunity to consider the testimony of anyone who might be affected, including at least one Colorado company that has told me of their objections to the bill as it now stands.

Before we make a change in Federal dairy policy that has been in place for 70 years I think it is appropriate to hear all sides of the debate. Because that has not happened, I cannot support the bill.

I urge all Members to join me in voting no today, so that the bill can receive a more careful evaluation and so that possible revisions can be considered in the Agriculture Committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2120.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just considered.

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

There was no objection.

LOCAL COMMUNITY RECOVERY ACT OF 2006

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4979) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify the preference for local firms in the award of certain contracts for disaster relief activities, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4979

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Local Community Recovery Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. USE OF LOCAL FIRMS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR DISASTER RELIEF ACTIVITIES.

Section 307 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5150) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''In carrying out this section, a contract or agreement may be set aside for award based on a specific geographic area.''.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Corps of Engineers should promptly implement the

decision of the Government Accountability Office in solicitation W912EE–06–R–0005, dated March 20, 2006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4979.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4979, introduced by Mr. PICKERING of Mississippi, amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify the preferences for the local firms in the award of contracts for disaster relief activity.

The Local Community Recovery Act of 2006 makes it clear that the government can limit contracts to local communities devastated in disasters.

□ 1630

The Stafford Act has a preference for doing business with local firms because putting communities back to work is an important strategy for helping them rebuild their economy.

In the areas hardest hit by Katrina, the job market, local economy and tax base have been devastated. This legislation will put people back to work rebuilding their communities while simultaneously strengthening the local economy and tax base. Another common advantage of contracting locally can be lower cost and faster job completion.

I would like to recognize my colleague, Mr. PICKERING, for his dedication to bringing this legislation to the floor. Mr. PICKERING has been a champion of this issue and has worked to help the people of the entire gulf coast region. This bill is further proof of his dedication and efforts. Since Katrina ravaged the gulf coast, Mr. PICKERING has worked tirelessly with me and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to resurrect his district and all of the gulf coast region.

I would also like to thank Ranking Member OBERSTAR and Ranking Member NORTON for working with us to develop a compromise bill that encourages the Army Corps to move forward with its local contracts.

The amended version of the bill does not limit judicial review of any contracts. As a result, the bill we are considering enjoys bipartisan support, I repeat, bipartisan support, and I encourage Members to support final passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield myself such time as I may consume, Mr. Speaker.

The legislation in its amended form before us this afternoon is the result of the finest of legislative action in which a substantive goal has been achieved through discussion and understanding of one another, understanding the underlying law and its application, and in this case, an administrative action that has produced a right result.

The objective in the Gulf States devastated by hurricanes, not just Katrina but Rita and Wilma and the ones preceding and the ones yet to come, is local recovery. That means not just restoring the physical needs of the communities, the homes, the businesses, the streets, the levees, the lighting, but also the businesses.

The objective of the Robert T. Stafford Act, which I must say I have had a very large role in shaping over the past 21 years with my then-colleague on the committee, Mr. Clinger, is to affirm that the administering agencies, that is, those administering the law and the funding, would give preference to local businesses to restore those businesses, to expedite completion of recovery work, and to achieve lower costs, because businesses locally know how to do the job better than out-of-State companies.

In this particular case, in the aftermath of Katrina, the Corps of Engineers responded by taking the action that law allows them. They issued a contract for debris removal in Mississippi that originally was given to a Florida company, Ash Britt. They decided not to renew that contract, because it was evident that the work was not going to be done principally by local companies and, instead, chose to issue three separate debris removal contracts to Mississippi firms to guarantee that local Mississippi companies would be selected for the contracts and to do so by limiting the bidding to Mississippi companies. The Florida company protested that bid to the Government Accountability Office.

Last week, the GAO issued its ruling, its decision in the matter of Ash Britt, Inc., with reference to the file number, dated March 20, and in the most important part said: ''We think Ash Britt misses the point when it argues that some form of preference short of a set-aside also implements the Stafford Act's preference for using local businesses to clean up disaster-related debris. The question here is not whether some lesser form of preference might have satisfied the act's intent, but whether the preference chosen was an abuse of agency discretion. Since the language in the statute does not specifically restrict the application of the preference, and since the use of a set-aside is consistent with the statutory goal of assisting firms in the affected area, we do not view the Corps' decision to implement the Stafford Act preference with a set-aside as an abuse of the agency's discretion to implement this statutory scheme.'' And then they conclude with referring to previous GAO decisions in the matter.

That settles it. The Corps has the authority; that authority has been affirmed by the Government Accountability Office, and the contracting should proceed. The GAO decision, so clear, so precise, so unequivocal in my judgment and in previous experience with the Corps and with GAO, should ward off any lawsuit or further appeal by Ash Britt. I think they will be very wise to accept the judgment of GAO and allow the procedure to go forward.

The bill before us is a revised version of the legislation the gentleman from Mississippi introduced just before our recess and which we discussed at some length. I had some reservations about it, some concerns, especially the prohibition of judicial review. That has wisely been removed, as the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, has expressed.

So I want to make it very clear that we have had a very thoughtful, very constructive discussion with the gentleman from Mississippi, with the subcommittee staff, with GAO, and with the Corps of Engineers. And the language in this sense of Congress portion of the bill pending before us this afternoon, ''It is the sense of Congress that the Corps of Engineers should promptly implement the decision of the Government Accountability Office in solicitation,'' and I don't need to repeat the reference, dated March 20, 2006, that should be very clear direction to the Corps of Engineers to proceed forthwith, get these debris removal contracts under way, and move ahead without concern or fear of further appeal by the contractor in this case.

I think it is a good legislative outcome. It is a good direction to the Corps. It will be good for people of Mississippi. It will be a good lesson for workers and smaller contractors in other hurricane-affected Gulf States. It will set a good precedent for the future.

I think that we have had a very fine result this afternoon, and I urge my colleagues on this side of the aisle and all Members to support this legislation.

I would further observe, Mr. Speaker, that my wife is from New Orleans. Her family was affected by the hurricane. We have just recently, just 2 weeks ago, spent time in New Orleans; went with family and friends to the 17th Street Canal, saw the levee break, saw the work of the Corps, the cofferdam set up to rebuild that portion of the levee, traveled to Saint Bernard Parish, saw the absolute utterly horrifying destruction of an entire 38,000-home area inundated, over the rooftops, homes floated away from their mooring, and debris still in the streets.

That debris needs to be removed. Those people need relief. They want to get back in their homes, they want to rebuild, and they are frustrated that companies that know how to do the work aren't being called on to do it.

This legislation will set the course, chart the future, give an opportunity for those who know how to do the job to get in there and do it and do it expeditiously.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PICKERING).

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your support, your leadership on these issues, and for your commitment and traveling to the Gulf region, to New Orleans and to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, your leadership on the committee and on the Select Committee on Katrina to find the solutions for the future storms and recoveries, but also to do everything you can to make sure that this Congress does the right thing for this region as we recover. I am extremely grateful.

To Mr. OBERSTAR, I thank you for working with me today in the best sense and tradition and civility of this place to find common goals and common ground to be able to help my people in my home State recover, rebuild and, most importantly, to lead the way for themselves.

As the Stafford Act clearly states, and Mr. OBERSTAR was here in the beginning of that act and has been intimately involved in all aspects of that over his career here, but let me read the Stafford Act and the committee language when it was first enacted.

In section 204 of the Disaster Relief Act of 1970, the Senate Committee on Public Works, which proposed the language, stated, ''Preference is to be given to persons or firms who work or do business in the disaster area.'' The committee report discussed the rationale and justification for this provision. ''One outstanding feature of the aftermath of a great disaster is the lack of ready cash. A Federal assistance program should be designed to revitalize the community by infusions of cash through the use of local people and business firms.''

To be honest, this has not been done in this recovery. Unfortunately, it is a failure of the Bush administration in implementing the contracts for the recovery of this region. But the administration is trying to correct that action. Today, 95 percent of all Federal contract dollars, 95 cents on every dollar spent on Federal contracts, is going to out-of-State firms, not in-State, not community, not local, but out-of-State.

Now, why is it so important that local firms, local businesses, local communities lead the way? It is those local businesses that will pay local taxes to rebuild local schools, to make the contributions to the churches as they care for the people who are helpless, needy, hungry, and homeless. It is those companies that will pay for the rebuilding of the Little League ball parks. All of the community institutions and infrastructure are led by local businesses and local leaders, and it is those people who should be on the front lines, not at the back of the line in the recovery effort.

What the Corps of Engineers did in December was to try to correct that. They set aside on a geographic preference consistent with the Stafford Act contracts for debris removal. And let me say this: In Mississippi alone, we have had more debris, as you can see from these pictures, more debris than any disaster in American history. Over 50 percent more has already been cleaned up than ever occurred in any disaster anyplace in America. What the Corps did in December was to say, in the future, going forward, we are going to let local companies lead the recovery and comply with the congressional intent and stated objectives of the Stafford Act.

Unfortunately, the incumbent contractor from out of State protested that action. They gamed the system to delay the implementation of those contracts. Three months later, the GAO rejects the protest, finds in favor of the Corps, finds in favor of the congressional intent of the Stafford Act, and says, in essence, the protest is baseless.

It is time, and this act urges the Corps, to immediately, to promptly move forward in the implementation of local contracts for local debris removal.

President Bush, when he addressed the Nation in Jackson Square in downtown New Orleans stated: ''In the work of rebuilding, as many jobs as possible should go to the men and women who live in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.'' What we are doing in this act is clarifying and reaffirming the original intent to make it possible that no one can litigate this or game this or delay this to keep local firms from leading the way.

Let me say this. As I look across to both sides, this body has been extremely generous to the people of Mississippi and New Orleans. We have appropriated billions, now over $100 billion to the recovery of the region. The churches and the charities across this country have been compassionate, and their generosity has flowed down and poured into our region. Our people will be forever grateful. Mississippi is the most generous State in the Nation, according to IRS returns. We are the poorest State, but we give more per capita than any State in the Nation. We are a proud people, and we want to lead the way and work first.

□ 1645

We do not want to be at the back of the line. We want to be on the front line, cleaning up, rebuilding, restoring and renewing our region.

I urge bipartisan support of this action today so that our region can recover with the help, but not the dependence, not the displacement, not the replacement of our own people, our own economy, our own jobs; and I ask all of us to look at this legislation and to work with me and for the administration to keep its commitment and to keep the law and the intent of this legislation.

In closing, let me also ask the current contractors: do nothing as these contracts to Mississippi companies go forward to disrupt, to sabotage, or to slow the work. Cooperate with us and partner with us, just as our companies have partnered with you as you led. Stand down. Let us stand up. Let us lead the way, and we can have a continued good relationship. But protest this, litigate this, fight this, sabotage it, and there will be bad will that will go forward and undermine the way that our communities and our country should work together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Members for their support, and I thank the ranking member, Mr. OBERSTAR, as we continue to rebuild our region.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds to express my appreciation to Mr. PICKERING for those kind remarks. We have spent a very productive time together.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN).

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. OBERSTAR for his leadership on this matter and for forging this bipartisan agreement. I rise today in support of H.R. 4979, the Local Community Recovery Act of 2006.

I want Members to know I approve of this language allowing set-aside contracts based on a geographic region. Florida for years has pushed for more local company involvement. This is something that Florida has been pushing for after every hurricane has battered our State.

Every time contracts go to out-of-state contractors who have relationships with FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, Florida companies do not get the work. This provision will allow local communities to recover more quickly. It is important for all contractors to work with local companies and local workers who know the area and the best way to get the job done.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act provides assistance to States in response to natural disasters. I recommend that the agencies follow the law and allow local communities to recover from these natural disasters.

Mr. Speaker, on April 1, hundreds of us will be going to New Orleans. It will be my second trip to work in that area and to try to encourage local participation and to find out the status so we can come back and report to the Congress on the progress. I think every Member should go to the region and work in that region to make sure that the $100 billion dollars that we are appropriating is spent in the local area.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express appreciation for the cooperation we have had this afternoon in working out this matter that should have been considered appropriately in committee

process. In the subcommittee, full committee we could have resolved these matters in an expeditious manner in a very expedited way. But failing the committee process, we have reached, I think, a very sound, very progressive and forward-looking outcome.

I want to restate section 2 of the pending bill, line 8: ''In carrying out this section, a contract or agreement may by set aside for award based on a specific geographic area.'' This is unmistakable language. It reaffirms the original intent of the Stafford Act, reaffirms historical precedent, and states it very clearly in legislative language.

We intend to get this bill passed this afternoon, and I hope the other body will act expeditiously as well so we can make this very, very clear and proceed on the awards of these contracts and reestablish businesses in Mississippi, as the gentleman from Mississippi has so well and firmly and forcefully stated as a very strong and effective advocate for the people of his district.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your cooperation. It always seems to me that the gentleman from Minnesota and a gentleman from Pennsylvania are working on the FEMA program, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Ridge, and the gentleman's father, the first Mr. Shuster. Every time we do, we come up with a good result.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for those kind words.

The Local Community Recovery Act makes sense. As the ranking member pointed out, it clarifies and reaffirms the language in the Stafford Act. It also directs the corps to move forward quickly so we can see the cleanup continue to make progress in the Mississippi and in the gulf coast region.

I want to again thank Mr. OBERSTAR for his cooperation on this issue. Once again, the T&I Committee has come together in a bipartisan manner and moved forward for the betterment of this Nation. I also thank Mr. PICKERING for his leadership and in working so closely with the T&I Committee to put this together for what I think is going to be a very positive outcome.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4979, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMENDING HAITI FOR HOLDING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 353) commending the people of the Republic of Haiti for holding democratic elections on February 7, 2006, and congratulating President-elect Rene Garcia Preval on his victory in these elections.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 353

Whereas the Republic of Haiti held democratic presidential and legislative elections on February 7, 2006;

Whereas reports indicate that the elections were peaceful and that 2.2 million Haitians—more than 60 percent of registered voters—participated in the elections;

Whereas many Haitians walked miles on election day to reach a polling station and waited for hours in line to exercise their right to vote;

Whereas the participation of an overwhelming number of Haitians in the elections demonstrates the commitment of the Haitian people to democracy;

Whereas on February 16, 2006, Rene Garcia Preval was declared the winner of the presidential election with 51.15 percent of the vote;

Whereas on February 23, 2006, the White House announced that President George W. Bush phoned President-elect Rene Garcia Preval to congratulate him on his victory in the elections and to discuss cooperation in Haiti's economic development and the fight against the illegal drug trade;

Whereas the elections of February 7, 2006, are a sign of hope for the future of the people of Haiti;

Whereas violence and natural disasters have caused tremendous suffering and loss of life in Haiti;

Whereas the people of Haiti would benefit from efforts to achieve national reconciliation; and

Whereas the elected government of Haiti will need the support and assistance of the United States and the international community to ensure social and economic development and to improve the lives of the Haitian people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) commends the people of the Republic of Haiti for holding democratic elections on February 7, 2006;

(2) congratulates President-elect Rene Garcia Preval on his victory in these historic elections; and

(3) pledges its support and assistance for national reconciliation, democracy, and development for the people of Haiti.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this concurrent resolution that commends the people of Haiti for holding peaceful and democratic elections on February 7 and expresses the sense of the United States Congress that the U.S. should actively support efforts in Haiti to move that country toward national reconciliation, democracy, and development.

Further, the resolution acknowledges the Haitian people's needs for sustained support and assistance from the United States and indeed the international community to ensure social and economic development.

The elections took place February 7 with 2.2 million Haitians, over 60 percent of the registered voters, participating. There were only minor reports of violence and voting flaws.

This bill recognizes the perseverance of the Haitian people as they struggle to maintain democracy. Many Haitians walked miles on election day to reach a polling station, and they waited hours in line to exercise their right to vote. The participation of an overwhelming number of Haitians in these elections clearly demonstrates the commitment of the Haitian people to democracy.

I support the Waters resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 353, a resolution to commend the people of Haiti for the success of their recent election and congratulates President-elect Rene Preval on his victory in the elections. President-elect Rene Preval defeated a large field of candidates and won the election with over 51 percent of the vote.

The people of Haiti have suffered tremendously as a result of violence and natural disasters, and the elections are a sign of hope for the future of the Haitian people. This resolution pledges the support of Congress and the assistance of the United States for national reconciliation, democracy, and development for the people of Haiti.

Finally, this resolution embodies the hope that many of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle share, that democracy, stability, and prosperity will be realized as Haitians move beyond these recent elections and put the turbulent chapter behind them. I urge my colleagues to show their support for democracy in Haiti by supporting this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my commendation and appreciation to the distinguished chairman, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), for his leadership and support of this legislation, and also our senior ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS). I do also want to thank my distinguished friend

and colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), for her management and being on the majority side in support of this legislation.

Of course not least of all, the author of this legislation, my very dear friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), who is the sponsor, the chief sponsor and author of this proposed resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it was my privilege to travel several times to Haiti with one of our distinguished and senior colleagues of this institution, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS). I can appreciate the many problems and issues facing the good people and the leaders of the country of Haiti. I do want to say I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, with the cherry blossoms in full bloom in the Nation's capital, democracy is once again blossoming in the troubled island nation of Haiti.

After a tumultuous 2 years under an interim government, the people of Haiti recently went to the polls en masse to elect a new President and a new legislature. After some delay, Mr. Rene Preval was declared the victor in the presidential contest. He is due to be inaugurated after the second round elections for the remaining seats in the National Assembly that are being held. These are scheduled for sometime next month.

Mr. Speaker, once again Haiti has a new chance to emerge from years of conflict and despair and grinding poverty to build a country that reflects the resourcefulness of its people and leaders. The task is tremendous. Haiti still lacks a professional police force that respects human rights and is trusted by the populace.

□ 1700

The murderous drug-dealing organizations continue to control parts of the capital and threaten instability in other parts of the country. Many schools are not in operation and most hospitals are little more than way-stations for the morgue. Infrastructure is virtually almost nonexistent.

Mr. Speaker, although the challenges before him are awesome, I think our President-Elect Preval is singularly capable of addressing these issues, but he cannot and he should not do it alone.

Our own government, the United States, working through the United Nations with our bilateral partners must redouble our efforts and financial commitment to Haiti so that the consolidation of democracy and the rebuilding of the country's economy have a reasonable chance of succeeding.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the President's budget proposal for Haiti for next year fails miserably in this regard. At a time when we should be deepening our commitment to the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, the President proposes to cut core development spending to Haiti by about 20 percent.

I am hopeful that as a result of the efforts of my colleagues, especially including our newly elected ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), we will be able to remedy the administration's shortsightedness through a Foreign Operations appropriations process. Indeed, given the extraordinary opportunity presented by these elections, I hope my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee in this and the other body will consider adjusting the pending emergency supplemental appropriations bill to include funding for the urgent needs of the Republic of Haiti.

In the meantime, I look forward to the April second-round elections and the overdue inauguration of Haiti's newly elected president.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY), who just got back from a trip to Haiti with Ms. WATERS, the author of this resolution.

Mr. FOLEY. Thank you, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Madam Chairman. And first let me thank MAXINE WATERS, my colleague from California, who not only accompanied me to Haiti, but traveled from California on a late-night red eye to meet me in Miami to fly to Haiti, to fly back to California that very day, in a gesture of goodwill, in a bipartisan gesture of goodwill to show Rene Preval that the United States Congress, Democrat and Republican, wish him Godspeed in helping the people of Haiti.

Chairwoman ROS-LEHTINEN told you the facts. On February 7, 2.2 million Haitians went to the polls and exercised their constitutional right to select a leader. They went by foot, by tap tap and other forms of transportation, traveling hours and standing in line for almost a day to get to their polling places.

Despite some early challenges, things did go very well. Mr. Preval, a populist president, as the only person to ever serve a full term as an elected president in Haiti, brings to his office the hopes and dreams of every Haitian. As we sat with Mr. Preval, I think MAXINE and I both felt a palpable sense of hope and optimism.

Mr. Preval understands the challenges that face him in Haiti. Mr. Preval was quick to suggest they don't need an army and waste tax dollars or federal dollars or dollars from other countries in establishing an army. He wants a legitimate police force. He wants a police force free of corruption. He wants health care and education to the provinces of Haiti.

He knows the challenges that lie before him, but as a wonderful man with a cheerful disposition, he is ready to accept those challenges. But he needs our help; he desperately needs the help of the United States, of Canada, of France, of CARICOM, of world leaders who are willing to invest in the plight of the Haitians.

We noticed a bounce to the steps, and I reported that to my hometown paper, the Palm Beach Post, which wrote a brilliant article and an editorial on our trip to Haiti, because for the first time you could see some optimism in the people's faces. You could see commerce flourishing in the market square.

And I don't want to mischaracterize. There are huge problems in Haiti. But just a sense that we may have finally turned a fresh page, a new chapter, a new opportunity for Haitians, and particularly for Haitians living in the United States who think about their families back there and simply want the best for them. They have arrived on our fabulous shores and have contributed to our community, but they also think back, as all generations of people from other countries do, about those that are back home. Will they be safe? Will they be healthy? Will they be prosperous? Is there a chance, a fighting chance that they will be given an option like most of us to live in peace and tranquility, raise their kids.

What I noticed too was the incredible number of children going to school and wearing beautiful dress uniforms and skipping along the streets. Again, once again, a sense of optimism. And having been there right after 2004, I can assure you there were challenging moments when you felt all was lost and all hope had faded and all optimism was extinguished.

Rene Preval, the president-elect, is here in our Capital tonight. Many of us, including Chairman SHAW of the Trade Committee and Ranking Member RANGEL, Chairman THOMAS and others are going to greet him and welcome him and talk about some aggressive trade approaches that we hope to launch in our committee. So in the spirit of bipartisanship and goodwill for those here in this Chamber who are willing to go that extra mile, I reach out the hand of friendship to Mr. Rene Preval, soon to be President Preval, as he embarks on a journey that has tremendous impact on all Americans.

And I thank Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN, as well, for her steadfast engagement in our conversations on Haiti, on the hemispheres that surround Haiti, because all of us, if we are going to truly solve this puzzle, need to solve it together. We will put the past behind us, the acrimony behind us, the politics behind us and move forward with a new day for Haitians.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), the distinguished ranking member of our Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from American Samoa for recognizing me. I also want to call attention on our side of the aisle to my colleagues, Congresswoman WATERS, Congresswoman LEE and my good friend, Congressman DELAHUNT, who have always been carrying the ball on the

issue of Haiti and the U.S. response to Haiti and the U.S. friendship with Haiti. I really take my hat off to all of them.

I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 353, which praises the people of Haiti for their recent elections and congratulates Rene Preval on his victory. I commend my friend and colleague, as I mentioned, Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, for introducing this resolution, and I am pleased to be an original cosponsor. I am pleased that my district, the 17th District in New York, has a very large Haitian community in Spring Valley, New York; and I know they are all eagerly anticipating better things for Haiti and U.S.-Haiti relationships.

After a history of instability, poverty and democratic setbacks, Haitians poured onto the streets last month to cast their votes, demonstrating their desire for a better future. And after a contested vote counting period, the front runner in the presidential election, Rene Preval, was declared the winner with nearly 52 percent of the official vote, compared to less than 12 percent for his closest contender. Now, such a large margin of victory gives Mr. Preval a strong mandate and legitimacy to reform and rebuild Haiti's institutions and fractured society.

Yet the challenges are vast. The same massive underlying problems still plague Haiti, and a second round of elections looms in the coming weeks.

While the Haitian people and government have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring their future, we in the United States have a duty to assist in every aspect of Haiti's political, economic and social state-building. Moreover, given Haiti's proximity to our borders, we have an overwhelming interest in doing so.

Now is the time for the United States to tangibly demonstrate that it stands with the Haitian people in their quest for democracy and stability. Therefore, together with Chairman BURTON and a bipartisan group of subcommittee colleagues, I recently called for us to seize this limited window of opportunity by providing $50 million extra money in fiscal year 2006 supplemental assistance for our neighbors to the south.

Elections signal the beginning of a transition, not an end. It is thus my hope that the Appropriations Committee will ensure that Haiti's enormous needs are met. This is the least we can do to help the Haitian people at this critical time.

I also call on the administration to work with the citizens of Haiti, their newly elected government and the international community to help Haiti advance on its path of freedom and prosperity. And I urge Secretary of State Rice to attend Preval's upcoming inauguration.

And finally, I reiterate my congratulations to the people of Haiti for their successful elections and to Rene Preval for his victory. I would like to highlight that President-Elect Preval is visiting Washington today, as the gentleman from Florida mentioned. And I look forward to meeting him and offering my full support for Haiti's quest for national reconciliation, democracy and development. I am proud to be the ranking Democrat of the International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, and I look forward to working with my colleagues.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the distinguished lady and the chief sponsor of this legislation, my good friend.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker and Members, I thank the gentleman from American Samoa, and I would like to thank the Chair of the International Relations Committee, the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the ranking member of that committee, my colleague from California, Congressman LANTOS, and the Chair and ranking member of the International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Congressman BURTON and Congressman ENGEL.

I would also like to commend Congressman FOLEY, and before I talk a little bit about our visit, I would like to thank many Members of Congress: Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, who cochairs the task force on Haiti with Congressman JOHN CONYERS and the Congressional Black Caucus; Congressman DELAHUNT; Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY; the many Members of Congress who have fought and stayed with the problem and did not give up.

Haiti, and the people of Haiti have suffered mightily. The struggle between the haves and the have-nots is legendary, the rich versus the poor, the elite versus the rejected, the mulattos versus the blacks.

Haiti needs a break. Haiti has experienced economic dislocation. It has experienced devastating hurricanes. But the people of Haiti have worked and they have believed in democracy. And so the people, on February 7, 2006, they went to the polls and they voted. More than 60 percent of the people of Haiti registered and they voted. They demonstrated their commitment to democracy.

Oh, they had all kind of obstacles. On that day there was a shortage of election workers and polling places, and there were long lines that caused voters to have to wait for hours before they could exercise their right to vote. But they voted. And they did what they had to do. They walked for miles and they voted. And in the end, President Preval emerged victorious.

The people of Haiti voted, including the Lavalas Party, the party that had elected President Aristide. They voted in large numbers. They are the predominant party in Haiti. And despite their lingering concerns about the way in which their democratically elected president, Mr. Aristide, had been removed from office, they did not boycott the elections. Despite the obstacles and the inconveniences of the election, they were determined to cast their vote and have their voices heard.

The people of Haiti elected Mr. Rene Garcia Preval. The people of Haiti simply want what all democracy should afford: fairness, justice and equality.

Haiti is a poor country. Haiti deserves our support. Haiti deserves the support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Haiti deserves bilateral support.

The people of Haiti want investment and trade. The people of Haiti do not deserve to have their will undermined by the powerful elite who are well connected to the power brokers in the U.S., Canada and France. We can encourage investment in Haiti and support fair wages and decent housing and public education for all of the children.

Mr. Preval is a smart, capable leader who loves Haiti. We need to support him and help him to develop Haiti.

Mr. FOLEY and I just returned from a trip to Haiti where we met with President-Elect Preval. President Preval was a gracious but determined host. President Preval recognizes that he has a great responsibility, but he is not deterred.

President Preval is hopeful and optimistic. And since his election, people are out cleaning the streets. The uniforms are back on the children. They are going to school. Business and commerce was going on in the marketplace. I have great hopes for Haiti.

When we spoke with Mr. Preval, he talked about investment. He wants to create jobs. He talked about the fact that they must have electricity. We must encourage support from the World Bank and from the International Monetary Fund and from our own country to help them get the electricity.

The people must have clean water. They need a new water system there. They do not want to spend their money on an army. They want a well-trained police force and community policing. There is much to be done. There is reconciliation to be had. But we are hopeful.

We congratulate the president and we thank the Members of Congress for all the support that they have given.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

□ 1715

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida for yielding, and I really welcome the enthusiasm and the optimism that have been expressed by the Congresswoman from California and the gentleman from Florida.

I am pleased to cosponsor this resolution. However, I have served as an observer in past elections in Haiti, elections that prompted great hope, but resulted in great disappointment. So I believe for a moment it is important to reflect, and I would quote the words of Luigi Einaudi, who was tasked by the OAS to mediate between the opponents

of the former president of Haiti, Mr. Aristide, and I am going to quote his words.

This is a gentleman who knows Haiti well and Washington well: ''Haiti is a tragedy, and it is a tragedy of partisanship and hate and hostility. These were divides among Haitians, and they are also divides among Americans because Haiti came to symbolize within the United States a point of friction between Democrats and Republicans that did not facilitate bipartisanship or stable policy or communication.''

In the end, he was unsuccessful. Aristide was overthrown in February of 2004, and Haiti continued to descend into violence and despair. But it wasn't Einaudi that failed. Haiti's political class bears much of the responsibility for this tragedy because of their self-serving and cynical refusal to place nation over people in exchange for self-aggrandizement.

But here we also have our share of responsibility. A recent New York Times story entitled ''Mixed U.S. Signals Helped Tilt Haiti Towards Chaos'' should be essential reading for all of us, and I will insert this article into the RECORD.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, American Ambassador Dean Curran, once referred to the ''chimeres of Washington.'' A chimere in Haiti is a thug hired to intimidate one's political opponents. And different Haitian political actors, both Aristide and his opposition, had their chimeres in Washington.

It has been my experience that there has been more advocacy than neutrality about Haiti on the part of the United States. Too often we join the zero-sum game of Haitian politics. We picked sides and supported them at the expense of Haiti and its long-suffering people.

For example, some here, working in coordination with Aristide's opponents, would place so-called ''holds'' on U.S. assistance in Haiti, blocking aid for the police, for the judicial system, for human rights observers, for election monitors; and Haiti's fragile institutions collapsed, starved from the outside and rotted from the inside.

I would note, and it is important to note this, that many of these holds were placed during the term of Rene Preval when he was the president in the past. Others who supported Aristide failed to recognize his shortcomings and deficiencies and failed to encourage him to put forth a positive vision for the Haitian people. The end result was that Haiti's fate was not only decided in Haiti, it was also decided here in Washington.

But now, with this most recent election, Haiti does have an opportunity to move past its past, and we have the same opportunity here in Washington. For Haiti to have a future, two things must happen: First, the Haitian political class must act like small ''d'' democrats and make a priority the needs of the Haitian people; and second, Americans must put our differences aside and commit to a bipartisan policy of noninterference in Haiti's internal politics.

I want to participate in that. I have had conversations with groups whom I have had profound differences about Haiti with in the past, such as the International Republican Institute. And maybe I am naive, but I sense an emerging consensus that we must come together on the part of all who have an interest in Haiti and encourage a new and constructive approach.

I am not saying that the U.S. should abandon Haiti, far from it. In fact, we should increase our aid. But I would recommend that we should provide assistance through multilateral organizations like the United Nations.

Yesterday we met with Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who agrees that the international community must provide a deep and sustained commitment to Haiti. In fact, I believe that Haiti should be the first test case for the United Nations' new peace-building commission, and the U.S. should give it its full support. And I have to admit that for the first time I do see a glimmer of hope for Haiti, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to make that a real ambition.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I gladly yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), one of our most distinguished senior members of the Committee on International Relations, and certainly a champion of human rights and my dear friend.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership in the cause of democracy, peace, and justice throughout the world.

I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Resolution 353, which congratulates the people of Haiti on holding peaceful and democratic elections on February 7. And I want to thank Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS for her bold leadership and for bringing forth this resolution immediately in full support of the Haitian people and their right to once again decide who will lead their democracy and to restore the rule of law in Haiti.

In supporting this legislation, we also congratulate President-Elect Rene Garcia Preval, a man who, I am confident, will restore peace, human rights, and accountability throughout Haiti and within Haiti's government.

Mr. Speaker, with over 2.2 million Haitians, more than 60 percent of registered voters, participating in these elections, it is clear to me that the people of Haiti are ready for peace and willing to do whatever it takes, whatever it takes to restore and secure their democracy once again.

Since the undemocratic removal of former President Aristide in 2004, Haiti's health, education, and economic sectors have spiraled into ruin. During the last 2 years, unemployment reached a staggering 90 percent in parts of Haiti. For months, schools remained closed and children feared kidnapping or death on the city streets. The only public hospitals that many of Haiti's poor could rely on were centers run by international organizations such as Doctors Without Borders or the International Red Cross. Public hospitals and government services were either closed or too dangerous to utilize. People feared kidnapping, assault, and even murder walking out of their homes and onto the streets.

However, the Haitian people have voted for a change, Mr. Speaker. Haiti now has an opportunity to set its own course through responsive government that puts people first. President Preval has demonstrated that he understands how to turn around Haiti's economy while still preserving the rights of all Haitians, especially Haiti's poor, and by raising the standard of living, increasing job opportunities and education for Haiti's poor.

During his first tenure, from 1996 to 2001, as president, Mr. Preval found ways to build hundreds of miles of road, dozens of schools, health centers. He transformed thousands of acres of land into peasants' hands and organized the two most famous and successful human rights trials in Haiti's history.

An international response, however, right now will be necessary in order to make Haiti's hopeful possibilities for a future a reality. That is why the Congressional Black Caucus, Haiti Task Force, the House International Relations Committee, Congresswoman WATERS, Mr. FOLEY, myself, all of us, Democrats and Republicans, in a bipartisan way are committed to making Haiti's future a bright one by supporting their duly-elected president.

Haiti will also need our financial support and technical assistance if it is to overcome the challenges it faces in its economy and its infrastructure and its ability to provide basic services to all Haitians. We must support a restoration of security by helping to get guns off the street and support an international effort to establish a national truth and reconciliation commission.

Also, we must support and move forward all of the trade efforts and aid efforts; we have got to increase these efforts, and also additional resources for fighting the HIV and AIDS pandemic, which Haiti has the highest rates in the Caribbean. These are items which are key to securing order and peace in Haiti, securing the people's choice.

And this is what happened now, the people have made a decision once again. The people's choice is Mr. Preval, and we have got to make sure that we help him to do everything he can to turn Haiti around. The Haitian people deserve no less.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, for their collegiality, I thank them very much.

I again thank the distinguished gentleman from American Samoa for his leadership, but as well the commitment that he brings to this Congress of internationalism and international cooperation. Likewise, my appreciation for my good friend ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for the leadership she brings to this committee and, as well, her compassion for issues dealing with human rights.

I want us to be reminded of the fact that Haitians fought alongside Americans in the course of our freedom. So I want to applaud Congresswoman WATERS for knowing our history and, as well, appreciating the pivotal role that Haiti and Haitians play in the security of America and the friendship of America. I remind you again that when we were fighting for our freedom, Haitians were alongside of us fighting, shedding their blood, and allowing us to be free. So our American history and Haitian history are intertwined, and we have a legitimate reason for looking and ensuring the democracy, the justice, and the freedom of the people of Haiti.

Let me also acknowledge the fact that many times our interaction with Haiti has not been the best. I traveled to Haiti with the chairman of the Intelligence Committee and the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. CONYERS, and we traveled before the elections occurred, met with the interim government, met with many of the different party leaders and others seeking to have a fair election.

It was not a very easy trip. There were accusations. There were suggestions that the government was trying to keep some of the candidates off of the ballot.

What I will say about Mr. Preval is that he stayed the course. Even in the midst of all that turmoil, he continued to campaign. Even with threats against his candidacy, he continued to campaign.

I think we should appreciate as well the comfortable relationship that he has with former President Aristide. He does not bring hostility to his leadership, but at the same time he brings his own leadership, his own mantle, if you will, of guidance of the people of Haiti.

So I too join my voice in congratulating the soon-to-be president on his inauguration and hoping that we will help him establish an excellent police force, one that provides safety for the Haitian people.

And I would ask, as a member of the House Judiciary Committee, that we would join in the authorization and the encouragement of the Appropriations Committee to be able to provide that funding. I would ask that the Judiciary Committee, along with the appropriators appropriately associated with the authorizing committee, really focus in on assisting Preval, along with, of course, the Committee on International Relations, in this whole question of law enforcement and a secure, trained police force. As well, the education of the children is important, clean water.

And I too believe that there is optimism as 2.2 million people voted on February 7. But we need to encourage trade; as well, we need to make sure that the Haitians who are in the United States feel safe to return. And if they do not feel safe, Mr. Speaker, I hope that as we look at immigration reform, we will add Haitian parity to the bill, which means that those who are in fear of their life who are still here in this country would have the opportunity to attain their status. Many of them are detainees because their particular status does not equate to other provisions, if you will, such as those in Cuba.

□ 1730

Let me also say that I hope that the extra money that the ranking member spoke of, $50 million and more, will be added to the Haitian appropriations.

And then, of course, I hope that we will have a representative delegation with good intentions and good will that will visit and represent the United States as they attend the inauguration of Rene Preval.

Might I say that there is legislation going through the House that calls, offered by Congressman KUCINICH, of which I am one of the cosponsors, to establish a Department of Peace.

It is interesting that I would say that in the course of debating or congratulating Haiti and its election, but maybe that is a valuable department to have, because maybe we can then promote peace.

Might I just say in closure, I thank the Speaker very much, and I thank the gentlewoman, the manager of the bill. I congratulate the Haitians and I support H. Con. Res. 363; I congratulate the author, Ms. WATERS, and I look forward to better days for the Haitian people.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and certainly an honor for me to give the rest of my time to our distinguished ranking member of our Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), to summarize the various aspects of this important legislation. And certainly I want to again thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida, as the manager of this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WAMP). The gentleman from New York is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from American Samoa. I will not take the full 2 minutes.

I just want to say that I am very excited that since I have become the ranking Democrat on the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the International Relations Committee, this is actually the first bill that has come to the floor.

It is a very, very important bill, because as was mentioned by all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, the relationship between the United States and Haiti is a very important one and a very special one.

And we have had lots of successes in the relationship, and also lots of failures through the years. I think that we want to, on a bipartisan basis, build on successes, and as everyone has mentioned before, the people of Haiti have spoken. They have had a democratic election. We talk a lot about democratic elections. We have it right here in Haiti in the Western Hemisphere, and overwhelmingly the people of Haiti have chosen Mr. Preval as their leader.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is incumbent upon those of us in the United States Congress and the administration and all of us working together to make sure that Mr. Preval succeeds and that more importantly the Haitian people succeed, and that democracy succeeds in Haiti, because it is not simply a matter of another country and what do we care whether it is a success or a failure. We do care and we should care, because Haiti is so close to the United States in terms of geography, because Haiti is right in our hemisphere, because Haiti is an important country, because there are many Haitian Americans in the United States with ties to the old country.

And that is why it is really just so important that we in the United States, and we talk about protecting democracy all over the world, and well we should. But I think right in our own back yard we have a lot to do.

So I want to thank Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA and all of the others who have spoken; Ms. WATERS, whose resolution this is; Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, with whom I have collaborated on so many important things, for all of their hard work and for all of us speaking of one mind here on both sides of the aisle that we want the U.S.-Haitian relationship to improve and to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution, I urge a unanimous vote of all our colleagues.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just wanted to thank Ms. WATERS for offering this resolution, for Mr. ENGEL, the ranking member on the subcommittee for his remarks, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA for his leadership on our International Relations Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I especially want to thank two staffers from each side of the aisle who have worked tirelessly not only on the issue of democracy for Haiti, but on all of the issues that impact Western Hemisphere: Mr. PAUL Oostburg, thank you, Mr. Oostburg, for your leadership.

And on our side, Ted Brennan. Thank you, Mr. Brennan, for your valuable work.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to heartily congratulate the people of Haiti on their recent election of President Préval on

February 7, 2006. It was a great triumph for the country to hold "free and fair" presidential and legislative elections. Reports were that the elections were peaceful and that 60 percent, over 2.2 million Haitians, many who stood in line for 6 hours or more, participated. This election is a great advancement of a return to normalcy for this great country and its stupendous citizens.

This is a pivotal point in history for Haiti and the world. I now call on the international community, with the U.S. in the lead, to support democracy in this determined country. I am hopeful that this first step will serve as the beginning of national reconciliation of democracy as well as social and economic development for Haiti.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in favor of H. Con. Res. 353.

I think it is important for this House to recognize the Republic of Haiti for recently holding successful, democratic elections, and to congratulate President-elect René García Préval on his electoral victory.

Haiti is the world's oldest Black republic and the second-oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere, after the United States. While street violence, kidnappings, and political instability have plagued Haiti in recent years, and are still threats, the democratic will of the people persevered and elections were embraced by the nation.

The presidential and legislative elections on February 7, 2006 saw unprecedented voter turnout. A member of my staff traveled to Haiti as an election monitor. Many Haitians were required to walk for miles to their designated voting centers and then were forced to wait for hours in line; nonetheless, more than 60 percent of those registered exercised their right to vote and participated in electing a new, democratic government.

This election marks a significant moment in Haiti; it not only serves as the basis of hope along the road to democracy, but also serves as a testament to the resolve and character of the Haitian people during their long struggle for peace, reconciliation, and prosperity.

Now is the time for the United States to commit itself to long-term support to Haiti. The task facing President-elect Préval is daunting; he must establish a new government, reform the judiciary, establish and maintain domestic order, create jobs, jumpstart the economy, and end Haiti's endemic malnutrition and crushing poverty. In the past, this Congress has turned a deaf ear to Haiti's needs—specifically by not passing the Haiti Economic Recovery Opportunity Act, which I have introduced in this Congress, along with Senator MIKE DEWINE in the Senate. It is my hope that President-elect Préval's election will mark a new, more supportive era in Haitian-American relations, in this Congress and in this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 353.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1833

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at 6 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 4882, by the yeas and nays;

S. 2120, by the yeas and nays.

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL VISITOR CENTER ENFORCEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 4882, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4882, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 404, nays 4, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 68]

YEAS—404

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
DeLay
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Foley
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp

Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—4

Blumenauer
Waxman
Weller
Wu

NOT VOTING—24

Beauprez
Boswell
Boyd
Capuano
Crowley
Davis (FL)
Deal (GA)
Evans
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Forbes
Ford
Gibbons
Gillmor
Gordon
Istook
Jenkins
Marchant
Musgrave
Nunes
Ortiz
Rush
Sweeney
Terry
Whitfield

□ 1854

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to ensure the proper remembrance of Vietnam veterans and the Vietnam War by designating a site for a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MILK REGULATORY EQUITY ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, S. 2120.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2120, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 285, nays 128, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 69]

YEAS—285

Ackerman
Akin
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Boehlert
Boehner
Boozman
Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Bradley (NH)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Camp (MI)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Cleaver
Coble
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
DeGette
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dingell
Doolittle
Drake
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hoekstra
Holden
Honda
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Kanjorski
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kline
Kuhl (NY)
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Latham
Leach
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McHugh
McIntyre
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Myrick
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pastor
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stearns
Strickland
Sullivan
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Weiner
Weldon (PA)
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NAYS—128

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Baldwin
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Blunt
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Butterfield
Calvert
Campbell (CA)
Clay
Clyburn
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cramer
Culberson
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
DeLay
Dicks
Doggett
Doyle
Dreier
Emerson
Ferguson
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Granger
Hastings (FL)
Hefley
Hobson
Holt
Hooley
Hunter
Hyde
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kingston
Kirk
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
LaHood
Langevin
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
McCarthy
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKeon
McKinney
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (NC)
Mollohan
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Neal (MA)
Obey
Olver
Pallone
Pascrell
Paul
Payne
Rahall
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Rothman
Royce
Saxton
Scott (GA)
Serrano
Shaw
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Stark
Stupak
Tancredo
Taylor (NC)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Visclosky
Walsh
Watson
Waxman
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Wicker
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—19

Beauprez
Boswell
Boyd
Capuano
Davis (FL)
Deal (GA)
Evans
Forbes
Ford
Gibbons
Gillmor
Gordon
Istook
Jenkins
Marchant
Musgrave
Rush
Sweeney
Terry

□ 1911

Mrs. MALONEY changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. SHAYS, SCOTT of Virginia, GREEN of Wisconsin, and HOYER changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 4200

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 4200.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4297, TAX RELIEF EXTENSION RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, under rule XXII, clause 7(c), I hereby announce my intention to offer a motion to instruct on H.R. 4297, the tax reconciliation conference report.

The form of the motion is as follows:

I move that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 4297 be instructed—

(1) to insist on the provisions of section 106 of the Senate amendment (relating to extension and increase in minimum tax relief to individuals),

(2) to recede from the provisions of the House bill that extend the lower tax rate on dividends and capital gains that would otherwise terminate at the close of 2008, and

(3) to the maximum extent possible within the scope of conference, to insist on a conference report which will neither increase the Federal budget deficit nor increase the amount of the debt subject to the public debt limit.

TRIBUTE TO BUCK OWENS

(Mr. THOMAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMAS. Madam Speaker, as the world now knows, early Saturday morning in his sleep, Buck Owens let go of the tiger's tail. What people probably do not know was what happened on Friday night. Because as Buck usually did, he acted naturally. He went to his Crystal Palace, his dance hall and dining room, had his usual chicken-fried steak Friday evening, and told the staff he did not feel very good and he was going to go home and miss the Friday night performance.

In going out to his car, a car full of people from Bend, Oregon, saw him, and they ran over to him and they said, Buck, we came all of the way down to see you. He turned around and went back in and played the complete first set because he could not disappoint a fan.

He went home and never woke up.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of my friend and country music legend, Buck Owens, who passed away on Saturday, March 25, 2006.

With 25 No. 1 songs, Buck had one of the most successful country music careers in history. Known for his trademark red, white and blue guitar, he was on stage nearly every Friday and Saturday night with his band, Buck Owens and the Buckaroos, at his Crystal Palace in Bakersfield. In fact, just hours before he passed away, he had spent the evening performing at the Crystal Palace, closing his portion of the show with his 1969 hit "Big in Vegas."

Alvin Edgar Owens was born to Texas sharecroppers in 1929 and became known as "Buck" at the age of 4 when he nicknamed himself after a mule on the family farm. In 1937, after their trailer hitch broke during their move west, Buck and his family ended up in Phoenix, where they remained for more than a decade. During that time, Buck and his siblings worked in the fields picking cotton and potatoes, which Buck later said, "was where my dream began to take hold . . ."

Buck began regularly playing music in local pubs when he was 16 and, when he moved to Bakersfield in 1951, he quickly found work playing with steel guitarist Dusty Rhodes and then Bill Woods and the Orange Blossom Playboys. While Buck at first played a hollow-body Gibson guitar, after a pawnshop sold his Gibson before he could redeem it, Buck began using a Fender Telecaster electric guitar that made his music unique and eventually became known as the "Bakersfield Sound."

In 1957, Buck signed a recording contract with Capitol Records and in 1958 he cut four original songs, including "Second Fiddle," which eventually reached No. 24 on the Billboard charts. During this time, Buck acquired a one-third interest in a Tacoma, WA, radio station and he remained in the radio business for the rest of his life. In 1959, Buck began doing his own live television show and his television career ultimately included 16 years as a co-host of "Hee-Haw."

Throughout his career, Buck earned the respect of musicians from all different genres of music. In fact, even the Beatles recorded a cover of one of his songs, "Act Naturally," in 1965. In 1996, he was recognized for his accomplishments and was inducted to both the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Buck was truly a Bakersfield institution, and his No. 1 hit, "Streets of Bakersfield," has become our town's unofficial anthem and our favorite of Buck's songs. However, in addition to our pride in his accomplishments as a performer and businessman, we appreciated Buck's generosity, including his support for Bakersfield College's music program as well as his annual Toys 4 Tots event, Buck Owens Rodeo, and celebrity golf tournament. Bakersfield will not be the same without Buck Owens. He was the heart of the town and will truly be missed.

□ 1915

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). 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.

MEDICARE PART D

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, well, Congress is temporarily in Washington between breaks, and I don't know how some Members on the other side of the aisle spent theirs, but along with Representative HOOLEY and Representative BLUMENAUER, all of us from Oregon, we spent the day yet going up the length of the Willamette Valley holding meetings in senior centers and other public venues to hear from seniors, senior advocates, people who work with seniors and care about seniors about the experience with the so-called Medicare part D prescription drug benefit.

Now, I heard from the other side of the aisle what a stunning success it is. We are protecting the profits of the pharmaceutical industry. They will get an extra $139 billion in profits. We are subsidizing the insurance industry to offer these plans, plans which can be changed on a weekly basis even though seniors can only sign up for one plan a year.

Yet as great as they say these things are, about half the seniors in my State and across America who were not mandatorily enrolled are not yet participating in the plans, in part, because in my little State, there are some 46 plans in my district, I guess in Portland a few more, so there are actually a total of 96 variants available to seniors.

They describe to us what happens when you go on these sites, these are the advocates, not the seniors. You will get, and there will be a little tiny asterisk by certain drugs, and they have given you some plans that might be good for you because you need a plan that will pay for the drugs your doctor has prescribed.

If you hit the little tiny asterisk, then a drop-down window comes out. Most seniors don't know about drop-down windows. The drop-down window says limits may apply. It turns out the limits might be you take 60 of those twice, two a day. The limit might be one a day, but it is not very explicit about that. When you call the 1–800 number, you can't get a human being to get information. So seniors are, for the most part, totally confused. They are having trouble, even when they try to focus in on a plan that might give them help, getting to a point where they can make a choice.

Of course, even if they do choose a plan that pays for that plan, that plan can change the drug benefit on a weekly basis, not something that a senior can do.

Now, we also heard from a small pharmacist, because of the confusion in the transition for the dual eligibles, her pharmacy, her little pharmacy, had to front $45,000 in prescriptions to seniors and has yet to be reimbursed. The reimbursements are starting to trickle in. She had spent 8 hours the day before trying to reconcile some of those to the actual outlays in the drugs that she had fronted for her seniors.

We heard time and time again about problems. My doctor has hired an additional person to try and deal with all the prior approvals required for seniors who have been taking a drug for years, many of these new plans will require all sorts of documentation on why they should get that drug. Many seniors don't know, who have already subscribed, that they are temporarily getting their old drugs until the 1st of April. On the 1st of April, they will fall under their new plan's mandates, and they may not be able to continue taking the drug their doctor has prescribed.

Minimally, Congress should revisit this punitive time limit. The time limit, you have to sign up by May 15, or we will penalize you. They say 1 percent per month; but guess what, you can't sign up again until next fall.

Any senior who doesn't sign up by May 15 will be penalized 6 percent tax, 6 percent extra for life as a bonus to the already subsidized insurance companies on top of their premium. That is not fair. Congress should undo that arbitrary mandate. That was to try and stampede seniors into plans that they don't understand that they might not want, and that should go.

But then perhaps we should do what the head of Walgreens has suggested. He said there are so many plans out there, so many benefits, so many formularies, his pharmacist can't figure it out.

Like Congress did 25 years ago, he says Congress should standardize these plans and say, there will be five or 10 plans out there with standard benefits, so everybody can understand what the 10 options are. They can just learn 10 options and then let the private companies compete over price, perhaps without a subsidy from the taxpayers.

Or, God forbid, we could actually take on the pharmaceutical industry

since the drug prices under these plans are actually on average higher than the prices offered by Costco. What a great deal. The President likes to talk about how these insurance companies, or PBMs, how they have just bargained so hard and driven down the prices. They are only 50 percent higher than the prices that the VA gets through negotiations for our veterans. But the Republicans outlawed, they outlawed, Medicare bargaining lower drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries.

Now, who does that help? They said that was un-American to negotiate lower drug prices. It is not un-American to give huge windfall benefits to the pharmaceutical industry.

MARKING 185 YEARS OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the House in honor of Greek Independence Day that was celebrated on March 25. Greek freedom fighters brought sovereignty back to their country, 185 years ago, allowing the Greek people to decide their fate for themselves again.

I speak here today to honor all persons and nations who have successfully fought for their right to live according to the rules of democracy and freedom, denying the rule of tyranny and autocracy. As the oldest democracy in the world, the Greek nation has passionately struggled to uphold democracy as its form of government.

The significance emanating from the year 1821 is outstanding, not only in the Greek context, but also as a strong symbol of the inspiration one brave nation can provide to the world.

When in 1821 the Greek people regained their independence, more than four centuries of occupation and oppression by the Ottoman Empire came to an end. The peoples of the Balkans were soon to follow the Greek example and sought freedom from the Ottoman rule.

The courage and vision of the Greek freedom fighters also transcended the borders of the former Ottoman Empire. The independence movement received broad support from intellectuals abroad, including English poet Lord Byron and U.S. Senator and Secretary of State Daniel Webster.

The Greek flag symbolizes the legacy of 1821. The cross in the upper left part of the flag stands for the Greek Orthodox Church, which significantly helped Greeks to preserve their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage during the years of occupation. The cross is embedded by nine alternating blue and white stripes, each representing one letter of the Greek word for freedom. While the flag was developed in the early days of independence, it took more than 150 years before it became the official Greek flag.

After the end of the Ottoman occupation, Greeks had to struggle for another century before their land was truly freed. In the 1970s, Greeks once again fought for freedom and independence, stripping off a 7-year rule by a military junta. Shortly after democracy had been reestablished, the Greek nation finally adopted the cross-and-nine-stripe flag as its official flag.

The United States is a proud partner of the Greek nation, which has given the gift of democracy to the world, and which throughout history has fought to uphold this gift as its guiding principle. Greeks and Americans share a common vision to have everyone on this planet enjoy the gift of freedom and democracy. Greece is one of our strongest allies in the international war against terror.

The United States and Greece have consistently joined forces to fight the global threats of terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism, nuclear proliferation, illegal narcotics, and international crime. As a strong NATO ally, the Greek military has taken on a strong and abiding commitment in Afghanistan as well.

Greece has given the United States both military and financial support for Operation Enduring Freedom. It contributes to it is International Security Assistance Force and has pledged to fund educational programs.

Located on shores of the Mediterranean Sea, Greece is of the greatest geopolitical importance. Neighboring with the Balkans, it serves as a shining beacon of peace and stability in the region. Bordering with Turkey, it serves as the bridge to the Muslim world.

I commend Greece for its strong work in the Middle East Partnership Initiative, MEPI, and its strong participation in the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative.

However, many pressing issues in the region remain unresolved, Madam Speaker. The ongoing conflict over the final name of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia causes grave concern, just as it grieves me to see the continued division of Cyprus and the unbalanced approach that has been taken to overcome this division.

I hope that we will soon be able to witness the end of the occupation and a reunification of Cyprus on fair and equitable terms. The emergence of a strong, vibrant and justly unified Cyprus would provide stability, both politically and economically, to the Mediterranean region.

I urge Congress remain engaged in the search for a just and lasting reunification that will promote peace and stability. Recalling the Greek routes of democracy, I am proud to represent the interests of my Greek American constituency. With currently 1.5 million members, the Greek American community contributes significantly to the prosperity of our Nation.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of the friendship that binds the United States, the land of freedom, and Greece, the country of freedom fighters.

Together, we can promote democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights worldwide.

ORDINARY WOMEN, EXTRAORDINARY LIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, in recognition of Women's History Month of 2006, we recognize and celebrate the contributions of great American heroines who have built a legacy for women leadership over the 230 years of our Nation's history.

In celebration of this year's Women's History Month theme, ''Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams,'' I call upon each of us to dedicate ourselves to making the future for all of America's girls and women full of hope and opportunity.

Today I salute the work of two extraordinary women and two exceptional young girls from Florida's 20th Congressional district. But first I would like to commend Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, who addressed the Congress just last week. She represents the aspirations and expectations of women in Liberia, Africa and women all over the world.

Now I would like to recognize two young women from the 20th District of Florida, Taryn Daley of Davie and Katie Bonilla of Weston, who started 10 lemonade stands to raise money for pediatric cancer research.

Taryn, 12, and Katie, 11, were inspired by their mitzvah project, which is a part of their bat mitzvah requirements of public service and a national program known as Alex's Lemonade Stand, an idea started by a young girl named Alexandria ''Alex'' Scott who was diagnosed with an aggressive childhood cancer.

In less than 2 weeks, Madam Speaker, Taryn and Katie found more than 30 volunteers, enlisted a group of sponsors, and raised $3,000 to fight childhood cancer. These two young ladies are proof that this generation of young women are dream builders. Their courage and compassion gives us all hope for a brighter future. They will inspire more young women to make the world a better place.

Next I would like to recognize the City of North Miami Beach police chief and president of the Miami-Dade Association of Chiefs of Police, Linda Loizzo. Linda is a true trailblazer. She has served the North Miami Beach Police Department for 32 years in a number of capacities: deputy chief, assistant chief of operations, major in charge of administrative services, commander in charge of the investigative division, and supervisor of several special support services units.

Linda was the first woman promoted to the rank of sergeant, the first woman promoted to the rank of lieutenant and major, and the first woman promoted to the rank of chief of police from the North Miami Beach Police Department. Her work doesn't stop there. Linda is also the regional director of the Florida Police Chiefs Association and she serves on numerous organizational boards.

Without question, Linda represents the best of our Nation's first responders. The National Association of Women in Law Enforcement estimates there are more than 16,000 police departments in this country, which is just slightly more than 200 female police chiefs.

Chief Loizzo didn't just break down walls in a male-dominated profession. She shattered and crumbled stereotypes in all professions and particularly those in law enforcement.

Finally, I want to recognize Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer, president and chief executive officer of the Children's Services Council of Broward County. Across the country there are millions of children that long for stability and hope in their lives. In Broward County, the needs of this vulnerable population are vast.

In 1999 there was a critical need for programs to make essential services available to children who face abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Cindy was a powerful voice in leading the charge for a Broward County ballot initiative to designate family program funding. The initiative passed overwhelmingly with 70 percent of Broward voters approving.

Since that time, Cindy has been instrumental in helping to ensure that each child will live in a safe and loving environment and has the resources needed to grow up healthy and strong. Today, Cindy serves as the board's chief executive officer and has led the effort to expand available funding to improve the lives of Broward's children.

Madam Speaker, in a world where the magnitude of problems that face our children can be daunting, Cindy identified and fixed a problem with the system and continues to deftly refine and steer the program. Her leadership and passion for children has made a difference in the lives of many south Florida families and provided thousands of children with a future filled with unlimited possibilities.

These women and young girls are doing what may seem like ordinary work, but they are leading extraordinary lives. Their work and service showcase what the theme of this year's Women's History Month was designed to celebrate and encourage.

□ 1930

On behalf of the people of Florida's 20th Congressional District, I am proud to recognize their uncommon character and motivation in performing the work that successful communities and generations are built upon, and I am delighted to recognize them in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD with this honor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). 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.)

MAKING THE WORLD SAFE FOR CHRISTIANITY

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

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, the top neoconservative of the 20th century was Woodrow Wilson. His supposed idealism, symbolized in the slogan, ''Make the world safe for democracy,'' resulted in untold death and destruction across the world for many decades.

His deceit and manipulation of the prewar intelligence from Europe dragged America into an unnecessary conflict that cost the world and us dearly. Without the disastrous Versailles Treaty, World War II could have been averted and the rise to power of Communists around the world might have been halted.

We seem to never learn from our mistakes. Today's neocons are as idealistically misled and aggressive in remaking the Middle East as the Wilsonian do-gooders. Even given the horrendous costs of the Iraq War and the unintended consequences that plague us today, the neocons are eager to expand their regime-change policy to Iran by force.

The obvious shortcomings of our regime change and occupation of Afghanistan are now readily apparent. The Taliban was ousted from power, but they have regrouped and threaten the delicate stability that now exists in that country. Opium drug production is once again a major operation with drug lords controlling a huge area of the country outside of Kabul. And now the real nature of the government we created has been revealed in the case of Abdul Rahman, the Muslim who faced a possible death sentence from the Karzai administration for converting to Christianity. Even now that Mr. Rahman is free due to Western pressure his life remains in danger.

Our bombs and guns have not changed the fact that the new puppet Afghan Government still follows Sharia law. The same loyalty to Sharia exists in Iraq where we are trying hard to stabilize things, and all this is done in the name of spreading democracy.

The sad fact is that even under the despicable rule of Saddam Hussein, Christians were safer in Iraq than they are today. Saddam Hussein's foreign minister was a practicing Christian. Today, thousands of Christians have fled Iraq following our occupation to countries like Jordan and Syria. Those Christians who have remained in Iraq fear for their lives every day. That should tell us something about the shortcomings of a policy that presumes to make the world safe for democracy.

The Muslim world is not fooled by our talk of spreading democracy and values. The evidence is too overwhelming that we do not hesitate to support dictators and install puppet governments when it serves our interests. When democratic elections result in the elevation of a leader or a party not to our liking, we do not hesitate for a minute to undermine that government.

This hypocrisy is rarely recognized by the American people. It is much more comfortable to believe in slogans, to believe that we are defending our goodness and spreading true liberty. We accept this and believe strongly in the cause, strongly enough to sacrifice many of our sons and daughters and stupendous amounts of money to spread our ideals through force.

Pointing out the lack of success is taboo. It seems of little concern to many Members of Congress that we lack both the moral right and constitutional authority to impose our will on other nations.

The toughest task is analyzing what we do from their perspective. We should try harder to place ourselves in the shoes of those who live in the Arab countries where our efforts currently are concentrated. We are outraged by a Muslim country that would even consider the death penalty for a Christian convert, but many Muslims see all that we do as a reflection of Western Christianity which, to them, includes Europe and America. They see everything in terms of religion.

When our bombs and sanctions kill hundreds of thousands of their citizens, they see it as an attack on their religion by Christians. To them our actions represent a crusade to change their culture and their political systems. They do not see us as having noble intentions. Cynicism and realism tell them that we are involved in the Middle East to secure the oil that we need.

Our occupation and influence in the holy lands of the Middle East will always be suspect. This includes all the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. Naively believing otherwise will guarantee continuing hostility in Iraq.

Our meddling will remain an incitement for radicals to strike us here at home in future terrorist attacks. All the intelligence gathering in the world will serve little purpose if we do not come to understand exactly why they hate us despite the good intentions that many Americans hold dear.

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

(Mrs. McCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I am proud to join with several of my colleagues this evening in celebrating the 185th anniversary of Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire.

In the years since Greek independence, Americans and Greeks have grown ever closer, bound by ties of strategic and military alliance, common values of democracy, individual freedom, human rights, and close personal friendship.

Madam Speaker, while we celebrate Greek independence this evening, it is also important that we recognize that Greece continues to battle oppression from present-day Turkey in Cyprus. It is crucial our Nation work with the United Nations and the Government of Cyprus to once again unify the island. However, I am deeply concerned that our government's recent actions will actually make it more difficult to reunify Cyprus. The U.S. State Department and Secretary Rice seem much more interested in rewarding those who illegally occupied the northern third of the nation back in 1974 than actually reunifying the islands. Over the past year, our State Department decided to allow Americans to fly into the occupied north, something that has not been permitted since the illegal occupation took place back in 1974.

Last year, I joined many of my colleagues from the Congressional Hellenic Caucus in sending a letter expressing our deep concern regarding the legality of U.S. citizens flying directly from Turkey to the airport in northern Cyprus. In response to that letter, the State Department responded that it was encouraging the elimination of unnecessary restrictions and barriers that isolate and impede the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Madam Speaker, this new policy must also be responsible for a decision earlier this year by the State Department to resume trade with the occupied north through ports that were declared closed after the invasion in 1974. In order to allow trade, the State Department is forced to ignore both Cyprus' domestic law, as well as international law that prohibits entering Cyprus through an illegal port in the north.

Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned that the State Department's new policy towards the government and the people of the occupied north will only delay reunification of the entire island. If U.S. allows direct trade through routes in the north, what incentives do the illegal occupiers of northern lands have to make any concessions to the rightful inhabitants? It is as if the State Department has completely forgotten who is responsible for the division of Cyprus in the first place.

I have repeatedly encouraged Secretary Rice to take an historic look at the Cyprus problem over the past 30 years. It is important to look at this problem not only through the lens of the nonvote in 2004, but also from the perspective of three decades of illegal actions on the Turkish side.

Madam Speaker, I pledge tonight to continue to speak out against a State Department that seems more comfortable punishing the victims of the Cyprus problem while rewarding the occupiers. I am hopeful that one day soon, like Greece, the island of Cyprus will be unified and free. And tonight I also applaud the determination that the Greeks showed 185 years ago to overcome the Ottoman Empire and restore democracy in the place of its birth.

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

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

FAIRNESS IN TRADE TARIFFS

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, recently Congressman DALE KILDEE and myself have introduced H.R. 4808.

We both are very concerned about the jobs that continue to go overseas, ''outsourcing'' some people call it. And with this bill what we are speaking to is the tariff situation that will exist between China and America.

In 2008, the Chinese will be selling in America Chinese cars that are made in China. These cars obviously will be made by people who make in many cases less than $1 an hour, $1.25 an hour, no benefits, but yet they will be selling these cars in this country.

What Mr. KILDEE and I have done, along with other Members in both parties, is to say, we want to see fairness in this arrangement. If we try to sell an American car in China today, tonight, tomorrow we would pay 28 percent tariff. When the Chinese sell their cars in this country in the year 2008, they will pay 2.5 percent.

What this bill does is simple. It says fairness, fair trade. What is good for the Chinese economy should be good for the American economy. What is good for the American economy, let it be good for the Chinese economy. But for this country, we have lost so many manufacturing jobs in my own State of North Carolina. Since NAFTA was enacted, we have lost over 200,000 manufacturing jobs. Just the past 4 years, between 2001 and 2005, we have lost 2.9 million manufacturing jobs in this country.

This Nation cannot and will not remain strong if we do not have a manufacturing base. So this bill that Mr. KILDEE and I have put in is very simple. I will repeat it again and then I will close very shortly.

That is, if we are going to accept Chinese cars to be sold in this country in 2008, and right now they will pay a 2.8 percent tariff while we are selling American cars in China and American cars have a tariff of 28 percent.

Madam Speaker, I will tell you this, I think the American people are tired and really kind of fed up, if you will, with the fact that we have not done a better job in this Congress, both sides, of trying to protect the American worker. This really is a bill that we are trying to send a message. With the WTO and the relationship we have, it would be very difficult for this bill to be signed by the President, but Mr. KILDEE and I believe that the Congress, on the floor of this House, should debate H.R. 4808 and let the American people, or as good as the American people, let the negotiators know that the Congress does care about fairness in these trade agreements.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will close by saying that I appreciate the honor of serving in the House. I hope that we will always do our best to protect American jobs and the American worker.

I also want to close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform. And, God, please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. And, God, please bless America.

SMART SECURITY

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, with today marking the 17th anniversary of the accident at Three Mile Island, this seems like an appropriate opportunity to discuss the dangers posed by nuclear energy and nuclear weapons.

As I have said from this floor many, many times before, I believe there is no greater national imperative than to bring our troops home from Iraq. But the end of the war must also be the beginning of some fresh and creative thinking about national security.

We are in a desperate need, a need for new strategies for keeping America safe. Last summer, Madam Speaker, I introduced the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Commitments Act. The concept behind the bill is very simple, and it is a really good starting point. America must keep its word and live up to the agreements it has made to reduce our nuclear arsenal. But we need to go even further.

So along with the Physicians for Social Responsibility, Friends for Peace, and WAND, I have developed a plan called SMART Security. SMART stands for sensible, multilateral, American response to terrorism, which seeks peaceful and diplomatic solutions to international conflict. SMART addresses a range of issues including energy independence, democracy building, and global poverty. But at its core is a renewed commitment to nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

SMART calls on the United States to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and to do it with strong diplomacy, with enhanced weapons regimes and regional security arrangements. Under SMART, we would set an example for the rest of the world by renouncing nuclear testing and development of new nuclear weapons. SMART would redouble our commitment to the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program which has been successful in reducing nuclear stockpiles and securing nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union.

□ 1945

SMART would stop the sale and transfer of weapons to regimes involved in human rights abuses, and it would ensure that highly enriched uranium is stored only in secure locations.

Mr. Speaker, at just the moment that we need to be vigilant about nuclear proliferation, the Bush administration is asking Congress to give its approval to his dangerous and misguided nuclear energy deal with India. Here he is agreeing to share sensitive nuclear technologies with a nation that was testing nuclear weapons as recently as 1998. He would essentially reward India for its refusal to sign the nonproliferation treaty, feeding the nuclear appetite of a nation that has failed to show the responsibility expected of a nuclear state.

What message does the India pact send to Iran and North Korea? What leverage do we have with these countries to give up their nuclear ambitions, especially since, despite the threats they represent, they have done actually nothing to violate their treaty obligations?

If this India agreement were ratified, how would we deal with India's neighbor and rival Pakistan, which is likely to demand the same nuclear concessions from the United States and which has a dishonorable history of sharing nuclear technology with rogue actors?

Mr. Speaker, there is a cruel irony to the U.S. nuclear policy. While we happily share nuclear technology with countries that have not always handled it responsibly, and while we continue to pursue a large and expensive nuclear arsenal of our own, we are fighting a bloody and expensive war over a nuclear weapon that never even existed. Remember, we are only in Iraq because our so-called leaders looked us in the eye and said there would be a mushroom cloud over American cities unless we sent our troops off to die.

It is time for a 180-day degree turn in our thinking about these issues. It is time we stopped equating security with aggression. It is time we rejected the doctrine of preemption, instead of reaffirming it as the Bush administration did recently. It is time we got SMART about national security.

It is time we protected America, not by invading other nations, but by relying on the very best of American values: our desire for peace, our capacity for global leadership, and our compassion for the people of the world.

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

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

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ON-PREMISE SIGN INDUSTRY

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of the on-premise sign industry to our economy and our country. From April 5 to April 8, the International Sign Association, which represents thousands of manufacturers, users and suppliers of on-premise signs and sign products, will be having its 60th Annual International Expo in Orlando, Florida.

At that expo, there will be 550 companies displaying nearly 1,700 booths of the most advanced and innovative sign products the industry has to offer. Nearly 25,000 people are expected to attend this event. This includes businesses from across the country and around the world. The expo will feature custom, architectural, digital and national sign companies and their products, giving sign enthusiasts and small businesses a prime opportunity to learn more about this ever-changing industry.

I sit on two committees that deal extensively with sign-related issues, so I am familiar with the issues that concern the industry. For example, on the Committee on Small Business, we are all aware of how important small businesses are to our economy. We know that 90 percent of American businesses are small business, and we know that they create the lion's share of new jobs. And we know that these small businesses thrive in an environment with as little government regulation as possible.

But what many people may not know is that the Small Business Administration, over which our committee has jurisdiction, officially recognizes that effective on-premise signage is a critical component of a business' success and can contribute to the success of all businesses. In fact, as SBA Bulletin No. 101 on signage for businesses states: ''Signs are the most effective, yet least expensive form of advertising for the small business.'' Obviously, the $12 billion on-premise sign industry plays a critical role in the success of small businesses and our economic growth.

Unfortunately, the on-premise sign industry still, like most small businesses, faces a flood of government regulations and needs our support. We need to enact extensive and permanent tax cuts, so that small business owners can keep more of their own money and use it to grow their businesses. We need to give small businesses the freedom to choose to participate in association health care plans, so that employers can give their businesses solid health care coverage. We need to pass serious tort reform, so that small businesses are not bogged down in legal costs and red tape. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government needs to get out of the way.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I understand that the Federal Government has a role to play in protecting the constitutional rights of on-premise signage, specifically, that the commercial speech represented in on-premise signage has certain guaranteed protections under the first amendment. It is vitally important that small businesses be allowed to communicate their business messages to American consumers, and one of the best ways to do this is with on-premise signage.

Similarly, the sign industry also has trademark concerns and needs protection from arbitrary government regulation that fails to acknowledge the protected status of their registered trade or service mark, slogan, motto, or other key text in their on-premise signage. And of course, small businesses can be adversely affected by the State's power of eminent domain, represented in the Kelo case most recently, especially those businesses whose on-premise signs have been taken by the government for whatever reason or excuse.

So, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to educate my colleagues about the value of on-premise signage and to describe the challenges they face. I congratulate ISA on 60 years of annual expos. I wish them the best of luck with their convention. I thank the thousands of on-premise signage businesses across the country, as well as the men and women who run them, for their invaluable contribution to our economy and our society.

COLLEGE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to state my opposition to H.R. 609, a higher education reauthorization bill that is much more than a day late and a dollar short.

As a former college chief administrator, I am deeply proud to represent my district, my State, and the higher education community on the Education and Workforce Committee; but I am not particularly proud of the reauthorization bill we produced.

We have had the past 8 years to build on the Higher Education Act of 1998. Today, we have an opportunity in this reauthorization bill to give young Americans and aspiring students more opportunities to attain the dream of a college education.

Indeed, we have a choice to expand access and the reach of the Federal Government's helping hand to those who cannot afford skyrocketing tuition, rising fees, room and board, textbooks, and so many other soaring costs and sacrifices associated with going to college.

But the choice we made late last year to cut student loans to the tune of $12 billion weakened our commitment to students. With those cuts in the budget reconciliation bill, we sent a message to America's students and their families that they are no longer among this Nation's top priorities.

As a consequence, the rapidly expanding gap between the amounts of available student aid compared to the cost of attaining a college education is growing out of control. And yet, while this administration's response is that colleges should simply charge less, it is not making the same demands of other industries that are equally critical to our economy's infrastructure and competitiveness.

This month, as high school seniors across the land receive their college acceptance letters, their proud parents are calculating how they can squeeze college costs into their budget. It is an uphill climb for most families that is made tougher by the President's budget cuts, which freeze Pell grants for a fifth year in a row; recalls the Federal portion of the Perkins Loan Revolving Fund that could extract another $600 million out of the student aid system each year; and freezes funding for SEOG and work study.

If we want to maintain our edge in the global economy, we cannot afford to undercut the administration's competitiveness initiative. But the promise of a more competitive workforce is simply incompatible with budget proposals to freeze Pell grants for a fifth year in a row and recalling a portion of the Perkins Loan Revolving Fund.

This hypocrisy builds on the Republicans' record on student aid: $12 billion in cuts to student loans; failure to extend the tuition deduction for higher education; and a 3-year long impasse over this reauthorization bill. Deep cuts in the President's budget will most likely carry over into the budget resolution we consider next week, further compounding the Republican hypocrisy. Similarly, the reauthorization bill moves America in the exact opposite direction of where our competitive workforce should be heading.

In fact, cuts to student aid threaten to return the state of higher education to the pre-World War II era, when only 5 percent of Americans had earned a college degree, compared with nearly 30 percent today. If we are to sustain our leadership and competitive edge in the global economy, we cannot afford to enact policies which will lead to only the elite being able to afford to go to college.

The so-called ''education President'' has put forward a woefully inadequate budget, and our leaders in this Chamber have presented a short-sighted reauthorization bill that falls short of what America's students, their parents, and our workforce deserves.

Mr. Speaker, I will be offering several amendments this week to address some of the shortfalls of H.R. 609. One bipartisan amendment, cosponsored by my colleague on the Education and Workforce Committee, Mr. SOUDER, would strike intrusive language in the bill dictating how colleges should carry out transfer credit policies.

An amendment sponsored by another colleague on the committee, Mr. HOLT, would correct a problem with the State tax allowance tables that deprive over 1 million students out of their fair share of Pell grants and reduce, if not eliminate, their eligibility for other types of need-based aid.

I will also offer amendments to preserve the Perkins Loan Revolving Fund, extend the expired tuition deduction claimed by middle-class families, and increase oversight on the administration and grading of ability to benefit exams.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that the Rules Committee will make these amendments in order. They are not partisan or political but, rather, commonsense amendments, making a weak bill better and keeping America's college students a top priority for this Nation.

ENERGY

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, I think most Americans are pretty interested, very concerned about the high cost of energy, particularly fuel.

At the present time, we are nearly 60 percent dependent on foreign oil. OPEC provides the largest part of that oil that we are importing. We currently have a very large trade deficit, and petroleum is really the major part of, at least the largest single entity in that trade deficit, and this is a major threat to our economy. Right now, the purchase of foreign oil contributes about one-third of that trade deficit that we are now experiencing.

The United States has only 3 percent of the world's petroleum reserves. So we are highly dependent on the rest of the world. We are now using more petroleum than we are discovering. So we are on a downhill slope. Obviously, we have to do some things differently than what we have been doing, and I think the energy bill we passed here in the Congress last summer was certainly a step in the right direction.

Many people may remember there was a renewable fuel standards in it that was fairly significant. There were incentives for wind, solar, hydrogen fuel cells which may be the wave of the future, something that is not a renewable fuel standard, but also some nuclear incentives were in there. We have not done much nuclear production for a long time, whereas Europe has moved ahead, and much of the energy in Europe is now due to nuclear power.

A couple of the major issues in a renewable fuel standard have to do with ethanol and biodiesel, and the remainder of my remarks will be addressed mainly to those topics.

First of all, a renewable fuel standard adds $51 billion to farm income over 10 years, and the good news for taxpayers is that this reduces government farm payments by $5.9 billion over that 10-year period. That is money that otherwise would be paid by the taxpayer. It also reduces the trade deficit of the United States by roughly $34 billion, and it significantly reduces air pollution as well.

So we think that obviously there are some tremendous benefits to the renewable fuel standard. Currently, we are producing roughly 5.9 billion gallons of ethanol this year, 2006; and the energy bill mandates by the year 2012, just 6 years from now, that we produce 7.5 billion gallons; but, actually, we will far exceed that at the pace that we are now producing ethanol.

□ 2000

By 2025, there is a goal on the part of many of us to become independent of the oil that is produced in the Middle East, which would mean we would need to produce roughly 60 billion gallons of ethanol, biodiesel, and those types of fuels. And this is doable. It is going to take a concerted effort, a commitment on the part of our country, but we can do that. Technology is changing rapidly.

One thing that I think is important to show is that we often hear that, well, ethanol is okay, but it actually burns up more energy than it produces. And that is not true. Ethanol, for every Btu of fossil fuel used, yields just about 1.4 Btu's of energy because a lot of the energy in ethanol comes from the sun. In contrast, gasoline, for every 1 Btu of fossil fuel used to produce it, yields about eight-tenths of a Btu. So there is an energy deficit.

The same is true of MTBE. And, of course, MTBE is rapidly being phased out, so there is a tremendous demand now for ethanol to fill that gap. So, anyway, the technology is certainly changing.

Something that is on the horizon is cellulosic ethanol. This is ethanol that would not necessarily be made from

corn, but would be made from switchgrass, rice, wheat, corn stover, so corn stalks, wheat stalks, and rice stalks can be used. These are things that are currently sometimes burned or thrown away. Also wood chips. So there is a tremendous opportunity out there in parts of the country that are not necessarily in the Corn Belt to be in some form of the ethanol industry.

Biodiesel is now where ethanol was about 10 or 15 years ago. It is on the cusp of really becoming a major part of our fuel supply and shows great promise. There are many spin-offs and by-products from ethanol. For instance, biodegradable plastics can be made in the process of wet milling. And right now a great deal of our packaging stores, like Wal-Mart and others, are now using biodegradable plastics.

So we think there is a great future here. And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to address the House.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge and lend support to the well over 1 million people who marched across American cities and towns in a peaceful, nonviolent way for fairness, dignity, and humane and respectful treatment of immigrant workers in our Nation. This ground swell of humanity wanted some very simple things. They wanted the principles of fairness and equal protection under the law to be applied in a fair and just way.

The people who marched are for comprehensive, reality-based immigration reform by this Congress, a reform that acknowledges the economic value, necessity and, yes, indeed, the codependency of our economy on the immigrant workforce; that also recognizes the inherent value of human beings and reaffirms the process of rigorous examination and process to attain permanent legal status and eventually citizenship. And it reaffirms a reality-based immigration reform, reaffirms the need for security in this country by assuring that the people that work here, that function here, are not hidden in the shadows but part of the workforce, integrated into that workforce and protected by the same laws and principles that all working people in this country enjoy.

I think what is happening in this country on the question of immigration is really about the future of our country. We have, as a Congress, a choice on immigration reform. We should not continue on the path set by this Congress in the Sensenbrenner bill, a bill that asks us to criminalize 11 million human beings in this country, that raises the specter of mass deportation and that ignites a flame of intolerance and division that this country is not about.

We don't need a path to create second-class citizens. We don't need a path that hides from our economic reality. We don't need a path that ignores the business interests. We don't need a path that forgets fairness and equity under the law. And we don't need a path that creates division and discrimination as a rule of law.

We cannot shun our values as an immigrant nation. This is a wrong path. And while possibly it is a short-term political victory based on division and based on creating a wedge issue that splits people in this country, it is a long-term defeat for this Nation.

I believe that we can do better. We can create a situation for the people of this country and for the immigrant workers in this country that is not blanket amnesty, that is not about open borders, that understands security is a priority issue, but also understands that comprehensive reform is the most important way to deal with this issue.

So let us not, as we debate this issue and as we continue to grapple with this very vexing and complex issue, let us not forget we are dealing with human beings, let us not ignore our economic reality, and let us put together a comprehensive package that accommodates both those realities and at the same time reaffirms the traditions, the values, the hopes and the aspirations of immigrants that have made this country what it is, that will strengthen it in the future, and that will continue the progress and the enlightenment this Nation needs.

OCALA NATIONAL FOREST

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 to strongly oppose the Bush administration's proposed sale of 300,000 acres of national forest lands, which include 1,000 acres of the Ocala National Forest in my congressional district.

The Bush administration's rationale for selling our national forest lands is to raise money for rural roads and schools. While our budget shortfall is temporary, ruining pristine national forest lands is permanent. That is why all four of the living former chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service sent a letter to Congress on March 13, 2006, strongly opposing the auctioning off of 300,000 acres of national forest lands.

Mr. Speaker, our national forest lands are worth protecting. Millions of Americans each year use our national forests to go hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, canoeing, and enjoying the outdoors. The Ocala National Forest also provides a habitat for thousands of animal species, including rare birds and black bears.

Now, what does the administration say about these forest lands to be sold? Well, Under Secretary of Agriculture Mark Rey, who directs national forest policy, said ''These are not the crown jewels we are talking about.'' Well, they say a picture is worth a thousand words, so let me show you a photograph of some of the actual land in the Ocala National Forest which is marked for sale by the administration.

Look at the green plush forest. Does this look ugly to you? Does anybody really believe that this would look better as a strip mall or a condo project? I think it is a crown jewel.

And let me show you who else thinks this land is pretty important. This is a photograph published in my local newspaper, the Orlando Sentinel, of a black bear that lives in the Ocala National Forest. Now, this black bear is being relocated from one location to another location. Look at this cute little black bear. Does anybody really believe that we should sacrifice this little black bear's habitat on the altar of budget deficits?

This fire sale of forest lands is literally unbearable. It is also financially shortsighted. We cannot sell national forest land every time there is a budget shortfall. This is a dangerous precedent for Congress to set. Our financial problems need to be addressed over the long term, not through the shortsighted sale of national treasures to the highest bidder.

The proposed sale of the forest land is not even an adequate budgetary solution. The money raised from this nationwide sell-off would not even be enough to cover the short-term school and road needs of the communities near Ocala National Forest, let alone other areas of the country.

Well, what can we do about it? There are three things: First, I circulated a letter to the Florida delegation asking them to oppose the sale of our Nation's forest lands, especially the nearly 1,000 acres in the Ocala National Forest. I am proud to report today that this letter was signed by both of our U.S. Senators, Republican and Democrat, and by a bipartisan majority of our House Members. On March 1, 2006, this letter was submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of the official comment period to voice our strong opposition to the sale.

Second, Congressman BEN CHANDLER of Kentucky and I are currently circulating a bipartisan letter asking Members to oppose the sale of 300,000 acres of forest lands all across the country in 41 separate States. Thus far, 52 Congressmen have signed on to our letter, and we encourage others to sign on tomorrow. After tomorrow, we will send this letter to the leaders of the House Budget Committee to urge them to oppose the administration's budget request and to encourage them to find alternative funding for rural schools and roads.

Finally, if we are unable to block this sale on the front end by having the administration withdraw this proposal, the plan would still have to be approved by this Congress, and I would encourage all of my colleagues to vote not just ''no,'' but ''heck no.''

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I am very optimistic we will be successful in blocking this reckless fire sale of our national forests and that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the serenity of the great outdoors for many years to come.

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last week, on March 19, our Nation marked a somber milestone. We began the fourth year of the Iraqi war. It is becoming quite clear that this falsely conceived war is proceeding disastrously, with no end in sight. The administration's repugnant use of the phrase as bombing began, ''shock and awe,'' has deteriorated into a ''knockdown and raw, last man left standing'' war of attrition.

The situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate precipitously. In the last month alone, there has been an escalation of sectarian violence. Dozens of suicide bombings, insurgent attacks and the like have left almost 1,000 more people dead since a bombing destroyed the dome of Samarra's Golden Mosque, a sacred and holy site to Shiite Muslims.

Iraq is still without a functioning government, as the Iraqi parliament has convened just once and for only 30 minutes. Moreover, there was an automobile ban in place throughout Baghdad to prevent car bombings that same day. A city-wide ban on cars, Mr. Speaker, is not a safe city. A nation where journalists cannot travel to report is not a safe country.

Headlines from newspapers around the globe have the same theme, civil war in Iraq. The administration, however, does not seem to see it that way. The President was in Ohio last week and made the following comment: ''Americans look at the violence that they see each night on their television screens and wonder how I can remain so optimistic about the prospects of success in Iraq. They wonder what I see that they do not.''

Well, I think the President has it the other way around, Mr. Speaker. The world sees a lot this President doesn't. Three years ago, we saw the administration did not have a plan to win the peace, and he and his narrow group of advisers led us down the path to war. We also see what he cannot see today, that our presence in Iraq has led to an increase in violence and terrorist activities in the Middle East and around the world, making us less safe as a nation.

Three years ago, on the eve of the invasion, I warned, and I quote myself, ''Even if we take the ground, we do not share the culture. In the end, we have to learn to exist in a world with religious states that we may not agree with, and find ways to cooperate.''

So the President has traded a brutal sectarian regime for an unstable nation that looks more and more every day like a dawning theocracy.

□ 2015

Events in the last few weeks seem to show this is indeed becoming the case. By refusing to prepare for the possibility that we would be considered occupiers rather than liberators, these architects of this war never afforded an opportunity to truly win the peace. Hospitals and medical services were ignored. Iraqi organizations open to the West were never consulted. Western media was not culturally appropriate inside that region. The seeds for unrest were sown before U.S. troops even entered Iraq.

Achieving military success without winning the hearts and minds of the public is a hollow victory, and now the President tells us troops will remain in Iraq until he leaves office in 2009, who knows when.

May I remind the body this President held a theatrically staged press event on a U.S. aircraft carrier on May 1, 2003, with a ''Mission Accomplished'' banner flying in the background. Major combat operations in Iraq have ended, he announced.

Two weeks ago, the United States launched the largest aerial assault in Iraq since 2003. More than 1,500 of our soldiers were deploy in the Samarra region to root out insurgent strongholds and seize weapons caches and the like. That sounds like a major combat operation to me, and it sounds like we are losing ground rather than making progress.

Statements by those in the administration prior to the invasion show how wrong the Bush administration has been. Donald Rumsfeld in February 2003 said, ''It is unknowable how long the conflict will last. It could be 6 days, 6 weeks, I doubt 6 months.''

Vice President CHENEY in March 2003 said, ''We will, in fact, be greeted as liberators. I think it will go relatively quickly . . . (in) weeks rather than months.'' We are into the fourth year, almost as long as it took to fight World War II.

The toll this war has taken is staggering. Since March 2003, 2,322 U.S. soldiers have died, another 18,000 troops have been injured as a result of hostilities, with numbers doubling between 2003 and 2004 and increasing again in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I wish to place in the RECORD names of Ohioans, 104 of them, brave patriots who have died in service to our country in Iraq. God bless them.

OHIOANS DEAD THROUGH OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (AS OF MARCH 4, 2006):

Anderson, Nathan Richard; Andres, Joseph John Jr.; Barkey, Michael Christopher; Bates, Todd Michael; Bell, Timothy Michael Jr; Benford, Jason A; Bernholtz, Eric James; Biskie, Benjamin Walter; Boskovitch, Jeffrey A; Bourdon, Elvis; Bowen, Samuel Robert; Brownfield, Andrew David; and Buryj, Jesse Ryan.

Christian, Brett Thomas; Cifuentes, Michael Joseph; Conover, Steven Daniel; Davids, Wesley Graham; Derga, Dustin Alan; Deyarmin, Daniel N Jr; Dixon, Christopher Robert; Dowdy, Robert John; Dyer, Christopher Jenkins; Eckert, Gary Andrew Jr; Eckfield, Robert Franklin Jr; Erdy, Nicholas Brandon; and Etterllng, Jonathan Edward.

Finke, Michael Wayne Jr; Fitzgerald, Dustin Robert; Ford David, Harrison IV; Garmback, Joseph Martin Jr; Gilbert, Richard Alan Jr; Godwin, Todd Justin; Grella, Devin James; Gurtner, Christian Daniel; Hardy, Richard Allen; Harper, Bradley Jared; Hawkins, Omer Thomas II; Hines, Timothy James Jr; Hodge, Jeremy Michael; and Hoffman, Justin Fenton.

Ivy, Kendall Howard II; Johnson, Adam Robert; Keeling, Thomas O;Kinney, Lester Ormond II; Kinslow, Anthony David; Knight, Timothy Allen; Knop, Allen James; Kreuter, David Kenneth John; Kuhns, Larry Robert Jr; Landrus, Sean Gregory; Large, Bryan William; and Lyons, Christopher P.

Martin, Ryan Abern; McVicker, Daniel M; Mendezruiz, David A; Mendoza, Ramon Juan Jr; Messmer, Nicolas Edward; Meyer, Harrison James; Miller, James Hoyt IV; Mitchell, Curtis Anthony; Montgomery, Brian P; Morgan, Richard Lynn Jr; Murray, Jeremy Enlow; Neighbor, Gavin Lee; Nolan, Allen Duane; and Nowacki, Andrew Walter.

Oberleitner, Branden Frederick; Odums, Charles Edward II; Ott, Kevin Charles; Pintor, Dennis Lloyd; Pratt, Daniel Joseph; Prazynski, Taylor B; Prince, Kevin William; Pummill, Richard Thomas; Ramey, Richard Patrick; Ramsey, Joshua Adam; Reed, Aaron Howard; Reese, Aaron Todd; Rock, Nathaniel S; and Rockhold, Marlin Tyrone.

Schamberg, Kurt Daniel; Schroeder, Edward August II; Scott, David Allen; Seesan, Aaron N; Seymour, Devon P; Shepherd, Adam Roger; Shepherd, Daniel Michael; Sloan, Brandon Ulysses; Smith, Kevin Scott; Smith, Michael James Jr; Souslin, Kenneth Clarence; Spann, Jacob D; Sparks, Jason Lee; Squires, Brad D; Swaney, Robert Adam; and Swisher, Tyler Bobbitt.

Tipton, John Edgar; Van Dusen, Brian Keith; Vandayburg, Allen Jeffrey; Webb, Charles Joseph; Wightman, William Brett; Wilkins, Charles Langdon III; Williams, Andre L; Wobler, Zachary Ryan; and Zimmer, Nicholaus Eugene.

OHIOANS DEAD THROUGH OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (AS OF MARCH 4, 2006):

Egnor, Jody Lynn; Foraker, Ryan Dane; Freeman, Daniel Jason; Goare, Shamus Otto; Good, Alecia Sabrina; Hickey, Julie Rochelle; Jones, Darrell Ray Jr; McDaniel, William Louis II; Oneill, Michael Christopher; and Owens, Bartt Derek.

HONORING SERGEANT ANTON HIETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to express the heartfelt condolences of a grateful Nation and to honor the life of Sergeant Anton Hiett of Mount Airy, North Carolina. Sergeant Hiett passed away on March 12, 2006, while serving in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Hiett served our country as a U.S. Army Reserve combat medic. His strong patriotism and desire to do what was right led him to join the

military after graduating from North Surry High School. He began his career as an infantryman, but later decided that his calling was to care for his wounded comrades. Last year, Sergeant Hiett volunteered to go to Afghanistan because he felt compelled to help his country at war.

Sergeant Hiett was a loving husband, father, son and brother. His friends describe him as someone ''having a big heart and always going the extra mile to help others.''

He leaves behind his wife, Misty Hiett, his 2-year-old daughter, Kyra Hiett, his parents, George and Angela Hiett, and three siblings. May God bless and comfort them during this very difficult time.

We owe this brave soldier and his family a tremendous debt of gratitude for his selfless service and sacrifice. Our country could not maintain its freedom and security without heroes like Sergeant Hiett who made the ultimate sacrifice. Americans as well as Afghanis owe their liberty to Sergeant Hiett and his fallen comrades who came before him.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life of Sergeant Anton Hiett.

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

(Mr. EMANUEL 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 gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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. BUTTERFIELD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD 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 Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT 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 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 Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this evening, as on each Tuesday evening, I rise on behalf of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, a group of 37 of us that are fiscally conservative Democrats that are concerned about the state of affairs in America. We are concerned about the debt, the deficit, the budget; and we are committed to trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government and our Nation's budgeting process.

Ever since I was a small child growing up in Prescott, Emmet and Hope, Arkansas, I always heard it was the Democrats that spent the money. And yet it was a President named Bill Clinton from Arkansas, from my hometown of Hope, Arkansas, in fact, that gave this Nation its first balanced budget in 40 years. From 1988 through 2001, America enjoyed the prosperity that came with having its fiscal house in order. America enjoyed the prosperity that came with having a balanced budget.

It is hard now to believe that from 1998 through 2001 this country had a balanced budget, because, as we all know, for the sixth year in a row this Nation, under this Republican-led Congress and under this President, this administration, has given us the largest budget deficit ever, ever in our Nation's history for a sixth year in a row.

As a matter of fact, as you walk the Halls of Congress, it is easy to spot a fiscally conservative Democrat because the 37 of us who belong to the Blue Dog Coalition have this poster outside our office in the Halls of Congress. As you can see today, the U.S. national debt is $8,365,525,832,151 and some change. That is a big number.

Let us put it in a way that we all can understand it. For every man, woman and child, including those born this past hour, every citizen of America's share of the national debt is $28,000 and some change.

Mr. Speaker, where I come from, very few of my constituents can afford to write a check for $28,000 and yet it is this kind of debt, this kind of deficit that we are saddling on our children and grandchildren and expecting them someday to pay back, and I believe it is morally wrong.

I raise these issues because, you see, my grandparents left this country better than they found it for my parents, and my parents left this country better than they found it for my generation, and I believe we have a duty and an obligation to try and leave this country just a little bit better than we found it for the next generation. But instead, for the sixth year in a row, we have the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history.

This administration, this Republican Congress, continues to pass tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year. Just in the last few months, this Congress passed the so-called Budget Deficit Reduction Act. Here is what it did. It cut Medicaid, the only health insurance plan for the poor, disabled, and elderly. It cut student loans and a program for orphans to the tune of $40 billion. And then they passed another tax cut to the tune of about $90 billion.

I was not real good in math in high school or college, but you can do the math on that. Some $90 billion in tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year, $40 billion in cuts to Medicaid, to orphan programs and to student loans. That amounts to $50 billion in additional debt, and yet the Republican leadership in this body had the nerve to call it the Deficit Reduction Act.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time for those of us in the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition to rise up and hold this administration, this Congress responsible for these kinds of reckless spending habits that destroy future generations.

The budget the President has submitted for fiscal year 2007, some $2.8 trillion, you have to give it to him, he has managed to cut all of the programs that matter to people: health care, education, infrastructure, economic development, and yet give us the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history all at the same time. How does he do that? Because he continues to propose to borrow money from foreign lenders, foreign central banks, foreign investors to fund tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year. What has it given us? It has given us a debt of $8,365,525,832,151.

By the time we complete this hour, Mr. Speaker, the national debt will have risen more than $41 million.

Every Tuesday night those of us in the Blue Dog Coalition, we are 37 members strong, we come here to talk about the debt and the deficit and what it means, not only to today's generation but to future generations, because you see, Mr. Speaker, these are big numbers. They are big numbers, but let me put it in perspective.

Not only is our Nation borrowing about a billion dollars a day; we are sending $279 million every day to Iraq, but do not dare ask the President how he is spending it or if he has a plan for how it is to be spent because he will tell you that you are unpatriotic. Some

$57 million is going every day to Afghanistan. And on top of that, our Nation is spending the first half a billion we collect in your tax money each and every day simply to pay interest, not principal, just interest on the national debt.

We need I–49 in my congressional district. I need $1.5 billion to complete it. Give me 3 days' interest on the national debt, I can build I–49. On the eastern side, we are waiting on I–69. Give me 3 days' interest on the national debt, and I can complete I–69' and with these two interstates, we can bring economic opportunities and jobs to one of the most depressed and distressed areas of the country.

These are the kinds of priorities that should be America's priorities that continue to go unmet until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order and restore some common sense to our government.

Mr. Speaker, if you have questions for the Blue Dog Coalition, I would invite you to e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov.

Mr. Speaker, we are very privileged this evening to have a special guest join us, that is, the whip of the Democratic Caucus, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank both Mr. ROSS and the Blue Dog Coalition for focusing on what I believe to be one of the most critical problems confronting our country. I am going to speak a little bit about that.

I lament the loss of one of the great leaders of the House, one of the great leaders of the Blue Dog Coalition, Charlie Stenholm. No Member with whom I have served over the last 25 years, a quarter of a century, has been any more focused on trying to instill fiscal responsibility in the policies of this House than was Charlie Stenholm.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friends in the Blue Dog Coalition for organizing this important Special Order hour. The Blue Dogs have long been focused on this issue of fiscal responsibility, and I believe there is no more important issue in our Nation today.

□ 2030

I do not make that statement lightly. It is not hyperbole. I realize that our Nation is at war. Our gulf coast is still reeling from the worst natural disaster in American history. We are struggling, nearly 5 years after 9/11, to address our homeland security vulnerabilities.

Forty-five million Americans have no health insurance. Health care costs, gas prices, and college costs are all up for our citizens; and median household income, at the same time, as you know, Mr. ROSS, is down. These are many of these critical issues that we face today. However, what the Blue Dog Coalition knows, and what every American needs to know, is that these issues that we face will all be impacted by the dangerous fiscal policies that we are embarked on.

Why? Because the record Federal budget deficits and exploding national debt that have been instigated over the last 5 years will affect our ability to address virtually every issue confronting the American people. That is why this matters.

This is not just some pie-in-the-sky issue that Mr. ROSS and I are talking about. Mr. ROSS made it very clear what he could do with just 3 days' interest in terms of bringing economic vitality to an area that needs growth and jobs and help with prosperity. Other issues such as the war on terror, homeland security, health care, education, Social Security and Medicare are all going to be impacted by these incredibly huge deficits that we are creating.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know you are interested in these comments, but here is what David Walker had to say, the Comptroller General of the United States. He told the Senate Budget Committee on February 15, and I quote, ''Continuing on this unsustainable fiscal path will gradually erode, if not suddenly damage, our economy, our standard of living and, ultimately, our national security.'' Now, that is the gentleman whom we have appointed as the watchdog for the Congress on the finances of this country to make sure we don't waste money. What he is saying is, these policies are unsustainable, dangerous and will undermine our national security.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me no pleasure to say this, but I believe it is an undisputed statement of fact. This administration, through its insistence on unaffordable tax policies, is the most fiscally reckless administration in American history. Just listen to former Republican House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas, who told the Wall Street Journal in January of 2004, and again I quote, ''I'm sitting here and I'm upset about the deficit, and I'm upset about spending. There is no way I can pin that on the Democrats. Republicans own the town now.'' That was the former Republican majority leader saying, Republicans are responsible for this reckless, irresponsible fiscal policy that worries Dick Armey.

Simply look at the facts. When President Bush took office in January 2001, he inherited a projected 10-year budget surplus of $5.6 trillion. That is what he said. It is not what we said. He said that in a statement to the Congress.

President Clinton reduced the budget deficit every year during his first term, and then, Mr. Speaker, in his second term, presided over four straight budget surpluses. That hadn't been done for 70 years prior to that time. The first time that happened was 70 years ago. In fact, the Clinton administration paid down the national debt by $453 billion during that second term. In fact, the surpluses were over half a trillion dollars. But we paid down the debt by $453 billion.

So, not surprisingly, President Bush issued this bold prediction on March 31, 2001. Before I get to that, my friend has put up on the board, Mr. ROSS, the distinguished gentleman from Arkansas, has put up on the board the deficits over the last 25 years. Now, I have been in Congress every one of those years, Mr. Speaker. 17 of those have been with Republican Presidents, 17 of those years. Eight of those years have been with a Democratic President.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some say, oh, well, 9/11 happened. It did. It cost us. It was serious. We needed to respond to it. But, very frankly, from 1982 to 1993, 9/11 didn't happen. Did we go to war in Iraq? Yes. And the good news was President Bush and Jim Baker went around the world and said, this is an international problem, and the international community paid for it. We didn't.

But if you will look at those figures that Mr. ROSS has put up, every year, every one, without fail, under a Republican President over the last 25 years has been a deficit year.

And then you get to the Democratic year. Now, frankly, Mr. ROSS has them in blue, but the first four numbers are, in fact, red numbers. We ran deficits. Why? Because we were pulling ourselves out of the deep debt that had been created by the prior two administrations. And then when we did that, it then took us into surplus for 4 straight years. But here's the good news.

Seventeen years, it is the bad news first; 17 years under Republican administrations, $4-plus trillion of deficits. Under Bill Clinton, $62.2 billion of surplus. That is an amazing record.

But here's what President Bush issued, a prediction in March of 2001 inheriting these surpluses, quote: ''We will pay off $2 trillion of debt over the next decade.'' That is what President Bush said, over the next 10 years. He has now been here 6 years. Two billion dollars of debt over the next decade; that will be the largest debt reduction in any country, ever. Future generations, President Bush said, shouldn't be forced to pay back money.

Now, I want, Mr. Speaker, I know you will be interested in this and others will be interested, other colleagues. President Bush said this: ''Future generations shouldn't be forced to pay back money that we have borrowed. We owe this kind of responsibility to our children and grandchildren.''

Tragically, although President Bush said that, his policies have led to exactly the opposite and have placed, if you add—Mr. ROSS says $28,000, but if you add the added debt limit, $30,000 per child, per grandchild, per wife, per husband, and depending upon the size of your family, if it is four, $120,000.

The reality, of course, shows that notwithstanding what Mr. Bush said he was going to do, the President said he was going to do, he has done exactly

the opposite. In 5 years, the Bush administration and this Republican Congress, Mr. Speaker, have created the four largest budget deficits in American history: As Mr. ROSS pointed out, $378 billion in fiscal 2002, $412 billion in fiscal 2003, $318 billion in fiscal 2005, and a projected $371 billion in fiscal 2006. And the Congressional Budget Office, Mr. Speaker, is projecting deficits as far as the eye can see.

So not only did this administration not reduce the deficit by $2 trillion, it has added $3 trillion. That is a $5 trillion mistake.

As far as paying down the national debt, the administration and this Congress have been forced to raise the statutory debt limit four times in 5 years. As Mr. ROSS knows, and my good friend, Mr. MATHESON knows, during the last 4 years of the Clinton administration, we never raised the national debt, not once. And, in fact, during the entire 8 years, we only raised it twice.

This administration has raised the statutory debt limit four times, for a total of $3.015 trillion, with a T. The national debt limit now stands at $9 trillion, which means that every man, woman and child in America owes about $30,000 of debt, as I said.

Consider, as the gentleman has pointed out, and he talked about it in terms of a day. We are borrowing $600,000 per minute, $600,000 per minute. In the last years of the Clinton administration, we didn't need to do that because we had responsible fiscal policies that we were pursuing.

Consider, the first 42 American presidents borrowed a total of $1.01 trillion from foreign governments and financial institutions over 211 years. This administration, in 5 years, now in their sixth, has borrowed from foreign entities, China, Saudi Arabia and others, $1.055 trillion. In other words, this President, in 5 years, has borrowed more money from foreign governments, foreign banks, foreign financial centers than all of the other Presidents America has had, combined.

Mr. Speaker, you don't need a doctorate in economics to appreciate that our Nation's economy and its security is more vulnerable when we are deeply indebted to foreign creditors.

Our deteriorating fiscal condition also has other serious side effects, Mr. Speaker. For example, the interest payments on the national debt are exploding. This is just like the interest consumers pay on their credit cards. In fiscal 2007, those interest payments will total a projected $243 billion.

Now, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, $243 billion is more money than every bill we will pass appropriating money for health, for education, for infrastructure, for environment, for crime prevention, for fighting terrorism, except the defense bill. So of the 11 appropriations bills we will pass, only one is larger than the interest we have to pay on the debt because we are mortgaging our future. In fact, interest payments on the national debt over the next decade are projected at $3 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, our children and grandchildren won't be able to buy anything for that. As a matter of fact, that sum is so large that just with the interest we are paying, we could pay all of Medicare expenses over the next 10 years. Think of that. These interest payments constitute resources that could have been used for national and homeland security, for Social Security and Medicare, for health care and education, and yes, Mr. Speaker, for tax cuts.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying it is highly ironic that President Bush traveled the country last year warning of Social Security's imminent demise, while at the same time he was spending every single nickel of Social Security surplus over the last 5 years. $817 billion of Social Security surpluses we have spent. And, in fact, what we have done is, we have taken those FICA taxes from working men and women and given it to some of the richest people in America in their tax cuts. My, my, my, what responsible policy. And, in fact, under the Republican budget policies every nickel of the Social Security surplus will again be spent over the next 5 years, a total of $1.148 trillion in total.

Consider that just a few years ago the chairman of the House Budget Committee, Mr. NUSSLE of Iowa, confidently predicted, now, this is Mr. NUSSLE of Iowa, our colleague who chairs the Budget Committee, who talks about fiscal responsibility, he said this: This Congress will protect 100 percent of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, period.

This is Mr. NUSSLE. No speculation, no supposition, no projections.

That statement of course, Mr. Speaker, proved absolutely, undeniably false, wrong. We have spent every nickel. We haven't saved 1 cent of that Social Security surplus. And I hope the Members of this House and the American people will keep this representation and others made by our Republican friends in mind as we prepare to consider this coming budget because they are going to say a lot of things, as they have in the past.

We will likely hear many more confident, bold predictions in the days ahead, predictions that are simply unmoored in fiscal reality. Every single Member of this House knows that the one tried and true method of restoring fiscal discipline is to reinstate the common-sense pay-as-you-go budget rules that were adopted when the Democrats were in charge in 1990. And George Bush I joined in that bipartisan agreement to get a handle on our fiscal posture in America.

Our Republican friends allowed those paygo rules to expire, Mr. Speaker, in 2002. We urged them to keep them. We have offered them in our budget resolution every year. They have been rejected. And our Nation has rued the day that that rule was changed.

I urge my colleagues, join Democrats in supporting pay-as-you-go budget rules. Let us end this cycle of deficit and debt that threatens our Nation's security and future.

And I thank my friend, Mr. ROSS. I thank Mr. MATHESON, who cochairs the Blue Dog Caucus, for continuing to focus on this issue which, in my opinion, is the most important that confronts our country because every other issue will be impacted by our fiscal irresponsibility.

□ 2045

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the whip of the Democratic Caucus, for joining the Blue Dog Coalition this evening as we hold this Republican administration and this Republican Congress accountable for this reckless spending, for this record deficit, for the record debt, and for this out-of-control budget that truly does not reflect America's priorities.

The gentleman from Maryland raised an excellent point when he talked about the Social Security trust fund. And I am beginning to understand. The first bill I filed when I got to Congress back in 2001 was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund. And the Republican leadership refused to give us a hearing or a vote on that bill. And now I understand why, because when we talk about the fiscal year 2006 deficit at $318 billion, that is not right. The real deficit is $494 billion because the $318 billion is counting the Social Security trust fund.

Now, when I go to the bank to get a loan, they want to know how I am going to pay it back, when I am going to pay it back, where the money is coming from to pay it back. And yet our government, this Republican Congress, continues to borrow billions of dollars from the Social Security trust fund with absolutely no idea, no provision on how or when or where the money is coming from to pay it back. And I believe that is morally wrong, as we have a duty and an obligation to protect Social Security for today's seniors as well as future generations.

I am also pleased to be joined this evening by one of the co-Chairs of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, a real leader within the group, Mr. MATHESON from Utah.

Welcome.

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. ROSS.

And it is great to have the minority whip join us. He has often been described as an honorary Blue Dog, and he has always recognized and been a voice in support of fiscally responsible policy. And I just want to emphasize a point that the minority whip had made in his comments about this notion that we should live with the set of rules that you have got to live within your means.

It is going to take some tough decisions to bring back fiscal discipline to this government. Balanced budgets are not going to be easy to achieve. If it

was easy, I would like to think it already would have happened.

So what the Blue Dogs believe is that you have got to put in a set of rules and a structure that helps encourage fiscal discipline. And one of the rules that the Blue Dogs have been strongly supportive of and the minority whip has mentioned in his comments is this notion that you pay as you go. And this is a concept that is pretty basic when you think about it.

If you have something new, a new program where you want to spend some money, you have got to pay for it. You have got to pay for it by taking money away from something else or finding a source of revenue to pay for it.

But the other piece of that puzzle is, if you want to do a tax cut, you have got to pay for that with corresponding cuts in spending or finding revenues elsewhere. It is really a pretty basic concept. I think people, when they look at their own household budget, look at it that way. They have so much money coming in and out that if they want to do an adjustment somewhere, they have got to do an adjustment someplace else to accommodate for that. And that is all we are asking.

And what is interesting, and I may want to ask the minority whip to describe this for me, he was here in 1990 when this was put in place, when the first President Bush was in office. I was not in Congress at that time, but those rules were in place starting after 1990, and I think among many factors, they were the critical factor in moving us toward the surpluses that we enjoyed by the end of the 1990s. And I find it unfortunate, and we should all find it unfortunate, quite frankly, that those rules were allowed to expire at the end of, I believe, 2001.

I know legislation has been offered and introduced to restore those rules. We cannot seem to get a vote on restoring those rules. I would love to have an up-or-down vote here in the House of Representatives on restoring those rules. I would love to see anyone, really, stand up and vote against that type of common-sense approach to encouraging fiscal discipline here in Congress.

I think that that is such a crucial point, I want to reemphasize what the minority whip had mentioned because I think that people are looking for solutions.

It is easy to step back and just complain about the problems we have here, but there are solutions out there to help us get our arms around this problem, and one of them is, let us look for these pay-as-you-go rules so that we all live within our means and we make responsible decisions.

The Blue Dogs actually have a 12-point plan, and I just want to talk about one other of those points in this segment where I am talking right now that I think is important, because along with trying to have fiscal discipline and making sure you live within your means, you have also got to make sure that money is being spent wisely, and that means you need accountability. And we do not have accountability right now in many, many agencies within the Federal Government. Do you realize in the Department of Defense, there are 63 different agencies and only six of them can give you a clean audit of their books and the other 57 cannot tell you where the money is being spent?

Now, I think it is Congress' job to ask the questions about where that money is being spent. I do not think this Congress has been very aggressive in its oversight function and asking where the money has been spent. The most recent year for which we have this data is 2003, and the government cannot account for $24.5 billion that was spent. And we throw a lot of numbers around here; $24.5 billion is a lot of money. That is more than the budget for the entire Department of Justice for a whole year, and right now we do not have the ability to have Federal agencies tell us how that money has been spent.

So one of the other points of the Blue Dogs' plan I just want to mention is, it would be a requirement that you have got to give us a clean audit of your books, and if you do not, your budget stays frozen at the previous year's level. I think that is a pretty good economic incentive for people to want to tell us how the money is being spent, and that forces accountability. So with fiscal discipline, of course, we want to have a structure that forces those tough decisions, but it is also important that we make sure we know how money is being spent. We need to have answers to those questions.

So I wanted to stand up in response and reaction to the very great comments and great statistics and great information and history that the minority whip has laid out for this cycle of moving from debt to a period of surplus, and now we are moving deeply into debt again. I want to reemphasize his support of the pay-as-you-go that he mentioned. He mentioned another notion of accountability the Blue Dogs have been a strong advocate for. I think that is how we are going to try to get our arms around this situation.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON), co-Chair of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, for his insight.

And the gentleman is right. As members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we are trying to make some sense out of our Nation's government, out of the budget process, trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline. We are not here just to rail at the Republicans. It may be the first time in 50 years that they have controlled the White House, House, and Senate. But we are not here just to criticize or to hold accountable, but also to offer up solutions and ideas on how we can fix this thing for America and future generations, and that is why we have a 12-point plan.

And the gentleman from Utah talked about accountability. And right here you will see an aerial photo of a hay meadow at the Hope Airport in Hope, Arkansas, a so-called FEMA staging area. It is my understanding that it has been about 7 months now since Hurricane Katrina, a terrible storm, devastated the gulf coast. We have folks in Pass Christian, Mississippi, living in military-style tents. We have got some 80,000 people living in camper trailers. We have got over 10,000 families living in hotel and motel rooms spread out over several States. And yet FEMA has purchased and has stored in a hay meadow at the Hope Airport some 10,777 brand-new, fully furnished, fully furnished, manufactured homes, $431 million worth just sitting there in a hay meadow at the Hope Airport, some 450 miles from the eye of the storm, while people continue to live in hotels and military-style tents and in camper trailers.

This is an example of the lack of accountability in our government. This is a symbol of what is wrong with this administration and what is wrong with FEMA. Their response is, they are concerned because, as you can see, they are literally just parked in this hay meadow, literally parked in the hay meadow.

And now winter weather has come and set in and spring is here and the showers are here and it is starting to rain. So FEMA's response, you would think, would be to get these 10,777; and 300 of them have been moved, by the way, good for FEMA, so we are down to 10,477 brand-new, fully furnished manufactured homes. You would think FEMA's response is, let us get them to the people who lost their homes and everything they own, who so desperately need them on the gulf coast. But no, FEMA's response is, we are going to fix that. We are going to spend $6 million to gravel the hay meadow. That is FEMA's response.

It is the lack of accountability that people are fed up with, Mr. Speaker. This is a symbol of what is wrong with this administration, what is wrong with this Republican Congress and what is wrong with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

At this time, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Georgia, a real leader within the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much, Mr. ROSS. And, as always, it is indeed a pleasure to be with you on these special orders.

I want to agree with our distinguished majority whip, who has distinguished himself in his years of leadership here, who has been fighting this fight for so long. And our whip pointed out an important point that is registering with the American people, and that is this: There is great concern all across the breadth and the depth of this country concerning the degree of foreign ownership of our country.

Mr. ROSS, we have time and time again been on this floor pointing out

the danger of foreign investment that we are overwhelmingly dependent upon. We are not critical of being an open, free society in which we are open for investors from all around the world to come and participate in our great economy. We are certainly not against the trade policies that involve all of the globalization. That is very important. We are very much involved and in support of opening up free markets so that our goods and our products are being traded.

But, Mr. ROSS, it is a dangerous, dangerous situation when we are overwhelmingly now dependent for our wherewithal on foreign interests. The fact that now that foreign investors control and own over 52 percent of our debt is not a healthy position for us to be in, for the mere fact that right now we are borrowing at a rate, that we are spending more just on interest to these countries than what we are spending on our own homeland security, our veterans, and our education, combined.

Here is the question: What will happen if this dries up? What will happen, let us say, in our negotiations and our dealings with China, from whom we are borrowing and who holds $250 billion in our debt? Or with Japan, that controls over $658 billion of our debt? Or with Taiwan, who controls over $117 billion? Or Hong Kong at $80 billion? Or the OPEC and the Middle Eastern countries, who control, combined, over $75 billion of our debt?

The issue here is that these are countries in which we have severe differences with who can use this at an inappropriate moment of strategic blackmail in so many financial areas and national security areas. Speaking of which, we cannot have any national security if we do not have financial security.

Mr. ROSS, I am glad you mentioned your trailers. I had a town hall meeting back home in one of my communities called Riverdale in Clayton County, and my Uncle Eugene said, You know, I was watching you all on television. I want you to ask your partner there, Mr. ROSS, have they moved those trailers yet?

Mr. ROSS. Three hundred of them.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Three hundred of them are moved. But they have still got so many there.

Mr. ROSS. Ten thousand four hundred and seventy-seven remain in this hay meadow at the Hope Airport while people continue to live in hotels, camper trailers, and military-style tents. It is horrible.

□ 2100

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. We are in a very, very delicate situation financially and a very insecure position financially, particularly as the world is looking at us.

But the most important point that I want to make, as I turn it back over to one of my other colleagues, is this. In my office today I had a visit from a group of my constituents who run a program called TRIO.

TRIO is the overlaying umbrella of a series of upward-bound programs that help young people who need a helping hand to get them into college. And that program is being axed by the President. I just left this morning, a group of us in a CODEL, with Congressman JERRY MORAN, who is a good friend who is on the Republican side, but is a good subcommittee chairman of our commodities group.

We had a hearing on the farm bill. And the two most important issues that they were saying is, please, Congressman, do not let the Bush administration cut our farm programs, our conservation programs. We had another visit from another group of folks who were senior citizens: do not let them cut our Medicare and our Medicaid programs. From the veterans themselves: please do not let them cut any more of our programs.

So when we look abroad at the foreign situation and we look here at home, we see pressing concerns and threats to our financial security that is at the hands of this administration and its very, very unresponsive, irresponsible and reckless financial policies.

And I am just proud to be here with the Blue Dogs this evening to point those issues out and make sure that the American people are aware of the great, great issues that we are faced with.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Georgia who raises an excellent point, that is, how the United States is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders, foreign central banks, foreign investors. In fact, foreign lenders currently hold a total of well over $2 trillion of our public debt.

Compare that to only $23 billion in foreign holdings back in 1993. And who are these countries that we are borrowing billions of dollars from? Japan, $682.8 billion. China, $249.8 billion.

As my friend from Tennessee, one of the founders of the Blue Dog Coalition, Mr. TANNER, has said before, if China decides to invade Taiwan, we will have to borrow even more money from China in order to defend Taiwan.

This does directly impact not only our national security, but our monetary policy because they can call these loans.

United Kingdom, $223.2 billion. Caribbean Banking Centers, I had never heard of such, $115.3 billion. Taiwan, $71.3 billion. OPEC, $67.8 billion they have loaned us to fund our government, to fund tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year, and we wonder why we have got $2.50 gasoline.

Korea, $66.5 billion. Germany, $65.7 billion. Canada, $53.8 billion. And Hong-Kong rounds out the top 10 lenders in loaning money to the United States of America at $46.5 billion.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Just to add to that point, just to add to that, in addition to all of what you just said, when you add the fact that this country is borrowing $2 billion every day from foreign governments, just to finance our trade deficits, we have just been talking about the budget deficits.

But when you turn and you add our trade deficits to that, and Mr. ROSS, again, a point that came out of my agriculture hearing just today in Valdosta, Georgia, was the point that now for the first time, just 10 years ago, the United States, on our agriculture we controlled or held 17 percent of all of the world's exports on agriculture products.

Now, do you know that that is down to less than 10 percent? And the fact of the matter is, we are now exporting more of our foodstuffs into this country than we are exporting out. This is not good for our national security, for this country, not only depending upon our finances from abroad; but, good Lord, if we get to the point where we are depending on our food from abroad, we are in serious trouble.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia. I am pleased to have him as an active member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. We are 37 members strong.

Mr. Speaker, if you have questions, comments or concerns you would like to raise with us, you can e-mail us at bluedog@mail.house.gov. That is bluedog@mail.house.gov.

Another very active member, a leader within the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, is the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF). I yield to him for as much time as he may so desire.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) for yielding to me. Once more I thank him for leading these Blue Dog hours each week and for the tremendous job he does in trying to balance our budget here in the Nation's Capital, as well as look out for those constituents back in Arkansas.

I wanted to join the gentleman from Arkansas and raise a number of concerns with the way that we are handling the Nation's budget, talk about some of the reforms that the Blue Dogs have been advocating. Let me just start out by talking about the budget picture. The chart that you have put up, Mr. ROSS, really tells the story of the trillions of dollars' worth of debt we have acquired, the fact that for every man, woman and child in the country, we now owe $28,000.

I was out in my district last week talking to a group of school kids. They were asking me, what would I like to see different about the way the country is run. I said, well, for one thing, I would like to see us balance our budget.

Right now, we are spending your money, I told this young man. We are spending so much of your money, that when you graduate from college, if you graduated tomorrow, in addition to your student loans, you would owe the

country $28,000. By the time you actually graduate from college, it will probably be, on the present course, much more than that.

Now, why is it that we have this debt? Well, the bottom line is, we are spending money faster than it is coming in, and you can't vote. We are spending your money, because you cannot object. That just is not right.

Now, how did we get to this situation? I think we got here through some very creative accounting. It used to be that when we calculated our debt, we looked at a 10-year window. But the 10-year picture got so bleak, we decided that, no, we will start looking at, instead, a 5-year window. We won't look at what happens beyond 5 years because the debt just grows so large.

In fact, what we started to do is we started to craft some of the revenue and tax measures here so that they would balloon in the outyears, so the impact on the budget would take place in the outyears, so that if we only looked at the narrow 5-year window, we didn't see how bad the picture got when the full effect of our policies took place 5 to 10 or 15 years from now.

But we did more than that. When the administration, for example, says that their plan will balance or cut the debt in half over the next 5 years, they are taking great poetic license with certain assumptions about what will happen in the next several years. For example, the administration's budget, the one they say that will get us to cut the deficit in half in the next 5 years, ignores the costs of the Iraq war after the end of this year.

That makes an assumption I think we would all like to make that there won't be any further war costs after December 31, but that is not a realistic assumption. Even if the last troops have come home by then, there are still billions and billions of dollars to repair, to maintain, to replace the equipment that has been degraded in Iraq.

More than that, we have to prudently expect that the expenses of the Iraq war are not going to come to an end on December 31. Even if all the troops came home, those expenses would not come to an end then.

What other fictions are we using in the budget process? Well, we are assuming that nothing is done about the alternative minimum tax. This tax that was started in the 1970s and was designed to apply to only a few families in the country was never indexed for inflation.

The basic theme behind that, or the theory of that, wasn't a bad theory, it was that several of the largest, wealthiest families in the country shouldn't escape any form of tax because they used a clever combination of tax loopholes. There ought to be some alternative minimum calculation. What was designed to and did apply only to a handful of families in the 1970s, because it was never indexed for inflation, now is applying to millions of people.

This cannot be left unchecked. If the AMT is not fixed, then all of the tax cuts that were given in the last several years will be completely wiped up and replaced with a very large middle-class tax increase.

Now, the administration knows this is a problem that has to be dealt with, but it is very expensive to fix this problem. It is going to require that we deal, very frankly, with some of the different budget priorities that we haven't been willing to deal with.

But by ignoring the impending AMT problem, by ignoring the ongoing costs of the war in Iraq, by narrowing the budget window that we are looking at from 10 years to 5 years, by engaging in these kinds of smoke and mirrors, by taking certain costs off the books, we can present to the country a budget picture which is not reflective of reality.

It doesn't show what dire fiscal straits we are really in. It is one of the reasons why I am so grateful for the work you are doing, Mr. ROSS, to point out to the country just how bad it has got in terms of our fiscal picture to promote the Blue Dog's 12-point plan, part of which is very simple, that is, when you are in a hole the way we are, stop digging.

That is part of our PAYGO proposal that says that we want to stop the hemorrhaging, that when we agree to new spending on this House floor, we should find a way to offset that cost so that we do it in a revenue-neutral way. When we agree on new tax cuts, we should find a way to do that in a revenue-neutral way, either by cutting spending or raising revenues somewhere else.

PAYGO, pay-as-you-go, basically says there is no free lunch, and, indeed, there isn't, as you can see by the fact that every man, woman and child in this country now owes $28,000. From 2001 to 2003, just a couple-year period, the total government spending soared by 16 percent. We are trying to put a lid on those kinds of increases.

We are trying to urge that the Federal Government simply use accounting practices that the biggest and the best firms in the country have to use. The GAO did a study that showed that 16 of 23 major Federal agencies can't do a simple audit of their own books. Can you imagine, Mr. ROSS, if one of the companies back in your district or mine did their accounting, if they were a public company, they did their accounting the way that the Federal Government does, how long it would be before they were indicted before a Federal grand jury? It wouldn't be long at all.

Now, why is it that we can require transparency and accountability and honest bookkeeping among our private firms in the interests of their shareholders, in the interests of their employees, but we don't seem to require it of the country itself? We haven't set aside funds for a rainy day.

It is something that most businesses do, it is something that most families do, so that when these tragedies occur, when we have natural disasters, when we have man-made disasters, we have some reserve to go back to. It makes infinite sense.

The economy is a cyclical phenomenon. We ought to have something stored away for a rainy day for when we are in a down part of the cycle. That is only prudent planning. That is part of the Blue Dog plan. We shouldn't hide the votes on this House floor when we are going to raise the debt.

Most Americans are unaware of the fact that the national debt is a little bit like a credit card debt. When we want to raise the national debt, that is when we want to authorize the administration to borrow more money. We have to vote to authorize it the same away that when people want to borrow more on their credit card they have to contact the credit card company and ask them to raise the limit.

How do we do that around here? Well, do we have an up or down vote where we can force people to go on the record and vote either to raise the national debt or against raising the national debt? No, we do more of that smoke and mirrors. We make it a procedural vote on top of a procedural vote on top of a procedural vote. Unless you are a sleuth, there is no way to find out that we have, in fact, voted to raise the debt on all Americans.

We shouldn't hide those votes. We should be open about those votes. We should be held accountable for those votes; and maybe, maybe, if each and every Member had to come to this House floor and defend a vote to raise the debt, we could compel the adoption of sound fiscal practices like pay-as-you-go.

I would love to see that. I would love to be able to join my Blue Dog colleagues and offer an amendment to a motion to raise the national debt that says, all right, we will agree to a short-term increase in the national debt provided that we adopt pay-as-you-go rules, provided that we come back here in a short period of time, we see what action the administration, the Congress are taking, that we don't raise the national debt by great leaps and bounds that let us off the hook for a year at a time, but, rather, give us only a short leash to get our fiscal house in order to show that we are diligently working on it.

□ 2115

These are some of the reforms the Blue Dogs are advocating. They were good public policy. They would enjoy, I believe, bipartisan support if we had the chance to actually vote on these proposals. And I want to compliment my colleague for all of his leadership on this issue.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California, a real active member and leader within the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, Mr. SCHIFF, for joining us in the discussion this evening as we outline the Blue Dog

Coalition's 12-point plan for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending.

This is the first time in 50 years the Republicans have controlled the White House, the House and the Senate, and they have given us the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history for the sixth year in a row. The debt is $8,365,525,832,151 and some change.

We will be updating that board here in just a few moments to show you, Mr. Speaker, exactly how much the debt has gone up since we started this hour-long discussion about trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Each week it seems as we wind down this hour others come to the floor to refute what we have to say. And one of the favorite sayings each week that we hear from the other side is how we voted against the Deficit Reduction Act. And I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that everyone understand exactly what the Deficit Reduction Act was really all about.

It was about cutting Medicaid. Eight out of ten seniors in Arkansas in a nursing home are on Medicaid. Half the children in Arkansas are on Medicaid. One out of five people in my home State will be on Medicaid some time this year. It is the health insurance program for the poor, the disabled, the elderly. Student loans, programs for orphans, those are the types of programs that were cut $40 billion to help pay for another $90 billion in tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year. Ninety billion minus 40 billion is $50 billion in new debt, and yet they had the nerve to call it the Deficit Reduction Act.

We are running out of time. And I will yield as we begin to update this board, showing exactly how much the debt, let's just do it real quick. In fact, the debt has gone up $41,666,000 in this past hour. So that means it is now $8,365,567,498,151 and some change.

Mr. Speaker, the minute we have left I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. I just want to say, because we are going to get ready for our Republican friends, some of them, to come and try to refute what we are saying, but as the good book, the Bible, says, ''Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.''

We have done that tonight. And even Mr. Armey, the Republican's former leader of this House, complained bitterly about the Republican leadership and the direction they were going when he said, ''They are in control. They control this town,'' he said.

There is no reason for us to have these deficits. They cannot refute the fact that under this Republican administration, under this Republican-led Congress they have borrowed more money, they have run up this debt, they have borrowed more money from foreign governments than all of the last 42 Presidents and administrations combined. They cannot argue that point.

They put forward a budget that slams right into the face of homeland and national security by cutting our veterans, by refusing to deal with the concurrent receipts measure, by cutting aid to veterans by a million dollars, and education up and down the line.

So the truth is speaking tonight, Mr. ROSS, and it has been indeed a pleasure for us to be here to tell the truth and set America free.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Conference for allowing me to join some of my friends and colleagues this evening and talk about some issues that we have heard a little bit about so far this evening and talk about some other matters as they relate to national security.

I want to introduce the Official Truth Squad. We are back again this evening. People are getting great response all across my district at home about the Official Truth Squad, because people say, isn't it wonderful that finally somebody is talking about the truth. And the gentleman before, just before, talked about the truth and we will show some truth tonight. I urge my colleagues on the other side on the aisle to stick around and look at the real numbers, look at the real numbers.

The Official Truth Squad began with a group of freshman Congressmen. We would meet and have met almost every week since the beginning of last year. And as we began to appreciate and understand how the Congress worked and what kind of issues were being addressed and how they were being addressed on the floor of the House, it became apparent to us that there were a lot of accusations that were flying across and there was a lot of misinformation and disinformation.

And our friends on the other side of the aisle oftentimes utilize what I call ''the politics of division,'' and that is, they split America. They split people into groups and they try to get people to fight, to be angry with each other. And we do not believe that that is the best way to solve problems.

We believe that, together, the challenges that we have, they are not Republican challenges, they are not Democrat challenges; they are American challenges. We believe that together we are able to best solve the challenges that face us. So we formed the Official Truth Squad to try to bring truly some facts, some truth, about the issues that you hear talked about on the floor of the House and elsewhere. We are also frustrated by somewhat of a lack of civility in Washington, so our desire is to try to raise the level of the rhetoric a little bit and stay away from the partisan and personal sniping that seems to go on.

In fact, when we talk about the truth I am fond of the utilizing a quote that many folks know and that is from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a fine United States Senator, a former Senator from the great State of New York. He said that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and not their own facts.

I think that is important to talk about because you have just heard a lot of discussion about a balanced budget amendment and about PAYGO, paying as you go for the Federal Government. And you get the sense that the folks who just present that material hadn't ever had an opportunity to vote on any of those things; that those things had never come up before the Congress, right, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of sense I got as I was sitting there listening to him. I said they must have not ever had an opportunity to vote on those things.

But in fact, they have, each of the items that they discussed, four separate times in the 1990s. There was a great opportunity to vote on a balanced budget amendment. The majority of the individuals on the other side of the aisle, the majority, in fact, the majority of the folks who were Blue Dogs here voted against a balanced budget amendment, most recently in 2004. And I know it is the truth because you can look it up; it is Roll Call Vote number 311, 311 in 2004. It was about a budget resolution that would make the amount of money that is appropriated binding so that you cannot go above that amount in the Federal Government's spending.

What was the vote then? One hundred eighty-one Democrats voted no. Now, that is the truth. So when you talk about trying to paint the picture of budget responsibility and fiscal responsibility, it is important to look at how people are voting.

They talk about PAYGO, pay as you go, and that is an important thing, and we have been working on that for years. But the most recent time when they had an opportunity to vote on it in 2004, Roll Call Vote number 318, look it up, Mr. Speaker, Roll Call Vote number 318, 2004, not a single Democrat voted for the PAYGO rule. Not one. Not a single Blue Dog that voted, not a single Democrat voted in favor of the PAYGO rule.

So, Mr. Speaker, everyone's entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts. So I think it is important that we point out facts.

I just want to briefly, before we get into the issue of national security, which we are going to talk about tonight, I think it is important to show the American people what the facts are about some of the other issues that were discussed.

Medicaid, you heard about Medicaid cuts, right, Mr. Speaker? Well, in fact,

here is a chart from 1995 to 2005, the amount of money that the Federal Government has spent on Medicaid. And you would think if there was a cut, as it has been described by folks on the other side, that this red line, which is the amount of money that the Federal Government spends, that it will go down, right, that it would go down. In fact, every single year since 1995 through 2005, there has been an increase in the Federal money spent on Medicaid, an average increase of 7.4 percent per year.

Mr. Speaker, that is not a cut. That is an increase and it is an appropriate increase to care for those who are neediest in our society. In fact, it is an increase from $89 billion in 1995 to $181 billion in 2005.

What about the education money that is talked about, these ''cuts''? Here is the education annual growth over the past 5 years, 2000 to 2005. The average growth is at 9.1 percent, 9.1 percent.

When you talk about Pell grants, which is the amount of money that the Federal Government provides for those most needy to go to school, to go to college or university and you talk about ''cuts,'' that is what you hear, isn't it, Mr. Speaker? In fact, what we have seen over the past 5 years is an increase every single year. Those aren't cuts, Mr. Speaker. It has grown about 10.3 percent every year since 2000.

So we call ourselves the Official Truth Squad because we are interested in bringing truth to the table. Truth is the only way that we can solve the challenges that we have in our Nation right now, and truth and working together is truly the only way to solve the great challenges that we have.

Tonight, we want to address a little bit of a different issue and it is an issue that when I talk to folks at home is really one of the top issues, if not the top issue, that they talk about when they talk about what they want their Federal Government to do in terms of addressing needs that they have; and the issue is that of national security. And there are a lot of different ways that we can talk about it, and we will discuss a couple of them this evening.

I have been joined by a number of my colleagues this evening and I want to thank them for coming. First, I want to introduce Representative BLACKBURN, who is a wonderful colleague, not a freshman, but we have given her honorary freshman status in the Official Truth Squad. We will come here this evening to talk about national security as it relates to border security because, as most of us believe, if the border is not secure, the Nation is not secure.

I welcome you this evening and thank you for coming.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership on this issue and for his leadership in continuing to bring the Truth Squad to the floor every evening, so we can talk about the issues that affect our constituents and the American people.

Mr. Speaker, we have as a party and as a conference been talking about the security agenda for many months now, looking at energy security, moral security, retirement security, economic security for this great Nation. A big part of this security agenda is our national security and we continue to address this issue. We talk about the war on terror. We talk about protecting our Nation, and that is where the border security component comes in.

In December, we passed a border security bill to address so many of these issues that are before us. And, of course, as typically happens and many times happens here, those of us in the House roll up our sleeves and get to work and we pass a bill. It crosses the Rotunda to the other side, to the other body, and maybe it languishes or does not move quite as quickly. But the Members of the House have taken action on this issue.

□ 2130

It is indeed one that deserves our attention, and as we talk about border security, there is one component that I would like to highlight this evening, just one component as we talk about border security and the importance of keeping this border secure.

When we talk about illegal immigration and illegal immigrants, I think it is imperative that we turn the focus to illegal entry. That is the action that an individual outside this country is choosing to commit—the act of illegally entering our country, and we need to keep our focus on that: Why would they choose to enter illegally? Why would they choose to circumvent our laws? Why would an individual choose to circumvent the rules? Why would they choose illegal entry?

Mr. Speaker, I think that you and I would probably agree that we are going to work diligently to protect our homes from illegal entry, and I am going to work just as hard to protect this country from illegal entry as I am going to work to protect my home from illegal entry.

I think it is important that we realize that individuals who decide they are going to illegally enter somewhere maybe come with a different agenda, but we have to recognize that they do not come as an invited guest.

We have rules in place that individuals are supposed to follow, and those individuals that follow those rules are then invited and brought into the process of being able to seek citizenship, of working to attain that citizenship, to being able to be a part of the bounty and the richness that this country offers.

We are a Nation of immigrants, but we are a Nation of laws, and it is important that we continue to recognize that, as we look at the debate, that we realize that entering this country illegally, that action is something that circumvents our laws.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership on the issue. I thank you for including me and allowing me to come to the floor and be a part of the Official Truth Squad and continue to put the focus on the issues that are important to my district in Tennessee and important to so many of our constituents.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, thank you so very much. I appreciate you coming and joining us this evening, and I think that you pointed out some very important perspectives that the constituents that I have at home would agree with, I know, and that is that illegal immigration may be a misnomer because it really is illegal entry and it is important to appreciate that perspective and to understand that what we are talking about here is, as you described, protecting our home, protecting our homeland, and that illegal entry into one's home we do not allow as a Nation, and that illegal entry into our homeland ought not be allowed either.

So as you mentioned, America is indeed a Nation of immigrants, but it is a Nation of laws as well, and so a comprehensive immigration reform must begin with securing the border. I thank you very much for coming and joining us this evening.

Also coming this evening is Judge POE, the honorable Congressman TED POE from Texas, member of the freshman class and an active member of the Official Truth Squad. His experience back in the State of Texas is just wonderful information and a resource that he has to give to the United States Congress and to America, and so I appreciate you coming this evening and sharing your perspective on national security.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Georgia for yielding some time to continue the thought about the specific issue of border security as it pertains to national security.

Security has been the talk of this House for the last few weeks, especially about port security, how the concern of Americans for securing the safety of our ports, with foreign governments infiltrating and running our port operations, how the American public has made that statement and Congress has responded with at least, on a temporary basis, doing something immediately about securing our ports, because it is the number one duty of government to protect or secure the people.

We do a lot of debating in this House about what is the purpose of government, and it seems to do a lot of things, maybe some things that our Founding Fathers never expected or even wanted for government to do. But one of the things government must do and has a constitutional duty to do is to protect the security of the Nation from within and from without.

One of those specific issues, of course, is protect our borders. Living in Texas, we constantly are concerned about the infiltration into our Nation

of people from other places illegally coming here, and it serves three concerns. One, of course, the war on drugs continues to escalate, and drug cartels know there is a lot of money in selling those drugs in the United States, and so violence has occurred on the Texas border because those drug cartels are fighting over turf to bring in that cancer and prey on the weaknesses of Americans. So that is the first concern.

Second concern, of course, is the universal concern in this country about terrorists, international outlaws, criminals who want to do us harm and come here for that specific purpose. Having a porous, open border encourages that conduct, and we know that those people expect to come in the United States and even try to come in the United States because of our lack of security on our borders.

Then there is that third group of people who illegally enter the United States for a multitude of other reasons; and the United States, our Nation, this government, this House, the people's House, must have the moral will to protect the dignity of the border. It seems to me that Third World countries protect their borders better than we do here in the United States, and we are a Nation that can do anything. The reason we do not protect the borders and secure the border is because we do not have the will to do it as a Nation.

It is interesting, we have heard a lot of rhetoric this week, especially about the bill that passed back in December that got almost no notice until the Senate starts talking about our bill and their option, or variation on that bill; but let me try to give you an example of how things are occurring in the United States by comparing it to maybe an analogy in another country.

Let us say that, for some reason, I want to go to France, and based on some of the things I have said about France, the Government of France, they probably would not let me in legally. I would have to sneak in. So if I sneaked in, took my four kids, three grandkids and showed up in France, over to Paris and say, teach my kids in English and give them an education, oh, I am not going to pay for it, the French people are going to pay for this education and provide social services for my kids and my grandkids and my two grandkids that are on the way, and continued that line of thought, the people in France would get me out of the country, and rightfully so. That would be true whether I went to France or to China or even to Mexico; but, yet, that seems to be what is occurring here in the United States because of our lack of securing our borders.

Our good friend from Tennessee, Mrs. BLACKBURN, has already alluded to this. If we have an intruder in our home, we call those people burglars. They are not welcome guests. They are not a guest burglar. They are a burglar. But if we have an intruder to our homeland because of, I guess, political correctness, we call them an undocumented guest worker. Both are committing illegal acts because of the entry into either our home or to our homeland. They are both not invited, and the one goes to jail and the other seems to be rewarded for that illegal entry, and we continue to reward that illegal conduct.

It seems to me that Mexico does have an immigration policy and to some extent that immigration policy is colonize the United States with illegal entry into the United States. We know that that is true because the Government of Mexico even publishes pamphlets and gives to individuals in Mexico how to sneak into the United States, what route to take, and so their policy is: colonize America.

It is not only to colonize America, but it is to make Americans feel guilty about trying to protect the sovereignty of our own Nation. I do not know if you can see this or not, Mr. Speaker, but this is the front page today of The Washington Post. You would think that this was the Mexico City Times, but it is not. Right here in the middle are thousands of folks, many of whom are illegally in the United States, assembling in Los Angeles; and you see that the 15 to 20 flags in this photograph, they are not American flags. They are flags from Mexico, Mexican nationals, proclaiming that the United States should not basically enforce the rule of do not come here illegally; another way of trying to tell the United States that our policy should benefit Mexico rather than put America and Americans first.

Illegal entry is wrong. There has been some misunderstanding about a guest worker program. We have a guest worker program. The United States grants every year 1.2 million visas to people who want to come here legally to work. Some of those take a long time to process. That is a whole other issue. The immigration department needs to move faster and quicker on that, but we grant 1.2 million legal visas for people who want to work here legally every year, but yet that has not done one thing to stop illegal entry into this country.

So we must protect the dignity of the United States, secure the border. We must understand that everybody wants to live in America. I do not blame them. It is obvious this is the country, because of our history and our worth of the individual, all people want to come here. The people need to respect the dignity and the rule of law and the sovereignty of this country and come here the right way.

That is the responsibility of our government, our Federal Government: secure the borders first, protect the sovereignty of our Nation, and then let us talk about what to do with people that have already illegally come into the United States.

It is a complex issue, but we need to start. The time is now to move forward on border security for the three reasons that I mentioned.

I appreciate my friend from Georgia allowing me to speak to this issue; and, hopefully, we can continue the dialogue and come up with some basic results that protect our homeland, like we want to protect and do protect our homes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman so much for participating tonight and for really sharing his firsthand knowledge and information from his background as a judge in Texas and really putting the whole issue into perspective, again, about protecting one's home, protecting one's homeland, the importance of the war on drugs, the war on terror and something that I talk about often with my constituents, and that is that our immigration policy really has been one of benign neglect for the past couple of decades, and that is why we find ourselves in the situation where we are right now, and that it just takes the will, it takes the will of leadership and the will of the Members of Congress to move us forward as it relates to illegal immigration.

I am hopeful that we will be able to do that. I am hopeful we will be able to do that in a positive way, in a way that recognizes the wonderful diversity of America and recognizes that America is a land of immigrants, without a doubt, but that also, and as importantly, it is a land of laws. We are a Nation of laws, and that is I think the important perspective that I would like to share with folks tonight as it relates to the issue of border security and illegal immigration.

I want to take a little different tack on the issue of national security. We have, as a Nation, remarkable challenges that confront us, and one does not have to let one's imagination run very wide to appreciate the challenges and the threats that we have as a Nation.

We stand truly on the shoulders of our parents and our grandparents. My parents' generation was the World War II generation. My father was a soldier in World War II, fought in the Philippines, and he and his generation have been called the Greatest Generation. Each generation has its own responsibility, there is no doubt.

When I am asked at home about the war in Iraq and how we are doing right now as a Nation, I always try to raise up and say let us talk about this in a larger picture.

□ 2145

Because I believe sincerely, and I know that most folks who look at this objectively believe that the war in Iraq is not really a war in Iraq, it is the battle in Iraq in the war on terror. It is a bigger issue. It truly is a bigger issue.

It is something that Frank Gaffney calls in his book ''War Footing,'' he calls it ''the war for the free world.'' That is a very sobering comment, but I think it is pertinent to talk about exactly what are the challenges and how big are the challenges that are before us as a nation.

I had recently the opportunity to meet with and to speak to a group of constituents who are members of Employers United for a Stronger America. This is a group of employers who actively support the Guard and the Reserve in our Nation. They do so in incredible ways: by assisting families, in helping when they have employees who are members of the National Guard or Reserve and they are called up to active duty. They help families, they help communities, they help the children, they assist in college education and in all sorts of wonderful ways, keeping the employee's salary going. Really remarkable.

And I was very interested to find out greater information about the Guard and Reserve. I know that some of my colleagues know this, but I wasn't fully aware of the incredible commitment that the Guard and Reserve are currently making. Since the inception of the National Guard and Reserves, there were only two call-ups in World War II and Korea until 9/11. And since 9/11 there have been five call-ups to active duty of members of the Guard and Reserve.

More than 200,000 Guard and Reserve troops have been called up for both the battle in Iraq and in Afghanistan. The number on active duty now is about 120,000, and over 450 companies have joined and participated in this Employers United for a Stronger America, and I think that they demonstrate that this is a larger issue. Our Nation's security is a larger issue than just that responsibility that is held by the troops and by the military.

One of my main concerns about national security, and I suspect others have a similar perspective, but it is what I call the ''Vietnam syndrome.'' It is the sense that with the conflict and the war in Vietnam that we became tired and frustrated as a nation with that battle and with that war, and that that has somehow shaded how we have reacted to the acts in the war on terror since then.

And I say that because I want to remind folks of the Official Truth Squad quote that we cite so often, and that is that everyone is entitled to their own opinion but you're not entitled to your own facts. And I want to cite some fairly sobering facts tonight and I think it puts the whole issue into perspective about national security.

What I would like to do is just list items that have been truly acts in the war on terror, because it didn't begin with September 11. You know that, Mr. Speaker. Everybody can appreciate that. Really, September 11 was but one in a series of acts against our Nation and freedom.

Many folks will cite that the war on terror began in November of 1979, when there was the seizure of our embassy in Tehran and the incredibly long and arduous ordeal of the 444-day-long hostage crisis that so many of us remember vividly.

Then, in April 1983, the bombing of our embassy in Beirut with 63 Americans killed. In October 1983, the bombing of our U.S. Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut, with 241 killed.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, these are facts. These aren't opinion.

December 1983, a truck loaded with explosives was driven into our embassy in Kuwait. September 1984, there was another violation of our embassy in Beirut.

April 1986, the Madrid bombing of a restaurant that was frequented by United States soldiers. August 1985, the bombing of the United States Air Force Base in Rhein-Main killing 22. October 1985, the Achille Laurel hijacking, where an American invalid in a wheelchair was executed.

April 1988, TWA Flight 840 was bombed, killing four. In 1988 again, Pan Am Flight 103 was bombed over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 259. January 1993, two CIA agents were shot and killed as they entered CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

Again, Mr. Speaker, facts. Facts, not opinions.

In February 1993, the first World Trade Center bombing with six killed and over 1,000 injured. November 1995, a car bomb explodes at a U.S. military complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, killing seven servicemen and women. June 1996, truck bomb in Dhahran destroys the Khobar Towers, a United States Air Force barracks, killing 19 and injuring over 500.

Facts, Mr. Speaker, not opinion.

Two coordinated attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya in Tanzania, killing 224. October 2000, the U.S.S. *Cole* attack in Yemen. And then September 11, 2001, the attack, second attack, on the World Trade Center, with over 3,000 Americans killed.

And we wonder whether they are done.

Well, you don't have to go far to get, again, Mr. Speaker, more facts about the remarkable threat to our Nation's security. This is a quote just a little over a year ago from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in January 2005, very recent, in which he said, ''We have declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology.''

So I think it is very telling, Mr. Speaker, to appreciate that the challenges that we have as a nation are not minor challenges. They are remarkably significant and they have been going on not just since 2001, they have been going on for years and years and years. And it is imperative that we as a society and that we as a Congress recognize the challenges and the threats that are posed before us.

I am pleased now to yield to one of my good friends and fellow freshmen, Congresswoman VIRGINIA FOXX from the great State of North Carolina. She has been a wonderful participant and active member of the Official Truth Squad. She always has a great perspective. She has a history as an educator and comes with wonderful experience and great perspective, especially in this area, the area of national security and national responsibility as it relates to national security, and I yield to her such time as she may consume.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congressman PRICE. We are fortunate indeed to have you doing yeoman's work on the Truth Squad and making sure that we are organized every night and here to bring the truth to the American people, because they are certainly not hearing the truth from our colleagues across the aisle.

Those of us who are freshmen, as the audience can see, very often are in the Chair at night, and we heard these untruths being said over and over and over again last fall and we spoke to the leadership and said, we need to do something about this. And the leadership threw that back to us and said, Well, what are you going to do? So the freshmen decided that we would take on this task and be here to present the facts, the facts as they are, indisputable facts.

Earlier this evening, I came to this podium and spoke about Sergeant Anton Hiett from the little town of Mount Airy, in the Fifth District in Surry County, North Carolina, and about the fact that he had been killed in Afghanistan. I expressed my sorrow and concern for his family and my gratitude for his service. Sergeant Hiett represents the best of this country and the folks willing to serve our country in the military.

We are really, really fortunate to have the best and the brightest in our military. We have an all-volunteer military now, and these folks are stepping forward to do what needs to be done to keep this country free. Our enlistments are up and our reenlistments are up. And no matter what the national media would like you to believe, things are going much better in Iraq and Afghanistan than you hear about in the news on a daily basis. So we are fortunate to have those folks.

I have often come to this podium and spoken about the role of the Federal Government vis-a-vis national security. Anyone with just a moderate amount of history education will know that the Federal Government was formed to provide for the defense of this Nation. It was formed to break away from England, first of all, and then for the defense of the Nation. And that is our number one goal and our number one role.

The Federal Government, unfortunately, over the last many years, has taken on many other roles, but we should never lose sight of the fact that the Federal Government is the only level of government that can deal with national security and the defense of this Nation. So it is entirely appropriate that our focus here in Congress is on national security and on the defense of this country.

Night after night and day after day we hear the Democrats decry the amount of money being spent on national security and national defense.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, if we don't have our freedom, nothing else matters. And maintaining that freedom is the number one role of the Federal Government and of our wonderful military out there willing to sacrifice every day so that we can remain free.

I want to talk a little bit about something that is going to happen tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, on this issue of national security. Tomorrow, the Democrats are scheduled to host a media stunt to unveil their so-called ''strategy'' on national security issues. While I am sure that the Democrats will talk the talk, their actions speak far louder than words.

The American people need to look beyond the Democrats' spin and study their record. Again, let's go to the facts, not what they try to tell us, and their record on this issue. When the American people do that, they will see that the Democrats have no credibility because they have voted against many measures to keep our country safe.

I am going to give you some points on this. Republicans voted to pass a major border security bill in December, but Democrats, led by the minority leader, opposed the bill. Republicans believe that border security is national security.

Republicans voted to pass the PATRIOT Act to keep Americans safe, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill. In fact, the minority leader over in the Senate boasted that he had killed the PATRIOT Act.

Republicans voted to pass the REAL ID Act to make sure people who received drivers' licenses are here legally. But Democrats, led again by their minority leader, opposed the bill. And we all know that the terrorists that attacked us on 9/11/2001 had several drivers' licenses they were not entitled to, which led them to be able to do the horrific acts they were able to do.

If this wasn't bad enough in terms of these things I have outlined that the Democrats have done just in this session alone, they are now trying to cut $60 billion from military weapons systems that keep our brave men and women in uniform safe.

If Democrats want to talk the talk like they are for a strong national security, then they need to start walking the walk. They need to stop coming in here every day and criticizing our President for doing all that he can to keep this country free. They need to stop patronizing us for supporting our men and women in uniform, and they need to understand what the role of the Federal Government is, because it is obvious that they do not.

National security is our number one issue, and as long as Republicans are in charge, we are going to see that it is our number one issue. We are going to see that this country remains free so that we can continue to do the great things that we have done.

We are the greatest nation on earth. We are not perfect. Nobody ever said that we were. But we know how to get things done and we know how to allow for freedom, not just for this country but for others.

□ 2200

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentlewoman's participation as part of the Official Truth Squad in trying to bring some reality and facts to the debate about whatever issue it is we are discussing, and this evening obviously it is about national security. You really put things in an appropriate perspective I think when you stated that oftentimes we tend to get clouded about what the Federal Government's real responsibility is. What is their fundamental responsibility? What is our fundamental responsibility? It is clearly laid out and that is the security and defense of our Nation. If we do not do that, nothing else matters that we do here.

I want to thank the gentlewoman for her participation in the Official Truth Squad tonight and appreciate your very cogent discussion about national security and about the importance of having folks work together in a positive and really uplifting way for America, not in a negative and spiteful and divisive way. We believe strongly that, again, these challenges are not Republican challenges, they are not Democrat challenges, they are America's challenges, and that is where we need to focus.

Right before Ms. FOXX discussed national security, I went through a list of events that had occurred since November of 1979, since the taking of hostages in Tehran at our embassy and that 444-day-long hostage crisis. There have been easily 15 to 20 specific factual events that have occurred, that when taken in their entirety clearly show that this war on terror, or what Frank Gaffney calls the war for the free world, has been ongoing for a longer period of time than most of us would admit to ourselves or to our colleagues. But it is true. It is true and it has not gone away.

Folks who say you do not need to worry about that, you just need to temporize things, that really the issue is not one that is that serious, that we do not need to address it in a head-on manner, I would draw your attention to this quote again from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in January of 2005, and if this is not a chilling quote, I do not know what is. If this does not get your attention as a Member of Congress and as an American, I do not know what will: ''We have declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology.''

Madam Speaker, I think that means us. I think that means America; and any response that does not recognize the gravity of that situation is, I think, irresponsible.

So when we gather as Members of Congress and we talk about the issues that are before us as they relate to national security, you cannot overestimate them. You cannot overestimate them. It is as fundamental as democracy itself, as clearly stated by our avowed enemy. He has defined himself as such.

There has been a lot of discussion this past week or so about Zacarias Moussaoui who is having his sentencing phase of his trial. This is the gentleman arrested in August of 2001 on immigration charges. He aroused suspicion. He was at a Minnesota flight school, and he presented himself to that flight school and said he wanted to learn to fly a Boeing 747. And thank goodness that somebody recognized this request as something that was a little out of the ordinary and he was arrested.

It turns out that he ultimately pled guilty to all six charges. He pled guilty in April 2005 to charges of conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism beyond national boundaries, to commit aircraft piracy, to destroying aircraft. That is what he pled guilty to. Again, facts not opinions. Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction, conspiracy to murder United States employees, and conspiracy to destroy property of the United States, and some people would minimize his involvement and say that is not really all that important, he probably didn't have that much to do with it.

Just this week, Mr. Zacarias Moussaoui claimed, proudly claimed, that he and shoe bomber Richard Reid were going to be the hijackers on a fifth plane on September 11 and planned to fly it into the White House. Thank goodness they were not successful in that endeavor.

Madam Speaker, I cannot tell you how proud I am of the men and women who defend our Nation. I cannot tell you how proud I am of the men and women who stand up in this body and in this Congress and provide those individuals the resources that they need to be able to defend our homeland, to make certain that we are indeed secure as a Nation.

I know that most of us get asked to visit school groups and scout groups, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups, to talk about government and Congress. I enjoy those visits for many reasons, not the least of which is the vitality and enthusiasm of the young people is infectious. And their enthusiasm for America is infectious as well. Oftentimes I review basic American history and then talk about the type of government we have and whether our Nation will exist forever.

It is interesting the response that I get as I talk with young people because it is a question that many have not thought about or comprehended. When you ask them, they say, sure, America will exist, it will always exist because there is a sense that in spite of the problems and the challenges that we have, that we as a Nation, and in spite of our disagreements about policies that we have, we as a Nation will indeed survive forever. There is this general sense that it is the destiny of the

United States and its continuation as a representative democracy is just a given, that we are guaranteed to exist forever, kind of just because.

Madam Speaker, you and I both know all too well that simply is not an absolute. It takes constant vigilance. It takes the action of those individuals in Congress as well as men and women across this Nation to be constantly on alert and make certain that we constantly are giving back to our Nation.

It is certainly my hope and prayer that we continue to flourish so we in future generations will have the opportunity to live freely and to meet the challenges that allow all of us to reach our greatest dreams.

Madam Speaker, I know I believe in the wonderful goodness of our Nation. I believe in its wonder and its beauty and its awesome promise. But as you also know, Madam Speaker, I know that liberty and freedom and our Nation require constant vigilance and support. We truly are a wonderful and a glorious Nation, and we remain a beacon of light and a vessel of hope and freedom to men and women around the world. I think it is incredibly important that we appreciate that September 11 was simply the culmination of over 20 years of specific events, and that there are savages on the Earth who have admitted that they will go to incredible lengths, including their own death, in order to destroy our way of life. It is that kind of enemy, it is that kind of world that requires a different vigilance than we have known.

Each generation has its duty. Each individual has his or her role to play. We all know that freedom is not free and each of us has to sacrifice and each of us has a price to pay for the liberty and the freedom that we so enjoy.

Madam Speaker, it has been my privilege to come and present the Official Truth Squad perspective on national security this evening and to try to raise the level of the rhetoric here in the House Chamber, to try not to be divisive, to ask my colleagues to recognize, both Republican and Democrat, that we are all in this together, that the challenges that we have are not partisan challenges, the challenges we have are American challenges. And when we work better together, we are able to solve those challenges that much more easily.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the members of the conference once again for allowing me the opportunity to present this hour this evening. I want to thank each of my colleagues for joining me this evening.

God bless America and may God continue to richly bless our great Nation and the men and women who protect us.

THIRTY-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be here once again with the 30-Something Working Group, and I want to thank the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), for giving us the opportunity to spend some time talking tonight about the priorities of the American people.

I am thrilled this evening to be joined, as we come to the end of Women's History Month, to be joined by my fellow freshman colleague and also my roommate while here in Washington, D.C., the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN).

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to join the gentlewoman.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, we spend a great deal of time at the end of the day talking about some of the frustrations about this job. The gentlewoman from Illinois and I, two of the few women Members, particularly in the freshman class that we were elected to, as were you, Madam Speaker, in 2004, who are moms with young kids that are trying to balance work and family. We find ourselves at home talking about that a lot.

Ms. BEAN, when you and I are sharing frustrations and stories about concerns that we have and that our constituents have, I find that we often end up talking about it in the context of our kids and the children of our constituents. I know you have a story that you talk to your constituents about, and you were telling me about the seventh graders in your district that you were talking to. I think that is a really neat story you should share.

Ms. BEAN. I mentioned it on the floor briefly that I had been with some kids several weeks back. More recently I mentioned to my colleague we were talking about Internet safety. I am the parent of teenagers, my daughters are 13 and 15, so the issue of Internet safety has been an important issue. I have been visiting middle schools to talk about some of the challenges that they face.

So we went to talk about Internet safety with the middle schoolers; and whenever I talk with middle schoolers, we also have a little bit of a civics lesson.

Many seventh graders I know in Illinois, as well as around the Nation, are studying the Constitution. I was pretty impressed with the quality of education our children are receiving because they had not expected me to ask them about it. They thought we were just going to talk about Internet safety, and I asked them about the Constitution and the Preamble, and if any of them had the Preamble to the Constitution memorized, and they did.

□ 2215

And they did. And I asked them to come on up. All the hands went up to be part of our little civics class. And they came up, and we took that preamble apart.

We talked about in order to form a more perfect union, you know, what does that really mean and they understood that that meant trying to make our Nation better. We talked about providing for the common defense, and how that meant that we not only needed strong national security, but we also needed to protect our citizens when natural disasters could come as well. And we talked about the general welfare and the economy and how their parents and their neighbors and their community needed a strong economic environment so that they could provide for themselves.

We also talked about domestic tranquility. Some of them admittedly did think that that meant, don't hit your sister, so we went through that.

But we also talked about fiscal responsibility. And one of the things that was alarming to them, and it was intended to be and to create a discussion with them, was to talk about the national debt, which is now over $8 trillion. And I shared with these seventh graders that their share of our national debt is now over $27,000 each. And they were very displeased to hear that that was their share of national debt and said, Well, why aren't you guys spending less?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I think you need to stress that again. How much is every American's share of the deficit?

Ms. BEAN. Every American's share of the deficit is over $27,000 of our over-$8 trillion of national debt; and as you now know, we are raising the debt ceiling so we can bring that up to $9 trillion. And it was really frightening to these kids.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We talk about the deficit quite a bit in our 30-something hour, and one of the ways that I sort of try to boil it down, because, you know, when you think about the number 8 trillion, especially, I mean, I imagine you were talking to seventh graders, and 8 trillion is a really big number. Even $27,000 is a big number.

Ms. BEAN. It is a big number when you are talking to 12-year-olds.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. So when we are on the floor here, I often try to boil down what those numbers mean in more simplistic terms. I can tell you that we, what we do is we talk about how it relates to someone's household budget. And you know, of course, families, millions and millions of families across this country struggle every day to balance their budgets to make sure that they are not spending more than they take in. And they are hoping that they are not racking up credit card debt and trying to balance all the needs that their family has, plus, you know, hopefully buying a few things that maybe aren't necessarily a need, but are just a want. I mean, that is something that in America we all strive to be able to accomplish.

But unfortunately, in Washington, when we got here, we found that there seems to be, between the two sides here, an ongoing struggle over whether or not it makes sense, amazingly, to not spend more than you take in.

Ms. BEAN. Well it is interesting how these seventh graders demonstrated greater fiscal sense than this Congress has been able to demonstrate, because we talked to them about debt and how essentially what we have been doing, to your point, to put it in their terms, would be like me, as a mom, getting a credit card in my daughters' names, okay, and going out and buying things for myself and then saying to them as soon as they are old enough to work, now you get to pay for all the things I bought myself.

That is essentially what we are doing to future generations. And they said, Well, that is just not right. And they were right in understanding that.

I also asked them, What would you do to not have debt; and they said, Well, spend less than you have. Pretty simple answer, but one that without PAYGO budget rules, which we once on a bipartisan basis adhered to in this body and were able to get ourselves to the largest surplus in the history of this Congress, we have now gone, since we have thrown out PAYGO rules and we are not requiring ourselves as a body of Congress to be more fiscally responsible, we now have the largest deficit in the history of the Nation, and that is pretty unconscionable.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Just to further explain the concept of PAYGO, we, as Democrats, have repeatedly introduced amendments and other proposals that would reestablish those PAYGO rules, the pay-as-you-go rules, and we have supported them. We have put all of our votes up on the board here that shows where we are versus where our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are, and Democrats have consistently supported returning to pay as you go, returning to the time when we didn't have to talk about a deficit, where we had a surplus, which was just before this, the beginning of this administration's tenure. And it would be wonderful if we could get back to talking about how we were going to spend the surplus, which we wish we had, when now, unfortunately, we are mired in debt and mired in deficit

Ms. BEAN. Very much so. I mean, what PAYGO really did is, it forced tougher decisions. It forced a greater degree of transparency and honesty with the public because it forced us to say, if we are going to spend more on a particular program, where was that money going to come from. And that has really gone away. And with the lack of that, there are a lot of false promises to the public about the reality of our false accounting.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You just can't have it all. I mean, the other story that I share with people when we are here on the floor during this 30-something hour is it is like when we talk to our kids. You know, sometimes my 6-year-old twins will say, Mom, you know, I really want, we will be in the toy store and they want everything in every aisle. And, you know, gosh, I would love to buy them everything in every aisle. But often, I have to say ''no,'' and then I try to explain to them, you know, our budget, the money that mom and dad earn really only enables us to afford to buy you some of these things. You can't have everything you want.

Ms. BEAN. Exactly. It is so fun to be here with you because this is my first time joining you in your 30-something colloquy, because at 44 I am a little outside of the age span, so I appreciate you inviting me today. But it is fun for us to be able to talk about our children on the House floor where we haven't done that before.

But I think there are some very strong parallels in what you are saying, in that oftentimes I think in our roles in Congress with the public, with our constituents, we have to bring a little bit of tough love to the equation the way we do with our children. We can't just tell people what they want to hear, but what they need to hear, which is the reality of our fiscal challenges.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And, boy, as moms, we certainly have a lot of practice at that.

Ms. BEAN. At the tough love.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Tough love is something that unfortunately the word ''no'' gets thrown around a lot more than I would like, than my kids would like to hear. ''No'' doesn't seem to exist in this body, at least under this leadership in the Congress.

Ms. BEAN. Well, that is why PAYGO is an important thing, because it creates an environment that forces those kind of tough decisions and forces a more honest dialogue with the public about what is affordable and what is not. Absolutely.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I want to go back if you don't mind. I want to go back to the chart that I was referring to earlier.

One of the things that we do try to do, and I am pleased to see that our colleagues from Florida and Ohio have joined us now. But when we talk about $8 trillion, and when we talk about what a billion means, we have come up with a chart that kind of tries to boil that down. This chart will help people; it has helped people understand the notion of how much a billion is.

A billion hours ago, humans were making the first tools in the Stone Age. A billion seconds ago, it was 1975 and the last American troops had pulled out of Vietnam. A billion minutes ago, it was 104 A.D., and the Chinese first invented paper. And then, of course, under the leadership of this Congress, and this administration, a billion dollars ago was only 3 hours and 32 minutes at the rate that the government spends money today. That is a startling contrast, and I have some excellent staff work that went into developing that, that figured that out and boiled down what a billion is.

But when you think about it that way, that means that we are spending money at a startling clip and that given how much in other definitions it took to get, it takes to get to a billion, it is really amazing when you look at it in these terms.

Ms. BEAN. I think you have another chart, if I am correct, that talks about what that means in terms of our spending priorities and that while we are spending so much on interest—you do have it—it essentially shows that we are spending more on interest on the debt that we have created than we are on education, on homeland security and on veterans' benefits. And I don't think the American public fully appreciate what those opportunity costs are, that that lack of fiscal discipline has consequences.

And, sadly, we are not moving in the right direction as we look at the 2006 budget, which only projects a $423 billion spending deficit, but it is considerably more than that when we factor in AMT fixes, and when we factor in the cost of the war, which we stopped counting in October, even though that is running at $6 billion a week, that we are not even projecting the real deficits, that this chart is going to look worse if we continue down this path.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are absolutely right. And I would like to welcome my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. RYAN

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As you are talking about the interest on the debt, we have got to get the money from somewhere; and as we show, night in and night out, here on the 30-something group, we are borrowing a good deal of this money from China. And this is what has happened since President Bush took over, Madam Speaker.

In 2000, we borrowed $62 billion from China, and in 2005 it grew exponentially to $257 billion that we borrowed from China. So this is significant in so many ways, as the gentlewoman from Chicago, from Illinois stated, that we are paying the interest on the debt. And that is money that is not going to education. That is money that is not going to homeland security. That is money that is not going for health care, veterans, whatever the case may be.

So that is bad enough, but we are borrowing it from China, so now we are paying them interest on money and they are taking that and putting it into their state-owned companies and hurting American manufacturing and a lot of American small businesses that I am sure are in your district, as they are in mine. And all we are saying is, this is a competitive global economy. We can't have this disadvantage here of where we are going to borrow the money and they are going to take the interest out of the American economy and pump it back in, so they are winning twice.

Ms. BEAN. I think you make a valid point. Americans are very uncomfortable with that foreign debt, particularly that ratio, because it minimizes our leverage in other areas and I think even has national security implications over the long term that make us all uncomfortable.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely.

We have another chart that we talk about. The amount of debt that has been racked up in just the last few years, just in the last 4 or 5 years is actually greater than all of the 42 administrations before this one. I mean, that is a truly astonishing statistic. I was really incredibly surprised about that.

We also try to boil down the difference between the debt and the deficit. The deficit is related to the fact that we spend more than we take in.

Ms. BEAN. More than we are bringing in, absolutely.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Right. The debt is the amount of money we borrow from other countries in order to remain fiscally solvent. I mean, that is truly amazing that we have so much debt that is owned by foreign nations.

And I don't know if the gentleman from Florida is ready to jump in yet, but he has an amazing chart, as well, that shows the United States of America and the percentage of the debt that is owned by other nations.

Ms. BEAN. I have some of those figures in the meantime, while you get the chart. It is actually, four lenders currently hold a total of $2.174 trillion of our public debt. Compare this to only 23 billion in foreign holdings in 1993. The top 10 current lenders are Japan at $682 billion; China at $249 billion; the UK at $223 billion; Caribbean banking centers, $115 billion; Taiwan, 71 billion; and it goes on and on.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is just, we have got to get a handle on this. We have to restore some fiscal sanity. We have to put on some brakes and we need a little tough mother love. Maybe it is just that we need to bring a few more moms into this Chamber and we will have a little more tough love, because apparently the folks here are either out of practice, or I don't know, maybe the discipline around their homes isn't, you know, is not so strong.

Ms. BEAN. That is absolutely true. When I talk to the seventh graders and the middle schoolers and I say to them, Well, what would happen if your parents spend more money than they have? And they said, We will get debt. And I said, Then what would happen? And they said, Well, then people would start taking our stuff and then we might even go bankrupt.

□ 2230

And, again, they understand that we have not demonstrated more responsibility as a Congress, which, as I know, is frustrating for the American people.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Actually this is a little bit of a leap, but you and I sit on the Financial Services Committee together, and I know that you have been very involved in the data security issue because, in addition to the concern that Americans have over our debt and our deficit, they are also very concerned, and I know my constituents talk to me about this all the time, about the financial information that is out there about them personally is being compromised on a regular basis. And I know that you have really been a leader in that effort, and it would good for you to talk about it.

Ms. BEAN. It has been a big issue for constituents of all ages. We initially focused pretty much on seniors in the suburban districts that I represent because they have very much been a target; so what was done was we tried to introduce the legislation that is now moving through from our Financial Services Committee that we both serve on which will require, in addition to financial institutions, those database brokers that hold that personal financial data to have to let consumers know if there is a breach of that security information. But what we have found is there are other Internet challenges beyond data security in that regard. And I mentioned the Internet safety issue, and that has been a big issue that I have also been focusing on with both parents with some evening forums that we have done in our district and also with students themselves.

As I mentioned, when I was with those middle schoolers and I asked them, How many of you communicate on the Internet, not only with friends but with strangers on sites like the myspace.com and others out there, 75 percent of the hands go up, and we are talking 12-year-olds. And then you ask them, Do you appreciate the dangers? Only half of those hands went back up. So we were there to remind them of the things they have to be careful about.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That is something that, with my 6-year-olds and 2-year-old coming up behind them, my husband and I are already talking about how to safeguard the information that they have access to and make sure we are aware and keep them and their computer in close proximity to us because there is so much out there. The Internet is an amazing thing, but there is so much out there. And whether it is data security or the security of our kids, we really have to make sure that we strike a balance, which is what you have been fighting for, and I have as well and other Democratic members on our committee. We have to strike a balance between making sure that business has the ability to operate and function and that we not unnecessarily restrict commerce on the Internet.

Ms. BEAN. That we inform families how to protect themselves and their communities. So I know we are not the only ones doing forums. I know many communities and schools on their own are beginning to roll out those kinds of educational awareness programs, and we want to continue to support that, absolutely.

We should talk briefly about, since it is the end of Women's History Month, whom we just had dinner with.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are absolutely right. One of the most amazing things about having the privilege that we have to represent our communities in Washington is the people that we get to meet and interact with. And you and I, along with the other members of the bipartisan Women's Caucus, had an opportunity tonight to have dinner with former Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman ever to serve on the United States Supreme Court.

Ms. BEAN. It was such an honor.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It was incredible. And I mentioned to her that I was 13 when she was first nominated by then-President Reagan and that my parents raised me to believe that young women, young girls could grow up and truly be anything they wanted to be and that was my first memory that that was the most clear example of that being true. And it was just a thrill to be able to share that with her tonight.

Ms. BEAN. It was so inspiring to hear you talk about how it affected you and how it affected all of us, regardless of all our ages, all these women Members of Congress who were so inspired by Sandra Day O'Connor and her leadership, her professionalism, and her dignity with which she served on the Supreme Court and what an inspiration to women she was. I was excited too that my daughters, who you know are here, not in the House Chamber at the moment, but who are here during their spring break vacation to join Mom out here in Washington and get a chance to meet her as well. I know for them that is going to be something they will remember for the rest of their lives. It was so exciting.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely. And I think it is only 70 women that serve with us in the House of Representatives out of 435 Members. You boil that down even further, there is only a handful of us who are moms with young children. There are only four of us that are younger than 40 years old. The thing that sticks in my mind from the time that we were elected 1½ years ago now is that story that they shared with us when we were at our orientation initially. If you recall, there is a statistic that they described there. There have been a little less than 12,000 people in American history who have served in the United States House of Representatives in all the 230-year history. And of that number, only 211 of them have been women and 70 are serving now.

So as we close out Women's History Month, Madam Speaker, and you are one of those women members in the Women's Caucus, and I remember talking with you, Madam Speaker, actually about when we heard that information. It was really astonishing.

Ms. BEAN. It was a number that reached out and grabbed you. Out of 12,000 total, only 200-plus were women.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. 211 women out of almost 12,000 people.

Ms. BEAN. Even with all that progress, I know it sometimes is shocking to some of those high school and middle school students that we do civics classes with. I know you do as I do, and I will say to them just out of curiosity, What percentage of the Congress do you think are women? And usually they will say 40 percent or 35 percent, and they are shocked to find it is still only 14 percent.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It shows you that we have really come a long way, but it really demonstrates why we need to continue to have Women's History Month and how it is so important to show young girls who are coming up behind us that they have the opportunity. They have to reach out and grab it. And it is our responsibility to pull other young women up on the platform with us now that we have been able to have an opportunity like this, not to be discriminatory against our male colleagues whom we are sharing the Chamber with this evening.

And actually the gentleman from Florida is the dad of a young girl who is a wonderful young woman and works hard in school, and I know that especially since you are the son of one of the House of Representatives' most revered women, former Congresswoman Carrie Meek, that surely you have something to add at the end of Women's History Month.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We definitely appreciate the contributions of women. If it weren't for women, there would be no men. And the way I look at it, being a mamma's boy, Madam Speaker, and I will admit to that even though I am a big rusty Congressman now, we appreciate all the contributions of women. And it is definitely good having women in the House, in this House, and in the U.S. Senate.

I think it is also important to reflect on the future, the opportunities. We talk about innovation here within our caucus. We look for a bipartisan way of approaching that to make sure that we can have more engineers. There are very few women engineers that are in higher education right now, and we have to make sure that they have access and opportunity. We do not want women or men to go overseas to work when we should have jobs here in the United States of America. So when I look at the opportunities and the success that women have had in the past, I know that in the future we still have to fight and make sure that we have inclusion, and that is important.

Madam Speaker, I am also proud to say that there are a number of individuals, younger girls, that are trying to develop themselves right now educationally, and we need to make sure that we provide them opportunities for the arts, opportunities in the area of physical education, and to allow a childhood to be broader than just taking a standardized test. And that creativity is going to be important.

But I am so glad you and Congresswoman BEAN were really getting heavy, and I wanted to just jump in a little bit because I grew up in a household with three women, my mother and my two sisters; and, of course, you know I have my wife and my daughter and my son. So we look forward to making this celebration even greater and greater every time, but also we have to be mindful as policymakers of making sure that we allow women and young girls to be able to have opportunities greater than women before them.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. How about the amazing experience we had 2 weeks ago with the President of Liberia, the first woman president of an African nation who addressed the joint session?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Words are inadequate to even describe the way she explained to us her struggle as a woman, and it is hard for Liberia and the United States to be able to reflect on what her life was all about. She was sharing with us here, Madam Speaker, that you see the glory; but let me share the story with you and how she still has one foot in on the uneducated woman in Liberia and Africa and the Harvard-educated woman one foot in the United States. And I think it is important for us to remember that we have to remember when we have the opportunity to lead. And I think she is grounded in that, and I think Liberia is going to be better because of it.

And she shared with us that she didn't want our pity, but she wanted to be able to receive our assistance because they will perform. She talked about the reforms she has made in her administration, making sure that she has accountability, making sure that she wipes out and stamps out cronyism, and to make sure that children can smile again, and that is important. It is important to build an environment in a community where children feel safe of where they live and where they go to school and all of their contributions.

So I was excited about her visit. I got down here a little early so that I would get a chance to shake her hand; and I look forward, Madam Speaker, hopefully, that we can help Liberia, one of the true allies of the United States of America, and has been so for a very long time. As you know, Liberia is one of the countries where slaves, once they were freed, went back to Liberia, and many of them have American last names because they brought them back from slavery. So we do have a connection with that country.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It was incredibly moving for all of us. And she didn't mention it during her speech, but it was very fitting that she spoke during Women's History Month. And I am not certain of this, but she is certainly one, if not the only, woman leader to ever address a joint session of Congress, unless Margaret Thatcher had previously addressed a joint session. I have not found anyone who actually could recall a woman addressing a joint session. So it was just really historic in so many different ways.

I really also thought about how we could take several pages from her lesson book because a lot of things that she talked about, making sure that you did not only look out for the privileged and making sure that you thought about the needs of young children and young girls in particular who needed to get an education and have hope and opportunity. In this country so often it appears as though the leadership in this body and in this country now has had a lot of disregard, quite a bit of disregard, for those things. And I am certainly hopeful that our colleagues were listening very carefully to her remarks and took them to heart.

Ms. BEAN. You remind me again of being back in the classroom with these kids and talking about that Preamble to the Constitution which talks also about the decisions we make for ourselves and our posterity and how they even understood that the decisions we make as Americans, whether in Congress or at home in our communities, affect generations of future Americans.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Just to shift gears a little bit, recently we have been talking about homeland security quite a bit, and I am not sure if you had a chance to talk about that with the seventh graders when you were in the classroom with them, but since we just came off a week, and, Mr. MEEK, I know that you spent some time talking to your constituents as well, I was really struck when I was home last week during our recess by how many more of my constituents appealed to me to come back to Washington and make sure that I continue to fight to improve our national security, that their confidence in this government's ability to keep them safe has really been shaken on so many levels, not just in terms of protecting them from terrorists and from outside actors, but just generally had their confidence shaken in their government's ability to function.

□ 2245

I mean, the culture of corruption that has been hanging over this institution, sadly, and this administration, really has shaken the confidence, I think, of our constituents to their core.

We really need to return to a time when we can restore that confidence, let them know that not all of the people in this government are in it for the wrong reasons, and that, in particular, we do put a very high priority on our national security.

Ms. BEAN. Absolutely.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And that the port deal that was recently proposed, and, seemingly, not had an

interest in even a 45-day security review with a country that had been implicated in some way, in the 9/11 attacks, that is the kind of thing I heard about when I went home.

I heard about how they are really deeply concerned about the lack of port security. I mean, we have invested now, we have third-party validators that we talk about here on this floor.

Mr. MEEK, when I went down to the port of Miami after the revelation came about the DPW port deal, the port personnel there, in our home port, talked to me about the $18 billion that has been spent since 9/11 improving airport security, which is a good thing, and they are happy about that, and the less than $700 million that has been spent to improve our port security, the less than 6 percent of U.S. cargo that comes through our ports that is physically inspected, 95 percent not inspected.

The general lack of confidence in our homeland security, in our government's ability to do the right thing on all fronts, is really, I think, at least from when I went home, something that is really disturbing them.

Ms. BEAN. Across the country, not just in Florida, but I think homeland security is a big issue across the board. I hear it in my town hall meetings and in the forums I had in my district as well.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, the way I look at this whole homeland security issue, and I am concerned, and I was over in the Senate, had an opportunity to sit down with some reporters, with Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer and also Senator SCHUMER from New York and some others, and I think it is important that we look at this for what it is.

The line is 95 percent of the containers that come into our ports are not checked. That is the real issue here. We can't really jump up and down about the 5, some say 6. I think it is important for us to remember, Madam Speaker, that this bipartisan effort that we should have as it relates to homeland security, I speak from the standpoint of being a member of the Homeland Security Committee, having the opportunity to serve on the oversight subcommittee and management and integration.

I can tell you right now, for us to go to 100 percent check is not a hard thing for us to do. But we have to set our priorities on what we want to do and how we want to do it, and when we want to do it.

I think the American people want to be protected, and I think it is important that we provide them that opportunity. As you know, we cry out for bipartisan support in this. I will tell you, Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green Party, you name it, any individual that is thinking about voting, I can tell you this right now. They believe in the security of our country. They don't care who brings about this security, who appropriates this money, they just want the job done.

We don't need a situation where a container is being shipped from the port of Mobile, Alabama, or through Illinois, what have you, and end up, God forbid, some sort of chemical agent is in this container because it was not checked.

Too many people in the world know that we don't check 95 percent of our containers, and that is dangerous on both sides of the ball. I think we are far beyond politics when we start talking about making sure that we increase our containers, container security and screening our containers. There are other countries that have 100 percent check.

I think that if other countries can do it, I know that the United States of America can do it. But it is all about our priorities. It is about how we set them, and it is about how we work together.

Unfortunately, we have some difficulty in that area right now, but hopefully we will be able to improve on that through pressure from the American people.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. MEEK, the thing that keeps coming to mind when I think about the comparison between the stress that has been put on airport security versus port security, if you ask, if you go out into the country and ask most Americans the difference that they have seen since 9/11 and in security in general, basically about the only thing that Americans could say that they could identify is they have to remove their shoes before they walk through a magnetometer at the airport.

I think most people really feel today that we should not be resting the sum total of our national security on taking your shoes off as you go through a metal detector. American people expect quite a bit more than that when it comes to homeland security, especially if you live near a port, like my district includes two, Port Everglades and the Port of Miami.

We have so many, so many potential openings around this country, and vulnerabilities. To focus all of our attention on only the ones that are most visible that provide the leadership here, the ability to say, see, we did that, we have taken care of that, and just provide surface reassurance about homeland security, that is the difference between words and action.

It is the difference between nice commentary in speeches and actually backing up those words with action.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentlewoman would yield, I think the great example that we have used here a million times is Katrina.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Exactly.

Mr. RYAN of OHIO. You guys are from Florida. We are from the Midwest, so we don't have hurricanes.

Ms. BEAN. Absolutely.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have a ton of snow, but no hurricanes. The fact that this government had days to prepare for Katrina and couldn't figure out how to do it. Now, we are talking about something that may happen that we will not have 5 days' notice to plan for it. It is difficult for us to understand, but this needs to be addressed, and it needs to be addressed immediately.

Because the fact of the matter is, the American people were counting on us. Our first obligation here is to make sure that we are protecting the American people and to have 95 percent of the cargo not inspected, I think, is a dereliction of duty on our part. I will be happy to yield to our friend.

Ms. BEAN. I think I am going to yield back the balance of my time, if that is okay. But I want to thank you, my colleagues, for letting me join you during this 30-something hour, my first time joining you even though you let an older Member join you.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, you have two beautiful young daughters waiting in the cloakroom for you.

Ms. BEAN. That is exactly right. That is why I am yielding back my time. I appreciate you letting me join you today, in the interest of not only my kids, but the seventh graders we talked about today. It has been very important.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It was wonderful to have you join us. I will see you at home.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, this is 30-something Part 2 here. I am glad Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Ms. BEAN had the opportunity to claim the first hour. I see Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ is proudly wearing her Florida pin, her Gators pin.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Go Gators.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They are in the money, and I believe Florida will be able to do some great things.

Let me just say, Madam Speaker, as you know, we come to the floor to talk about a number of things, talk about what we as Democratic Members here in the House have to offer the American people. We want to make sure that there is no secret about our plans, about our initiatives, and what we are trying to do to be able to make sure that this country gets back on fiscal discipline, track, be more physically, fiscally sound, I am sorry, I am trying to get it out, it is a little late, but also just to make sure we are accountable to the American people, not just accountable to the Democratic citizens of the United States of America, but to make sure that we are accountable to all Americans.

I think that is the approach that we are taking, through the polling that I am seeing and reading, not only in periodicals, but also that I am getting

individuals that are e-mailing what people are saying and how they feel. Madam Speaker, to my e-mail, a number of them, I am very pleased about how the Democratic Members of the House and Senate have stood up to this administration.

As you know, Mr. RYAN, there are a number of issues that have been unearthed through what we do here on this floor, by sharing with the American people, Madam Speaker, with third-party validators and making sure that we share our plans with the American people and make sure that they are not what we say in some parts of the country, hoodwinked, bamboozled, or what we say here in Washington DC to be a recipient of the Potomac two-step.

I believe now more than ever, Mr. RYAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. DELAHUNT that the American people should and deserve to be leveled with. I think that is what we are looking for. They are not looking for who is the greatest party on the face of the Earth, and who has the best mascot or who wears the best tie or the best dress or the best suit or whatever the case may be. They are looking for individuals that are willing to govern above the table and not under the table.

I know, with great confidence, that we are there 110 percent. On terrorism, we are there 110 percent. We are on the side of making sure that we track down the individuals who are responsible for 9/11. Not only track them down, but kill them if necessary. I think it is important that we lay that on the table right here, right now.

The bottom line is the fact that we on this side of the aisle have fought on behalf of increasing container security at the ports. We just had an example last week, Mr. RYAN. Mr. SABO had an amendment here on the floor. Another example that we are going to talk about a little later on is we tried to increase security at the ports on the heels of the whole lack of security at ports, Mr. DELAHUNT, and still the American majority voted it down.

I am excited about the fact that we are back. I am excited about the fact that we are going to talk about some of these issues tonight.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. One of the issues, too, is we are talking about this. We now have evidence where a recent report coming into our hands, through the United States Senate, that investigators smuggled in enough radio active material to build two dirty bombs into the United States, which calls into question this administration's efforts to secure our borders.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. RYAN, if you would just yield for a moment.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it is important to recollect for a moment our friends from the other side of the aisle, part of the Republican majority of this House, tonight were on the floor and they were talking about how for this Congress, this Bush Republican Congress, national security and homeland defense were a priority.

It would appear that simply by repetition, by saying it somehow it translates into meaningful national security in real homeland defense. Yet we find again and again and again that this country, as a result of the actions by this White House and this Bush Republican Congress, have failed to provide homeland defense that is meaningful for this country.

That report, by the way, it should be noted, was conducted by the Government Accountability Office. That is an independent arm of this Congress. This is not Democrats picking on Republicans.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This isn't, Mr. DELAHUNT, and Mr. MEEK, saying we are going to run a sting operation to check the ports and see how the borders are. This is the Government Accountability Office. This is their report, and they were able to sneak in, through the northern border and the southern border, enough radioactive material to build two dirty bombs in the United States of America.

We are not here because we want to pick on anybody.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If my friend would yield for a moment.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I want to commend a Senator, a Republican, that requested this particular GAO investigation and inquiry and commissioned that it be undertaken by this independent arm of the U.S. Congress. This is what that Republican Senator from Minnesota has to say about the findings and the conclusion of that report.

□ 2300

The Senator said, A report that investigators smuggled enough radioactive material to build two dirty bombs into the United States called into question the Bush administration's efforts to secure the borders.

Senator Norm Coleman, a Republican, a Minnesota Republican, who heads the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations which held a hearing said he was alarmed at the ease with which investigators brought the unspecified radiological material and transported it across the northern and southern U.S. borders.

Now, when I hear that this Bush Congress and this Bush White House have done something about homeland defense and national security, Madam Speaker, who is kidding who? Who is kidding who? Can't we have some honesty?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You know what strikes me when you say that is that we talk about the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence that has existed for quite some time now and it is only getting worse with every passing day, it is interesting that the administration appears to think that just by changing out a staffer, by swapping one person, a chief of staff, for another, that that is somehow going to magically transform this administration into a competent one.

It is amazing to me that they could get materials into this country if they have been supposedly stepping up their commitment and our ability to keep our Nation secure in the last 5 years. How is that possible if they are running a tight ship like they say they are?

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can, there is a second report in addition to the one that we were just discussing. This second report, again, commissioned by the Republican chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations, its conclusions were this: The Homeland Security Department has placed 670 monitors at ports around the country. At the current pace the department will fail, let me repeat that, fail to meet its goal for installing 3,034 devices by September 2009. To reach the goal the department would need to install 52 monitors a month for the next four years, though its current installation rate is 22 a month, the report said.

Now, this is to determine whether radioactive material that could be used in a dirty bomb is being detected. Now, by the way, if you happen to live in Miami or if you are from Georgia, you should know that the ports of Miami and Savannah, Georgia are among those without the devices that they need. So if you should be living in those particular States, be aware that you are vulnerable to have from the sea, through the ports, material that could be used in a dirty bomb come into your neighborhoods.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I want to comment. This is the same article, from the GAO report, again, a third party validator, not from the 30–Something Group.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, that is a Blumberg news agency.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is a Blumberg news article. Thank you.

This quote is from a retired Coast Guard Commander who is now a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Steven Flynn. ''Both the opportunity for terrorists to target legitimate global supply chains remain plentiful and the motivation for doing so is only growing.''

We are living on borrowed time. And all we are saying here is that the strategy from this administration is wrong. You cannot convince me, Madam Speaker, that we could not marshal the resources of the United States of America and focus this country's energy on the equipment, the technology, the research that needs to be done to develop the newest technologies, and put them where they need to be, you cannot convince me that we could not do that, Mr. MEEK. You cannot convince me that the United States could not do that.

What we are saying here, and we are not here to pick on anybody, we do not want to hurt anybody's feelings but it

seems that the end result can be tragic. And you know what, there may be a situation where we do do all we can and it may not be enough. But to sit here and see this haphazard garbage, lack of focus, this administration has the worst case of political A.D.D. we have seen in a long time and it is hurting the country.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just put the facts out on the table. I just find it so amusing when I hear that national security and homeland defense is something that this side of the aisle, the Republican side of this aisle, the majority that runs this House in conjunction with the administration that is headed by a Republican President and a Senate that has a majority of Republicans are suggesting that national security and homeland defense are a priority, and yet study after study, committee after committee reports that we are ill prepared.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. RYAN, you talk about A.D.D. and lack of focus in terms of making sure we can keep this Nation safe. Lest people think that the DPW port deal was an isolated incident where we think that that was an anomaly and we are not continuing down that path of engaging foreign governments and the corporations they own to help us with our national security or to be involved in our national security, right after the withdrawal of DPW we learn, and through a third party validator again, the Associated Press, that the administration acknowledged that they issued a no-bid contract to Hutchinson Whampoa Limited which represents the first time a foreign company will be involved in running a sophisticated radiation detector at an overseas port without American customs agents present.

I mean, what is going on?

We are from Florida. The Bahamas is 30 minutes by plane. It is really unbelievable that there is an astonishing lack of concern about the gaping holes in our national security that this administration appears to have no qualms about leaving unprotected.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it was you, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, that alluded earlier to the experience of Katrina and other national disasters. I mean, there was a report issued again by a subcommittee of this House that concluded that the response to Katrina was a failure of leadership. I mean, that cannot be said any more succinctly or simply.

A member of the committee, again, a Republican, let me repeat that, not a Democrat but a Republican, our colleague, CHRIS SHAYS from Connecticut, said this: The report is very tough on the President. It is very tough on the Department of Homeland Security. It is a blistering report but I think it is fair.

The panel found that Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff was detached, and that the then-FEMA Director Michael Brown was clueless, Shays said. In one of the excerpts Chertoff was chided for executing critical responsibilities late, ineffectively or not at all, according to the report and to Mr. SHAYS.

□ 2310

Yet, when I turn on any of the stations and the issue is homeland security, the spokesman for the Homeland Security Department is often Secretary Chertoff. So let us just continue along that road, and you know what is going to happen? We are going to continue to find a failure of leadership in every instance that this administration is implicated in.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, last week, we had an opportunity, Mr. SABO from Minneapolis-St. Paul offered an amendment in this House to add over $1 billion to port security, homeland security, in the supplemental, and it got shot down on pretty much a party-line vote.

Time and time again, the Democratic Party has offered amendments in committee to increase funding for homeland security, and the majority side, time and time again, shoots down those amendments to add additional funding. But if it comes to giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country, they are all standing, saying we have got to go for it, but if we need an extra $1 billion for homeland security, everyone heads for the hills, and they hide under the seats.

Here's a list, June 17, 2003, Mr. OBEY from Wisconsin, increase port and maritime security by $500 million. Republicans defeated the amendment on a party-line vote.

June 24, 2003, another amendment by Mr. OBEY, increase port and maritime security again by $500 million. We are not even addressing the problem. I mean, $7 billion more we need, $6- or $7 billion more just to address what the Coast Guard is telling us we need. Mr. OBEY is only asking for $500 million, Madam Speaker. Republicans block consideration of that amendment by a vote of 222–200. That is Rollcall vote 305, Madam Speaker, and this other one was in the House Report 108–169, page 97, for the Members, Madam Speaker, who would like to look it up.

We are not making this up. You people want to know what the Democrats want to do? We want to increase funding for port security, and the Republican majority will not let us.

September 17, 2003, Mr. OBEY, Mr. SABO and Senator BYRD tried again to increase funding to enhance port and maritime security, $475 million. Guess what happened, Madam Speaker. Republicans defeated this amendment on a party-line vote. You want to know what the Democrats want to do, Madam Speaker? We want to increase funding for port security by half a billion dollars.

June 9, 2004, another amendment by Mr. OBEY of Wisconsin in the Appropriations Committee to increase port and container security by $400 million. We are not asking for an arm and a leg here. We are still $6.5 billion away from where we need to be, but we are just trying to chip away. Throw us a bone. Help us out. We just want to get moving in the right direction here. What happened again? Republicans defeated the amendment on a party-line vote, House Report 108–541, page 128. Go look it up.

I am quite frankly tired of hearing that the Democrats do not have an agenda because every single day in committee, no matter what committee it is, Appropriations Committee, Armed Services Committee, Education Committee, Homeland Security Committee, we are trying to get things done, and the Republicans block us every single time. This is what the Democrats want to do and we are getting blocked.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, it comes down to who is telling the truth and who is not. I mean, just because I may put something behind me and say that I stand for homeland security, do I really stand for homeland security? We are in the minority. When you are in the minority, Madam Speaker, I think it is important for us to explain to Members and staff, in case someone did not get the memo, that when you are in the majority you set the agenda that comes to the floor. You raise your hand thumbs up or thumbs down for your caucus to vote in the way that you want them to vote, when I talk about the Republican majority.

I think it is important for us to understand that the White House has said, oh, we have a strategy for Iraq, and then we find out that they all along never had a strategy.

Oh, we do not know anything about outing CIA agents. Some folks forgot about that. We do not even know the lady's name. Later, we find out through an independent investigative counsel that they knew everything about it.

What are you talking about a port deal? We do not have any knowledge of this. What is going on on this, someone told me in the hall. I mean, they knew exactly what was going on and the reason why it is happening and the reason why folks are getting away with it.

Like Secretary Rumsfeld, I am on the Armed Services Committee. It is an outright joke, to come before an Armed Services Committee to tell us whatever they want to tell us, and so shall it be written, so shall it be done; why are you asking questions. Matter of fact, I am bothered to come to Capitol Hill and have to respond to the Armed Services that constitutionally you have oversight over the Department of Defense.

We have individuals that are in shirt and tie, have the look of frustration. I mean, you are going to ask us? Yeah, we have a war, and now, the President has just said, well, you know, as it relates to troop withdrawal, I guess that is up to another President.

Mr. RYAN was talking about it earlier. He represents Youngstown. Someone says, Congressman, are we ever going to have a strategy as it relates to education?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, we never had a plan when we went in there, let alone a strategy to leave.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me say. Mr. RYAN and I were talking a little earlier, and it is like Mr. RYAN telling his constituents, well, I know we have to have an education strategy, but that is not my job; that is up to the next Congressman that represents Youngstown.

Madam Speaker, the reason why the President is saying whatever he wants to say, when he wants to say it, is because this Republican Congress has allowed him to say it and get away with it. Our job is not the day-to-day operation of the war in Iraq. It is our job to bring in this presidency, making sure that we are accountable to those troops that are on the ground and our mission.

The bottom line is, what is our mission? I mean, these are the individuals that gave this Congress bad information, and then the minute that they gave the Congress bad information got away with it.

There were weapons of mass destruction. Then apologize, well, we got bad information on weapons of mass destruction. I am sorry, you know, hey, it happens, but individuals have died. Now, we have Iraqi troops that are now being downgraded; they cannot even fight without U.S. troops backing them up.

Then the Secretary says, well, you know, there may be a civil war. There is a civil war going on in Iraq. Let us just say it. Let us put it out there.

The coalition, you do not hear anything about the coalition getting bigger and greater. No, it is not getting bigger and greater. Matter of fact, the Brits are leaving this year and a number of other countries have said, hey, you know, I am willing to take the training wheels off the Iraqi Army.

Let me just say this, Madam Speaker, because I think that Mr. RYAN laid it out so that everyone can understand. A new Member of Congress could understand what you just set out.

The bottom line is that trying is not good enough. We need the American people to chime in and make their Member of Congress stand up on behalf of the American people. Mr. RYAN said correctly, and backed it up with the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, the fact that we have a Republican majority that is more loyal to an individual riding around here making $1 billion or $1 million a year or record profits, or whatever their industry is, than they are committed to container security. It is not just what KENDRICK MEEK is saying. That is the fact, and Mr. RYAN laid it out, and yes, we do have a level of frustration.

Folks say you seem like you are upset. Well, we should be upset, and I do not care if it is Democrat, Independent or Republican. Mr. DELAHUNT said it earlier, as far as ports. Containers come into a port. Guess what. There are trucks that they go on the back of and trains that they go on the back of. They go throughout America, and next thing you know, this issue makes it to the heartland or Sioux City, Iowa, or whatever the case. The people may say, well, that is a coastal issue. That is not a coastal issue. It is an American issue.

□ 2320

And they have been allowed to do whatever they want to do, whenever they want to do it because this Congress hasn't reined them in.

I am going to close in 1 second, but I just want to also point out, Madam Speaker, since we are pointing out a few things here, that we have turned on the lights here in the Chamber. This whole Dubai thing and the Republicans marching around, ''We stopped that from happening; we blocked that deal.'' Well, guess what, there were a couple of votes before that where they tried to block it, but procedurally they blocked the Democrats from doing that. It is not who blocked it, it is about how we got there.

How did an under secretary level individual make this kind of decision; the outsourcing of American Security? It happens every day, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And I can tell you this, ''We are standing up to the President.'' No, you are not standing up to the President. But guess what? When all of America is standing on this side of the line and saying, are you representing us or who are you representing, are we standing up for Dubai?

What did the President say? I got a little confused there, Members. I am sorry. The President said, well, we have got to keep our word. What about keeping our word to the American people on security and health care and all those things he talked about during the campaign? And all the Republican Members won the majority because they said, trust us on security, trust us on fiscal responsibility.

Don't get me started on fiscal responsibility. It is almost like the guy running from the back of the class, who is an F student, who says I want to be the valedictorian of the class because I say that I am. Did not work, did not study, did not do the things that he needed to do to be the top person in the class, but better yet, because they say it, that makes it right.

What does this mean, Mr. DELAHUNT? This means if the American people see fit that the Democrats are in charge of the Congress, that the White House will not be making statements and saying, well, we have said it publicly so that means you can't do anything about it, Republican Congress.

And if folks want to talk about a Democratic plan in Iraq, it is accountability, it is making sure we take these no-bid contracts and put them on top of the table and really get down to the reason why we are still in Iraq. I am just talking about what I am talking about, Mr. DELAHUNT. I am not saying there are some shady deals, but there are a number of articles that are out that are pointing to this.

Every day this stuff is coming out, Madam Speaker, and I think it is very, very important that we focus in on that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can just make an observation, Madam Speaker, I asked my staff to count the number of hearings that the International Relations Committee has conducted in terms of the United Nations and the need to reform the United Nations, and also hearings that had a focus on the so-called Oil-for-Food program. Throughout Congress there were dozens of those hearings.

Do you know how many hearings we have had in the International Relations Committee on the issue of corruption that we know is going on in Iraq, Madam Speaker? Would you think maybe there have been 20 or 15 or five? No, there are none, despite repeated requests from Members of this House. Not a single hearing into the corruption that many different sources have acknowledged is rampant in Iraq in the past 3½ years. Not a single one. Because this Congress is afraid. This Congress is protecting the administration and is abrogating its responsibility.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Make sure we are clear about which part of the Congress is afraid and where the leadership has been exercised on our side of the aisle in terms of that oversight and where it has been shunned on the Republican side of the aisle, Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not a single hearing. Not a single hearing, Madam Speaker. Not one.

Can anybody, can any Member, Republican or Democratic, please respond and provide an explanation, when there have been reports after reports after reports, indictments, reports from the special Inspector General for Iraq reconstruction. It cries out for investigation. It cries out for oversight, Madam Speaker.

You know, when the CPA, the Coalition Provisional Authority, came in, and in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein, and began to administer as a viceroy, if you will, for the nation of Iraq, there was $8.1 billion left over from the United Nations Oil-for-Food program. There was an audit done subsequently. Not a single penny of that $8 billion plus can be accounted for. That is outrageous.

Why haven't we heard from this Congress the need to conduct oversight hearings? If the American people were aware of the requests that have been made continuously to do the kind of work that we were elected to do and is not being done, there would be outrage, Madam Speaker.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I just want to piggyback on your observations. I am the least senior of the four of us. I am a freshman, and about 15 months into my first term. We have talked many times on this floor in our 30-something Working Group about the lack of outrage, the astonishing lack of outrage, the deafening silence on the other side of the aisle about all these things we are talking about.

Why no hearings? Where is the accountability? Why aren't they demanding some answers from this administration about the results in Iraq, about how we got into Iraq, about the leadup, about the fact there were no weapons of mass destruction? And how come we haven't had any hearings on the intelligence and whether that was manufactured, or was it shaped around the decision that was already made clearly by this administration? Not one hearing. Not one hearing on almost anything since I have been in the United States Congress.

And what I have noticed, the observation I want to make is that we have had a very slow but now more rapid deterioration of our system of checks and balances. This Congress, the Republican leadership in this Congress could care less about oversight. They would just cede the whole ball of wax to this administration. This administration has run amuck. That is how I really believe the American people feel. This administration has been allowed to go unchecked, unresponsive. No one asks any questions.

You know what was really ironic, what was really interesting, was that it appears as though the outrage has built on the Republican side of the aisle, our good friends on the Republican side of the aisle. I noticed there was a whole lot of outrage that was cropping up all over during the Dubai Worlds Port deal. That sense of outrage on that side appeared to be in direct proportion to the reduction in the President's polling numbers. The lower his numbers got, the more outrage there appeared to be.

I think that it probably would be a little bit more comforting for most Americans if the outrage was more consistent about Katrina and its aftermath, about the war in Iraq, about the deficit, about the debt, about the corruption, about the cronyism, and about the incompetence. This administration has veered so far off to the right. There is a stranglehold that the right has on the Republican leadership in this country. They are so out of the mainstream now.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not the right, if I can correct my friend and colleague, but the far right.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The far right.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not the traditional conservative Republicans that have made an enormous contribution to this country and whom we respect, but the radical neoconservatives.

And it is so interesting now to hear from those that were there right after the inauguration talking about how at the first national Security Council meeting, Madam Speaker, there was discussion about war and going to Iraq and changing the regime and making it a national priority.

□ 2330

Again, if you want to get into competence, put aside whether you supported going into Iraq. I happen to be opposed because this administration in my view never made a case. But that is irrelevant. Talk about lack of competence.

Let me refer you to a story that appeared in the New York Times about a month ago. It states that the American general in charge of training the new Iraqi military after Baghdad fell says the Bush administration strategy to use those forces to replace departing American troops was hobbled from its belated start by poor prewar planning and insufficient staffing and equipment. The account by Major General Paul Eaton on January 31, after 33 years in the Army, suggests that commanders in Iraq might by now have been much closer to President Bush's goal of withdrawing American forces if they had not lost so much time in the first year to begin building a capable Iraqi force.

I am quoting a decorated American hero: ''We set out to man, train and equip an army for a country of 25 million with six men.'' Referring to General Eaton, he worked into the autumn with a revolving door of individual lone talent that would spend between 2 weeks and 2 months and never receive even half the 250 professional staff members he had been promised. The general's assessment of the problems he confronted was seconded by Walter Slocumb, sent by the Bush administration to Baghdad 6 months to serve as the senior civilian adviser on national security and defense.

Again, Mr. Slocumb, an Under Secretary in this administration said, ''I have to agree with General Eaton that it was hard to get the resources we needed out there. There was not a broad enough sense of urgency in Washington.''

And today we hear this President, this Secretary of Defense, talking about the need to train Iraqis. Why didn't they listen to their own military commanders, specifically the one that was in charge. He was calling on them to do something and they turned a deaf ear, and we are still in Iraq today because of their incompetence.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, the real issue is this. We want to talk about listening to the military commanders on the ground. I heard time after time again about oh, yes, whenever our commanders tell us what we need, we will give it to them. Well, if it has anything to do with America, if it had anything to do with Hurricane Katrina, and all of America saw the video that Michael Brown, of all people, said, Mr. President, we think that the levees will break. We think that we need assistance immediately as it relates to evacuation. We need resources. Silence.

Afterwards we have a partisan committee appointed by the majority, and they have findings with no solutions.

Madam Speaker, I have a solution right here right now. The bottom line, if we were in the majority, and this is not make believe, this is a possibility, I believe those individuals who are not registered to vote are going to register to vote to bring about some sort of change from what is going on right now.

I feel very good Members coming to the floor and sharing with American people, not just Democratic folk because if I wanted to just share with Democratic folk, I would send some sort of blast e-mail out to a Democratic list of individuals, or I would go down to the Democratic National Committee and say I just want to do a Webcast and I just want to talk to Democrats.

No, Madam Speaker, we committed to the American people that we would uphold the Constitution and represent them, if they are Democrat, Independent, nonvoter, Republican, whatever the case may be. They are going to get representation. On this issue of national security and accountability, this administration has moved in an unprecedented way and is making history in the wrong areas, putting us in debt to foreign countries that we have never been in debt to, but putting us in debt to where it is going to be very difficult to get a plan to get out of debt.

We on this side want to pay as we go. Mr. RYAN knows. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ knows, as does Mr. DELAHUNT. Once upon a time and youthful indiscretions, hey, I was a little loose with the credit cards. I will put my hand up. It happens. But I will tell you this, when those creditors call your house, they disrespect you from hello. They do not say, ''May I speak to Mr. MEEK.'' They say, ''May I speak to KENDRICK. Is KENDRICK home?'' That is what is going to happen.

I want to talk about the third-party validators. Let me move my Republican rubber stamp; that is for later.

When we talk about this debt, it is wide open. I challenge, I will say it again, I challenge any Member of the majority to come over and take a mike and tell us how this can be positive for our country, for us to be in debt to foreign nations.

I am going to put Canada up here. They are our neighbor. They own $57.8 billion of our debt.

Taiwan, toys are made there, and some American flags are made there, too. They own $71.3 billion of our debt.

The U.K. has decided to take the training wheels off the Iraqi government and withdraw a number of their troops because they know it is time for the Iraqis to stand up for themselves. They own $223.2 billion of our debt, and climbing.

Folks want to get all concerned, I know some folks who fought wars before, Germany owns $6.57 billion of our debt.

Korea owns, and I know that is something to our veterans, too, $66.5 billion of our debt, U.S. debt they own.

OPEC nations, and Mr. DELAHUNT, please name a few of the OPEC nations for us.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, there is Saudi Arabia. The gentleman remembers Saudi Arabia because 15 of the 19 hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia. Those are the 19 hijackers that were responsible for the deaths of in excess of 3,000 Americans. Saudi Arabia is part of OPEC, and how much money do we owe OPEC?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We owe OPEC $67.8 billion, but let us not leave Iraq and Iran and other countries that we have concern about where our troops are getting sand in their teeth right now. Let us not leave them out of the OPEC nations and allies and people of interest.

We have China, Red China, Communist China, China where U.S. workers are training their replacements in China to take their jobs, to make them unemployed. They own $249.8 billion of our debt.

And Japan, the island of Japan, they own $682.8 billion of our debt.

Now let me just say real quick to the Members, the Republicans have voted to put this on a credit card. They voted to put us into debt with interest. The Republican majority says we want to cut the budget in half by, and I do not know what the new number is, 2010, 2020. We have balanced the budget. The Democrats have balanced the budget. There is no other party in this House that can claim that something has been accomplished.

The bottom line is when these countries call in the tab on the United States of America, what are they going to say? Are they going to say, sir, ma'am? Or are they going to say ''pay me.'' They are going to disrespect not only our seniors and others, but they are going to disrespect future generations.

The bottom line is if the Republicans wanted to govern, they would have done it by now. They set up the atmosphere to allow this administration to be out of control.

□ 2340

What are the Democrats going to do? We are going to bring them back into control. We are going to make sure that we have accountability.

We are going to make sure that folks come to the Hill and talk about why Osama Bin Laden is still running free. And without any great deal of fear of U.S. troops bearing down upon him once upon a time, why is he still out? Why is he still releasing audiotapes and videotapes and recommending books for the American people to read to understand him more.

The bottom line, Madam Speaker, people like Osama Bin Laden long ago should have been tracked down and killed, period. That is just where it is and that is what we need to move towards.

Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that. And you know, as we are beginning to wrap up here, I think it is important to make this point, because I am sure you did, and you guys have experienced this too. There is a certain level of frustration that I have because I feel like our generation is getting dealt a pretty bad hand here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Kicked in the teeth.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As you just showed, we are mortgaging off our future. This is public debt held by China that has quadrupled. We went over that earlier in the evening. The debt limit has been increased by $3 trillion just since President Bush has been in, $450,984,800 and recently almost up to, almost up to $9 trillion in publicly held debt.

The war, I mean, this administration is strapping our generation with debt, with war, with lack of investment, with increased tuition costs, increased energy costs, millions of our fellow citizens without health care. This administration and the Republican Congress is dealing our generation a pretty bad hand.

And I started telling a lot of these student groups that come in and out of here, we go to schools and talk, hey, it is going to be our generation's responsibility, our life's work in this Congress, or wherever we may end up, to try to fix this mess. And that is exactly what it is.

I yield to my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. And what just keeps striking me about all of what we are saying is that it feels enveloped by the stranglehold that is around this administration's neck by the far right and that ideology, that the stranglehold of the far right on this administration and this Republican leadership drives their incompetence, drives their decisions on Iraq, drives their decisions on Katrina, or lack thereof, drives their decisions on the deficit, on the debt.

We talk about incompetence. We talk about corruption and cronyism and incompetence, but you cannot detangle, disentangle their incompetence and their ideology because the two are intertwined

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You are 110 percent right, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

We can't say it enough. The bottom line is the message that we are giving out to the American people and to all the Republican majority: As a matter of fact, we don't need permission from the Republican majority to lead; we just need the numbers in this House to lead. And we are leading in many ways.

We call the first play when it comes down to many of the pieces of legislation that move through this House of Representatives and bringing some level of accountability to it. Sometimes we are successful, Madam Speaker, in getting an amendment or two onto a piece of legislation because it is so abundantly clear the reason why they are useful to a piece of legislation. But why does it have to be abundantly clear? Why can't it just be good governance? Why can't it just be a bipartisan approach?

I will tell you, and I commit, Mr. RYAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DELAHUNT, when we get in the majority which—I believe the American people will start asking questions and will take action against those that are allowing this history in all the wrong ways to take place, and elect Democrats to be able to allow us to come here and run this House in the way that all the American people can be proud and feel accountable, we will not bow down to the strong special interests and say, well, wait, we have to take care of them and then we will take care of you. And when we come down to take care of you, we are going to question you about why you need this assistance. And so I think it is important that we go through that.

As we make closing comments here, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I don't know if you closed but you can go ahead.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I will close just by saying this. It would be one thing, and the American people, I know, are understanding this and have an ever-growing understanding with every day that passes and they observe this administration and the Republican leadership here.

It would be one thing if they had the confidence that, you know, they could just sub out the Republican individuals here and sub in another, a different Republican and get a more competent person. Unfortunately, it is not just that the individuals here are incompetent or that this administration is led by incompetence. It is that the ideology and the incompetence are so intertwined that it doesn't matter which Republican you swap in.

We have seen the board lit up here where you have moderate Republicans, arms wrenched behind their back when they are trying to express what is supposedly their conscience, and instead they are forced to vote according to the ideological stranglehold that is around the neck of the Republican leadership and the Republican Party. And so it doesn't matter who you swap in and out. If the ideology doesn't change, which it is clearly not going to, then you will just get more the same. Just like you will have more of the same in swapping the individual, one individual for another in the White House, as the President did today, and what you would see if we didn't make the change that is so necessary with the leadership in this country.

I appreciate the opportunity to join my colleagues here again in the 30-something Working Group.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, we are making closing comments, sir.

Mr. DELAHUNT. You know what I also find disturbing and it really provokes a certain, let me use the word ''disgust.'' When the administration is criticized, particularly some individuals, rather than speak of the policy, they speak in a language that refers to ''them'' or ''those'' or ''some,'' never identifying ''them'' or ''those'' or ''some.'' It is a particular trait of Secretary Rumsfeld. Actually, in today's Washington Times, there is a story about a speech that the Secretary gave to military officers at the Army War College. Let me just quote from the story.

''Defense Secretary Rumsfeld delivered harsh words to war critics yesterday saying, 'Some view al Qaeda operatives as victims.''' That is really unfortunate, because I would call on the Secretary to have the courage to stand up and identify who those ''some'' are. I dare say there is not a single Member in this House, Madam Speaker, that would view an al Qaeda operative as a victim. That is just simply disingenuous and certainly I would suggest demeans the office of the Secretary of Defense.

Who are ''some,'' Madam Speaker? Not any American that I know, Madam Speaker. None. But if an American wants to criticize this war, this policy, this mismanagement by this Secretary of Defense, not only are they entitled to do it, Madam Speaker, they are obligated if they embrace everything that America stands for.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As we wrap up, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something.

□ 2350

All of the charts, Madam Speaker, that we used here tonight are on this Web site for the Members to review and check out.

And again, in closing, before my friend wraps this up, I think again this administration, this Republican Congress, has really put the next generation behind the 8-ball with the war, with the debt, with the income inequality that has not been at this level of separation of the richest to the poorest since before World War II, and all the other issues we talked about. And I think it is unfair to do that to the next generation.

America has always been about making the next generation better. And, hopefully, with our advice and counsel, this Republican majority will take that and move forward.

If I do not get a chance to tell you guys, Go Gators.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. Go Gators.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. To the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts and also the gentleman from Ohio and the gentlewoman from Florida, I just want to say that our whole reason for coming to the floor is to be able to share with the Members what is happening right now under the Capitol dome, not what happened 6 months ago, but what is happening today or a couple of days ago, and about how we can correct ourselves.

The other message is letting not only other Members know, Madam Speaker, but the American people know that we are ready to lead. I always use the football analogy by saying, I am going to buy DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ a mouthpiece because she is ready to go. And I can tell you, there are a number of people, Madam Speaker, who are ready to lead.

Have you ever heard of ''lead or get out of the way''? We are willing to do that. Do you want to talk about plans? This is just one binder of plans. Do you want to talk about innovation? Do you want to talk about homeland security? Do you want to talk about Iraq? Do you want to talk about education? Do you want to talk about health care? Do you want to talk about respecting our veterans and giving them the health care that we said we would give them? Do you want to talk about military families being dealt with in a way that they should be dealt with; and the men and women who are in harm's way, equipment for our troops? Do you want to talk about those things?

Well, other folks can talk about it. We are ready to act.

The only thing that is stopping us right now, Madam Speaker, are a couple of votes on this floor. And we want the American people and we want the majority to know that we are not on their heels, we are in front of them on this issue. And that is the only thing that is stopping us.

Now, either one of two things is going to happen. Either there are going to be some of our friends on the other side of the aisle saying, I am going to join with the Democrats and we are going to be bipartisan and we are going to do what we have to do on behalf of this country, or some individuals on the other side of the aisle, with all due respect to the gentlemen and the gentlewomen on the other side, are going to be unelected and we will lead. And we will show the American people, Madam Speaker, how we want to govern.

With that, we want to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to be here.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 609, COLLEGE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2005

Mr. BISHOP of Utah (during the Special Order of Mr. MEEK of Florida), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109–399) on the resolution (H. Res. 741) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BOSWELL (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of airline delays.

Mr. CAPUANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. GIBBONS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BISHOP of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GRIJALVA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today and March 29, 30, and 31.

Mr. BILIRAKIS, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

Mr. DREIER, for 5 minutes, today and March 29 and 30.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today and March 29 and 30.

Mr. KELLER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, March 31.

Mr. KING of Iowa, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and March 29, 30, and 31.

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table, and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 166. An act to amend the Oregon Resource Conservation Act of 1996 to reauthorize the participation of the Bureau of Reclamation in the Deschutes River Conservancy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 1608. An act to enhance Federal Trade Commission enforcement against illegal

spam, spyware, and cross-border fraud and deception, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

S. 2447. An act to redesignate the White Rocks National Recreation Area in the State of Vermont as the ''Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area''; to the Committee on Resources.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker pro tempore, Mr. ADERHOLT.

H.R. 4826. An act to extend through December 31, 2006, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. ADERHOLT, announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 2275. An act to temporarily increase the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for carrying out the national flood insurance program.

S. 2320. An act to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on March 17, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.J. Res 47. Increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

H.R. 1053. To authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Ukraine.

H.R. 1691. To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Appleton, Wisconsin, as the ''John H. Bradley Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic''.

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on March 21, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 4826. To extend through December 31, 2006, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 29, 2006, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6737. A letter from the Director, Defense Research and Engineering, Department of Defense, transmitting Notification of intent to obligate funds for an additional project for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2006 Foreign Comparative Testing (FCT) Program, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2350a(g); to the Committee on Armed Services.

6738. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Anthony R. Jones, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6739. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the semiannual report detailing payments made to Cuba as a result of the provision of telecommunications services pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6); to the Committee on International Relations.

6740. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting an annual report required by section 655 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, pursuant to Public Law 104–164, section 655(a) (110 Stat. 1435); to the Committee on International Relations.

6741. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); to the Committee on International Relations.

6742. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the report on Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq pursuant to Section 9010 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2006, Pub. L. 109–148; to the Committee on International Relations.

6743. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report pursuant to the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 1993 and the FREEDOM Support Act, pursuant to Public Law 103–160, section 1203(d) of Title XII Public Law 102–511, section 502; to the Committee on International Relations.

6744. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6745. A letter from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, transmitting a copy of two Bureau publications entitled, ''Consolidated Federal Funds for Fiscal Year 2004 (State and County Areas)'' and ''Federal Aid to States for Fiscal Year 2004''; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6746. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6747. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6748. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6749. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6750. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6751. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6752. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6753. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6754. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6755. A letter from the Political Personnel and Adv. Comm. Mgmt. Spec., Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6756. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Competitive Sourcing Official, Department of Labor, transmitting pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105–270), the Department's Inventory of Inherently Governmental Activities and Inventory of Commercial Activities for 2005; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6757. A letter from the Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6758. A letter from the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a report entitled, ''Certification of the Fiscal Year 2006 Revised General Purpose General Fund Revenue Estimate in Support of the District's $331,210,000 General Obligation Bonds (Series 2005A)''; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6759. A letter from the President and CEO, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, transmitting in accordance with Section 645 of Division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004, Pub. L. 108–199, and Section 641 of Division H of the Fiscal Year 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Pub. L. 108–447, the Corportation's report on competitive sourcing efforts for FY 2004 and FY 2005; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6760. A letter from the Commissioner, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Adminstration's annual inventory as required by Public Law 105–270, the Federal Activites Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act of 1998 and OMB Circular A–76; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6761. A letter from the Executive Secretary and Chief of Staff, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting a report

pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6762. A letter from the Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shallow-Water Species Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No. 041126333–5040–02; I.D. 022406B] received March 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

6763. A letter from the Alternate Federal Liaison Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule—Clarification of Filing Date Requirements for Ex Parte and Inter Partes Reexamination Proceedings [Docket No.: PTO–P–2006–0007] (RIN: 0651–AC02) received February 28, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6764. A letter from the Acting Director, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting notification that funding under Title V, subsection 503(b)(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, has exceeded $5 million for the response to the emergency declared as a result the influx of evacuees from areas struck by Hurricane Katrina beginning on August 29, 2005 in the State of Oklahoma, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 5193; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6765. A letter from the Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule—Eligibility for Health Care Benefits for Certain Filipino Veterans in the United States (RIN: 2900–AM03) received February 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

6766. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—2006 Calendar Year Resident Population Estimates [Notice 2006–22] received March 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6767. A letter from the Inspector General, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the Board's budget justification for the Office of Inspector General for fiscal year 2007, prepared in compliance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A–11; jointly to the Committees on Appropriations, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

[Omitted from the Record of March 16, 2006]

Mr. BARTON of Texas: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 4943. A bill to prohibit fraudulent access to telephone records (Rept. 109–398). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

[*Filed on March 28, 2006*]

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 741. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Rept. 109–399). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 4882. A bill to ensure the proper remembrance of Vietnam veterans and the Vietnam War by providing a deadline for the designation of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Rept. 109–400). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

TIME LIMITATION OF REFERRED BILL

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII the following action was taken by the Speaker:

H.R. 3127. Referral to the Committee on the Judiciary extended for a period ending not later than March 29, 2006.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. JINDAL:

H.R. 5013. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to prohibit the confiscation of firearms during certain national emergencies; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SCHIFF (for himself and Mrs. BIGGERT):

H.R. 5014. A bill to provide for fairness for the Federal judiciary; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BAIRD (for himself and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H.R. 5015. A bill to prohibit securities trading based on nonpublic information relating to Congress, and to require additional reporting by Members and employees of Congress of securities transaction, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, the Judiciary, and Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KOLBE:

H.R. 5016. A bill to provide for the exchange of certain Bureau of Land Management land in Pima County, Arizona, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. SHAYS (for himself and Mrs. MALONEY):

H.R. 5017. A bill to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committees on Intelligence (Permanent Select), Government Reform, Armed Services, the Judiciary, International Relations, Financial Services, Transportation and Infrastructure, Rules, Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POMBO (for himself, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska):

H.R. 5018. A bill to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. WALDEN of Oregon:

H.R. 5019. A bill to authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to participate in the rehabilitation of the Wallowa Lake Dam in Oregon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. HOEKSTRA:

H.R. 5020. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

By Ms. BERKLEY:

H.R. 5021. A bill to amend the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 to provide for certain nuclear weapons program workers to be included in the Special Exposure Cohort under the compensation program established by that Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BROWN of Ohio (for himself, Mr. LEACH, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Ms. LEE, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. HONDA, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ANDREWS, and Mr. HOLT):

H.R. 5022. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. CHRISTENSEN (for herself, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. OWENS, Ms. LEE, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia):

H.R. 5023. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the amendments made by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 requiring documentation evidencing citizenship or nationality as a condition for receipt of medical assistance under the Medicaid Program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. ISRAEL):

H.R. 5024. A bill to require annual oral testimony before the Financial Services Committee of the Chairperson or a designee of the Chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Financial Accounting Standards Board, and the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, relating to their efforts to promote transparency in financial reporting; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WALDEN of Oregon (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. HOOLEY, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 5025. A bill to protect for future generations the recreational opportunities, forests, timber, clean water, wilderness and scenic values, and diverse habitat of Mount Hood National Forest, Oregon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FORTUÑO:

H.R. 5026. A bill to designate the Investigations Building of the Food and Drug Administration located at 466 Fernandez Juncos Avenue in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as the ''Andres Toro Building''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. JINDAL:

H.R. 5027. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit against tax proportional to the number of million British thermal units of natural gas produced by a high Btu fuel facility; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LINDER (for himself, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. DICKS, Mr. DENT, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas):

H.R. 5028. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve and expedite the assessment and determination of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material threats by the Secretary of Homeland Security under the Project BioShield program; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LINDER (for himself, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. DICKS, Mr. DENT, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas):

H.R. 5029. A bill to establish in the Department of Homeland Security a Domestic Nuclear Detection Office to improve the ability of the United States to detect and prevent acts of nuclear and radiological terrorism and to enhance coordination of such efforts across Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mrs. MILLER of Michigan:

H.R. 5030. A bill to amend the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 to establish vessel ballast water management requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MOLLOHAN:

H.R. 5031. A bill to extend Corridor O of the Appalachian Development Highway System from its current southern terminus at I-68 near Cumberland to Corridor H, which stretches from Weston, West Virginia, to Strasburg, Virginia; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. NEY (for himself, Mr. MCNULTY, and Mr. CROWLEY):

H.R. 5032. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the income tax forgiveness for members of the Armed Forces who die as a result of wounds, disease, or injury incurred while serving in a combat zone to include forgiveness for the last taxable year ending before the wounds, disease, or injury are incurred; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ROTHMAN:

H.R. 5033. A bill to permit access to certain information in the Firearms Trace System database; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SANDERS:

H.R. 5034. A bill to redesignate the White Rocks National Recreation Area in the State of Vermont as the ''Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area''; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. SERRANO:

H.R. 5035. A bill to provide discretionary authority to an immigration judge to determine that an alien parent of a United States citizen child should not be ordered removed from the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota (for himself, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H. Con. Res. 365. Concurrent resolution urging the Government of China to reinstate all licenses of Gao Zhisheng and his law firm, remove all legal and political obstacles for lawyers attempting to defend criminal cases in China, including politically sensitive cases, and revise law and practice in China so that it conforms to international standards; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. PENCE (for himself, Mr. HYDE, Mr. LANTOS, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. ANDREWS, and Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania):

H. Res. 736. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that legal action in Afghanistan against citizens who have already converted or plan to convert to other religions is deplorable and unjust; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mrs. BIGGERT (for herself, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. BASS, Mr. DREIER, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. LEE, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. FEENEY, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. GUTKNECHT, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, Mr. HOLT, Mr. OWENS, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. BAKER, Mr. REICHERT, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. FORD, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. OXLEY, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. HONDA, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Ms. BEAN, Ms. WATERS, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. CLAY, Mr. NEY, Mr. BACA, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. RYUN of Kansas, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. DENT, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. KANJORSKI, and Mr. ISRAEL):

H. Res. 737. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Ms. NORTON (for herself and Mr. CARDIN):

H. Res. 738. A resolution congratulating Jason Kamras for his exceptional dedication to the students of John Philip Sousa Middle School in Washington, D.C., resulting in his selection as National Teacher of the Year, 2005092006, in recognition of his work; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. SHAW:

H. Res. 739. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should declare lung cancer a public health priority and should implement a comprehensive inter-agency program that will reduce lung cancer mortality by at least 50 percent by 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. SWEENEY, Mr. WALSH, Mr. MCNULTY, and Mr. ENGEL):

H. Res. 740. A resolution calling on the Government of the United Kingdom to immediately establish a full, independent, public judicial inquiry into the murder of Northern Ireland defense attorney Pat Finucane, as recommended by international Judge Peter Cory as part of the Weston Park agreement and a way forward for the Northern Ireland Peace Process; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H. Res. 741. A resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 11: Mr. JEFFERSON and Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 23: Mr. SHAYS and Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.

H.R. 47: Mr. BEAUPREZ.

H.R. 97: Mr. STRICKLAND.

H.R. 115: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 147: Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. POE, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.

H.R. 226: Mr. WOLF.

H.R. 282: Mr. TOWNS and Mr. MCKEON.

H.R. 284: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 303: Mrs. CAPITO.

H.R. 341: Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 354: Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 356: Mr. CANNON.

H.R. 363: Mr. GONZALEZ.

H.R. 376: Mr. MOLLOHAN and Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 378: Mr. HONDA and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 408: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 478: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 503: Mr. DOGGETT.

H.R. 517: Mr. MCKEON, Mr. BOREN, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.

H.R. 559: Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 616: Mr. POMBO.

H.R. 633: Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 697: Mr. DOYLE, Mr. FARR, Mr. WYNN, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. TOWNS, and Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 699: Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. ROYCE, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. BARROW, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 735: Mrs. MALONEY.

H.R. 752: Mr. LYNCH and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 805: Mr. EMANUEL.

H.R. 807: Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 865: Mr. GERLACH.

H.R. 867: Ms. WATSON.

H.R. 881: Mr. MEEHAN.

H.R. 994: Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. JINDAL, and Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina.

H.R. 998: Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. RENZI, Mr. BEAUPREZ, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mrs. MYRICK.

H.R. 1059: Ms. MCKINNEY and Ms. CARSON.

H.R. 1175: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts.

H.R. 1182: Ms. WATERS.

H.R. 1188: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 1204: Mr. SIMMONS.

H.R. 1217: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. ACKERMAN.

H.R. 1227: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. SPRATT, and Mr. HUNTER.

H.R. 1241: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 1249: Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 1298: Mr. MCHUGH.

H.R. 1339: Mr. JINDAL.

H.R. 1356: Mr. CLEAVER and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1366: Mr. FILNER and Mr. FEENEY.

H.R. 1408: Mr. KUCINICH.

H.R. 1415: Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 1425: Mr. BERMAN.

H.R. 1471: Mr. LAHOOD and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.

H.R. 1505: Mr. FORD.

H.R. 1546: Mr. SHAYS.
H.R. 1558: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina and Mr. MOORE of Kansas.
H.R. 1578: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 1582: Mr. FORD, Mr. MCNULTY, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. CASTLE, and Ms. WOOLSEY.
H.R. 1621: Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1634: Ms. HARRIS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. RAHALL, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. HYDE, Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. BEAUPREZ.
H.R. 1696: Mr. WALSH.
H.R. 1792: Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. HONDA, Mr. SAXTON, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. WAXMAN, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 1872: Mr. BONNER.
H.R. 1951: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. STRICKLAND, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H.R. 2034: Mr. RAHALL.
H.R. 2052: Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia.
H.R. 2103: Mr. PETRI.
H.R. 2177: Mr. LEVIN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PLATTS, and Mr. HALL.
H.R. 2292: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.
H.R. 2351: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 2369: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. GERLACH.
H.R. 2429: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mrs. CAPPS.
H.R. 2534: Mr. GERLACH.
H.R. 2567: Mr. SULLIVAN and Mr. FOLEY.
H.R. 2568: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 2635: Ms. HARMAN.
H.R. 2669: Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 2671: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 2684: Mr. GERLACH, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. WYNN.
H.R. 2716: Ms. HARMAN.
H.R. 2841: Mr. CASTLE.
H.R. 2861: Ms. HERSETH, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. ROTHMAN, and Mr. CASE.
H.R. 2943: Mr. CLEAVER and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 2961: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 2962: Mr. KUCINICH and Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.
H.R. 2963: Ms. CARSON, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H.R. 3127: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. WU, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, and Mr. GERLACH.
H.R. 3131: Mr. DOYLE.
H.R. 3164: Mr. SOUDER.
H.R. 3255: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 3307: Mr. GERLACH, Ms. HART, and Mr. WELLER.
H.R. 3358: Mr. BARROW.
H.R. 3385: Mr. INSLEE.
H.R. 3442: Mr. WAXMAN.
H.R. 3476: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 3478: Mr. SOUDER, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. SKELTON.
H.R. 3502: Mr. KUCINICH.
H.R. 3588: Mr. ANDREWS and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3602: Ms. LEE.
H.R. 3644: Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, Mr. WYNN, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, and Ms. HART.
H.R. 3658: Ms. WATERS, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 3701: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 3715: Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 3883: Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky.
H.R. 3888: Mr. WAXMAN.
H.R. 3931: Mr. PLATTS.
H.R. 4005: Mr. EHLERS, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. FERGUSON.
H.R. 4015: Mrs. SCHMIDT.
H.R. 4025: Mr. SOUDER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. BOUCHER, Ms. CARSON, Mr. WYNN, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 4033: Mr. MARKEY and Mr. MELANCON.
H.R. 4166: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 4188: Mr. LEACH, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 4197: Mr. PALLONE.
H.R. 4200: Mr. HALL and Mr. BOREN.
H.R. 4211: Mr. OWENS, Mr. WEXLER, and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 4229: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 4236: Mr. STRICKLAND and Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 4259: Mr. ABERCROMBIE and Mr. CASE.
H.R. 4264: Mr. POMBO.
H.R. 4298: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. LEACH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. STRICKLAND, and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 4332: Mr. OBERSTAR.
H.R. 4341: Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. GUTKNECHT, Mr. ISTOOK, Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 4372: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. MALONEY, and Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 4384: Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 4390: Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 4399: Mr. GERLACH.
H.R. 4403: Mr. AKIN.
H.R. 4413: Mr. SAXTON and Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 4434: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 4435: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 4460: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 4517: Mr. PAUL and Mr. ALEXANDER.
H.R. 4542: Ms. LEE, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Mrs. CAPPS.
H.R. 4547: Mr. CARTER, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. PLATTS.
H.R. 4548: Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan.
H.R. 4562: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. TANCREDO, and Mr. STARK.
H.R. 4565: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. MCKINNEY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 4596: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 4619: Mr. CARNAHAN and Mr. HINCHEY.
H.R. 4641: Mr. PAUL and Mr. BOEHLERT.
H.R. 4672: Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 4681: Mr. TURNER, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. KELLER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. BOREN, Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. FILNER, Mr. BAKER, Mr. HOLT, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, and Mr. MOORE of Kansas.
H.R. 4685: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 4694: Mr. STARK.
H.R. 4712: Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H.R. 4715: Mr. CHABOT.
H.R. 4736: Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. STARK, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. BROWN of Ohio.
H.R. 4740: Mr. LATOURETTE, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. EHLERS, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 4741: Mr. ROGERS of Michigan and Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4751: Mr. SOUDER.
H.R. 4755: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FILNER, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. HEFLEY, Mrs. BONO, Mr. MARCHANT, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. STRICKLAND, and Ms. CARSON.
H.R. 4760: Ms. LEE, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 4761: Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. ISTOOK, and Mr. ADERHOLT.
H.R. 4764: Mrs. BONO, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. FOLEY.
H.R. 4772: Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 4774: Mr. SOUDER and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 4775: Mr. ALEXANDER and Mr. BAKER.
H.R. 4790: Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, and Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland.
H.R. 4810: Mr. GUTKNECHT, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Ms. FOXX, Mr. PENCE, Mr. CANNON, Mr. PAUL, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. HOSTETTLER, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. WESTMORELAND, and Mr. KINGSTON.
H.R. 4843: Mr. MORAN of Kansas.
H.R. 4844: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 4861: Mr. WAXMAN.
H.R. 4867: Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 4868: Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 4882: Mr. DOOLITTLE.
H.R. 4889: Mr. LINDER.
H.R. 4898: Mr. EVANS, Ms. CARSON, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Mr. SERRANO, and Mr. HINCHEY.
H.R. 4900: Mr. OWENS and Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire.
H.R. 4902: Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. BUYER, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. HERGER, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. HOYER, Mr. LINDER, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. NUNES, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. PORTER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. SODREL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WU, and Mr. YOUNG of Florida.
H.R. 4904: Mr. FILNER and Mr. SAXTON.
H.R. 4917: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 4922: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H.R. 4924: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas and Mr. EDWARDS.
H.R. 4937: Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina and Mr. JEFFERSON.
H.R. 4949: Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. TANNER, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. PICKERING, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. BASS, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, and Mr. MOORE of Kansas.
H.R. 4953: Mr. MCCOTTER and Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 4962: Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 4976: Mr. BERMAN.
H.R. 4988: Mr. TANCREDO and Mr. SHAYS.
H.R. 5000: Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MEEHAN and Ms. WATSON.
H.R. 5007: Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. REYES, and Mr. FILNER.
H. Con. Res. 235: Mr. SMITH of Texas and Mr. ALLEN.
H. Con. Res. 282: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Ms. SOLIS.
H. Con. Res. 299: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H. Con. Res. 318: Ms. LEE.
H. Con. Res. 342: Mr. MEEKS of New York.
H. Con. Res. 346: Mr. STARK, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. WU, and Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.
H. Con. Res. 348: Mr. MICHAUD.

H. Con. Res. 355: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CHANDLER, and Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee.

H. Con. Res. 357: Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. DELAHUNT, and Mr. GORDON.

H. Res. 127: Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. MATSUI, and Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan.

H. Res. 316: Ms. BEAN.

H. Res. 490: Mr. WEXLER, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. MALONEY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, and Mr. SCHIFF.

H. Res. 600: Mr. WAXMAN.

H. Res. 605: Mr. KUHL of New York and Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey.

H. Res. 680: Mr. BURGESS, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Ms. NORTON.

H. Res. 688: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. COOPER.

H. Res. 699: Mr. POMEROY.

H. Res. 700: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, and Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky.

H. Res. 703: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H. Res. 709: Mr. DUNCAN and Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland.

H. Res. 717: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H. Res. 720: Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H. Res. 729: Mr. UPTON and Mr. FEENEY.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 4200: Mr. SAXTON.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 609

OFFERED BY: MR. BLUMENAUER

AMENDMENT NO. 1: At the end of title IX of the Amendment add the following new section:

SEC. _____. SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY.

No later than May 2007, the Secretary of Education shall convene a summit of higher education experts working in the area of sustainable operations and programs, representatives from the agencies of the Federal Government, and business and industry leaders to focus on efforts of national distinction that—

(1) encourage faculty, staff, and students at institutions of higher education to establish both administrative and educational sustainability programs on campus;

(2) enhance research by faculty and students at institutions of higher education in sustainability practices and innovations that assist and improve sustainability;

(3) encourage institutions of higher education to work with community partners from the business, government, and nonprofit sectors to design and implement sustainability programs for application in the community and workplace; and

(4) identify opportunities for partnerships involving higher education institutions and the Federal Government to expand sustainable operations and academic programs focused on environmental and economic sustainability.

H.R. 609

OFFERED BY: MR. BURTON OF INDIANA

AMENDMENT NO. 2: At the end of title VI of the Amendment, add the following new section:

SEC. _____. CONDITIONS ON PROGRAM GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.

Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1122) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 632. GIFT REPORTS BY RECIPIENT INSTITUTIONS.

''(a) REPORTING BY INSTITUTIONS.—

''(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall require, as part of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) annual data collection, that each institution receiving funds under this title include the following data:

''(A) the total cost of establishing or operating a program or center assisted under this title;

''(B) the names and addresses of all State and private sector corporations, foundations, or any other entities or individuals that contribute cash or any other property for the institution, programs, or centers receiving funds under this title;

''(C) the amount of cash or the fair market value of the property that each contributor contributes to the institution, programs, or centers receiving funds under this title; and

''(D) the use made of each contribution by each such contributor.

''(2) DEADLINE.—Any report under paragraph (1) shall be made no later than such date as the Secretary shall require.

''(3) CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO REPORT.—In the case of any institution from which a report is requested under paragraph (1), if the Secretary does not receive a report in accordance with the deadline established under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall—

''(A) make a determination that the institution of higher education has failed to make the report required by this paragraph;

''(B) transmit a notice of the determination to Congress; and

''(C) publish in the Federal Register a notice of the determination and the effect of the determination on the eligibility of the institution of higher education for contracts and grants under this title.

''(b) REPORTS BY SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall annually prepare a report summarizing the information collected from institutions of higher education under subsection (a)(1), including all of the information required by subparagraphs (A) through (D) of such subsection. The Secretary of Education shall publish such report in the Federal Register and transmit a copy of such report to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

''(c) RETROSPECTIVE INFORMATION.—The data collected from institutions of higher education under subsection (a)(1) in the first submission after the date of enactment of this section, and the Secretary's first report under subsection (b), shall include the information required by subparagraphs (B), (C), and (D) of subsection (a)(1) regarding contributions made on or after September 11, 2001, and before the end of the first reporting period under such subsection.''.

H.R. 609

OFFERED BY: MR. COLE OF OKLAHOMA

AMENDMENT NO. 3: Page 129, beginning on line 13, strike subsection (c) of section 402 and redesignate the succeeding subsections accordingly.

Page 139, line 24, strike ''as amended by section 402(c) and''.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 152 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006 No. 36

Senate

The Senate met at 9:44 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Creator and Redeemer, we praise You today for Your goodness and for Your wonderful works to the children of humanity. You satisfy the longing soul and fill hungry spirits with goodness. Thank You for Your many blessings: for life and health, for grace and friendship, for praise and worship.

Equip our Senators for the challenges of this day. Empower them to seize the opportunities to make a difference in our Nation and the life of our world. May their best energies not be squandered in partisan politics. Instead, give each lawmaker the courage to understand what is right and the willingness to do it.

Give us all a faith that will discern the new things You are doing in our world.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM DEMINT led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 28, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. DEMINT thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. We are not yet in morning business.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for not to exceed 1 hour, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the minority leader or his designee, and the remaining 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, seeing no one from the minority here at the moment, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to proceed for a few moments in majority time in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO ERMA ORA JAMES BYRD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the King James version of the Bible tells us that shortly after the creation of man:

The Lord God said ''It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helpmate for him.''

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.

It continues that ''he took one of his ribs . . . and . . . made he a woman.''

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.

The verse concludes:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Mr. President, for almost 69 years, ROBERT BYRD and Erma Ora James Byrd have been one—since their marriage on May 29, 1937. And today I rise to offer my heartfelt condolences to the Senator from West Virginia, ROBERT BYRD, on the passing of his dear wife.

Senator BYRD has served for nearly 50 years in the Senate as our cornerstone—a reminder of this body's mission and duty. Sadly, the cornerstone of the Senate has lost the keystone of his life. Erma Ora James Byrd went home to be with her Creator on this Saturday past, at the age of 88.

Erma Byrd was born in Floyd County, VA, and moved to the coalfields of West Virginia as a child with her family. Her father was a coal miner and came to the State to work.

As a Kentuckian—another State of coal miners—I was always moved to hear Senator BYRD proudly declare that he had, in fact, married a coal miner's daughter.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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On the Byrds' 65th wedding anniversary in 2002, Senator BYRD said:

Erma and I are complete and whole, a total that is more than the sum of its parts. In my life, Erma Ora Byrd is the diamond.

As every schoolchild in West Virginia learns, coal, when placed under great pressure, becomes a diamond. So it is fitting that Senator BYRD has the coalfields to thank for bringing his beloved Erma to him.

The Byrds' marriage was a study of partnership, devotion, and teamwork. It was living proof of the deep bonds that grow between a loving husband and wife. My own parents were married for 50 years, so I have seen firsthand the strength of those bonds and know the heartache when they are broken—until the reunion.

And so we grieve with our friend for his loss. Our prayers are with him. But we also know West Virginia's great Senator will one day be rejoined with his beloved Mrs. Byrd.

May God bless our friend ROBERT BYRD and the Byrd family.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

I withhold that suggestion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRIBUTE TO MAGGIE INOUYE AND ERMA ORA BYRD

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I join with my colleague from Kentucky in expressing my deep sense of sorrow, as well, over the passing of two members of our family. And I speak of both the wife of our colleague from Hawaii, Senator INOUYE, who lost his beloved Maggie a week or so ago and, of course, the recent news we received over the weekend of the passing of Erma Ora Byrd. These are members of our family, in a sense.

I have known both Mrs. Byrd and Mrs. Inouye since I was a child. My father was a Member of this body and was elected, in fact, to the Senate on the same day ROBERT BYRD was, in 1958. So I have had the privilege of serving with Senator BYRD both indirectly and directly for these now more than 40 years. In fact, I have the unique privilege of being his seatmate in this body, something which I have enjoyed immensely over the past decade and a half that I have sat at this seat in the Senate next to the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia.

I certainly remember Maggie Inouye. She was wonderful to my parents and was good to me over the years. To watch two of our colleagues about whom we care so deeply go through the tremendous suffering they are going through as a result of the loss of their life mates is something all of us—regardless of where we sit in this Chamber, to what party we belong, in what direction our ideological compass may lead us—we all have a deep sense of loss for these wonderful people.

DAN and Maggie Inouye were very close to my parents, as I mentioned. She was born in 1924 and attended schools in Hawaii and then went on to receive degrees at the University of Hawaii and Columbia University and was highly respected in the area of speech pathology. She was a remarkable woman in her own right who could have had a very distinguished career independently of her husband.

She and DAN met in 1947, and as DAN INOUYE likes to tell the story, on the second date he proposed marriage. Not one to delay at all, he had met the person he clearly decided was going to be his life mate. And for the next 57 years, they were just that.

They celebrated the birth of their son Kenny who was again a wonderful child and has done a remarkable job in his own right.

I will remember Maggie best for her grace and poise and I was saddened to hear of her passing after a long battle with cancer earlier this month.

I went out to Hawaii last week and attended Maggie's funeral along with Senator STEVENS and his wife Catherine. It was a long trip, and I know that DAN did not expect a large number of his colleagues to make that journey. It was not a hard trip to make. It would have been harder not to make it in my case, given the closeness of our families over the years. And for me I knew there was nowhere else I could be than being present with DAN and his family to celebrate the life of Maggie.

During the visitation period prior to the funeral service, I was deeply moved by watching literally a couple thousand people express their condolences to DAN, to his son Kenny, Kenny's wife, Jessica. Each expression was heartfelt. It was personal. These were relationships that were solidified over years of friendship with DAN INOUYE, with his wife Maggie, and the constituents and friends of theirs from Hawaii.

I was also moved by the peacefulness of the funeral service, and most especially by the very touching and eloquent eulogy delivered by Maggie's longtime friend, Sumi McCabe.

I would like to close by offering my thoughts and prayers, once again, to DAN, to his son Kenny, and to his daughter-in-law Jessica.

As we mourn the loss of this wonderful woman, let us remember that her spirit will be with us and that her inspirational legacy will live on in the generations to come of her family.

So again, to our friend DAN, we want to express our deep sense of loss and our sense of solidarity with him.

Mr. President, to lose, just a few days later, of course, the wife of our great friend and leader, Senator BYRD, was a major blow as well. Certainly, the history of Erma Ora Byrd is well known to all of us.

As Senator MCCONNELL just pointed out, she was the daughter of a coal miner. She had been the life mate, for 69 years, of our colleague from West Virginia. It was clear to anyone who had the fortune of knowing them that they loved each other very deeply.

Erma Ora James was born in Floyd County, VA, in 1917. The daughter of a coal miner, as I just mentioned, her family moved to Raleigh County, WV, where she met ROBERT while attending the Mark Twain Grade School.

They were married when they were both 19 years of age in 1937. Shortly thereafter they began a loving family that has grown to two daughters, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Even though she was content to remain out of Washington's limelight, Erma became quickly known and loved for her commonsense values and her devotion to her family.

Erma also became well respected for her advocacy on issues affecting children across West Virginia and, of course, our Nation as well. Two academic scholarship programs at Marshall University and West Virginia University, respectively, have been named in her honor as a result of her efforts.

Four years ago, at the couple's 65th wedding anniversary, Senator BYRD said of his wife:

Erma and I are complete and whole, a total that is more than the sum of its parts. In my life, Erma Ora Byrd is the diamond. She is a priceless treasure, a multifaceted woman of great insight and wisdom, of quiet humor and common sense. I wish that more people could know the joy I have had in finding one's soul mate early in life and then sharing that deep companionship over many happy years.

Mr. President, my thoughts and prayers, along with those of our colleagues, I know, are with Senator BYRD and his family in these hours. I wish to extend my sympathies to ROBERT; his daughters, Mona and Marjorie; their husbands, Mohammed and Jon; ROBERT and Erma's grandchildren, Erik, Darius, Fredrik, Mona, and Mary; and ROBERT and Erma's great-grandchildren, Caroline, Kathryn, Anna, Emma, Hannah, and Michael.

Knowing of Senator BYRD's love for poetry, I am reminded of a passage in Thomas Gray's ''Elegy in a Country Churchyard,'' which happened to be my father's favorite poem. Gray's ''Elegy'' says in one of its stanzas:

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

ROBERT gained a wonderful friend, obviously, and a companion—a life companion—in Erma. It is my hope that her spirit remains with us and will inspire all of us and future generations to come.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I wish to take a minute to offer my sincerest condolences to Senator BYRD on the passing of his beloved wife Erma. In a love story that is both moving and inspiring to all people, ROBERT BYRD's grade school sweetheart became his lifelong best friend in a marriage that spanned almost seven decades. While this makes the loss that much more profound, I would imagine it makes the

memories that much sweeter and the love all the more enduring.

As somebody who is fortunate enough myself to be married to a wonderful woman for the past 14 years, I can only imagine the difficult transition this causes for our dear colleague from the State of West Virginia, but I pray that the Byrd family will find strength in this difficult time. I pray that Erma may now rest in eternal peace.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I join many of my colleagues who have been speaking today and yesterday extending their heartfelt sympathy to Senator ROBERT BYRD of West Virginia for the loss of the diamond of his life, Erma. She truly was the light of his life. On many occasions, I have eased over into the chair next to Senator BYRD, and we have talked about how blessed we are with our two wives. He knows my wife Tricia and often asks about her, typically the courtesy that Senator BYRD extends to all of us.

I have asked him about Erma and how she was doing. We talked a lot about what a difference they have made in our lives. There is no question that he is going to miss her greatly, as will all of the family, I know. To all of them, we extend our heartfelt sympathies. We know the children and grandchildren are with Senator BYRD now and with Mrs. Byrd.

I remember an occasion on a Friday afternoon standing here when Senator BYRD asked me to yield. You are not always sure what Senator BYRD is asking you to yield for because it could be that you violated some rule of the Senate. But he asked if I would yield so that he could speak on the beauty of the grandson. I had just had my first grandchild, and it happened to be a grandson. He spoke so beautifully, so eloquently, totally from memory, and ended with a beautiful quote of what a grandson means to a grandfather. I was moved by it, literally to tears. And of course, when it came out in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, I had it framed. It hangs on the wall of my son's home in Paris, KY. Obviously, he doesn't think much of it right now, doesn't fully appreciate it. But some day, he will read that, and I know he will think of his grandfather and where he has served.

I tell that story to remind my colleagues about the kind of man Senator BYRD is. He can be a tough adversary. He can cause leaders to have a lot of heartburn. I have had it a couple of times when I was standing here in this place. But it is because he reveres the institution, because he does care about us as individual men and women. He knows about every one of us. He knows about our families. And not only does he love the institution, but he loves knowledge and great history and poetry.

Many have quoted from his favorite poem in the last couple of days. I don't have a poem. I don't have some great saying from memory. I only rise to join all the others in saying how much I admire and appreciate this Senator who is an institution in his own right in this body. I know how much he is suffering right now.

Sometimes we get so busy these days in this institution, trying to make it move forward or trying to keep up with the mail and the constituents and the flying back and forth, we really need a few who have very firm rudders and their sails set in the right direction for the best interests of the country. I know that is true of Senator BYRD.

Again, I extend my best wishes to him. When he returns, I will join all my colleagues in paying my respects to him and my appreciation for the example he set for himself and Erma, his wife of 69 years.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Erma Ora Byrd, the wife of our esteemed colleague, ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia. It has always warmed my heart to watch the Senator from West Virginia speak of his wife in conversation, of which we have had many, or as he has stood on this Senate floor. He has mentioned her name, and whenever he mentioned it, he immediately got this glow on his face in reverence to his friend, his wife, his love of nearly seven decades.

Love of this magnitude should be celebrated. And their marriage of 69 years should be celebrated. As a matter of fact, recently I talked to Senator BYRD about his marriage, and he said: I just hope that we can celebrate 70 years of marriage. Well, they did not get to 70 years. They got to 69, plus. And although her body failed her this past weekend, and their time together on this Earth ended, the love they shared—Senator BYRD and Erma—that love is timeless and that love is forever.

ROBERT BYRD is known throughout the country for his intellect and his patriotism, for his devotion to this country, to the State of West Virginia, his reverence for the Constitution, and his reverence for the Senate. But as famous as he is, and as eloquent as he is, and as far as he has gone in this Senate—he has been the leader here; he has been the chairman of committees here—he never would fail to share the credit for his many accomplishments with his wife, who inspired him and humbled him.

Erma never sought the spotlight, nor, according to ROBERT, would she allow her husband to bask in it for any longer than absolutely necessary. She strived to be a model of duty and service—service to one's family and service to one's country.

Erma Byrd has always been by her husband's side, ever since they were married, both of them at the age of 19. Imagine: the age of 19. Their love never waned. It is as strong now as it was on the very day they said their wedding vows. And I would posit that it has actually grown deeper, far deeper. That love is a bond that will never be broken, and even in her death her spirit will remain by his side to guide him on.

Erma had been struggling with illness for the past several years. God ended her battle, allowing her to be at rest. Although Erma's struggle with illness is over, and the deep pain that ROBERT felt as he watched her struggle with this illness is over, we should all know that he needs us now, his friends and his colleagues. He needs us to be his friend as he grieves for the loss of his soulmate.

Although we mourn her loss, we must not forget to also celebrate the rich, full life she made with her husband, her children, and her grandchildren.

The good Senator from West Virginia has always had a penchant for poetry, especially when it was used to help him describe Erma. So in closing, I will quote a poem by Charles Jeffreys that the Senator himself has used to describe his marriage to Erma:

We have lived and loved together
Through many changing years;
We have shared each other's gladness
And wept each other's tears;
I have known ne'er a sorrow
That was long unsoothed by thee;
For thy smiles can make a summer
Where darkness else would be.

Like the leaves that fall around us
In autumn's fading hours,
Are the traitor's smiles, that darken,
When the cloud of sorrow lowers;
And though many such we've known, love,
Too prone, alas, to range,
We both can speak of one love
Which time can never change.

We have lived and loved together
Through many changing years,
We have shared each other's gladness
And wept each other's tears.
And let us hope the future,
As the past has been will be:
I will share with thee my sorrows,
And thou thy joys with me.

When ROBERT BYRD spoke these words, he meant them deeply in his soul toward his one love. And so my husband joins me, and our family joins me, and I know all of our colleagues feel this way: We offer our thoughts and prayers to our dear friend Senator BYRD, to his family, and to the good people of West Virginia during this difficult time. I know my friend ROBERT will dedicate his future in the Senate not only to the people of West Virginia, whom he serves so proudly, but to his incomparable soulmate who so inspired him.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday in the Senate Judiciary Committee, there was a historic vote, a

vote that relates to an issue America has grappled with almost from the beginning. That is the issue of immigration. It is interesting as we reflect on our history that we are a nation of immigrants. But for the Native Americans who were here on our shores when the first White men arrived, we have all come to this country either directly or indirectly through our parents, grandparents, or previous generations. It is that immigration which has made America such a unique and diverse place. We take great pride in our roots, where we came from, and even greater pride in where we have planted those roots in American soil. That is a fact of life in America. It brings a special quality to this country.

Think of the people who have decided to come to our shores, men and women who walked away from a comfortable life in a familiar place with a familiar church, with family, a culture, a language, to embark on a journey to a place they had never seen before, to come to a country where they could not speak the language, to live in a place where they were not certain what their future would hold. It takes an extraordinary person to make that leap of faith into the future. It takes an extraordinary family to decide that their future is going to be here in a new place.

The story I have described has been repeated millions of times. The people who had the courage to step forward and come here have brought a special quality to this country, a quality we admire—creativity, a love of freedom, entrepreneurship, things that make America a much different place in the world, an America which we are all proud to call home.

An interesting thing happened in the course of history. Those who came first would look at the ships coming in and say: No, not more of those people. That is part of it, too—an intolerance for immigration even as we know our own birthright included an immigrant experience.

Now we are involved in a national debate about some 11 or 12 million in our midst who are not here with proper documentation, not having followed the proper legal process. We have been asked to reflect on that. Do we need them? Are they an important part of America?

They are a very important part, not just for the spirit they bring but for what they do each day. These are the men and women who probably cooked your breakfast, probably cleared the table after you finished, washed the dishes in the kitchen. These are the people who each day clean your hotel room. They are the ones who are watching your children at daycare. They are taking care of your aging parent at a nursing home at this moment. They make sure that when you go to the golf course the putting green is perfect. They stand in line many times for 8 hours or more in dull, tough jobs, in damp cold, experience watching chicken carcasses and beef carcasses go by so you can enjoy a barbecue over the weekend. They take jobs many people won't take. That is the immigrant story.

They volunteer to serve our country. Some 60,000 of them are now in the U.S. military, not legal citizens—here legally but not citizens—willing to put on that uniform, take an oath of loyalty to the United States, and literally risk their lives for you and for me. Some of them die in the process. We have this kind of cruel wrinkle in the law that if you die in service to America, we will make you a citizen after you die. Their grieving parents receive folded American flags in gratitude from a nation that is so thankful for their heroism.

Now they have come forward out of the shadows, hundreds of thousands of them across America, protesting a bill that passed the House of Representatives which would make a criminal out of every single one of them, not just ordinary criminals but aggravated felons. The House bill, the SENSENBRENNER bill which passed, says that the 11 or 12 million in America who are undocumented would be branded as aggravated felons, the same type of criminal penalty which we save for the worst—armed robbers and rapists. That is what the House bill would do. That is what they would brand these people, the same people who sit next to us in church, whose kids go to school with our kids, the same people we see every day though we may not speak to them. That bill is cruel. That bill is wrong.

Yesterday, the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate on a bipartisan basis decided that there was a better way. By a 12-to-6 vote, the Senate Judiciary Committee said the following: First, if we are going to be a secure America, we need to know who lives here. We need to know the names and addresses and workplaces of all the people in America, particularly the 11 or 12 million undocumented. So for security purposes, we moved forward with this bill to identify who these people are, where they live, where they are from, and to make certain that any single one of them who is a threat to America would be removed and has to leave. But we went further. We said: We need to toughen the borders, too. Let's make sure we enforce the laws that are there. America can't absorb every single person who wants to come here. That is physically impossible. So we need better enforcement at the borders, and we need enforcement when it comes to employment. If we say to employers: We need to know who is working for you, we need to know if, in fact, they are American citizens, and we will enforce the law, it is going to tighten the system.

The second thing we did was essential. We said to the people who are here: We are going to give you a chance, a chance to become legal in the eyes of America. But it won't be easy. It will take you a long time. It will take you more than 10 years. During that 10-year period, you will have to demonstrate to us that you were, in fact, a person of good moral standing, that you don't have a criminal record, that you were working, you were paying your taxes, you were learning English, and you will pay a fine for having violated the law in coming to this country. At the end of that period, we will decide if you met these strict qualifications and whether you can get on to a 5- or 6-year path to finally become an American citizen.

It is not an easy road. Some will fall along the wayside. Some will make it. Those who make it will add something to America. They will show that their determination to leave a place and come here has been matched by the determination to stay here and make this a better country.

When I walk through the streets of Chicago—I love that city, the diversity. When you get in a taxicab in Chicago, you will meet the world. Every driver is from country after country, people who come here—doctors, scientists, and others who are driving cabs and praying they might become part of America. It reminds me of my own roots, and my mother, who came from Lithuania. In 1911, when she arrived, could she have ever dreamed that one day her youngest son would be sworn in as the 47th Senator from the State of Illinois? It was a dream she never could have had, but it came true when she saw me sworn in before she passed away. In my office is her naturalization certificate behind my desk—a reminder of who I am and where I am from and, quite honestly, where we are all from.

Yesterday, with the bill passed on a bipartisan vote, which now will come to the floor of the Senate, we have an opportunity to do something that is not only historic and fair but right, to make America a more secure place, make certain there is fairness, and to make certain, as the President said, that we maintain not only the lawful tradition in America but the welcoming tradition in America. We can celebrate our diversity, knowing that it makes us different than so many other countries—countries that are now torn by sectarian strife and ethnic violence. Thank God that in the United States, because there are so many of us from so many different places, we have largely avoided that kind of confrontation.

I hope we will consider this bill on a bipartisan basis. We will need to tighten up some aspects and change a few words here and there. But we can never go how the House of Representatives went, with the Sensenbrenner bill; it is a punitive bill, a mean-spirited bill, not in the best tradition of America. We can do better. It criminalizes 11 million or 12 million Americans. Calling them aggravated felons is no way to embark on this road to a more united America.

That law, as it passed the House, will never be enforced. We know that. But

it is a shadow over the lives of so many millions—not just those here without documentation, but those who would reach out to help them, such as the priest who counsels the mother to stay with her children, even though she may not have the right legal documents or the person at the domestic violence shelter who tells a mother and her battered children to stay in this place; it is a safe and secure place for you; stay here until that abusive, drunken husband of yours is arrested and the kids are safe again.

Under the bill passed by the House of Representatives, the people I have described would be branded not just as criminals but as felons. That is an unfortunate approach and one that doesn't reflect the values of this country. That is an approach which would drive more people into the shadows.

The Democrats support a comprehensive approach, one that includes security and also includes a path to legalization—a tough, long path, with many requirements that some will not finish. But those who do finish will make a better America. We have to go beyond enforcement. We have a reasonable and realistic approach to address the undocumented who live among us. We would give them an opportunity, and that is the best America can offer to anybody. By giving them this opportunity, we encourage them to come forward and register and to be part of the legal rolls in America. That way, we know who is living here, which enhances our national security. This is also true to American values. It is rewarding immigrants who work hard and play by the rules.

We face extraordinary security challenges in America today. We have a war that now has claimed over 2,300 of our best and bravest—sons and daughters of families across America, from Illinois and every State in the union. Today, 138,000 American troops stand risking their lives for us in Iraq and another 20,000-plus in Afghanistan. We owe them not only our gratitude and our admiration, but we owe them a plan to come home.

When I take a look at the situation in Iraq, it deteriorates each day and moves inexorably toward a civil war, which we pray will never happen, and I wonder how this will end. For some of us who voted against the resolution which brought us into this war, we argued at the time that it is a lot easier to get into a war than to get out of one. We argued that we needed more allies to stand with us so that it would not be just American soldiers. We argued that more nations should be with us in this effort so we would not be subsidizing a war, which now costs us $2 billion a week.

Unfortunately, this administration moved forward, anyway. They went into a war without enough troops, without enough body armor, without enough protection on the humvees, and without the necessary defensive equipment on helicopters. They sent the troops into battle and, sadly, so many have not come home. Many have come home with broken and battered bodies.

We have an obligation now to say to the Iraqis: We have helped you. We have removed your dictator. We have given you a chance to govern yourself, given you a chance for free elections, and we have given you a chance for your future. But now it is your responsibility. Govern your own nation; bring it together and defend your own people.

This administration promised us for years that, given enough time, the Iraqi Army and the police force would replace our troops. How much longer must we wait? How much longer must we wait until these Iraqis will stand and fight for their own future and their own country? I will believe this administration has a plan that works when the first American soldier comes home, replaced by an Iraqi soldier standing guard there in his own country. We are still waiting for that day. I hope it will come soon.

When President Bush said last week that perhaps we will have to wait until we have another President, 2½ years from now, my heart sank. Two and a half more years of this? Two and a half more years of losing American lives and watching these soldiers come back with visible scars?

We have to do better than that. Real security in America means a real plan to bring this Iraqi war to an end. I urge this administration to work toward that day and toward that plan, on a bipartisan basis, and to work toward homeland security that makes certain we are safe.

The General Accounting Office reported yesterday there is the ability to bring across our border enough fissile material to make a dirty bomb, despite our border security. There is a lot more we need to do to make America safe, and a stronger America begins at home.

This administration needs to do more when it comes to port security—not turn it over to some foreign government to manage five major ports.

This administration needs to do more when it comes to security at our chemical plants and nuclear plants.

This administration needs to do more when it comes to protecting us and making sure our first responders have what they need. I was in Marion, IL, at the fire department meeting with Chief Rinella, talking about the cuts in the Bush budget that will reduce the funds available to that department and to police departments, which we will count on if we ever have a major challenge in the United States. Real security begins at home, with an administration committed to security.

I urge my colleagues to join, on a bipartisan basis, to restore the funds that were cut in the Bush budget.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak after Senator SANTORUM for approximately 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

IRAQ'S FIGHT FOR ITS FREEDOM

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I have to respond to my colleague from Illinois, who suggested that somehow the Iraqis are not standing up and fighting for the freedom of their country and the comment, ''How much longer do we have to wait?''

Ask the Iraqi families of the men who were beheaded—30 of them most recently—whether they are waiting for the Iraqis to step forward and sacrifice for their country. Ask the Iraqis who are in the military who are dying today, sacrificing for the freedom of their country, whether they are waiting. The people of Iraq are stepping forward and fighting for their country. We are helping them do that. It is the clear intention of our policy in Iraq to hand over the responsibility, and it is happening.

I find it almost remarkable that here now, 3 years into this conflict, where we are trying to transform an entire society, that the level of patience for this very difficult process, given all the progress made and all the elections that have been held and the Constitution drafted—I think in all but four of the provinces, there is very little terrorist activity, or insurgent activity, or whatever you want to call it. There is a concentration in a few provinces where there are problems.

But I met with people from Mosul yesterday—elected officials—who came here and talked about the dramatic improvements that are going on in that area, and the lack of any kind of al-Qaida operations and terrorist operations in that area, saying that life is dramatically advancing. We don't hear talk about that. We hear talk about the problem spots, and that is legitimate. But the idea that the Iraqis are not fighting for their country, that they are not stepping forward—as we see day in and day out that they are conducting missions and they are eliminating the terrorist threat in Iraq—I think it is almost incredible. I don't know how you can read the news and suggest that the Iraqis are not stepping forward to defend their country and fight for their freedom.

Also, coming back to the issue of patience, I thank God sometimes that some of the elected officials who are here today were not around in 1777, 1778, and 1779. We would still be singing ''God save the queen,'' not ''hail to the chief.'' It took us 11 years to put a democracy together, in circumstances that I suggest were far less difficult, in a neighborhood that was far less problematic than the neighborhood Iraq happens to be situated in. So the idea that we have lost our patience in a

struggle against Islamic fascism, which is a real present danger to the future of the United States of America, to me, is almost unconscionable.

This is a struggle we are engaged in. This is a struggle for our time. It is one that I believe history will look back upon and suggest that we met the threat that would have fundamentally changed the future of the world, and we met it before it did so. We met it with strength, with determination, and we overcame the doubters, overcame those who would have rather cut and run. I am not for cutting and running when it comes to the future security of this country. I have patience because things that are difficult and meaningful take time. We have to give that time.

I suggest there are some things that we are finding out now. Another effort I have been working on in Iraq is the intelligence information we have been able to gather from the former regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. This has been a project that Congressman PETER HOEKSTRA, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, has been working on—and I have worked with him—to make sure these 48,000 boxes, containing roughly 2 million documents, are released to the American public and the world to determine what was the intelligence assessment and the activity level and, in particular, in Iraq with Saddam, and with his interaction with elements of al-Qaida or other terrorist organizations.

What we are finding is that some of the statements that have been made on the floor and statements that were made just as recently as March 19, 2006 by my colleague from Pennsylvania, Congressman JACK MURTHA, who said:

> There was no terrorism in Iraq before we went there. None. There was no connection with al-Qaida. There was no connection with terrorism in Iraq itself.

Yet if we look at some of the documents that are being released by Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte—and, again, only a few hundred of the millions of documents have been released. As a caveat, while Congressman HOEKSTRA and I are excited about the fact that DNI decided to release these documents, the pace of the release is, let us say, unsatisfactory to this point.

We have, with the blogosphere, the Internet, the opportunity to put these documents out there and have almost instantaneously translated postings about what these documents contain.

During the time the Director of National Intelligence Negroponte has had these documents—this is 3 years ago—less than 2 percent of the documents have been translated. At this pace, my grandchildren may know what is in these documents.

We need to get these documents out. Mr. President, 600 over a little over a 2-week period is almost the same pace as translating with the people they had over in DNI Negroponte's shop. We need to get these documents out quicker. Why? Because if we look at what is in these documents, there is important information in understanding the connection between Iraq and terrorist organizations and the threat we were facing, the potential threat we had talked about, which is the coordination between a country that had used chemical and biological weapons, was thought universally to have chemical and biological weapons, and terrorists who have expressed a direct desire to use those weapons and get access to them.

If we look at a report that was issued by the Pentagon Joint Forces Command translating and analyzing some of these documents, called the ''Iraqi Perspectives,'' on page 54, they write: Beginning in 1994, the Fedayeen Saddam opened its own paramilitary training camps for volunteers—this is 9 years, by the way, before the Iraq war—graduating more than 7,200 ''good men racing full with courage and enthusiasm'' in the first year.

Mr. President, 7,200 in the first year, 1994.

Beginning in 1998, these camps began hosting ''Arab volunteers from Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, 'the Gulf,' and Syria.'' Volunteers. I wonder why they would be volunteering to help Saddam. It is not clear, it says, from the available evidence where are all these non-Iraqi volunteers who were ''sacrificing for the cause'' went to ply their newfound skills. Before the summer of 2002, most volunteers went home upon the completion of training. They didn't stay in Iraq. They came for training from countries in the gulf regions, and they went home. Odd that they would be fighting for the cause which would, in that case, be Saddam, if they went home.

Before the summer of 2002, as I said, most volunteers went home upon completion of the training, but these camps were humming with frenzied activity in the months immediately prior to the war.

As late as January 2003, the volunteers participated in a special training event called the Heroes Attack.

Stephen Hayes, who deserves a tremendous amount of credit for his reporting on these documents in the Weekly Standard, has brought this issue to the forefront and has awakened Members of Congress, myself included, to the importance of discovering the content of these documents as well as some of the information contained in these documents.

He reminds us of the special significance of that training in 1998:

> That is the same year that the U.N. weapons inspectors left Iraq for good; the same year a known al Qaeda operative visited Baghdad for 16 days in March; the same year the U.S. embassies were bombed in East Africa; the same year the U.S. bombed Baghdad in Operation Desert Fox; and, the same year Saddam wired $150,000 to Jabir Salim, the former Iraqi Ambassador to the Czech Republic, and ordered him to recruit Islamic radicals to blow up the headquarters of Radio Free Europe.

What we have here is, again, information that I believe is vitally important for the American public to see. I encourage Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte to step up the pace. Congressman HOEKSTRA and I have introduced legislation which would require just that: it would require the release of these documents and provides a way to do so.

We introduced this legislation prior to the decision to release these documents, but, again, I just make the point that the pace with which these documents are being released is inadequate. We need to continue to step that up, allow this information to get out for people to see, pro and con—all the information that is available to us. These are old documents. They are at least 3 years old; in some cases much more than that. The classified nature is specious, at best. We want to protect names, obviously, if there are reasons to protect certain names because of potential fallout from having their names released. If there are recipes for chemical weapons, fine. But the bottom line is most of this information should be released, can be released, and is not being released.

I assure my colleagues—and I think I can speak for Congressman HOEKSTRA in this regard—we will stay on this issue, and we will make sure all of this information is made available to the American public so we have a better understanding of what the situation was in Iraq prior to the war.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating members on both sides of the aisle on the Judiciary Committee for the fine work they did yesterday on the immigration bill. My expectation is that it will be coming to the floor soon.

I wish to echo some of the remarks that were made by my senior colleague from Illinois, Senator DICK DURBIN. I think everybody in this Chamber should be interested in a comprehensive immigration reform bill, one that takes seriously the security of our borders, one that takes seriously enforcing the hiring practices of employers, but also one that makes sure we are providing a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million to 12 million undocumented workers who are making enormous contributions to this country.

The bill that came out of the Judiciary Committee last night strikes the right balance. I believe it is a bill that is worthy of support on both sides of the aisle, and I am looking forward to participating in the debate on what I think will be one of the most important issues we face in the Senate.

LOBBYING REFORM

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I come to the Chamber today to address the ethics bill that has been pending before

the Senate for the past three weeks. It has now been exactly four months since Duke Cunningham resigned from the House after pleading guilty to bribery, tax evasion, and mail fraud charges. It has now been almost three months since Jack Abramoff pled guilty to defrauding Indian tribes.

In the aftermath of both guilty pleas, Members on both sides of the aisles in both Houses of Congress brought forward good proposals to change the culture that led to these scandals, and yet here we are on March 28th with a half-finished ethics bill in the Senate and even less in the House.

I know there are many important issues facing our country—health care, education, the war in Iraq, and, as I just mentioned, immigration—but it is equally important that we as Members of Congress consider how we are going to deal with the cloud of corruption that hangs over the Capitol and how that affects the issues which are important to the American people. For that reason, I sincerely hope the leadership of both parties will be able to reach an agreement to bring this bill back to the floor before our next recess.

The American people are tired of a Washington that is only open to those with the most cash and the right connections. They are tired of a political process where the vote you cast isn't as important as the favors you do. And they are tired of trusting us with their tax dollars when they see them spent on frivolous pet projects and corporate giveaways.

It is not a game that is new in this town. It is not particularly surprising to the public. People are not naive about the existence of corruption. They know it has worn the face of both Republicans and Democrats over the years. So the hope is that we could find a bipartisan solution to the problem.

Before the recess, we made some progress on the ethics bill. I was pleased to join with Senator DODD on an amendment to ban Members and staff from accepting meals from lobbyists. And when we get back to the bill, I will be joining Senators SANTORUM, MCCAIN, LIEBERMAN, and FEINGOLD in offering an amendment to define the way we reimburse corporate jet travel. I would like to spend a few minutes talking about this amendment.

During the past 5 years, Members of Congress, Presidential candidates, and political parties have used the corporate jets of 286 companies a total of more than 2,100 times. Despite the fact that a single flight of these jets can cost tens of thousands of dollars, the average reimbursement rate has only been about $1,700 per trip. So far, politicians have gotten away with this because current law only requires us to reimburse the cost of a first-class ticket on these charter flights, not the actual cost of operating the plane. But since we are usually the only passengers on the plane who don't work for the company, this rule is effectively giving us thousands of dollars in unwarranted discounts. This has to change.

Let me say this to my colleagues: Although I discontinued the practice earlier this year, I have used corporate jets in the past. I know some of the other proponents of this amendment have done the same. I know how convenient these charters can be. I know that a lot of my colleagues, particularly those from large States, will oppose this rule change because it makes it significantly more difficult and costly to interact with their constituents who live in less populated parts of their States. So I am not unsympathetic to these concerns. There are many parts of Illinois in which there is no commercial air service.

But this isn't about our convenience. It is about our reputation as public servants who are here to work for the common voter, not the highest bidder. We all know that corporations are not allowing us to use their jets out of the kindness of their hearts. It is yet another way that lobbyists try to curry influence with lawmakers.

One lobbyist told USA Today about the advantages of allowing Members of Congress to use his jet. He said:

> You can sit down and have a cocktail and talk casually about a matter, rather than rushing in between meetings on Capitol Hill.

A lobbyist for a telecommunications company is quoted as saying that providing a jet to a lawmaker ''gives us an opportunity to form relationships, to have a long stretch of time to explain issues that are technical and complicated. If it wasn't useful, we wouldn't do it.'' The vast majority of the people we represent don't have the money to buy that access and form those relationships. They don't have the ability to fly us around on their private planes. In fact, they are having enough trouble paying the mortgage and their medical bills and their kids' college tuition. And they expect us to listen to their issues with the same concern we would any lobbyist or corporation with a jet.

I know that some say that legislation isn't really being discussed on these flights. But appearances matter. If we want to be serious about showing our constituents that we are fighting for them—and not just for the wealthy and powerful—we can't allow a small number of special interests to be subsidizing our travel.

If there isn't enough commercial air service in a state and there is a need to take a charter flight, then we should pay the full cost of the charter. If there is not enough money in our Senate travel accounts to cover these costs, then we should increase our travel budgets. What we shouldn't do is allow lobbyists to pick up the tab.

I know this may not be a popular amendment. I know many of my colleagues will be inconvenienced if it is adopted; I will be as well. But if we are serious about cleaning up the way we do business in Washington, it is an important step for us to take. I hope my colleagues will do the right thing and support this amendment.

In closing, let me say it is obvious we are not going to be able to finish ethics reform today. I know Senator LOTT and Senator DODD are working diligently to try to get this bill back on the floor. I also am aware of the importance of the immigration bill that we are going to be considering for the next two weeks. But I have to insist that we bring this ethics and lobbying bill back to the floor as soon as practicable and that we get to work on getting a bill passed and sent over to the House. The American people expect us to take strong action to clean up the way we do business in this city. They have been waiting for a long time. It is time we got to work.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LOBBYING AND RULES REFORM

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all of our colleagues, we should be getting some indication from our leadership soon as to when and how we will proceed on the lobbying and rules reform legislation. Of course, a major part of our time this week will necessarily be involved in considering the immigration reform legislation that was reported out of the Judiciary Committee on a bipartisan vote on Monday night. But I do think that we should go back to this very important issue also, which has been pending now for 3 weeks.

This is a bipartisan piece of legislation from two different committees. It is one of those rare but blessed occasions when Republican and Democrat, chairman and ranking members, can work together. Senator DODD and I worked together on this legislation, along with Senator FEINSTEIN and other Democrats, to shape the package that came out of the Rules Committee. Senator COLLINS, the chairman of the very important Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, was able to get legislation out of her committee working with Senator LIEBERMAN of Connecticut. Good work is being done. We were making progress and were about to get into a position where we could have wrapped the legislation up in a couple of days.

However, Senator SCHUMER proposed an amendment involving the Dubai World ports issue, and that caused the legislation to be stopped. That issue now is being dealt with by transferring the responsibility for the operations of those terminals to domestic companies. So that issue is being addressed, for now. I believe Senator SCHUMER has

indicated that he is willing to withdraw his amendment, and we can go forward.

The pending business then would be the Wyden amendment on the issue of holds and how secret holds could be dealt with in this body. Some Senators have some concerns about the amendment. I would like for us to step up and address that issue and work with our leaders. That is a Rules Committee issue and I have held a hearing on the issue of holds. I support the Wyden-Grassley approach, but I think that when it involves rules that directly impact how the Senate operates day-today, the leaders of our two parties in the Senate have to have major input in how we deal with the issue in the future.

There are other issues that are pending that have interest and support. Obviously, one of those is the amendment by Senator COLLINS and Senator LIEBERMAN dealing with establishing a new Office of Public Integrity. That issue was considered in their committee, and they would like for it to be considered on the floor. I certainly understand that and would be supportive of that because it is supported by these two leaders of that committee. But we have 77 amendments filed as first-degree amendments, most of which are not germane to the bill. So I have to ask my colleagues: Are we serious about lobbying reform and rules reform?

There are some good things in here. I don't support all of them, and on a bill of this magnitude nobody is going to support all of it. But I think we need to step up and resolve these issues. We do need reform in the lobbying area and some changes in the rules especially in the area of disclosure. We also need a mechanism to deal with earmarks that have not been considered by either the House or the Senate, and then are inserted in conference reports.

We are going to have to deal with all these issues sooner or later. We can do it now or we can do it later. Some people I suspect hope this entire package of reforms will slide off the face of the Earth and disappear. It is not going to. It is here, and it is going to come back. We can do it today if the leaders give us that charge or we can come back to it later as filler or we can be the legislative yo-yo. But this issue is going to be dealt with. I hope we can come up with a way to get it done even today, if possible.

We have actually lost a full day. We could have been working on this yesterday afternoon. We could have been working on it this morning. There are other issues that are of interest and concern to the Members and to the leaders, so I understand how that goes. But if every Senator presumes to offer his or her amendment and demand a recorded vote, we will not ever finish it. Maybe the American people are not that focused. Obviously, when I was home I got a lot of questions about immigration, about taxes, but I got one call, just one, about this bill. It was from somebody who was concerned about something they hoped we would not put in the bill. Actually, it was a lobbyist, and I didn't even agree with what he was saying.

I think we should reconsider the cloture vote as soon as possible. I will support it no matter at what point it occurs. We can consider two or three of these amendments or several of them or not. But we need to step up to the issue, vote cloture, and complete this legislation as soon as possible.

I ask my colleagues: Who wants to take the blame for not getting this done? I was very disturbed about the way this was brought to a halt because I had yielded for what I was clearly told were going to be comments and all of a sudden, we were hit with a second-degree amendment that had no applicability to this at all.

We need to get together in a bipartisan way to address this issue, and we need to do it now. If we do not, somebody is going to have to explain it. The way I will explain it is not going to be positive because we have a commitment and we need to go forward with it.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time for morning business has expired.

The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for a period of time not to exceed 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LOBBYING AND RULES REFORM

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, let me begin my comments by commending the Senator from Mississippi for his excellent statement. The Senator from Mississippi deserves great credit for working with his ranking member, Senator DODD, to craft a lobbying reform and disclosure bill on the provisions that were under the Rules Committee jurisdiction. Similarly, I worked very closely with the ranking Democrat on the homeland security committee to come up with a bipartisan bill that reflects issues that are under the jurisdiction of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

The result is a strong bill. We have married the bills reported by the two committees on the Senate floor. We have produced legislation that I think would help to restore the public's confidence in the integrity of the decisions that we make in Washington. Some may ask: Why does this matter? Why should we enact lobbying disclosure and reform legislation? The reason is, if the public does not trust us to make decisions that are not tainted by undue influence from special interests, then we will not, as a Congress, be able to tackle the major issues facing our country. If the bonds of trust between those we represent and public officials are so frayed, then we are not going to be able to make the tough decisions, the hard choices that are necessary when tackling the big issues and challenges that confront our country.

The issues before the Senate in this bill are pressing and serious. Recent scandals involving Jack Abramoff and former Representative Duke Cunningham have brought to light the need for Congress to reevaluate practices that, although legal, raise questions about the integrity of decisions that are made or at least create the appearance of conflicts of interest and undue influence. We need to ban practices that erode the public's confidence in the integrity of Government's decisions. We need to have greater disclosure of the amount of money spent on lobbying and how it is spent. I think sunlight is the best disinfectant in many cases, and providing and requiring greater disclosure will make a real difference.

All of us here today recognize that lobbying, whether done on behalf of a business organization, an environmental cause, a children's advocacy group, an educational institution or any other cause can provide us with very useful information that does not dictate but does aid our decision-making process. We should remember that lobbying actually has a noble history. The word comes to us from Great Britain when individuals would gather in the lobby of Parliament in order to talk to members, and the medium of exchange was ideas and not favors.

Today, unfortunately, the word ''lobbying'' too often conjures up images of all-expense-paid vacations masquerading as factfinding trips, special access that the average citizen can never have, and undue influence that leads to decisions not being made in the public interest. The corrosive effect of that image on the public's confidence in the decisions that we make cannot be underestimated.

We in Congress have an obligation to strengthen that crucial bond of trust between those in Government and those whom Government serves. This legislation is a significant step in that direction, and we need to pass it promptly, without delay.

As my colleague, the Senator from Mississippi, has mentioned, there are some 77 amendments that have been filed to this bill. Many of them have nothing to do with lobbying or ethics reform. Others only have a very tangential connection. If we are serious about delivering lobbying reform legislation, if we believe that we need to clean up questionable practices, if we want to restore that bond of trust between the public and its elected officials, then we should move forward with this legislation without delay,

without extraneous amendments that have nothing to do with the issue before us. We can do this bill with a good day of hard work.

I thank the majority leader for bringing up the bill again, for recognizing its importance, and for working with the four managers of the bill to try to find a path forward. But we need cooperation from our colleagues and from the leaders on the other side of the aisle if we are going to be successful in doing so. I am convinced, as is the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee, that in a day's time we can complete action on this bill and be on our way to conference with the House if we have a little cooperation from our colleagues.

Let's not fail this test. Let's not fail to get this job done. This matters. It matters because if we do not have the support of the American people, the trust and confidence of the American people, then we cannot tackle the major issues facing this country.

This bill would be a significant step forward in repairing the frayed bonds between the American people and their Government at a time when surveys indicate that trust in Congress is perilously low.

I hope we can come together. This is a bipartisan effort. Senator SANTORUM convened a bipartisan task force that has worked very hard and gave rise to many of the bipartisan principles upon which this bill is based. Let us work together on both sides of the aisle. We have bipartisan support. With the ranking Democrats, Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator DODD, with the two chairmen, Senator LOTT and myself, we can get this job done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANDREW H. CARD, JR.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to praise and thank Secretary Card who, for the last 5½ years, served as Chief of Staff for the President of the United States. Those of us from New Hampshire, such as the Senator in the Chair, know Andy Card well. Long before he became Chief of Staff, before he became Secretary of Transportation, before he even went into the White House with the first President Bush, he was an individual who had a fair amount of presence in New Hampshire. He started out in Massachusetts in the State legislature. There, with a small band of Republican members of that body in the 1970s, those of us who were in government in New Hampshire had a chance to meet him on occasion as a neighbor and fellow legislator and member of the government.

Then, in 1987, I believe it was, he came to New Hampshire and basically took up residence on a cot in a rundown building that we used as the headquarters for the George H. Bush campaign for President. He was the field director, the campaign manager under Governor Sununu and under my father, Governor Gregg. He, at that time, created a tremendous amount of goodwill amongst those who had a chance to work with him. He was an extraordinarily highly capable individual who got his job done, did it without ego but did it very effectively.

That approach, which grew with experience both as a Deputy Chief of Staff with the first President Bush and then as Transportation Secretary, and now as Chief of Staff since the beginning of this administration—that approach of a quiet, confident, unassuming but extraordinarily effective individual has been really his modus operandi. He has really set a standard, I believe, to which Chiefs of Staff will be held as we go forward from administration to administration.

The job of Chief of Staff is one of the most difficult jobs there is in Washington, obviously. It is a high-intensity position requiring workdays that often run into 20 hours. It requires that you know all the issues, that you know who the players are, that you put out the fires, that you communicate effectively, that you be courteous to people who may not be so courteous to you, and that you deal effectively with getting the President of the United States the information he needs in order to do his job. Andy Card, as I said, set a standard which will be one which I think Chiefs of Staff to come will try to equal.

He is always fair. He is always open. He is low key, unassuming, extraordinarily effective but firm when he had to be on issues and with people relative to carrying out the policy of the President. As he said today at the ceremony at the White House, he always recognized the fact that he was a staffer. He was not an elected official as a Chief of Staff, but he was a staffer who worked for the President of the United States and that his job was to carry forward the policies of the President. He did that extraordinarily well.

His wife, of course, has been with him all these years and put up with the thousands of hours he has not been at home since he has done this job—his wife Kathleene. As she has ministered to people who attend their church and others, she has certainly been a soulmate and person of strength for Andy Card.

We bid him a sort of a bittersweet farewell in that I know he will be missed in that position, but he has certainly earned the right to move on to take some time for himself and his family, to be able to get up in the morning and be able to enjoy the day without having to know that he will be rushing off for a 20-hour day at the White House.

I suspect he will be returning to New England. We look forward to having him back. I know he will spend a fair amount of time in Massachusetts and a fair amount of time in Maine, and I am sure he is going to stop on his way between Massachusetts and Maine to take advantage of New Hampshire's ''no sales tax'' climate. He is a special person, and the country has been well served by having him.

His successor, Josh Bolten, I have had the good fortune of dealing with also for a number of years but especially in the last few years as Director of OMB. In my role as chairman of the Budget Committee, he is obviously the person I have had the most contact with in the administration. Interestingly enough, he brings a lot of the same characteristics to the job Andy Card does. He is low key, he is bright, has a great sense of humor, and he understands that his job is to carry forward the mission of and purposes of the President.

He is a person you can talk to, who enjoys listening, will reach out, and does reach out for and has reached out as Director of OMB to Members of the Senate to hear their thoughts and ideas as to how we should proceed.

He has tremendous respect, I believe, on both sides of the aisle in the way he has led the OMB, and he will create a seamless transition in the White House as he moves over to the chief of staff job.

We are fortunate to have people such as this—people such as Andy Card and Josh Bolten who are willing to take on the obligation of public service and serve in positions such as Chief of Staff for the President, jobs which are extraordinarily intense and involve tremendous sacrifice relative to family. But without good people such as this willing to do them, the Nation would be much less.

We thank Andy Card for his service. We wish him and Kathleene good luck and good fortune as they move forward, and we welcome Josh Bolten to the job.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended and that I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INTEGRITY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I do not anticipate taking the full 15 minutes,

but I did want to alert my colleagues to an amendment that I believe will be coming up this afternoon, or perhaps even later this morning. In any event, later today Senators MCCAIN, LIEBERMAN, and I will be offering an amendment to the ethics bill before us to create an Office of Public Integrity.

The American people view the way that we enforce ethics requirements on each other and on our staff as an inherently conflicted process. We set our own rules, we are our own advisers, we are our own investigators, we are our own prosecutors, we are our own judges, and we are our own juries. Even though we have some of our finest Members serving on the Ethics Committee, they cannot escape the perception that the process is plagued by conflict of interest. We do have extraordinary capable, ethical individuals serving on the Ethics Committee in the Senate. We are very fortunate to have a committee that works in harmony and that takes its job very seriously.

I believe we can preserve the important role of the Ethics Committee—and it is a vital role because the Constitution requires each House of Congress to discipline its own Members, if necessary, and we are going to preserve that absolutely critical role—but that we can make an improvement in the process by creating a congressional office, the Office of Public Integrity.

I emphasize this is part of the legislative branch. We are not talking, as some have, about creating an outside commission of judges and former Members of Congress and ethics experts. We are talking about recognizing that the Constitution clearly places responsibility within the legislative branch for taking actions, if necessary, against its own Members who violate the House or Senate rules. But we believe that process would be enhanced if we create an office of public integrity. It would be headed by a director who would be appointed by the majority and minority leaders of the Senate. That office would conduct investigations of possible ethics violations independent of any direct supervision by the Senate. So we would be assured that the public would perceive the process—the investigation—as more credible than now occurs when the Ethics Committee is investigating allegations against their colleagues.

I wish to point out, however, this is not the Shays-Meehan bill in the House, whatever the merits of that approach. This is a different approach from that taken by the Senator from Illinois, Senator OBAMA, and it is even different from the proposal Senator LIEBERMAN and I advanced in the Homeland Security markup. We have refined it still further. We narrowed the authority of the Office of Public Integrity, and I think we struck exactly the right balance between the duties of this office and the duties of the Ethics Committee. This office would conduct impartial, independent, thorough investigations and report its findings to the Ethics Committee which then would retain authority to rule on the cases and allegations and decide what action, if any, is taken. This would enhance the public confidence that this investigation would be an independent one.

It is very difficult for us to investigate ourselves. There are friendships, there are inherent conflicts of interest. The Ethics Committee does a terrific job in the Senate. It has wonderful members serving on it, individuals of the highest integrity. But the public perception is always going to be that this is an inherently conflicted process because we are investigating ourselves. We are playing every role in the process. What we are trying to do is create an office that would conduct the investigation.

I know many of our colleagues are not comfortable with this concept. Some of them have compared it to the old special prosecutor laws. But that is not what we are doing. We are very carefully setting up a system of checks and balances with the Ethics Committee retaining all of the final authority to decide how to proceed, to decide whether subpoenas should be employed, to decide whether an investigation should go forward in the first place, and to decide the ultimate disposition of the case. The investigation would be done by this independent office.

I point out to my colleagues one of the advantages of having an independent Office of Public Integrity conduct the investigation. The public now is often skeptical of the findings and actions taken by the Ethics Committee. If the Office of Public Integrity comes to the Ethics Committee and says these allegations have been thoroughly investigated, we, an independent entity, have investigated these allegations and we find there is no truth to them, that finding is much more likely to be accepted by the public if the investigation is done by this independent office. It would have complete credibility. That would be a great advantage. It would remove the cloud of doubt and suspicion that often hangs over Members of Congress unfairly when allegations are made against them.

The reason the public often has those doubts is they know we are investigating ourselves. They know our colleagues are investigating allegations against their colleagues.

If we insert this Office of Public Integrity into the process, public confidence in the thoroughness, independence, and credibility of the investigations would be enhanced. It would in no way diminish the authority of the Ethics Committee to take the action, make the final judgments, and indeed judgments all along the way, on this case.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELIMINATING SECRET HOLDS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am hopeful that shortly the Senate will be voting on a measure that will take a very significant step forward by bringing sunshine and public accountability to the Senate.

If you walk the streets of this country and ask someone what a hold is in the Senate, I don't think you will get 1 out of 100 people who will have any idea what you are talking about. But the fact of the matter is, a hold in the Senate is the ability to block a piece of legislation, block a nomination from being even discussed in the Senate. As a result of a hold, the Senate will not even get a peek at a topic that may involve millions of our citizens, billions of dollars, and affect the quality of life of citizens in every corner of the land.

It would be one thing if the Senator who exercises this extraordinary tool—this tool that carries so much power with it—if that Senator would exercise the tool in public and could be held accountable. Unfortunately, holds are now placed in secret. They are done behind closed doors. The sponsor of a piece of legislation will not even know about it. It seems to me a Senate that is serious about lobbying reform absolutely must stop doing so much of its important business in secret, behind closed doors.

I will offer later in the day, I hope, with Senator GRASSLEY, Senator INHOFE, and Senator SALAZAR, an amendment to bring a bit of sunshine to the Senate. It is an amendment that would not abolish the hold. Senators' rights would be fully protected. Senator COLLINS is in the Senate, and as a result of the colloquy we had several weeks ago, this legislation also protects the Senator's right to be consulted on a piece of legislation. Certainly, that is something all Members feel is important. If there are bills that affect a Senator's State or that they have a great interest in, that Senator would have an opportunity to study the legislation and to reflect on what it means.

What we say in this bipartisan amendment is when a Senator digs in, when a Senator plans to exercise this extraordinary power, the power to block a bill or a nomination from ever being heard, we are saying that Senator has got to be held publicly accountable. What we require is that a Senator who exercises a hold would have to so state in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. They could still use their procedural rights to make sure they have a chance to oppose the legislation and to oppose it strongly, but they would be identified as the person who was so objecting.

The intelligence reauthorization bill is now being prevented from coming to this Senate as a result of a secret hold.

A lot of Senators give lengthy and eloquent speeches about fighting terrorism, but now a bill that is vital to national security is being held up in secret. It has been held up for months and months as a result of this secret hold. That ought to change.

Certainly, it ought to change if Senators are serious about lobbying reforms because one of the best ways for lobbyists to work their will is to have procedures that help them behind closed doors. That is what the secret hold is all about. It is written nowhere in the Senate rules, but it has become one of the most significant and powerful tools a Senator can exercise. It is done without any public accountability at all.

There has been a bit of irony in the last couple of days about this legislation. I thought it was going to come up already, given the fact that we had come back from the recess. I was under the impression that would be the first order of business. But we could not get to the bipartisan measure to abolish secret holds because, lo and behold, there was a secret hold on an amendment to try to get the Senate to do its business in public. That pretty much says it all. Not only do we have secret holds on national security legislation, legislation that would make a real difference in terms of striking a balance between fighting terrorism ferociously and protecting civil liberties, not only do we have national security legislation being held up, but even efforts to bring about basic reforms such as openness and sunshine for the Senate are being held up as a result of this secret procedure.

I emphasize what the change will mean for the Senate. No longer if this change is put in place will staff be able to keep secret from Members an objection; no longer will leadership be the only one to know about an objection; no longer will it be possible for a Senator to be kept in the dark about something they have worked on for years and years. The fact is, Senator GRASSLEY and I have worked on this legislation for a full decade.

Senator LOTT, the chairman of the Rules Committee, has been particularly helpful in terms of working with us on this measure. There have been hearings. Senator BYRD, who, of course, knows more about the Senate rules than anyone in the history of this Senate, has been very helpful in terms of giving us background about what we ought to do. This amendment puts the burden on the person who ought to be held publicly accountable: squarely on the shoulders of an objector. The person who exercises a hold will be identified and colleagues can discuss with that person how to move forward in a bipartisan way.

No Senator is going to be stripped of their rights. No Senator is going to be kept from protecting constituents that have serious concerns about legislation. But with the right to stand up for your view and to object to a piece of legislation, there ought to be some responsibility. There ought to be some accountability.

I find it stunning the Senate would even consider lobbying reform without an effort to do its business in public. We have already spent several days on this legislation. Hopefully, it will be completed shortly. It seems to me one of the most obvious reforms that Senators ought to be in favor of, if this Senate is serious about reform, is doing its business in public.

Nowhere in the Senate rules does it say anything about secret holds. Nowhere is it written down that a Senator can exercise this enormous power and do it without any accountability at all.

Senator GRASSLEY and I believe it is time to bring some sunshine for the Senate and for Senators to do the people's business in public. Secret holds have been the bane of the Senate for decades. Back in the 101st Congress, then-majority Bob Dole said:

> I have never understood why Republicans put a hold on Republican nominees. Maybe I will figure it out some day. I have been working on it. I have not quite understood it.

In that same Congress, former Senator John Glenn observed:

> . . . as one hold would come off, there was agreement another one would be put on, so that no one really had to identify themselves. The objecting Senator would remain anonymous. So much for sunshine in the United States Senate.

Those are the words of one of our most respected colleagues, John Glenn, words that I hope Senators will remember later in the day when we will have a chance to vote on a bipartisan amendment to bring some sunlight to the Senate and some openness in the way the Senate conducts the public's business.

When we have important national security legislation held hostage today by a secret hold, that alone says that this Senate needs to change the way it does business. It ought to do its business in the open. It ought to do its business in a way that will hold Senators accountable.

After 10 years, Senator GRASSLEY and I have watched these secret holds block legislation, block nominations in a way that does a disservice to all the people we represent.

We are going to have a chance to end this. We are going to have a chance to ensure that while Senators can exercise their rights and debate topics that they feel strongly about, they can also be held publicly accountable.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we are beyond 12:30 p.m. Thus, I ask unanimous consent to delay the recess until we complete, in a few minutes, two items of business we will be addressing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we are going to address two issues, and those are the issue surrounding the lobbying bill, which is on the floor now, and we will march through that issue—the Democratic leader and I will explain to our colleagues what has just been done—and then also we expect to address the issue surrounding immigration and the cloture vote that is scheduled this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2006—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (S. 2349) to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

Pending:

> Wyden/Grassley amendment No. 2944, to establish as a standing order of the Senate a requirement that a Senator publicly disclose a notice of intent to object to proceeding to any measure or matter.
>
> Schumer amendment No. 2959 (to amendment No. 2944), to prohibit any foreign-government-owned or controlled company that recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan during the Taliban's rule between 1996–2001, may own, lease, operate, or manage real property or facility at a United States port.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

AMENDMENT NO. 2959 WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, since I offered the amendment on the Dubai Ports World, a lot has happened. In fact, Dubai Ports World has agreed to sell its U.S. operations, and so it will have no control over them. That will happen over the next several months. The administration has agreed that should be what happens.

Obviously, we are going to keep a watchful eye on the deal, and should for some reason—and I have no expectation this will occur—the deal not be allowed, we would want to bring the amendment back to the floor. The majority leader has graciously agreed that we would be allowed to do so, although I have no expectation that will happen.

So I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the pending amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, let me add to what the distinguished Senator from New York just said. First of all, I thank him, through the Chair, for his cooperation on an issue which is constantly evolving, but it looks as if it is well underway to satisfy everybody's

concerns. But the understanding is we will come back and address the issues in his amendment at some point in some way on the floor if that glidepath to satisfactory conclusion is not reached.

AMENDMENT NO. 3176 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2944

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on behalf of myself, Senator MCCAIN, and Senator LIEBERMAN, I send a second-degree amendment to the pending amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS], for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. LIEBERMAN, proposes an amendment numbered 3176 to amendment No. 2944.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be 2 hours equally divided between Senator COLLINS and Senator VOINOVICH or his designee. I further ask unanimous consent that there be 20 minutes equally for debate between Senator WYDEN and Senator SESSIONS or his designee. I further ask unanimous consent that following the use or yielding back of time the Senate proceed to a vote on the Collins amendment, to be followed immediately by a vote on the Wyden amendment, with no further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, what we have done is cleared a way, with one amendment and calling up other amendments, with the glidepath that we will address two amendments shortly after our break for our policy lunches today. We, I think, can be on a glidepath thus of completing the lobbying reform bill before addressing the border security and immigration bills. Again, we have a lot of work to do, but that would be the intent.

There is one remaining piece of business we need to address, in terms of the cloture vote that is scheduled for this afternoon, and I will, before lunch, have a further unanimous consent about that as well.

At this juncture, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote with respect to S. 2454 be vitiated. I further ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined after further concurrence by the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to S. 2454 and, further, that the bill be open for debate only during the first day of consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, very briefly to review, after our break today for lunch, our policy lunches, we will be on lobbying reform. We have two amendments which will be debated. We set up to 2 hours. I would think that time could be condensed. Further discussions will take place over our lunches on lobbying reform. At a point in time, we would expect after we finish with lobbying reform, we will go to the border security bill, and we will have more to say about how that will all be handled at a later date.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess—

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I wonder if the majority leader would be willing to respond to a—

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when we return at 2:15 I be recognized for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, reserving the right to object to the unanimous consent request, I believe that Senator COLLINS had offered an amendment and that she would be scheduled to be recognized first.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I might respond to my colleague, I am asking that I be recognized in morning business for 10 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the status of the proceedings? What is happening here?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There has been a unanimous consent request by the Senator from Illinois to speak at 2:15.

Mr. REID. Who has the floor now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator yield to me?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, further reserving the right to object, the legislative business that is pending, what is the status of that, before the unanimous consent was made?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate is scheduled to have 2 hours equally divided between the Senator from Maine, Senator COLLINS, and——

Mr. LOTT. So Senator COLLINS would be recognized upon the return from the luncheon period to begin debate on the pending amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Or Senator VOINOVICH or his designee.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, we have had so much difficulty in getting an agreement to move forward on this legislation; we were not able to do it yesterday or this morning. I really hope that when we return from lunch, we go straight to the pending business and amendment. I would like to accommodate all of our colleagues, but we have struggled so hard to get to this point, I would have to object.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized at 2:15, when we return, for 10 minutes.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, but I will not object, I was not aware of the purpose of the request, and I understand the sensitivity and the timing of this. We will be prepared to proceed with Senator COLLINS at 2:25.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:50 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for 10 minutes in morning business. At this point, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, Senator BARACK OBAMA, from Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Illinois.

RETIREMENT OF LANE EVANS

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today, along with my colleague from Illinois, in a bittersweet moment. One of our dearest friends from Illinois, Congressman LANE EVANS, announced today that he will not be seeking reelection next term.

Since the day he arrived in Congress more than two decades ago, LANE EVANS has been a tireless advocate for the heroes with whom he served and the countless other veterans who bravely defended this country. When Vietnam vets were falling ill from Agent Orange exposure, he led the effort to pass Agent Orange compensation. Just recently, he led the fight to make sure the children of veterans exposed to Agent Orange who were born with spina bifida would be taken care of as well.

He was one of the first in Congress to speak out about some of the health problems facing Persian Gulf war veterans and has fought for benefits for them ever since.

He fought to expand benefits to women veterans. He worked to help those veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, and also worked to make sure there is a roof over the heads of the thousands of homeless veterans in our country today.

LANE EVANS has fought these battles for more than 20 years, and even in the face of his own debilitating disease, Parkinson's, he has had the courage to keep fighting. Today, veterans across America have this man to thank for reminding America of its duty to take care of those who have risked their lives to defend ours. Today, we all thank LANE EVANS for his courage in reminding us of this. His voice is going to be missed in this town, but I am sure it will continue to be heard wherever there are veterans who need help or vulnerable people across America who are looking for a hand up, not a handout.

Just a personal note: I don't know many people who are more courageous than LANE EVANS, who has worked tirelessly, despite extraordinarily challenging physical ailments. He is one of the most gracious, best humored, and hardest working people that I have ever seen.

I remember when I first started my own campaign for the Senate, he took me around on a tour of his district. By the end of the day I was worn out because he was indefatigable in terms of his efforts. I consider him not only a dear friend, but I think it is fair to say that had he not supported me early in my election campaign I would not be here today. So I think this is an enormous loss for the Congress, but I know all of us will continue to draw inspiration from LANE EVANS, and I am glad that he will continue to be my friend for many years to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, only a little over an hour ago, LANE EVANS announced he would not seek reelection in November to the U.S. House of Representatives. I understand his decision. It is a loss for his district, for our State, and for America. From the Quad Cities to Quincy, Springfield, Decatur, Carlinville, and towns in between, LANE EVANS is deeply respected and his service will be deeply missed.

For over 20 years, LANE EVANS has stood as a beacon of hope and has been a strong voice in his Illinois congressional district.

There are two kinds of courage in this world. There is physical courage, which is rare. Then there is even a rarer commodity, moral courage. Once in a great while you find someone who has both. LANE EVANS is that person.

He grew up in Rock Island, IL, the son of a union firefighter. He joined the Marine Corps right out of high school, served during the Vietnam era from 1969 to 1971. After the Marines, LANE went to college, then to Georgetown Law School. He was elected to Congress in a famous upset election in 1982.

For nearly a quarter of a century, the U.S. House of Representatives had LANE EVANS, former marine, as a Member of its body. He closed his announcement today the way he closed many letters, with the vow: Semper Fi. Semper Fi, those Latin words that mean ''always faithful.'' LANE EVANS was always faithful—first to his fellow veterans. I can't think of another colleague in the House or Senate who worked harder for veterans, whether it was the Vietnam era Veterans Congressional Caucus which he chaired, his work with Senator Tom Daschle on Agent Orange, his dogged efforts to find out what was behind Gulf War Syndrome, helping homeless veterans, helping veterans find jobs, expanding VA home loans, trying to find health benefits for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, and, of course, working with the vets at the Rock Island Arsenal.

Like others who served his country in uniform, LANE EVANS was a man of peace. He worked to ban landmines which maim and kill thousands. He hung a portrait of John Lennon in his office, he said, because he thought John Lennon was often a better reminder than many people he met in Congress of the hopes of working-class young people for peace and freedom.

What a champion for America's workers. After the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended, LANE EVANS said we could not abandon workers at places such as the Rock Island Arsenal, men and women who helped to win the Cold War. He fought for fair trade. He saw what happened in Galesburg when Maytag closed, costing 1,600 jobs. He fought to make sure America's workers were never left behind. And what a fighter for family farmers and for the environment, for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He was cochairman of the Alcohol Fuels Caucus. He has been a leader in proethanol battles.

But, you know, he was a battler starting early in his career. As a lawyer he didn't take the easy way out to make a lot of money. He was a legal aid lawyer. He fought for people who had no voice in the courtroom, and he came to Congress to make sure everyone had a voice in his congressional district. I have no doubt Lane would have been reelected again if he had chosen to run in November. Now he is fighting a different kind of battle.

Nearly 8 years ago, LANE came out publicly and announced that he had Parkinson's disease. It was a cruel blow. It turns out that I was with him when he discovered it. We were in a Labor Day parade in Galesburg. He was waving and he said he couldn't feel some of the fingers in his hand. He sensed something was wrong. It took a while for the diagnosis to come out. For a man that young to be diagnosed with Parkinson's is unusual. Publicly he announced his disease and started fighting—for stem cell research and for medical help for those who suffer from diseases just like his.

During his last race, in 2004, he told audiences: I may be slow, but I still know which way to go. Living with Parkinson's made him a better Congressman because, ''I can understand what families are going through.'' Time and again, LANE EVANS showed extraordinary courage, not just as a politician but as a human being.

His determination to serve his district pushed him to work harder, even as the burden of Parkinson's became heavier. His dignity and perseverance in the face of this relentless and cruel disease is an inspiration to every one of us who counts LANE EVANS as a friend. In his statement today, LANE EVANS said:

> I appreciate the support of people I never met before who would ask how I was doing and tell me to keep up the good fight.

The truth is, LANE EVANS, his whole adult life, has been involved in a series of good fights. Politicians come and go in the Halls of Congress, but this soft-spoken son of Illinois will leave his mark as a man truly committed to securing the American dream for everyone in our Nation.

Thank heavens for LANE EVANS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from Maine.

LEGISLATIVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2006—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 3176

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, would the Presiding Officer review the time agreement that we are about to embark on for consideration of the Collins-Lieberman-McCain amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 hours evenly divided between the Senator from Maine and the Presiding Officer.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. President. I was aware that was the case, but I thought it would be helpful to our colleagues to better understand the state of play.

Mr. President, I made some preliminary comments this morning. I do want to explain further the concept of the Office of Public Integrity, but I know the Senator from Illinois had asked that I yield to him some time. In the interests of accommodating his schedule, I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Illinois to speak in support of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I thank Senator COLLINS, not only for her accommodation but also for her leadership on this issue. I also thank Senator LIEBERMAN for his outstanding work on this issue.

I rise today to speak about the importance of improving the ethics enforcement process that we currently

have. Last month I introduced legislation to create an outside congressional ethics enforcement commission that would be staffed by former judges and former Members of Congress from both parties. Under my proposal, any citizen could report a possible ethics violation by lawmakers, staff, or lobbyists. My commission would have had the authority to conduct investigations, issue subpoenas, gather records, call witnesses, and provide its full public report to the Department of Justice or the House-Senate ethics committees.

I knew this proposal would not be the most popular one that I introduced in Congress, but I didn't anticipate the deafening silence that greeted it. Change is difficult and Members of Congress are understandably concerned about delegating investigations of their own conduct to an outside body, but I hope, when my colleagues learn a little more about the amendment I am offering with Senators COLLINS, LIEBERMAN, and MCCAIN, that they will understand an independent ethics fact-finding body is not only a good idea but a necessary idea.

Earlier this year, I was asked by the Minority Leader to take a lead role in crafting ethics legislation. I was glad to assume that role because I believe that the foundation of our democracy is the credibility that the American people have in the legitimacy of their Government. Unfortunately, over the past few years, that legitimacy has been questioned because of the scandals we have here in Washington.

But one of the greatest travesties of these scandals is not what Congress did, but what it didn't do.

Because for all the noise we have heard from the media about the bribes accepted by Congressman Duke Cunningham, the thousands of dollars in free meals accepted by other Congressmen, and the ''K Street Project'' that filled lobbying firms with former staffers, we have heard only silence from the very place that should have caught these ethics violations in the first place, the House Ethics Committee.

For years now, it's been common knowledge that this committee has largely failed in its responsibility to investigate and bring to light the kind of wrongdoing between Members of Congress and lobbyists that we are now seeing splashed across the front pages. And the sad truth is that the House ethics process does not inspire public confidence that Congress can serve as an effective watchdog over its own Members.

Time and time again over the past few years, the House Ethics Committee has looked the other way in the face of seemingly obvious wrongdoing, which has the effect of encouraging more wrongdoing. In those few instances when the committee has taken action, its leadership was punished, and it ceased to become an effective body. Coupled with a Federal Election Commission that was deliberately structured to produce deadlock, this has produced a dangerous outcome

In the words of one outside observer:

> When everyone in Washington knows the agency that is supposed to enforce campaign finance laws is not going to do it and the ethics committees are moribund, you create a situation where there is no sheriff. You end up in the Wild West, and that's the context we've been operating under in recent years.

Without question, the Senate ethics process is far superior, and I commend my colleagues who have served—and continue to serve—selflessly and tirelessly on the Senate Ethics Committee. Indeed, I have the greatest respect for Senator VOINOVICH and Senator JOHNSON. They have done an outstanding job in a difficult task. They are two of the finest people I have had the pleasure to serve with since I arrived in the Senate.

But here's the sad reality. No matter how well our process works here in the Senate, it doesn't really matter since the American people perceive the entire ethics system—House and Senate—to be broken. Our constituents, unfortunately, do not distinguish between the bodies in their opinion of Congress. And as long as our credibility is stained by the actions—and inactions—of the other body, then the legitimacy of what we do is also called into question.

With all due respect to my colleagues on the Senate Ethics Committee, there's some good reason for the American people to be skeptical of our enforcement system. After all, we in the Senate are our own judge, jury, and prosecutor. Under the current system, Members investigating their colleagues are caught in a bind. Either they investigate and become vulnerable to the allegation that they are prosecuting a Member for political reasons or they do not investigate and it looks like they are just covering up for a colleague. That investigation trigger has to be depoliticized for the good of Members and the integrity of the process.

And so, we can pass all the ethics reforms we want—gift bans, travel bans, lobbying restrictions—but none of them will make a difference if there isn't a nonpartisan, independent body that will help us enforce those laws.

That's why I come to the floor today to support this amendment for an Office of Public Integrity. The office is the next critical step in the evolution of ethics enforcement in the Senate and vital to restoring the American people's faith in Congress.

This amendment doesn't have quite the same level of independence as the outside commission that I proposed setting up. But it does have much more independence than the current system, and for that reason I wholeheartedly endorse it and am proud to be a cosponsor.

The Office of Public Integrity established in this amendment would provide a voice that cannot be silenced by political pressures. It would have the power to initiate independent investigations and bring its findings to the Ethics Committees in a transparent manner. Final authority to act on these findings would remain with the members of the Ethics Committees, which would satisfy constitutional concerns.

Currently, in both the House and the Senate, the initial determination of whether to open an investigation has often resulted in a game of mutually assured destruction—you don't investigate Members of my party, and I won't investigate Members of your party.

But what's interesting is that while there is often great disagreement and sometimes even deadlock in the decision to open an investigation, there's usually general agreement on what the final judgment and punishment should be. That's because the development of a full factual record can convince even the most ardent partisan that a Member of his own party should be disciplined.

In this sense, the OPI proposal is an admirable attempt to reform the most troublesome aspect of the current ethics process while still retaining what works about it. Under this proposal, Ethics Committee members would be relieved of the most difficult part of their duties, which will make it easier for members to serve on the Ethics Committees and easier for them to carry out their responsibilities.

Most importantly, it would add much-needed credibility to the outcome of the process itself. By having the courage to delegate the investigative function to an Office of Public Integrity, the U.S. Senate would be sending the message that we have confidence in ourselves and our ability to abide by the rules. That would be an important signal to send to the American people.

To put this in some historical context, a similar approach was endorsed by a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress that was cochaired by Congressmen Lee Hamilton, a Democrat, and DAVID DREIER, a Repulblican, in 1997. Representatives Hamilton and DREIER recommended the establishment of an independent body to supplement ethics investigations through fact finding. Had that recommendation been embraced by the House then, it is possible that the recent House scandals could have been averted.

In the Senate, similar proposals have been suggested over the years by Senators BOND, GRASSLEY, and LOTT, as well as former Senator Helms. And state legislatures in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Florida, among others, have established mechanisms to allow for independent input into ethics enforcement.

Today, it's time for the Senate to take the lead, the same way it took the lead in creating the first congressional Ethics Committee in the 1960s.

In the end, the true test of ethics reform is not whether we pass a set of laws that appeal to a lowest common

denominator that we can all agree on, it's whether we pass the strongest bill with the strongest reforms possible that can truly change the way we do business in Washington. That's what the American people will be watching for, and that's what we owe them.

Enforcing the laws we pass is a crucial step toward reaching this goal and restoring the public's faith in a government that stands up for their interests and respects their values.

I commend, once again, Senators COLLINS and LIEBERMAN for their outstanding work in the committee. I strongly urge my colleagues to support their amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Illinois for his support. He has worked very hard on these issues. I appreciate his comments.

Mr. President, I yield to my partner and colleague from Connecticut, the ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security, Senator LIEBERMAN, for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the committee, the Senator from Maine, for her leadership generally on this bill and to say and it may be repetitious, what a pleasure it is to work with her and how proud I am of what our committee has accomplished in a thoroughly nonpartisan way under her leadership.

In that spirit, I am proud to join with Senator COLLINS as a cosponsor of this amendment and also pleased that Senators MCCAIN and OBAMA have joined us as cosponsors of this amendment. Senator MCCAIN deserves credit for having led, along with Senator DORGAN, the tough, independent investigation of the Abramoff scandal that led to the action that I hope Congress will now take to reform our lobbying laws. Senator MCCAIN introduced a very strong lobbying reform bill of which I am pleased to be the cosponsor.

Senator OBAMA has played a very important role in this debate on ethics reform, introduced a very strong enforcement proposal of his own, and his support of this amendment is very important to Senator COLLINS and me.

The bottom line is the proposals that are in the Senate now that came out of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Rules Committee do represent significant reform of our existing lobbying regulations and laws.

But there is a missing piece. The missing piece is enforcement, taking steps to make sure that strong rules will be accompanied by strong enforcement. That is exactly what this amendment does.

When our committee considered this subject; that is, the Committee on Homeland Security, Senator COLLINS and I put down a bipartisan mark that would have created an Office of Public Integrity, a bipartisan, bicameral Office of Public Integrity, empowered to receive and oversee reports filed under the ethics rules in the Lobbyist Disclosure Act.

The Office of Public Integrity also would have had the authority to give advice on compliance with ethics rules, the Lobby Disclosure Act, and the investigative violations of the ethics rules.

We were very anxious to respond to concerns that somehow this independent Office of Public Integrity would become, as someone said, a rogue entity or violate the Constitution's mandate that each House of Congress determine its own rules and sanction its own Members when the facts justify that, so we included a number of protections to ensure that the office would be under the control of the Ethics Committee and that the Ethics Committee would have final say on interpretation of the rules and on the question of whether the rules had been violated.

Some felt our proposal was meant to imply dissatisfaction with the Senate Ethics Committee and the job it has done. That was decidedly not the case. The opposite is true. Rather, it reflected our decision that if we are aspiring to genuinely elevate, improve, and strengthen not just our lobbying regulations but the credibility and legitimacy they have with the American people, whose faith has been undercut by so many recent events in the processes here in Washington, including the Abramoff scandal and the conviction of a Member of the other body, rather, it reflects that belief that we have to act in a way to restore that confidence.

One way to do that is to say not only are we adopting tough new lobbying laws, but we are prepared to create an independent office to enforce them.

That provision that was in the mark Senator COLLINS and I put before our committee was, in fact, removed by a majority vote of the committee. We have taken to heart the comments offered by our colleagues. Today we offer this amendment in a form that we think addresses the most serious and frankly realistic and accurate concerns of our colleagues—not the speculative fears or truly rank misunderstandings of what our intentions of the provision's unfortunate amendment were, and it still provides the element of independence that we need for ethics enforcement.

First, here are some of the questions. A number of people raised questions about whether a bicameral Office of Public Integrity would be constitutional. I believe strongly that our original proposal was consistent with the Constitution's mandate that each House set and enforce its own rules. Nevertheless, in the spirit of accommodation, we have changed our original amendment to make the Office of Public Integrity a Senate-only office. That is what this amendment before the Senate today provides.

Second, we have responded to concerns expressed about the authority of the Office of Public Integrity as Senator COLLINS and I initially proposed it, to give advice and opinions on the ethics rules. Some of our colleagues in committee worried that the Office of Public Integrity and the Ethics Committee might give conflicting advice. Although we always intended the Ethics Committee to retain ultimate interpretive authority, the amendment we offer today eliminates the advice-giving function of the Office of Public Integrity, leaving it with the Senate Ethics Committee.

Third, our original committee proposal assigned to the Office of Public Integrity the responsibility for receiving, monitoring, and auditing filings under the Lobbying Disclosure Act. Improved compliance with that act should be one of the goals of the reform package that is before the Senate. However, I know there has been objection to that, and at some point we may offer that as an independent amendment—in fact, one I think for which there will be less objection.

Fourth, we have left the responsibility of receiving and reviewing Member and staff financial disclosure statements with the Ethics Committee. Under the proposal we offer today, the duties of the Office of Public Integrity will center on the initial review of ethics complaints.

These are good changes that respond to concerns expressed and still preserve the integrity and strength and independence of the Office of Public Integrity. It would remain a nonpartisan, independent, and professional office headed by a full-time executive Director who would serve for a 5-year term. The Director would be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate, upon the joint recommendation of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate.

The selection and appointment of the Director would be made without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of fitness to perform the duties of the office.

I have every confidence that, as called for by our proposal—this amendment—the Director will be a person of integrity, independence, and public credibility who will have experience in law enforcement, the judiciary, civil or criminal litigation, or has served as a member of a Federal, State, or local ethics enforcement agency.

Our proposal will provide an important element of independence to the initial stages of an ethics complaint, while still retaining the full authority of the Ethics Committee. Let me walk through the process that we propose.

Under our proposal, an ethics complaint may be filed with the office by a Member or an outside complainant, or may be initiated by the office on its own initiative. Within 30 days of the filing of the complaint, the Director of the Office will make an initial determination as to whether the complaint should be dismissed or whether there

are sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation. The subject of the complaint is provided the opportunity during that period to respond to the complaint.

The Director may dismiss a complaint if he or she determines that the complaint fails to state a violation, lacks credible evidence of a violation, or is inadvertent, technical, or otherwise de minimis in nature. In any case where the Director decides to dismiss the complaint, the Director may refer the case to the Senate Ethics Committee so that the Ethics Committee may decide if the complaint is frivolous.

On the subject of frivolous complaints, let me assure my colleagues that we have provided strong safeguards. If the Ethics Committee determines that a complaint is frivolous, it may notify the Director of the Office of Public Integrity not to accept any future complaint filed by that same person, and the person who filed the frivolous complaint may be required to pay the costs of processing the complaint. Also, the Director will not be allowed to accept any complaint concerning a Member within 60 days of an election. This so-called cooling-off period before an election will ensure that we do not attract politically motivated complaints in the midst of competitive campaigns. Also, let me note that any member of the public can already file an ethics complaint with the Senate Ethics Committee, so in that respect our proposal continues current practice.

If during the 30 days the Director determines that there are sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation, the Director must notify the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee may then overrule the decision by a two-thirds, public rollcall vote of the committee, and the committee must issue a public report. Thus, we preserve the ultimate authority of the Ethics Committee even at this early stage while providing a greater measure of both independence and transparency.

If the Ethics Committee does not overrule the decision of the Director, the Director then conducts an investigation to determine if probable cause exists that a violation occurred. If the Director determines that probable cause exists that an ethics violation has occurred, the Director must then inform the Ethics Committee, and, again, the Ethics Committee may overrule the decision with a two-thirds, public rollcall vote of the committee which must be accompanied by a public report.

If the committee does not overturn the Director's decision, the Director then presents the case to the Ethics Committee, and the Ethics Committee makes the final decision as to whether a violation has occurred by a rollcall vote and a report that includes the vote of each member.

If the Ethics Committee decides that a violation has occurred, the Director will recommend appropriate sanctions to the committee. The Ethics Committee, though, retains the final decision on whether sanctions will be imposed, what those sanctions will be, and whether to take action itself or recommend sanctions to the full Senate for consideration.

Our proposal does preserve the ultimate authority of the Ethics Committee at every stage of the process while providing a much greater measure of both independence and transparency along the way. This is a way to give the American people confidence that we will have an independent entity, watchdog, assisting Senators preparing the case before the Ethics Committee.

Finally, I note that, at the suggestion of Senator MCCAIN, we are assigning to the Office of Public Integrity the role of recommending approval or disapproval of privately funded travel by Members and staff. The reform legislation that is before the Senate, reported out of the Rules Committee, contains a new preapproval process for privately funded travel. Giving this responsibility to the Office of Public Integrity will, here again, assure the American public that travel requests by Members of the Senate will be scrutinized by an independent office. This proposal, in sum, will add staff and support to the Ethics Committee process and will add greater independence and greater transparency. It is a sensible, sound, strong effort to assure the American people we are not only adopting reforms in our lobbying regulations and laws, we are taking action to make sure those reforms are enforced.

I urge my colleagues to support our amendment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, how much time is remaining on the side of the proponents?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 38 minutes.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I expect Senator MCCAIN will be on the floor very shortly to speak in favor of the amendment. While we are waiting for his arrival, let me make a few more comments on the purpose of this amendment.

Even though we are so fortunate to have the Presiding Officer as the chairman of the Ethics Committee and some of our finest Members serving on the Ethics Committee, the fact is, that does not change the public's frustration or doubt about the process. The public views the process as inherently conflicted. The public believes that investigations of our colleagues by our colleagues raise obvious conflicts of interests.

No matter the incredible integrity of the Members who serve on the Ethics Committee, they simply cannot escape that problem of public perception. That is why Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator MCCAIN, and I have attempted to come up with a new approach in our amendment that is designed to restore the public's confidence in the ethics system. We do so by creating the new Senate Office of Public Integrity. This office would be headed by a Director, appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate upon the joint recommendation of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate. This individual would have a 5-year term and could be reappointed. This is not a lifetime appointment of someone who could somehow get out of control. This person would have to have a background suitable for the position, and it would take a joint agreement of the majority and minority leaders to appoint the person to the 5-year term.

I pointed out in my comments this morning that our proposal is not the same as the proposal advanced in the House by Congressmen SHAYS and MEEHAN, regardless of the merits of that proposal. It is not the version created or proposed by Senators OBAMA and REID earlier. In fact, we have refined it from the proposal offered during the Homeland Security Committee's markup to try to accommodate some concerns that were raised by the Presiding Officer. But what this proposal does is recognize that the public does not have confidence in the current system.

We do not undermine the authority of the Ethics Committee. We recognize and appreciate the hard work of the Ethics Committee, and we realize the Ethics Committee alone should retain the ability to decide what sanctions may be appropriate for a Member who has been shown to have committed some misconduct. The Ethics Committee is involved every step of the way, as a safeguard, as a check or balance.

But I would ask my colleagues to consider allegations that may be raised against a Member and that are investigated by an independent Office of Public Integrity. Now, that office comes back and says: There is no merit to these allegations. That judgment is going to be readily accepted by the public because it has been rendered not by a group of us sitting in judgment of our colleague but, rather, by an independent Office of Public Integrity.

Again, if the Office of Public Integrity found grounds to continue the investigation, found probable cause, conducted an investigation and came to the Ethics Committee with its findings, it is the Ethics Committee and not the Office of Public Integrity that has the decision to make on what sanctions, if any, are appropriate.

I think we have struck the right balance. I think we have sustained the authority of the Ethics Committee, but we have also ensured that the investigations will be carried out by an independent Office of Public Integrity that would have the credibility to carry out this kind of sensitive investigation. After all, it is very difficult to investigate one of our colleagues.

We are fortunate because we know each other in this body. We have a

great deal of regard for one another. We are friends with the people with whom we serve. All of that helps make the Senate a more collegial body, helps us to get our work done. But it also raises questions in the mind of the public about whether serious allegations are independently and thoroughly investigated. I believe that is the advantage of the approach we put forward.

This is a modest proposal. We are not suggesting the Office of Public Integrity should provide rulings on ethics matters, providing advice. We are not suggesting the Office of Public Integrity would decide sanctions to be imposed on Members. We build in that that is the job of the Ethics Committee. We do not change that. But we do try to deal with the perception that the current process is inherently conflicted.

Let me run through how the process would work. Essentially, the office would do much of the investigative work that is now conducted by the staff of the Ethics Committee, with the notable exception, which Senator LIEBERMAN mentioned, of ruling on requests for privately funded travel. The office would not provide advice or counsel. It would not issue advisory opinions. It would not have the power to enforce subpoenas. It could not make public the product of its investigations. And it could not directly refer matters to Federal or State authorities, such as the Department of Justice. All of those authorities would remain with the Ethics Committee.

I make that point because, perhaps due to the many different versions of this concept, as advanced in the House or by outside groups or by other Members, there is a lot of confusion over the duties and responsibilities of the Office of Public Integrity. So I want to make clear what the powers of this office would be.

What the office would do is accept complaints, and within 30 days of receiving a complaint would make an initial determination as to whether the complaint should be dismissed or whether an investigation is warranted. If the office dismisses a complaint, it may refer the case to the Ethics Committee to determine if the complaint is frivolous and whether sanctions should be imposed on the individual or the outside group filing the complaint. I think that is a big improvement on the current system.

If, after the initial inquiry, the office finds sufficient grounds to open an investigation, it would provide notice to the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee would then have 10 days to overrule that determination.

I want to make that point very clear, that the Ethics Committee can decide to overrule the decision of the Office of Public Integrity to pursue the investigation further or the Ethics Committee could decide to take no action at all, in which case the Office of Public Integrity, having found sufficient grounds to open an investigation, would proceed. If the office finds probable cause that a violation has occurred, the Ethics Committee would then have up to 30 days in which to overrule that determination or let it stand. If not overruled, the office then presents the case and the evidence to the Ethics Committee to vote on whether any rules or any other standards of conduct have been violated.

Again, you see that the Ethics Committee is involved at every single stage. There is a report from the Office of Public Integrity and an opportunity for the committee to overrule the Office of Public Integrity. That opportunity is always available.

Mr. President, I do expect Senator MCCAIN will be joining us shortly. In the meantime, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that it be charged to both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise to, first, commend Senators LOTT and COLLINS for bringing the underlying bill to the floor of the Senate. I know both worked extremely hard to pass their respective pieces from the Rules Committee and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Second, I want to make one thing clear: I strongly support lobbying reforms that protect the integrity of our legislative process, close loopholes, promote moral/ethical behavior, and enforce our Senate rules. Any reforms that make sense that are not cosmetic should be given the strongest consideration by this body. I am particularly pleased that this bill requires the completion of an ethics training program conducted by the Ethics Committee within 120 days of enactment for current Members of the Senate and staff as well as requiring training for incoming Members and staff. It is not mandatory today. It is voluntary. This makes it mandatory, which is an improvement.

The Senate Ethics Committee professional nonpartisan staff already conduct numerous ethics lectures and seminars for the Senate community. The Ethics Committee staff also regularly conducts training for individual Member's offices upon request. In addition, the Ethics Committee staff receives and responds to over 200 calls per week asking specific questions about rules compliance. While I applaud the many positive aspects of the proposed lobbying reform bill, this amendment to create an Office of Public Integrity is off target and unnecessary. As a member of the Ethics Committee for 8 years and chairman for the past 3, I oppose the proposed OPI because it will harm the Senate ethics process rather than improve it.

If adopted, the OPI will introduce partisan politics into a process that has been bipartisan. It is interesting to note that none of the sponsors of this OPI has served on the Ethics Committee, and all Members of the Ethics Committee currently, and others, are opposed to it. By its very design, the OPI will simply replicate the tasks the Ethics Committee does every day, including receiving complaints against Members and staff and investigating allegations of misconduct. Given all the other duties of the Ethics Committee staff and the need for the Ethics Committee to have its own counsel when reviewing the Director's recommendation, there would not be any reduction in the staff of the Ethics Committee. More importantly, the OPI would add a duplicate investigative stage because the Ethics Committee will need to conduct its own investigation to verify the merits of any complaint it receives from the Director of the OPI; otherwise, the Ethics Committee would be acting irresponsibly.

Some proponents of the OPI have argued that the Ethics Committee cannot or does not get the job done. They believe that a third party must be appointed to ensure that nefarious acts are not committed within these walls. The fact that the Ethics Committee has an excellent track record of enforcement seems to have been forgotten by those who have taken this position, although I must say that the Senator from Maine has been very complimentary to the chairman of the Ethics Committee and the work we are doing. I am appreciative of that.

Other OPI proponents argue that despite the great work of the Ethics Committee, the appearance of Senators enforcing our rules on other Senators is a problem that OPI will fix. Some of this criticism appears to be based on the fact that Members of the Ethics Committee and its staff are obligated to keep matters confidential. We can't talk to people about things. It is easy for critics to point and sneer when the committee and its members are obliged to confidentiality and are prohibited from responding to questions and criticism. Frankly, I believe it is the Ethics Committee's commitment to keep matters confidential that causes some to question the effectiveness and values of the Ethics Committee. However, it is this confidentiality that provides due process protection for Members and staff and keeps partisan politics out of the ethics process. These confidentiality provisions provide due process protection for Members while keeping partisan politics out of the ethics process.

Nevertheless, if a colleague acts in a way that is contrary to the rules of conduct of the Senate, the Ethics Committee has the ability and the duty to investigate the allegation, and it does

so. Right now we have a right to initiate investigations without a complaint. In terms of reading something in the newspaper, something brought to our attention and it seems like it casts a bad reflection upon the Members of the Senate, we have often sent letters off to Senators saying: We have seen this. We want you to respond to it.

Frankly, that is why the proposed OPI is somewhat offensive. It suggests that Members lack the moral conviction to make difficult decisions when a fellow Member has acted in violation of the Senate rules.

While sitting in judgment of one's peers is never easy, the Ethics Committee conducts itself with a sense that the reputation of the Senate is above any individual Member. In my opinion—I hope my colleagues will agree with me after considering this amendment—the OPI and its independent counsel is more cosmetic and, frankly, problematic. It seems as if proponents of the measure understand that as well. In fact, proponents of the OPI offered a much more robust proposal during the markup of the lobbying reform bill in the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. The proposal was soundly defeated in a bipartisan manner. Recognizing all of the other flaws in the earlier proposal, this amendment strips away all of the other elements of the earlier proposal to offer nothing more than the creation of an independent counsel within the Senate.

Frankly, I am confused. On the one hand, one would believe that in offering this amendment, faith in the Senate Ethics Committee would be low. However, the scaled-back version of the OPI suggests that the proponents recognize the Senate Ethics Committee is doing its job but still want to force this independent counsel on the Senate for no reason than to appease the media, frankly, and some of the watchdog groups. I keep hearing the public doesn't have any confidence in the process. There have been complaints about what has happened over in the other House. But the fact is, to my knowledge, we have not had complaints about the work of the Senate Ethics Committee. Certainly, I haven't heard any complaints from any of my constituents about this work, and I am chairman of the committee.

Despite the misunderstandings and commentary by various groups, the Ethics Committee is already a vigorous enforcer of Senate rules. The Ethics Committee and its 11 professional, nonpartisan staff, including 5 nonpartisan attorneys with many years of prosecutorial and investigative experience, are there to initiate investigations based on complaints from Members and staff, outside individuals and groups, as well as on its own initiative. What I am saying is, if this stuff comes to the attention of the staff, they go out and do the investigation. They look into the matter. They bring it to us and ask us: Do you think we should go forward. It is not as though we are controlling what they can do. That is one of the things the proposal for the independent counsel doesn't recognize. They are already in a position to do that. We are proposing to do what we are already doing.

With the assistance of this professional nonpartisan staff, the Senate Ethics Committee is doing exactly what our colleagues and the American people should expect of us—protecting the integrity of the Senate and vigorously pursuing and sanctioning Senators and staff who violate the rules of the Senate. I have not heard any evidence to the contrary.

The tradition of the Ethics Committee doing its job is a long one. For over 40 years, the Ethics Committee has operated in a way to meet the constitutional mandate that each body establish rules, investigate its Members for disorderly behavior, and hand out appropriate punishment. The Ethics Committee continues to meet this mandate today, and it does so in a bipartisan manner. In fact, published accounts reveal that the Ethics Committee has considered allegations involving some 35 Senators, all but 3 of which occurred after 1977.

While these Members include only public allegations, frankly, this reveals that the Senate Ethics Committee has not had the problem of partisan gridlock that has affected the House ethics process. If we create a Senate OPI, however, I can almost guarantee the Ethics Committee will become partisan and gridlocked, especially in the present political environment.

This is also why all six members of the Ethics Committee, three Republicans and three Democrats, oppose creation of the OPI. Over the years, the Ethics Committee has benefited from a bipartisan working relationship. This positive working relationship could be quickly lost under this new independent counsel. Moreover, the OPI appears designed to result in conflict and disagreement between the Ethics Committee and the Director of the OPI.

First, Members should understand the three-stage process that has been proposed under the OPI and understand why this proposal would ruin the bipartisan nature of the system as well as creating an adversarial relationship between the Ethics Committee and the Director.

At each stage of the OPI process, if the Director, prosecutor, independent counsel, or whatever you want to call him or her, determines that he or she believes there are sufficient grounds to conduct or proceed with an investigation, then the Director would notify the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee then has the opportunity to overrule the determination by a two-thirds vote. But if the Ethics Committee disagrees with the Director and votes to overrule, the Ethics Committee is required to issue a public report which would include a record of how each Member voted. While this OPI amendment does not specify what should be included in these public reports, as a practical matter, these public reports will include the Member's name, facts about the alleged misconduct, and the rationale for rejecting the Director's recommendations. By requiring the public report, a Member's name will be disclosed even if the Ethics Committee determines there is no violation of the rules.

I think this new public reporting process will turn the existing Senate ethics process into a political public relations battle rather than a determination on the merits of each matter. What's more, the Director is not likely to be happy that the Ethics Committee disagreed with his or her conclusions.

If you bring it in, talk about it, and then if you disagree with independent counsel and you have a vote, this will go back and forth. Then Members will start worrying about how they are voting in terms of the fact that they disagreed with the independent counsel's decision. Then we get into the issue of your votes in terms of various Members who are before the committee and having Members in your own caucus coming up to you and saying: Why did you vote that way or why didn't you vote this way? These considerations are not part of our decisionmaking today. This is a nuance that I think many people don't understand. That is how we keep this.

People ask me about cases, and I say ''no comment.'' The media asks, and I say ''no comment.'' Once the name is out there, Katey, bar the door—especially today, unfortunately, in this partisan, political environment.

I want to take a second to point out something that is obvious but may be overlooked in this debate. Issuing a subpoena to a Member of the Senate is a very serious matter, and Members know it. The heart of the subpoena power is a big stick that the Ethics Committee must occasionally use to enforce information requests during an investigation. The subpoena power is used judiciously. This power should not be delegated lightly as the OPI proposes to do.

Proponents of the OPI also suggest that the Director of the OPI will be responsible and answerable to the Ethics Committee throughout the process. In fact, this Director would not be answerable and responsible throughout the process. After the Ethics Committee approves the Director's initial decision to begin an investigation, the Director would have the unchecked power to investigate. These investigations may go on as long as the Director, in his or her sole discretion, sees fit.

We all know that independent of any power to sanction, the power to investigate is itself an awesome power and may itself impose on the subject of the investigation a heavy burden to his or her resources, to his or her reputation, to his or her ability to represent and serve constituents fully and effectively. The OPI amendment would resurrect the independent counsel in the

institution of the Senate. This would serve neither the interests of this institution nor the public.

Finally, inherent conflict between the Ethics Committee and the Director, as I mentioned, is built into the way this determination is made.

Advocates of the OPI state that the process would remove politics from the ethics process. I can guarantee you that by creating this independent counsel, politics would not only play a part in the ethics process but would be a decisive factor to every inquiry. Members of the Ethics Committee would have to explain why they voted the way they did to the media, their colleagues, and party members. Partisan considerations will transform a now bipartisan decisionmaking process into another partisan battle. The Senate has had enough of some of these partisan problems.

I also find it troubling that Members believe it is better policy to turn over the investigative process to an unelected and unaccountable individual rather than leaving such an important responsibility with Members who respect the Senate as an institution and are accountable to the voters every 6 years.

I also want to take a step back and discuss another reason proponents of the OPI claim it is necessary. Throughout the entirety of the recent scandals, reports appear that cast doubts upon the integrity of everybody on Capitol Hill. There is a belief that the Senate Ethics Committee was asleep at the wheel—or even worse, indifferent to the allegations in the Abramoff-related matter. As detailed in the committee response to Democracy 21, which is posted on the Ethics Committee Web site, the committee voted to follow its general practice of not initiating an investigation that might interfere with an ongoing Department of Justice criminal investigation. We keep hearing complaints from Democracy 21 and others that ''you guys should be involved in the Abramoff case.'' We discussed it and decided to follow the procedure we followed in the past. The Justice Department said: Keep your nose out of this. Let us do our work. When we are done, we will come to you.

We had the same case in terms of Senator Torricelli. He was under investigation—this is public knowledge—by the Justice Department and, for some reason, they decided not to prosecute him. They sent the stuff to us after they did their investigation. By the way, it was helpful to us because we had the Justice Department investigation before us. As a result of that, we censured as a public admonition of Senator Torricelli. He decided not to seek reelection to the Senate. So I just want you to know that the opposition to this is a bipartisan opposition. People who have been around here and have been through the process understand that we are getting the job done.

One other thing that I think will help is annual reports. As you know, right now we don't have to report what we do. People at home come up to me and say: What are you doing?

I say: I am chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee.

They say: What about it?

I cannot talk about it.

What do you do?

I cannot talk about it. There is no record on this, and I put out an annual report every year and cannot talk about what we have accomplished.

We have an amendment that we got in the committee, when it was marked up, that says we will report each year everything that we do. Members' names will not be mentioned, but at least the public will know that we are doing our work and we are not just sitting there letting everything pass us by. I am not sure that is going to satisfy some of the public interest groups, or that it will satisfy some of the media who have taken shots at me editorially because they think we are trying to hide something.

But the fact is, we are trying to get the job done. We must preserve the reputation of this Senate. So I want to say that I think the creation of the OPI is not a positive step forward and, in fact, it would diminish the job that is being done in the Senate to enforce our ethics laws and rules.

Mr. President, I reserve my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I yield up to 10 minutes to the Senator from Arizona, who is a key supporter of the amendment.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from Maine. I will not take all of the 10 minutes. I would like to begin by thanking her and Senator LIEBERMAN for their very hard work and their dedication to trying to fix a problem that perhaps some of my colleagues may not be aware of, and that is our reputation as a body is suffering rather significantly in the view of the American people.

I view this amendment by the Senator from Maine as a way to help the Ethics Committee do its job because the questioning has been: Why haven't people been investigated? If you had a body that would help them determine whether a case is worthy of further investigation and pursuit or not, it seems to me it would relieve the Ethics Committee of some of the onus of making tough decisions when we are talking about our colleagues.

I was interested in the comment by the Senator from Ohio that he won't investigate until after the Abramoff thing is done by the Justice Department. The Abramoff thing would not have been investigated by the Justice Department if it had not been for the Indian Affairs investigation; and while the Justice Department began and continued the investigations, we continued our hearings on the Abramoff case. If I may say, with a bit of ego, the Indian Affairs Committee contributed quite a bit to the information they needed in order to pursue this not unprecedented but egregious case of corruption of the system, staff, and Members. Really remarkable things happened under Mr. Abramoff. So somehow we on the Indian Affairs Committee were able to have an investigation—the little, obscure Indian Affairs Committee.

But the fundamental point is that we need to restore the confidence of the American people in the way we do business. Hardly a day goes by, or at least a week, that there is not a major story about influence of special interests, wrongdoing, or certainly ethical questions that are raised. That is the kindest way that I can describe it. We need to fix the problem. So why not give this to the body of the Senate that is charged with these onerous obligations.

I sympathize with anybody who is a member of the Ethics Committee because tough decisions have to be made and most of us are friends here. That is very tough.

So why would it be harmful? And why would it not be helpful to have an Office of Public Integrity with a mission that would be carefully circumscribed, which, if they made a decision, could be overruled by a vote of the Senate, and would be helpful in clearing up sometimes a cloud of investigations such as those that characterized the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the other body where there were charges launched and there were partisan vendettas which many people called ''the criminalization of partisan differences.''

Mr. President, I hope my colleagues recognize that when our approval ratings are down around 25, 26 percent, and there are people who continue to be deeply disturbed about the way we do business—whether or not it is legitimate, the perception is out there; you can look at any public opinion poll—should we not do what we can to help fix either a real or imagined problem that we have with the people we serve?

It seems to me that an Office of Public Integrity that would recommend appropriate action taken by the Ethics Committee, not by the Office of Public Integrity such as has been recommended by this amendment, would be helpful to the Ethics Committee process, helpful in carrying out and determining whether these are partisan, unwarranted charges, or whether those are legitimate.

I want to point out again that this is a legitimate difference of opinion. The Senator from Maine and I, and others, including Senator LIEBERMAN, have a view that this is necessary. Others think it is not. Can we calm down a little bit? This is a legitimate subject of debate on whether we need it. I hope we can discuss this, but I also believe that if you don't do this, what are we going to do? What are we going to do to try to restore some of the confidence that the American people have clearly lost in us?

Obviously, a functioning Ethics Committee, with a level of credibility with

the American people, is something I think would contribute to healing this breach that has developed between us and the people we represent.

I thank the Senator from Maine and Senator LIEBERMAN and others for this bipartisan effort. I would like to say a word about the so-called watchdog groups. I think they do a lot of good. They have done a lot of good for this body and for this Nation. There are people who are concerned about public integrity. There are people who bring issues before us and the American people. They are legitimate. I may not agree with them all the time, but I think to view them as adversaries, frankly, in my dealings with them they have been helpful. They certainly were in various investigations in which I and my committee have been involved, and also with reform efforts in which I have been involved. I, for one, appreciate their work and the dedication they have to giving a better Government to the American people.

Again, I thank Senator COLLINS for her hard work, and I appreciate her efforts. I appreciate her and Senator LIEBERMAN's bipartisan stewardship of one of the most important committees in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the pending McCain-Collins-Lieberman amendment to create an Office of Public Integrity. I thank my colleague from Ohio, Senator VOINOVICH, who serves as chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee. I serve as vice chair. This is a committee that has three Republicans and three Democrats, and it has a history of close bipartisan cooperation.

I applaud Senator VOINOVICH's observations about the Abramoff scandal and the fact that the Department of Justice has an investigation that is ongoing. The Department of Justice actually has requested the Ethics Committee not to begin its own investigation for fear of jeopardizing criminal charges that may or may not be brought by DOJ, and we also recognize a much greater investigative capability and the importance of not duplicating efforts. So I appreciate Chairman VOINOVICH's observations in that regard.

I thank Senators COLLINS, LIEBERMAN, LOTT, and DODD for their efforts to bring to the floor this bipartisan lobbying reform legislation and their ongoing work to complete this important bill. I support the bill, and I believe many of the reforms we are debating are long overdue.

As vice chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee, I am hopeful we can continue to work in a bipartisan manner to pass this legislation, conference the bill with the House, and enact these much needed reforms.

I must say as an aside, while these reforms are much needed, the underlying truth is, I believe the greatest share of problems this body faces is due to a separate issue, that of campaign finance, but that will have to be taken up in a different context and different legislation.

Unfortunately, I rise today to oppose the pending amendment. I know my colleagues have offered this amendment in an attempt to improve the ethics process and because they believe in good faith that the creation of a new Office of Public Integrity, or OPI, will address perceived shortcomings in the operations of the Ethics Committee. However, I am concerned this amendment attempts to fix something that, frankly, is not broken and will, in fact, have a detrimental impact on the Senate.

As a relatively new member of the Ethics Committee, I do not have an entrenched loyalty to that committee. If I believed the committee was not taking its duties seriously or was acting in an irresponsible manner, I would be the first to call for a new approach. The truth is, I believe the Senate Ethics Committee operates effectively and in a bipartisan fashion. However, the members of the committee and its staff are obligated to operate under strict confidentiality, which I believe some of our colleagues and certain outside groups equate with inaction. This simply is not the case. To the contrary, the committee serves Senate offices in an advisory role, investigates matters of concern, and enforces the rules of the Senate on a daily basis. But to provide due process protections and to ensure professionalism, most of the committee's actions are confidential.

I believe the Members who have had interactions with the Ethics Committee appreciate this professional approach which further encourages Members and their staff to seek the prior advice of the committee and avoids many potential problems.

I recognize this perception of inaction must be addressed in order to restore public confidence in the ethics process. I thank the chairman of the Ethics Committee, Senator VOINOVICH, for offering an amendment during the markup of this bill that will allow the Ethics Committee to publish annually on a no-name basis a report detailing the activities of the committee. I believe this is an important step and will give our colleagues and the public a better idea of the committee's operations.

I wish to spend a few minutes discussing my concerns about the amendment itself.

First, I believe there are significant constitutional issues surrounding the creation of an independent Office of Public Integrity. The Constitution gives the Senate the authority to establish its own rules and to punish its own Members. An Office of Public Integrity that is outside the Senate would violate this section of the Constitution, as well as the speech and debate clause. As a consequence, such an office would never be able to acquire the information or compel the necessary testimony to investigate rules violations, keeping in mind that each Member of the Senate is subject to the same criminal laws as every other citizen of America but beyond those laws also must comply with the ethics rules we have internally in the U.S. Senate.

An Office of Public Integrity that is set up within the Senate to avoid these constitutional issues, as I understand the current amendment as drafted, would merely duplicate the Senate Ethics Committee, would be a waste of resources, and would not solve the problems the sponsors perceive to exist. The two-tiered ethics process that would be created by this amendment would undoubtedly slow consideration of ethics complaints, create more doubt about the process, and make our colleagues and the public less confident in our ability to address these issues.

I am also concerned about the practical operations of an Office of Public Integrity. As I understand the amendment under consideration, the Office of Public Integrity would take over most of the investigatory functions of the Senate Ethics Committee. When an ethics complaint is received, the Office of Public Integrity would preliminarily investigate the matter, and if grounds for further investigation are found, the matter would then be sent to the Senate Ethics Committee for approval. The decision to continue the investigation could be overridden by a public two-thirds vote of the Ethics Committee with a required public report on the matter. If approved, the matter would be referred back to the Office of Public Integrity for further investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, if the Director of the Office of Public Integrity determines that there is probable cause that an ethics violation has occurred, the Director would, once again, send the matter to the Ethics Committee and, once again, this determination could be overridden by a public two-thirds vote of the Ethics Committee with a mandatory public report. Assuming the Ethics Committee did not override the Director's determination, the Office of Public Integrity would then present the case to the committee for a final ruling and implement any sanctions. Regardless of the committee's decision on the case, the amendment would require the committee to issue a public report at this stage of the process.

I fail to see how this process of ethics cases bouncing back and forth between the Office of Public Integrity and the Ethics Committee will improve in any way the way ethics complaints are handled. Instead, the amendment would create more bureaucracy and a more belabored process.

In addition, it is not clear if the underlying ethics complaint would remain confidential during this process. The amendment contains a provision prohibiting the Director or the staff of

the Office of Public Integrity from disclosing any information about a case unless authorized by the Senate Ethics Committee. However, I do not know how information will remain confidential when cases are being referred back and forth between the Office of Public Integrity and the Ethics Committee, especially when the amendment specifically requires the committee to issue public reports. This leaves open the possibility that Members will be forced to live under the cloud of an investigation as a result of every accusation brought before the Office of Public Integrity, regardless of its merit—regardless of its merit. Such a situation would only interject more partisanship into the ethics process and create a blunt tool for extreme partisan groups to make politically based attacks.

I have no doubt that my colleagues have offered this amendment with the best of intentions and based on their belief that this Office of Public Integrity would improve how we do our business in the Senate. Once again, if I believed the Ethics Committee process was broken or that the proposed Office of Public Integrity would, in fact, improve the mechanism for considering ethics complaints in the Senate, I would support that amendment. However, I know the ethics process is working in the Senate.

To address the perception of inactivity which is the result of the Senate's confidentiality rules, the bill does contain important language to mandate that the committee report in broad terms its activities, which will provide greater transparency to the committee's action.

It is my hope that my colleagues will listen to the concerns about this amendment expressed by the current and past members of the Ethics Committee who best understand the committee operations and will join us in a bipartisan fashion opposing the McCain-Collins-Lieberman amendment.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. VOINOVICH. I yield up to 5 minutes to Senator STEVENS.

Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty-one minutes.

Mr. VOINOVICH. How much time does the Senator need?

Mr. STEVENS. How much time is left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty-one minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. Ten minutes.

Mr. VOINOVICH. I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Alaska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I want to express my concerns regarding the creation of the Office of Public Integrity. We discussed this proposal in committee, and I joined a bipartisan group of Senators in defeating it, and rightly so.

The proposed Office of Public Integrity would duplicate the efforts of the Senate Ethics Committee. Our Ethics Committee was established pursuant to the Constitution, which states each body of Congress must make its own rules. This office would, in effect, replace—or duplicate—the current rule of the Senate.

The implication the sponsors here make is that in order to restore public confidence, we have to create something new. I do not think we should replace the Senate Ethics Committee, nor do I think we should imply that our current system is not working.

I happen to have been the target of complaints to the Ethics Committee, and I can tell you it has a qualified staff headed by a very capable chairman and ranking member who have the public's trust.

As a matter of fact, I once chaired this committee, and believe me, it is a difficult and thankless job, but one Chairman VOINOVICH is doing very well. If the Ethics Committee process is broken, we should fix, it. We should not create another layer of bureaucratic red tape and ask American taxpayers to pay $2 million a year to fund it.

What's more, I am concerned that the Office of Public Integrity could be used as a partisan, political tool. The climate in Washington today is the most partisan I have experienced in my 37 years in the Senate, and we should think carefully about offering up another tool for partisan critics of either party to abuse. Under this proposal, accusations don't have to be verified, those making accusations are not under oath. This proposal will add another layer to what is already a very expensive process. Who will pay those costs? A Senator could face multiple accusations presented to this OPI—and the Senate Ethics Committee. The costs of legal assistance in such instances will be doubled.

In my judgment, this proposal points us in the wrong direction, and it's a slap in the face to Chairman VOINOVICH and Senator JOHNSON, and all past chairmen for that matter.

I have some concern about this amendment. I can state, as President pro tempore of the Senate, I would have a series of duties under this amendment subject to being told exactly what to do by the two leaders of the Senate. However, as I view this amendment, it does not create an entity that makes any decisions.

I think the Senator from South Dakota is absolutely correct. The impact of this amendment would be that the Director of this office would become the investigatory arm of the Senate Ethics Committee. As a matter of fact, once the Director gets a complaint, he then has to make recommendations to the Senate Ethics Committee. The Senate Ethics Committee either approves or denies the recommendation. In terms of the investigation concept, the complaint with the Office of Public Integrity is not made under oath, it is not made under normal procedures.

I agree with the Senator from South Dakota, I don't know how the Senate has the authority to create an independent body that is spending taxpayers' money that has the job of duplicating the investigatory arm in the Senate Ethics Committee. We have a Senate Ethics Committee investigating group, and it does a very good job.

I happen to have been chairman of the Ethics Committee in the past, and I have also have been the subject of investigation by the Ethics Committee. I can assure my colleagues they do a good job. I can also assure my colleagues that it costs a considerable amount of money to comply with the inquiries of an ethics complaint. All this does is set up another entity that also will cause more attorney's fees and more time of the Senator to deal with the problem of someone having presented a complaint against him.

If the Director decides to dismiss a complaint, it goes back to the Senate Ethics Committee. They decide whether it is frivolous. The Director doesn't make that decision. Again, it is back to the committee.

I don't understand the Senator from Arizona saying this is supposed to take the workload off the Senate Ethics Committee. To the contrary. I agree with the assertion that has been made that I don't know of any Senator who would serve the Ethics Committee under this rule. I certainly would not. Whenever the Director determines there are sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation, he notifies the Senate Committee on Ethics, and the committee may overrule that. In other words, there is nothing this Director does without going back to the Ethics Committee and burdening the Ethics Committee. Under current Senate rules, the Ethics Committee can continue to investigate complaints presented to it. They have the procedures and they have the rules. They would have to follow them if the complaint was directed to that committee. There is nothing in here saying you can only present a complaint to the Director of this Office of Public Integrity.

If the Director determines there is cause to proceed further, what does he do? He goes back to the Senate Ethics Committee and says that is his determination. The Ethics Committee then has the right to vote on that. I don't know how we are restoring public confidence in the system if we create an investigatory arm that comes back to the Senate Ethics Committee every time it wants to do something. They are the people who make the decisions now, and the process is working.

I don't understand because of some complaints from public interest groups that the process is not working, mainly because—I applaud the initiative of Senator VOINOVICH and Senator JOHNSON and the decision by the committee to publish a report. I think that is a good one. That is a complaint that was heard back in the days when I was chairman of the committee. We, by nature, kept those decisions within the

Senate, except when there was a final decision made. I was here when one Senator was censored and one other expelled from the Senate because of a Senate Ethics Committee investigation.

Whatever decision is made, whether the office is going to refer something to the Department of Justice, what do they do? The Director comes back to the committee and tells them the Director thinks it should be referred to the Department of Justice, and then the Senate committee votes on whether it should go to the Department of Justice.

I tell the Senate, from my point of view, the Constitution gave us not only the right but the duty to create our own rules, and the rules we have—and they are very important—are the rules concerning our ethics. They are enforced internally by the Senate itself.

The decisions made under this amendment would be no different than right now. The final decision will be made by the Senate Ethics Committee. All this really does is find a way to further publicize that complaints have been made.

I know it says if there is a frivolous complaint made, then this Director can say you cannot present the complaint any longer to the Office of Public Integrity. There is nothing barring them from complaining to the Senate Ethics Committee again. The Senate rules are there. Anybody can file a complaint with the Senate Ethics Committee, and they are reviewed by very fine staff.

I have to tell my colleagues, if we take the action to create something in the public—call it Office of Public Integrity—and it has no teeth, how have we restored confidence in the system? This is not a way to restore confidence in the system. The way to restore confidence in the system is for Senators to stop repeating rumors about the Senate, to stand up and say: The Senate has integrity and the Senate is doing its job.

The Senators who serve on this Ethics Committee—and believe me, I remember trying to get someone to take my place. It took a long time to find someone to take my place because we had just gone through a long investigation of a Senator, and it was really a bitter period of time for the Senate Ethics Committee. No one wanted to serve on it anymore.

This is going to present a situation where no one will serve on this committee. Why would they do it? They have someone, a director, who comes to them and tells them the director thinks some Senator has done something wrong. The Senate votes. Then what do they do? If he disagrees, then they publish it. What good does that do? The problem is the integrity of the rules. And I think, serving on both this committee—and I have been the chairman of this committee also, and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee—these are heavy burdens, to carry out these responsibilities.

The Senate Ethics Committee is a heavy burden. It takes more time than any Senator who hasn't served on the committee can possibly determine. Talk about reading. You have to read depositions, go through files; enormous time is put into this. What are we going to do now if we create this Office of Public Integrity? Someone else is going to do the investigations and bring it to the committee and say: What do you think about this? Guess what. In the final analysis, there is one section that says, in any event, the committee will comply with the Senate rules. So the whole body of Senate rules and the precedent behind Senate rules are still in place, but we create a new Office of Public Integrity on top of it to start the investigations. The investigatory process of the Senate Ethics Committee is a very unique one, and I urge the Senators to at some time read that rule and read the precedents under that rule which are set forth in the publication the Senate Ethics Committee has made.

I agree we have to restore public confidence, but this is one aspect that destroys public confidence because it says you cannot have confidence in the investigatory side of the ethics process. There is nothing that says you can't have confidence in the committee itself because every final decision in this process is still made by the Senate Ethics Committee. That, to me, is not an improvement at all of the process.

Furthermore, we ought to take into account the situation that exists right here in Washington, DC, now. In the 37 years I have been in the Senate, I have never seen such partisan people outside of the Senate on both sides accusing Members of the Senate. It is part of the political process now, it is not part of the ethics process. We have people accusing us almost daily of having done something wrong and publishing it through blogs and all that. I think we should be very careful in setting up another tool for these bloggers and these people to use to create more news, to create more charges against the Senate. So I urge the Senate to vote against this amendment and keep confidence in our own rules and our own procedure.

It is my hope the Senate will follow the example of the Majority of the Rules Committee and the Governmental Affairs Committee. We will closely scrutinize this and other amendments before us.

I cannot support an amendment that either replaces the Senate Ethics Committee or adds another layer to our already expensive and time-consuming process. I urge the Senate to defeat this provision.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I yield time to the Senator from Utah. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty-one minutes.

Mr. VOINOVICH. I yield 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I have heard the arguments, and I agree with most of them. I simply want to put it all in perspective.

Let us remember that the Senate Ethics Committee, under the man who is currently the assistant majority leader, the majority whip, Senator MCCONNELL, censured the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, a member of Senator MCCONNELL's own party. The Senate Ethics Committee is not a namby-pamby, rollover, protect-the-party kind of institution. Let us remember that the current Democratic leader, the Senator from Nevada, was on the Ethics Committee when it censured a member of his own party with sufficient strength to cause that Member to recognize that he could not possibly seek reelection.

There would be those who would say: Oh, Senator REID will protect the Democrat. Senator REID will see to it that the decision of the Justice Department, which said he had not violated a law, would be sufficient and would give him appropriate political cover. Senator REID did not do that. Instead, the Ethics Committee came out with a statement so strong that the Senator in question withdrew himself from the election.

Again, the Senator from Kentucky, when he was chairman of the Ethics Committee, came out with statements so strong that the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee—in some people's view, the most significant committee assignment anyone could have in this body—was forced to resign.

Let us not listen to those who say the Senate Ethics Committee does not do its job and needs some kind of a watchdog—some kind of a gatekeeper, if you will—that will go out and gather those accusations which the Ethics Committee has not properly examined. Let's create the Senate version of the independent counsel.

The Independent Counsel Act came after Watergate, as people reacted to the Watergate scandal and said: We need a counsel who is independent of all politics. They don't recognize that the people who ended up with the prosecutions and the convictions that sent members of the Nixon administration to prison were not people connected with an independent counsel; they were people out of the Justice Department. Let us remember that when the President tried to do things with the Justice Department that were viewed as being protective of him, there were individuals who refused to accept appointment, who resigned from the Justice Department rather than carry out a partisan agenda. We are getting the independent counsel mentality here of the same kind. There has been a scandal. Jack Abramoff has broken the law.

I agree with the comment made by the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. NELSON, who said: Washington is the only place I know where, when people break

the law, our reaction is, change the law, make the law tougher.

Jack Abramoff is going to go to prison, and he is going to go to prison under the old rules. He is going to go to prison under the existing laws. That doesn't say to me that the existing rules and the existing laws somehow failed. What failed is that Jack Abramoff failed his moral and integrity responsibility to abide by the law, not that there was something wrong with the law.

So we had the Independent Counsel Act after Watergate, and we saw what happened. When the impeachment trial here in this Chamber was over, Senator MCCONNELL and Senator DODD, the chairman and ranking member respectively of the Senate Rules Committee, both went upstairs to the press gallery and both said: It is time to kill the independent counsel statute. The independent counsel statute has gone too far, it has created too much partisanship, it has created too much difficulty. A bipartisan call, and this body agreed, and the independent counsel statute lapsed, with no tears being shed for it in this body.

Now there is a sense that somehow, in response to the Abramoff scandal, we must do the same thing that was done in response to the Watergate scandal. If we do this, at some future point, the future counterparts of Senator MCCONNELL and Senator DODD will go to the gallery and say it is time to kill the Office of Public Integrity.

Let's go back to the way things make sense. We have heard all of the examples from all of the Senators as to the way this would work and the way it would make sense. I oppose this amendment, and I hope all of the Members of the Senate will do so as well.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Again, the time remaining, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fifteen minutes.

Mr. VOINOVICH. I yield the Senator from Arkansas up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I commend Senators COLLINS and LIEBERMAN on their great work on this underlying bill. I am on the Homeland Security Committee with them, and it is always great to work with them. They work in a very nonpartisan and bipartisan fashion.

Also, I wish to thank Senator VOINOVICH and Senator JOHNSON for their leadership on the Ethics Committee on which I also serve. They have demonstrated what being real Senators is all about because they take their responsibility on ethics very seriously, and I am here today to support their position on this amendment and to oppose this amendment.

The Ethics Committee works with diligence and without politics. I have only been on this committee for a little more than a year, and I will be the first to tell you that there is a problem with the House Ethics Committee. I think everybody agrees on that. But also, I am adamant to say that there is really not a problem at all on the Senate Ethics Committee because we take our responsibilities very seriously. We are there to protect the Senate, the integrity of this institution, and, just as the Constitution says, we are there to oversee the behavior of our colleagues. We do that in a very confidential manner.

I must say that it is sometimes frustrating to outside forces who look and see us, and they may file something and they may not get an immediate response.

I remember when I was starting out practicing law in Arkansas, a lawyer told me: Never try your case in the newspaper. I think that is very true when it comes to the world of ethics inside the Senate. If we allow the confidentiality to go away, then, in my view, we would be opening a Pandora's box. I can just imagine—again, in today's realistic political world—I can just imagine what it would be like if someone were to file a complaint and the next thing you know, there would be radio ads, television ads, Internet ads, blogs, et cetera, out there saying that so-and-so has ethics charges pending against him.

The Senate Ethics Committee, although not perfect, is a much better option than the Office of Public Integrity. Again, I believe that is one of the reasons this amendment or something very similar to this was defeated in the committee on a bipartisan basis.

I also notice that there are groups around Washington, DC, who are very supportive of the Office of Public Integrity. Basically, one of their complaints is that when they file a complaint with the Senate Ethics Committee, the complaint seems to go in a black hole. In fact, I have an e-mail that says we—the Ethics Committee—ignore outside complaints. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am here to tell you, nothing could be further from the truth. We consider all the complaints, wherever they come from, very seriously. We look at them, and we act on outside complaints, complaints that come from outside this body. We have spent a lot of time—hours and hours, in fact—on complaints that originated outside this body.

Also, I think some of these groups say they acknowledge that the House has a problem with their Ethics Committee, but they say that both committees are in need of repair. Really, they can't point to anything in the Senate Ethics Committee that has gone wrong or any way that we failed on the Senate Ethics Committee. There is a reason for that. You can look back over the last 20 years, and you will see a number of high profile, very difficult, very tough, and oftentimes very complicated investigations the Senate Ethics Committee has undertaken which have led to some sort of admonishment of their own Members in the Senate.

The last thing I wanted to say, is this: Being on the Ethics Committee, every day when I walk in that room, I ask myself, what did I do to make HARRY REID mad? Why did he put me on this committee? Because I will tell you, as the chairman will or as the cochairman will tell you, it is not an easy assignment. In fact, it is grueling.

One thing we need to understand is that oftentimes, to get down to the facts and to get down to the truth, it takes time. It takes a lot of time. Sometimes you have witnesses who are no longer here. Some of these witnesses live in other parts of the country and even, in some cases, other parts of the world.

There are meetings and meetings and meetings on these allegations. One thing I love about the Senate Ethics Committee is the high level of trust among the members in that committee. There is a culture of integrity in that committee. As I said, even though it is no fun to sit in judgment of our colleagues, it has worked very well.

Because of the committee's policy of keeping its meetings closed and confidential, it allows a freedom within the Ethics Committee to really drill down and get into details and ask hard questions, questions that you might be afraid to ask in a public forum because you may not know the answer, and that answer may be very embarrassing and just by asking the question, it could turn into an allegation.

The process we have right now—although it is closed, although it is confidential—works very well. In a lot of ways it is similar to turning the case over to the jury, where you allow the jury to go back into deliberations and hash it out however they want to do it. In the end, they come back and they do justice. I think our Founding Fathers got it right in article I, section 5, paragraph 2 when they said that:

> Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behavior, and with the Concurrence of two-thirds, expel a Member.

I think our Founding Fathers expected us to do this and not set up a third party office to do this.

Again, I rise to join my two chairmen, the chairman and cochairman on the Ethics Committee, in opposing this amendment, and I encourage all my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am voting against the Collins amendment because it is unconstitutional. Article I, section 5, provides:

> Each House may determine the Rules of its' Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly behaviour, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a Member.

The Senate has determined the rules for punishing its Members which carries out the constitutional mandate. That constitutional procedure does not permit delegation of that responsibility.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I found this debate to be both interesting and ironic. We have heard the proposed Office of Public Integrity described on the one hand as being a potentially out-of-control, independent counsel/special prosecutor. Then we have heard it described as a toothless entity that simply duplicates the work of the Ethics Committee and would have to check with the Ethics Committee at its every stage of the investigation.

In fact, neither characterization is an accurate one. Perhaps the best way to think of the proposed Office of Public Integrity is that it would be the investigative arm of the Ethics Committee. It would be an entity that would conduct a thorough, impartial, credible investigation of allegations and then report back to the Ethics Committee. It is essentially controlled by the Ethics Committee but has the ability to do independent investigations.

It is neither an out-of-control special prosecutor nor is it a powerless office that simply duplicates the work being done and that would be done by the Ethics Committee anyway. In fact, one of the opponents of this amendment said that they would create a duplicate investigation. I don't understand how that conclusion can be reached. There is nothing in this amendment that would require the Ethics Committee to conduct a parallel investigation, and why would they? We have already heard the Chairman of the Ethics Committee say that they do not do an investigation when there is a parallel Justice Department investigation going on. Why would the Ethics Committee choose to duplicate the work of the Office of Public Integrity? This bill does not mandate that the Ethics Committee throw all common sense overboard. So that argument simply does not hold water.

We have also heard it alleged that the Office of Public Integrity would make public information that is now confidential. But look at the plain language of the amendment. I am going to read it into the RECORD because this information to the contrary has been advanced on the Senate floor. Here is what it says: ''Disclosure.'' It is on page 11 of the amendment.

Information or testimony received, or the contents of a complaint or the fact of its filing, or recommendations made by the Director to the committee, may be publicly disclosed by the Director or the staff of the Office only—

I am going to underscore that, Mr. President.

—only if authorized by the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate.

I don't know how it could be more clear, that the decision on disclosing information on the investigation cannot be made unilaterally by the Office of Public Integrity. Under our amendment, the Ethics Committee, not the Office of Public Integrity, has the sole authority to determine what parts of an investigation, if any, become a matter of public record. The OPI has no such authority. The language could not be more clear on that point.

Second, although a vote of the Ethics Committee to overrule the Office of Public Integrity would be made public, that is because such a vote would end the case. In other words, the Ethics Committee would not be voting publicly multiple times on a particular investigation at every stage—contrary to the information, or the argument that was advanced earlier by the distinguished chairman of the Ethics Committee. This is how it would work. The Ethics Committee would vote only once, either to overrule the Office of Public Integrity, which it can do at any stage of the investigation, or at the end of the investigation the committee would vote on a final determination of whether a violation has occurred.

I realize that Members have very strong views on this issue. I realize there are legitimate differences of opinion. I recognize that this is a difficult issue. But I hope that Members will look at the actual language of the amendment that Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator MCCAIN, and I have advanced. I recognize that there is a reason there is considerable confusion. There are all different versions of entities similar to the Office of Public Integrity that we are proposing. But we have drafted our proposal very carefully not to undermine the good work of the Ethics Committee, not to take away the final decisionmaking from the Ethics Committee but to promote public confidence in the integrity and the credibility of investigations by having this office, the Office of Public Integrity, conduct the investigation.

Will the Presiding Officer inform me how much time is remaining on the proponents' side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 12 minutes remaining.

Ms. COLLINS. I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VOINOVICH. How much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 8 minutes.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Kentucky.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Ohio. I congratulate the Senator from Maine for her extraordinary work on the underlying lobby reform bill but respectfully disagree as to the appropriateness of adopting the Lieberman-Collins amendment.

This amendment creates a new Senate Office of Public Integrity with a Director, appointed for a 5-year term, by the President Pro Tempore upon the joint recommendation of the majority leader and minority leader. He or she would literally be ''an investigation czar.'' Let me just highlight a few of the most problematic aspects of this proposal.

No. 1 on the list of the ''Duties'' of the Director is, and I quote from page 3, ''(1) to investigate . . .''. At its core the OPI is really the ''SBI''—''Senate Bureau of Integrity''—not even of intelligence.

To get the ball rolling, investigations by the Director are initiated by a complaint filed by anyone—a complaint without any requirements. In comparison, FEC complaints must be in ''in writing, signed and sworn to by the person filing such complaint, shall be notarized and shall be made under penalty of perjury and subject to the provisions of the criminal code.'' The complaint this integrity czar investigates doesn't have to meet any of those requirements—it could be filed via anonymous voicemail or on a beverage coaster—the name and address of the complainant isn't even required.

The only restriction on the complaint is that a complaint against a Member can't be ''accepted'' within 60 days of an election involving such Member. Thus, complaints can be filed against a Member's staff, and on the flip side, complaints made, maybe not accepted, but made during that 60-day period against a Member gives that Member no way to clear their name until after that election.

Making matters even more grim, these complaints are only against incumbents or their staff—so challengers can go hog wild in filing complaints and keeping their opponents under a cloud of suspicion—no matter how baseless. The only penalty for a frivolous complaint is they might not accept another one from that person, to the extent their identity is even known, and may incur costs resulting from the complaint. A very small price to pay for what would smear the good name of Members.

The Director is required to go to the Ethics Committee before getting his full blown power to ''administer oaths, issue subpoenas, compel attendance and production of documents and take depositions.'' However, it takes a roll call vote of ⅔ of the full committee to stop the Director's full blown investigation and the vesting of his full prosecutorial powers.

This amendment strips the bipartisan 6-member Ethics Committee of one of its core functions—enforcement—arguably its most important—and vests it all in one unelected individual. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Let me say I know there are many watchers of the Senate, as an institution, who may well believe that the Ethics Committee is a body constituted to go easy on Senators. I must respectfully suggest to the public and to our colleagues that the facts are otherwise.

I was vice chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee and then subsequently chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee during a time when my

party was in the majority in the Senate and had to, based on the facts in a particular case, offer a resolution to expel the chairman of the Finance Committee of the Senate from the Senate. That Member of the Senate subsequently resigned. But the vote in the Senate Ethics Committee was 6 to 0, on a bipartisan basis, to expel the chairman of the Finance Committee from the Senate. Surely, no one would consider that a slap on the wrist.

I cite another example. When the current Senate Democratic leader was chairman of the Ethics Committee, it issued such a scathing report on a bipartisan basis that a Member of his party chose to discontinue his effort to be reelected in the fall of 2002. The Senate Ethics Committee respects, first and foremost, this institution and its reputation. I think it has undertaken extraordinary efforts over the years in protecting Members from spurious complaints and being able to sort out a genuine wrongdoing and, when genuine wrongdoing appears, go after it and not tolerate it.

I particularly compliment the current chairman of the Ethics Committee, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. VOINOVICH, who has done an extraordinary job in this regard as well.

So I hope our colleagues, on a bipartisan basis, will not support the Collins-Lieberman amendment. I think the Senate Ethics Committee can handle this job quite well in the future, as it has in the past.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, we are faced with a choice. We have the opportunity to pass significant legislation to strengthen our lobbying disclosure laws to ban practices that raise questions about undue influence of special interests and to strengthen the enforcement of those laws. Even without the Office of Public Integrity, I believe we have produced a good bill. But I believe that our legislation will be incomplete if we do not act to strengthen the enforcement process. I believe, after much study, that the best way to do this is to create an Office of Public Integrity.

That is not in any way to indicate a lack of appreciation for the hard work of the fine members of our Senate Ethics Committee under the leadership of two individuals with great integrity. I understand that it is a thankless job to serve on the Ethics Committee, and contrary to the comment that was made earlier in the debate, I believe that this office, by conducting the investigative portion, by assisting the Ethics Committee in investigating allegations, would actually be of great assistance to the Ethics Committee.

The chairman of the Ethics Committee has expressed, time and again, his frustration that the public does not know of the work the Ethics Committee does. It doesn't realize how seriously the investigations and allegations are treated; that it doesn't appreciate how difficult it is to pursue allegations against Members with whom one serves. I suggest that this amendment offers great assistance to the Ethics Committee. If there is an Office of Public Integrity which is conducting independent investigations and reporting its findings to the Ethics Committee, I think that enhances the public's understanding of the process, the public's acceptance of the process, and the credibility of the investigations.

We are dealing with a reality that public confidence in Congress is very low. It is perilously low. It makes it difficult for us to pass legislation because the public believes that oftentimes our decisions are not in the public interest but, rather, beholden to some private interest. That saddens me because I know the people I serve with are individuals of great integrity, and the vast majority of elected officials in Washington and elsewhere are in public service for all the right reasons. But that perception is a reality we need to deal with. The best way to deal with it, in my judgment, is to pass strong, comprehensive legislation which will help repair the frayed bonds between the public and those who serve the public.

The Office of Public Integrity is an integral part of achieving that goal. There is a lot of opposition to this amendment. I don't delude myself to the contrary. I have learned organizational change in Washington is the hardest kind of change to accomplish. I learned that when Senator LIEBERMAN and I led the legislation restructuring and reforming our intelligence community, the most sweeping reforms in 50 years. I have learned trying to change the organization of Congress or the way Congress works makes that reorganization of our intelligence community look easy.

I recognize this is an uphill fight, but I believe it is the right thing to do. I hope our colleagues, before casting their vote today, will take the time to read the actual language of the amendment and to think about what we need to do to repair the breach between those who are elected and the people we serve, to promote and strengthen public confidence in the political process. I believe if our colleagues do that and if they care about restoring public confidence in Congress, they will support the amendment we have offered.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARTINEZ). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, first, I again compliment the chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee for the good job she and the committee have done in proposing legislation that will make a difference in the Senate and in the Congress. I respect everything the Senator has done. Some of the amendments making mandatory some of the things we are doing voluntarily I welcome. I thank the Senator.

One thing I have tried to do is to inform Members about what the rules are so they do not get in trouble. I point out that even though the amendment is well motivated and meant to help the Ethics Committee, all six members of the Ethics Committee on a bipartisan basis oppose it. The Ethics Committee is the investigative arm of the Senate. It is a nonpartisan investigator of all matters brought before the Ethics Committee and, something some Members are not happy about, matters that are not brought before us, on the complaint of some, that we recognize, through the media, there is a problem with one of the Members, and we get involved in it. We do not have to wait for someone to file a complaint. We are the watchdog of the Senate. We want to protect the Senate's reputation. We admonish, we censor and, in some cases, eject Members of this Senate for not upholding the high standards all Members are expected to uphold after being elected to this Senate.

I do not believe this is going to mend the problem in terms of public confidence. As I have mentioned, except for recently some criticisms, we did not get involved in the Abramoff investigation. Overall, in terms of the public, the Senate Ethics Committee has been doing the job they are supposed to do under the Constitution. Again, I underscore in terms of Abramoff, we did not get involved because of the fact that the Justice Department asked us not to get involved. They thought it would interfere with their investigation. I assure Members of the Senate and I assure the public and other groups that are looking in on us, once that investigation is finished and the information is sent here, if one of our Members or several Members are involved, we will fully investigate that. If those individuals have violated the rules of the Senate, they will be properly dealt with by the Ethics Committee.

In terms of the specific parts of this legislation, I bring up something that has a problem, and that is that every time the Ethics Committee disagrees with the Office of Public Integrity, we have to have a published vote of the committee. As a result of that, what will happen, in my opinion, is that after a while, where the Ethics Committee does not agree with the Office of Public Integrity, you will build up an adversarial type of relationship. Members, in terms of how they vote, will start taking into consideration, gee, it is going to be public that we disagreed with this guy and people will ask, why did you disagree with that, and we get into that whole area of questioning people's motivation.

It also gets us involved in partisanship, Members asking, why did you vote that particular way? You had a chance maybe to harm some other Member because of political reasons. Or why did you pick on one of our Members?

This job is a very tough job. It is not a job that makes one popular with his

colleagues in this Senate. I believe rather than helping the situation, in spite of the fine motivation of the people sponsoring this amendment, rather than helping, it is going to hurt the situation and also make it very difficult in the future to have Members being willing to serve as a member of the Senate Ethics Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I have been allocated 10 minutes to speak on the Wyden amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. SESSIONS. I seek to use that time.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for an inquiry?

Is there a unanimous consent in terms of Members speaking?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, the time is controlled by the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, to clarify our situation, if I may, if the Presiding Officer would tell me if I am correct that there is still an amount of time remaining to the proponents of the Collins-Lieberman-McCain amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 6 minutes remaining.

Ms. COLLINS. And I believe the time of the opponents has expired, the time that was controlled by Senator VOINOVICH; am I correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Ms. COLLINS. And I believe there is a parallel time agreement for further debate on the Wyden amendment; am I correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. INHOFE. My request would be that I be acknowledged to speak on the Wyden-Grassley-Inhofe amendment in whatever order you are prepared to give me.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am going to reserve my 6 minutes for right before the vote for some concluding comments. I probably will not use all 6 minutes. I have no objection to turning now to the debate on the Wyden amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 2944

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. I assume Senator INHOFE will have time after I conclude my 10 minutes and I ask unanimous consent to that effect. He is on the other side of this issue.

The Wyden amendment provides a new advantage for those who want bigger and more expensive Government. Senators who want time to study a bill before granting consent would have to put their names in the RECORD as objecting to it even though they may quickly decide they do not have an objection to the bill.

First, the Senator from Oregon stated that this amendment—and this is a good example of what happens in the Senate—that this amendment was being blocked by a secret hold. But there was no secret hold. The leadership of the Senate knew that I had an interest in participating in the debate, but I had a meeting at the White House this morning and so I asked if they could accommodate that and set the debate at a time I could participate. That apparently was worked out.

Under the Senator from Oregon's amendment, I would have had to submit a written request to the majority leader in order to participate in the debate, but I was at the White House and that was not very practical. Is telling my leader I would like an opportunity to be in the Senate to debate this issue now an unreasonable request? The Senator from Oregon has also stated that the intelligence authorization bill is being held up based on a secret hold. In truth, it is not a secret. I will tell the Senator who is holding that important intelligence bill: It is the two Senators from Massachusetts. Senators KENNEDY and KERRY have objected to considering the bill because they want to offer amendments. Some say they are poison-pill amendments, but they are amendments they want to offer. So if the Senator has a problem about that, he should talk to his colleagues. The Senators may say this only applies to proceeding to a bill. This is an important thing, because in 99 percent of the cases, proceedings of the bill and passage of the bill happen at the same time. The bill is called up and asked to be passed by unanimous consent. It is all the same request. Frankly, the problem with this bill goes further than the mechanical application. It makes a statement. It basically says that passing bills is inherently a good thing, and we should assume any Senator who has never heard of a bill should consent to it. Anyone who dares not to grant promptly and immediately any such consent is some scoundrel who needs to be exposed to misdeeds.

Senator COBURN has offered an amendment that says if we are going to have this hold amendment, he would offer one that says if you want to pass a bill and there is no quorum present, and you want to ram it through with no quorum present, you need to have a petition signed by 100 Senators saying they are prepared to let the bill go through.

Why not? It is not practical, perhaps, but the system is not designed to be practical. Frankly, it is too easy to pass bills. Bills flow through this body like water.

I want the American people to know how bills are passed in this Senate. We were talking about some sunshine here. Let's talk about it. There is a system we have called a hotline. What is a hotline? In each Senate office there are three telephones with hotline buttons on them. Most evenings, sometimes after business hours, these phones begin to ring. The calls are from the Republican and the Democratic leaders to each of their Members, asking consent to pass this or that bill—not consider the bill or have debate on the bill but to pass it. Those calls will normally give a deadline. If the staff do not call back in 30 minutes, the bill passes. Boom. It can be 500 pages. In many offices, when staffers do not know anything about the bill, they usually ignore the hotline and let the bill pass without even informing their Senators. If the staff miss the hotline, or do not know about it or were not around, the Senator is deemed to have consented to the passage of some bill which might be quite an important piece of information.

So that is the real issue here. The issue is not about holds. The rules say nothing about holds. Holds do not exist. The issue is consent. Nobody has a right to have an individual Senator's consent to pass a bill. They act as though you have a right to get it. You would expect if you are going to say you have unanimous consent, you have consent. But that is not always the case.

If staff do not have time to read the bill—some of these bills are hundreds of pages long—they frequently assume someone else has read it. Staff in the Senate offices do not read all these bills, and they go back to whatever they were doing before the hotline phone rang. Presumably, some committee staffer has read the bill at some point along the way, but in almost no case have actual Members of the Senate granted their intentional consent to the bills that pass during the day's wrapup that we often see late into the night on C–SPAN.

In many cases, even Senators sponsoring the bill have never read it, unfortunately. Committee reports are filed on bills. Very few staff have read the committee reports. How do I know about this? I have the thankless task of chairing the Senate Steering Committee. One of our commitments is to review every bill that is hotlined in the Senate. My staff actually reads them. It is a service to my colleagues, I suggest. They read the CBO scores which tell how much the bill costs the taxpayers. A lot of times they do not want you to know that. Some committee, group, or someone has moved a bill on the floor—they move it along—and nobody has read the score. Many contain massive, new spending programs. Some bust the budget. We think Senators who are looking out for the taxpayers and taking the time to study bills should have the same rights as Senators who are willing to let big spending bills pass without reading them. This amendment is not good government. It will make it more likely that bills will pass in the middle of the night filled with pork and who knows what else.

The current process established by the two leaders provides for 72 hours for Senators to withhold consent and to read a bill. Beyond that, the objections become public. Under this amendment, if a Senator in an offhand conversation with the leader says, ''I

think we ought to take a hard look at this bill,'' does that mean his name should be printed in the RECORD? That is not workable. If I am on the floor, and the leader asks me if we ought to go to such and such a bill, and I say, ''No, don't do that, I think something else should go first,'' do I then immediately have to go to the floor and publish that in the RECORD?

According to this resolution, any communication with the leader suggesting we not proceed to a bill would need to be printed in the RECORD and submitted to the leader in writing. However, if I communicate to the leader that we should proceed to some big spending bill, I can do that in secret. This gives a new advantage to those who want to pass legislation without review.

Now, I take very seriously holding up a bill. We stay on our team, and we look at the matter promptly and try to give an honest response. And if we have a problem with a clause or two in a piece of legislation, we share that with the Senators who are promoting the legislation. Usually an agreement can be reached, and usually the legislation is cleared, anyway, without any significant delay.

Line 4 of the Wyden amendment says:

The majority and minority leaders of the Senate or their designees shall recognize a notice of intent of a Senator who is a member of their caucus to object to proceeding to a measure or matter only if the Senator

(1) submits the notice of intent in writing to the appropriate leader or their designee; and

(2) within 3 session days after the submission under paragraph (1) submits for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and in the applicable calendar section described in subsection (b) the following notice:

''I, Senator [blank], intend to object to proceeding to [blank], dated [blank].''

If a Senator tells their leader on the phone they have concern with a bill that was offered that night, must they quickly run down to his office and hand the leader a piece of paper? This says it must be submitted in writing; otherwise, the leader cannot recognize it.

If the leader decides against proceeding to the bill, does that mean he has violated the rule?

How can we prove that the leader did not simply change his mind, but rather that he illegally recognized an oral hold, which was not submitted in writing?

Who is to make such a determination?

Is the Parliamentarian going to be put in the uncomfortable position of trying to divine the motivations of a party leader?

I am not sure what the purpose of the 3 days is, but here is what its effect is:

If a bill is hotlined at 7:30 at night, and the leaders say it will be passed at 7:45 unless there is an objection, and my staff calls them to say please do not proceed, we would like to review the bill, rather than reading the bill, they would have to run to the leader's office with a piece of paper saying we object to the bill.

Then, let's say they run back to the office, start reading, and after review, the bill looks fine. Let's say they even call back within the 15-minute window that was given. The bill passes that night. The next day it passes the House, and is signed by the President. It is now law.

On the third day, I would still need to insert a statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD saying ''I, Senator JEFF SESSIONS, intend to object to proceeding [blank], dated [blank].''

I intend to object to a bill that has already been signed into law?

The amendment has been so poorly drafted that it is not even clear what it does. This is what we are dealing with.

This poorly drafted amendment is intended to stack the deck, in favor of other poorly drafted legislation passing in the middle of the night with little or no review.

Let's look at section (c) line 18:

A Senator may have an item with respect to the Senator removed from a calendar to which it was added under subsection (b) by submitting for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the following notice:

I, Senator [blank], do not object to proceeding to [blank], dated [blank].

This is the flip side: Maybe you looked at the bill and do not like it, but are willing to let it pass by a voice vote.

Now, to get the ''scarlet letter'' I removed, you need to put a statement into the RECORD saying you do not object to the bill, which may not be altogether true.

Further, what if you simply want to offer an amendment, or debate, but the leadership wants to pass the bill clean. How does this bill apply?

I suppose one interpretation is it would not apply at all, because it only purports to apply to ''proceeding to a bill.''

What if you want to offer a thousand amendments? What then? What if you prefer to proceed to a different version of the bill?

What if you would simply like a roll-call vote on the motion to proceed, or would like time to debate, but the leadership does not want to grant you that. Technically, you are objecting to proceeding under those circumstances.

I could stand here for hours discussing all the many ways this amendment is going to damage the Senate, and the many ways this amendment is absolutely worthless as a tool to prevent blocking of legislation in secret.

But what I object to most is that this amendment says passing legislation is always preferable to slowing it down, that letting a bill pass is good no matter how poorly drafted, how costly, how late in the evening, or how few Senators have studied or even heard of the bill.

How much pork is there? Passing bills is good: In many cases, that is not correct.

There is a widely quoted story about the ''coolness'' of the Senate involving George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was in France during the Constitutional Convention.

Upon his return, Jefferson visited Washington and asked why the Convention delegates had created a Senate. ''Why did you pour that coffee into your saucer?'' asked Washington. ''To cool it, '' said Jefferson. ''Even so,'' responded Washington, ''we pour legislation into the senatorial saucer to cool it.''

The Framers intended the Senate to deliberate, to thoughtfully review legislation, not be a rubber stamp.

This amendment says those Senators who are willing to grant consent to legislation they have never read or have perhaps never even heard of—those are the good Senators.

But those Senators who dare to say: I would like time to read this legislation, to see how much it costs, to see whether it is within the national interests—they are the troublemakers. These scoundrels need to be exposed to the public.

So, in summary, here is where we are.

Passing midnight spending boondoggles with two Senators in the Chamber: Good. Reviewing legislation: Bad. Objecting to big spending legislation: Really bad.

Lobbyists must be thrilled with this. Lobbyists who are pushing special-interest legislation will now have a ready-made target list.

All they need to do is get the leadership to hotline the legislation, and within 3 days they will know who they need to talk to or jump on or ''sick the dogs on.''

I believe we need to return to the ''cooling'' Senate, not a ''freezing'' Senate, where obstruction is the rule, nominees are blocked endlessly; not a ''greased'' Senate, where bad legislation passes at lightning speed late at night with no time for review, but a Senate where Senators are encouraged to take the time to pick up a bill and read it, to weigh the consequences for the American taxpayers.

This amendment runs directly contrary to the spirit of reform this bill purports to address.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I see several of the sponsors of the amendment here. Probably they disagree with some of my views, but I think they are worthy of their consideration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: How much time is available on my side? My understanding is we have 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon controls 10 minutes.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it is my desire to yield the first 3 minutes to Senator INHOFE, the next 3 minutes to Senator GRASSLEY, and then I will

speak. I thank my friend from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first, let me say to my friend from Alabama, I do not think we have ever been in disagreement on anything. I have a little different take on this issue than he does and a little different background because of an experience I had when I served in the other body.

First, I think realistically, looking at this, you may say ''in writing,'' but if you call your leader and tell him, ''I plan to go ahead and object to this,'' and he knows it is going to come in writing, unless you don't get along with the leader very well, I don't think that would be a real serious problem. But I do agree with the Senator from Alabama that passing laws is not necessarily a good thing. My feeling is we have too many laws, not too few laws. I have said that many times.

But let me share with you an experience I had in the other body. When I was first elected in 1986 to the House of Representatives, I found there was a process used to keep the signatures of a discharge petition from being open to the public. So there could be something very popular. For example, a gun control bill might not be popular in West Texas, but there might be a West Texas Democrat whose party tells him for the national scene, ''We want lots of gun controls, and I know it is not popular in the State, but there is a way you can go home and say you opposed gun controls and at the same time you can get by with appeasing the leadership.''

That is what they did. They would put the discharge petition in the drawer of the Speaker's desk, and you could not get it out unless a majority of people signed the discharge petition. Consequently, they would go ahead and tell people they had signed it when, in fact, they had not.

I had a one-sentence bill that totally reformed that. It stated that all signatures on a discharge petition shall become public record. We actually had seven editorials by the Wall Street Journal. We had all these things saying: Finally, there is light.

All I want—all I want—is to be able to have everyone being accountable for what they are saying. I have two holds right now, and I have said publicly that I am the one who has the holds. I have never, in the 12 years I have been here in this body, not specifically stated that I had holds when I did. So I think that is the main thing. There are similarities between the situation that occurred in the House, and I agree with Reader's Digest, the Wall Street Journal. They said that was the greatest single reform in the last 60 years.

So when I first came to this body, I made this statement: that it appeared to me that being able to put on holds without being accountable is a very similar practice to the inability of knowing what the signatures were on discharge petitions. Consequently, I started back 12 years ago working on this issue. I am very happy to join Senator WYDEN and Senator GRASSLEY in what I consider to be a reform that is badly needed in the Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a November 1994 article in Reader's Digest by Daniel Levine be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Reader's Digest, November 1994]

HOW THE TRIAL LAWYERS FINALLY MET DEFEAT

A STORY OF DEMOCRACY AND CAPITOL HILL

(By Daniel R. Levine)

When a twin-engine Cessna airplane crashed near Fallon, Nev., four years ago, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) ruled pilot error was the cause. But that didn't stop lawyers for two of the injured passengers from suing Cessna on the grounds that the seats on the 25-year-old plane did not provide adequate support. The seats had been ripped out without Cessna's knowledge and rearranged to face each other. But the lawyers claimed that Cessna should have warned against removing the seats. A jury awarded the two plaintiffs more than $2 million.

In Compton, Calf., a single-engine airplane nearly stalled on the runway and sputtered loudly during take-off. Less than a minute into the air it crashed, killing two of the three people on board. On July 18, 1989, two days before the one-year statute of limitations would expire, the survivor and relatives of the deceased passengers filed a $2.5 million lawsuit naming the plane's manufacturer, Piper Aircraft Corp., as a defendant. Not mentioned in the suit was the fact that the plane, built in 1956, had been sitting at the airport unused and uninspected for 2½ years. The case, awaiting trial, has already cost Piper $50,000.

The NTSB found that 203 crashes of Beech aircraft between 1989 and 1992 were caused by weather, faulty maintenance, pilot error or air control mishaps. But trial lawyers blamed the manufacturer and sued each time. Beech was forced to spend an average of $530,000 defending itself in each case and up to $200,000 simply preparing for those that were dismissed.

Such product-liability lawsuits have forced small-plane makers such as Cessna to carry $25 million a year in liability insurance. In fact, Cessna stopped producing piston-powered planes primarily because of high cost of defending liability lawsuits. Thus, an American industry that 15 years ago ruled the world's skies has lost more than 100,000 jobs and has seen the number of small planes it manufactured plummet from over 17,000 in 1978 to under 600 last year.

That may all change. Bucking years of intense lobbying by trial lawyers, Congress voted last summer to bar lawsuits against small-plane manufacturers after a plane and its parts have been in service 18 years. The legislation will create an estimated 25,000 aviation jobs within five years as manufacturers retool and increase production.

This was the first time that Congress has reformed a product liability law against the wishes of the lawyers who make millions from these cases. And the dramatic victory was made possible because of the efforts of a little-known Congressman from Oklahoma who challenged Capitol Hill's establishment.

On his first day in 1987 as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Jim Inhofe (R., Okla.) asked colleague Mike Synar (D., Okla.) how he had compiled such a liberal voting record while winning reelection in a conservative district. Overhearing the question, another longtime Democratic Congressman interjected: ''It's easy. Vote liberal, press-release conservative.''

This was a revealing lesson in Congressional ethics, the first of many that would open Inhofe's eyes to the way Congress really ran. He soon realized that an archaic set of rules enabled members to deceive constituents and avoid accountability.

When a Congressman introduced a bill, the Speaker of the House refers it to the appropriate committee. Once there, however, the bill is at the mercy of the committee chairman, who represents the views of the Congressional leadership. If he supports the legislation, he can speed it through hearings to the House floor for a vote. Or he can simply ''bury'' it beneath another committee business.

This arrangement is tailor-made for special-interest lobbies like the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA). For eight years, bills to limit the legal liability of small-aircraft manufacturers had been referred to the House Judiciary Committee, only to be buried. Little wonder. One of the ATLA's most reliable supporters on Capital Hill has been Rep. Jack Brooks (D., Texas), powerful chairman of that committee and recipient of regular campaign contributions from ATLA.

The only way for Congressmen to free bills that chairmen such as Brooks wanted to kill was a procedure called the discharge petition. Under it, a Congressman could dislodge a buried bill if a House majority, 218 members, signed a petition bringing it directly to the floor for a vote. But discharge petitions virtually never succeeded because, since 1931, signatures were kept secret from public. This allowed Congressmen to posture publicly in favor of an issue, then thwart passage of the bill by refusing to sign the discharge petition. At the same time, House leaders could view the petitions, enabling them to pressure signers to remove their names. Of 493 discharge petitions ever filed, only 45 got the numbers of signatures required for a House vote. And only two of those bills became law.

Inhofe saw the proposals overwhelmingly favored by the American People—the 1990 balanced-budget amendment, school prayer, Congressional term limits, the line-item veto—were bottled up in committee by the House leadership. When discharge petitions to free some of the bills were initiated, they were locked in a drawer in the Clerk's desk on the House floor. The official rules warned that disclosing names ''is strictly prohibited under the precedents of the House.''

In March 1993, Inhofe filed a one-sentence bill on the House floor challenging the secrecy: ''Once a motion to discharge has been filed the Clerk shall make the signatures a matter of public record.''

The bill was assigned to the Rules Committee, where it was buried. Three months later, on May 27, Inhofe started a discharge petition to bring the bill to a floor vote. Among those signing was Tim Penny (D., Minn.), a lawmaker who after ten years in the House had grown so disgusted that he had decided not to run for re-election. ''Discharge petitions procedures are symbolic of the manipulative and secretive way decisions are made here,'' said Penny. ''It's just one more example of how House leaders rig the rules to make sure they aren't challenged on the floor.''

Inhofe, though, was badly outnumbered. The Democrats 82–seat majority controlled the flow of legislation. But he was not cowed. From his first years in politics Inhofe had shown an independent streak—and it had paid off. After initially losing elections for governor and Congress. He was elected to three consecutive terms as mayor of Tulsa,

beginning in 1977. In 1986, he ran again for the Congress and won. Four years later, he bucked his own President, George Bush, by voting against a 1991 budget ''compromise'' that included a $156–billion tax hike.

By August 4, two months after filing his discharge petition, Inhofe had 200 signatures, just 18 shy of the 218 needed to force his bill to the floor. But the House leadership was using all its muscle to thwart him. On the House floor, Inhofe announced: ''I am disclosing to The Wall Street Journal the names of all members who have not signed the discharge petition. People deserve to know what is going on in this place.''

It was a risk. House leaders could make him pay for this deed. But by making public the names of non-signers, he would avoid a direct violation of House rules. Inhofe collected the names by asking every member who signed the petition to memorize as many other signatures as possible.

The next day, The Wall Street Journal ran the first of six editorials on the subject. Titled ''Congress's Secret Drawer,'' it accused Congressional leaders of using discharge-petition secrecy to ''protect each other and keep constituents in the dark.''

On the morning of August 6, Inhofe was within a handful of the 218 signatures. As the day wore on, more members came forward to sign. With two hours to go before the August recess, the magic number of 218 was within his grasp.

What happened next stunned Inhofe. Two of the most powerful members of Congress—Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman John Dingell (D., Mich.) and Rules Committee Chairman Joseph Moakley (D., Mass.)—moved next to him at the discharge petition desk. In a display one witness described as political ''trench warfare,'' the two began ''convincing'' members to remove their names from the petition.

Standing near the desk was Rep. James Moran (D., Va.). Moakley warned him that if Inhofe succeeded, members would be forced to vote on controversial bills. ''Jim,'' he said sternly, ''I don't have to tell you how dangerous that would be.'' When the dust settled, Moran and five colleagues—Robert Borski (D., Pa.), Bill Brewster (D., Okla.), Bob Clement (D., Tenn.), Glenn English (D., Okla.) and Tony Hall (D., Ohio)—had erased their names.

Still refusing to quit, Inhofe faxed the first Wall Street Journal editorial to hundreds of radio stations. Before long, he found himself on call-in programs virtually every day of the week.

When The Wall Street Journal printed the names of the nonsigners on August 17, House members home for the summer recess could not avoid the public outcry Inhofe had generated. With scandals in the House bank, post office and restaurant still fresh in their minds, voters were demanding openness.

Feeling outgunned, Moakley allowed his Democratic colleagues to sign the discharge petition. When Rep. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky (D., Pa.) affixed her name to the petition on September 8, she became the 218th Signatory.

Inhofe's bill won overwhelming approval on the final vote, 384–40. Even though most Democrats had not supported him, 209 now voted with Inhofe. Groused Dingell: ''I think the whole thing stinks.''

The first real test of Inhofe's change came last May when Representatives Dan Glickman (D., Kan.) and James Hansen (R., Utah) filed a discharge petition to free their bill limiting small-plane manufacturer liability. Even though it was co-sponsored by 305 members, the bill had been bottled up in the Judiciary Committee for nine months. But because members' signatures would now be public, voters would finally know who truly stood for product-liability reform and who did not.

Meanwhile, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America was pulling out all the stops to kill the bill. Members personally lobbied Congressmen and orchestrated a ''grassroots'' letter-writing campaign in which prominent trial attorneys urged their Representatives not to support the bill. ATLA even fired off a maximum-allowable contribution of $5,000 to Representative Hansen's opponent in the November election.

The pressure didn't work. Within two weeks 185 members had signed, and House leaders realized it would be impossible to stop the petition. Their only way was to offer a compromise version. In mid-June, Brooks reported out of committee a bill that differed only slightly from the original. On August 2, the Senate approved similar legislation. The next day the bill cleared the House without dissent. On August 17, President Clinton signed it into law.

Glickman, whose Wichita district is home to Cessna and Beech aircraft companies, said the procedural change spearheaded by Inhofe was crucial to victory. ''A lot of forces did not want this bill to go forward,'' he continued, ''and it would not have succeeded without the discharge petition.''

The success of this legislation is proof that when Congress is required to do the people's business in the open, the people—rather than special interests—win. The high cost of product-liability lawsuits, to manufacturers as well as consumers, will require far more sweeping reform of the tort system. But the passage of this one bill is an important first step in the right direction. And it took a little-known Representative from Oklahoma to point the way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, thank you. And I thank Senator WYDEN for his leadership and the time.

Everything this body has heard the Senator from Alabama say about what is wrong with this piece of legislation is entirely inaccurate. Everything he said we need to do to study bills—to hold them up until we get a feel about everything in a bill before enactment by this body—this amendment, which brings transparency to holds, does not in any way prevent any of that from happening. All it simply says is, if you are going to put a hold on legislation, you ought to have guts enough, not be a sissy that the public might find out who you are, why you are holding something up. State for the entire country why you think this person or this bill ought to be held up in the Senate. You can hold it up for a year. You can hold it up for 1 day.

I have been putting things in the RECORD of why I put holds on bills, just as this amendment requires, for several years. And I can assure you, not one of my colleagues has beaten me up because they knew who I was. Not one of my colleagues has bloodied my nose. Not one of my colleagues has given me a black eye. Not one of my colleagues has done anything. It does not hurt. You can be a Senator. You can be out in the open. You can be transparent and still do the job you need to do.

But after all, this is the Senate. The public's business ought to be public. That is what this legislation is all about. But it also has something to do with the practical workings of the Senate. If somebody does not like a bill you propose, and they want to slow it up, you can sit down and talk to them. Now you do not even know who they are, in many instances. If you are going to do business, you have to know who to talk to. Being a part of a collegial body, as we are, talking to each other is how you get things done and move the ball along.

It is about open government. It is about reducing cynicism and distrust of public officials. It is about public accountability. It is about building public confidence. It is about making sure that as to what is being done here, the public knows who is doing it and why they are doing it. I do not see why there can be any opposition to this amendment.

A hold is a very powerful tool and must be used with transparency. I believe in the principle of open government. Lack of transparency in the public policy process leads to cynicism and distrust of public officials.

There is no good reason why a Senator should be able to singlehandedly block the Senate's business without any public accountability. The use of secret holds damages public confidence in the institution of the Senate.

Our amendment would establish a standing order of the Senate requiring Members to publicly disclose when they place a hold on a bill or nominee. For several years now, I have made it my practice to insert a notice in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD whenever I place a hold.

Under our proposal, disclosing holds will be as simple as filling out a cosponsor sheet and Senators will have 3 days to do it.

This proposal was drafted with the help of Senators LOTT and BYRD, who as former majority leaders know how this body operates and how disruptive secret holds can be to the Senate's business. Senator STEVENS has expressed his concerns about the use of secret holds. It says a lot that the longest-serving Members of this body oppose the use of secret holds and see them as a real problem.

If Senators support the goal of the underlying bill to increase legislative transparency and accountability, then they should support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I yield to Senator LOTT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, very briefly, I rise in support of this amendment. I think the misuse of the hold in the Senate has become a fundamental problem. I do not see how anybody could support the concept of secret holds.

Now, this may drive holds into some other category, but I think it is a step

in the right direction. I commend Senator WYDEN and Senator GRASSLEY for offering it.

This proposal is an experiment in making the Senate and Senators more accountable to their colleagues and to the American people. This proposal addresses the issue of anonymous holds that Senators use to prevent consideration of legislation and nominations. This amendment would place a greater responsibility on Senators to make their holds public.

It requires that the majority and minority leaders can only recognize a hold that is provided in writing. Moreover, for the hold to be honored, the Senator objecting would have to publish his objection in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, 3 days after the notice is provided to a leader.

I believe that holds, whether anonymous or publicly announced, are an affront to the Senate, the leadership, the committees, and to the individual Members of this institution.

This amendment does not eliminate the right of a Senator to place a hold. Some day, the Senate may decide that holds, in and of themselves, are an undemocratic practice that should no longer be recognized.

Secret holds have no place in a publicly accountable institution. A measure that is important to a majority of the American public and a majority of Senators should not be stopped dead in it's tracks by a single Senator. And when that Senator can hide behind the anonymous hold, democracy itself is damaged.

How do you tell your constituents that legislation they have an interest in, legislation that has been approved by the majority of a committee, is stalled and you don't know who is holding it up? What does that say about this institution?

I think the secret hold should have no place in this institution, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I understand this amendment requires public disclosure of certain holds—namely, those that rise to the level of expressing an intent to object to proceeding to a measure or matter.

Any such objection would have to be submitted in writing and disclosed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and printed in the Senate calendar of business. Quite frankly, if a Member's objection rises to that level, it is probably appropriate to publicly disclose such.

But the term ''hold'' is used to apply to a much broader form of communication between Members and the leader. A hold is generally considered to be any communication in which a Member expresses an interest in specific legislation and requests that the Member be consulted or advised before any agreement is entered with regard to the issue.

In that sense, a hold is a Senate mode of communication, rather than a procedural prerogative, and when used to communicate a Member's interest in a matter, it is more of an informal bargaining tactic, not an intent to derail or delay consideration of a measure.

Such informal communication is not only important to the workings of this body, but it facilitates the development of unanimous consent requests and facilitates the consideration of legislation.

In some respects, such informal holds act much like the Rules Committee proceedings in the House whereby Members present their position with regard to offering amendments to legislation.

There is no such process in the Senate and often times informal holds, or consent letters, are the only means by which the leadership knows who has an interest in an issue and needs to be consulted in order to craft a unanimous consent agreement.

This amendment does not affect such informal consultation and so will not impede the ability of the leadership to move the business of the Senate. However, when the communication rises to the level that a Member will object to proceeding, it is appropriate that it be disclosed.

Consequently, consistent with the purpose of the bill before us, this amendment would provide greater transparency of the legislative process and increase public confidence in the outcome.

I urge adoption of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I think Senator LOTT, Senator INHOFE, and Senator GRASSLEY have said it very well. This amendment is about a simple proposition; and that is, the Senate ought to do its most important business in public, where every Senator can be held accountable. We have offered this bipartisan amendment to eliminate secret holds on the lobbying reform legislation for the same reason Willy Sutton robbed banks: Banks are where the money is. And secret holds are where the power is.

Secret holds are one of the most powerful weapons available to lobbyists. I expect that each of our offices has gotten at least one call asking if the office would put a secret hold on a bill or nominee in order to kill it without any public debate, and without a lobbyist's fingerprints anywhere.

Getting a Senator to put a secret hold on a bill is like hitting the lobbyist jackpot. Not only is the Senator's identity protected, but so is the lobbyist's. A secret hold lets a lobbyist play both sides of the street and gives lobbyists a victory for their clients without alienating potential or future clients.

In my view, secret holds are a stealth extension of the lobbying world. It would be particularly ironic if the Senate were to claim it was adopting lobbying reform legislation without doing away with what is one of the most powerful tools available to a lobbyist.

This has been a bipartisan effort. It has gone on for literally a decade. Senator LOTT, to his credit, tried a voluntary approach with Senator Daschle. We want to emphasize—for example, the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, was involved in this—that this in no way eliminates the right of a Senator to have a consult, to have the opportunity to look at legislation, to review it when it comes out of committee. A Senator can seek that. In my mind, a consult is similar to a yellow light that says proceed with caution. A hold, on the other hand, is similar to a red light, a stop light. It is when a Senator digs in and says they are going to do everything they possibly can to block a piece of legislation from going forward.

I want to protect Senators' rights, but Senators' rights need to be accompanied by responsibilities. We are talking about legislation that can involve billions of dollars, millions of our citizens, and the public's business ought to be done in public.

What this amendment does is ban a staff hold, the so-called rolling hold where the hold is passed secretly from Senator to Senator. And when a Senator exercises the power of a hold to deal with an issue that is important to them, in the future, they will be held publicly accountable.

This is long overdue. Senator Dole, when he was majority leader, spoke out on this, more eloquently than perhaps any of us are doing today. Senator GRASSLEY, myself, Senator INHOFE, Senator LOTT believe that it is time to bring sunshine to the Senate and for the Senate to do the people's business in public. I can't think of a more appropriate place to do it than on the lobbying reform bill we are working on today.

I urge my colleagues to pass the amendment and to bring some sunshine to the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Mr. WYDEN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, shortly we will vote on the Wyden-Grassley amendment. First, we will vote on the Collins-Lieberman-McCain amendment which is the second-degree amendment. I applaud the initiative of Senators WYDEN and GRASSLEY. When this amendment first came up, I spoke in favor of it. I believe we do need to end the practice of secret holds.

I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor to the Wyden-Grassley amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Let me say a few final words about the amendment Senators

MCCAIN, LIEBERMAN, and I have proposed to create an office of public integrity. We are about to vote on that amendment, and then we will proceed to vote on Senator WYDEN's amendment.

I believe our proposal has struck the right balance. I draw this conclusion, in part, because my colleagues who are opposed to the amendment are arguing two conflicting extremes, and both obviously cannot be right. On the one hand, some of my colleagues are disparaging the Office of Public Integrity by calling it an independent counsel, by implying that it would be a too powerful, out-of-control entity that would conduct unfair investigations and put Members in peril.

On the other hand, we have also heard colleagues during this debate say that the Office of Public Integrity would not have enough power because it can be overruled by the Ethics Committee. These two conflicting and inconsistent positions suggest that, in fact, we have struck the right balance. We have respected the role and the authority of the Ethics Committee, but we have strengthened the credibility of the investigative part of an inquiry into allegations of wrongdoing.

At the end of the day, the debate and vote on our proposal comes down to a simple question. That is, what are we going to do to strengthen public confidence in the integrity of this institution? Regardless of how fine a job the Ethics Committee has done—and it has performed well—the fact remains that public confidence in Congress is near an all-time low. I believe the legislation that we have brought forth to strengthen our lobbying disclosure laws, to prohibit practices that raise conflicts of interest and, with our amendment, to strengthen the enforcement mechanism is critical to strengthening the bond between the people we serve and those of us privileged to be elected to public office.

I urge my colleagues to support the modest proposal for a well balanced Office of Public Integrity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired. The question is on agreeing to the Collins amendment.

Ms. COLLINS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

Ms. COLLINS. I also ask for the yeas and nays on the Wyden-Grassley amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have already been ordered on the Wyden amendment.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3176 to amendment No. 2944.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent on official business.

I also announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) is absent due to a death in the family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 30, nays 67, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 77 Leg.]

YEAS—30

Baucus	Feingold	Menendez
Bayh	Grassley	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Kennedy	Obama
Bingaman	Kerry	Reed
Burns	Kohl	Sarbanes
Cantwell	Landrieu	Snowe
Carper	Lautenberg	Stabenow
Chafee	Levin	Talent
Collins	Lieberman	Vitter
Durbin	McCain	Wyden

NAYS—67

Akaka	Dole	McConnell
Alexander	Domenici	Mikulski
Allard	Dorgan	Murkowski
Allen	Ensign	Murray
Bennett	Enzi	Nelson (NE)
Bond	Feinstein	Pryor
Boxer	Frist	Reid
Brownback	Gregg	Roberts
Bunning	Hagel	Salazar
Burr	Harkin	Santorum
Chambliss	Hatch	Schumer
Clinton	Hutchison	Sessions
Coburn	Inhofe	Shelby
Cochran	Inouye	Smith
Coleman	Isakson	Specter
Conrad	Jeffords	Stevens
Cornyn	Johnson	Sununu
Craig	Kyl	Thomas
Crapo	Leahy	Thune
Dayton	Lincoln	Voinovich
DeMint	Lott	Warner
DeWine	Lugar	
Dodd	Martinez	

NOT VOTING—3

Byrd	Graham	Rockefeller

The amendment (No. 3176) was rejected.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2944

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is now on agreeing to the Wyden amendment No. 2944. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) is absent due to death in the family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 84, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 78 Leg.]

YEAS—84

Akaka	Bennett	Brownback
Alexander	Biden	Burns
Allen	Bingaman	Cantwell
Baucus	Bond	Carper
Bayh	Boxer	Chafee
Chambliss	Hutchison	Nelson (FL)
Clinton	Inhofe	Nelson (NE)
Cochran	Inouye	Obama
Coleman	Isakson	Pryor
Collins	Jeffords	Reed
Conrad	Johnson	Reid
Cornyn	Kennedy	Roberts
Craig	Kerry	Salazar
Crapo	Kohl	Santorum
Dayton	Landrieu	Sarbanes
DeWine	Lautenberg	Schumer
Dodd	Leahy	Shelby
Dole	Levin	Smith
Domenici	Lieberman	Snowe
Dorgan	Lincoln	Specter
Durbin	Lott	Stabenow
Enzi	Lugar	Stevens
Feingold	Martinez	Talent
Feinstein	McCain	Thomas
Grassley	Menendez	Vitter
Hagel	Mikulski	Voinovich
Harkin	Murkowski	Warner
Hatch	Murray	Wyden

NAYS—13

Allard	Ensign	Sessions
Bunning	Frist	Sununu
Burr	Gregg	Thune
Coburn	Kyl	
DeMint	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—3

Byrd	Graham	Rockefeller

The amendment (No. 2944) was agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. FRIST. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we have made progress today on a very important bill, a bill that we brought to the floor now several weeks ago. It is an important bill that reflects upon this institution in terms of respect, in terms of integrity, and a bill on which we have made huge progress. Yet it is a bill about which it has come time, I think, really, now, to establish a glidepath to continue debate, allow germane amendments but recognize we want to keep those amendments on the bill itself.

I had hoped we would have been able to reach an agreement to sequence a large number of amendments, but the amendments keep coming. And after talking to both sides of the aisle, I understand that we are not going to be able to get time agreements on those amendments. Therefore, my only option at this juncture is to bring this bill to a close with a cloture unanimous consent request.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be agreed to, and the Senate now proceed to a vote on invoking cloture on the underlying bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the legislation now before this body is imperfect, but it is sure good. I said before, and I say again, the work done by the Rules Committee and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is exemplary. It was bipartisan. They

brought pieces of legislation to the floor. It was melded into one, and this is what is now before this body.

We have had amendments offered. Some have passed; some have not. As the majority leader has indicated, we tried to get the list of amendments agreed to. This would go on for weeks. We have immigration. I want to get to immigration. I want to come out of here with a good lobbying reform bill.

As I said, this bill is not perfect, but it contains important reforms to strengthen both lobbying disclosure requirements and our own internal efforts in some very significant ways. No one needs to hang their head in shame about what we have done. It extends and strengthens a cooling off period for Members and staff, ends gifts and meals for lobbyists, requires preapproval and more disclosure for all trips, requires disclosure of job negotiations, prohibits the K-Street Project under Senate rules, eliminates floor privileges for former Members who become lobbyists, requires more disclosure by lobbyists—and that is an understatement—requires new disclosure of grassroots lobbying and stealth coalitions by business groups, reforms rules regarding earmarks, scope of conference and availability of conference reports to eliminate dead-of-night legislating.

This is a good piece of legislation. I would like a lot more, but I don't believe the perfect should get in the way of the good. This is good.

I urge my colleagues to vote for cloture so we can complete action on this bill quickly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection——

Mr. McCAIN. Reserving the right to object.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there was no objection.

Mr. McCAIN. I reserve the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, if we vote cloture, there will be several important amendments that will fall, including use of corporate jets, including earmarking, which is the reason we have the abuses that we have today. I will not support cloture, and I will tell my colleagues if we do have cloture, we will revisit those issues.

There is no reason any Member of this body should pay only first-class airfare for riding a corporate jet. Earmarking is out of control, and it has become a problem with all Americans, and we need to address at least those two issues.

I hope my colleagues understand if we do invoke cloture, we will be revisiting those issues one way or another. I am disappointed that we could not address those very important aspects.

I will not object to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

By unanimous consent, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 2349: an original bill to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

Bill Frist, Mitch McConnell, Rick Santorum, Mel Martinez, James Inhofe, Susan Collins, Trent Lott, John E. Sununu, John McCain, Judd Gregg, Norm Coleman, Michael B. Enzi, Wayne Allard, R.F. Bennett, Craig Thomas, Larry E. Craig, George Voinovich, and Christopher Bond.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on S. 2349, the Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act of 2006, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) is absent due to a death in the family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAMBLISS). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 81, nays 16, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 79 Leg.]

YEAS—81

Akaka	DeWine	Lugar
Alexander	Dodd	Martinez
Allard	Dole	McConnell
Allen	Domenici	Menendez
Baucus	Dorgan	Mikulski
Bayh	Durbin	Murkowski
Bennett	Enzi	Murray
Biden	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Frist	Nelson (NE)
Bond	Grassley	Pryor
Boxer	Gregg	Reed
Brownback	Hagel	Reid
Burns	Harkin	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Salazar
Cantwell	Hutchison	Sarbanes
Carper	Inhofe	Schumer
Chafee	Inouye	Shelby
Chambliss	Isakson	Smith
Clinton	Jeffords	Specter
Cochran	Johnson	Stabenow
Coleman	Kennedy	Stevens
Collins	Landrieu	Talent
Conrad	Lautenberg	Thomas
Cornyn	Leahy	Thune
Craig	Levin	Voinovich
Crapo	Lincoln	Warner
DeMint	Lott	Wyden

NAYS—16

Bunning	Kohl	Sessions
Coburn	Kyl	Snowe
Dayton	Lieberman	Sununu
Ensign	McCain	Vitter
Feingold	Obama	
Kerry	Santorum	

NOT VOTING—3

Byrd	Graham	Rockefeller

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Upon reconsideration, on this vote, the yeas are 81, the nays are 16. Two-thirds of the Senators voting, a quorum being present, having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to take a couple of moments here to pay tribute to Erma Ora Byrd, the beloved wife of our good friend and colleague, Senator ROBERT BYRD. I will be a very few minutes.

I thank Senator LOTT because I know he has business he wants to attend to, and he is very supportive of my making a statement.

(The remarks of Mrs. BOXER are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

Mrs. BOXER. I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. LOTT are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

Mr. LOTT. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, sometime tomorrow, hopefully, or the next day, we are going to move to immigration. There is widespread acknowledgment that our immigration system is badly broken. There is a crisis at our borders, and we need a comprehensive strategy to address it.

Just yesterday, the Senate Judiciary Committee reported a bill with strong bipartisan support which would do much that is necessary to restore order to our immigration system. The committee bill offers real solutions with tough, effective enforcement and smart reforms. The bill is not perfect, but it is certainly a good bill. This legislation would secure our borders, crack down on employers who hire illegally, and bring undocumented immigrants out of the shadows. I commend Chairman SPECTER, Ranking Member LEAHY, and Senator KENNEDY, who has worked on these issues for more than 30 years, and the rest of the committee for their hard work in completing this bill.

I have received assurances from the majority leader that it will be in order for Senator SPECTER to offer the committee-reported bill as the first amendment to Senator FRIST's border security bill. That amendment will be a complete substitute, so if it is adopted by the full Senate, it will completely supersede the Frist bill.

This is no different than we handle all other pieces of legislation. Based on those assurances, we have consented to vitiate the cloture vote—that happened earlier today—and allow the debate to move forward.

Under the process we have agreed upon, the foundation of the Senate's upcoming debate on immigration policy will be the bipartisan committee bill.

I will have more to say about immigration policy in the coming days. For now, I want to express my satisfaction that the full Senate will be allowed to debate the comprehensive, bipartisan immigration bill that the Senate Judiciary Committee reported yesterday. I welcome that debate.

Mr. LEAHY, Mr. President, I filed an enforcement amendment to the bill on March 7 and look forward to an opportunity to offer that amendment and have it considered by the Senate. My amendment is the ''Honest Services Amendment,'' No. 2924.

The purpose of my amendment is to articulate more clearly the line that cannot be crossed without incurring criminal liability. If we are serious about lobbying reform, the Senate will adopt this amendment. It was only with the indictments of Abramoff, Scanlon, and Cunningham that Congress took note of the scandal that has grown over the last years.

If we are to restore public confidence, we need to provide better tools for Federal prosecutors to combat public corruption in our Government. I explained this amendment back on March 9, and a copy of it is included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of that day.

This amendment creates a better legal framework for combating public corruption than currently exists under our criminal laws. It specifies the crime of Honest Services Fraud Involving Members of Congress and prohibits defrauding or depriving the American people of the honest services of their elected representatives.

Under this amendment, lobbyists who improperly seek to influence legislation and other official matters by giving expensive gifts, lavish entertainment and travel and inside advice on investments to Members of Congress and their staff would be held criminally liable for their actions.

The law also prohibits Members of Congress and their staff from accepting these types of gifts and favors or holding hidden financial interests in return for being influenced in carrying out their official duties. Violators are subject to a criminal fine and up to 20 years imprisonment, or both.

This legislation strengthens the tools available to Federal prosecutors to combat public corruption in our Government. The amendment makes it possible for Federal prosecutors to bring public corruption cases without all of the hurdles of having to prove bribery or of working with the limited and nonspecific honest services fraud language in current Federal law.

The amendment also provides lobbyists, Members of Congress, and other individuals with much needed notice and clarification as to what kind of conduct triggers this criminal offense.

In addition, my amendment authorizes $25 million in additional Federal funds over each of the next 4 years, to give Federal prosecutors needed resources to investigate corruption and to hold lobbyists and other individuals accountable for improperly seeking to influence legislation and other official matters.

The unfolding public corruption investigations involving lobbyist Jack Abramoff and MZM demonstrate that unethical conduct by public officials has broad-ranging impact. These scandals undermine the public's confidence in our Government. Earlier this month, the Washington Post reported that as an outgrowth of the Cunningham investigation, Federal investigators are now looking into contracts awarded by the Pentagon's new intelligence agency, the Counterintelligence Field Activity, to MZM, Inc., a company run by Mitchell J. Wade who recently pleaded guilty to conspiring to bribe Mr. Cunningham.

The American people expect, and deserve, to be confident that their representatives in Congress perform their legislative duties in a manner that is beyond reproach and that is in the public interest.

Because I strongly believe that public service is a public trust, I urge all Senators to support this amendment. If we are serious about reform and cleaning up this scandal we will do so. I hope the Republican leadership and the managers of the bill will accord me the opportunity to offer the amendment and improve the underlying measure.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ISAKSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of the bill tomorrow morning, Senator FEINGOLD be recognized to offer his amendment No. 2962 relating to the definition of ''lobbyist'' for purposes of gifts; provided further that there be 40 minutes equally divided for debate prior to a vote in relation to the amendment, with no second-degree amendments in order to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the adjournment of the Senate, all time until we resume the bill tomorrow count against the time limit under the provisions of rule XXII. I further ask unanimous consent that all first-degree amendments that qualify under rule XXII be offered no later than 11 a.m. on Wednesday, other than a managers' amendment to be cleared by the managers and the two leaders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HOLDS ON INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, earlier today, my colleague from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, alleged that I have a ''hold'' on the Intelligence Authorization Act. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I know that in the heat of debate on the Senate floor, words can sometimes come out faster than a Member might intend, so I harbor no ill will toward my colleague. But in the interest of accuracy, I wish to set the record straight.

Last autumn, many of us were shocked to read allegations in the press of secret clandestine prisons operated around the world by the CIA as part of the war on terror. Congress has a responsibility to perform oversight in all things, including the intelligence community's conduct in the war on terror. In discussing this amendment last fall, I said, and I repeat today, no one is passing judgment on whether these alleged facilities should be closed. We are simply saying that Congress—and specifically the duly established intelligence committees of the House and Senate—need to know what is going on.

On November 10, 2005, I offered an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act requiring the Director of National Intelligence to provide a secret report to the Intelligence Committees of the House and Senate on the operation, past or present, of these alleged facilities. It would also have required a report on the planned disposition of those allegedly held at these facilities and a determination as to whether interrogation techniques at these facilities were consistent with U.S. obligations under the Geneva Convention and the Convention against Torture.

In debating this amendment, I was delighted to work with my colleague, Senator ROBERTS, the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and his vice chairman, Senator ROCKEFELLER, to perfect the text of the amendment so they could support it. It passed with overwhelming bipartisan support by a vote of 82 to 9.

About 1 month later, the House of Representative voted 228 to 187 to urge

House-Senate negotiators to include the amendment in their conference report. The House Armed Services Committee, however, was concerned that the amendment was beyond the scope of their jurisdiction and the provision was stripped out in conference.

I turned then to the Intelligence Authorization Act and again worked with Senator ROBERTS and Senator ROCKEFELLER to prepare the amendment anew for inclusion in that legislation. The amendment was identical to the provision passed previously in the Senate and endorsed by the House and was cleared by Senator ROBERTS for passage by unanimous consent. But someone objected to the unanimous consent request to pass this vital bill by voice vote. Since that time, the legislation has lingered because someone doesn't want a vote on this amendment or the amendments offered by my colleague from Massachusetts, Senator KENNEDY.

I know my friend from Alabama voted against my amendment when it was on the floor in November. I am sure he would vote against it again. We can agree to disagree on this issue, but his assertion that I have placed a hold on the intelligence bill is simply not true.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, earlier today, the Senator from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS said that Senator KERRY and I objected to Senate consideration of the intelligence authorization bill because we wish to offer amendments.

In fact, neither Senator KERRY nor I have objected to this bill and no other Democrat has objected to considering it. The bill is cleared on the Democratic side. That means an unidentified Republican Senator or Senators have placed a hold on the bill and are preventing the Senate from considering it.

I do have two amendments to the bill. My first amendment would require the administration provide to the Intelligence Committee with the presidential daily briefs on Iraq from 1997 to the first day of the Iraq war as part of the committee's investigation on the use of prewar intelligence. I would certainly be willing to support a time agreement allowing reasonable debate and a vote on the amendment.

My second amendment would guarantee that detainees held by the intelligence community would be treated humanely, and that treatment would be verified independently.

Apparently, to prevent debate on this very important issue, a Republican Senator is willing to let the whole intelligence bill fail. That's an outrage.

It's important for the Senate to approve the intelligence authorization bill, and it's important for the Senate to get to the bottom of the abuse of intelligence the administration used to justify war.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I am honored to address the Senate in celebration of the 185th anniversary of Greek independence. On March 25, 1821, the Greeks revolted against nearly 400 years of repressive rule by the Ottoman Empire and began their journey toward independence.

And in honor of that historic day, the United States and Greece stand together in our commitment to the principles of democracy, freedom, and independence.

In honor of that day, we celebrate the achievements and contributions of the Greek state and her people. We honor Greece's accomplishments in history, science, philosophy, mathematics, literature, and art.

In honor of that day, we recognize and celebrate our own democratic heritage in this Nation. The Greeks believed in self-governance, and our Founding Fathers incorporated the ancient Greeks' political experience and philosophy when they formed our representative democracy. Greek ideas of government and freedom have had an immense and unparalleled influence in the world and in this Nation. And I would like to thank the Greek people for leading the way and giving us the inspiration to pursue these ideals.

In honor of that day, we celebrate the contributions of the more than 1 million Greek-Americans in this country. In New Jersey alone, there are over 61,000 Greek-Americans who contribute daily to the economic, political, and cultural fabric of this Nation.

Over the years, not only has Greece supported the United States in every major international conflict in the last century, but it has stood by this country after the September 11 terrorist attacks. And Greece generously supported us with aid after the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina here on our soil.

And we should stand with Greece and protect the human and religious rights of the Ecumenical Patriarch. This is an issue that not only affects the Greek community but is important to all communities. We must protect the rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as Turkey has: refused to recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate's international status and its significance to Orthodox Christians around the world, impeded training for the clergy while requiring that all candidates for the Holy Synod be Turkish nationals; confiscated 75 percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchal properties, and levied a 42 percent retroactive tax on the Balukli Hospital which is run by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Last year, as Member of the House, I authored a resolution calling on Turkey to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to respect the human and religious rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. And that language sent a strong message to Turkey when it was included in the State Department authorization bill which passed the House last year.

Now, as a U.S. Senator, I will remain firm in my position and will continue to work hard to make sure Turkey ends its discrimination and persecution against the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

As Aeschines, one of ancient Greece's more gifted orators once said, ''In a democracy, it is the laws that guard the person of the citizen and the constitution of the state, whereas the despot and the oligarch find their protection in suspicion and in armed guards.''

From the history of democracy to the religious freedom and human rights of the Ecumenical patriarchate, we in this Nation share this common vision with Greece and her people.

And the United States of America stands proudly with Greece in honor of our shared commitment to democracy, freedom, and independence.

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM MYERS TO 9TH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to note that it has now been more than one full year that the nomination of William Myers to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has been pending on the Senate Calendar. On March 17, 2005, the Judiciary Committee approved the Myers nomination by a vote of 10–8. Unfortunately, this was not the first time Mr. Myers has been approved by the Judiciary Committee. We are also approaching the two-year anniversary when Bill Myers was approved by the Judiciary Committee in the 108th Congress on April 1, 2004.

Last year, with the so-called ''Gang of 14'' agreement, many pending nominees finally received their long-overdue up or down votes on the Senate floor. Unfortunately, Bill Myers was not one of those nominees, despite the fact that he has the support of a bipartisan majority of this Senate. On July 20, 2004, Bill Myers received 53 votes to end the filibuster on his nomination. The time has come to give Bill Myers his long-overdue up or down vote on the Senate floor. His nomination has been pending on the Senate calendar for a full year now and I urge the Senate leadership to bring this nomination up for a vote.

Bill Myers is a highly respected attorney who was approved unanimously by this Senate in 2001 to serve as Solicitor of the Department of Interior. Former Democratic Governor of Idaho Cecil Andrus, who also served as Interior Secretary in the Carter administration, says that Bill Myers possesses ''the necessary personal integrity, judicial temperament and legal experience'' as well as ''the ability to act fairly on matters of law that will come before him on the court.'' As a nominee to fill an Idaho seat on the 9th Circuit, Bill Myers has the full support of the entire Idaho congressional delegation.

Bill Myers is a qualified nominee and there is no justification for continuing to filibuster or delay his nomination. My fellow Idahoans and all residents in the 9th Circuit deserve to have their appeals heard in a timely manner. To do this, we must fill all vacancies on

the court in a timely manner. I join with my colleague from Idaho, Senator CRAIG, in urging this Senate to hold an up or down vote on the nomination of William Myers to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, just before we recessed 2 weeks ago, many celebrated the Irish national holiday commemorating the Patron Saint Patrick. That day also marked an important anniversary for another man: William G. Myers. Mr. Myers' nomination was confirmed by the Senate Judiciary committee exactly one year ago on that day, and he has since been waiting for confirmation by the Senate.

My colleagues know that this is the second time Mr. Myers will be considered by the Senate for a seat on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. It is important to note that in the previous Congress a majority of the Senate voted to confirm him. Due to the circumstances of that time, however, his confirmation required a supermajority. I am confident that the current Congress will see the fine qualities of Mr. Myers, and he will receive a full bipartisan vote for confirmation.

Mr. Myers will be an advocate of truth and justice. He was confirmed in the past as Solicitor for the Department of the Interior and is a very talented and capable candidate. His tremendous background demonstrates that he will provide clear and precise judgment and leadership to the Western States in the Ninth Circuit. Mr. Myers has proven throughout his professional career that he understands the culture and heritage of the Western States and the issues critical to that region. His professional history demonstrates that he will show responsibility and intellect in every decision that he makes as a judge.

I strongly support William Myers' nomination to the Ninth Circuit Court. He deserves our fair consideration for this position, and it is my hope that he will be given an up-or-down vote in the Senate. The President has correctly selected this highly qualified nominee, and I ask that the Senate move quickly to confirm him.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BEALL

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to pay my respects to a true Marylander who passed away last week, Senator J. Glenn Beall, Jr. He will be remembered for devoting his life to public service as a naval officer, a State delegate, a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and a U.S. Senator.

Senator Beall was born in Cumberland, MD, to a prominent and extraordinary Maryland family who shared his dedication to improving the lives of all Marylanders. His father, J. Glenn Beall, was a moderate Republican Congressman who served in the U.S. House of Representatives for a decade and the U.S. Senate for 12 years. Senator Beall Jr. grew up following his father's campaigns in Western Maryland and went on to follow in his footsteps.

Senator Beall's long and distinguished career in both the public and private sector has set a high bar for those of us who follow in his footsteps. His example reminds us to eschew capricious fame and the ever-changing political winds and to focus on the substantive issues of the day.

As a freshman Senator in 1986, I sought and received Senator Beall's advice and counsel on how to best serve the people of Maryland, and most particularly, the residents of western Maryland. His advice was specific, immediate, and realizable. It added greatly to my own efforts to succeed. I will miss his counsel and the true collegial spirit that governed our interaction.

Senator Beall had a lot of Senate know-how. His political priorities focused on health, preservation, and transportation. He was known for going across party lines in an effort to work on a bipartisan basis. It was a pleasure to work with him.

Most recently, Senator Beall was the founding chairman of the Canal Place Preservation & Development Authority, which was the direct result of his tireless efforts to establish the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park in the early 1970s. Together, I worked with Senator Beall to create economic development opportunities throughout western Maryland. His constituents throughout the State, and especially in the region, are indebted to him for the creative manner in which he led the preservation, rehabilitation, development, and management of the Canal Place Preservation District.

Throughout his life and long-lived political career, Senator Beall strived to serve the needs of Marylanders in the State legislature, in the U.S. Congress, and at the Canal Place Preservation & Development Authority. I join my constituents in mourning the loss of a remarkable gentleman who had Maryland in his heart, and bid farewell to an old friend.

GRATITUDE FOR INTEGRITY, EXPERTISE AND PROFESSIONALISM

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, at the end of March, I will be losing a valuable member of my legislative team as she returns to her host agency, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Since early 2005, Larisa Collado has served as a legislative fellow in my Washington, DC, office. Her extensive expertise on technical financial intricacies, coupled with her diligence, enthusiasm and professionalism has made her an invaluable, albeit temporary, member of my staff.

As chairman of the Senate Banking Subcommittee on International Trade and Finance and the designated Senate lead for regulatory relief matters, I am actively engaged in a wide portfolio of financial issues. During her service, Larisa has been critical to advancing my legislative agenda by meeting with stakeholders and analyzing and recommending legislative initiatives. She has effectively utilized her firsthand experiences as a regulator when working on a number of controversial issues. Without her able assistance, my efforts to promote financial services regulatory restructuring would have been seriously undermined. Larisa has demonstrated time and again the willingness to revisit detailed regulatory provisions without losing patience or drive. When others would have turned to other projects, she stayed committed to this long-overdue but sorely overlooked facet of the financial services sector.

Larisa has also demonstrated keen perceptivity and integrity with regard to the proper balance of personal privacy protection and legitimate law enforcement—a necessary component of congressional oversight and reform of our Nation's financial markets. Idahoans and Americans across the country are becoming increasingly aware of the vulnerability of their personal financial information. I looked to her for guidance and analysis of the proper ways to ensure that financial information remains private. At the same time, Larisa has also been a key component of my efforts to work with Idaho Hispanics to educate those who need help with financial literacy and understanding the benefits of the financial services community.

Larisa has proven herself a highly effective professional and I have no doubt she will continue to excel at the FDIC in a career already marked by superior performance and achievement. I thank her for her commitment to public service and to Idaho these past months, and wish her well.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

A FRIEND TO IDAHO WHEAT

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, the National Association of Wheat Growers announced their annual awards in February, and I am proud to report that a member of my staff was one of only five Senate staff members recognized for ''superior action in support of the goals and policies of the wheat industry.''

Staci Lancaster serves as my senior policy advisor with responsibilities in agriculture, forestry, trade and immigration issues, and as my staff director of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee on Forestry, Conservation and Rural Revitalization. Staci provides me with meticulous and well-researched information, not only on the wheat industry, but in all legislative areas for which she bears responsibility.

I have great respect for her intelligence and analytical abilities and trust her guidance and direction on these issues which are so critical to Idaho. She is a tremendous asset to me and my staff and I congratulate her on this esteemed award.•

TRIBUTE TO THE MIDDLEBURY PANTHERS WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY TEAM

• Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I am pleased today to recognize the Middlebury College women's ice hockey team for its recent NCAA Division III National Championship—the school's third in as many years and its fifth national title in the last 7 years.

In defeating Plattsburgh State by a score of 3 to 1 on March 18, the Panthers finished their season 27 to 2, tying the school record for victories. The Panthers had four players named to the all-tournament team including Emily Quizon, the American Hockey Coaches Association's National Player of the Year.

I am proud this hockey dynasty is being built in the Green Mountain State. I am particularly pleased that the student athletes who have created this dynasty are doing so while studying at a top-notch academic institution. The demanding academics at Middlebury make the accomplishments of these great student athletes that much more impressive.

Since Bill Mandigo took over as the head coach of the Panthers in 1988, the women's team has posted a record of 329–86–11. That gives Coach Mandigo the most wins by a women's hockey coach at any level. Although the team will graduate five seniors this May, Middlebury will return seven of its top eight scorers from this season, and I am sure that Coach Mandigo's program will continue to develop successful students and athletes.

I congratulate each member of the team: head coach Bill Mandigo, assistant coach Jean Butler, Abby Kurtz-Phelan, Shannon Tarrant, Emily McNamara, Rose Babst, Kerry Kiley, Liz Yale-Loehr, Molly Vitt, Karen Levin, Gillian Paul, Shannon Sylvester, Emily Quizon, Annmarie Cellino, Randi Dumont, Erika Nakamura, Gloria Velez, Alison Graddock, Margaret MacDonald, Lacey Farrell, Ellen Sargent, Tania Kenny, Abby Smith, Nina Daugherty, and Kate Kogut.

Again, congratulations to the Middlebury College Panthers for their third straight national championship.•

TRIBUTE TO THE MIDDLEBURY PANTHERS MEN'S ICE HOCKEY TEAM

• Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the Middlebury College men's ice hockey team on winning its third straight NCAA Division III National Championship with a victory over St. Norbert College on March 19.

After eight national titles in the last 12 years, there is little new that can be said about Middlebury hockey. The eight national championships, including this recent three-peat, speak for themselves. Under the leadership of Coach Bill Beaney, the Panthers have achieved an unprecedented level of success, making them the envy of college hockey programs everywhere.

Last week, in reaction to the Panthers' hat trick of national titles, the Burlington Free Press called Middlebury hockey players ''talented, determined, motivated student-athletes . . .'' Although this description goes without saying, it reminds us that this great hockey team is comprised of students that must balance their athletic and academic responsibilities. At a college as academically renowned and demanding as Middlebury, balancing these responsibilities is no easy task, and these great student athletes must be commended for their efforts both on and off the ice. As a U.S. Senator from Vermont, I am proud to have such a great academic institution in our State, and I am also proud of the incredible hockey program Middlebury has developed.

I congratulate each member of the team: head coach Bill Beaney, assistant coach Chris LaPerle, assistant coach Frank Sacheli, student assistant Ryan Cahill, manager Ryan McQuillan, Ross Cherry, Tom Maldonado, Jed McDonald, Samuel Driver, Jack Kinder, Ryan Harrington, Mickey Gilchrist, Darwin Hunt, Jamie McKenna, Eric LaFreniere, Justin Gaines, Evgeny Saidachev, Robert MacIntyre, Mack Cummins, Jeff Smith, Brett Shirreffs, John Sales, Doug Raeder, Kyle Koziara, Ian Drummond, Richie Fuld, Yen-I Chen, Jocko DeCarolis, Leonard Badeau, Mason Graddock, and Scott Bartlett.

Again, congratulations, Panthers, on another national title and another fantastic season.•

RECOGNITION OF ARTHUR WINSTON

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very pleased to take a few moments to recognize the amazing life accomplishments of Arthur Winston as he is honored by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority—MTA—family during his retirement and 100th birthday celebration.

Arthur Winston began his association with the MTA at the young age of 15. He would assist his father who was employed by the maintenance department for one of MTA's predecessors, the Pacific Electric Railway Company. In 1924, Arthur began his career with the Pacific Electric Railway Company. After a brief period of separation between 1928 through 1934, he returned at the age of 28 and began 72 years of continuous work. In total, Arthur has devoted 76 years of his life to public service and has missed only day of work since 1934, which occurred when his wife passed away in 1988.

In 1996, Arthur Winston received a congressional citation from President Bill Clinton as ''Employee of the Century.'' In 1997, the MTA board of directors named the agency's bus operating division in South Central Los Angeles, Chesterfield Square, after him. He has also appeared on the Oprah Winfry television show where he was invited to share his life's story with her television viewing audience.

Arthur Winston was born in Oklahoma on March 22, 1906 before Oklahoma was officially recognized as a State. He and his family moved to Los Angeles in 1918, when Arthur was 12. He attended Jefferson High School and graduated in 1922. Currently assigned to the bus operations division that bears his name, Arthur serves as an attendant leader and directs a crew of 11 employees. Through their efforts, Los Angeles city buses are properly maintained for use by the city's residents.

I invite all of my colleagues to join me and the members of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority family in commending Arthur Winston for his 100th Birthday and his 76 years of service and dedication to MTA and the city of Los Angeles.•

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH WHITEHEAD

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Joseph Whitehead, an officer with the Bibb County Drug Squad in Macon, GA who was tragically killed in the line of duty on the early morning of Thursday, March 23, 2006.

An 11-year veteran of the Bibb County Sheriff's Department, Joseph Whitehead was known as an exemplary law enforcement officer who was dedicated to making our neighborhoods safer by fighting drugs in Middle Georgia. His steadfast commitment to fighting gangs and drugs that plague our communities is commendable and will be a lasting legacy for his family, his fellow law enforcement officers, and the citizens of Middle Georgia.

Joseph Whitehead's tragic death is a sad reminder that our law enforcement personnel put themselves in harm's way every day to make this Nation safer and more secure for our children and grandchildren.

Joseph Whitehead will be remembered as a man who loved his family, a true leader, a team player who loved his job, and a man who gave it his all every single day. He is a true American hero.

Georgia's law enforcement community and our entire State grieve his tragic loss. May God bless him, and may God bless his family.•

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MAJOR ALFORD L. MCMICHAEL

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor SGM Alford L. McMichael, U.S. Marine Corps. He retires after 36 years of dedicated service to his country and the U.S. Marine Corps.

The consummate Marine, he typifies every desirable characteristic of a staff Non-Commissioned Officer, NCO—unsurpassed leadership, mentorship, guidance, courage, and dedication. Sergeant Major McMichael has served his

country in tours throughout the world. He has provided leadership to generations of marines through tours of duty as sergeant major of the Marine Corps Officer Candidates School, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs Division, and the 14th sergeant major of the Marine Corps.

His career culminated in his appointment as the first senior noncommissioned officer for Allied Command Operations to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, the strategic NATO headquarters in Mons, Belgium. In that capacity, Sergeant Major McMichael has been instrumental in developing and elevating the role of the noncommissioned officer in the militaries of NATO member countries in order to enhance their military effectiveness.

With limited resources and with purpose of conviction, Sergeant Major McMichael has been responsible for the Armed Forces of predominantly former Soviet-block nations to adopt professional noncommissioned officer and staff noncommissioned officer programs. This momentous feat, accomplished virtually singlehandedly, is a landmark in the Alliance's 21st Century transformation. The United States and the NATO Alliance have been most fortunate to have had Sergeant Major McMichael within their ranks for over three decades.

The Department of the Navy, the U.S. Marine Corps, Congress, and the American people have been served extraordinarily well by this dedicated American. Members of this Congress will not soon forget the leadership, service, and dedication of Sergeant Major McMichael. He will be missed, yet his contributions will resonate far and deeply into the institutions to which he so well and faithfully devoted his life. From a grateful nation, we bestow our profound appreciation to Sergeant Major McMichael, his lovely wife Rita, and their daughter Portia, and offer our very best as they end an important chapter in their lives and embark upon a new journey. May they forever be counted in our blessings.●

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2467. A bill to enhance and improve the trade relations of the United States by strengthening United States trade enforcement efforts and encouraging United States trading partners to adhere to the rules and norms of international trade, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–6098. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Georgia: Approval of Revisions to the State Implementation Plan'' (FRL8045–4) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6099. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Arkansas Update to Materials Incorporated by Reference'' (FRL8022–1) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6100. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maine; Architectural and Industrial Maintenance (AIM) Coatings Regulations'' (FRL8038–1) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6101. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Texas; Permits by Rule'' (FRL8045–5) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6102. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Clean Air Act Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plan Revision for Colorado; Long-Term Strategy of State Implementation Plan for Class I Visibility Protection; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL8044–4) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6103. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Testing of Certain High Production Volume Chemicals'' (FRL7335–2) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6104. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Underground Storage Tank Program: Approved State Program for Pennsylvania'' (FRL8011–3) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6105. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rule to Reduce Interstate Transport of Fine Particulate Matter and Ozone (Clean Air Interstate Rule): Reconsideration'' (FRL8047–9) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6106. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Burden Reduction Initiative'' (FRL8047–3) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6107. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Indiana'' (FRL8040–6) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6108. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the Nevada State Implementation Plan, Washoe County District Board of Health'' (FRL8040–8) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6109. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Lakeview PM10 Maintenance Plan and Redesignation Request'' (FRL8041–9) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6110. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; La Grande PM10 Maintenance Plan and Redesignation Request'' (FRL8041–6) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6111. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a draft of proposed legislation which authorizes appropriations for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6112. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Astragalus lentiginosus var coachellae (Coachella Valley milk-vetch)'' (RIN1018–AT74) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6113. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Four Vernal Pool Crustaceans and Eleven Vernal Pool Plants; Final Rule; Administrative Revisions'' (RIN1018–AU06) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6114. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determinations of Endangered Status for the Salt Creek Tiger Beetle (Cicindela nevadica lincolniana)'' (RIN1018–AJ13) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6115. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Navarretia fossalis (spreading navarretia)'' (RIN1018–AT86) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6116. A communication from the Chief, Division of Scientific Authority, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule to List the Tibetan Antelope as Endangered Throughout Its Range'' (RIN1018–AF49) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6117. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hexythiazox; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL7768–3) received on March 18, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6118. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Inert Ingredients; Revocation of 29 Pesticide Tolerance Exemption for 27 Chemicals'' (FRL7760–6) received on March 18, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6119. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Imidacloprid; Pesticide Tolerance'' (FRL7766–8) received on March 18, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6120. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modified cry3A Protein and the Generic Material for its Production in Corn; Extension of a Temporary Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL7766–6) received on March 18, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6121. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Avocados Grown in South Florida; Florida Avocado Maturity Requirements; Correction'' (FV06–915–1 C) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6122. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment to the Potato Research and Promotion Plan'' (FV–05–702 IFR) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6123. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Update and Clarify a Shell Egg Grading Definition'' (PY–05–003) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6124. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Olives Grown in California; Decreased Assessment Rule'' (FV06–932–1 IFR) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6125. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pine Shoot Beetle; Additions to Quarantined Areas'' (Doc. No. 05–027–2) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6126. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Karnal Bunt; Criteria for Releasing Fields from Regulation'' (Doc. No. 04–134–2) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6127. A communication from the Secretary of Agriculture, transmitting, a draft of proposed legislation entitled ''Forest Service Tribal Relations Enhancement Act of 2006''; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6128. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program Report for 2005; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–6129. A communication from the Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Anti-Money Laundering Programs; Special Due Diligence Programs for Certain Foreign Accounts'' (RIN1506–AA29) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–6130. A communication from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Import Restrictions Imposed on Certain Archaeological and Ethnological Materials from Columbia'' (RIN1505–AB59) received on March 16, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–6131. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oklahoma Regulatory Program'' (OK–030–FOR) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–6132. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Application Procedures'' (RIN1004–AB85) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–6133. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, transmitting, a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Anthony R. Jones, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6134. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, transmitting, a report on the approved retirement of General Charles F. Wald, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6135. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, and 'Other Flatfish' by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (I.D. No. 022106B) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6136. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report covering defense articles and services that were licensed for export under section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act during Fiscal Year 2005; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6137. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Report of the Attorney General relative to the Foreign Agents Registration Act for the six-month period ending June 30, 2005; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6138. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or defense services sold commercially under contract in the amount of $100,000,000 or more to the United Kingdom (UK Chinook Through Life Customer Support Program); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6139. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendments to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations: Office Names, Corrected Cross-Referencing, Reference to Wassenaar Arrangement, and other Corrections/Administrative Changes'' (22 CFR Parts 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, and 130) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6140. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 06–57—06–66); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6141. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of rules entitled ''Security Zones (including 11 regulations), Drawbridge (including 1 regulation), Special Local Regulations (including 6 regulations), and Safety Zone (including 69 regulations)'' (RIN1625–AA87, 1625–AA09, 1625–AA08, 1625–AA00) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6142. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulated Navigation Area; San Carlos Bay, FL'' (RIN1625–AA11) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6143. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zones (including 3 regulations): [CGD01–006–007], [CGD13–06–011], [COPT St. Petersburg 06–034]'' (RIN1625–AA00) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6144. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Security Zones; San Francisco Bay, San Pablo Bay, Carquinez Strait, Suisun Bay, California'' (RIN1625–AA87) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6145. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Anchorage Regulations; Long Beach, CA'' (RIN1625–AA01) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6146. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Drawbridge Operation Regulations (including 3 regulations): [CGD01–06–013], [CGD01–06–020], [CGD05–05–079]'' (RIN1625–AA09) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6147. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Drawbridge Operation Regulations (including 2 regulations): [CGD01–06–006], [CGD07–05–063]'' (RIN1625–AA09) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6148. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Security Zones (including 2 regulations): [COPT San Francisco Bay 06–008], [COPT San Francisco 06–009]'' (RIN1625–AA87) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6149. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Local Regulations for Marine Events; Chesapeake Bay'' (RIN1625–AA08) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6150. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Local Regulations; St. Petersburg Grand Prix Air Show; St. Petersburg, FL'' (RIN1625–AA08) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6151. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Atlantic Herring Fishery; 2006 Specifications'' (RIN0648–AT21) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6152. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2006 Specifications for the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery'' (RIN0648–AT20) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6153. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels 60 Feet (18.3 Meters) Length Overall and Using Hook-and-line Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (I.D. No. 022406A) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6154. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the Gulf of Alaska'' (I.D. No. 021506A) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6155. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Offshore Component in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (I.D. No. 021606E) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6156. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shallow-Water Species Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska'' (I.D. No. 022206C) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6157. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Less Than 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA Using Jig or Hook-and-Line Gear in the Bogoslof Pacific Cod Exemption Area in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (I.D. No. 022206A) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6158. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Offshore Component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (I.D. No. 021606F) received on March 27, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SANTORUM (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2461. A bill to prohibit United States assistance to develop or promote any rail connections or railway-related connections that traverse or connect Baku, Azerbaijan, Tbilisi, Georgia, and Kars, Turkey, and that specifically exclude cities in Armenia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Mrs. LINCOLN):

S. 2462. A bill to permit startup partnerships and S corporations to elect taxable years other than required years; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SUNUNU (for himself and Mr. GREGG):

S. 2463. A bill to designate as wilderness certain National Forest System land in the State of New Hampshire; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. KYL):

S. 2464. A bill to revise a provision relating to a repayment obligation of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation under the Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 1990, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2465. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KYL (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2466. A bill to authorize and direct the exchange and conveyance of certain National Forest land and other land in southeast Arizona; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. DEMINT, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. CRAPO, and Mrs. DOLE):

S. 2467. A bill to enhance and improve the trade relations of the United States by strengthening United States trade enforcement efforts and encouraging United States trading partners to adhere to the rules and norms of international trade, and for other purposes; read the first time.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. Res. 407. A resolution recognizing the African American Spiritual as a national treasure; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HAGEL (for himself and Mrs. CLINTON):

S. Res. 408. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the President should declare lung cancer a public health priority and should implement a comprehensive interagency program that will reduce lung cancer mortality by at least 50 percent by 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. DEWINE):

S. Res. 409. A resolution supporting democracy, development, and stabilization in Haiti; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. KOHL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TALENT, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DODD, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. DEMINT, and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. Res. 410. A resolution designating April 2006 as ''Financial Literacy Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ENZI, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. Res. 411. A resolution recognizing a milestone in the history of Gallaudet University; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KYL (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. LOTT):

S. Con. Res. 84. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding a free trade agreement between the United States and Taiwan; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 241

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 241, a bill to amend section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 to provide that funds received as universal service contributions and the universal service support programs established pursuant to that section are

not subject to certain provisions of title 31, United States Code, commonly known as the Antideficiency Act.

S. 277

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 277, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for direct access to audiologists for Medicare beneficiaries, and for other purposes.

S. 333

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 333, a bill to hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior and to support a transition to democracy in Iran.

S. 440

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 440, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to include podiatrists as physicians for purposes of covering physicians services under the medicaid program.

S. 503

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 503, a bill to expand Parents as Teachers programs and other quality programs of early childhood home visitation, and for other purposes.

S. 718

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 718, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide standards and procedures to guide both State and local law enforcement agencies and law enforcement officers during internal investigations, interrogation of law enforcement officers, and administrative disciplinary hearings, and to ensure accountability of law enforcement officers, to guarantee the due process rights of law enforcement officers, and to require States to enact law enforcement discipline, accountability, and due process laws.

S. 811

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 811, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

S. 842

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 842, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to provide for mandatory injunctions for unfair labor practices during organizing efforts, and for other purposes.

S. 882

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 882, a bill to designate certain Federal land in the State of Utah as wilderness, and for other purposes.

S. 1062

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1062, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

S. 1086

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. TALENT) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1086, a bill to improve the national program to register and monitor individuals who commit crimes against children or sex offenses.

S. 1112

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1112, a bill to make permanent the enhanced educational savings provisions for qualified tuition programs enacted as part of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001.

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1112, supra.

S. 1263

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1263, a bill to amend the Small Business Act to establish eligibility requirements for business concerns to receive awards under the Small Business Innovation Research Program.

S. 1367

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1367, a bill to provide for recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting a national teacher corps in underserved communities.

S. 1691

At the request of Mr. CRAIG, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1691, a bill to amend selected statutes to clarify existing Federal law as to the treatment of students privately educated at home under State law.

S. 1741

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1741, a bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize the President to carry out a program for the protection of the health and safety of residents, workers, volunteers, and others in a disaster area.

S. 2083

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2083, a bill to prohibit the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) from removing any item from the current list of items prohibited from being carried aboard a passenger aircraft.

S. 2087

At the request of Mr. CHAMBLISS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2087, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for the employment of foreign agricultural workers, and for other purposes.

S. 2178

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2178, a bill to make the stealing and selling of telephone records a criminal offense.

S. 2296

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2296, a bill to establish a fact-finding Commission to extend the study of a prior Commission to investigate and determine facts and circumstances surrounding the relocation, internment, and deportation to Axis countries of Latin Americans of Japanese descent from December 1941 through February 1948, and the impact of those actions by the United States, and to recommend appropriate remedies, and for other purposes.

S. 2314

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2314, a bill to suspend the application of any provision of Federal law under which persons are relieved from the requirement to pay royalties for production of oil or natural gas from Federal lands in periods of high oil and natural gas prices, to require the Secretary to seek to renegotiate existing oil and natural gas leases to similarly limit suspension of royalty obligations under such leases, and for other purposes.

S. 2322

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2322, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to make the provision of technical services for medical imaging examinations and radiation therapy treatments safer, more accurate, and less costly.

S. 2370

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2370, a bill to promote the development of democratic institutions in areas under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority, and for other purposes.

S. 2385

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2385, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to expand eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation paid by the uniformed services in order to permit certain additional retired members who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for that disability and Combat-Related Special Compensation by reason of that disability.

S. 2437

At the request of Mr. STEVENS, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2437, a bill to increase penalties for trafficking with respect to peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor.

S. CON. RES. 20

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 20, a concurrent resolution expressing the need for enhanced public awareness of traumatic brain injury and support for the designation of a National Brain Injury Awareness Month.

S. RES. 371

At the request of Mr. FRIST, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 371, a resolution designating July 22, 2006, as ''National Day of the American Cowboy''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2944

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2944 proposed to S. 2349, an original bill to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2944 proposed to S. 2349, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. SANTORUM (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2461. A bill to prohibit United States assistance to develop or promote any rail connections or railway-related connections that traverse or connect Baku, Azerbaijan, Tbilisi, Georgia, and Kars, Turkey, and that specifically exclude cities in Armenia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to block U.S. support for yet another anti-Armenian initiative.

In numerous cases over the last few years, the Turkish government has methodically sought to isolate Armenia economically, politically and socially. One of the most egregious examples was the imposition of a 1993 blockade against Armenia in support of Azerbaijan's war against Karabakh Armenians.

The Turkish government has routinely sought to exclude Armenia from projects that would benefit the economies of the countries of the South Caucasus. The latest example of this policy is the proposal to build a new rail line that would connect Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Similar to the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, this rail link would specifically go around Armenia.

Now, geographically, we all know that a pipeline or rail line that seeks to connect Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan would have to pass through Armenia. One would have to make a special effort to bypass Armenia.

The U.S. should not endorse Turkey and Azerbaijan's politically motivated attempt to isolate Armenia.

I therefore rise today in opposition to this plan, and to introduce legislation, along with my colleague, Senator SANTORUM, that would bar U.S. support and funding for a rail link connecting Georgia and Turkey, and which specifically excludes Armenia. This project is estimated to cost up to $800 million and would take three years to complete. The aim of this costly approach, as publicly stated by Azeri President Aliyev, is to isolate Armenia by enhancing the ongoing Turkish and Azerbaijani blockades and to keep the existing Turkey-Armenia-Georgia rail link shut down. This ill-conceived project runs counter to U.S. policy, ignores the standing Kars-Gyumri rail route, is politically and economically flawed and serves to destabilize the region.

U.S. policy in the South Caucasus seeks to foster regional cooperation and economic integration and supports open borders and transport and communication corridors. U.S. support for this project would run counter to that policy which is why Senator SANTORUM and I are introducing this legislation today.

We cannot continue to stoke the embers of regional conflict by supporting projects that deliberately exclude one of the region's most important members. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Mrs. LINCOLN):

S. 2462. A bill to permit startup partnership and S corporations to elect taxable years other than required years; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill that will offer small businesses greater flexibility in complying with their tax obligations. This legislation is one of a series of proposals that, once enacted, will reduce not only the amount of taxes that small businesses pay, but also will reduce the administrative burden that saddles small companies when trying to comply with the tax laws.

The proposal that I am introducing today will permit start-up small business owners to use a taxable year other than the calendar year if they generally earn fewer than $5 million during the tax year.

Before I talk about the specifics of this particular provision, let me first explain why it is so critical that we begin evaluating how we can reduce the administrative burden of the tax code. As is well-known small businesses are the backbone of our Nation's economy. According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses represent 99 percent all employers, employ 51 percent of the private-sector workforce, and contribute 51 percent of the private sector output.

Yet, despite the fact that small businesses are the real job-creators for our Nation's economy, the current tax system is placing an entirely unreasonable burden on them when trying to satisfy their tax obligations. The current tax code imposes a large, and expensive, burden on all taxpayers in terms of satisfying their reporting and record-keeping obligations. The problem, though, is that small companies are disadvantaged most in terms of the money and time spent in satisfying their tax obligation.

For example, according to the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, small businesses spend an astounding 8 billion hours each year complying with government reports. They also spend more than 80 percent of this time on completing tax forms. What's even more troubling is that companies that employ fewer than 20 employees spend nearly $1,304 per employee in tax compliance costs; an amount that is nearly 67 percent more than larger firms.

These statistics are disturbing for several reasons. First, the fact that small businesses are being required to spend so much money on compliance costs means they have fewer earnings to reinvest into their business. This, in turn, means that they have less money to spend on new equipment or on worker training, which unfortunately has an adverse effect on their overall production and the economy as a whole.

Second, the fact that small business owners are required to make such a sizeable investment of their time into completing paperwork means they have less time to spend on doing what they do best—namely running their business and creating jobs.

Let me be clear that I am in no way suggesting that small business owners are unique in having to pay income taxes, and I'm certainly not expecting them to receive a free pass. What I'm asking for, though, is a change to make the tax code fairer and simpler so that small companies can satisfy this obligation without having to expend the amount of resources that they do currently.

For that reason, the package of proposals that I have introduced will provide not only targeted, affordable tax relief to small business owners, but also simpler rules under the tax code. By simplifying the tax code, small

business owners will be able to satisfy their tax obligation in a cheaper, more efficient manner, allowing them to be able to devote more time and resources to their business.

Specifically, the proposal that I am introducing today will permit more taxpayers to use the taxable year most suitable to their business cycle. Until 1986, businesses could elect the taxable year-end that made the most economic sense for the business. In 1986, Congress passed legislation requiring partnerships and S corporations, many of which are small businesses, to adopt a December 31 year-end. The tax code does provide alternatives to the calendar year for small businesses, but the compliance costs and administrative burdens associated with these alternatives prove to be too high for most small businesses to utilize.

Meanwhile, C corporations, as large corporations often are, receive much more flexibility in their choice of taxable year. A C corporation can adopt either a calendar year or any fiscal year for tax purposes, as along as it keeps its books on that basis. This creates the unfair result of allowing larger businesses with greater resources greater flexibility in choosing a taxable year than smaller firms with fewer resources. This simply does not make sense to me. My bill changes these existing rules so that more small businesses will be able to use the taxable year that best suits their business.

Importantly, these changes will not reduce the amount of taxes a small business pays by even one dollar. The overall amount of taxes a qualifying small business pays will remain the same. This bill simply permits more taxpayers to use a taxable year other than the calendar year and makes tax compliance easier.

This bill is good policy and common sense. I look forward to working with the bill's cosponsor, Senator LINCOLN, in providing small businesses with more flexibility in meeting their tax obligations.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2462

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Small Business Tax Flexibility Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. QUALIFIED SMALL BUSINESSES ELECTION OF TAXABLE YEAR ENDING IN A MONTH FROM APRIL TO NOVEMBER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part I of subchapter E of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to accounting periods) is amended by inserting after section 444 the following new section:

''SEC. 444A. QUALIFIED SMALL BUSINESSES ELECTION OF TAXABLE YEAR ENDING IN A MONTH FROM APRIL TO NOVEMBER.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—A qualified small business may elect to have a taxable year, other than the required taxable year, which ends on the last day of any of the months of April through November (or at the end of an equivalent annual period (varying from 52 to 53 weeks)).

''(b) YEARS FOR WHICH ELECTION EFFECTIVE.—An election under subsection (a)—

''(1) shall be made not later than the due date (including extensions thereof) for filing the return of tax for the first taxable year of the qualified small business, and

''(2) shall be effective for such first taxable year or period and for all succeeding taxable years of such qualified small business until such election is terminated under subsection (c).

''(c) TERMINATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—An election under subsection (a) shall be terminated on the earliest of—

''(A) the first day of the taxable year following the taxable year for which the entity fails to meet the gross receipts test,

''(B) the date on which the entity fails to qualify as an S corporation, or

''(C) the date on which the entity terminates.

''(2) GROSS RECEIPTS TEST.—For purposes of paragraph (1), an entity fails to meet the gross receipts test if the entity fails to meet the gross receipts test of section 448(c).

''(3) EFFECT OF TERMINATION.—An entity with respect to which an election is terminated under this subsection shall determine its taxable year for subsequent taxable years under any other method that would be permitted under subtitle A.

''(4) INCOME INCLUSION AND DEDUCTION RULES FOR PERIOD AFTER TERMINATION.—If the termination of an election under paragraph (1)(A) results in a short taxable year—

''(A) items relating to net profits for the period beginning on the day after its last fiscal year-end and ending on the day before the beginning of the taxable year determined under paragraph (3) shall be includible in income ratably over the 4 taxable years following the year of termination, or (if fewer) the number of taxable years equal to the fiscal years for which the election under this section was in effect, and

''(B) items relating to net losses for such period shall be deductible in the first taxable year after the taxable year with respect to which the election terminated.

''(d) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) QUALIFIED SMALL BUSINESS.—The term 'qualified small business' means an entity—

''(A)(i) for which an election under section 1362(a) is in effect for the first taxable year or period of such entity and for all subsequent years, or

''(ii) which is treated as a partnership for the first taxable year or period of such entity for Federal income tax purposes,

''(B) which conducts an active trade or business or which would qualify for an election to amortize start-up expenditures under section 195, and

''(C) which is a start-up business.

''(2) START-UP BUSINESS.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(C), an entity shall be treated as a start-up business so long as not more than 75 percent of the entity is owned by any person or persons who previously conducted a similar trade or business at any time within the 1-year period ending on the date on which such entity is formed. For purposes of the preceding sentence, a person and any other person bearing a relationship to such person specified in section 267(b) or 707(b)(1) shall be treated as one person, and sections 267(b) and 707(b)(1) shall be applied as if section 267(c)(4) provided that the family of an individual consists of the individual's spouse and the individual's children under the age of 21.

''(3) REQUIRED TAXABLE YEAR.—The term 'required taxable year' has the meaning given to such term by section 444(e).

''(e) TIERED STRUCTURES.—The Secretary shall prescribe rules similar to the rules of section 444(d)(3) to eliminate abuse of this section through the use of tiered structures.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 444(a)(1) of such Code is amended by striking ''section,'' and inserting ''section and section 444A''.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for part I of subchapter E of chapter 1 of such Code is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 444 the following new item:

''Sec. 444A. Qualified small businesses election of taxable year ending in a month from April to November.''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2005.

By Mr. SUNUNU (for himself and Mr. GREGG):

S. 2463. A bill to designate as wilderness certain National Forest System land in the State of New Hampshire; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation with my friend, the senior Senator from New Hampshire, JUDD GREGG, which will designate approximately 34,500 acres of forest land in the State of New Hampshire as wilderness. Our bill, the New Hampshire Wilderness Act of 2006, will enact the recommended wilderness designations as set forth in the Forest Service Management Plan for the White Mountain National Forest.

Established under the Weeks Act of 1911, the White Mountain National Forest consists of nearly 800,000 acres—732,000 acres in the State of New Hampshire and 65,000 acres more in Maine. Over 6 million people visit the White Mountain National Forest annually, making it one of the most popular National Forests in the Nation.

In November of 2005, the Forest Service recommended the designation of additional acreage as wilderness in its management plan for the White Mountain National Forest. The bill that Senator GREGG and I are introducing today, the New Hampshire Wilderness Act of 2006, incorporates the recommendations of this management plan by designating some 23,700 acres in the area of the Wild River as wilderness, and adding another 10,800 acres to the existing Sandwich Range Wilderness. This land would remain as White Mountain National Forest land under the protection of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Similar legislation is to be introduced in the House of Representatives by our New Hampshire colleagues, Representative CHARLES BASS and Representative JEB BRADLEY.

With the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, Congress set out to permanently preserve areas of natural beauty for the public to enjoy; areas ''where the earth and its community of life are

untrammeled by man.'' New Hampshire was one of the original States in 1964 to have wilderness designated with the establishment of the Great Gulf Wilderness, and it reflects the view in our State that Granite Staters place a premium on safeguarding our natural heritage for future generations. In New Hampshire, we presently have four wilderness areas comprising more than 102,800 acres; and with the passage of this bill, we will expand one current wilderness area and create a fifth.

In New Hampshire, we have a tradition of multiple use for the consideration of our forest lands. In the White Mountain National Forest, it is generally understood that decisions affecting the forest are vetted thoroughly and that consensus is the guideline by which policies are implemented. Indeed, the development of the White Mountain National Forest Management Plan is one of the few times in the last 30 years that the final decision on how a particular National Forest will be managed over the next 15 years was not subject to an administrative appeal by concerned citizens.

As my colleagues know, wilderness areas consist of Federal lands that are permanently reserved from such activities as mining, logging, road construction, vehicular traffic, and building construction. By law, the establishment of new wilderness must be approved by Congress. That presents a unique responsibility on the part of lawmakers to reflect the views of community leaders, residents, visitors and other interested parties in designating wilderness. Given the consensus approach they undertook in their decision-making process for the White Mountain National Forest, we chose to pattern our legislation on the recommendations set forth by the Forest Service.

One need only experience the beauty of the White Mountain National Forest once to understand the need to preserve it for future generations. The Forest Service has done an admirable job in putting together a Forest Management Plan that all can support. I am pleased to introduce this measure with Senator GREGG, and I encourage my colleagues to give quick consideration to our legislation.

I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the New Hampshire Wilderness Act of 2006 be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2463

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''New Hampshire Wilderness Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(2) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of New Hampshire.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF WILDERNESS AREAS.

In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following Federal land in the State is designated as wilderness and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Certain Federal land managed by the Forest Service, comprising approximately 23,700 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Proposed Wild River Wilderness—White Mountain National Forest'', dated February 6, 2006, which shall be known as the ''Wild River Wilderness''.

(2) Certain Federal land managed by the Forest Service, comprising approximately 10,800 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Proposed Sandwich Range Wilderness Additions—White Mountain National Forest'', dated February 6, 2006, and which are incorporated in the Sandwich Range Wilderness, as designated by the New Hampshire Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98–323; 98 Stat. 259).

SEC. 4. MAP AND DESCRIPTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall file a map and a legal description of each wilderness area designated by section 3 with the committees of appropriate jurisdiction in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(b) FORCE AND EFFECT.—A map and legal description filed under subsection (a) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in the map and legal description.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Each map and legal description filed under subsection (a) shall be filed and made available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief of the Forest Service.

SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) ADMINISTRATION.—Subject to valid existing rights, each wilderness area designated under this section shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with—

(1) the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); and

(2) the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.).

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE OF WILDERNESS ACT.—With respect to any wilderness area designated by this Act, any reference in the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) FISH AND WILDLIFE.—As provided in section 4(d)(7) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(7)), nothing in this Act affects any jurisdiction or responsibility of the State with respect to wildlife and fish in the State.

(d) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to valid existing rights, all Federal land in the wilderness areas designated by section 3 are withdrawn from—

(1) all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;

(2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(3) disposition under the mineral leasing laws (including geothermal leasing laws).

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. KYL):

S. 2464. A bill to revise a provision relating to a repayment obligation of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation under the Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 1990, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to revise the Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 1990 in order to bring the Settlement Act process to an orderly conclusion. The 1990 Act ratified a negotiated settlement of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation's water entitlement to flow from the Verde River. The Department of the Interior provided technical assistance in crafting this legislation. I am pleased to be joined by Senator KYL as an original cosponsor of this bill.

As part of Water Rights settlement, Congress authorized and directed the Secretary of the Interior to provide the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation a no-interest loan pursuant to the Small Reclamation Project Act, in the amount of $13 million, to construct facilities for the conveyance and delivery of water to 1,584 acres on the Fort McDowell reservation. Prior to construction of the irrigation system, the Department of the Interior conducted its environmental review pursuant to NEPA. The review revealed that 227 of the acres to be irrigated were significant cultural sites and the Secretary subsequently withdrew those acres from development. The Department proposed to develop replacement lands, subject to the availability of funding. To date, however, the replacement lands have not been developed and the settlement agreement has been left uncompleted.

In October 2005, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and the Department of the Interior agreed that the Department's environmental mitigation responsibility for the replacement lands should be resolved through legislation. They proposed that the Department forgive and cancel Fort McDowell's obligation to repay the mandatory loan in return for the Tribe's forgiving the Department of the Interior's responsibility to develop 227 mitigation acres. The Yavapai Nation and the Department further agree that funds already advanced to the Tribe toward development of the replacement acres would be reprogrammed to fund other water development projects on the Yavapai Nation's reservation.

The bill introduced today implements the Yavapai Nation's and the Department's agreement by effectively resolving the replacement land mitigation cost for the Department and the loan repayment by the Tribe. This agreement shall constitute completion of all conditions necessary to accomplish full and final settlement. Resolution of this last remaining issue fully implements the Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 1990. I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2464

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Revision Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) FORT MCDOWELL WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT ACT.—The term ''Fort McDowell Water Rights Settlement Act'' means the Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–628; 104 Stat. 4480).

(2) NATION.—The term ''Nation'' means the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, formerly known as the ''Fort McDowell Indian Community''.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. CANCELLATION OF REPAYMENT OBLIGATION.

(a) CANCELLATION OF OBLIGATION.—The obligation of the Nation to repay the loan made under section 408(e) of the Fort McDowell Water Rights Settlement Act (104 Stat. 4489) is cancelled.

(b) EFFECT OF ACT.—

(1) RIGHTS OF NATION UNDER FORT MCDOWELL WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT ACT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), nothing in this Act alters or affects any right of the Nation under the Fort McDowell Water Rights Settlement Act.

(B) EXCEPTION.—The cancellation of the repayment obligation under subsection (a) shall be considered—

(i) to fulfill all conditions required to achieve a full and final settlement of all claims to water rights or injuries to water rights under the Fort McDowell Water Rights Settlement Act; and

(ii) to relieve the Secretary of any responsibility or obligation to obtain mitigation property or develop additional farm acreage under section 410 the Fort McDowell Water Rights Settlement Act (104 Stat. 4490).

(2) ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES AND BENEFITS.—Nothing in this Act alters or affects the eligibility of the Nation or any member of the Nation for any service or benefit provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes or members of such Indian tribes.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2465. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today, I am pleased to introduce the Boxer-Smith-Durbin STOP–TB Now Act of 2006. This bill would authorize additional resources to fight tuberculosis, a deadly infectious disease that knows no borders.

In January, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, a long-term strategy was developed to cut in half the number of TB cases and deaths. This Global Plan to Stop TB estimates that the 10-year cost to control tuberculosis is $56 billion, including $47 billion to detect and treat TB and $9 billion for additional research and development. If this plan is implemented over the next 10 years, it is estimated that it will save the lives of 14 million people throughout the world.

Tuberculosis is a deadly disease, especially in the developing world. Tuberculosis kills nearly 2 million people per year—one person every 15 seconds. One-third of the world is infected with the germ that causes TB and an estimated 8.8 million individuals will develop active TB each year. Tuberculosis is a leading cause of death among women of reproductive age and of people who are HIV-positive.

While developing nations are most heavily impacted by TB, there is also a concern here at home. It is estimated that 10–15 million people in the United States are infected with the germ that causes TB. And, California has more TB cases than any other State in the country. Ten of the top twenty U.S. metro areas for TB case rates are in California; San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego, Fresno, Los Angeles, Stockton, Sacramento, Ventura, Vallejo, and Oakland.

This funding is a wise investment for our Nation. A recent article published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that a $35 million investment in the health system of Mexico to fight TB would yield a savings to the U.S. taxpayer of $108 million in terms of reduced TB healthcare costs domestically.

I have been working with Senator SMITH to fight the spread of international tuberculosis since 1999. I am proud that he has been such a strong partner on this issue. And, I am grateful for the support of Senator Durbin, a champion on the issue of global AIDS and other infectious diseases.

The Boxer-Smith-Durbin bill is consistent with the Global Plan to Stop TB, including the goal to reduce by half the international tuberculosis death and disease burden by 2015. It also sets a goal to detect at least 70 percent of cases of infection tuberculosis, and the cure of at least 85 percent of the cases detected.

The bill authorizes not less than $225 million for fiscal year 2007 and not less than $260 million for fiscal year 2008 for foreign assistance programs that combat international TB. It also creates a separate authorization of $30 million for the Centers for Disease Control to combat international TB.

This bill will not only save lives, it will help reverse a troubling trend—the emergence of multi drug-resistant tuberculosis caused by inconsistent and incomplete treatment. In the U.S., a standard case of TB takes 6 months to cure at the cost of $2,000 per patient. A case of multi drug-resistant TB can take up to 2 years to treat costing as much as $1 million per patient.

TB kills more people than any other curable disease in the world. I hope my colleagues will join us in supporting this important legislation.

By Mr. KYL (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2466. A bill to authorize and direct the exchange and conveyance of certain National Forest land and other land in southeast Arizona; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, today I am pleased to join with Senator MCCAIN to introduce a modified version of S. 1122, the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act, which we introduced last year. This modified bill is a culmination of months of negotiation with members of the climbing community, local and state stakeholders, and other interested parties. It is an effort to strengthen the land exchange in a way that better meets the needs of outdoor recreation, conservation, resource protection, and mining interests.

Let me briefly explain the new provisions in this bill. First, you may recall that S. 1122 contained a placeholder for additional climbing provisions. I included this provision in our bill as a good faith offer to the climbing community to work with us and the proponent of this land exchange, Resolution Copper Company, to address the loss of public access to climbing at Oak Flat in a way that did not compromise public safety. The discussions over the last six months have been fruitful. There will be continued interim use of Oak Flat and some additional access to climbing on Resolution Copper's private land—all subject to public safety requirements.

This modified bill goes a step further in addressing the loss of recreation at Oak Flat. S. 1122 required the identification and development of a replacement climbing site. I am pleased to announce that representatives from Resolution Copper, working in cooperation with climbers and federal land managers, have found a climbing gem about 20 miles from Oak Flat, near Hayden and Kearny, Arizona in the Tam O'Shanter Mountains. ''Tamo,'' as it is now nicknamed, has the quality of rock and the elevation and diversity of cliffs, climbing walls, and boulders that rock climbers seek. Couple these characteristics with Arizona's mild weather and this site has the potential to be a four season climbing destination and tourism draw for Arizona.

Recognizing this potential, Arizona State Parks, Resolution Copper, and the Bureau of Land Management in cooperation with the communities and other mining interests, have been working together on a proposal to turn ''Tamo'' into Arizona's newest State park. This proposed State park would place a special emphasis on rock climbing, but would also have opportunities for camping and other outdoor recreation. To turn ''Tamo'' into State park is not an easy task. Currently, Arizona State Parks lack the legal authority to acquire ''Tamo,'' but it is seeking it through the Arizona state legislature. I am pleased to report that a State bill containing this authority successfully passed the state Senate with overwhelming support from the Sierra Club, Access Fund, and ASARCO, a mining company operating in the vicinity. The stakeholders tell me this issue and others concerning access to the site are close to resolution. For this reason, I am including language in this bill that would facilitate a recreation and public purposes conveyance of ''Tamo'' to Arizona State Parks.

This conveyance, of course, would be subject to resolution of these issues.

Besides addressing climbing and recreation concerns, this modified bill does even more for environmental conservation and effective land management than the original by adding to the private land package two additional parcels: East Clear Creek and Dripping Springs.

The East Clear Creek parcel encompasses 640 acres and is one of the largest single blocks of private inholdings within the Coconino National Forest. The parcel includes two miles of East Clear Creek, hence its name, and magnificent canyons that drop as much as 2,000 feet in some areas. This unique landscape is a wildlife transition zone between the upper plateau dominated by ponderosa pine and the riparian corridor of the creek, allowing it to support several threatened and sensitive species including bald eagle, peregrine falcon, fish, reptile and amphibian species and big game species such as Rocky Mountain elk, mule deer, turkey, and black bear. This parcel has been identified and is strongly endorsed for public acquisition by the U.S. Forest Service and the Trust for Public Lands.

The Dripping Springs parcel encompasses 160 acres in the Dripping Springs Mountains near Tam O'Shanter Peak in Gila County. This parcel has rock formations with excellent climbing opportunities and is within the contemplated boundaries of the proposed state park.

In summary, this land exchange gives us the ability to preserve highly sought-after land, important for wildlife habitat, cultural resources, watershed and land-management objectives, to promote outdoor recreation and tourism, and to generate economic opportunities for state and local residents in the copper triangle region in Arizona. It is good for our environment and our economy. I urge my colleagues to approve the legislation at the earliest possible date.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 407—RECOGNIZING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN SPIRITUAL AS A NATIONAL TREASURE

Mr. MENENDEZ submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

S. RES. 407

Whereas, since slavery was introduced into the European colonies in 1619, enslaved Africans remained in bondage until the United States ratified the 13th amendment to the Constitution in 1865;

Whereas, during that period of the history of the United States, the first expression of that unique American music was created by enslaved African Americans who—

(1) used their knowledge of the English language and the Christian religious faith, as it had been taught to them in the New World; and

(2) stealthily wove within the music their experience of coping with human servitude and their strong desire to be free;

Whereas, as a method of survival, enslaved African Americans who were forbidden to speak their native languages, play musical instruments they had used in Africa, or practice their traditional religious beliefs, relied on their strong African oral tradition of songs, stories, proverbs, and historical accounts to create this original music, now known as spirituals;

Whereas Calvin Earl, a noted performer and educator on African American spirituals, remarked that the Christian lyrics became a metaphor for freedom from slavery, a secret way for slaves to ''communicate with each other, teach their children, record their history, and heal their pain.'';

Whereas the New Jersey Historical Commission found that ''some of those daring and artful runaway slaves who entered New Jersey by way of the Underground Railroad no doubt sang the words of old Negro spirituals like 'Steal Away' before embarking on their perilous journey north.'';

Whereas African American spirituals spread all over the United States, and the songs we know of today may only represent a small portion of the total number of spirituals that once existed;

Whereas Frederick Douglass, a fugitive slave who would become one of the leading abolitionists of the United States, remarked that the spirituals ''told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. . . .''; and

Whereas the American Folklife Preservation Act (Public Law 105–275; 20 U.S.C. 2101 note) finds that ''the diversity inherent in American folklife has contributed greatly to the cultural richness of the nation and has fostered a sense of individuality and identity among the American people.'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that African American spirituals are a poignant and powerful genre of music that have become one of the most significant segments of American music in existence;

(2) expresses the deepest gratitude, recognition, and honor to the former enslaved Africans in the United States for their gifts to our Nation, including their original music and oral history; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation that reflects on the important contribution of African American spirituals to American history, and naming the African American spiritual a national treasure.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to submit a resolution honoring the African American Spiritual as a national treasure. This important piece of legislation recognizes that the African American spiritual is a poignant and powerful genre of American music that contributes to the cultural richness of our country.

I am very proud to sponsor this resolution and grateful to the individuals who helped make this landmark occasion possible. In particular, I would like to thank Calvin Earl, a New Jersey native, who is a noted performer and educator on African American spirituals for his vision and dedication in helping make this resolution a reality. I also would like to thank the staff at the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress for their endless expertise and insight.

SENATE RESOLUTION 408—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD DECLARE LUNG CANCER A PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY AND SHOULD IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE INTERAGENCY PROGRAM THAT WILL REDUCE LUNG CANCER MORTALITY BY AT LEAST 50 PERCENT BY 2015

Mr. HAGEL (for himself and Mrs. CLINTON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 408

Whereas lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women, accounting for 28 percent of all cancer deaths;

Whereas lung cancer kills more people annually than breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, liver cancer, melanoma, and kidney cancer combined;

Whereas, since the National Cancer Act of 1971 (Public Law 92–218; 85 Stat. 778), coordinated and comprehensive research has elevated the 5-year survival rates for breast cancer to 87 percent, for prostate cancer to 99 percent, and colon cancer to 64 percent;

Whereas the survival rate for lung cancer is still only 15 percent and a similar coordinated and comprehensive research effort is required to achieve increases in lung cancer survivability rates;

Whereas 60 percent of lung cancer is now diagnosed in nonsmokers and former smokers;

Whereas ⅔ of nonsmokers diagnosed with lung cancer are women;

Whereas certain minority populations, such as black males, have disproportionately high rates of lung cancer incidence and mortality, notwithstanding their lower smoking rate;

Whereas members of the Baby Boomer generation are entering their sixties, the most common age for the development of cancer;

Whereas tobacco addiction and exposure to other lung cancer carcinogens such as Agent Orange and other herbicides and battlefield emissions are serious problems among military personnel and war veterans;

Whereas the August 2001 Report of the Lung Cancer Progress Review Group of the National Cancer Institute stated that funding for lung cancer research was ''far below the levels characterized for other common malignancies and far out of proportion to its massive health impact'';

Whereas the Report of the Lung Cancer Progress Review Group identified as its ''highest priority'' the creation of integrated, multidisciplinary, multi-institutional research consortia organized around the problem of lung cancer rather than around specific research disciplines; and

Whereas the United States must enhance its response to the issues raised in the Report of the Lung Cancer Progress Review Group: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the President should—

(1) declare lung cancer a public health priority and immediately lead a coordinated effort to reduce the mortality rate of lung cancer by 50 percent by 2015;

(2) direct the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to increase funding for lung cancer research and other

lung cancer-related programs within a coordinated strategy and defined goals, including—

(A) translational research and specialized lung cancer research centers;

(B) expansion of existing multi-institutional, population-based screening programs incorporating state of the art image processing, centralized review, clinical management, and tobacco cessation protocols;

(C) research on disparities in lung cancer incidence and mortality rates;

(D) graduate medical education programs in thoracic medicine and cardiothoracic surgery;

(E) new programs within the Food and Drug Administration to expedite the development of chemoprevention and targeted therapies for lung cancer;

(F) annual reviews by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality of lung cancer screening and treatment protocols;

(G) the appointment of a lung cancer director within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with authority to improve lung cancer surveillance and screening programs; and

(H) lung cancer screening demonstration programs under the direction of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services;

(3) direct the Secretary of Defense, in conjunction with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to develop a broad-based lung cancer screening and disease management program among members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and to develop technologically advanced diagnostic programs for the early detection of lung cancer;

(4) appoint the Lung Cancer Scientific and Medical Advisory Committee comprised of medical, scientific, pharmaceutical, and patient advocacy representatives to work with the National Lung Cancer Public Health Policy Board and to report to the President and Congress on the progress and the obstacles in achieving the goal described in paragraph 1; and

(5) convene a National Lung Cancer Public Health Policy Board comprised of multiagency and multidepartment representatives and at least 3 members of the Lung Cancer Scientific and Medical Advisory Committee, that will oversee and coordinate all efforts to accomplish the mission of reducing lung cancer mortality rate by 50 percent by 2015.

SENATE RESOLUTION 409—SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT, AND STABILIZATION IN HAITI

Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. DEWINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 409

Whereas Haiti has a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of $361, over 65 percent of the population lives under the poverty line, 50 percent of the population does not have access to clean water, and nearly 50 percent of the population is illiterate, according to the World Bank;

Whereas the Government of Haiti has fundamental requirements with respect to providing citizen security, protecting the rule of law, controlling drug trafficking, and fighting corruption;

Whereas, on March 2, 2004, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated, ''We should put the people of Haiti at the center of everything we try to do, and try and help them build a better future. And as I have indicated before, I hope this time the international community will go in for the long haul and not a quick turn-around. We need to work with them to stabilize the country, and sustain the effort. It may take years and I hope we will have the patience to do it.'';

Whereas the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1542 on April 30, 2004, and extended again until August 15, 2006, by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1658, ''with the intention to renew for further periods'';

Whereas over 40 countries participate in MINUSTAH, including 12 countries from the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas the United Nations senior leadership in Haiti is comprised of representatives from Canada, Brazil, and Chile;

Whereas more than 3,500,000 Haitians registered to vote in Haiti according to the Organization of American States;

Whereas more than 2,000,000 Haitians voted in the national elections on February 7, 2006, according to the Haitian Provisional Electoral Council (CEP); and

Whereas more than $1,000,000,000 was pledged at the International Donors Conference in July 2004 in support of Haiti's Interim Cooperation Framework: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) urges reconciliation among the people of Haiti, including a government led by President-elect Rene Preval that respects the rights of all political parties;

(2) supports the holding of the second round of parliamentary elections as soon as possible while stressing the importance of a free, fair, and open process;

(3) thanks the countries that have contributed personnel to MINUSTAH, particularly Brazil, whose President, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, announced on March 13, 2006, that peacekeepers from Brazil will stay in Haiti for as long as the new government in Haiti needs them;

(4) strongly encourages MINUSTAH to maintain the current elevated troop levels and to raise significantly the numbers of UNPOL police forces;

(5) urges the international community to continue to support MINUSTAH, to fulfill the pledges made at the July 2004 International Donors Conference, and to plan for a new multi-year commitment of support at a new donor's conference to be held no later than July 2006;

(6) recommends the creation of an effective demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration program to encompass former military members and gangs;

(7) recommends that the new government cooperate fully with MINUSTAH in assuring police and judiciary reform; and

(8) supports assistance from the United States Government for the reconstruction of Haiti, including programs supporting job creation, governance and rule of law, protection of the environment, social development, and reconstruction of basic infrastructure.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, Haiti's recent election has refocused the eyes of the international community on that country, its remarkable successes, and its continuing challenges. We must remind ourselves that although less than two months ago the Haitian people elected Rene Preval as their next President. Haiti's GDP per capita is $361, with over 65 percent of the population below the poverty line. Half of all Haitians have no access to clean water, and nearly half cannot read or write. In this context the Haitian achievement of an election is even more extraordinary.

The international community took notice of Haiti's difficulties and its achievements, pledging over a billion dollars in support of Haiti's Interim Cooperation Framework in July 2004 at the International Donors Conference. Some of this money has arrived in Haiti and is benefiting the Haitian people while other pledges remain unfulfilled. We are in a critical time in Haiti; we need to ensure that the promised money arrives and is used in a way that will improve the lives of all Haitians.

That's why today I am submitting a Senate resolution along with my colleague, Senator DEWINE that highlights Haiti's successes and reminds our international partners of their commitments to Haiti and of the importance of promoting stability there. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) is authorized through August of this year, and it is critical that this important stability operation be continued. Over 40 countries have sent personnel to MINUSTAH, including Brazil, whose President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva recently announced that Brazil's peacekeepers will remain in Haiti for as long as the new government there needs them.

I have just today met with the President-elect of Haiti, Rene Preval. In our meeting I stressed to him the important role he must now play to ensure that his government respects the rights of all political parties and maintains its legitimacy with the Haitian people and the international community. Mr. Preval has a unique opportunity at this historical juncture to move Haiti in the right direction. Doing so will ensure that Haiti attains its proper place within the community of free and democratic nations. Only by constantly striving to enhance the liberties and opportunities of the average Haitian can Mr. Preval be an effective steward of Haiti's dreams.

SENATE RESOLUTION 410—DESIGNATING APRIL 2006 AS ''FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH''

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. KOHL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TALENT, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DODD, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. DEMINT, and Mr. BAUCUS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 410

Whereas the personal savings rate of United States citizens in 2005 was negative 0.5 percent, marking the first time that the rate has been negative since the Great Depression year of 1933;

Whereas in 2005, only 42 percent of workers or their spouses calculated the amount that they needed to save for retirement, down from 53 percent in 2000;

Whereas the 2005 Retirement Confidence Survey found that a majority of workers believe that they are behind schedule on their retirement savings and that their debt is a problem;

Whereas during the third quarter of 2005, the household debt of United States citizens reached $11,000,000,000;

Whereas during the third quarter of 2005, individuals serviced their debt with a record 13.75 percent of after-tax income;

Whereas nearly 1,600,000 individuals filed for bankruptcy in 2004;

Whereas approximately 75,000,000 individuals remain credit-challenged and unbanked, or are not using insured, mainstream financial institutions;

Whereas expanding access to the mainstream financial system will provide individuals with less expensive and more secure options for managing their finances and building wealth;

Whereas a greater understanding of and familiarity with financial markets and institutions will lead to increased economic activity and growth;

Whereas financial literacy empowers individuals to make wise financial decisions and reduces the confusion caused by the increasingly complex economy of the United States;

Whereas only 26 percent of individuals who were between the ages of 13 and 21 reported that their parents actively taught them how to manage money;

Whereas the majority of college seniors have 4 or more credit cards, and the average college senior carries a balance of $3,000;

Whereas 1 in every 10 college students has more than $7,000 of debt;

Whereas many college students pay more in interest on their credit cards than on their student loans;

Whereas a 2004 Survey of States by the National Council on Economic Education found that 49 States include the subject of economics in their elementary and secondary education standards, and 38 States include personal finance, up from 48 and 31 States, respectively, in 2002;

Whereas a 2004 study by the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy found that high school seniors scored higher than their previous class on an exam about credit cards, retirement funds, insurance, and other personal finance basics for the first time since 1997;

Whereas, in spite of the improvement in test scores, 65 percent of all participating students still failed the exam;

Whereas individuals develop personal financial management skills and lifelong habits during their childhood;

Whereas personal financial education is essential to ensure that individuals are prepared to manage money, credit, and debt, and become responsible workers, heads of households, investors, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and citizens;

Whereas Congress found it important to coordinate Federal financial literacy efforts and formulate a national strategy; and

Whereas, in light of that finding, Congress established the Financial Literacy and Education Commission in 2003 and designated the Office of Financial Education of the Department of the Treasury to provide support for the Commission: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2006 as ''Financial Literacy Month'' to raise public awareness about—

(A) the importance of financial education in the United States; and

(B) the serious consequences that may result from a lack of understanding about personal finances; and

(2) calls on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and the citizens of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 411—RECOGNIZING A MILESTONE IN THE HISTORY OF GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ENZI, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mrs. MURRAY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to.

S. RES. 411

Whereas Gallaudet University grants more bachelor's degrees to deaf people than any other institution of higher learning in the world, is the only such institution serving primarily deaf and hard of hearing students, and provides groundbreaking research in the field of deafness;

Whereas, in 1988, Dr. I. King Jordan became the first deaf President of Gallaudet University, and the first deaf president of any institution of higher education in the United States;

Whereas deaf and hard of hearing graduates of Gallaudet University serve as leaders around the globe;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan graduated from Gallaudet University in 1970 with a B.A. in Psychology, and received both a master's degree and a doctorate in Psychology from University of Tennessee by 1973;

Whereas, before his appointment as president, Dr. I. King Jordan served as the Chair of the Department of Psychology and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Science at Gallaudet University;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan was a research fellow at Donaldson's School for the Deaf in Edinburgh, Scotland, an exchange scholar at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, and a lecturer at schools in Paris, Toulouse, and Marseille, France;

Whereas, from 1997 to 2001, Dr. I. King Jordan led the first comprehensive capital campaign for Gallaudet University and successfully raised nearly $40,000,000, which was used by the University to strengthen academic programs, increase the endowment, and construct the Student Academic Center;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan established the President's Fellow program to increase the number of deaf and hard of hearing faculty members by providing support for deaf and hard of hearing college graduates to complete their terminal degree;

Whereas in 1988, Dr. I. King Jordan proclaimed to the world, ''Deaf people can do anything, except hear.'';

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is a strong advocate on the national and international level for deaf people and people of all disabilities, and was a lead witness in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (in this resolution referred to as the ''ADA'') during a joint session of Congress prior to the passage of ADA;

Whereas in July 2005, Dr. I. King Jordan received the George Bush Medal for the Empowerment of People with Disabilities, an award established to honor those individuals who perform outstanding service to encourage the spirit of ADA throughout the world;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan served in the Navy from 1962 to 1966;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan has shared nearly 38 years of marriage with Linda Kephart, with whom he has two children, King and Heidi;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is a strong supporter of physical fitness and has completed more than 200 marathons and 40 100-mile marathons;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan will retire as the first deaf president of Gallaudet University on December 31, 2006; and

Whereas Dr. I King Jordan is an accomplished, respected leader who devoted his life to Gallaudet University and efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and individuals with disabilities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) Recognizes the achievement of Gallaudet University; its leadership, faculty and students; and

(2) expresses appreciation to Dr. I. King Jordan for his many years of dedicated service to Gallaudet University, to the deaf and hard of hearing community, and to all individuals with disabilities.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 84—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING A FREE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND TAIWAN

Mr. KYL (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. LOTT) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. CON. RES. 84

Whereas for more than 50 years a close relationship has existed between the United States and Taiwan, which has been of enormous economic, cultural, and strategic advantage to both countries;

Whereas on November 16, 2005, President Bush noted the strong ties between the United States and Taiwan, saying Taiwan is a ''free and democratic Chinese society'', and that economic reforms have made it ''one of the world's most important trading partners'';

Whereas on January 1, 2002, Taiwan was officially admitted into the World Trade Organization under the name of the ''Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu'' (TPKM), and this accession has reduced Taiwanese tariffs and has increased market access to foreign investment;

Whereas on August 6, 2002, the President signed into law the Trade Act of 2002, which by request, was extended until June 30, 2007, providing for an expedited procedure for congressional consideration of international trade agreements;

Whereas a 2002 report issued by the United States International Trade Commission found some sectors of the United States economy, such as exports of motor vehicles, rice, and fish would increase significantly, and other food exports to Taiwan would increase by more than 100 percent, if the United States entered into a free trade agreement with Taiwan;

Whereas the United States is Taiwan's third largest trading partner, and Taiwan is the eighth largest trading partner of the United States;

Whereas Taiwan is the sixth largest market for United States agricultural products, while in terms of per capita consumption, Taiwan is the world's second largest consumer, the third largest buyer of United States beef and corn, the fifth largest buyer of United States soybeans, and the eighth largest buyer of United States wheat;

Whereas Taiwan has become the world's largest producer of information technology hardware, and ranks first in the production of notebook computers, monitors, motherboards, and scanners;

Whereas the United States is an important supplier of electrical machinery and appliances, transport equipment, scientific instruments, and chemical products to Taiwan;

Whereas Taiwan purchases nearly the same amount of goods and services from the United States as all the countries with respect to which the United States is currently negotiating free trade agreements; and

Whereas the United States and Taiwan have already signed more than 140 bilateral agreements: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that the United States should increase trade opportunities with Taiwan by launching negotiations to enter into a free trade agreement with Taiwan.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3175. Mr. COBURN (for himself and Mr. OBAMA) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3176. Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. OBAMA) proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2944 submitted by Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. INHOFE) to the bill S. 2349, supra.

SA 3177. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3178. Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. FEINGOLD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3179. Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3180. Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2349, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3181. Mr. REID (for Mr. BYRD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 2349, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3182. Mr. REID (for Mr. BYRD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 2349 , supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3183. Mr. COBURN (for himself and Mr. OBAMA) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS—MARCH 9, 2006

SA 2981. Mr. ENSIGN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, strike line 9 and all that follows through page 4, line 20, and insert the following:

(a) IN GENERAL.—A point of order may be made by any Senator against consideration of a conference report that includes any new or general legislation, any unauthorized appropriation, or new matter or nongermane matter not committed to the conferees by either House. The point of order shall be made and voted on separately for each item in violation of this section.

(b) DISPOSITION.—If the point of order against a conference report under subsection (a) is sustained, then—

(1) the matter in such conference report shall be deemed to have been struck;

(2) when all other points of order under this section have been disposed of—

(A) the Senate shall proceed to consider the question of whether the Senate should recede from its amendment to the House bill, or its disagreement to the amendment of the House, and concur with a further amendment, which further amendment shall consist of only that portion of the conference report not deemed to have been struck;

(B) the question shall be debatable; and

(C) no further amendment shall be in order; and

(3) if the Senate agrees to the amendment, then the bill and the Senate amendment thereto shall be returned to the House for its concurrence in the amendment of the Senate.

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of ⅗ of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of ⅗ of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required in the Senate to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1)(A) The term ''unauthorized appropriation'' means an appropriation—

(i) not specifically authorized by law or Treaty stipulation (unless the appropriation has been specifically authorized by an Act or resolution previously passed by the Senate during the same session or proposed in pursuance of an estimate submitted in accordance with law); or

(ii) the amount of which exceeds the amount specifically authorized by law or Treaty stipulation (or specifically authorized by an Act or resolution previously passed by the Senate during the same session or proposed in pursuance of an estimate submitted in accordance with law) to be appropriated.

(B) An appropriation is not specifically authorized if it is restricted or directed to, or authorized to be obligated or expended for the benefit of, an identifiable person, program, project, entity, or jurisdiction by earmarking or other specification, whether by name or description, in a manner that is so restricted, directed, or authorized that it applies only to a single identifiable person, program, project, entity, or jurisdiction, unless the identifiable person, program, project, entity, or jurisdiction to which the restriction, direction, or authorization applies is described or otherwise clearly identified in a law or Treaty stipulation (or an Act or resolution previously passed by the Senate during the same session or in the estimate submitted in accordance with law) that specifically provides for the restriction, direction, or authorization of appropriation for such person, program, project, entity, or jurisdiction.

(2) The term ''new or general legislation'' has the meaning given that term when it is used in paragraph 2 of Rule XVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

(3) The term ''new matter'' means any matter not committed to conferees by either House.

(4) The term ''nongermane matter'' has the meaning given that term when it is used in Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3175. Mr. COBURN (for himself and Mr. OBAMA) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. FULL DISCLOSURE OF ENTITIES RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Effective beginning January 1, 2007, the Office of Management and Budget shall ensure the existence and operation of a single updated searchable database website accessible by the public at no cost that includes for each entity receiving Federal funding—

(1) the name of the entity;

(2) the amount of any Federal funds that the entity has received in each of the last 10 fiscal years;

(3) an itemized breakdown of each transaction, including funding agency, program source, and a description of the purpose of each funding action;

(4) the location of the entity and primary location of performance, including the city, State congressional district, and country;

(5) a unique identifier for each such entity and parent entity, should the entity be owned by another entity; and

(6) any other relevant information.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ENTITY.—The term ''entity''—

(A) includes—

(i) a corporation;

(ii) an association;

(iii) a partnership;

(iv) a limited liability company;

(v) a limited liability partnership;

(vi) any other legal business entity;

(vii) grantees, contractors, and, on and after October 1, 2007, subgrantees and subcontractors; and

(viii) any State or locality; and

(B) does not include—

(i) an individual recipient of Federal assistance;

(ii) a Federal employee; or

(iii) a grant or contract of a nature that could be reasonably expected to cause damage to national security.

(2) FEDERAL FUNDING.—The term ''federal funding''—

(A) means Federal financial assistance and expenditures that include grants, contracts, subgrants, subcontracts, loans, awards and other forms of financial assistance; and

(B) does not include credit card transactions or minor purchases.

(3) SEARCHABLE DATABASE WEBSITE.—The term ''searchable database website'' means a website that allows the public to—

(A) search Federal funding by name of entity, parent entity, or type of industry, geography, including location of the entity and the primary location of the performance, amounts and types of federal funding, program sources, type of activity being performed, time factors such as fiscal years or multiple fiscal years, and other relevant information; and

(B) download data included in subparagraph (A) including outcomes from searches.

(c) WEBSITE.—The database website established by this section—

(1) shall not be considered in compliance if it links to FPDS, Grants.gov or other existing websites and databases, unless each of those sites has information from all agencies and each category of information required to be itemized can be searched electronically by field in a single search;

(2) shall provide an opportunity for the public to provide input about the utility and of the site and recommendations for improvements; and

(3) shall be updated at least quarterly every fiscal year.

(d) AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director of OMB shall provide guidance to agency heads to ensure compliance with this section.

(e) REPORT.—The Director of OMB shall annually report to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs and the House Committee on Government Reform on implementation of the website that shall include data about the usage and public feedback on the utility of the site, including recommendations for improvements. The annual report shall be made publicly available on the website.

SA 3176. Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. OBAMA) proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2944 submitted by Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. INHOFE) to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; as follows:

TITLE—SENATE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INTEGRITY

SEC. 11. ESTABLISHMENT OF SENATE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INTEGRITY.

There is established, as an office within the Senate, the Senate Office of Public Integrity (referred to in this title as the ''Office'').

SEC. 12. DIRECTOR.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate upon the joint recommendation of the majority leader of the Senate and the minority leader of the Senate. The selection and appointment of the Director shall be without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of fitness to perform the duties of the Office.

(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Director shall possess demonstrated integrity, independence, and public credibility and shall have training or experience in law enforcement, the judiciary, civil or criminal litigation, or as a member of a Federal, State, or local ethics enforcement agency.

(b) VACANCY.—A vacancy in the directorship shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(c) TERM OF OFFICE.—The Director shall serve for a term of 5 years and may be reappointed.

(d) REMOVAL.—

(1) AUTHORITY.—The Director may be removed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate upon the joint recommendation of the Senate majority and minority leaders for—

(A) disability that substantially prevents the Director from carrying out the duties of the Director;

(B) inefficiency;

(C) neglect of duty; or

(D) malfeasance, including a felony or conduct involving moral turpitude.

(2) STATEMENT OF REASONS.—In removing the Director, a statement of the reasons for removal shall be provided in writing to the Director.

(e) COMPENSATION.—The Director shall be compensated at the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 13. DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE OFFICE.

(a) DUTIES.—The Office is authorized—

(1) to investigate any alleged violation by a Member, officer, or employee of the Senate, of any rule or other standard of conduct applicable to the conduct of such Member, officer, or employee under applicable Senate rules in the performance of his duties or the discharge of his responsibilities;

(2) to present a case of probable ethics violations to the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate;

(3) to make recommendations to the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate that it report to the appropriate Federal or State authorities any substantial evidence of a violation by a Member, officer, or employee of the Senate of any law applicable to the performance of his duties or the discharge of his responsibilities, which may have been disclosed in an investigation by the Office; and

(4) subject to review by the Select Committee on Ethics to approve, or deny approval, of trips as provided for in paragraph 2(f) of rule XXXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

(b) POWERS.—

(1) OBTAINING INFORMATION.—Upon request of the Office, the head of any agency or instrumentality of the Government shall furnish information deemed necessary by the Director to enable the Office to carry out its duties.

(2) REFERRALS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.—Whenever the Director has reason to believe that a violation of law may have occurred, he shall refer that matter to the Select Committee on Ethics with a recommendation as to whether the matter should be referred to the Department of Justice or other appropriate authority for investigation or other action.

SEC. 14. INVESTIGATIONS AND INTERACTION WITH THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS.

(a) INITIATION OF ENFORCEMENT MATTERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An investigation may be initiated by the filing of a complaint with the Office by a Member of Congress or an outside complainant, or by the Office on its own initiative, based on any information in its possession. The Director shall not accept a complaint concerning a Member of Congress within 60 days of an election involving such Member.

(2) FILED COMPLAINT.—

(A) TIMING.—In the case of a complaint that is filed, the Director shall within 30 days make an initial determination as to whether the complaint should be dismissed or whether there are sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation. The subject of the complaint shall be provided by the Director with an opportunity during the 30-day period to challenge the complaint.

(B) DISMISSAL.—The Director may dismiss a complaint if the Director determines—

(i) the complaint fails to state a violation;

(ii) there is a lack of credible evidence of a violation; or

(iii) the violation is inadvertent, technical, or otherwise of a de minimis nature.

(C) REFERRAL.—In any case where the Director decides to dismiss a complaint, the Director may refer the case to the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate under paragraph (3) to determine if the complaint is frivolous.

(3) FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINTS.—If the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate determines that a complaint is frivolous, the committee may notify the Director not to accept any future complaint filed by that same person and the complainant may be required to pay for the costs of the Office resulting from such complaint. The Director may refer the matter to the Department of Justice to collect such costs.

(4) PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION.—For any investigation conducted by the Office at its own initiative, the Director shall make a preliminary determination of whether there are sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation. Before making that determination, the subject of the investigation shall be provided by the Director with an opportunity to submit information to the Director that there are not sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation.

(5) NOTICE TO COMMITTEE.—Whenever the Director determines that there are sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation—

(A) the Director shall notify the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate of this determination; and

(B) the committee may overrule the determination of the Director if, within 10 legislative days—

(i) the committee by an affirmative, roll-call vote of two-thirds of the full committee votes to overrule the determination of the Director;

(ii) the committee issues a public report on the matter; and

(iii) the vote of each member of the committee on such roll-call vote is included in the report.

(b) CONDUCTING INVESTIGATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Director determines that there are sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation and his determination is not overruled under subsection (a)(5), the Director shall conduct an investigation to determine if probable cause exists that a violation occurred.

(2) AUTHORITY.—As part of an investigation, the Director may—

(A) administer oaths;

(B) issue subpoenas;

(C) compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of papers, books, accounts, documents, and testimony; and

(D) himself, or by delegation to Office staff, take the deposition of witnesses.

(3) REFUSAL TO OBEY.—If a person disobeys or refuses to comply with a subpoena, or if a witness refuses to testify to a matter, he may be held in contempt of Congress.

(4) ENFORCEMENT.—If the Director determines that the Director is limited in the Director's ability to obtain documents, testimony, and other information needed as part of an investigation because of potential constitutional, statutory, or rules restrictions, or due to lack of compliance, the Director may refer the matter to the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate for consideration and appropriate action by the committee. The committee shall promptly act on a request under this paragraph.

(c) PRESENTATION OF CASE TO SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS.—

(1) NOTICE TO COMMITTEES.—If the Director determines, upon conclusion of an investigation, that probable cause exists that an ethics violation has occurred, the Director shall notify the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate of this determination.

(2) COMMITTEE DECISION.—The Select Committee on Ethics may overrule the determination of the Director if, within 30 legislative days—

(A) the committee by an affirmative, roll-call vote of two-thirds of the full committee votes to overrule the determination of the Director;

(B) the committee issues a public report on the matter; and

(C) the vote of each member of the committee on such roll-call vote is included in the report.

(3) DETERMINATION AND RULING.—

(A) REFERRAL.—If the Director determines there is probable cause that an ethics violation has occurred and the Director's determination is not overruled, the Director shall present the case and evidence to the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate to hear and make a determination pursuant to its rules.

(B) FINAL DECISION.—The Select Committee on Ethics shall vote upon whether the individual who is the subject of the investigation has violated any rules or other standards of conduct applicable to that individual in his official capacity. Such votes shall be a roll-call vote of the full committee, a quorum being present. The committee shall issue a public report which shall include the vote of

each member of the committee on such roll-call vote.

(d) SANCTIONS.—Whenever the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate finds that an ethics violation has occurred, the Director shall recommend appropriate sanctions to the committee and whether a matter should be referred to the Department of Justice for investigation.

SEC. 15. PROCEDURAL RULES.

(a) PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN INVESTIGATIONS.—No investigation shall be undertaken by the Office of any alleged violation of a law, rule, regulation, or standard of conduct not in effect at the time of the alleged violation.

(b) DISCLOSURE.—Information or testimony received, or the contents of a complaint or the fact of its filing, or recommendations made by the Director to the committee, may be publicly disclosed by the Director or by the staff of the Office only if authorized by the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate.

SEC. 16. SOPI EMPLOYEES UNDER THE CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.

Section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 3) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (H), by striking ''or'';

(B) in subparagraph (I), by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(J) the Office of Public Integrity.''; and

(2) in paragraph (9), by striking ''and the Office of Technology Assessment'' and inserting ''the Office of Technology Assessment, and the Senate Office of Public Integrity''.

SEC. 17. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by subsection (b), this title shall take effect on January 1, 2007.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Section 312 shall take effect upon the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 3177. Mr. COBURN. submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. LOBBYING DISCLOSURE AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF FORMS FILED BY RECIPIENTS OF FEDERAL FUNDS AND CONTRACTS.

(a) LOBBYING DISCLOSURE.—Section 1352(b)(2) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) an itemization of any funds spent by the person for lobbying on a calendar year basis.''.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Section 1352(b) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(7) Declarations required to be filed by paragraph (1) shall be made available by the Office of Management and Budget on a public, fully searchable website that shall be updated quarterly.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 3178. Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. FEINGOLD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place insert the following:

SEC. ___. BAN ON IN OFFICE EMPLOYMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

Rule XXXVII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by adding at the end the following:

''13. (a) A member of the Senate shall not negotiate or have any arrangement concerning prospective private employment if a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest might exist.

''(b) An employee of the Senate earning in excess of 75 percent of the salary paid to a Senator shall recuse himself or herself from working on legislation if a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest might exist as a result of negotiations for prospective private employment.

''(c) The Select Committee on Ethics shall develop guidelines concerning conduct which is covered by this paragraph.''.

SA 3179. Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted an amendment intended to be processed by him to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

TITLE III—OFFICE OF LOBBYING DISCLOSURE

SEC. 301. ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF LOBBYING DISCLOSURE.

There is established, as an independent office within the legislative branch of the Government, the Office of Lobbying Disclosure (referred to in this title as the ''Office'').

SEC. 302. DIRECTOR.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR.—The Office shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by agreement of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the Senate, and the minority leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The selection and appointment of the Director shall be without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of fitness to perform the duties of the Office.

(b) VACANCY.—A vacancy in the directorship shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(c) TERM OF OFFICE.—The Director shall serve for a term of 5 years and may be reappointed.

(d) REMOVAL.—

(1) AUTHORITY.—The Director may be removed by a majority of the appointing authority for—

(A) disability that substantially prevents the Director from carrying out the duties of the Director;

(B) inefficiency;

(C) neglect of duty; or

(D) malfeasance, including a felony or conduct involving moral turpitude.

(2) STATEMENT OF REASONS.—In removing the Director, a statement of the reasons for removal shall be provided in writing to the Director.

(e) COMPENSATION.—The Director shall be compensated at the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 303. DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE OFFICE.

(a) DUTIES.—The Office is authorized—

(1) to receive, monitor, and oversee reports filed by registered lobbyists under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995;

(2) to assume all other responsibilities and authorities of the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995;

(3) to refer to the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate and Committee on Standard of Official Conduct of the House of Representatives, as appropriate, any information it comes across that relates to a possible violation of ethics rules or standards of the relevant body;

(4) to conduct periodic and random reviews and audits of reports filed with it to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and rules; and

(5) to provide informal guidance to registrants under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 of their responsibilities under such Act.

(b) POWERS.—

(1) OBTAINING INFORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon request of the Office, the head of any agency or instrumentality of the Government shall furnish information deemed necessary by the Director to enable the Office to carry out its duties.

(B) INVESTIGATION BY DOJ.—In the event that the Office, due to failure of a person to comply with a request for information, is unable to determine whether a violation of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 has occurred, the Office may refer the matter to the Department of Justice for it to investigate whether a violation of the Act may have occurred.

(2) REFERRALS TO DOJ.—Whenever the Director has reason to believe that a violation of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 may have occurred, he shall refer that matter to the Department of Justice for it to investigate.

(3) GENERAL AUDITS.—The Director shall have the authority to conduct general audits of filings under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.

SEC. 304. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF.

(a) STAFF AND SUPPORT SERVICES.—The Director may appoint and fix the compensation of such staff as the Director considers necessary.

(b) APPLICABILITY OF CIVIL SERVICE LAWS.—The Director and other members of the staff of the Office shall be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service.

(c) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Director may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

(d) PHYSICAL FACILITIES.—The Architect of the Capitol, in consultation with the appropriate entities in the legislative branch, shall locate and provide suitable office space for the operation of the Office on a nonreimbursable basis. The facilities shall serve as the headquarters of the Office and shall include all necessary equipment and incidentals required for the proper functioning of the Office.

(e) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the Director, the Architect of the Capitol and the Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Director on a nonreimbursable basis such administrative support services as the Commission may request.

(2) ADDITIONAL SUPPORT.—In addition to the assistance set forth in paragraph (1), departments and agencies of the United States may provide the Director such services, funds, facilities, staff, and other support services as the Director may deem advisable and as may be authorized by law.

(f) USE OF MAILS.—The Office may use the United States mails in the same manner and

under the same conditions as Federal agencies and shall, for purposes of the frank, be considered a commission of Congress as described in section 3215 of title 39, United States Code.

(g) PRINTING.—For purposes of costs relating to printing and binding, including the cost of personnel detailed from the Government Printing Office, the Office shall be deemed to be a committee of the Congress.

SEC. 305. EXPENSES.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this title.

(b) FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES.—The Director may place orders and enter into agreements for goods and services with the head of any agency, or major organizational unit within an agency, in the legislative or executive branch of the Government in the same manner and to the same extent as agencies are authorized to do so under sections 1535 and 1536 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 306. TRANSFER OF RECORDS.

Not later than 90 days after the effective date of this Act, the Office of Public Records in the Senate and the Office of Clerk of the House of Representatives shall transfer all records to the Office with respect to their former duties under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.

SEC. 307. TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION TO OFFICE OF LOBBYING DISCLOSURE.

(a) FILING OF REGISTRATIONS.—Section 4 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1603) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''Office of Lobbying Disclosure''; and

(2) in subsection (d), by striking ''Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''Office of Lobbying Disclosure''.

(b) REPORTS BY REGISTERED LOBBYISTS.—Section 5(a) of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1604(a)) is amended by striking ''Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''Office of Lobbying Disclosure''.

(c) DISCLOSURE AND ENFORCEMENT.—Section 6(a) of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1605) is amended by striking ''Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''Office of Lobbying Disclosure''.

(d) PENALTIES.—Section 7 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1606) is amended by striking ''Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''Office of Lobbying Disclosure''.

(e) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Section 8(c) of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1607(c)) is amended by striking ''Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''Office of Lobbying Disclosure''.

(f) ESTIMATES BASED ON TAX REPORTING SYSTEM.—Section 15(c)(1) of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1610(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''Office of Lobbying Disclosure''.

SEC. 308. OFFICE EMPLOYEES UNDER THE CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.

Section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 3) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (H), by striking ''or'';

(B) in subparagraph (I), by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(J) the Office of Lobbying Disclosure.''; and

(2) in paragraph (9), by striking ''and the Office of Technology Assessment'' and inserting ''the Office of Technology Assessment, and the Office of Lobbying Disclosure''.

SEC. 309. PROHIBITION ON FILING AND OTHER ASSOCIATED FEES.

The Office shall not—

(1) charge any registrant a fee for filings with the Office required under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995; or

(2) charge such a registrant a fee for obtaining an electronic signature for such a filing.

SEC. 310. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by subsection (b), this title shall take effect on January 1, 2007.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Sections 302, 304, and 305 shall take effect upon the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 3180. Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 5, strike lines 4 through 17 and insert the following:

''(2) the term 'out-of-scope earmark' means an earmark that includes any matter not committed to the conferees by either House; and

''(3) the term 'assistance' means budget authority, contract authority, loan authority, and other expenditures, and tax expenditures or other revenue items.

''2. It shall not be in order to consider any Senate bill or Senate amendment or conference report on any bill, including an appropriations bill, a revenue bill, and an authorizing bill, unless a list of—

''(1) all earmarks in such measure;

''(2) an explanation of the essential governmental purpose for each earmark; and

''(3) an identification of the Member or Members who proposed each out-of-scope earmark, if any;

SA 3181. Mr. REID (for Mr. BYRD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 50, strike lines 8 through 13 and insert the following:

(1) FINAL REPORT.—Two years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to Congress a final report containing information described in subsection (a).

SA 3182. Mr. REID (for Mr. BYRD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 46, after line 7, insert the following:

(d) LIMIT ON COMMISSION AUTHORITY.—The Commission shall not conduct any law enforcement investigation, function as a court of law, or otherwise usurp the duties and responsibilities of the ethics committee of the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Strike Sec. 266(a)(2) and (b).

SA 3183. Mr. COBURN (for himself and Mr. OBAMA) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 5, strike line 21 through page 6, line 19, and insert the following:

72 hours before its consideration.

SEC. 104. AVAILABILITY OF LEGISLATION ON THE INTERNET.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) AMENDMENT.—Rule XIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by adding at the end the following:

''11. (a) It shall not be in order to consider a bill or resolution, or conference report thereon, unless such measure is available to all Members and made available through a searchable electronic format to the general public by means of the Internet for at least 72 hours before its consideration.

''(b) This paragraph may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of 3/5 of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of 3/5 of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required in the Senate to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this paragraph.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall take effect 60 days after the date of enactment of this title.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this title, the Secretary of the Senate, in consultation with the Clerk of the House of Representatives, the Government Printing Office, and the Committee on Rules and Administration, shall develop and establish a website capable of complying with the requirements of paragraph 11 of rule XIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, as added by subsection (a).

NOTICES OF HEARINGS/MEETINGS

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Environment and Public Works will hold an oversight hearing on Wednesday, March 29, at 9:30 a.m., on the impact of the elimination of MTBE.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on National Parks of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, April 6, 2006, at 2:30 p.m. in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the following bills: S. 1510, a bill to designate as wilderness certain lands within the Rocky Mountain National Park in the State of Colorado; S. 1719 and H.R. 1492, bills to provide for the preservation of the historic confinement sites where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II, and for other purposes; S. 1957, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Interior to convey to The Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Interpretive Trail and Visitor Center Foundation, Inc. certain Federal land associated with the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail in Nebraska, to be used as

an historical interpretive site along the trail; S. 2034 and H.R. 394, bills to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to evaluate the significance of the Colonel James Barnett Farm in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and assess the suitability and feasibility of including the farm in the National Park System as part of the Minute Man National Historical Park, and for other purposes; S. 2252, a bill to designate the National Museum of Wildlife Art, located at 2820 Rungius Road, Jackson, Wyoming, as the National Museum of Wildlife Art of the United States; and S. 2403, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to include in the boundaries of the Grand Teton National Park land and interests in land of the Grand Teton Park Subdivision, and for other purposes.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send two copies of their testimony to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, SD–364 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510–6150.

For further information, please contact Tom Lillie, David Szymanski, or Sara Zecher.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m. to hold a hearing on Multilateral Development Banks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a hearing on Nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 485 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing on S. 1439, the Indian Trust Reform Act of 2005, Titles II through VI.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a hearing on ''NSA III: Wartime Executive Powers and the FISA Court'' on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Witness List

Panel I: The Honorable Harold A. Baker, Judge, U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Urbana, IL; The Honorable Stanley S. Brotman, Judge, U.S. District Court of New Jersey, Camden, NJ; The Honorable John F. Keenan, Judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York New York City, NY; The Honorable Allan Kornblum, Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida Gainesville, FL.

Panel II: Morton H. Halperin, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, Executive Director, Open Society Policy Center, Washington, DC; David S. Kris, Senior Vice President, Time Warner, Inc., New York, NY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations be authorized to meet on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, 9:30 a.m., for a hearing entitled ''Neutralizing The Nuclear And Radiological Threat: Securing the Global Supply Chain (Part One).''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Airland be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 28, 2006, at 2:30 p.m. in open session to receive testimony on Air Force and Navy tactical aviation programs in review of the Defense authorization request for fiscal year 2007 and the future years Defense program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Aviation be authorized to meet on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 10 a.m., on FAA Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BIOTERRORISM AND PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Bioterrorism and Public Health Preparedness be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 10 a.m., in SD–430.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security be authorized to meet on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 2:30 p.m., for a hearing regarding ''Bolstering the Safety Net: Eliminating Medicaid Fraud.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RETIREMENT SECURITY AND AGING

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Retirement Security and Aging be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 28, 2006, at 2:30 p.m., in SD–430.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination on today's Executive Calendar: No. 596. I further ask unanimous consent that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

COAST GUARD

The following named individual for appointment as Commandant of the United States Coast Guard and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 44:

To be admiral

Vice Adm. Thad W. Allen

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2006

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 380, H.R. 4911.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4911) to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 4911) was read the third time and passed.

FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 410, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 410) designating April 2006 as ''Financial Literacy Month.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table; and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 410) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 410

Whereas the personal savings rate of United States citizens in 2005 was negative 0.5 percent, marking the first time that the rate has been negative since the Great Depression year of 1933;

Whereas in 2005, only 42 percent of workers or their spouses calculated the amount that they needed to save for retirement, down from 53 percent in 2000;

Whereas the 2005 Retirement Confidence Survey found that a majority of workers believe that they are behind schedule on their retirement savings and that their debt is a problem;

Whereas during the third quarter of 2005, the household debt of United States citizens reached $11,000,000,000;

Whereas during the third quarter of 2005, individuals serviced their debt with a record 13.75 percent of after-tax income;

Whereas nearly 1,600,000 individuals filed for bankruptcy in 2004;

Whereas approximately 75,000,000 individuals remain credit-challenged and unbanked, or are not using insured, mainstream financial institutions;

Whereas expanding access to the mainstream financial system will provide individuals with less expensive and more secure options for managing their finances and building wealth;

Whereas a greater understanding of and familiarity with financial markets and institutions will lead to increased economic activity and growth;

Whereas financial literacy empowers individuals to make wise financial decisions and reduces the confusion caused by the increasingly complex economy of the United States;

Whereas only 26 percent of individuals who were between the ages of 13 and 21 reported that their parents actively taught them how to manage money;

Whereas the majority of college seniors have 4 or more credit cards, and the average college senior carries a balance of $3,000;

Whereas 1 in every 10 college students has more than $7,000 of debt;

Whereas many college students pay more in interest on their credit cards than on their student loans;

Whereas a 2004 Survey of States by the National Council on Economic Education found that 49 States include the subject of economics in their elementary and secondary education standards, and 38 States include personal finance, up from 48 and 31 States, respectively, in 2002;

Whereas a 2004 study by the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy found that high school seniors scored higher than their previous class on an exam about credit cards, retirement funds, insurance, and other personal finance basics for the first time since 1997;

Whereas, in spite of the improvement in test scores, 65 percent of all participating students still failed the exam;

Whereas individuals develop personal financial management skills and lifelong habits during their childhood;

Whereas personal financial education is essential to ensure that individuals are prepared to manage money, credit, and debt, and become responsible workers, heads of households, investors, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and citizens;

Whereas Congress found it important to coordinate Federal financial literacy efforts and formulate a national strategy; and

Whereas, in light of that finding, Congress established the Financial Literacy and Education Commission in 2003 and designated the Office of Financial Education of the Department of the Treasury to provide support for the Commission: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2006 as ''Financial Literacy Month'' to raise public awareness about—

(A) the importance of financial education in the United States; and

(B) the serious consequences that may result from a lack of understanding about personal finances; and

(2) calls on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and the citizens of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs and activities.

RECOGNIZING A MILESTONE IN THE HISTORY OF GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 411, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 411) recognizing a milestone in the history of Gallaudet University.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 411) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 411

Whereas Gallaudet University grants more bachelor's degrees to deaf people than any other institution of higher learning in the world, is the only such institution serving primarily deaf and hard of hearing students, and provides groundbreaking research in the field of deafness;

Whereas, in 1988 Dr. I. King Jordan became the first deaf President of Gallaudet University, and the first deaf president of any institution of higher education in the United States;

Whereas deaf and hard of hearing graduates of Gallaudet University serve as leaders around the globe;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan graduated from Gallaudet University in 1970 with a B.A. in Psychology, and received both a master's degree and a doctorate in Psychology from University of Tennessee by 1973;

Whereas, before his appointment as president, Dr. I. King Jordan served as the Chair of the Department of Psychology and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Science at Gallaudet University;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan was a research fellow at Donaldson's School for the Deaf in Edinburgh, Scotland, an exchange scholar at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, and a lecturer at schools in Paris, Toulouse, and Marseille, France;

Whereas, from 1997 to 2001, Dr. I. King Jordan led the first comprehensive capital campaign for Gallaudet University and successfully raised nearly $40,000,000, which was used by the University to strengthen academic programs, increase the endowment, and construct the Student Academic Center;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan established the President's Fellow program to increase the number of deaf and hard of hearing faculty members by providing support for deaf and hard of hearing college graduates to complete their terminal degree;

Whereas in 1988, Dr. I. King Jordan proclaimed to the world, ''Deaf people can do anything, except hear.'';

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is a strong advocate on the national and international level for deaf people and people of all disabilities, and was a lead witness in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (in this resolution referred to as the ''ADA'') during a joint session of Congress prior to the passage of ADA;

Whereas in July 2005, Dr. I. King Jordan received the George Bush Medal for the Empowerment of People with Disabilities, an award established to honor those individuals who perform outstanding service to encourage the spirit of ADA throughout the world;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan served in the Navy from 1962 to 1966;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan has shared nearly 38 years of marriage with Linda Kephart, with whom he has two children, King and Heidi;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is a strong supporter of physical fitness and has completed more than 200 marathons and 40 100-mile marathons;

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan will retire as the first deaf president of Gallaudet University on December 31, 2006; and

Whereas Dr. I. King Jordan is an accomplished, respected leader who devoted his life to Gallaudet University and efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and individuals with disabilities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) Recognizes the achievement of Gallaudet University; its leadership, faculty and students; and

(2) expresses appreciation to Dr. I. King Jordan for his many years of dedicated service to Gallaudet University, to the deaf and hard of hearing community, and to all individuals with disabilities.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2467

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk. I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2467) to enhance and improve the trade relations of the United States trade enforcement efforts and encouraging United States trading partners to adhere to the rules and norms of international trade, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2006

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, March 29. I further ask that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved and the Senate proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour with the first 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the final 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee; further, that following morning business the Senate resume consideration of S. 2349, the lobbying reform bill. I further ask that at 10:50, Senator DODD or his designee be recognized to call up amendments on behalf of himself or others and at 10:55 Senator LOTT or his designee be recognized to call up amendments on behalf of himself or other Members.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Today we made significant progress on the lobbying reform bill. Cloture was invoked an hour or so ago. Under an agreement that we have just entered, Senators will have up to 11 a.m. in the morning to offer first-degree amendments that qualify postcloture. Votes will occur, and we expect to finish up the lobbying bill in a reasonable time on Wednesday. That will allow us to begin consideration of the border control legislation.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:08 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 29, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate Tuesday, March 28, 2006:

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 44:

To be admiral

VICE ADM. THAD W. ALLEN

THE ABOVE NOMINATION WAS APPROVED SUBJECT TO THE NOMINEE'S COMMITMENT TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS TO APPEAR AND TESTIFY BEFORE ANY DULY CONSTITUTED COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF DR. RUDY CASTRUITA

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to Dr. Rudy Castruita of California on the occasion of his retirement as San Diego County Superintendent of Schools. I have known Dr. Castruita since 1994 when he became County Superintendent in San Diego and have always been impressed by his tireless commitment to children and the students across the school districts he served. He dedicated his career to furthering the cause of education and to helping our kids learn.

Prior to his appointment as Superintendent in San Diego, he served with great distinction for six years as superintendent of the Santa Ana Unified School District where he was recognized for his tremendous leadership and innovation. Among the recognition his leadership has brought to local schools are several highly coveted California School Boards Association Golden Bell Awards for leading edge efforts to address the educational needs of students, the Federal Blue Ribbon Schools designation and California Distinguished Schools designation. He has also received the prestigious Marcus Foster Award from the Association of California School Administrators and in 1992, he was named California's Superintendent of the Year.

As a San Diegan with deep roots in the public schools there, I took great pride in the role that Dr. Castruita played as Chair of the statewide effort to set standards for high school graduates in the state of California. This endeavor was perhaps the most important state education reform of the past several decades. He also served on the State Superintendent's Advisory Committee for implementing the Public School Accountability Act of 1999, a law that helped to instill rigorous standards into the curriculum and educational delivery system throughout the state.

He also served on the Governance Task Force of the statewide committee to develop a Master Plan for Education, and State Reading First Committee. Dr. Castruita's abiding personal commitment to eradicating illiteracy across our community has made the San Diego County Office of Education a beacon in literacy programs and distinguished him as a prominent leader in this important Issue.

I have had the pleasure, along with a number of state leaders including governors from our state and other state constitutional officers to utilize the San Diego County Office of Education's state-of-the-art regional technology center that exists today because of Dr. Castruita's efforts. His enthusiasm and interest in cutting-edge technology to lift student achievement resulted in his being named one of 12 "tech savvy" superintendents in the nation by eSchool News.

In San Diego, we are also proud of Dr. Castruita's notable commitment to national leadership, serving on several national boards including Scholarship America and the prestigious Education Research & Development Institute. He was nominated by the President of the United States and appointed by Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defense, and Rod Paige, U.S. Secretary of Education, to serve on the President's Advisory for the Department of Defense Schools, which are military-based schools overseas.

He has also built impressive and lasting relationships in the community with our public schools that includes work with the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, San Diego United Way/CHAD, the San Diego YMCA, the Natural History Museum, Laurels for Leaders, and the California Center for the Arts.

His work on behalf of California's children and our schools has made a real difference across our state, and we all owe him a great debt of gratitude for championing these issues. It is hard to imagine substantive discussions of education policy in our state without Dr. Castruita involved. He has provided me with tremendous guidance and advice on these important issues on countless occasions and his wise counsel will be missed. I wish both he and his family well in his retirement. Dr. Castruita continues a lasting and impressive legacy of commitment to public education within California and across the country as he begins other endeavors that will undoubtedly contribute to the well being of children and public education.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker for allowing me this time to honor such a great leader and important figure to education.

CONGRATULATING EVAN SCOTT GAWLIK

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Evan Scott Gawlik of Denton on his commitment, contribution and success as a finalist in this year's Intel Science Talent Search.

The Intel Science Talent Search is a science competition for high school seniors. Intel is committed to encouraging and developing America's brightest youths so that they may well be on the road to becoming tomorrow's elite scientists. As an Intel STS finalist, Mr. Gawlik is displaying to the world that he has exceptional promise and has the potential to become one of tomorrow's great scientists. Through education programs such as the Intel Science Talent Search, Intel works to inspire and educate children in communities around the world in the areas of science, mathematics and engineering.

One of those finalists was Evan Scott Gawlik, a constituent of the 26th District, who attends the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science in Denton. This honor will most certainly serve as a milestone in this young man's career as a scientist.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Evan Scott Gawlik for his efforts and for receiving this commendable award given by the Intel Science Talent Search. His commitment to science and to helping others serves as an inspiration to all.

IN HONOR OF THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATION

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor, recognition and celebration of the 65th Anniversary of the United Service Organization (USO), a non-profit, civilian organization established in 1941. Since then, the USO has filled a void in the lives of men and women serving in the U.S. military, by providing them with entertainment, recreation, support services and the priceless sense of connection to home.

In 1941, the USO was incorporated in the State of New York. By 1944, USOs had been established in more than 3,000 locations across the country, held aloft by its volunteer membership. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who initially challenged six non-profit organizations to form a military support organization, became the first USO Honorary Chairperson—a role accepted by every President ever since. The mission of the USO has remained unwavering: To serve the spiritual, social, welfare, educational and entertainment needs of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Over the years, thousands of entertainers, famous and unknown, have volunteered their time and efforts to perform to grateful audiences on U.S. military bases around the world. From the legendary music of Duke Ellington to the manic comedy of Robin Williams, the USO tradition has carried on. The brilliant legacy of volunteerism that illuminates the life of the late Bob Hope, whose name is synonymous with the USO, is carried on through the song, dance and comedy of every volunteer who continues to keep the spirit of hope alive for our men and women serving our country far from home.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of the volunteers, past and present, of the United Service Organization. During times of war and peace, the USO continues to serve as a vital bond of calm and familiarity, uplifting the spirit of men and women in uniform with heartening support and entertainment reminiscent of home. We extend our deepest gratitude to those who have traveled thousands of miles, crossing perilous borders and lands of strife, to uplift

their morale and reenergize the spirit of countless American soldiers around the world. On behalf of the memory of Bob Hope and the collective service of every volunteer—Thanks for the Memories.

HONORING THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY CLASS OF 1951

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the U.S. Military Academy Class of 1951.

The Class of 1951 has many noteworthy members such as the first black four-star General in the U.S. Army, Roscoe Robinson, a Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, Edward C. Meyer, David M. Abshire a NATO ambassador and Special Counsel, and Bill Richardson who served as the Commander of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command. Buzz Aldrin, one of the first two men to land on the moon also graduated with this profound group.

The Class of 1951 has produced 3 four-star generals, 7 three-star generals, 12 two-star generals and 4 one-star generals. In addition, the Class of 1951 has earned 5 Distinguished Service Crosses, 6 Distinguished Defense Service Medals, over 100 Purple Hearts, and over 60 Silver Stars. The Class of 1951 also has approximately 200 Combat Infantry Badges, 100 Distinguished Flying Crosses and over 50 Distinguished Service Medals.

The Class of 1951 played a major role in securing the safety and security of the people of the U.S. during a critical period in our history. The class participated in the inaugural parade of President Harry S. Truman, and the funeral processions of General John Pershing and General Henry Arnold. The Class of 1951 also participated in the wars of Korea and Vietnam with direct participation in The Battle of Pork Chop Hill in Korea, the battles connected to the Tet Offensive in Vietnam and the Cambodian operations in mid–1970. Most notably a majority of the class of 1951 saw combat during the Cold War. The class assisted in many new initiatives that were tested and implemented during this period. The class supported efforts during the Cold War, by assisting in the introduction of the nuclear age to the Armed Forces, participating in the activities to secure the Berlin Wall and additional activities involved or related to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to commend and congratulate the U.S. Military Academy Class of 1951 on all of its contributions and accomplishments. They have served this country well, truly meriting recognition. I call upon my colleagues to join me in the applauding the Class of 1951's past accomplishments and in wishing the class continued success in the years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 67 on the motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 4297, I was on a leave of absence due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT A. FREY

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Robert A. Frey, the 2006 Boy Scouts of America Frontier District Honoree. Robert Frey has dedicated over 30 years of service to Boy Scout Troop 127 and served for 29 years as chairman of the Troop Committee. Robert will be recognized at the Boy Scouts of America Frontier District Annual Fundraising Breakfast for his contributions to the organization and his community.

Robert has dedicated his life to serving his community and his country. He served as a member of the U.S. Army in the Southwest Pacific for nearly 3 years, followed by 31 years of employment at Letterkenny Army Depot in Chambersburg, PA. He has also taken an active role in the Presbyterian Church of Falling Spring, serving as a deacon, ruling elder, Sunday school teacher, and youth group advisor.

In addition to his contributions to the U.S. Army and his church, Robert devoted much of his life to guiding hundreds of Boy Scouts, leading backpacking trips and teaching them about the outdoors. Robert served as chairman of the Troop Committee from 1976 until 2005, an almost unheard of length of service in which he provided direction to Scouts, counseling them through the Eagle Scout process and teaching them life skills.

Known as "Pop" to the hundreds of kids he has led, Robert Frey illustrates the important and rewarding role community members play in the lives of children. He has been recognized for his exceptional service with the Frontier District Award of Merit, the Keystone Area Council Silver Beaver Award, and the National Council/Presbyterian Church USA God and Service Award.

Robert has enthusiastically committed his life to helping others, serving his country, his community, and his church. The citizens of Chambersburg, the Presbyterian Church of Falling Spring, and the hundreds of boys he has guided throughout his service as a Scout leader would like to join me in thanking him for his outstanding service and devotion to his community.

TRIBUTE TO ELI SEGAL

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary American, Eli Segal, who passed away on February 20, 2006 at the age of 63.

Eli Segal was born in Brooklyn, NY, in 1943. He graduated from Brandeis University in 1964 and received a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1967.

Mr. Segal began his political involvement in 1968 when he joined Senator Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign. Even though Senator McCarthy lost, Mr. Segal was not deterred. He went on to serve in key positions on several Democratic presidential campaigns, culminating with the 1992 campaign of President Clinton, which was Eli Segal's first presidential campaign victory.

Mr. Segal served as Assistant to the President in the Clinton White House, and within months established the Corporation for National Service, now known as AmeriCorps. Because of his superb skills and management, the once controversial program became an acclaimed success. Four hundred thousand young Americans enrolled in the program and helped to improve their communities and their country. Mr. Segal also took an active interest in City Year, another service program he eventually chaired. At the request of Nelson Mandela, he helped launch City Year in South Africa.

When President Clinton signed welfare reforms into law in 1996, Mr. Segal took on the challenge of creating opportunities for former welfare recipients who were now required to work. He began asking American companies to make commitments to hire former welfare recipients, and his "welfare-to-work partnership" grew from five companies to 20,000. As he did with AmeriCorps, Mr. Segal left a great legacy with the success of welfare reform.

Mr. Segal is survived by his wife Phyllis, his son Jonathan, his daughter Mora, two grandchildren, and his brother Alan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring an outstanding American and an extraordinary public servant. We extend our deepest sympathy to Eli Segal's family and we pay tribute to a life filled with values and contributions to the country he loved and served so well. He made our Nation stronger and I consider myself blessed to have known him and worked with him.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 64 on the motion to recommit H.R. 4939 with instructions, I was on a leave of absence due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

CONGRATULATING LEON H. BRACHMAN

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Leon H. Brachman, who for his steadfast service on the Baylor All Saints

Hospital Board, has been selected to receive the Centennial Heritage A ward.

The Centennial Heritage Award recognizes individuals and corporations that support the All Saints Health Foundation with major contributions, as well as past hospital chiefs of staffs, and foundation and board chairs. These individuals who represent the leadership of the hospital for the past 100 years are honored with Centennial stars.

Leon Brachman has diligently served on the Baylor All Saints Hospital Board since 1958. In his tenure as a board member, the All Saints Health Foundation has enjoyed many expansions and advancements. In 1959, All Saints moved to a new facility and increased its number of beds from 110 to 365. The Carter Rehabilitation Center opened for cardio-pulmonary and rehabilitation services in 1979. In addition, the first liver transplant in Fort Worth was performed at Baylor All Saints in 2002.

Mr. Brachman steadfast dedication to improvement and vision to Baylor All Saints has benefited many. Today, he remains a prominent figure by setting a high standard of excellence and encouraging others. His compassion, drive and determination for the betterment and quality of service at Baylor All Saints Hospital should be emulated.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Leon H. Brachman on receiving the Centennial Heritage Award and commend his perseverance and desire to make Baylor All Saints Hospital a symbol of quality health care.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF CLAYTON E. KEELING, JR.

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Clayton E. Keeling Jr., devoted father, Vietnam War Veteran, and friend and mentor to countless people throughout our community.

Mr. Keeling grew up in the City of Cleveland. He honorably served our Nation for 4 years as a member of the United States Marine Corp, retiring in 1969 at the rank of Corporal. His courageous tour of duty in Vietnam was recognized with a Purple Heart Medal, National Defense Service Medal and a Vietnam Service Medal.

Mr. Keeling's lifelong dedication to and focus on assisting United States Veterans was clearly reflected throughout his professional and personal life. He made an indelible impact on the lives of numerous veterans and their families as a Veteran's Representative at the Ohio Bureau of Job and Family Services, where he worked for many years. Moreover, Mr. Keeling volunteered his time and efforts to raise the lives of veterans and to raise their plight into the light of public consciousness. Mr. Keeling was a founding member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 15 of Cleveland.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor, gratitude and remembrance of Mr. Clayton E. Keeling, Jr. I extend my deepest condolences to his daughter, Lindsay Keeling, to his dearest friends, Marie Sudduth, Jack Beech and Greg and Janet Tulley; and to his extended family and numerous friends. Mr. Keeling's sacrifice, courage and service that he offered on behalf of our Nation and on behalf of the veterans of our community, has truly made a positive difference and will be honored and remembered for all time.

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF WEST SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 40th Anniversary of West Springfield Elementary located in Springfield, Virginia.

West Springfield Elementary, like all Fairfax County public schools, has a commitment to excellence, and the students, parents, and staff of West Springfield are all dedicated to having each student reach their highest potential. To kick off the celebration of their 40th year of excellence, tonight the WSES students will perform a night of patriotic music. The program is entitled ''Songs of America'', and each grade level will perform a song, and the school ensemble will close the night's celebration. In addition, on May 31st, the school will hold an open house to reunite old friends and enjoy art displays and refreshments.

West Springfield Elementary School's commitment to excellence has extended outside the classroom and into the community. For the second year, West Springfield Elementary is holding its Wellness Walk on April 5th to benefit Sickle Cell Anemia. Last year's walk raised funds for lymphoma research. In addition, the school has a chess club, and a Just-Say-No Club in which fourth and fifth graders promote ways to resist negative peer pressure. The parents, teachers, and staff of the West Springfield Elementary community get involved in various activities including the Fun Fair, which raises money for the school, and BINGO nights which allow the school community to gather for a night of fun.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank the West Springfield Elementary School faculty and staff for the immeasurable contributions that they have made to the community by shaping today's youth and tomorrow's future. I congratulate the school on its many successes over the last 40 years, and I wish it more successful years in the future. I ask that my colleagues join me in applauding this outstanding and distinguished school.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Chairman, during rollcall vote No. 59 on the Conaway amendment to H.R. 4939, I was on a leave of absence due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted ''no.''

TRIBUTE TO ANDY'S ARMY

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Andy's Army, a children's volunteer organization in Connellsville, PA. During their last week of school vacation, members of Andy's Army sacrificed swimming in the pool and playing outside to raise $10,000 for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Andy's Army, formed after the death of Andrew Peperak, a 26-year military veteran, performs community service in the Connellsville area. In late August, the members collected money to donate to the American Red Cross Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund. The group sold bottled water at a community parade and collected money at two busy city intersections for three days. They set their goal at $10,000 and did not give up until they achieved it.

After accomplishing their goal, Andy's Army was invited to Heinz Stadium to present the donation to Red Cross representatives. The kids were greeted by members of the Pittsburgh Steelers football team. Inspired by their enthusiasm and hard work, Pittsburgh Steelers' wide receiver Hines Ward matched their contribution and donated another $10,000 to the relief fund.

The kids of Andy's Army have exhibited compassion and determination to help others who are less fortunate than themselves. Andy's Army participants Alex Peperak, Charles Peperak, Luke Peperak, Elizabeth Sparks, Andrew Sparks, Nicole Sparks, Tyler Sparks, Ray Craig, John Eutsey, Ashleigh Eutsey, McKenzie Wildey, Cassie May, Courtney McClain, Katie Wilbur, Ashleigh Hawk and Tiffany Sherbondy all deserve our thanks and congratulations on their hard work to give an extraordinary $10,000 contribution to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND HURRICANE RECOVERY, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4939) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes:

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to this bill, the largest emergency appropriations measure to ever be considered by the House of Representatives. I do so with great reluctance because there are several positive aspects to the bill, including resources for our dedicated troops. Despite these reservations, I oppose this bill because the Administration and the Majority in Congress have failed to provide adequate oversight and accountability for our operations in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, in four days we will mark the third anniversary of this tragic war, a war that

I opposed from the beginning and which has already cost our country over $400 billion. Without a strategy for success or an end in sight, the Congressional Budget Office predicts the price tag for military costs alone will reach $600 billion by the end of this decade. The added costs of long-term healthcare for our veterans, reconstruction assistance, and economic aid will of course raise this figure exponentially, prompting some of our Nation's best economists to predict that the long-term costs of this war will rise as high as two trillion dollars. Meanwhile, the loss of our best and brightest young people can never be measured.

Going into war without the approval and support of the international community and without a plan for the post-war occupation period has resulted in a Nation less secure now than at the end of major combat operations. Despite the heroic efforts of our military, and the hundreds of billions of dollars poured into Iraq, it is now on the brink of civil war. We've seen how disastrously this administration's strategy, or lack thereof, has played out in Iraq, and yet we continue to circumvent the normal budget process, putting hundreds of billions of dollars on the national credit card without any plan for success, any plan to begin the process of bringing our troops home, or any plan to turn Iraq over to the Iraqi people.

Mr. Chairman, I voted in favor of our last emergency supplemental bill because, among other things, the bill instructed the Department of Defense to provide a detailed report to Congress of its military expenditures in Iraq and Afghanistan to finally allow us to track how the Administration was spending the taxpayer's money. Despite this language, the General Accounting Office reported in November numerous problems in DOD's processes for recording and reporting costs for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, the GAO found that neither DOD nor Congress can reliably know how much the war is costing, nor the details on how appropriated funds are being spent. The facts are not being made available and Congress is operating and appropriating without them.

Congress is not fulfilling its responsibility to act as the steward of the National Treasury. I, along with several colleagues on both sides of the aisle, have cosponsored legislation that would restore oversight and accountability to our budget process. Several of my colleagues have called for hearings and investigations into how funds are being spent in Iraq. These efforts have been met with near-total resistance by the Majority leadership in the House, and by the administration. Time and again we who are elected to keep close watch over spending are being denied the necessary tools to do our jobs.

The good in this bill is increased funding to address the crisis in Darfur, our fellow Americans affected by the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina and the language preventing the Dubai Ports deal from moving forward. I've supported these efforts in the past and were these provisions to be considered properly under normal budget procedures, I would support them.

Whether or not Members support the war in Iraq, it's becoming clearer day by day that the President's policies are unsustainable. Without a change of direction and a clear plan for success, I cannot in good conscience continue to pass off trillions of dollars to our children and grandchildren to fund this debacle.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Chairman, during rollcall vote No. 58 on the Millender-McDonald amendment to H.R. 4939, I was on a leave of absence due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF JOHN PETER SMITH HOSPITAL'S DEDICATION TO CHARITY CARE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Peter Smith Hospital as it celebrates 100 years. JPS has been serving the citizens of Tarrant County since its humble beginnings in 1906.

John Peter Smith Hospital has always retained its identity and mission to providing charitable care. Starting with a very small staff and limited space, JPS has tirelessly committed itself to the improvement of their patients' health.

In the past 20 years alone John Peter Smith Hospital has expanded outside the confines of the typical hospital. They have opened an AIDS clinic, a women's center and other multiple clinics across the county. Most recently, John Peter Smith Hospital has established a new hospital with 30 beds in south Arlington.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I stand here today to celebrate John Peter Smith Hospital for its 100th anniversary of actively providing quality health care to the thousands in need. As their representative, as a doctor and as a citizen of the 26th Congressional District, I am grateful for JPS Hospital's service.

IN HONOR OF REV. DR. JOSEPH SKRHA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Rev. Dr. Joseph Skrha, as family and friends gather to celebrate his 80th birthday and his continued love and devotion to his North Broadway neighborhood in Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Skrha's joyous life is centered around family, faith and community. His closest confidant, his wife of nearly fifty-two years, Betts, along with their children—Joseph Ray, Betsy, John, the memory of their beloved son, Paul, his son-in-law Daniel, daughter-in-law Patricia and grandchildren, Katie, Christopher, Rebecca and Nathaniel—are the guiding stars of his life, illuminating a path they walk together—a journey of hope, strength and healing that he continues to share with the residents of the North Broadway community.

Dr. Skrha was born, raised and still lives on Broadway Avenue in Cleveland—in the heart of the neighborhood that he's served his entire life. He graduated with honors from both John Carroll University and Loyola University Medical School, completed his residency at St. Alexis Hospital then focused on establishing a family medical practice. Dr. Skrha could have practiced anywhere, but he turned down every offer to move away from the neighborhood that personifies the word 'home.' As a caring physician and an ordained Roman Catholic Deacon, Dr. Skrha's dedicated service has softened the hard urban edges of the North Broadway neighborhood. Dr. and Mrs. Skrha's united focus on making a difference in their community has not wavered. They continue to channel their social activism into numerous civic endeavors, including their volunteer efforts on behalf of the University Settlement, The Broadway School of Music and the Arts, and the Cleveland Sight Center.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor, gratitude and recognition of Rev. Dr. Joseph Skrha, as we join with his family and friends to celebrate his 80th birthday. Dr. Skrha's keen mind, compassionate heart and gentle energy continues to inspire, energize and strengthen the lives of the residents of North Broadway and far beyond—including my own. I wish Dr. Skrha an abundance of health, peace and happiness in his continued journey of faith and hope, today and for all time.

TRIBUTE TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF RAYMOND FLOYD

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Raymond Floyd for his service to our Nation, the game of golf and the Masters Tournament. Few events in the world of sports can compare to the pageantry, beauty and grace of the Masters Tournament in Augusta, GA. And there are even fewer individuals who have contributed to that prestige as much as Raymond Floyd.

Early in his career Raymond Floyd became a role model for young people with his dedication to the game of golf, his family, and family values.

Raymond was inducted to the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1989. In 1992, he was honored as Golf World's "Man of the Year." Then, in 1994, the Floyd family was named "Golf's Family of the Year" by Golf Week magazine.

Raymond Floyd's record in golf includes 62 victories worldwide. He won two PGA Championships, one Masters Championship, and one U.S. Open Championship. He played in eight Ryder Cup competitions and served as captain for another Ryder Cup Team. He holds numerous scoring and course records. He is also the only player to win on both the PGA and Senior PGA Tour in the same year. He has also joined the legendary Sam Snead in winning during each of his four decades on the professional tour.

In addition to his accomplishments playing on the course, Raymond Floyd has made a

name for himself in the art of golf course design. His understanding of the game of golf, combined with a desire to create courses that are both beautiful and challenging has resulted in numerous quality golf courses.

Mr. Speaker, Raymond Floyd is among the names of the other greats in golf history. His accomplishments on and off the course will live forever.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Chairman, during rollcall vote No. 57 on the Neugebauer amendment to H.R. 4939, I was on a leave of absence due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted ''no.''

CONGRATULATING THE TEXAS WESLEYAN BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the superior performance of the Texas Wesleyan Basketball Team on their victory over Oklahoma City for the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics' Division I Men's Basketball Championship at Municipal Auditorium.

The unseeded Rams won the final game 67–65 to become the NAIA Division I Men's Basketball Championship. The victory came when the Rams' senior guard, Ben Hunt, hit a three-point shot with 0.2 seconds remaining in the game. Senior forward Trevor Meier managed to tie the score at 64–64 which paved the way for Texas Wesleyan's climatic finish.

Additional honors came to individual team members when Evan Patterson was selected as the tournament's Most Valuable Player and Head Coach, Terry Waldrop, was named the Rawlings-NAIA Division I Men's Basketball Coach of the Year. The championship victory marked the first NAIA Division I Championship for Texas Wesleyan.

This victory was a combined effort and would not have been possible if it was not for the incredible sense of teamwork put forth by all athletes.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Head Coach Terry Waldrop, Texas Wesleyan President Harold Jeffcoat, as well as the members of the Texas Wesleyan Basketball Team. I am honored to serve as their U.S. Representative.

TRIBUTE TO MR. TIM CHESLEY

HON. CHARLES H. TAYLOR

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the fine work and achievements of one of my constituents in Western North Carolina, Mr. Tim Chesley. Mr. Chesley serves as an engineer for the National Forests in North Carolina and recently earned the U.S. Forest Service's National Managerial Engineer of the Year award.

A Forest Service employee for 30 years, Tim Chesley garnered this prestigious award for his outstanding management of programs, projects and employees. ''His extraordinary response to the massive destruction, that resulted from the remnants of three hurricanes in September of 2004, plus his long-standing leadership as the assistant forest engineer for the past 22 years merits this award,'' wrote Forest engineer Lynn Hicks in the nomination letter.

Mr. Chesley was selected as the deputy planning chief and engineering liaison, when an incident command team was formed, after flooding from the hurricanes wrecked havoc on Forest Service lands over a two-week period sixteen months ago. Working six days a week, he coordinated the planning, design, reconstruction, and contract administration for the repair of hundreds of miles of National Forest roads and trails and for nearly 50 bridges as well as for campgrounds, fisheries, offices and other Forest Service facilities.

Mr. Chesley continues to coordinate the administration of contracts that will exceed $35 million, and in July he helped secure another $5.5 million in Emergency Relief of Federally Owned Roads funding. He was also responsible for the recruitment, training and supervision of more than 150 engineering employees who have come to North Carolina, from across the country on temporary assignment, to assist with the storm recovery effort. As a manager for most of his career, he has supervised more than 30 people, including trainees, technicians and professionals. He is currently supervising seven engineering trainees, who were sent to North Carolina for one year in support of the hurricane damage recovery work.

A native of Conway, New Hampshire, Mr. Chesley received his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of New Hampshire, and his Master's Degree in Civil Engineering and Transportation Planning from the University of California at Berkeley. In addition to his professional responsibilities, he has taken the lead on several major community projects, including raising funds and constructing playgrounds for Asheville's Kenilworth community and for Glenn C. Marlow Elementary School in Hendersonville. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Asheville Kiwanis Club where he has been a member for more than ten years.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues in the House will be most appreciative of Mr. Chesley's devotion and hard work at the United States Forest Service. I am proud to announce that he will be presented the U.S. Forest Service's National Managerial Engineer of the Year award at a formal ceremony in Washington, DC on April 3, 2006.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Chairman, during rollcall vote No. 56 on the Sabo amendment to H.R. 4939, I was on a leave of absence due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

CONGRATULATIONS TO DANIEL McPHERSON

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Daniel McPherson who, due to his superior performance, received the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches 2A honor as Player of the Year after scoring 26 points in the Lions' semifinal win over Tahoka High School.

As one of Ponder High's leading basketball players, Daniel, a 6–2 senior forward, manages to give his absolute best efforts when the team requires it most. He is aware that victory is a combined effort and would not have been possible if it was not for the incredible sense of teamwork put forth by all athletes.

I extend my most sincere congratulations to Daniel McPherson and wish him the best of luck in his academic and athletic career.

TRIBUTE TO AGNES DALE SMITH

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because on April 2, 2006, Agnes Dale Smith will celebrate her 100th birthday. Those who know and love her call her ''Aggie'' and she was born in Willow Hill, Illinois, in 1906. Such longevity is truly special and certainly deserves to be recognized and respected. It is truly amazing to think of all that America has experienced in the past century and to know that Aggie has witnessed it all.

In 1925, Aggie graduated from Robinson High School in Robinson, Illinois, where she served as Vice President of her senior class. She also wrote for the school newspaper and played intramural basketball and field hockey. On October 16, 1930, Aggie married Victor L. Smith. They would have one daughter, Emily Carol. Aggie went on to earn her Associate in Science degree from Vincennes University in 1967. Aggie then studied at Trinity College in Dublin during the summer of 1969. She also studied at American University in Washington D.C. as well as four other mid-western locations, including Lincoln Trail College in Robinson, Illinois.

During her life, Aggie has seen and experienced much. For instance, she was appointed as a Volunteer Services Director during World War II and traveled to Chicago on three occasions to attend conferences. She also witnessed the investiture of Prince Charles in Wales. Aggie has attended four Republican National Conventions in her lifetime. She was elected National Vice President of Delta Theta Tau philanthropic sorority. Aggie also proudly served the Illinois Daughters of the Revolution as Division VI director for two years. In 1987, Aggie was named a Distinguished Citizen by the Robinson Chamber of Commerce.

Again, I rise today to celebrate Aggie Smith's 100th birthday and recognize her many accomplishments. I hope my colleagues will join me in wishing her many happy years to come.

TRIBUTE TO VIOLA VAN DORIN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the accomplishments of Viola Van Dorin, who served in the armed forces as a nurse during the Second World War.

Viola Van Dorin, as well as her late husband, Forrest Van Dorin, both valued their patriotic obligation to enlist in our nation's military shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. After her exemplary service in the Army Nurse Corps, Viola devoted herself to preserving the memory of World War II by donating more than 240 items to the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing. She currently lives in Jackson, Michigan.

Violet began her career as a nurse, graduating from the Sparrow Hospital School of Nursing in 1935. She worked at the Michigan State College Hospital, and then moved on to private practice with Dr. Kenneth Hodges and Dr. Kenneth Johnson. She excelled as both an office receptionist and an assistant to the physicians. Vi had the opportunity to even star in a film during the prewar period, a documentary called The Case History of Lucy X, which was the first to educate the public and medical professionals on the contagious disease tuberculosis.

In 1942, Vi was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps and assigned to Torney General Hospital in Palm Springs, California. There she met her future husband, then a dashing young Sergeant in the Army. They married on June 7, 1943, and their marriage lasted until Forrest's death in 2003.

In 1944, Vi was assigned to the 82nd General Hospital unit and transported to Wales where the unit helped rehabilitate wounded soldiers. Before the end of the War, Vi was promoted to First Lieutenant and received several citations: the American Theater Ribbon, three Overseas Service Bars and a Victory Medal. She and her husband were reunited in 1946, and they settled down in the Lansing area. She and Forrest had a son, Ken Van Dorin, as well as three grandchildren: Rebecca Louise, Natalie Ann and Robert Kenneth.

Violet's service in both the military and the medical field has demonstrated her commitment to serving our nation, caring for others, and preserving historical treasures. She should also be commended for her tireless devotion to preserving the memory of World War II and honoring the sacrifices of our veterans. Across Michigan's counties and communities, her legacy will be realized long into the future. I am pleased to know her remarkable story, and to share it with my Congressional colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Violet Van Dorin, a citizen and a veteran truly deserving of our respect and admiration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Chairman, during rollcall vote No. 55 on sustaining the ruling of the chair with regard to the point of order against the DeLauro amendment to H.R. 4939, I was on a leave of absence due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

TRIBUTE TO DAVID MITCHELL

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor David Mitchell of Pt. Reyes Station, California, who recently retired after 30 years as the editor and publisher of the Point Reyes Light. The Light has covered community activities, misdeeds, and controversies in the rural small towns of West Marin since 1975.

Dave earned a degree in journalism at Stanford University and worked at various small papers before buying the Light with his former wife Cathy. After the couple split up in 1981, Dave sold the paper and worked for the San Francisco Examiner for several years before getting the paper back due to payment default.

Described as everything from "intelligent, scrappy, and folksy" to "controversial, opinionated, and hard-headed," Dave always presented the news in a lively, personal manner and encouraged his readers to participate through letters and columns. He considered himself a muckraker and determinedly pursued deceit and corruption where he saw it. In 1979 he and Cathy won a Pulitzer Prize for their expose of the Synanon cult.

West Marin has changed during Dave's tenure, and the Light chronicled issues such as politics, immigration (even sending reporters to the Azores, Italy, and Jalisco, Mexico, where many were from), relations between Point Reyes National Seashore and the community, and the struggles of ranchers to remain viable as the towns became more gentrified. The paper was always challenged financially as Dave used an inheritance to subsidize it, and he sometimes suffered from severe burn-out as he worked long hours to keep both the finances and the news activities in line. After achieving financial stability, he sold the paper in November, 2005, to Robert Plotkin who made a commitment to maintain its community focus.

Mr. Speaker, David Mitchell has provided a vital service to West Marin as well as setting high standards for community newspapers. I know he will continue as a fixture on the local scene and maintain his passion for the issues he championed.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ALPHALONIA P. "PEACHES" GWYN

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Alphalonia P. "Peaches" Gwyn of Winston Salem, North Carolina.

We rely on a great number of people, in addition to the members of our staff, to do our jobs as members of Congress. The people we work with twice a week to help us get to and from our districts become part of the extended network of support that helps us fulfill our duties.

One of those people was Peaches Gwyn. A dedicated employee of US Airways, Peaches always had a smile and a friendly voice at US Airways' Capitol Desk. Peaches was tireless, making sure that members of Congress were able to get back to their districts and serve their constituents. She handled herself with grace and aplomb on the phone with staff members under pressure to get their bosses on the first flight possible.

I have heard of the help she offered through my schedulers over the years who were sorry to learn that she recently succumbed to cancer. Her coworkers told us that Peaches fought cancer every step of the way, never giving up. She wanted to keep busy and go back to work, but eventually lost her battle.

My thoughts and prayers are with those at US Airways who loved her and learned from her. May the Gwyn and Perkins families be comforted by peaceful memories and may they find strength in Peaches' spirit which lives on through everyone she touched.

RECOGNITION OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of Greek Independence Day, which was celebrated this past Saturday. In doing so, I reaffirm the historic and strategic ties between the United States of America and Greece, and acknowledge the heritage that all of Western civilization draws from both ancient and modern sources in Greece.

On March 25, 1821, the people of Greece declared independence from their Ottoman occupiers and reclaimed the mantle of democracy that they originated in ancient Athens. Since then, they have been a true and steady friend of the United States, working together to promote our common ideals, common goals, and in recognition of our mutual admiration. We are partners in seeking peace and prosperity in the Balkans and southeastern Mediterranean, as well as throughout the world. In celebrating Greek Independence Day this year, we recognize the contributions of ancient Greece to the establishment of democracy and culture, and the continuing importance of modern Greece in national affairs.

Additionally, we affirm the innumerable contributions that Greek Americans have made to

the United States. Their independence and creativity have been an essential component of the American success story, adding immeasurably to our economic strength. Greek American cultural values have enriched our communities and added to the diversity we cherish as Americans. I hope that you will join me in saluting Greece and Greek Americans in this 185th anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

TRIBUTE TO BEA WATSON

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today in tribute to a most distinguished member of the Fontana community and my dear friend, Bea Watson.

In recognition of Bea's outstanding achievements and contributions to our community, I am pleased to share with you a few of her numerous recognitions, including the honor of over twenty-two prestigious awards. These include two esteemed Congressional Awards, the Fontana PTA Council Award, the Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Volunteer Award, the California Parks and Recreation Award, the Community Spirit Award, and the title of California Legislature Woman of the Year. Bea is held in high esteem by all who have been touched by her tireless devotion to others, and deserves every accolade we may present her in thanks for her service.

I am endlessly grateful for Bea's involvement on behalf of the citizens of her community. As a member of the California League of Cities, the Fontana Unified School District, the Fontana Chamber of Commerce, the Fontana Women's Club, the Fontana Teen Center, and the Fontana Historical Society, Bea has profoundly influenced the impacts of these organizations and has directed efforts to improve the community. As City Clerk of Fontana, Bea has proudly represented the city, serving as the keeper of the City Seal and of the official city documents.

Bea's commendable dedication to the City of Fontana has nurtured a sense of pride among her fellow citizens. Her efforts have touched the lives of her neighbors and her exceptional impact upon our community will create a lasting legacy for generations to come. Bea's enduring commitment, enthusiasm, and concern for others' wellbeing have advanced women's rights, education, the arts, and the spirit of the Fontana community. As a volunteer, public servant, and friend to her community, Bea has proven herself as an exemplary American. Bea continues to serve as an inspiration to us all.

I thank Bea for dedicating her life to serving on the behalf of the Fontana community. I am honored to consider Bea my friend and I truly appreciate all she has given to our community and our country.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, March 25th, the people of Greece celebrated the 185th anniversary of their independence from the Ottoman Empire.

As the brilliant Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote in the preface to Hellas in 1821, "We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece." Nowhere is this more true than in America, a country crafted to embody the vision and ideals of the ancient Greeks, and home to more than three million citizens of Greek decent.

The building in which we now stand, along with many prominent structures in our Nation's Capital, draws heavily on the architecture of ancient Greece, and is a fitting tribute to the civilization that provided the model for our own democratic experiment. America's founders were deeply inspired by the heroic individualism of Homer's epic poetry, the search for truth embodied by Socrates, and the passion for justice that guided Greek political theory.

The American Revolution was driven by the Greek idea that the authority to govern derives directly from the people, and this successful assertion of autonomy in turn inspired Greece to declare its independence on March 25, 1821, after nearly 400 years of rule by the Ottomans. Weeks later, the Messinian Congress sent a letter to then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams asking for moral support, asserting: "Your virtues, Americans, are close to ours, although a broad sea separates us." In response, stirring speeches by President James Monroe and Daniel Webster led the Congress to send funds and supplies to aid the Greeks and motivated many Americans to fight alongside the Greeks in their struggle for freedom.

Today, history, mutual respect, and shared values continue to strengthen the alliance between Greece and the United States. After fighting side-by-side in every major war of the 20th century, we are now united in the war against terror that poses a threat to liberty and justice everywhere. Together we have stood up to the forces of oppression in conflicts from World War II to the Persian Gulf, we have joined as strategic partners in NATO, and are working to build peace, stability, and democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Unfortunately, not all Greeks are celebrating their independence this week. In one of the most militarized regions in the world, members of the Greek Cypriot community continue to live under conditions of oppression, harassment, and deprivation imposed by some 35,000 Turkish soldiers. I am disturbed that Turkey continues to defy the international community and the U.N. resolutions with its policies towards Cyprus.

If a solution to Cyprus can be finalized it would reshape the eastern Mediterranean and could lead to an improvement in relations between Greece and Turkey. I am saddened by the persistence of tensions between these two neighbors, both of which are strong friends of the United States and vital partners in NATO and the war on terror. I hope that a negotiated agreement will soon be reached, so that Greeks everywhere can realize the inherently human desire for freedom.

I also support the reunification of the remains of one of the most magnificent and best-known monuments in the world: the Parthenon. I welcome the announcement last month that the British and Greek governments have engaged the Director General of UNESCO to lead a cooperative approach to resolving the issue of the Parthenon Marbles. I congratulate both parties for the shift in focus from contentious restitution to cooperative reunification and look forward to the opening of the New Acropolis Museum, where all the Sculptures will be displayed as close to their original position as possible.

The United States' kinship with the Greek people was reflected in the enthusiasm with which America embraced modern Greece's fight for independence 179 years ago. Similarly, the American ideal of freedom has drawn generations of Greek men and women to America's shores. Today we celebrate and give thanks for the contributions Greek Americans and their devotion to family, faith, community, and country that has enriched our Nation.

Through decades of challenge and change, the shared admiration, cooperation, and friendship between Greece and the United States has endured and deepened, and together we have proved the fundamental truth of the Greek proverb, "The passion for freedom never dies." Today we reaffirm that sentiment and our commitment to promoting liberty, democracy, and justice in America, in Greece, and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great joy and admiration that I wish the people of Greece a happy Independence Day and continued freedom and prosperity.

185 YEARS OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 185th anniversary of Greek Independence. I would also like to make a special honor of Congressman BILIRAKIS, who is celebrating his last Greek Independence Day as a Member of the House of Representatives. I commend him for his service not only to our country but his indefatigable support of Hellenic issues. I know he will be missed not only by his constituents in Florida, his colleagues here and by all Hellenic Americans.

March 25th is a date that will live in the hearts and minds of Greeks all around the world. After close to 400 years of Ottoman rule, on March 25, 1821, the people of Greece rose up against the Turks and won their independence.

The Greeks have a history dating back almost 4,000 years, Greece is the cradle of democracy and its great philosophers were an invaluable inspiration for our founding fathers. In ancient Athens they found a model for the new democracy that our forefathers used to establish our democracy in America.

We are joined by blood, culture, and a profound commitment to shared values. Greek ideals of democracy and freedom inspired our

Nation's founders and breathed life into America's experiment with democratic self-government.

Mr. Speaker, I have the great honor of representing a number of Greek-Americans in the Seventh District of New York. Their influence and active participation in the life of their communities has fostered economic, political and social growth throughout New York City.

Generations of Greek Americans have enriched every aspect of our national life, in the arts, sciences, business, politics and sports. Through hard work, love of family and community, they have contributed greatly to the prosperity and peace that we all enjoy as Americans today.

But as we celebrate Greek independence, we must keep in mind the ongoing struggle for freedom and demand for human rights on the island of Cyprus. I believe the United States and the international community must remain steadfast in our resolve to bring peace and unity to an island that has been home to violence and division for far, far too long.

Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate my strong commitment to Greek communities in my district, the country, and throughout the world. Their strength and dedication to democracy and peace in the world has made them a shining star of modern civilization.

IN HONOR OF CURTIS RELIFORD

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedicated work and inspiring courage of Curtis Reliford. Mr. Reliford's life story reflects the best of the American Spirit and reveals the incredible generosity to our nation's people.

Mr. Reliford experienced a troubled youth in his native Louisiana. In his early years, he was lured down the self destructive, illusionary path of drugs, alcohol, and money, all resulting in dead ends and unhappiness. Twenty one years ago, after much contemplation and perseverance, Curtis decided to move to California, with the hope of creating a better life for himself. In Santa Cruz, CA Curtis has found himself by aiding those who need a hand. He is an active member of the NAACP, and created his own business as a landscaper, a skill he used, and will continue to use, in Hurricane destroyed New Orleans. Through strong determination, great self-sacrifice, and enduring dedication, Mr. Reliford began his long healing process. He believes, and has proven, his calling to aid those who require and ask for assistance.

The fruits of Mr. Reliford's life transformation have been truly spectacular, not only benefiting our local community, but touching people's lives on a national level. Mr. Reliford is a small business owner and has started a non-profit community support group "Brothers teaching Brother." Most recently, Mr. Reliford has turned his sights back on his native Louisiana. Due to his selflessness, Curtis has been awarded the Jefferson Award from the County of Santa Cruz. His commitment to the assistance of others is inspiring. He also shows no signs of stopping.

After witnessing the devastating destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina, Mr. Reliford, inspired by his daughter's proclamation of "Daddy, you can do anything!" decided to focus his nurturing spirit on the people devastated by Katrina. He began taking donations in Downtown Santa Cruz, in order to raise funds for those who lost their homes. Enough was collected to make a life altering trip down to Louisiana. Mr. Reliford has now completed three relief trips to the Gulf Coast, but he believes his work will not be complete until every person who lost their home receives full assistance. Mr. Reliford is setting up a new organization, "Follow Your Heart Action Network", dedicated to bringing continued help to people in the South.

Mr. Speaker, it is people like Curtis Reliford that make the United States the great country that it is, and it's truly an honor for me to represent individuals like Mr. Reliford. The service of local members of the community is an asset to this nation, and I applaud Mr. Reliford's contributions. Curtis Reliford's dedication to advancing the condition of human welfare throughout our nation has had a positive impact on countless individuals, and for that reason I rise in honoring him.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN H. STROGER, JR.

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great public servant: John H. Stroger, Jr., President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

John Stroger is the first African-American to have been elected as Cook County Board President after serving Cook County for many years in other capacities, including as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners Finance Committee. During his lifetime of public service, President Stroger has always served with distinction and with an unwavering dedication to improving the lives and well being of all of the residents of Cook County.

As Chairman, he was instrumental in the development and construction of a new hospital facility, which bears his name, John H. Stroger Hospital. The facility, which is state-of-the-art, serves the health needs of all of Cook county's residents, including the indigent and uninsured. John Stroger is the past President of the National Association of Counties and in that capacity, he provided leadership on public policy issues affecting local governments across the Nation. He was particularly concerned with the need of county governments to ensure health care access for all county residents.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you will join me in wishing President Stroger a full and speedy recovery from his recent illness and all the best to his wife and family.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. JADICK

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, there is a physician in my district who deserves the thanks of our Nation and this Congress for his actions in combat in Iraq.

Naval Commander Rich Jadick, MD, of the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta deployed to Iraq in the summer of 2004. He arrived just in time for the Battle of Fallujah, the heaviest urban combat American troops have endured in a generation.

Newsweek Magazine quotes Dr. Jadick's commander, Lt. Col. Mark Winn, that as a direct result of Dr. Jadick's courageous actions under fire, at least 30 U.S. Marines were saved from death.

During just 30 days of combat, Dr. Jadick treated over 600 Marines and Iraqi soldiers and civilians. He established a forward aide station well advanced beyond the safety limit prescribed for combat medical personnel. His courage in ignoring the danger to himself in order to provide life-saving treatment for wounded personnel led to his being awarded the Bronze Star with a "V" for valor.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of the Ninth Congressional District of Georgia, I commend and thank Dr. Jadick for his heroism and extraordinary service to his Nation and his fellow man.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CUBAN-AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I offer congratulations to members of the Cuban-American Jewish Community who have contributed greatly to our Nation. They were elementary school classmates at the Plantel del Centro Israelita de Cuba and graduated from the sixth grade on June 20, 1958. Some of them were part of the Peter—Pedro—Pan Operation, which brought over 14,000 children and teenagers from Cuba who came to this country without their parents, thanks to the generosity of the U.S. Government. These Cuban Jewish children were cared for by the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, HIAS, which assisted them in finding housing in foster homes and orphanages.

Despite the fact that they all left Cuba after 1959, they have remained in contact since. Most of these individuals will be celebrating their 60th birthday this year and are holding a reunion in Miami. It will be their first gathering as a group since they risked their lives in search of freedom and liberty to come to this great country that warmly accepted them with open arms. They are proud citizens and are very grateful for the opportunities they have enjoyed in this country such as freedom, peace and prosperity, opportunities that our brothers and sisters in Cuba do not enjoy. I am glad to see such a wonderful group of people committed to bringing freedom and democracy to Cuba.

Many members of the Cuban-American Jewish Community have had long and successful careers that span many years of outstanding service, dedication, hard work, devotion, and love for our country. They are successful parents, professionals, businessmen, community leaders and grandparents. I am proud to recognize the Cuban-American Jewish Community for their tireless dedication to

the well being of our South Florida residents. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Cuban-American Jewish Community for their wonderful service to our great Nation.

Below, I have included the names of the individuals that are part of this distinguished group. In parentheses are the married names of the women.

Aliva Lipschitz (Mingel), Aron Lew, Becky Gol (Eshkenazy), Berta Perelmuter (Faigenblat), Betty Kozolchyk (Savariego), Cecilia Lurie (Berenthal), David Vainstein, Eli Bick, Enrique Bekerman, Enrique Goldberg, Zolia Eva Becker (Don), Gela Arber (Altman), Isidoro Stein, Jacobo Fridzon, Jacobo Rydz, Jose Kluger, Joseph Roisman, Judy Derechinsky (Feder), Leon Kopel, Leon Papir, Luis Kosobucki, Luis Lidsky, Luisa Kopel, Manny Feinstein, Marcos Kerbel, Mark Faigenblat, Moises Golobovich, Nicky Vaserstein, Perla Radlow (Stein), Polita Rubinstein (Chyzyk), Rebeca Rosenzweig (Shapiro), Rebecca Roth (Glinsky), Richard Novigrod, Ruth Silber (Kurkin), Sara Hochman (Zands), Sarita Zditowsky (Blaugrund), Tere Treibich (Ben Hain), Toni Rosenberg (Taubenfeld), Vivian Celniker (Mechaber).

I would also like to recognize the loving memory of those who are no longer with us: Salomon Milner and Alberto Rabinsky.

HOWARD JUNIOR COLLEGE WINS REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Howard College for winning the NJCAA Region V Championship on March 12, 2006. Head coach Mark Adams led the Hawks to an 81–71 victory over their arch rival, Midland College, in spectacular fashion. With this victory, the Hawks have earned their first trip to the NJCAA National Tournament since 1969.

Even greater than their triumph on the court, the Hawks have overcome many obstacles and trials along the way. Last year, Howard sophomore Dezmon Harris lost his mother in the same week his team lost the Regional Championship game to Midland. With fierce determination and an unyielding desire to win, Harris led his team to victory this year and showed why he was recently named WJCAC Player of the Year.

Since 1945, Howard College has been a beacon of education in my district. It brings me great pleasure to honor the athletic achievements of an institution that continues to be a leader in educating the young people of West Texas.

TRIBUTE TO MS. BEA'S COMMUNITY READING PROGRAM

HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize a community reading program in Crowley, Louisiana founded by Joey Webb.

Ms. Bea's Community Reading Program organizes 20 community volunteers each week to visit Ross Elementary School and work for half an hour in each of the four first grade classrooms. These patient and caring volunteers work one on one with the students to help them learn to read and improve their reading skills. To ensure the effort isn't just one day a week at school, the program issues each student a weekly reader to practice at home. In addition, the volunteers serve as valuable role models and inspire the students to continue learning and staying in school.

The faculty at Ross Elementary has commented that the impact of the program is improving the entire school. Although the program is focused on the first grade, students in the other grades have taken notice of the community members coming to the school. Students are working harder, classroom behavior has improved and they are more focused on schoolwork.

Earlier this year, I participated in the program and visited with several classrooms and spoke with them about the importance of learning to read and attending school. These young students are the future of Louisiana. As our state rebuilds from the devastation caused by two hurricanes it is now more important than ever that we inspire our youth to work to improve and contribute to our great state.

I want to congratulate Joey Webb and the citizens of Crowley on their dedication and spirit to help others in the community.

PEACE BETWEEN TAIWAN AND CHINA

HON. JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, on February 27, 2006, Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian declared that Taiwan's Unification Council will cease to function and the National Unification Guidelines will no longer apply. This decision was made in an effort to guarantee Taiwan's freedom from communist China and its people's right to democratically choose their own future.

Since peace in the Taiwan Strait is critical to all nations in the region and military confrontation must be avoided, I urge China to suspend its jingoistic rhetoric towards Taiwan, rescind the Anti-Secession Law enacted last spring, and dismantle the hundreds of missiles targeted at Taiwan.

Furthermore, on the first anniversary of the passage of China's Anti-Secession Law and the tenth anniversary of The Taiwan Strait Missile Crisis, it is time for a meaningful dialogue between the communist Chinese leaders and the democratically elected leadership in Taiwan in order to find a peaceful resolution to their differences.

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN BAILEY-SCOTT, CARE AWARD RECIPIENT

HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Susan Bailey-Scott of Virginia Beach, Virginia, upon receiving the Commonwealth Academy Recognition for Educators (CARE) Award.

The CARE award honors outstanding educators who work to enhance the lives of their students. This year's honorees are recognized for their unrelenting work to enhance the lives of the students they serve. It is presented by Commonwealth Academy, located in Alexandria, Virginia, and honors those committed to diverse learning throughout the nation. Susan Bailey-Scott, a middle school math teacher at Ruffner Academy in Norfolk, Virginia, is honored for her work in promoting diverse learners in the spirit of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Ms. Bailey-Scott has been teaching for nine years, including two years in Japan. She received her B.A. in Business Administration from James Madison University and her master's in Education from Old Dominion University. Ms. Bailey-Scott also has completed some post-graduate work at Old Dominion and William and Mary.

Ms. Bailey-Scott is the Math Department Chair at Ruffner, and she is very active in teacher training. She has been a cooperating teacher with both Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University teacher candidates and has been a presenter at numerous education conferences.

Ms. Bailey Scott has won a variety of awards for teaching, including Who's Who Among America's Teachers and Norfolk Public Schools District Teacher of the Year.

I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Susan Bailey-Scott and congratulating her on this distinguished achievement.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WEBSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Webster Volunteer Fire Department. Fifteen courageous citizens formed this outstanding and brave fire department on March 23, 1906. Since it's inception, the department has had over 850 faithful volunteers that have protected the communities of East Webster, Village of Webster, and North East Penfield.

Today, the Webster Volunteer Fire Department has a membership of 140 brave firefighters who on average respond to 1200 calls per year. These calls for aid range from fires, accidents, emergency medical care and service calls; all showing the departments ability to assist the varying needs of the communities they proudly serve. In addition to their heroic tasks, the department also provides fire prevention programs, CPR and first aid training for all citizens. The Webster Fire Department also works closely with various neighborhood groups such as local Boy Scout troops, Girl Scout troops, and various other groups.

In honoring their 100th anniversary, the Webster Fire Department will begin its celebration with a Founders Banquet, followed by a gigantic Carnival and Parade for the entire community.

I stand here today proud of the services these brave men and women provide our area. Their strong tradition of service and bravery has kept our citizens safe over the past century. I personally thank the Webster Volunteer Fire Department and thank them for their past service as well as the next 100 years that lie ahead.

HONORING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF JACK B. McCONNELL, MD

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the American Medical Association has established a new honor, the Jack B. McConnell, MD, Award for Excellence in Volunteerism, which recognizes the work of a senior physician who provides treatment to U. S. patients who lack access to health care. After a full career of practice, this physician remains dedicated to the future of medicine through the spirit of volunteerism.

Jack B. McConnell, MD, is a distinguished physician and scientist who served as Corporate Director of Advanced Technology at Johnson & Johnson. Widely acknowledged for his medical contributions, he directed the development of the TB Tine Test used in the detection of tuberculosis, participated in the early stages of the development of the Polio Vaccine, supervised the discovery of Tylenol, was instrumental in developing the technology for MRI's and helped write the enabling legislation to map the genome.

Dr. McConnell saved his greatest achievement for retirement: the creation of Volunteers in Medicine. His visionary concept—using retired medical personnel to volunteer their time and talents in a network of free community clinics for the working uninsured—coupled with his enthusiasm and determination has enabled the VIM program to grow to over 40 clinics in less than a decade. The initial VIM clinic was opened on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, and continues to serve with over 20,000 patient visits in 2005.

Today, I am honored to recognize the tremendous life and career of Dr. McConnell. His service has benefited so many citizens throughout the Second District of South Carolina.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL FAIRNESS ACT OF 2006

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Federal Judicial Fairness Act of 2006"—bipartisan legislation to correct the current inequity in our compensation system for federal judges. I am pleased that Representative JUDY BIGGERT has joined me in this effort, as we both serve as Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus on the Judicial Branch.

Mr. Speaker, the federal judiciary is an integral part of our democracy, providing an important check to the other branches and protecting the rights of the American people. However, if certain steps are not taken, we risk compromising the quality of our judiciary. The salary of federal judges has decreased by almost 40 percent since 1969 compared with the private sector. Consequently, judges have been leaving the federal bench in increasing numbers, many before reaching retirement age, and a large proportion leaving to work for private law firms.

Members of Congress, for a variety of reasons, have determined that it would not be appropriate to give themselves pay raises on an annual basis. Since judicial salary increases for justices and judges are linked with the salaries of Members of Congress, federal judges have also been denied a cost-of-living adjustment in the 5 of the last 13 years that Congress voted to deny themselves one.

Several reports over the last few years have specifically recommended that salary adjustments for Members and judicial officials be determined separately. In 2003, a report by the National Commission on the Public Service (the Volcker Commission), cited "the compelling need to recruit and retain the best people possible" to serve on the federal judiciary and urged Congress to move on "an immediate and substantial increase in judicial salaries," since "the lag in judicial salaries has gone on too long, and the potential for the diminished quality in American jurisprudence is now too large."

The late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, William Rehnquist, also frequently stated that inadequate compensation seriously compromises the judicial independence fostered by life tenure and risks affecting judicial performance. His views were recently echoed by new Chief Justice Roberts in his Year-End Report where he stated the following:

"There will always be a substantial difference in pay between successful government and private sector lawyers. But if that difference remains too large—as it is today—the judiciary will over time cease to be made up of a diverse group of the Nation's very best lawyers. Instead, it will come to be staffed by a combination of the independently wealthy and those following a career path before becoming a judge different from the practicing bar at large. Such a development would dramatically alter the nature of the federal judiciary."

The "Federal Judicial Fairness Act of 2006" will address this issue and restore equity. Specifically, the bill provides for the following:

1. Termination of Linkage to Congressional Pay—the bill terminates the linkage of congressional pay increase to judicial pay increases, so that Congress's decision to deny itself pay raises will not also place that burden on Federal judges.

2. Partial Catch-Up Increase in Judicial Compensation—the bill increases the salaries of all Federal judges by 16.5 percent, to partially make up for the decline in real pay for judges over the last three decades. In 2003, both President Bush and the late Chief Justice Rehnquist agreed that a pay adjustment of at least 16.5 percent was needed.

3. Annual Cost-of-Living Adjustments—the bill would provide Federal judges with annual cost-of-living adjustments based on the Employee Cost Index, the index already used by the Federal Government to keep Federal salaries in line with inflation.

This important legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senators FEINSTEIN, LEAHY, and KERRY. Mr. Speaker, if Congress does not provide reasonable compensation adjustments nor address the growing pay disparity between judges and other members of the legal profession, the quality of our judiciary will be compromised.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING SERVICE OF GENERAL WAYNE DOWNING (RET.) BEING THE RECIPIENT OF THE GENERAL ALEXANDER M. HAIG ''GUARDIAN OF LIBERTY AWARD'' BY THE WEST POINT SOCIETY

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on March 18th, the West Point Society recognized the outstanding service of General Wayne Downing (Ret.) by awarding him the General Alexander M. Haig "Guardian of Liberty Award;" an honor that is presented to select individuals who exemplify West Point's motto of "Duty, Honor, and Country." I want to take a moment and recognize General Downing's contribution to the United States Army as well as the security of our nation.

General Wayne A. Downing, U.S. Army (Retired) is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point where he earned a Bachelors of Science degree in 1962. General Downing also holds an M.B.A. from Tulane University. A highly decorated combat veteran, General Downing served in a variety of command assignments in the infantry, armor, special operations, and joint units, culminating in his appointment as the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Special Operations Command. He saw combat during two tours in Vietnam and later as a general officer, Downing commanded the special operations of all services during the 1989 invasion of Panama and commanded a joint special operations task force operating deep behind the Iraqi lines during Operation Desert Storm.

After 34 years of service to the United States, General Downing continued to serve his nation after his retirement from the Army. He was appointed by the President to assess the 1996 terrorist attack on the U.S. base at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. From 1999–2000, General Downing served as member of the Congressionally mandated National Commission on Terrorism, known as the Bremer Commission. And most recently, he served the White House as National Director and Deputy National Security Advisor for Combating Terrorism.

There is no question that General Downing's service to the United States is a tribute to patriotism and dedication to service. I now want to read into the RECORD a letter written by the superintendent of General Downing's alma mater, West Point in recognition of his being awarded the "Guardian of Liberty Award." The letter, from Lt. General William Lennox reads:

DEAR GENERAL DOWNING: Congratulations on receiving the General Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Guardian of Liberty Award. All of us at the United States Military Academy are

proud of your many achievements. Your career of distinguished service is a tribute to your professionalism as an officer and leader of character to the nation. Your accomplishments, past and present, are exceptionally well known. Your receipt of this award is yet another confirmation by the West Point Society of Philadelphia and the Long Gray Line that you have been an outstanding role model for us all. For you, the words from our Alma Mater ring true, ''May it be said, well done!'' The Corps of cadets, staff and faculty and the entire West Point community wish you the very best in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. LENNOX, Jr.
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Superintendent.

Congratulations, General Downing.

RECOGNIZING MR. MARCO ANTONIO FIREBAUGH

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the life of Marco Antonio Firebaugh. Marco Antonio Firebaugh was a former California state Assemblyman and a tireless advocate for working families.

Mr. Firebaugh was an advocate for millions of Californians who have no voice in government. He represented the 50th Assembly District in southeast Los Angeles from 1998 to 2004 before leaving office due to term limits. Mr. Firebaugh was appointed Assembly Majority Floor Leader in 2002 and chaired the California Latino Legislative Caucus from 2002–04. His achievements on behalf of the people of Los Angeles significantly improved their day-to-day quality of life.

Perhaps Mr. Firebaugh's most notable accomplishment was the passage of his legislation to allow students living in California to pay in-state tuition to California state colleges and universities regardless of their immigration status. During his time in the Assembly, Mr. Firebaugh's work also included a bill directing state air quality funding toward low-income communities heavily affected by pollution. At the time of his death, Mr. Firebaugh was a candidate for the state Senate in the 30th District, in southeast Los Angeles County.

I want to extend my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Marco Antonio Firebaugh—a man who so passionately fought to improve the lives of those he was elected to serve. Mr. Firebaugh is survived by his two children, Tlalli Ariana and Nicolas Andres, his mother, Carmen Ramos Garcia, brothers Carlos and Jesse, and sisters Cecilia and Esmeralda.

TRIBUTE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 185TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. MCNULTY. Mr. Speaker, the American people join with the people of Greece in celebrating the 185th Anniversary of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire.

The bedrock of our close relationship with Greece is our mutual devotion to freedom and democracy and our unshakable determination to fight, if need be, to protect these rights.

Greek philosophers and political leaders—Cleisthenes and Pericles and their successors—had great influence upon America's Founding Fathers in their creation of these United States.

We, as a nation, owe a great debt to Greece. Greece is the birthplace of democracy, as we know it.

Thomas Jefferson said, ''To the ancient Greeks, we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves (American colonists) out of Gothic darkness.''

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were an attack on democracy and freedom—not just against our people, but also against all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world. The Greek people understand this.

I congratulate the people of Greece and wish them a Happy National Birthday.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DR. HERMAN ASH

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great man, a great American, and a great friend of mine, Dr. Herman Ash, who passed away in Saugerties, New York at the age of 96 earlier this month. I have had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Ash for most of my life, since he treated me for a football injury in high school.

After fleeing Germany in 1937, Dr. Ash and his wife, also a doctor, settled in Saugerties and opened a medical practice. What many will remember most about Dr. Herman Ash, in addition to his medical practice, was his love of music. Dr. Ash was an accomplished pianist and violinist and enriched the small town of Saugerties with music that he played, composed, and taught. In addition to his own musical talents, he brought the Saugerties Pro Musica to town in 1995. This organization continues to host regular performances each year.

Not only was Dr. Ash's service to his community commendable, he was a true American. Endeared to the country that gave him refuge in 1937, Dr. Ash joined the U.S. Army and served as a captain in the European Theater of Operations during World War II. He was also a member of the Lamouree-Hackett Post #72 American Legion for over 60 years, most of which he served as the Post's medical officer.

Dr. Herman Ash's commitment to service to his community is something to be celebrated. Over his lifetime he tutored young musicians in Saugerties, was a literacy volunteer, taught English as a Second Language classes, volunteered for the Heart Association, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and the Juvenile Diabetes Association, a cause near and dear to my own heart.

Words cannot express the gratitude and appreciation felt by those whose lives, including my own, Dr. Ash touched. The world would be a. much better place if everyone gave back to others just a fraction of what Dr. Ash gave throughout his life. My thoughts and prayers remain with the family and friends of this great man.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND WILBERT LEO DANIELS

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Reverend Wilbert Leo Daniels and his brother the late Reverend Cooper Darryl Daniels for their dedication and service to the elderly and non-elderly disabled citizens of our community.

During his tenure as pastor of the Greater Jerusalem Baptist Church, Reverend W. Leo Daniels secured the funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to begin development of an eight story housing facility in Northeast Houston. His dream of constructing a home for the elderly and handicapped was realized after his death under the guidance of his brother, Reverend Cooper Darryl Daniels.

The W. Leo Daniels Towers were dedicated in 1979 and have maintained nearly full occupancy for 27 years. The Towers, located at 8826 Harrell, Houston Texas consist of 100 units and serve to assist residents in their daily independent lifestyles. The residents are offered a variety of services including a beauty shop, a washateria and a cafeteria with a central dining room that accommodates 299 persons. The Towers also offer a remedial education class that is supported through the Houston Community College.

The W. Leo Daniels Towers has become a powerful influence among the residents and the Northeast Houston Community alike. In 2002, a computer literacy lab with bi-weekly classes was opened for all the residents and Northeast Community population to attend. The Towers have also collaborated with the Houston Food Bank and with the United Way of Houston Gifts to provide access to food, furniture, office supplies and clothing for its residents.

The solidarity of the Greater Jerusalem Baptist Church membership and the united efforts of all concerned have made the dream of Reverend W. Leo Daniels a reality. The Towers have helped fill the need of so many in the Northeast Houston Community, and I ask that we all honor this great achievement and pay tribute to those that are responsible for its success.

RECOGNIZING ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2005 FROM THE 8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, since 1830, Members of Congress have had the great honor and privilege of nominating outstanding young men and

women to our military academies. Each year, I have the opportunity to meet students who have excelled in both their academic fields as well as their extracurricular activities. Each of these fine young men and women would excel at our finest private and public universities; however, they all share a singular distinction that separates them from their peers—they all share a deep commitment to their communities and their nation and so, they seek nomination to our prestigious military academies.

This year the nominating board interviewed over 60 superb applicants from the 8th District of Pennsylvania to our service academies and I want to take time to recognize each one of them by name. I think it is also proper to acknowledge the board members who had the arduous job of interviewing so many exceedingly qualified students that the 8th District has to offer. I congratulate these students on their commitment and dedication. They all make our nation and our world a better place.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2005 FROM THE 8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA:

United States Military Academy: Rocco C. Boccuti of Doylestown, Bronne Joseph Bruzgo, Jr. of Yardley, Evan Alexander Cumming of Yardley, Andrew Curtis Detwiler of Souderton, Thomas R. Dunn of Chalfont, David Edison Geib of Telford, William Paul Herbert of Dresher, Andrew Kim of Dresher, Charles Kenneth Ridge, Jr. of Langhorne, Alexander C. Shelby of Morrisville, and William Warren Zuber, Jr. of Newtown.

United States Naval Academy: Eamon Emmett Coleman of Yardley, Carli Ann Dimino of New Hope, William Edwin Doar of Langhorne, Thomas Michael Kane of Doylestown, Rachael Elizabeth Koehler of Perkasie, Van Gordon Lawson of Doylestown, Aaron Christopher Marchant of Doylestown, Stephen William Ullrich, Jr. of Southampton, Andrew Ventresca of Chalfont, and William Warren Zuber, Jr. of Newtown.

United States Air Force Academy: Kathryn Leigh Aden of Newtown, Bronne Joseph Bruzgo, Jr. of Yardley, Evan Alexander Cumming of Yardley, Andrew Curtis Detwiler of Souderton, Jason Robert Hallenbeck of Upper Black Eddy, Jacob Cody Hunt of Morrisville, Andrew Kim of Dresher, Daniel Andrew Lusardi of Holland, and Philip Michael Smith of Doylestown.

United States Merchant Marine Academy: Jacqueline Elizabeth Bors of Willow Grove, Bronne Joseph Bruzgo, Jr. of Yardley, Evan Alexander Cumming of Yardley, John Anderson Geating of Roslyn, Stefan Nordtveit of Newtown, Haley Rae Wallace of Doylestown, and William Warren Zuber, Jr. of Newtown.

USMA Board Members: Mr. Joseph R. Barkley '65, Mr. Scott Belveal '92, Mr. Dan Caraccio '84, LTC Willis C. Collett Jr. '58, Ms. Elizabeth W. Fineburg, Mr. Alex Gorsky '82, Mr. Frederick R. Gudknecht, Mr. Paul Pryor. USMA-MALO: Mr. Kevin J. Wallace '84, Mr. Robert J. Welch '84.

USNA Board Members: Adm. Steven Chadwick, USN, Mr. James J. Gormley, Jr., Mrs. Barbara Z. Kolbe, Col. Tom Manion, USMC, Dr. Jonathan W. McCullough, Captain Dave Stacy, USN, Mrs. Suzanne M. Twiggs, Captain R. A. "Skip" Wiegand, USN, (Ret.).

USAFA Board Members: Col. Harris H. Brooks, USAFR, Mr. Bob Campbell, Lt. Col. Janice B. Cope, USAFR (Ret.), Lt. Col. Sue DeGiovanni, USAFR, Lt. Col. Vincent DeGiovanni, USAFR, Maj. Wayne Fowler, USAFR, Mr. Raymond Fresella, Mr. Eugene Schaefer, Jr.

HAND-IN-HAND

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Hand-in-Hand, an organization that seeks to break down barriers by uniting the entire Saint Joseph's University community, area volunteers, and the disabled communities of the tri-state region. Saint Joseph's University was founded by the Society of Jesus in 1851 and is home to 3,450 full-time undergraduates and 2,900 graduate and nontraditional students. The University's strong liberal arts tradition is marked by rigorous and open-minded inquiry, high academic standards, and the development of the whole person.

Hand-in-Hand was founded by George Carasiti, a Saint Joseph's of 1978 graduate. Hand-in-Hand brings to campus approximately 450 area people with mental and physical handicaps and 750 local high school students who have volunteered to be their buddies for the day. The high school students also pair with Saint Joseph's students from various campus organizations, sports teams, and fraternities and sororities who in turn, run game booths, play music, and serve as mascots and buddies for their annual event.

Hand-in-Hand earned a 1988 Presidential Citation from the White House Office of Private Sector Initiatives for "outstanding contributions to the American spirit of volunteerism and community action." Also honored by the Montgomery County Association for Retarded Citizens and the Elwyn Institute, Hand-in-Hand is the model for similar festivals at 10 other colleges and universities, including the University of Scranton, Johns Hopkins University, and Georgetown University. Additionally Saint Joseph's Office of Student Leadership and Activities named Hand-in-Hand the best student organization in 2000 and again in 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring Hand-in-Hand for their efforts to change the mindsets, open hearts, enrich lives, and break down the barriers of fears and ignorance that have isolated people with disabilities from the rest of American society.

RECOGNIZING PECO INC.'S DESIGNATION AS BOEING'S "SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR"

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the accomplishments of PECO Inc., a company that operates in Oregon's 3rd Congressional District and has been in business for nearly 70 years.

PECO Inc. has received Boeing's "Supplier of the Year" honor for the Interiors category. This distinguished award highlights the value of efficient, professional companies with long histories in this region.

PECO Inc. employs more than 200 people, and has previously won the Boeing President's Award in 1988 and the Outstanding Performance Award in 1994, as well as similar awards from IBM, Raytheon, Control Data, Varian, and Storage Technology. The employees at PECO Inc., have earned a high honor for the region.

HONORING UNITED STATES COAST GUARD COMMANDER NEIL L. NICKERSON

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor United States Coast Guard Commander Neil Nickerson and to commemorate his illustrious career of dedicated service to our nation.

Commander Nickerson graduated from the Coast Guard Officer Candidate School in March 1984. Since then, he has served a wide range of tours taking him from the Atlantic, to the Pacific, through the Panama Canal, across the Equator and into the Arctic Circle.

During his first tour in Miami Beach, Florida, Commander Nickerson assisted with search, rescue and recovery for the tragic Space Shuttle Challenger explosion. He then served in Guam and Alameda, California, where he began law enforcement missions ranging from drug interdiction to fishery regulation. Several years later, Commander Nickerson began service as Coast Guard Liaison Officer to the San Diego, California Navy Fleet Training Group. From there, he became Commanding Officer of USCGC *Liberty* in Alaska.

Over the course of these tours, Commander Nickerson distinguished himself as an outstanding officer, earning the respect of his peers and superiors alike. Based on these merits, in 1995 he was one of the elite few selected to attend post-graduate education at the Naval War College. Upon completion of this rigorous coursework, he began service in the Budget Office of Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC.

Soon thereafter, Commander Nickerson assumed the position of Executive Officer of the USCGC *Alex Haley* in Alaska. During his tenure, he oversaw the complete refurbishing of the former US Navy ship. Commander Nickerson then led the USCGC *Alex Haley* on its maiden voyage from the Naval shipyard in Philadelphia through the Panama Canal and up to Kodiak, Alaska. Following this tour, Commander Nickerson began service as Executive Officer of the USCGC *Jarvis* in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he continues to serve today.

This year, Commander Nickerson will retire from 22 years of service to the US Coast Guard. Throughout his accomplished career, Commander Nickerson has kept with the highest traditions of the US Coast Guard and serves as an inspiration to us all. In recognition of his exceptional performance of duty, Commander Nickerson has been awarded six Coast Guard Commendation Medals with Operational Distinguishing Device on all. On the occasion of his retirement, the US Coast Guard also will be awarding him the Meritorious Service Medal. This prestigious honor recognizes officers that have demonstrated expert knowledge, effective management and outstanding leadership.

I ask that my colleagues join me in commending this dedicated public servant and in congratulating him on a well-deserved retirement.

HONORING NORTON PARKER CHIPMAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI COLLEGE OF LAW

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Norton Parker Chipman, an esteemed graduate of the Cincinnati Law School. On April 4, 2006, his memory will be honored as the newly ordained namesake for the Norton Parker Chipman Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies located at the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

Norton Parker Chipman led a distinguished life, including time spent as a United States Congressman, author, first presiding justice of California's Third District Court of Appeal, and perhaps, most notably, a Civil War hero. Seriously injured and reported as dead at Fort Donelson in 1862, Chipman's bravery and resolve was rewarded with an assignment to President Abraham Lincoln's staff at Gettysburg. As judge advocate, Chipman's successful prosecution of Captain Henry Wirz, commander of the Confederacy's infamous Andersonville war prison camp, earned him a spot on the platform at Gettysburg next to his close friend President Lincoln while the President delivered his famous Gettysburg Address.

Among several of his accolades, Chipman also was a co-founder of the Grand Army of the Republic and authored the order creating Memorial Day. He was appointed as the first presiding justice of California's Third District Court of Appeal in 1905 and served honorably until his retirement in 1921. To this date, Chipman remains the longest serving presiding justice of the court.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Norton Parker Chipman for his contributions to our country, and I am pleased that his legacy is being commemorated at the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

TRIBUTE TO MR. M. BRIAN MAHER

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention to the life and work of an outstanding individual whom I feel fortunate to call my friend, Mr. M. Brian Maher. He was honored on Tuesday, March 7, 2006, at the 13th Annual Archbishop's Business and Labor Recognition ceremony, under the auspices of the Newark (NJ) Archdiocese.

Mr. Maher is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Maher Terminals, Inc., a major marine terminal in the Port of New York/New Jersey, as well as a supplier of state-of-the-art marine terminal computer services and software. Mr. Maher, who has been in the business for 35 years, carries on in the tradition of his revered father, who founded Maher Terminals after serving in World War II.

A graduate of the Ohio State University and a lifetime resident of New Jersey, Mr. Maher is currently a member of the board of trustees of NJN Foundation, and of St. Peter's College. He serves as director of the New York Shipping Association and as director and officer of the United States Maritime Alliance, Ltd.

Mr. Maher has been chosen to receive numerous service awards, including the Ninth Annual Labor Award, from New Jersey's State AFL–CIO, "Person of the Year 2001" from New York/New Jersey Foreign Freight Forwarders and Brokers Association, Inc., the International Maritime Hall of Fame Lookout Award, the Admiral of the Ocean Sea Award for distinguished service to American ships and American seafarers, and the Bi-State Harbor Carriers Conference of NJMTA award for being the individual who has contributed most towards bolstering the image of the Port Community.

Additionally, Mr. Maher is past chairman of the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce, past member of the Board of Overseers, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and past vice-chair of St. Peter's College Board of Trustees. Mr. Maher is a past member of the board of directors of the Regional Business Partnership, the Regional Plan Association and the Union County Alliance. He served as president and member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Waterfront Employers and is a past director of the National Maritime Safety Association. Originally, appointed by Governor Christine Todd Whitman, Mr. Maher served on the Dredged Materials Management Team, formed to ensure the viability of the Port of New York/New Jersey, and to protect the environment. He also served on the Dredging Project Facilitation Task Force.

Brian remains happily married to Sandra, with whom he has two children, Amanda and Michael. Throughout his life, his generosity to charitable causes, and Catholic schools in particular has been admirable. It gives me great pleasure to honor such an upstanding individual.

Mr. Speaker, the job of a United States Congressman involves so much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing the efforts of fine citizens like Mr. M. Brian Maher. I ask that you join residents of New Jersey, the employees of Maher Terminals, Inc., Mr. Maher's family and friends and me, in recognizing M. Brian Maher for his years of outstanding service to the citizens of our Great State of New Jersey.

HONORING SALME HARJU STEINBERG

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Salme Harju Steinberg, President of Northeastern Illinois University. President Steinberg recently announced that she will retire from the University in 2007, ending over thirty years of distinguished service to the university.

President Steinberg began at Northeastern Illinois University as a professor of history in 1975. She went on to serve as both Department Chair and Administrator. For the past eleven years, she served as President of NEIU.

Under President Steinberg's leadership, NEIU experienced an increase in enrollment and marked improvements in the academic and cultural opportunities available to its students. President Steinberg's intelligent stewardship and forward thinking have resulted in increased funding for academic programs and improved financial assistance for students.

President Steinberg has also demonstrated a commitment to assist first generation college students. Today, Northeastern University can boast a minority enrollment of over 60 percent, with as many as forty-seven languages spoken across the campus.

In addition to the breadth of diversity President Steinberg has worked to introduce, she also developed heritage programming to deepen the cultural education and appreciation of NEIU students, including an innovative study abroad program.

Mr. Speaker, President Salme Harju Steinberg's many contributions to Northeastern Illinois University will always be remembered, and her dedication will continue to benefit NEIU students long after her retirement. I wish her the best in all of her future endeavors.

CELEBRATING LTC HARRY GAUNT AS VETERAN OF THE YEAR 2006

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the announcement of the Joint Veterans Committee of Maryland's Veteran of the Year 2006. The Joint Veterans Committee of Maryland is an active organization that focuses on military veteran legislation on the local, State and Federal level. Recently, they elected LTC Harry Gaunt, United States Army, retired, for this prestigious award because of the contributions he has made to this great Nation.

Lieutenant Colonel Gaunt was active for 22 years in the Armed Forces, serving in WWII, as well as the Korea and Vietnam wars. Because of his tremendous determination, steadfastness, and perseverance, he received the Army Commendation Medal; Good Conduct Medal with Cluster; American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic Pacific Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Army Occupation Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Republic of Vietnam Service Medal; Philippine Liberation Medal; and two Presidential Unit Citations.

Even after retirement, Lieutenant Colonel Gaunt remained active in military life through veterans' organizations. Among these organizations he took active leadership roles confirming his dedication to the United States Armed Forces. Through the Wells McComas Post 2678 VFW, Gaunt completed two terms as All State post commander and also the VFW District 14 commander. He served as the chairman of the Buddy Poppy Contest for the Department of Maryland Veterans of Foreign Wars, chairman of the Citizenship, Education and Community Activities Committee, and

chairman of the Department of Veterans Service Committee. Most recently, he continued his leadership role as a delegate of the Joint Veterans Committee of Maryland.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join with me in celebrating the outstanding commitment Lieutenant Colonel Gaunt has made to the United States of America. Lieutenant Gaunt used his leadership skills and the vast knowledge gained from active duty to continue serving his county. LTC Harry Gaunt is truly deserving of our thanks and appreciation for the contributions he has made throughout his career.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF MAYOR JOHN THOMAS

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise today to recognize the retirement of John Thomas from the office of mayor of the city of Mary Esther, FL.

Throughout his entire career, John has been unquestionably devoted to serving his country. In 1952, he joined the United States Air Force and began a career that would extend over 40 years. Through Air Force bases across the Nation and around the world, he was in charge of coordinating essential services for our soldiers, especially in the area of transportation. As the chief of services for a United States Air Force Base in Spain from 1989 to 1994, John aided his country in time of war as his base provided support to Operation Desert Storm 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1994, John and his wife returned to the United States and decided to take up residence in Mary Esther, a city in my district in Northwest Florida. Never tiring, John became involved with the City Council within 2 years, and shortly thereafter took over a vacated seat on the council. After an unsuccessful run for mayor of Mary Esther, John persisted and was elected to the mayor's office in 2000.

For three terms, John Thomas served as the mayor of Mary Esther. He dedicated his energy, as he had before, toward making his city the best place to live. John is well-known for the efforts he put forth toward that goal. From 2003 to 2004, he also served as president of the Northwest Florida League of Cities, where he shared his insights with others and looked at ways he could better aid and lead the city of Mary Esther.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I commend Mayor John Thomas for his excellent leadership in Northwest Florida and for his selfless service to our Nation. The city of Mary Esther has benefited greatly from his service, and I wish him well in his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO MR. DON DiLEO

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call your attention to the life and work of an outstanding individual whom I feel fortunate to call my friend, Mr. Don DiLeo. He was honored on Tuesday, March 7, 2006, by the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ, at the 13th Annual Archbishop's Business and Labor Recognition ceremony.

Don DiLeo is president of Teamsters Local Union Number 408, which represents members in the building materials, heavy highway and construction industries. He was appointed as a business agent in 1969 and has served as president of the Local Union since 1980. In 1984, Don was appointed to the Executive Board of Teamsters Joint Council Number 73, which represents 60,000 members affiliated with 20 local unions in the State of New Jersey. Over the course of his tenure, he has served as both president and chairman of the Joint Council Number 73 Pension Fund, chairman of the North Jersey Construction Negotiations Committee for Teamsters, and contributing member of the New Jersey State Board of Mediation.

In 2005, the New Jersey Industrial Union Council honored Mr. DiLeo for a lifetime of distinguished service and significant contributions to the trade union movement. The following year, he was named as a vice president to the New Jersey State Building Constructions Trades Council.

Under Mr. DiLeo's leadership, New Jersey Teamsters have become very active in many charities. He began an annual golf tournament to raise money for the Joint Council Number 73 Scholarship Fund, which awards grants to the children of council members for their college education. He formed the Joint Council Number 73 Food Bank Corporation, which provides food for striking or locked out union members. The Joint Council also works closely with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey on its Thanksgiving Turkey Drive and other projects. Additionally, in 2004, the council was awarded the Community Food Bank Distinguished Partner Award. Also, the Joint Council participates in the Ocean County Saint Patrick's Day Parade and annually donates a beach wheelchair to a shore town that contributes to the noteworthy event. The Joint Council sponsors the Australian Challenge "Trip of a Lifetime" group. Over the past 12 years, Challenge has arranged overseas trips to the United States for children who are seriously ill. The Joint Council and its affiliated locals have provided accommodations and transportation for the children to events, while they are visiting the metropolitan area. In addition, the Joint Council and its locals have remained prime supporters of Camp Fatima, advancing the interests of handicapped children.

Don remains happily married to Jacqueline, his wife, with whom he has four children, Joseph, Donald, Jessica and Ralph. He is the proud grandfather of two.

Mr. Speaker, the job of a United States Congressman involves so much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing the efforts of committed citizens like Mr. Don DiLeo. I ask that you join residents of the Eighth Congressional District, the Borough of Flemington, members of the Teamsters Local Union Number 408, Mr. DiLeo's family and friends and me, in recognizing Don DiLeo for his years of distinguished service in representing the trade union movement.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RAY MEYER

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with sadness to offer my condolences to the family and friends of Ray Meyer, who passed away recently at the age of 92. Ray Meyer was a loving husband and father, as well as the face of college basketball in Chicago since 1942.

Best known as the legendary head coach of the DePaul University Blue Demons basketball team from 1942 until his retirement in 1984, Coach Meyer's success while roaming the sidelines rates him among the greatest coaches college basketball has ever seen.

Meyer led the Blue Demons to 37 winning seasons and 724 overall victories, and his teams played in postseason tournaments 21 times. He mentored legendary players like George Mikan, Mark Aguirre and Terry Cummings. The entire country was captivated by Coach Meyer's team and his personality as the Blue Demons made a historic run to the Final Four in 1979. He subsequently led a series of number one ranked teams in the early 1980s and was enshrined in basketball's Hall of Fame before he even finished his coaching career.

Although these feats are impressive, he made an even bigger impact on the hearts and minds of his players, colleagues and fans. His grin and compassionate personality were among his most memorable traits. He taught his players important lessons about life as well as basketball.

In addition to being a dedicated coach, Ray Meyer was also a loving family man. His late wife had such a large impact on his life and DePaul University that the Blue Demons now play on Ray & Marge Meyer Court. His sons Tom and Bob played under his tutelage, and he groomed his son Joey to be his successor in 1984, where he would remain head coach until 1997. In the 55 years from Ray Meyer's first game as coach through the last Blue Demons game with Joey Meyer at the helm, Ray Meyer attended each of the 1,467 games they played.

Mr. Speaker, Coach Meyer left an indelible mark on everyone he touched. His oversized personality captivated generations of Chicagoans. The DePaul community, the city of Chicago, and all of basketball will always remember him.

RECOGNIZING PETTY OFFICER TERESA PADILLA AS THE BALTIMORE AREA COAST GUARD PERSON YEAR 2006

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise before you today to recognize Petty Officer Teresa Padilla as the Baltimore Area Coast Guard Person of the Year 2006.

Petty Officer Padilla is well known among her peers as being highly dedicated and loyal

to her post. Recently, she took on many more roles within the United States Coast Guard due to a shortage of staff. Under her leadership, the Outpatient Department of the Coast Guard was handled exceptionally well. She also supervised five corpsmen, assisted in the treating of 5,236 patients, assumed responsibility of the Leading Petty Officer, as well as excelled in her position as the Clinic's Supply Petty Officer.

Petty Officer Padilla has done exceptional work in the Baltimore Area Coast Guard. She accepted each new challenge with poise and dignity. According to her superiors, her positive outlook was infectious. The individuals under her management also kept an optimistic attitude in their daily routines. Petty Officer Padilla thrived in the new responsibilities she received.

Along with her work in the Coast Guard Yard Clinic, Petty Officer Padilla took an active role in setting up Nate's Open Door Baby Pantry. This organization supplies families with a wide range of materials including car seats and baby bottles. Petty Officer Padilla not only donated her personal time to assist this organization, but she also donated clean used clothes from her own children to provide assistance to families in need. Being a member of the Yard Morale Committee, Petty Officer Padilla graciously volunteered to assist at the Yard Christmas Children's Party as one of Santa's helpers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to recognize the outstanding devotion and faithfulness Petty Officer Teresa Padilla has shown to the United States Coast Guard. Her loyalty and commitment to this country and its citizens deserves our unwavering gratitude.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I would like to offer a personal explanation of the reason I missed rollcall vote No. 56 on March 16, 2006. It was a Sabo amendment vote on H.R. 4939, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006. I was detained and could not make it to the floor for this vote.

I respectfully request that it be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that if present, I would have voted rollcall vote No. 56, the amendment increasing spending by $1.225 billion, increasing Customs and Border Protection by $700 million, Coast Guard Operating Expenses by $125 million, FEMA Regional Operations by $300 million, and FEMA Preparedness funding by $100 million, ''nay.''

MEMORIALIZING THE TWELVE MEMBERS OF B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL WHO PERISHED IN A TRAGIC BUS ACCIDENT

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago on March 22nd, 12 Americans—all from B'nai B'rith International—a Jewish organization committed to fighting human rights abuses—lost their lives in a tragic bus accident in the mountains of Chile. What should have been a relaxing day excursion for these 12 senior citizens to Chile's beautiful Lauca National Park instead became a horrible nightmare as their tour bus tumbled more than 300 feet down a cliff, killing all but four on board. The driver of the bus remains under investigation as Chilean authorities try to determine the exact cause of the wreck.

As Chairman of the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, I have visited Chile, and I know first hand its beautiful land and culture. I understand what drives Americans to visit this great country, and I am deeply saddened that this part of Chile will be forever marked by tragedy.

I know all the victims of this terrible tragedy will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved them. I respectfully ask my colleagues to join me in sending the deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers to their families. May God bless them and help them get through this very difficult time.

TRIBUTE TO TOM LAURIN FOR EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE AS SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to pay tribute to a longtime public servant, Thomas R. Laurin, who has played a key role in improving the economy and quality of life for San Bernardino County over the past three decades as community development agency director.

Although Tom Laurin is not a native of San Bernardino, he moved there at a young age when his Air Force father came to Norton Air Force Base. He graduated from San Gorgonio High School (a rival of my alma mater, San Bernardino High) and received a bachelor's degree from California State University, San Bernardino.

After receiving his master's degree in Urban Geography at the University of Northern Colorado, Tom Laurin returned in 1977 to join the San Bernardino County Office of Community Development. He eventually became the Director of Community Development and Housing.

When Tom joined local government, San Bernardino County had 746,000 people and only two cities had more than 50,000 residents. Today, nearly 2 million people live in San Bernardino County, and 14 cities include a population of more than 50,000—four have more than 150,000.

As my colleagues know, this kind of explosive growth brings tremendous challenges to local government. Urban problems like crime, dilapidated housing, and a lack of local amenities have all been confronted by the Community Development Agency.

Under the leadership of director Laurin, I believe the agency has more than met those challenges, and made the county by far a better place to live even as it has been one of the fastest growing areas in the nation. He has helped the county utilize $188 million in federal grants, and secured $750 million in tax-exempt affordable housing loans.

I have had the pleasure of working closely with Tom on the county's Neighborhood Initiative Program, designed to improve entire neighborhoods of low-cost housing. Working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Fannie Mae, the county took a $15 million grant and rehabilitated neighborhoods in Redlands, Highland, San Bernardino and adjacent unincorporated areas.

More than 550 homes, many of them shuttered HUD foreclosures, were fixed up and are now owned by proud low- and moderate-income families. The program generated an additional $12 million, which was reinvested. It has won numerous national awards.

Tom Laurin created the county's first Enterprise Zone, which has helped hundreds of businesses and thousands of employees gain economic success. He created the county's Enterprise Funding Corporation, which after 20 years is still assisting local business. And he oversaw creation of innovative financing and development programs that helped create for-profit businesses to dispose of millions of trees that had been killed by bark beetles in the San Bernardino Mountains.

More than 20 of Tom's projects have received awards from state and national organizations, as well as HUD Best Practices awards. He has served on many state and national boards, and is a sought-after speaker on community development issues. For five years, he has been a CSU San Bernardino professor on urban issues.

Mr. Speaker, after nearly 30 years of top-level public service, Tom Laurin will retire as Community Development Director in April. I ask you and my colleagues to please join me in thanking him for his work on behalf of the people of San Bernardino County, and wishing him well on his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO KORYNE HORBAL, DEE LONG AND VIVIAN JENKINS NELSEN

HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to take part in the celebration of National Women's History Month by recognizing accomplished leaders from the State of Minnesota: Koryne Horbal, Dee Long and Vivian Jenkins Nelsen.

Koryne Horbal has blazed a trail for gender equality in Minnesota and much beyond. Her

many leadership posts have included Chairwoman of the Democrat-Farmer-Labor (DFL) party, founder of the DFL Feminist Caucus, Democratic National Committee (DNC) Member representing Minnesota where she started the DNC's Women's Caucus. She also served as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. She served in the U.N. ambassadorial role for 4 years during the Carter Administration. During that time, she and Gloria Steinem became good friends and have since worked together on many projects.

Ms. Horbal has worked tirelessly on many issues, from women's rights to pay equity, from higher education to health care. She says there was one female Minnesota legislator when she began in politics and 17 when she stepped down as State Chairwoman. She led a study called Present but Powerless that examined the role of women in the DFL party and found women heavily involved but rarely in positions of power. While at the U.N., she was also partly responsible for the only treaty about women, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. The U.S. is the only industrialized country to have not signed it, she adds.

Ms. Horbal, now a consultant at the Women's Resource Center at Augsburg College, says she first got involved advancing women's rights when she realized how much women were left out of the process.

''I became a feminist one year when the party was deciding about which potential candidates would run for election,'' Horbal says. ''Women weren't included in this discussion. That's what woke me up.''

Dee Long charted new territory when she assumed leadership positions historically held by men. To date, not only was Ms. Long the first female Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, she remains its only. She was also the first woman to chair a tax committee in the Minnesota Legislature, and was the first woman to chair a joint Senate/House committee.

Over the years, Ms. Long has taken the lead on many issues. But the ones that remain closest to her heart include environmental and tax issues. She helped lead the development of Minnesota's version of the Superfund legislation, where the polluter pays for hazardous waste cleanup. She also played a leading role in developing the Minnesota Livable Communities Act, which focuses on smart growth development. Today, Ms. Long works as the Director of the Environmental Tax and Incentive Program at Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy.

As new women politicians entered the Legislature, she advised them to not simply go to committee meetings. Know the issue backwards and forwards, and be a leader, she'd tell them. Being knowledgeable about the issues before you creates respect. She also encouraged women to get involved in issues that weren't historically women's issues, such as taxes, justice, and others.

''If you know the issues, you'll have the respect,'' she says.

Vivian Jenkins Nelsen also has a long list of firsts among her accomplishments. She is the co-founder of INTER–RACE, a diversity think tank located at Augsburg College. She was a Bush Leadership Fellow at Harvard University, and is a nationally recognized diversity practitioner, trainer and researcher. She was the first black woman graduate of Dana College in Nebraska. Further, she was the first black woman professor at Augsburg College, and first such administrator at the University of Minnesota. At the University of Minnesota, she served as Director of Human Relations Training as well as Director of Administration at the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

Ms. Nelsen was always exposed to human and civil rights work growing up, and sees her work as an extension of her parents' efforts. ''Then, they were trying to bring black people up. I am trying to help make corporate America and American policy ready and accepting of all people.'' Her father, a pastor in the Lutheran Church, worked for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and helped to organize the protest march to Selma. Ms. Nelsen recalls meeting with King as one of the critical moments that defined her path in life. She said when she met with a group of people with King, he focused his time and attention on her, because ''a kid came before everything else.'' This is a sentiment to she has taken to heart herself.

Ms. Nelsen has consulted on race and gender issues for the Lutheran Church. She has also served as president of the Minnesota Women Equity Action League, which acted as the legal arm of the gender equality movement. Today at INTER–RACE, she works with Fortune 500 companies, nonprofits, and policy makers at all levels.

''My job is about helping people find their voice about justice,'' Nelsen says. ''It's about being able to look at other people's behavior, but also their own.''

Mr. Speaker, these 3 women have impacted their communities and the larger world community with a lot of hard work, determination and grit. They have fought for greater gender equity and provided leadership to make it happen. I commend each of these women for the difference they have made, and continue to make every day.

CELEBRATING 185 YEARS OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the great nation of Greece and celebrate with its citizens 185 years of independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Any first-year university student knows Greece to be one of the ancient cradles of Western Civilization. In art and literature, history and philosophy, science and mathematics, the contributions of the Greek people to the world as we know it are immeasurable.

And of course, one of Greece's most significant contributions to modern civilization is that of democratic governance. The influences of Socrates, Plato, Pericles, Solon, and many others provided the basis for our founding fathers' essays and treaties on life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

These ancient thinkers planted the seeds of modern democracy, but the people of modern Greece did not reap the benefits until over two thousand years later. In 1821, the Greek people declared independence from the Ottoman Empire, marking the beginning of an eleven-year struggle for freedom. It is this courageous action that we honor today.

The Greek revolutionaries' valiant efforts inspired the support of a fledgling democracy known as the United States of America. Many Americans left home and volunteered to fight alongside the Greeks, and this Congress also sent money and supplies to assist in Greece's struggle for autonomy. Since that time, the U.S. and Greece have worked side-by-side to oppose tyranny and oppression and advance the cause of democracy worldwide.

But our ties with Greece do not end with this shared commitment to the principles of democracy. Indeed, today more than 1 million people of Greek descent live in the United States. These men and women have made innumerable contributions to our society and way of life, and for this we thank them.

Colleagues, please join me in saluting the people of Greece for their tremendous commitment to democracy and the principles that helped to found our Nation.

TRIBUTE TO DR. ALBERT E. SMITH: AN EDUCATOR WITH TRUE VISION

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues the retirement of Dr. Albert Emanuel Smith, President of Florida Memorial University in Miami Gardens, Florida, a remarkable educator, administrator and leader who has left an indelible mark on our entire South Florida community.

According to Dr. Smith, ''The primary mission of any worthy institution of higher education is to produce graduates who understand that education is a lifelong endeavor.'' Throughout his career, Dr. Smith truly lived that creed. He dedicated his life's work to opening the doors of educational enlightenment and opportunity to thousands.

A native of Sioux Falls, South Dakota Dr. Smith earned a Bachelors of Science degree from North Carolina A&T State University, a Masters of Science degree from George Williams College and his Ph.D., from the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh in 1971.

Dr. Smith's early professional career included a brief stint as a minor league baseball player for the Saint Louis Cardinals; two years in the United States Army Medical Service Corps where he was a commissioned officer and company commander; and five years as the director of athletics at North Carolina A&T State University.

In 1971, Dr. Smith was appointed executive assistant director of athletics at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1974, he was named director of athletics and associate professor of education at Eastern Michigan University. Dr. Smith served as Vice Chancellor for Development and University Relations, professor of education, and Executive Director of the North Carolina A&T University Foundation in 1976. He served in this capacity until he became the sixth president of South Carolina State University in 1976.

In 1993, Dr. Smith moved on to become the 10th President of Florida Memorial University (then Florida Memorial College). Under his

leadership, FMU has truly experienced a renaissance and metamorphosis. Dr. Smith implemented a major capital improvement program, including the dedication of the Lou Rawls Center for the Performing Arts, and he achieved an important educational milestone in expanding its offering of academic programs and guiding the college to University status.

I know that everyone in our community thanks Dr. Smith for a job well done. We wish him and his wife, Sadie, our very best for continued success and much happiness in the future.

A SALUTE TO THE WILSON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL GIRL'S BASKETBALL TEAM, TENNESSEE'S 2005—2006 CLASS AAA STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an extraordinary group of young women from Wilson Central High School in Lebanon, Tennessee—the 2005–2006 Class AAA Girl's Basketball State Champions.

Of the 5 years Wilson Central High School has been in existence, the Lady Wildcats have been to three State championship tournaments. On March 11, 2006, they brought home the State title after defeating Shelbyville Central High School 44–38. The State championship is the school's first State title in any sport. The team finished a remarkable season with a 32–7 overall record. I am extremely proud of these outstanding young athletes for this great accomplishment.

These student-athletes should be honored not only for the feat of winning the Tennessee State Girl's Basketball Championship, but they should also be recognized for excelling in the classroom and maintaining a team grade point average of 3.61. This is certainly no easy task and I am proud of the way they have represented their school and hometown both on and off the basketball court.

On behalf of the Fifth Congressional District of Tennessee, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the following members of the Wilson Central High School girl's basketball team: freshmen Kelsey McGee, Lauren Wasson, Jasmine Hassell, sophomores Heather Simonis, Kristyn Clark, Sydney Ketcher, Rebecca Stewart, Cameryn Calhoun, Shelley Stewart and Rachel Stewart, juniors Tierney Jenkins, Lauren Farmer, Sara Williams and especially to the graduating seniors Elizabeth Martin, Breonna Brown, and Jenny Hall. I commend Nikki Eversole, Brittany Farmer, Courtney Chapman, Kayla White, Melanie Jones and Audriana Saddler for their hard work and contributions to the team.

I also salute their coaches—Head Coach Bud Brandon, his father and Assistant Coach Campbell Brandon, and Assistant Coaches Jay Holladay and Scott Moore for their commitment, expertise and leadership. Campbell Brandon coached the Lebanon High School Blue Devilettes to their State championship victory 35 years ago, in 1971. Today, he shares his son's pride for another team of amazing young women—the 2006 Wilson Central Lady Wildcats.

I applaud the tremendous achievements of these exceptional young players and wish them well in their endeavors on the basketball court and beyond.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Chairman, during the vote on amendments and final passage for H.R. 2829, the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act, I was away from the Capitol on business in my home State of Georgia.

On the Chabot amendment to H.R. 2829 (Vote #34), I would have voted "yes."

On the Hooley amendment to H.R. 2829 (Vote #35), I would have voted "yes."

On the Paul amendment to H.R. 2829 (Vote #36), I would have voted "yes."

On the Rehberg amendment to H.R. 2829 (Vote #37), I would have voted "yes."

On final passage, I would have voted in favor of H.R. 2829, to reauthorize the Office of National Drug Control Policy Act (Vote #38).

MARCH 30, 2006 INAUGURATION OF PORTIA SIMPSON MILLER PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce in to the RECORD my sincerest congratulations and best wishes for Portia Simpson Miller, Jamaica's newly-installed President of the People's National Party and newly-elected Prime Minister, on her imminent Inauguration on March 30, 2006.

Celebrants of Women's History Month in Jamaica and elsewhere had much to rejoice about as Simpson Miller made history on February 25th, when she was elected the first woman president of the 68-year old People's National Party (PNP). With this, the stage was set for more history: she will become the first woman Prime Minister of the great nation of Jamaica.

Simpson Miller knows full well the numerous challenges in store as she embarks on this political journey as Prime Minister. She is no stranger to the political arena—where partisan and national expectations are high—and realizes that there is much to be done to address the many problems of the Jamaican society. The much anticipated question about the direction in which Simpson Miller intends to take the country will begin to unfold in a couple of days when she is sworn in as Prime Minister and appoints her Cabinet to implement her priorities.

Yesterday, in Ocho Rios, St. Ann Jamaica, Simpson Miller shed a single tear as she accepted the People's National Party's symbolic baton of leadership from P.J. Patterson, the outgoing Prime Minister. Simpson Miller stressed the need for unity, and urged the party to have its election machinery oiled and ready by June this year. Simpson Miller praised Patterson, who has led the party for 14 years, for helping her political career, and she paid tribute to their friendship even when they competed against each other for the presidency fourteen years ago.

In her acceptance speech yesterday before ruling party's National Executive Council (NEC) she calmly stated "I come to you today with no malice, no malice whatsoever, because I come today as your party leader. I am determined to lead a united party. I am determined to build bridges that will lead to unity of purpose and accomplishment of our mission. I am determined to devote my energy and time to the healing process because it is only in unity that we can have strength, and it is only in strength that we can be assured of the success of our programs and victory for the fifth term".

Mr. Speaker, with change come challenges. There are always skeptics and detractors lurking on the horizon waiting to pounce at the first signs of failure. I am confident that Portia Simpson Miller will rise to lead the great Jamaican nation into the future with optimism and hope.

SIKH ORGANIZATIONS UNITE FOR KHALISTAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the Indian newspaper The Telegraph ran a story on March 21 reporting that two Sikh organizations in Punjab, Dal Khalsa, under the leadership of Satnam Singh, and the Shiromani Khalsa Dal under the leadership of Daljit Singh Bittu, are uniting to promote a sovereign, independent Khalistan. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Sikhs declared Khalistan independent on October 7, 1987. Ever since then, Sikhs have been struggling against a massive Indian force of over 500,000 troops sent to suppress their drive for freedom.

The announcement from Dal Khalsa and the Shiromani Khalsa Dal was met by shouts of "Khalistan Zindabad," meaning "Long live Khalistan." Now the Chief Minister of Punjab has ordered the police to place the leaders of both organizations under watch. Let me make this clear, Mr. Speaker. They are under police watch in "the world's largest democracy" for peaceful political activities designed to achieve freedom for their people.

These arrests come in short order after the recent arrests of Sikh activists Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan and Kanwarpal Singh Dhami for speeches they made supporting Khalistan. Dr. Chohan committed the additional crime of flying the Khalistani flag from his residence. Groups of Sikhs were arrested last year in January and June for hoisting the Khalistani flag and making speeches in support of sovereignty for Khalistan. Dal Khalsa organized those events. It has organized numerous events in support of a sovereign Khalistan in Punjab, and the support has been shown to be large. I guess this scares the Indian government.

Mr. Speaker, these actions are unacceptable in any country. We use our influence to put pressure on totalitarian regimes for just these kinds of tactics. They are even more unacceptable when the country using them

claims to be democratic. This does not resemble any kind of democracy I know about.

Mr. Speaker, we must take a stand for freedom in South Asia, as we are doing elsewhere in the world. The time has come to cut off our aid and trade with India and until basic human rights for all people are respected there. In addition, we should put the Congress officially on record in support of free and fair plebiscites in Punjab, Khalistan, in Kashmir, in Nagaland, and all the other minority nations seeking their freedom from India. It is time for America to show its active support for freedom, stability, dignity, and human rights.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan has published a very good release on the statement by Dal Khalsa and the Shiromani Khalsa Dal. I would like to add it to the RECORD now for the information of my colleagues.

SIKHS ARRESTED IN INDIA FOR SPEAKING FOR KHALISTAN

WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 15, 2006.—Sardar Kanwarpal Singh Dhami, Chairman of Dal Khalsa, and Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan were arrested earlier this month for speaking out for an independent Khalistan. They were charged with sedition. These arrests follow the arrests of Sikh leaders last year belonging to Dal Khalsa both in January and June for hoisting the flag of Khalistan. Kanwarpal Singh Dhami was arrested after saying that the Sikh Panth could not live under someone else's rule. He was accused of ". . . sedition, promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony, imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration and statements conducing to public mischief." The government charged that he promoted separatist and 'terrorist' movements.

Dal Khalsa has sponsored numerous marches and conferences in Punjab in support of a free Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. It was the organizer of the two events at which Sikhs were arrested for making speeches and raising the Khalistani flag. It was announced today that they will be joining forces with the Shiromani Khalsa Dal, headed by Sardar Daljit Singh Bittu, in support of a free Khalistan. The Punjab and Haryana High Court ruled that it is legal to ask for freedom for Khalistan, yet the Indian government continues to treat it as a crime. They do not even live by their own law.

Dr. Chohan said on India's Zee TV that Khalistan will be free by 2007. He has also been flying the Khalistani flag and that of his party, the Khalsa Raj Party, outside his office. According to the book Chakravyuh: Web of Indian Secularism (page 183), Dr. Chohan worked with Major General Jaswant Singh Bhullar, Professor Manjit Singh Sidhu, Didar Singh Bains, and others "to stop Sikhs living abroad" from supporting freedom for Khalistan and connived with the Indian government for the June 1984 attack on the Golden Temple.

"It is evident that the Indian government is scared of the increasing amount of peaceful activism in Punjab in support of Khalistan," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which is leading the Sikh struggle for independence. "The time of Khalistan's liberation is near. India will fall apart soon," he said. "We condemn the arrests of Sardar Dhami and Dr. Chohan but remind the Sikh Nation that it must work only with leaders who are honest, sincere, and committed to the liberation of Khalistan." Dr. Aulakh noted that in New York in 2000, former Member of Parliament Simranjit Singh Mann had called for the Council of Khalistan's office to be closed. "Sikhs must be very careful about the leaders they follow," Dr. Aulakh said. "This office has worked unwaveringly for a sovereign Khalistan for almost 20 years," he noted.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. "We only hope that the breakup will be peaceful," said Dr. Aulakh.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir, tens of thousands of Christians and Muslims throughout the country, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. He was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. No one has been brought to justice for the Khalra kidnapping and murder. Yet according to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial, some since 1984!

Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper and get justice," said Dr. Aulakh. "India should act like a democracy and allow a plebiscite on independence for Khalistan and all the nations of South Asia," Dr. Aulakh said. "We must free Khalistan now."

TRIBUTE TO WALTER JEBE

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Walter G. Jebe, a longtime community leader, businessman and historian, who died of leukemia in the Veterans Hospital in Palo Alto on Feb. 25th at the age of 81. The unofficial mayor of San Francisco's Excelsior district, Mr. Jebe was a champion of small business and for his neighborhood and an outspoken advocate and historian. He has left an indelible mark on our city.

Mr. Jebe was born in 1924, raised in the Excelsior District, graduated from Balboa High School, studied photography at Samuel Gompers trade school and was drafted into the Army. After serving our Nation, Mr. Jebe returned to San Francisco and opened Jebe's Cameras on Mission Street. He was a self-taught businessman, and neighboring businesses took bets on how long he would last. He stayed in business for 45 years.

All politics was local to Mr. Jebe, who was a member of the Excelsior Business Association, the Geneva Excelsior Lions Club, the Boy Scouts, and other organizations he felt would improve the Excelsior. He also served on a number of San Francisco city commissions, including the Delinquency Prevention Commission, the Library Commission and the Arts Commission. He helped secure a branch of the public library for the Excelsior, and last year wrote a book about the history of the neighborhood.

Walter Jebe was a respected authority on San Francisco history and taught courses throughout San Francisco. He collected vast quantities of photos and memorabilia on the San Francisco Mid Winter Fair of 1894, the Pan Pacific Exhibition of 1915, the 1939 World's Fair and the 1906 Earthquake and Fire.

As a prominent member of the San Francisco History Association, he headed the task force that negotiated a deal for the Federal Government to turn over the Old Mint at Fifth and Mission streets to a nonprofit organization to become a history museum. The Old Mint is a San Francisco architectural gem that survived the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and played a vital role in rebuilding the city. A member of the Old Mint Advisory Council, Mr. Jebe was responsible for overseeing the restoration project.

With great appreciation for his fine work and service to our city, I extend my deepest sympathy to his wife of 53 years, Vivian Jebe, his son Walter and daughter Vivian, and thank them, for sharing their magnificent husband and father with us. He was a true San Francisco treasure and we are diminished by his passing.

PREPARE NOW DON'T WAIT FOR A HURRICANE STRIKE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call upon the United States Government to assist the islands of the Caribbean with preparation for the impending 2006 hurricane season and to enter in the RECORD an editorial from the New York CaribNews entitled "Prepare Now Don't Wait for a Hurricane Strike" which addresses the need to take timely action now before a natural disaster occurs.

The impact and wreckage still linger in Grenada from 2004 and 2005. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Ivan and Emily we realized that decades of progress was wiped away and insurmountable damage was done to 90 per cent of the country's housing stock and watersheds. Similar devastation exists throughout the islands of the Caribbean who received direct force of the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes. It is crucial that steps be taken to prepare for these tragedies long before they occur. We must have programs in place to respond immediately and not wait until the disaster strikes.

WITH 2006 HURRICANE SEASON AROUND THE CORNER, A LOUD CARIBBEAN APPEAL: PREPARE NOW DON'T WAIT FOR A HURRICANE STRIKE

MARCH 21, 2006.—Among Caribbean leaders, Dr. Keith Mitchell, Grenada's Prime Minister, is undoubtedly the best person, not only to talk about the importance of preparing a country's response system before a natural disaster occurs. He is also well qualified to be the region's spokesman on rebuilding a nation after devastation caused by a hurricane.

That's because of the wreckage Hurricanes Ivan and Emily left behind in 2004 and last year in Grenada. In a matter of hours Ivan wiped out decades of progress in the Eastern Caribbean state, destroyed the productive base of the economy, took at least a dozen lives and damaged 90 per cent of the country's housing stock, forested areas, watershed and mangroves. In less than a year Emily came along and unfortunately piled on damage on top of damage and put a halt to much of the rebuilding effort after Ivan.

That put Dr. Mitchell and his people in the unenviable position of starting from scratch to rebuild a beautiful country.

Small wonder, then, that when the United Nations was about to launch its international Central Emergency Response Fund last week in New York, the Grenada leader was invited to join UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at the head table to speak to delegates from around the world about the value of being well prepared in case of a natural disaster and the need for an effective response by the international community to appeals for help.

A key task was to appeal for financial and technical assistance for victims of natural disasters.

Speaking on behalf of Caricom and addressing the high level meeting as a ''survivor of an unprecedented catastrophe'' the Prime Minister presented a sensible case for small states. ''The Caribbean is among the regions in the world most vulnerable to natural disasters,'' he said. ''The survival of our economies is dependent on the frequency and magnitude of these events.''

Afterwards, he told us at Carib News that he was worried and nervous about the upcoming hurricane season, which begins in June. His concern for the Caribbean region as a whole, not simply Grenada, wasn't misplaced.

After all, Ivan left a trail of devastation in Jamaica, Haiti, St. Vincent and other islands. The loss of life in Haiti was mind-boggling and tragic. Other hurricanes also affected the Bahamas and the U.S. Last year, Katrina took its lethal high winds and heavy rains to the Gulf Coast of the United States, especially New Orleans and the pitiful sight of tens of thousands of homeless persons, at least 1,000 killed and the Big Easy brought to its knees wouldn't be erased from the memory banks of Americans for decades to come. Add the inept response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and the Bush White House to the nightmare and it would become clear why rich and poor countries alike should be petrified about the 2006 hurricane season.

But hurricanes aren't the only cause for despair. Monstrous floods hit Guyana in late 2004 from which it hasn't fully recovered. Some estimates by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, put the damage in Guyana to approximately 60 percent of its gross domestic product. The floods affected almost two-thirds of the 800,000 plus persons who live there.

Clearly, nations and territories in the region should have learned some important lessons from these tragedies. The first was that they should be prepared for the tragedy long before it occurs. Next, they must have programs in place to respond immediately after the all clear has been given. That was why it was so distressing to hear both Dr. Mitchell and Jeremy Collymore, Coordinator of the Caribbean Emergency Response Agency, CEDERA, express regret that some countries seem to be waiting until the next calamity strikes in order to wake up. That would add to the suffering.

In his speech to the diplomats and other representatives in New York, Dr. Mitchell expressed the Caribbean's disappointment at the ''poor response'' to the region's appeals for assistance in the wake of the natural disasters.

''In both cases only a small percentage of the pledges were fulfilled,'' he said. That's an international scandal, a crying shame. Here were countries and institutions making pledges, lifting people's hopes but failing to live up to their word in times of need and suffering.

SIKH ACTIVISTS ARRESTED IN PUNJAB

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, Sikh activists Kanwarpal Singh Dhami and Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan were recently arrested by the Indian Government on charges of sedition. Their crime was to speak in support of a sovereign Khalistan. Dr. Chohan also flies the Khalistani flag from his residence. When did free speech become a crime in a democracy?

The Sikh homeland of Khalistan declared itself independent from India on October 7, 1987.

These arrests are a follow-up to the arrests of groups of Sikh activists last year on Republic Day in January and again in June on the anniversary of the Golden Temple for making speeches in support of freedom for Khalistan and raising the flag of Khalistan. These events were led by Dal Khalsa. Recently, Dal Khalsa was put under watch by order of the Chief Minister of Punjab after its leader, Satnam Singh, and the leader of the Shiromani Khalsa Dal, Daljit Singh Bittu, announced that they are joining forces to achieve sovereignty for Khalistan.

Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of tactics that totalitarian governments use, not democratic ones. A real democracy would not arrest people for making speeches. This is underlined by the fact that, according to the Movement Against State Repression, India admitted to holding 52,268 Sikh political prisoners. Tens of thousands of other minorities are also held as political prisoners, according to Amnesty International. How can such things happen in the world's largest democracy?

The time has come to stand up against India's tyranny. We should end our aid to India, especially since India uses 25 percent of its development budget for nuclear development, and we should stop our trade until all people enjoy basic human rights. And we should declare our support for free and fair plebiscites in Kashmir, as India promised in 1948, in Punjab, Khalistan, in Nagaland, and wherever people are seeking freedom. The essence of democracy is the right of self-determination and that basic right is being denied to minorities in India. The best thing we can do to support stability, freedom, and human dignity in the subcontinent is to stop rewarding the tyrants and throw our full support behind those seeking freedom.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan has issued a very good release on the arrests of Dr. Chohan and Mr. Dhami. I would like to insert it in the RECORD at this time. Thank you.

DESIRE FOR KHALISTAN ALIVE AND WELL IN PUNJAB

WASHINGTON, D.C., MAR. 21, 2006.—Slogans of ''Khalistan Zindabad'' filled the air at the Holla Mohallah festival in Anandpur Sahib, Punjab, led by Dal Khalsa and the Shiromani Khalsa Dal. The two organizations pledged to unite to liberate the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, which declared itself independent from India on October 7, 1987.

Dal Khalsa, led by Satnam Singh, president of Dal Khalsa, and Daljit Singh Bittu, pledged to ''provide a fresh platform for the Sikhs who were depressed with the incompetent and incapable leadership of various factions of the Akali Dal,'' according to The Telegraph, an Indian newspaper. Satnam Singh said the organizations would reach out to people to involve them in ''the struggle to uphold our honor and dignity,'' the newspaper reported. The Punjab government led by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has directed the police that both groups be put under watch.

Dal Khalsa has sponsored numerous marches in Punjab in support of a free Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. It was the organizer of the two events at which Sikhs were arrested for making speeches and raising the Khalistani flag.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries. It is doomed to break up as they did.

''The uniting of these two organizations is very good for the Sikh nation and its aspirations,'' said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. ''The Indian government continues to persecute and kill our Sikh brethren,'' he said. ''Unity is essential for the liberation of Khalistan,'' he said. ''As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh','' Dr. Aulakh noted: ''This shows that the drive for freedom is still alive in Punjab,'' he said. ''What kind of democracy watches people for demanding freedom? Why don't they watch the Black Cats who have killed thousands of Sikhs with the protection of the Indian government?'' he asked.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948 as well as tens of thousands of Christians throughout the country, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat, tens of thousands of Muslims elsewhere in India, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and others. An Indian newspaper reported that the police in Gujarat were ordered to stand aside in that massacre and not to get involved, a frightening parallel to the Delhi massacre of Sikhs in 1984. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs ''worse than a genocide.''

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. He was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. No one has been brought to justice for the Khalra kidnapping and murder or for the murder of Jathedar Kaunke. Yet according to a report by the Movement

Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial, some since 1984!

Missionary Graham Staines was murdered along with his two sons, ages 8 and 10, by a mob of militant, fundamentalist Hindu nationalists who set fire to the jeep, surrounded it, and chanted ''Victory to Hannuman,'' a Hindu god. None of the people involved has been tried. The persons who have murdered priests, raped nuns, and burned Christian churches have not been charged or tried. The murderers of 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat have never been brought to trial.

''Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper and get justice,'' said Dr. Aulakh. ''India should act like a democracy and allow a plebiscite on independence for Khalistan and all the nations of South Asia,'' Dr. Aulakh said. ''We must free Khalistan now.''

TRIBUTE TO GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend a momentous date passed which merits our observance. Greek Independence Day commemorates and celebrates the 185th anniversary of the Greek people's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire on March 25, 1821. From this day, until the Treaty of Constantinople officially recognized Greek independence, the Greek people waged a valiant and victorious struggle for their freedom.

The Ottoman Empire's oppression and occupation of Greece evolved over the course of the 14th and 15th centuries. Yet during these centuries, Greek patriots arose to oppose and overthrow the Ottomans' dominion, and in 1814 emerged the secretly formed Friendly Society, which proved a herald of Hellenic liberty.

Then 7 years later, on March 25, 1821, the Orthodox Metropolitan Germanos of Patras proclaimed a national uprising, and simultaneous uprisings arose throughout Greece. Initially this courageous movement liberated many areas of Greece, but the Ottoman Empire rapidly and ruthlessly responded with innumerable acts of brutality, including the massacre of entire Greek communities.

Such Ottoman barbarism contrasted ill with Greek heroism and inspired many nations and citizens to rally to the Greek cause. Thus, in 1827, the British and French fleets delivered a crushing blow to the Ottoman fleet at Navarino, and in 1828, 10,000 French soldiers landed in the Peloponnese to end the Ottoman scourge of Greece.

It was then, and after the horror of war had ebbed and ended, the Convention of May 11, 1832, recognized Greece as a sovereign state, and, again, the Treaty of Constantinople recognized Greek independence from Ottoman rule in July of 1832.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, it is both fitting and fair for we Americans as a free people to commemorate and celebrate the date of March 25, the date Greece, the Cradle of Democracy, was once again made free.

So, too, Mr. Speaker, let us reflect upon the reality that no treaty, no mere scrap of paper, could ever accomplish more than to simply state the obviousness of Greek freedom, which has always endured for time immemorial, despite whatever oppression encountered.

Indeed, did not the pen of the British poet and doomed martyr to the cause of Greek independence and freedom, Lord Byron, write a testament to the Greek people's inherent love of liberty when he wrote:

The Sword, the Banner, and the Field, Glory and Greece, around me see! The Spartan, borne upon his shield, Was never more free.

And may Greece, Mr. Speaker, ever be free.

CHALLENGES FACING CARIBBEAN REGION AS IT FACES INTEGRATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD the first part of an eloquent speech made by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Honorable P.J. Patterson, March 9 to the Protocolary Session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States on the theme of ''Caribbean Integration In Emerging Hemispheric Relations''.

The Caribbean region is a breathtaking area. The rich people, culture and natural resources make it a jewel of the global community. But as Mr. Patterson outlines in his remarks, more must be done to promote the countries' political and social prosperity. He warns, ''Unless we focus in a meaningful way on the intrinsic link between democracy, good governance and international security on the one hand, and development on the other, our goals for peace, stability and political and economic security will always remain elusive.'' Patterson continues, ''We must therefore address the development agenda with the same energy and commitment as we have sought to strengthen the democratic agenda, giving each equal dedication, in order that the benefits of democracy can be widely felt to improve the quality of life for our peoples.''

One key to further development, according to Patterson, is integration. ''Smaller units operating on their own can no longer be viable counterweights in this rapidly changing world,'' maintains Patterson. The plight of the people of the Caribbean can only be enhanced through greater national and international commitment in addition to empowerment among national leaders. Not only must Caribbean leaders, ''broaden the boundaries of our collaboration beyond the OAS and the United Nations,'' and look towards the World Trade Organization, as Patterson recommends, but a greater commitment must be made to principles such as education, justice and the rule of law, inclusion, and integrity in order to make the region stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I rise again to strongly support the words spoken by Mr. Patterson in an effort to bring to light challenges facing the region and his proposals for what actions need to take place to secure a brighter future for the Caribbean nations.

CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION IN EMERGING HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

It was indeed with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation extended by the distinguished Secretary General to address this august body. I consider it a distinct honour to be doing so in this prestigious Hall of the Americas. Most importantly, the opportunity afforded me at this time, takes on added significance as it comes at the juncture when I am about to take formal leave from the ''field'' of active politics. In a few weeks, my involvement in regional and hemispheric developments henceforth will be from the vantage point of the spectator's stands.

As one who has participated in these two processes from very early in my political career, I have been asked to share a few thoughts on my vision for the Caribbean and the Americas, bearing in mind the current global realities and our shared commitment towards advancing the political, economic and social development of this hemisphere.

As such, I propose to focus on the nexus between developments in the regional integration process, particularly within CARICOM, and developments taking place at the hemispheric level. How do I see these two processes coalescing to bring about a partnership that will meet the needs of every member state, regardless of their size or wealth and one that will improve the quality of life for our peoples, our most important assets?

THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO

In order to fully appreciate where our countries are going, we must first understand the milieu in which they are operating. This will affect the vision we all have for a hemisphere in which we can enjoy peace, stability and prosperity on a sustained basis.

Some sixty years ago when the OAS was created, no one would have thought that we would have experienced such rapid and radical shifts in the international environment, propelled by marked transformations in the global economy. These, together with the emergence of new threats to international peace and security, now challenge the very survival of many of our countries.

As the twin forces of globalisation and liberalization have become more pronounced, new demands were thrust upon the countries of the hemisphere forcing, in varying degrees, modifications to our national objectives and priorities. Increased vulnerabilities to the vagaries of these two phenomena have led to the abandonment of traditional economic policies and the adoption of new models of economic development as we seek to secure a greater space in the world economy and a more participatory role in international economic relations.

There is no doubt that both globalisation and liberalization, especially in the last decade, have been the driving force behind the integration of the global economy. Despite the potential benefits of this process, we have to acknowledge that the long-term survival of many of our countries continues to require adjustment to the new realities of an international environment which has become increasingly hostile and unpredictable.

Notwithstanding improvements in global economic prospects and the potential benefits to be derived there from, we have to admit that inequities still remain, putting a number of countries at economic risk, including those in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The quest for sustainable growth, particularly for small economies, has become even more elusive as traditional support mechanisms are gradually eroded. There continues to be increased pressure to move more rapidly to reciprocal trade rules as we bear the brunt of rising energy prices and the weakness in non-oil commodity prices.

All of these are occurring simultaneously, as investors become increasingly risk averse

and restrict capital flows, and as the fiscal positions of our economies weaken and debt increases.

While we welcome international commitments to the Global Partnership for Development as outlined in the Millennium Declaration, Monterrey Consensus, and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, we are discouraged by the limited progress to date. This means that priority projects which form the core of our development agenda such as poverty eradication and improvements in health and education will continue to lag in implementation. We remain hopeful but by no means certain, that the UN General Assembly's Outcome Document of last September will spur renewed action with a greater degree of political will.

If this scenario were not daunting enough, emerging security concerns have brought added uncertainties resulting in new changes in objectives and priorities, causing even further delays in implementing national agendas, as we seek to be ''reliable partners'' in implementing international security objectives.

Against this backdrop, the current international situation poses a number of challenges to regional integration, notwithstanding the fact that the popularity of regionalism evolved from this very same process in the early 1970s as an effective response to the onset of globalisation.

THE HEMISPHERE'S CHALLENGE

In this present scenario, how do we reduce our vulnerability to external shocks, achieve sustainable development, strengthen governability, promote democracy and at the same time, comply with our international, regional and hemispheric obligations?

Jamaica and indeed CARICOM, has always maintained that there is an urgent need to make this process of global economic governance and integration more inclusive and more beneficial to the interests of developing countries.

By so doing, there would be greater prospects for tangible signs of development and strengthening democracy in our countries and societies around the world.

We are reminded everyday of the sense of unease and restlessness which emerges when the people we lead are not given meaningful opportunities for self-expression and self-actualisation. We regard these as fundamental elements of democracy and civil society. In order to meet the challenges which militate against peace and stability, we must provide a truly enabling environment.

THE HEMISPHERIC AGENDA

It is not surprising, therefore, that we in this hemisphere share a wide range of similar problems and concerns. Our regional and hemispheric agendas are inextricably linked and have therefore become inseparable. This is reflected in both our interdependence and the elements of globalisation that today characterizes international relations and which ultimately leads to a myriad of interlocking issues. Within this context, both the OAS and our respective regional integration movements have a salient role to play.

From its creation in 1948, the OAS was envisaged as the primary political forum in the hemisphere to maintain peace and security, to promote and consolidate democracy and advance cooperation for integral development. The OAS has undoubtedly played a pivotal role in the settlement of disputes and in bringing solutions to various political crises within the hemisphere as we have seen through the important role it has played in dealing with the political situation in Haiti. We welcome and applaud the return of President René Préval as the duly elected Leader of Haiti.

Today, we are confronted by new threats and challenges which our Governments are simultaneously obliged to address and surmount. The hemispheric agenda has expanded significantly over the years to address issues such as corruption, the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, terrorism, money laundering, children's issues, women's affairs and the protection of human rights.

The pursuit of these programmes at the level of the OAS, complements the important initiatives on which we have all embarked at the national and multilateral level, as we seek not only to come to grips with, but also to overcome these problems. The multidimensional nature of many of these issues requires a comprehensive, cooperative approach.

Today, the OAS has also assumed additional responsibilities for the implementation of the mandates of the Summit of the Americas, aimed at creating prosperity through economic integration and trade, eradicating poverty and discrimination and protecting the natural environment. Moreover, within this process, we have adopted a shared vision to consolidate democracy and security in the hemisphere, and to create conditions to advance prosperity, a multitude of items for an ever-increasing agenda.

The adoption of other mechanisms and instruments, including the Inter-American Democratic Charter, have served to concretize our adherence to the tenets and principles of the democratic agenda. These commitments have brought tremendous impetus to what we are doing at the regional level. Our citizens at all levels have become involved in every aspect of governance; more women are running for political office and being appointed to high positions and I can certainly attest to that! An increasing number of civic organizations are actively monitoring transparency and accountability; the exercise of the undeniable freedom of expression and of the press is widely enjoyed; and access to information legislation has been passed in many countries, including my own.

While the foregoing is laudable, however, are we satisfied that in this dynamic process of globalization, the OAS is fulfilling the economic development aspect of its mandate?

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE J. WILLIAM BEARD

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, today I acknowledge a great friend of the legal community, Judge J. William Beard, who passed away last month at the age of 85.

Born March 20, 1920 in Chicago, Judge Beard moved with his family to the San Fernando Valley in 1925. He attended the University of Redlands before enlisting in the Army Air Forces during World War II.

Leaving the military as a lieutenant, Judge Beard married Ann Dodgen in October 1945 and returned to his Los Angeles-area roots. As an aspiring lawyer, he opened a legal messenger service and attended Southwestern University School of Law.

In 1951, two years after graduating and passing the State Bar, Judge Beard joined the District Attorney's Office in El Centro, which is located in my district in Imperial County, California. Several months later, he opened a private practice. One of his subsequent law partners, Cruz Reynoso, became the first Latino appointed to the California Supreme Court in 1982.

When future U.S. Sen. Alan Cranston and other Democratic leaders formed the California Democratic Council in 1952, Judge Beard became a charter member. He interrupted his legal career to serve as an Imperial County-based state senator from 1957 to 1961 (District 39), and was appointed to the El Cajon Municipal Court bench in 1980.

As a recovering alcoholic, Judge Beard was active in the state Bar Association's committee on Alcohol Abuse. He started a support group for alcoholic legal professionals and doctors in the 1970s. Judge Beard believed that his background with alcoholism provided him with insights into the human psyche that were invaluable in the courtroom.

Later, while serving on the Municipal Court bench in El Cajon, he handled small claims court cases in Ramona. The informal, rural setting provided an intimacy that he found lacking in a larger venue.

By the time he retired a decade later, he had also established an alcohol counseling program for drunken drivers at the El Cajon court—one of the first of its kind in the county. In retirement, Judge Beard served on the state Medical Assurance Board and spoke at 12-step recovery meetings.

Judge Beard's passing will not only be felt in the legal community but society as a whole, as Judge Beard was a humanitarian who truly cared for his fellow human beings.

CONGRATULATING ''TEACHER OF THE YEAR'' MARTHA PAGE

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Martha Page, a distinguished citizen from my congressional district who was recently awarded the Excellence in the Classroom and Educational Leadership (ExCEL) ''Teacher of the Year'' Award for her exceptional service at the Hodgenville Elementary School in Hodgenville, KY.

A kindergarten teacher for more than thirty years, Ms. Page maintains a unique passion for teaching that focuses not only on the academic progress of her students, but also on their emotional, social and cognitive growth. Year after year, her innovative approach to teaching is driven by a genuine care for the happiness and success of young people. Through her own example, Ms. Page consistently demonstrates to her students the importance of character: honesty, goodness, and making life count.

Martha Page's dedication to students often transcends the classroom, leading her to play an active role in after school programs and frequent parent-teacher interface. In addition to her work in the classroom, she serves as a mentor to student teachers and is a valuable resource to her colleagues. Ms. Page is also a longtime member of the LaRue County Board of Education and remains actively involved in numerous state and local professional associations.

I applaud Martha Page's accomplishments in public education, an occupation of great responsibility and even greater reward. On behalf of so many in the Hodgenville area, I would like to express my profound appreciation for her service and inspiration as she motivates young people to recognize and develop their talents and abilities.

It is my great privilege to recognize Martha Page today, before the entire U.S. House of Representatives, for her achievements as an educator. Her unique dedication to the development and well-being of young people and the communities they will someday serve make her an outstanding citizen worthy of our collective honor and respect.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND MARINE-LIFE ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. RICHARD W. POMBO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, today my Colleagues, BARNEY FRANK and DON YOUNG, and I are introducing the American Fisheries Management and Marine-Life Enhancement Act. This legislation will reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act—the Nation's premier fishery conservation statute.

This legislation continues to build on the tradition of allowing for regional solutions to regional fishery management problems by using a system of Regional Fishery Management Councils. These Councils offer a transparent process where those with a stake in the resource can be heard and can see how decisions on the management of the resource are made.

This legislation keeps in mind a number of important principles which have kept the Magnuson-Stevens Act as relevant and dynamic as it is. We have tried to maintain a number of these key themes including: management must be science-based (with peer review that includes the public); there must be an open and transparent decision-making process with stakeholder involvement; there must be flexibility which recognizes that there is a need for regional solutions to regional problems; there is a need to minimize potential for lawsuits—fisheries management decisions should be made by the professionals not by the courts; there needs to be a balance between conservation and economic considerations; and finally, the Act needs to consider the impacts of management decisions on those communities which are dependent on the resource to remain viable communities.

The management of our Nation's fisheries has always been a matter of balance. It is important to continue the balance between the health of the resource and the interests of the fishing industry to provide a healthy, sustainable protein source for the world. Without a sustainable, healthy resource, the fishermen would be out of business and without a fishing industry, the Nation would not have seafood to consume. This legislation maintains this balance and makes sure that the management decisions to maintain the balance are based on science. These decisions need to be made with adequate peer review and with the input of the affected and interested participants and this bill continues those ideals.

Ten years ago, Congress passed the Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA). That legislation was the first major reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and made major changes to the statute. The SFA amended or added 15 definitions, added three new National Standards (and amended one existing National Standard), added 8 new provisions which the Councils were required to comply with in drafting new fishery management plans (and required that all existing plans be amended to comply with the new provisions), included 5 new discretionary provisions for Councils to consider when developing fishery management plans, required thirteen new reports, and for the first time, included disclosure standards, conflict of interest standards, and recusal standards for members of the Regional Fishery Management Councils.

The SFA focused on three major themes—the identification overfishing and a requirement for rebuilding overfished fisheries, the identification and conservation of essential fish habitat, and the reduction, to the extent practicable, of bycatch in our Nation's fisheries. All three of themes were important to making sure that fisheries were sustainable.

The Sustainable Fisheries Act required major changes to the way the Nation's fisheries were managed—changes for the better. While the SFA was not perfect, it pushed the Councils and the Secretary to address some key issues to make our fisheries more sustainable. Since 1996—only ten years ago—we have seen tremendous progress in all three of these areas and the Nation's fisheries are in much better shape than they were less than a decade ago. But we can still do better. The American Fisheries Management and Marine-Life Enhancement Act will allow the Councils to gather better data, provide for the use of new technologies, provides new funding for ''clean gear'' technologies and does so without creating new areas for litigation.

Congress has continued to discuss ideas which would make our fisheries more sustainable since the SFA was enacted. Members of Congress have participated in two major fisheries conferences here in Washington, D.C. that focused on how well or how poorly fisheries were being managed in the U.S. While the overall picture was getting better, these conferences sparked debate on the new steps that could be taken to make our fisheries better. This legislation builds on the recommendations of those conferences.

The American Fisheries Management and Marine-Life Enhancement Act builds on the progress made by the Sustainable Fisheries Act, from the recommendations of the national fisheries conferences, from ideas floated at meetings with interested user groups, and from the report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

The Senate Commerce Committee, led by Co-Chairmen STEVENS and INOUYE, has passed reauthorization legislation that is clearly headed in the right direction and I compliment their leadership on this issue. I hope that the American Fisheries Management and Marine-Life Enhancement Act will be as well received as theirs was and I look forward to resolving the few differences we have before the end of the year.

The American Fisheries Management and Marine-Life Enhancement Act takes a number of provisions from Senators STEVENS' and INOUYE's legislation, a number of provisions from the administration's proposed legislation, a number of recommendations from the Regional Fishery Management Councils, and recommendations from hearings both in Washington and in fishery-dependent communities.

This bill addresses or touches on 11 of the 16 recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy which suggest changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act and 6 of the remaining 11 recommendations that suggest changes to agencies' activities related to fisheries conservation or management.

While this legislation may not be perfect, I believe it will move fisheries management in the right direction. I look forward to working with my House Colleagues and my Senate Colleagues to develop consensus legislation to reauthorize this important act before the end of the year.

CALL FOR ROADMAP FOR LEGALIZATION OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to echo what the vast majority of Members of Congress believe: Our country is in need of a solution to address the influx of undocumented immigrants into the United States. I would also like to enter into the RECORD a Wall Street Journal editorial advocating for amnesty, a letter signed by esteemed Members of Congress calling for orderly, legal venues for new immigrants and earned legalization for those in the United States and an opinion piece by Cardinal Archbishop Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles explaining his archdiocese's stand against proposed legislation that would penalize social and religious organizations that help undocumented immigrants.

This Nation was founded by immigrants fleeing religious persecution. Ironically, today this country has evolved to one that persecutes undocumented immigrants who, like our forefathers, came here searching for a better quality of life. Upon arrival, if undocumented immigrants are so lucky to cross the border alive and evade exploitation by drug smugglers and coyotes, they are forced to live in the shadows without access to health care or employment benefits at a job that pays little salary. In fear of detection by law enforcement, they cannot live normal lives.

This is an unjust burden imposed to persons who are welcomed with open arms into this country by U.S. employers to perform unskilled labor. As George Melloan states in his opinion piece, ''The U.S. needs labor; immigrants supply labor. So the solution is to find ways to bring the two together in some legal, orderly way.'' While it is true that this country is suffering from astronomically high deficits, the American entrepreneurial spirit drives an economy that embraces cheap labor. There is no reason to believe that the labor demand will subside and as a result immigrants will continue to be attracted to employment opportunities here. We in turn will continue to depend on immigrant labor to harvest our crops, tend to our gardens, clean our homes and offices and even take care of our children.

We cannot deny that immigrant labor is vital to our economy. As leaders of this Nation, we also have a moral obligation to those within our borders. Undocumented immigrants have suffered sufficient hardship to arrive here and are forced to lead secret lives to put food on the tables. This cannot continue. As Cardinal Archbishop Mahoney eloquently states in his piece, providing humanitarian assistance to those most in need, such as undocumented immigrants should not be a crime, as is stipulated in H.R. 4437. This bill so vaguely proposes punishing those who offer aid to undocumented immigrants, that it would penalize acts of mercy such as offering a meal or administering first aid. I admire Cardinal Archbishop Mahoney's stand for instructing priests not to follow the proposed law. I can only hope similar conviction will be found in Members of Congress as they oppose such legislation.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in agreeing that the only way to right the wrong endured by undocumented immigrants is to take them out of the shadows and offer them a way to achieve citizenship. As Melloan states, this is the "only practical solution."

[From the Wall Street Journal, Mar. 21, 2006]

EXAM WEEK FOR THE GOP CONGRESS

(By George Melloan)

Immigration reform is on the Senate agenda this week. The issue has been festering for years and probably will still be when Congress takes its Easter break, once again demonstrating the weakness of Republican congressional leadership.

It hardly needs saying the U.S. immigration policy is a mess. An estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants are among the 300 million souls who inhabit the Nation. Most fill jobs U.S. citizens disdain. It would be hard to run U.S. hotels and restaurants without the maids and busboys who have made their way from places like Quito and San Salvador.

Yet their presence annoys what Weekly Standard editor Fred Barnes aptly calls "paleocons," conservatives of the Pat Buchanan stripe who go hysterical over these brown-skinned, Spanish-speaking toilers. Vigilantism has broken out on the Mexican border, with macho guys packing six-guns searching for wetbacks. More seriously, the hysteria has infected Congress, resulting in House passage in December of a bill that would, along with other drastic measures, authorize the construction of a 700-mile Berlin Wall on the Mexican border.

One guy who really loves that wall is a Yankee-baiting Mexican leftist named Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. The highly visible testimony to gringo abhorrence of Mexicans is feeding his campaign for the July 2 Mexican presidential election. If he makes it, the U.S. will have only a few friends left in Latin American capitals. The aging, tottering Fidel Castro will have finally achieved his life's ambition of turning the Spanish-speaking world against America.

Illegal immigrants are indeed a problem, although also the principal victims of their illegal status. Because they don't have documents they can be easily exploited in ways offensive to the American sense of justice and fair play. The industry that has developed for sneaking them into the country is used for other purposes, such as smuggling drugs. A few, partly because of attachments to the smugglers, turn to crime in places like Los Angeles and Albuquerque.

The inability of the U.S. to devise a sensible set of immigration policies has broader repercussions beyond Latin America. Microsoft's Bill Gates complains that the U.S. is shutting out foreigners with needed skills. Colleges and universities say that Immigration and Naturalization Service bureaucracy complicates the admission of students, limiting the ability of the U.S. to earn foreign currency and international goodwill by offering the world's youth first-class educational opportunities. Employers protest at criminal penalties if they fail to detect document forgeries and thus don't fulfill their "duties"' as surrogate law enforcers.

If Congress had been living up to its responsibilities, these problems would have been addressed long ago. The first requirement is for members to accept the fact that unfilled jobs in a booming economy are going to attract individuals seeking better lives. That's a normal and powerful drive in homo sapiens. Spending taxpayer billions on a hideous wall and more cops might reduce the flow, but it won't stop it or deal with the issue of what to do about those already in the country.

Lawmakers of course have a natural predilection toward exercising police power. Large construction projects appeal as well, especially in a Congress that seems mainly focused on finding ways to pass out federal dollars to key constituencies. But it should be evident by now that those kinds of approaches are limited in coping with honest human instincts.

The equation is simple: The U.S. needs labor; immigrants supply labor. So the solution is to find ways to bring the two together in some legal, orderly way. President Bush understands this, which is why he has proposed the restoration of a guest-worker program. But for some reason—perhaps because the president's staff is not sufficiently skillful or vigorous enough in pressing his case—the Republican leaders in Congress seem deaf to the wishes of their own president.

The second part of the equation, what to do about existing illegals, is a bit more difficult, politically at least. The first bit of advice worth taking: Stop treating it as a police problem. Nearly all of the illegals sneaked into the U.S. for nothing more heinous than to offer their honest labor. They violated U.S. immigrations laws but they aren't criminals in the sense of posing a threat to persons and property. If approached seriously and with sufficient goodwill, it should not be beyond the mind of man to find ways to make them legal.

In other words, they need to be given amnesty. The paleocons immediately object that doing so would reward them for breaking the law. How about changing the phrasing a little bit? Let's say they are to get amnesty in recognition of the fact that they already have suffered sufficient hardship in getting into the U.S. and living secret lives. Various other schemes that have been mentioned, such as sending them home to wait in a queue, have one fatal defect: They won't convince illegals that it is safe to come out of hiding.

Offering to give illegals green cards and wipe the slate clean is the only practical solution. If they come forward, they can stay on their jobs and travel back and forth to their homes legally. Some who have been trapped in the U.S. by their inability to travel freely will choose to go home permanently. There will be less incentive to sneak in family members, since it will be possible to visit relatives or send remittances. Restoring something like the old bracero program for temporary farm workers would further regularize the flow of labor.

Let's admit that Beltway politics has gone crazy. Aside from the paleocons, there are the labor unions and their "liberal" friends. Most unions long ago gave up representing working people in favor of representing themselves, which is no doubt why they are losing membership. It is hard to think of a class of workers more in need of union support than poor Latinos with no legal rights. But politics are what Congress is paid to manage. It's too bad this Congress is making such a hash of it.

THE CRIMES OF BUREAUCRATIC ETHNIC CLEANSING

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, on April 1, 2006 there will be a march with world significance in the battered city of New Orleans. Thousands of marchers from all over the Nation will assemble to force a laser beam of conscience to focus on the horror of ethnic cleansing now underway in that region. While it is true that Hurricane Katrina was an act of God and the collapse of the levees was an accident resulting from years of Federal underfunding, incompetence and local corruption, some have charged, and I agree, that the present blunders and stagnation in the recovery and rebuilding operation is the result of an "ethnic cleansing mindset." The plot you will find nowhere on paper or in any set of email messages; however, there is an understanding within a powerful "government-real estate complex" that African Americans who have been displaced by the ravages of Katrina should not be encouraged to return. This unwritten plot begins in the White House where chief political strategists have pinpointed the obvious fact that without the Black voters of New Orleans, Louisiana will become a permanent Republican "red" state.

The April 1st march is designed to confront this bold ethnic cleansing by planned neglect and abandonment. The march will also dramatically highlight the overarching racist mindset that nurtures the ethnic cleansing process. On several different occasions, during the early flooding in New Orleans armed law enforcement officers blocked the paths of fleeing Black evacuees and forced them back toward the murderous flood waters.

Waving and firing their shotguns uniformed officers of the law blocked evacuees attempting to escape the floods by crossing the Crescent City Connection Bridge. High-level elected officials later condoned this behavior by their police. These inhumane, unspeakable actions combined with the present planned ineptitude related to the rebuilding of the 9th ward and the refusal of support for evacuees who wish to return, have generated numerous angry voices, especially among the youth, in New Orleans and across the Nation. In the language of RAP poems, I have tried to translate and convey the message of three of these angry voices:

ANGRY VOICE ONE: NAZIS ON THE BRIDGES

Armed Nazis
On steel bridges
Blocked paths to
The highest driest ridges.
Each uniformed gangster
Had an official gun
Black fathers forced
To watch their
Flood soaked children run.
They drew a hard line
Between Black and White blood—

They drove the mothers
Back into the flood.
Nazi viruses
Never die
They don't even fade away,
When times are dry
They hide in bunkers
Hunkered down for a stormy day.
On the bridges
Satan in command
Devils rules the land
On the bridges
Judgment day
Blacks get back
Stay out of the way
Die out of sight
The waters will cover you
In the endless wet night.
Run to requisition
The tightest Nuremberg noposes
These Katrina crimes
Are war criminal abuses.

ANGRY VOICE TWO: THEY ARE COMING FOR OUR HOMES

Wake up Black people
They're coming for our homes!
Monster Katrina
Has many national clones.
Wake up Black people
With confusion and neglect
They now wash us away
They hijack our property
For a tourist development day,
Donald Trump and Disney Ducks
Will have their powerful say;
People chocolate people
Your're not welcomed to stay
Our schools churches graveyards
Have all been hauled away.
Wake up Black people
They're coming for our homes!
Monster Katrina
Has many national clones.
Urban blight declassified
Diversity agenda mystified
Inner cities reoccupied
Suburban flight
Has suddenly died
City planners cried
Eminent domain
Brings savage pain
Ethnic cleansing
Income rinsing
Brokers bulldoze us out
Urban surfs
Have no financial clout
Wake up Black people!
Weak tribes will rot
Extinct among the stones
Monster Katrina
Has many national clones.
Wake up Black people!
They're coming for our homes.

ANGRY VOICE THREE: BLACKS NEED MORE GUNS

Now hear this!
Soldiers in Iraq
Come home now
To kill racist snakes
Crawling on our backs
More guns are needed by Blacks.
To fight our way
Across blocked bridges
Blacks need more guns!
Never again
Will they drive us
Weeping back into the flood,
Next time before we drown
We'll spill lots of blood.
Blacks need more guns!
They halted all Blacks
Who came their way
They hoarded the flood
For their next rainy day.
To get gestapos off our back
Black soldiers in Iraq
Come home now
Blacks need more guns!
Soldiers come home
Storm the bridges
Nazis fire down
From high dry ridges.
No well regulated
Militias from the slums
Are here to march against
Official heartless bums.
Desperate Blacks are mandated
Now to bear arms
Shed the luxury
Of non-violent charms.
The NRA
Can save our day
The second amendment
Is the great American way.
Blacks need more guns!
It's us oh Lord
Black victims
Standing in the need of prayer.
If not the NRA Lord
Tell us who else is there?
The NRA
Is our salvation
Whom shall we fear?
When the next flood rises
On television
You will not be entertained
by even one tiny tear.
The second amendment
Is our road to rescue
Whom shall we fear?
Blacks need more guns!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF FORTENBERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Chairman, on Thursday, March 16, 2006, I was inadvertently detained and thus missed rollcall vote No. 46. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 185th anniversary of Greek independence and to pay tribute to the contributions of Greek Americans to the American melting pot.

In 1821, an underground rebellion began by Greeks who had been living for generations under occupied rule by the Ottoman Turks for over 400 years. The War for Independence ended roughly 7 years later, when Greece achieved its liberation with the Treaty of Andrianople. Only then, were Greek citizens able to fully celebrate their culture, their religion, and their democratic heritage.

And, it was that rich philosophical history on which our Founding Fathers drew inspiration. When drafting our Constitution over 200 years ago, many ideas came from the world's first democracy in Ancient Greece.

Greece has long been one of the United States' closest allies. Fighting alongside America in every war of the 20th Century, Greece continues to offer strong support with the current War on Terrorism.

With over 3 million Greek Americans living in the U.S. today, Greek culture still plays an important role in communities all across the Nation. Public service organizations, like AHEPA's Chapter 453 in Wyckoff, New Jersey, are committed to being positive participants in our society. And, it has been an honor to work with them over the past several months.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Americans to recognize Greek Independence Day and the valuable contributions that so many Greeks and Greek Americans have made to our country.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF REP. SHERWOOD L. BOEHLERT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the contributions of my friend and colleague, Congressman SHERWOOD (SHERRY) BOEHLERT. After 24 years in Congress, Congressman BOEHLERT who has served this House with dignity and a great deal of integrity has decided that "it's time."

First elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1982, Congressman BOEHLERT represents the 24th District of New York, and he does so with steadfast leadership, commitment, and simply put, a love for the job.

As he rose in seniority and became chairman of the House Science Committee in 2001, BOEHLERT worked to further economic development for his district and the State of New York, as well as to push for an environmental agenda that would benefit not only his constituents, but the nation as a whole.

While we are losing one of the most dynamic and passionate Members of this great body, the good people of central New York, are losing a man who fought and worked tirelessly on their behalf. From his efforts to secure money for transportation projects to supporting the agenda of the National Science Foundation, SHERRY BOEHLERT was going to do what it took and what was best for those who elected him into office.

It has been a privilege to serve with my friend in the House and to work side by side with him on matters concerning the New York State Congressional Delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, an article by E.J. Dionne, Jr. which speaks to the retirement of our much-respected and admired Member, SHERRY BOEHLERT.

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 21, 2006]

THE GOP'S SHRINKING MIDDLE

(By E. J. Dionne Jr.)

Members of Congress retire all the time, but some retirements are leading indicators of the direction of our politics. Rep. Sherwood Boehlert's announcement last week to call it quits matters, and in a depressing way.

The affable 69-year-old New York Republican is one of the last of a breed: a liberal Republican, though he calls himself a "moderate" and has the record to prove it. Boehlert's departure does not leave the House bereft of liberal Republicans—Rep. Jim Leach of Iowa is more liberal than Boehlert. But Leach, alas, is an outlier. The spotted owl is in good shape compared with liberal Republicans.

Boehlert chose to retire in the year when National Journal, the political world's answer to Sports Illustrated, featured him as the ultimate ''Down the Middle'' guy. In its Feb. 25 issue, the magazine published its annual ratings, which showed that Boehlert's votes were more liberal than those of 52.2 percent of House members and more conservative than 47.8 percent. Boehlert's district includes the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, and it's hard to move the ball more to the middle of the plate than he does.

It's been downhill for his brand of Republicanism from the moment he set foot in Washington as a congressional staffer in 1964. That's the year Barry Goldwater won the Republican presidential nomination and the great flight of the Republican liberals began.

After Goldwater's landslide defeat, two Republican progressives who later became conservatives, George Gilder and Bruce Chapman, wrote a brilliant book called ''The Party That Lost Its Head,'' detailing how and why the party's liberal wing responded so anemically to the conservative challenge. But it was too late. The party of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt was destined to become an annex of the conservative movement.

Boehlert has always been unabashed in embracing his liberal roots. Over breakfast on a sunny summer morning in Cooperstown five years ago, Boehlert embraced two of the most progressive politicians of his lifetime. ''People say to me: 'Why are you the kind of Republican you are?' Because in my formative political years, when I was coming up in New York, my governor was Nelson A. Rockefeller and my senator was Jacob K. Javits.''

Why does the decline and fall of liberal Republicanism matter? After all, rationalizing the political system into a more conservative GOP and a more-or-less liberal Democratic Party makes the alternatives clearer to voters, who are offered, in Goldwater's famous phrase, ''a choice, not an echo.''

But it turns out that a Republican Party dominated by conservatives is no more coherent than the party that left room for progressives. The huge budget deficit is conservatism's Waterloo, testimony to its political failure. The conservatives love to cut taxes but can't square their lust for tax reduction with plausible spending cuts. Oh, yes, a group of House conservatives has a paper plan involving deep program cuts, but other conservatives know that these cuts will not pass, and shouldn't.

Paradoxically, because the liberal Republicans didn't pretend to hate government, they were better at fiscal responsibility. They were willing to match their desired spending levels with the taxes to pay for them. It didn't make for exciting, to-the-barricades politics. It merely produced good government.

Boehlert, being an optimist by nature, was always ready to declare that the ''moderates' moment'' had finally arrived. Last November, after I had written a column taking some moderate Republicans to task for backing the outrageous budget bill that passed under the cover of darkness at 1:30 a.m., there was Boehlert on the phone insisting that he and fellow moderate Mike Castle (R-Del.) had wrung some important concessions out of the House leadership. Maybe so, I replied, but I had a higher opinion of moderate Republicans and expected more of them than that lousy budget bill.

The problem may be that Boehlert and Castle did get as much as they could, given the numerical weakness of their variety of Republicanism, but that's not good enough. I suspect Boehlert knows this. Absent a robust progressive wing, congressional Republicans will continue to produce fiscally incoherent government. Democrats now have the task of representing their own brand of politics, and that of progressive Republicans, too.

I'll miss Boehlert and his optimistic moderation. Our politics worked better when a sufficiently large band of Republican moderates and liberals could take the edge off polarization and orient government toward problem-solving. But the liberal Republicans are gone. We have to deal with the GOP we have, not the GOP we wish still existed.

TRIBUTE TO GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 185th anniversary of Greek independence and to celebrate the long friendship shared between the people of Greece and the United States of America.

Greece and the United States are forever linked by common values and political philosophy. In the formative years of our Republic, the founding fathers looked to the shining example set by ancient Greece whose political institutions and democratic ideals were the foundation upon which were based many of the political freedoms and traditions Americans enjoy today.

In 1821, as our American experiment with democracy blossomed, we proudly stood in support of the new Greek republic emerging from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821, ''it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you.'' As the Greek state took shape, Presidents Adams, Madison and Jefferson joined a nation of grateful Americans in an expression of encouragement and good wishes. Ever since, Greece and the United States have enjoyed a strong cultural, commercial and strategic partnership.

The Greek people have stood with us during every major American military action. The citizens of the United States will never forget how during World War II, Greece in the historic Battle of Crete, presented the Axis powers with their first major setback, setting in motion a chain of events that would significantly affect the outcome of World War II.

And today the Greek people are standing beside us still, this time in Afghanistan where they have not only dedicated financial and logistical support to the NATO effort there, they are also playing an important role in helping to physically secure the country.

Thomas Jefferson referred to ancient Greece as the light which led ourselves out of Gothic darkness. On the occasion of the 185th anniversary of Greek independence, I join all Americans in wishing the people of Greece congratulations and best wishes. We will remain eternally grateful to the Greek people and the legacy of ancient Greece for the shining example it set for democracies the world over.

TRIBUTE TO GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to rise in commemoration of the 186th anniversary of Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829 and to pay tribute to its long and sometimes difficult journey back to democracy, freedom, stability, and prosperity.

Nestled in Southern Europe, and bordering the Aegean Sea, Ionian Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea, between Albania and Turkey, Greece is the epitome of picturesque.

Greece is rich with history traceable to Stone Age hunters, compounded with agricultural and complex civilizations of Minoan and Mycenaean kings and followed by the Dark Ages, marking a period of wars and invasions.

During the second half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, Greece strengthened its landmass by adding neighboring islands and territories.

After being invaded by Italy in 1940, Greece became occupied by Germany from 1941 to 1944. After enduring many years of civil war, Greece defeated the communist rebels in 1949 and subsequently joined NATO in 1952.

In 1972, Greece held its first democratic elections and created a parliamentary republic, abolishing the monarchy, and later joined the European Community in 1982.

Today, Greece is part of the international coalition committed to the war on terror. By making airspace and airbases available to the U.S., Greece is an important player in the war against terrorism.

I join my colleagues in commemoration of Greece Independence Day and gladly pay tribute to the many cultural contributions paid by Greek Americans in Dallas, as well as, in our Nation.

CELEBRATING THE 185TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE ON MARCH 25, 2006

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 185th anniversary of Greek independence, which took place on March 25, 2006.

Thousands of years ago the spirit of democracy was born in Greece. In 1821, this democracy flourished when the Greeks successfully declared their independence from the Ottoman Empire. Their struggle and success reinforced their belief in freedom and democracy. This belief holds strong and true today, as Greeks continue to fight side-by-side in defense of democracy and freedom, and in opposition to terrorism.

Today we celebrate Greece and the Greek people everywhere for their continued contribution to democracy and freedom. As nations around the world struggle with tyranny and injustice, may they look to the victories of the Greeks for hope that democracy can flourish.

LIBERIA IS IN NEED OF U.S. ASSISTANCE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue my supplication for increased U.S. support for the people of Liberia and to enter into the RECORD a Washington Post editorial dated March 20 which outlines why the United States should lend itself to providing assistance to the poverty-stricken West African country.

When the country of Liberia was founded by freed American slaves in 1847, it held a world of promise. Today, however it is suffering from profound poverty—a product of a civil war that has driven more than 3 million Liberians from their homeland. More than 8 in 10 Liberians cannot find work. Underdevelopment plagues the country—a country with no running water and no electricity. Founded by the dream of freedom, it now suffers from a distinct deprivation that the United States can now address through their support of the newly elected president of Liberia Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and her goals for her countrymen and women.

This month, President Johnson-Sirleaf addressed a special joint-session of Congress and met with President Bush. She outlined the many things that are needed to be done in order to ensure her country thrives. "We must revive educational facilities, including our few universities. We must provide essential agricultural extension services to help us feed ourselves again, developing the science and technology skills to insure that we prosper in a modern global economy," she told Members of Congress. President Johnson-Sirleaf has expressed the urgency of resettling displaced Liberians, the rehabilitation of the core of an electricity grid to high-priority areas and institutions, in addition to the demobilization of former combatants and restructuring of their army, police and security services. President Johnson-Sirleaf, as Mr. Fred Hiatt mentions in his editorial, is one reason why President Bush should help Liberia. A Harvard-trained economist, and former World Bank and United Nations official, she is committed to uplifting her country. A second reason, according to Hiatt, is the fact that if nothing is done at the present time, the cost of repair in Liberia will be "far more difficult and expensive" later on.

Mr. Speaker, all these are pressing reasons to assist Liberia and I am certain that with President Johnson-Sirleafs commitment and U.S. aid, the economy and social conditions of Liberia can be revived.

[From the Washingtonpost.com, Mar. 20, 2006]

THE CASE FOR CARING NOW

(By Fred Hiatt)

On one of her visits to her native Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf told a joint session of Congress last week, she was placed in a jail cell with 15 men. "All of them were executed a few hours later," she said. "Only the intervention of a single soldier spared me from rape."

Now Johnson-Sirleaf, 67, is the newly elected president of her unhappy African country, and if you think she was trying to seize Congress's attention with that anecdote of 20 years past, you are no doubt correct.

After all, the world is full of unhappy countries that have won sympathy here, and then been rapidly discarded. Think Haiti, for example, or Afghanistan, which was of interest to Ronald Reagan, forgotten by George H.W. Bush, neglected by Bill Clinton and then (not coincidentally) a crisis again.

Now Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first female elected leader, is enjoying her moment of fame and good feeling. Laura Bush and Condoleezza Rice attended her inauguration in January, Congress greeted her as a hero last week, President Bush will receive her tomorrow. After a quarter-century of coups, dictators and civil wars in Liberia, this is a moment of restored democracy and hope.

Do not assume, however, that Johnson-Sirleaf therefore will stoop to unseemly flattery or diplomatic spin. After all her years of exile, harassment, surveillance and prison with all the misery waiting for her back home, she seems to have no time for that.

As in: When she is asked during a visit to The Post how she will plead her case for aid to Bush, given draining U.S. commitments to Iraq and Afghanistan, she replies, "For the reason you said—he needs a success. Billions are being spent on Iraq, billions are being spent on Afghanistan—and it will take a fraction of those billions to make Liberia a success story.

"I think he needs one, and we're going to give him an opportunity to have one."

It's not that Johnson-Sirleaf, stately in traditional dress, comes across as ungrateful. In her address to Congress, she thanked the United States for its help in brokering an end to Liberia's vicious civil war and for sending money to get the country going again.

But, she says, "we still have problems. I can't tell you we're out of the woods."

Any Western leader might regard that as an astonishing understatement. Johnson-Sirleaf works out of a dilapidated palace that, like the rest of her country, depends on generators for electricity.

"We have a city that's dark," she says. "We have a city where many young children don't know that water comes out of a tap." At night, children gather on street corners to do their homework by the spillover from private floodlights, since they have no light at home. Many others do no homework because they can't afford pencils, or can't attend school at all.

Civil war drove most of the country's 3.5 million people from their homes. Some 45 percent of the population is 14 or younger; many of those children were press-ganged into armies and know no other life. Life expectancy is 42.5 years. Unemployment is 80 to 85 percent. Of every 1,000 children born, 132 die in infancy.

Why should the United States care? The standard answer of traditional historical ties, based on the freed American slaves who founded Liberia, may have worn thin after all these years. But there are two others.

One is that helping is cheaper in the long run than the alternative. When conditions in a country become too atrocious to bear—when drug-addled marauders take to chopping off the hands of children who get in their way, as in Liberia's neighbor Sierra Leone—public opinion may (at least some of the time) force the United States, Britain or the United Nations to intervene. By the time that demand comes, the destruction is so complete—in Liberia, roads, hospitals, water pipes, everything has crumbled—that repair is far more difficult and expensive.

The second is Johnson-Sirleaf herself: Harvard-trained economist, former World Bank and U.N. official, democrat. She espouses an anti-corruption, socially inclusive vision that aid officials can only dream of finding in most poor countries. Courageously, for he still has many followers, she has asked that former dictator Charles Taylor, now in Nigeria, stand trial for his crimes.

When her hour at The Post is over, she waves off the usual pleasantries and asks: What will emerge from this interview? What will Liberia get out of it? And suddenly "grandmotherly," the adjective you often hear applied to her, reminds you less of the woman who sneaked you an extra cookie when your mother wasn't looking and more of having your hands checked for cleanliness before being seated at the Sunday dinner table.

Well, Madam President, I'm afraid this column is the best I can do. I hope you get more out of President Bush tomorrow.

COMMEMORATING THE 185TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud recognition of the 185th anniversary of Greek independence. This special day for Greece commemorates the strength and determination of its people to restore their democratic roots and identity.

The political philosophies of both the United States and Greece have been challenged by oppressive powers, and both nations have proudly defended their right to self-government and individual freedoms. After showing a desire to be free from the Ottoman Empire in 1821, Greece endured eleven long years of war to succeed in gaining independence. American and Hellenic cultures greatly respect their tradition of independence and recognize the importance of democratic principles.

The United States and Greece have always enjoyed a friendship and alliance in international and cultural endeavors. I am pleased that the Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis and other dignitaries paid a visit last week to Washington, D.C., to celebrate this anniversary since Hellenic principles resonate in our culture and politics. The United States was founded on the principles of democracy developed thousands of years ago in the city-states of ancient Greece. The beauty of Greek architecture can even be found while taking a walk through our beloved Capitol building. Likewise, our country's influence on Greece can be seen in their first Constitution, which was based on our Declaration of Independence and the principles behind the American Revolution.

On a cultural level, since Greece resurrected the Olympics in 1896, they have symbolized peace and excellence for people around the world. The Olympics show that great athletic skill and spirited competition can bring nations together despite their differences. We saw at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy, how Hellenic ideals such as equality and friendship have stood the test of time and continue to flourish at a global level. Hellenic culture, whether through its development of democratic government or its espousal of friendly competition, encourages people to come together amicably even during the most difficult of times.

Mr. Speaker, it would be hard to imagine a United States of America, or even the world,

without the great contributions from Greece. I will continue to work in Congress to support Hellenic causes and our strong and important alliance. I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating Greece on the anniversary of its independence.

TRIBUTE TO WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, a collective groan could be heard across the state of West Virginia in the waning hours of Thursday, March 23, 2006, as a last-second shot by the Texas Longhorns closed the doors on West Virginia University's impressive NCAA tournament run.

But while our Mountaineers might have lost the game, it remains a ''sweet ending'' for our heroes of the hard-court who, for the second year in a row, have our state swelling with pride.

It is the first time West Virginia has won two games in consecutive NCAAs since superstar Jerry West, whose silhouette graces the NBA's logo, led it to the title game in 1959 and a regional semifinal the next year.

Forward Mike Gansey, one of five seniors on the team, said about the distinction, ''I just hope we end up being one of the great and most popular teams in West Virginia history like they were.''

I think it's pretty safe to say Mr. Gansey and the rest of the team's departing stars will get their wish.

It will be a long time before any of us forget the hustle and heart of Gansey, the improbable three-point stroke of Martinsburg native Kevin Pittsnogle, the leadership and selfless play of J.D. Collins, the accomplishments on and off the court of Academic All-American Joe Herber, the sweet shot of Patrick Beilein.

And we will always remember how all of these young men came together to achieve more than anyone expected, and how through sheer determination, teamwork and a ton of heart they became role models not just for a state, but for an entire nation.

We will miss these five fine men on the basketball court, but will continue to follow the accomplishments of these unofficial West Virginia ambassadors as they are certain to go on to great things.

Behind them, they leave big shoes to fill, but they also leave their legacy, a legacy that will be carried on by their teammates and by many in the years to come.

HONORING EDWARD AND MERLE FORD

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Edward and Merle Ford on their 50th wedding anniversary. Edward and Merle celebrated this wonderful milestone on February 28, 2006 after having spent half a century in love and with the shared experiences of family life.

Edward Lee Ford was born on July 31, 1929 in Hemingway, South Carolina. He relocated to Pennsylvania to attend Pine Forge Academy. Prior to graduating from Pine Forge, Edward and his twin brother, Jesse, were drafted into the Army where they served as medics. During his time at Pine Forge and while in Germany, Edward diligently wrote to Merle Elizabeth Cheatham. Merle was born on January 1, 1934 in Baltimore, Maryland, and like Edward, attended Pine Forge Academy. During the early days of their romance, letter-writing kept their love alive.

On October 23, 1955, Merle Elizabeth Cheatham and Edward Lee Ford were wed at the chapel on the grounds of Pine Forge Academy. The Fords have four children; Rhonda, Terry, Dwayne, and Lisa; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Merle and Edward have likewise kept their connection to Pine Forge Academy strong. Merle worked as the Registrar, Secretary to the Principal, and Typing Teacher at the Academy, while Edward designed and built Kimbrough Hall, several of the log cabins, and renovated North Hall into the Music Conservatory. Edward even served as the first president of the Pine Forge National Alumni Association. In 1995, Edward, along with his brother Jesse, received the honor of being alumni of the year. In addition to their dedication to each other and the Academy, the Fords are pillars in their church where they serve as Head Deacon/Deaconess at the Walnut Street Community Seventh-day Adventist Church in Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring Edward and Merle Ford on their fifty golden years of love and dedication to each other. I hope they will continue to live in the house Edward built for Merle and that they are blessed with continued joy, health, and love.

TEN CONSTITUENTS KILLED IN AN ACCIDENT

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great sadness in my heart. On Wednesday, March 22, 2006, ten of my constituents were killed in an accident that has left a tight knit community in New Jersey full of grief, and reflecting on fond memories of those who have departed.

Today my prayers are with those our community has lost: Marvin Bier and Shirley Bier, Hans Wilhelm O. Eggers and Maria Eggers, Arthur Kovar and Frieda Kovar, Robert Rubin and Barbara Rubin, Marion Diamond, and Carrole E. Ruchelman. Each of these people embraced life and we will miss them greatly.

In the wonderful years of retirement, these residents of the Ponds, in Monroe Township, New Jersey, sought out new parts of the world. Last week, they were on a cruise that took them to Chile, where they opted to take a bus to explore an enticing part of that country. In a horrible accident, the bus rolled off an embankment.

In addition to those killed, we must also pray for Bernard Diamond and Harold Ruchelman, who survived the terrible crash that took the lives of their wives. These two men will need the support of our community. We must give them our love and help them deal with the seemingly insurmountable sorrow they must feel.

My prayers are also with the family members, relatives, and neighbors of those affected by this accident. This week has reminded us of the preciousness of each moment, and how many of the unexpected events that change our lives remain out of our control. It reinforces the need to remain humble in the eyes of God and to take each day and live it as if a gift from God. This was the spirit in which each of these ten New Jersey residents traveled with B'nai B'rith on their South American cruise. They left the safety and comfort of the Ponds to explore a new part of the world. They are now on their final journey and safe in God's hands.

Today is a day for reflection and for contemplation. While we have pain and grief today, tomorrow we must work to find internal peace with the events of last week. As Psalm 23 reminds us, ''surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'' It is not easy today, and it will not be easy tomorrow, but we need to embrace the grace that exists and make the most of our lives, building upon the memory of those we have lost. As Moses reminds us in Deuteronomy, ''be strong and of good courage. Fear not, for God will go with you. He will not fail you. He will not forsake you.''

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEDICATION OF THE KAVLI INSTITUTE FOR PARTICLE ASTROPHYSICS AND COSMOLOGY AT THE STANFORD LINEAR ACCELERATOR CENTER

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mrs. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Stanford University and Stanford Linear Accelerator on the dedication of the Kavli Institute for Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology on March 17, 2006. The institute is dedicated to advancing the understanding of the cosmos in its search for ''dark matter'' and ''dark energy,'' which compose an estimated 96 percent of the universe.

This was all made possible by Fred Kavli, a world renowned physicist, through his extraordinary generosity and vision.

The following are his inspirational remarks at the dedication of the institute which bears his name.

It is a special pleasure to be here today for the dedication of this beautiful building in the service of science.

First I want to remember and pay tribute to Leland Stanford and his wife, Jane, who laid the physical and spiritual foundation for this great university, and who in their foresight provided the ample land on which this building stands today.

We owe our gratitude to the many people who have been instrumental in making the Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Cosmology and the building come about, and give special recognition to President Hennessy, Provost Etchemendy, and the Department of Energy, represented by Robin

Staffin. We appreciate the capable work of Roger Blandford, Jonathan Dorfan, and Steven Kahn, who are the prime engines in this effort, and we recognize Steven Chu for his contribution in starting the Institute.

We truly have a great building on a wonderful site, and I want to recognize the architectural firm of EHHD for a beautiful and functional design.

The building will be an important focal point for the activity of the Kavli Institute for Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology. It is especially important since the Institute is a joint effort of Stanford and SLAC, and the new building will help to integrate the scientific effort of the two institutions, and will be a common meeting ground for participants from each as well as for visitors from many other institutions.

The prominent location is symbolic of the central role it will play in this function.

But the building cannot fulfill its function without content, and we are especially thankful to Pierre Schwob who donated the computer center, and Pehong Chen who donated the Chair for the director of the Kavli Institute.

The Kavli Foundation supports basic science because we believe in its long-range benefit to humanity. We are looking for benefits which may lie far into the future, benefits that may be hard to predict, but as we look at the past, the benefits of science have been proven over time. The fruits of research are not always immediate and are often not predictable. Often the benefits are the result of unpredictable outcomes of an exploration that was initially motivated purely by intellectual curiosity.

Heisenberg, Schrodinger, and Dirac were not motivated by practical applications when they and their colleagues developed the quantum theory of matter, and yet, their research led to, among other results, an understanding of electronic conduction in solid state materials, which led to the invention of the transistor, which made possible the development of integrated circuits, computers, the internet, and the IT world in which we live today.

I believe there is a strong relationship between the level of a nation's science and its technological and industrial leadership in today's high-tech world.

For many years, Bell Laboratories was the strongest and best scientific research institution in the world. The research from Bell Labs was freely publicized throughout the world, but who was to take primary advantage of it to build a high technology industry? It was the home country, the United States of America. It is not just a matter of knowing the theory, it is the foundation that is built step by step by scientists, the engineers, the technicians, the suppliers, the scientific infrastructure, and it is the whole underlying knowledge base that transfers pure science into industrial benefits. I believe that without the Bell Labs, the U.S. would not be the strong world leader we are today in high technology.

Similarly, the Silicon Valley would not be among the very top world technological centers without Stanford and SLAC.

It is well known and widely accepted that investments in research yield enormous benefits to society through improved standard of living, better health, and stronger national security.

I believe that basic science is the primary driver for human progress and increased knowledge about the human being, nature, and the universe.

It is for these reasons that we must be willing to make investments with a long horizon, and it is important that our leaders in government duly recognize the importance of our scientific standing in providing a superior standard of living. Sacrifices that we make today will build our future of tomorrow.

The benefits of basic science can be hard to predict, but based upon the past, the future will be more spectacular than we can ever imagine.

And to the scientists I want to say, I envy you out there looking back to the beginning of time, playing among the galaxies. You guys are really good packing 100 billion galaxies with a hundred billion stars each in the space of a subatomic particle, but when you tell me there are 11 dimensions, I like to remind you of Paul Dirac's statement that said ''physical laws should have mathematical beauty and simplicity.''

Today we are grateful to have this beautiful facility with an outstanding team of scientists backed up by two great institutions. I am confident that you will make new discoveries and advance our understanding of the cosmos.

Let us dedicate this house of science to take us on a ride among the stars to answer some of our most fundamental questions.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to a remarkable scientific endeavor, the Kavli Institute for Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology at SLAC, and to extend to its creator, Fred Kavli, our gratitude for his leadership, his vision and his generosity.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2429–S2482

Measures Introduced: Seven bills and six resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2461–2467, S. Res. 407–411, and S. Con. Res. 84. **Page S2467**

Measures Passed:

Higher Education Extension Act: Senate passed H.R. 4911, to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, clearing the measure for the President. **Page S2480**

Financial Literacy Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 410, designating April 2006 as ''Financial Literacy Month''. **Pages S2480–81**

Recognizing Gallaudet University: Senate agreed to S. Res. 411, recognizing a milestone in the history of Gallaudet University. **Page S2481**

Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act: Senate resumed consideration of S. 2349, to provide greater transparency in the legislative process, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S2439–60**

Adopted:

By 84 yeas to 13 nays (Vote No. 78), Wyden/Grassley Amendment No. 2944, to establish as a standing order of the Senate a requirement that a Senator publicly disclose a notice of intent to object to proceeding to any measure or matter. **Pages S2454–59**

Rejected:

By 30 yeas to 67 nays (Vote No. 77), Collins/McCain/Lieberman Amendment No. 3176 (to Amendment 2944), to establish the Senate Office of Public Integrity. **Pages S2440–54, S2459**

Withdrawn:

Schumer Amendment No. 2959 (to Amendment No. 2944), to prohibit any foreign government-owned or -controlled company that recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan during the Taliban's rule between 1996–2001 may own, lease, operate, or manage real property or facility at a United States port. **Pages S2439–40**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By unanimous consent, Frist motion to reconsider the vote (Vote No. 36), by which the motion to invoke cloture on the bill failed on Thursday, March 9, 2006, was agreed to. **Page S2460**

By 81 yeas to 16 nays (Vote No. 79), upon reconsideration, two-thirds of those Senators voting, a quorum being present, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the bill. **Page S2460**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at approximately 10:30 a.m., on Wednesday, March 29, 2006, where Senator Feingold will be recognized to offer Amendment No. 2962 relating to the definition of lobbyist for purposes of gifts; provided further, that there be 40 minutes equally divided for debate prior to a vote in relation to the amendment, with no second-degree amendments in order to the amendment. **Page S2482**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding the adjournment of the Senate, all time until the Senate resumes consideration of the bill on Wednesday, March 29, 2006, count against the time limit under the provisions of rule 22; provided further, that all first-degree amendments that qualify under rule 22 be offered no later than 11 a.m., on Wednesday, March 29, 2006, other than a managers' amendment to be cleared by the managers and the 2 leaders. **Page S2482**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 10:50 a.m., on Wednesday, March 29, 2006, Senator Dodd or his designee be recognized to call up amendments on behalf of himself or others, and that at 10:55 a.m., Senator Lott or his designee be recognized to call up amendments on behalf of himself or others. **Page S2482**

Securing America's Borders Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at a time determined by the Majority Leader, after consultation with the Democratic Leader, Senate begin consideration of S. 2454, to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for comprehensive reform. **Pages S2460–61**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the previously scheduled vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill be vitiated. **Page S2461**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

1 Coast Guard nomination in the rank of admiral. **Page S2482**

Measures Read First Time: **Pages S2465, S2481–82**

Executive Communications: **Pages S2465–67**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2467–69**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S2469–76**

Additional Statements: **Pages S2463–65**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S2476–79**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Pages S2479–80**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S2480**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—79) **Pages S2459, S2460**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:44 a.m., and adjourned at 7:08 p.m., until 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, March 29, 2006. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S2482.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2007 for the Bureau of Reclamation, after receiving testimony from John W. Keys III, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, and Mark Limbaugh, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, both of the Department of the Interior.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Foreign Operations concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2007 for the Department of State and foreign operations, after receiving testimony from Condoleeza Rice, Secretary of State.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (ARMY)

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2007 for the Army, after receiving testimony from Francis Harvey, Secretary, and General Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff, both of the United States Army, Department of Defense.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Airland concluded a hearing to examine the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2007 and the future years defense program, focusing on Air Force and Navy tactical aviation programs, after receiving testimony from Michael J. Sullivan, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, Government Accountability Office; Donald B. Marron, Acting Director, Congressional Budget Office; Christopher Bolkcom, Specialist in National Defense, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; Lieutenant General Donald J. Hoffman, USAF, Military Deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition; and Rear Admiral Thomas J. Kilcline, Jr., USN, Director, Air Warfare Division, and Rear Admiral Steven L. Enewold, USN, Program Executive Officer, Joint Strike Fighter Program, both of the United States Navy.

FAA BUDGET

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Aviation concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2007 for the Federal Aviation Administration and the long-term viability of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund (AATF), after receiving testimony from Marion C. Blakey, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, and Todd J. Zinser, Acting Inspector General, both of the Department of Transportation; and Gerald L. Dillingham, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, Government Accountability Office.

MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine U.S. efforts to promote anticorruption strategies of multilateral development banks, after receiving testimony from Clay Lowery, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs; Cynthia S. Perry, African Development Bank, and Ruth E. Levine, Center for Global Development, both of Washington, D.C.; William Easterly, New York University, New York, New York; and Adam Lerrick, Carnegie Mellon University Tepper School of Business, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Warren W. Tichenor, of Texas, to be U.S. Representative to the

Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador, who was introduced by Senator Cornyn, Patricia P. Brister, of Louisiana, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as the U.S. Representative on the Commission on the Status of Women of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, who was introduced by Senator Vitter, Rajkumar Chellaraj, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Administration, and George McDade Staples, of Kentucky, to be Director General of the Foreign Service, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

NUCLEAR AND RADIOLOGICAL THREAT

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations held a hearing to examine securing the global supply chain relating to neutralizing the nuclear and radiological threat, focusing on the domestic and international deployment of radiation detection equipment, U.S. government efforts to prevent radiological or nuclear terrorism, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Radiation Portal Monitor (RPM) Program to install RPMs at U.S. ports of entry, the Department of Energy Second Line of Defense program to install RPMs at key international border crossings and ports, and the importation of radiological sources across the Northern and Southern border, receiving testimony from former New Jersey Governor Thomas H. Kean, Trenton, on behalf of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States; Eugene E. Aloise, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Gregory D. Kutz, Managing Director, Forensic Audits and Special Investigations, and Keith A. Rhodes, Chief Technologist, Center for Technology and Engineering, all of the Government Accountability Office; David G. Huizenga, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Office of International Material Protection and Cooperation, Office of Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, National Nuclear Security Administration; Vayl S. Oxford, Director, Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, and Jayson P. Ahern, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, both of the Department of Homeland Security; and Stephen E. Flynn, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, New York.

Hearings continue on Thursday, March 30.

MEDICAID FRAUD

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security concluded a hearing to examine eliminating Medicaid fraud, focusing on the current infrastructure for Medicaid program integrity at the state and Federal level, including a review of the current system for tracking improper spending and fraud at the state and Federal levels, after receiving testimony from Daniel R. Levinson, Inspector General, and Dennis Smith, Director, Center for Medicaid Services, both of the Department of Health and Human Services; Leslie G. Aronovitz, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; and Brian G. Flood, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Austin.

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Subcommittee on Bioterrorism and Public Health Preparedness held a hearing to examine public health preparedness in the 21st century, focusing on a national public health infrastructure with real-time situational awareness, and responding to threats by terrorism or natural disasters, receiving testimony from Richard Besser, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services; Michael C. Caldwell, Dutchess County Department of Health, Poughkeepsie, New York; Peggy A. Honore, Mississippi Department of Health, Jackson; Lisa G. Kaplowitz, Virginia Department of Health, Richmond; Nicole Lurie, The RAND Corporation, and Elin A. Gursky, ANSER, Analytic Services, Inc., both of Arlington, Virginia; and Tara O'Toole, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Center for Biosecurity, Baltimore, Maryland.

Hearing recessed subject to the call.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Subcommittee on Retirement Security and Aging held a hearing to examine reauthorization of the Older Americans Act Title V, focusing on senior community service employment, receiving testimony from Mason M. Bishop, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training; Ignacio Salazar, SER–Jobs for Progress National, Inc., Irving, Texas; Kent Kahn, Experience Works, Inc., Lima, Ohio; and Anthony R. Sarmiento, Senior Service America, Inc., Silver Spring, Maryland.

Hearing recessed subject to the call.

INDIAN TRUST REFORM ACT

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S. 1439, to provide for Indian trust asset management reform and resolution of historical accounting claims, after receiving testimony from James Cason, Associate Deputy Secretary, and Ross Swimmer, Special Trustee for American Indians, both of the Department of the Interior; Tex G. Hall, the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation,

New Town, North Dakota, on behalf of sundry organizations; Jim Gray, Intertribal Monitoring Association on Indian Trust Funds, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Clifford Lyle Marshall, Sr., Hoopa Valley Tribal Council, Hoopa, California; Austin Nunez, Indian Land Working Group, Tucson, Arizona; and Majel M. Russell, Crow Tribe of Indians, Billings, Montana.

WARTIME POWERS AND FISA COURT

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine wartime executive powers and the FISA Court, focusing on National Security Agency standards and procedures for electronic surveillance of international terrorist activity, after receiving testimony from Judge Harold A. Baker, U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois; Judge Stanley S. Brotman, U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey; Judge John F. Keenan, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York; Judge William Stafford, Jr., U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida; Magistrate Judge Allan Kornblum, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida; Morton H. Halperin, Open Society Policy Center, Washington, D.C.; and David S. Kris, Time Warner, Inc., New York, New York.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 23 public bills, H.R. 5013–5035; and 7 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 365; and H. Res. 736–741 were introduced. **Pages H1195–96**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1196–98**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H. Res. 741, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Access Act of 1965 (H. Rept. 109–399)

H.R. 4882, to ensure the proper remembrance of Vietnam veterans and the Vietnam War by providing a deadline for the designation of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (H. Rept. 109–400) **Page H1195**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Schwarz of Michigan to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1133**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Deadline Enforcement Act: H.R. 4882, amended, to ensure the proper remembrance of Vietnam veterans and the Vietnam War by providing a deadline for the designation of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, by a yea-and-nay vote of 404 yeas to 4 nays, Roll No. 68; **Pages H1137–39, H1162–63**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To ensure the proper remembrance of Vietnam veterans and the Vietnam War by designating a site for a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.''. **Page H1163**

H. Gordon Payrow Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 4786, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 535 Wood Street in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, as the ''H. Gordon Payrow Post Office Building''; **Pages H1139–40**

Dr. Jose Celso Barbosa Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 3440, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Avenida RL Rodriguez in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, as the ''Dr. Jose Celso Barbosa Post Office Building''; **Page H1140**

Gene Vance Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 4805, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 105 North Quincy Street in Clinton, Illinois, as the ''Gene Vance Post Office Building''; **Pages H1140–41**

Supporting the goals and ideals of ''National MPS Day'': H. Res. 85, to support the goals and ideals of ''National MPS Day''; **Pages H1141–42**

Recognizing the life of Wellington Timothy Mara and his outstanding contributions to the New York Giants Football Club, the National Football League, and the United States: H. Res. 517, to recognize the life of Wellington Timothy Mara and his outstanding contributions to the New York Giants Football Club, the National Football League, and the United States; **Pages H1142–44**

Providing that attorneys employed by the Department of Justice shall be eligible for compensatory time off for travel under section 5550b of title 5, United States Code: H.R. 4057, amended, to provide that attorneys employed by the Department of Justice shall be eligible for compensatory

time off for travel under section 5550b of title 5, United States Code; **Pages H1144–45**

Recognizing Dr. I. King Jordan for his contributions to Gallaudet University and the deaf and hard of hearing community: H. Res. 680, to recognize Dr. I. King Jordan for his contributions to Gallaudet University and the deaf and hard of hearing community; **Pages H1145–48**

Supreme Court Grounds Transfer Act of 2005: S. 2116, to transfer jurisdiction of certain real property to the Supreme Court—clearing the measure for the President; **Pages H1148–49**

Milk Regulatory Equity Act of 2005: S. 2120, to ensure regulatory equity between and among all dairy farmers and handlers for sales of packaged fluid milk in federally regulated milk marketing areas and into certain non-federally regulated milk marketing areas from federally regulated areas, by a yea-and-nay vote of 285 yeas to 128; nays, Roll No. 69—clearing the measure for the President; **Pages H1149–54, H1163**

Local Community Recovery Act of 2006: H.R. 4979, as amended, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify the preference for local firms in the award of certain contracts for disaster relief activities; and **Pages H1154–56**

Commending the people of the Republic of Haiti for holding democratic elections on February 7, 2006, and congratulating President-elect Rene Garcia Preval on his victory in these elections: H. Con. Res. 353, to commend the people of the Republic of Haiti for holding democratic elections on February 7, 2006, and congratulating President-elect Rene Garcia Preval on his victory in these elections. **Pages H1157–62**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:36 p.m. and reconvened at 6:33 p.m. **Page H1162**

Senate Message: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on page H1133.

Senate Referrals: S. Con. Res. 83 was held at the desk; S. 1608 was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and S. 166 and S. 2447 were referred to the Committee on Resources. **Pages H1136, H1193–94**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings today and appear on pages H1162–63 and H1163. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 11:54 p.m.

Committee Meetings

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FDA, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a hearing on the Food and Nutrition Service. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the USDA: Eric M. Bost, Under Secretary; Kate Coler, Deputy Under Secretary, and Roberto Salazar, Administrator, all with Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services; Eric Hentges, Executive Director, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion; and W. Scott Steele, Budget Officer.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE, AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life, and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a hearing on VA/DHP Joint Incentives Programs. Testimony was heard from Gordon H. Mansfield, Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs; and David S. C. Chu, Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense.

SCIENCE, THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, JUSTICE, COMMERCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies held a hearing on the FBI. Testimony was heard from Robert S. Mueller III, Director, FBI, Department of Justice.

U.S. NAVY'S FUTURE SUBMARINE FORCE STRUCTURE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Projection Forces held a hearing on U.S. Navy's future submarine force structure. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Navy: Allison Stiller, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Ships; ADM Charles L. Munns, USN, Commander, Naval Submarine Forces; RADM Joseph A. Walsh, USN, Director, Submarine Warfare Division (N87); and RADM William H. Hilarides, USN, Program Executive Officer for Submarines, Naval Sea Systems Command; Ronald O'Rourke, Specialist in National Defense, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; and public witnesses.

OPM'S 2007 BUDGET

Committee on Government Reform: Subcommittee on Federal Workforce and Agency Organization held a

hearing entitled ''OPM's 2007 Budget and New Strategic and Operational Plan: A Discussion With the OPM Director.'' Testimony was heard from Linda Springer, Director, OPM.

BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT—INVESTIGATIVE PRIORITIES

Committee on Government Reform: Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations held a hearing entitled ''Setting Post-9/11 Investigative Priorities at the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.'' Testimony was heard from Richard M. Stana, Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, GAO; the following officials of the Department of Homeland Security: Richard L. Skinner, Inspector General; and Robert Schoch, Deputy Assistant Director, National Security Division, ICE Office of Investigations; Joseph Webber, former Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security; and public witnesses.

BRIEFING—SECURITY RESTRAINTS ON BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Prevention of Nuclear and Biological Attack met in executive session to receive a briefing on Security Restraints on Biological Research: Where Are the Boundaries? The Subcommittee was briefed by public witnesses.

ETHIOPIA'S TROUBLED INTERNAL SITUATION

Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations held a hearing on Ethiopia's Troubled Internal Situation. Testimony was heard from Donald Y. Yamamoto, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, Department of State; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT—BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS, AND EXPLOSIVES—REFORMING LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held an oversight hearing on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATFE): Reforming Licensing and Enforcement Authorities. Testimony was heard from Audrey Stucko, Deputy Assistant Director, Enforcement Programs and Services, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Department of Justice; and public witnesses.

FIREARMS CORRECTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing on H.R. 5005, Firearms Corrections and Improvements Act. Testimony was heard from Audrey Stucko, Deputy Assistant Director, Enforcement Programs and Services, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Department of Justice; Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, City of New York; and a public witness.

COLLEGE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Committee on Rules: Granted, by voice vote, a structured rule on H.R. 609, College Access and Opportunity Act, providing one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that in lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the Rules Committee Print dated March 22, 2006 shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution. The rule provides that the amendments printed in the report may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report. The rule provides that, after disposition of the amendments printed in the report, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion and no further consideration of the bill shall be in order except by a subsequent order of the House. Testimony was heard from Chairman McKeon, and Representatives Petri, Castle, Biggert, Keller, McMorris, Boustany, Burton, Lewis (KY), King (IA), Gohmert, George Miller (CA), Holt, McCarthy, Tierney, Kind, McCollum, Davis (IL), Grijalva, Bishop (NY), Blumenauer, Jefferson, Jackson-Lee, Kennedy (RI) and Emanuel.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2006

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimate for fiscal year 2007 for the Air Force, 10 a.m., SD–192.

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2007 for the Department of Veterans Affairs, 2:30 p.m., SD–124.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, to hold hearings to examine U.S. nonproliferation strategy and the roles and missions of the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy in nonproliferation in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2007 and the future years defense program, 9:30 a.m., SR–222.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, to hold hearings to examine Global Strike Plans and programs in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2007, 2:30 p.m., SR–222.

Subcommittee on SeaPower, to hold hearings to examine Navy/Marine Corps force structure and future capabilities in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2007 and the future years defense program, 3:30 p.m., SR–232A.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on International Trade and Finance, to resume hearings to examine the reauthorization of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, focusing on ways to improve the Bank's economic impact procedures, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Technology, Innovation, and Competitiveness, to hold hearings to examine the importance of basic research to United States' competitiveness, 10 a.m., SD–562.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, to hold hearings to examine S. 2150, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Bureau of Land Management Land to the City of Eugene, Oregon, H.R. 3507, to transfer certain land in Riverside County, California, and San Diego County, California, from the Bureau of Land Management to the United States to be held in trust for the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians, S. 1832, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to lease oil and gas resources underlying Fort Reno, Oklahoma, to establish the Fort Reno Management Fund, S. 1056, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the City of Henderson, Nevada, certain Federal land located in the city, and S. 2373, to provide for the sale of approximately 132 acres of public land to the City of Green River, Wyoming, at fair market value, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the impact of the elimination of MTBE, 9:30 a.m., SD–628.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine U.S.-China economic relations revisited, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to receive a closed briefing regarding U.S.-India atomic energy cooperation, focusing on the Indian separation plan and the Administration's related legislative proposal, 9:30 a.m., S–407, Capitol.

Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, to hold hearings to examine U.S.-Burma relations, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, to resume hearings to examine how prepared is the nation's capital for terrorism, focusing on efforts to improve and refine coordination efforts and the NCR strategic plan and implementation, 2:30 p.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: business meeting to consider pending calendar business, 9:30 a.m., SR–485.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Brian M. Cogan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, Michael Ryan Barrett, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Ohio, and Thomas M. Golden, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 9:30 a.m., SD–226.

Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights, to hold hearings to examine state regulation of violent video games and the first amendment, 2 p.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing regarding certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine how seniors can stop investment fraud, 10 a.m., SD–106.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, on Natural Resources and Environment, 9:30 a.m., 2362A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, executive, on National Foreign Intelligence Program, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies, on IRS, 10 a.m., and on DC, Courts and Criminal Justice, 3 p.m., 2358 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, on DOE, Science Research, 10 a.m., 2362B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs, on Millennium Challenge Corporation, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Homeland Security, on FEMA, 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, on Smithsonian, 10 a.m., on National Endowment for the Humanities, 2 p.m., and on National Endowment for the Arts, 3 p.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, on public witnesses, 10:15 a.m., and 2 p.m., 2358 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life, and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, on Army Budget, 10 a.m., and on VA/DHP Information Technology, 1 p.m., H–143 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies, on Marshals/Prisons, 2 p.m., H–309 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, full Committee, hearing on issues relating to defense acquisition reform, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel, hearing on the Defense Health Program—Department of Defense Initiatives to Control Costs, 3 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, hearing on Defense Science and Technology: Investments to Shape the Evolving Terrorist Threat, 4 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on the Budget, to mark up the Budget Resolution Fiscal Year 2007, 10:30 a.m., 210 Cannon.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, to mark up the following measures: H.R. 4127, Data Accountability and Trust Act (DATA); and H. Con. Res. 357, Supporting the goals and ideals of National Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, hearing entitled ''Digital Content and Enabling Technology: Satisfying the 21st Century Consumer,'' 1 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Public Reporting of Hospital-Acquired Infection Rates: Empowering Consumers, Saving Lives,'' 2 p.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance, and Government-Sponsored Enterprises, hearing entitled ''Fostering Accuracy and Transparency in Financial Reporting,'' 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Government Management, Finance and Accountability and the Subcommittee on Management, Integration, and Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security, joint hearing entitled ''Department of Homeland Security Information Technology Challenges and the Future of eMerge,'' 3 p.m., 2247 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment, to mark up a measure To reorganize the Directorate for Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection of the Department of Homeland Security, to facilitate homeland security information-sharing, 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, joint hearing on The Human Rights Dialogue With Vietnam: Is Vietnam Making Significant Progress? 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing on Offshore Banking, Corruption, and the War on Terrorism, 2 p.m., 2200 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, to mark up the following bills: H.R. 3509, Workplace Goods Job Growth and Competitiveness Act of 2005; and H.R. 3049, Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property, oversight hearing on Remedies for Small Copyright Claims, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Resources, to continue markup of H.R. 4200, Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act and to mark up the following measures: H.R. 122, Eastern Municipal Water District Recycled Water System Pressurization and Expansion Project; H.R. 413, Bleeding Kansas National Heritage Area Act; H.R. 518, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act of 2005; H.R. 2563, To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct feasibility studies to address certain water shortages with the Snake, Boise, and Payette River systems in Idaho; H.R. 3418, Central Texas Water Recycling Act of 2005; H.R. 3418, Central Texas Waste Recycling Act of 2005; H.R. 3462, To provide for the conveyance of the Bureau of Land Management parcels known as the White Acre and Gambel Oak properties and related real property to Park City, Utah; H.R. 3682, To redesignate the Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia as the Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge; H.R. 3967, Pactola Reservoir Reallocation Authorization Act of 2005; H.R. 4013, To amend the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 to provide for conjunctive use of surface and groundwater in Juab County, Utah; H.R. 4080, Glendo Unit of the Missouri River Basin Project Contract Extension Act of 2005; H.R. 4084, To amend the Forest Service use and occupancy permit program to restore the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to utilize the special use permit fees collected by the Secretary in connection with the establishment and operation of marinas in units of the National Forest System derived from the public domain; H.R. 4204, American River Pump Station Project Transfer Act of 2005; H.R. 4686, Multi-State and International Fisheries Conservation and Management Act of 2006; S. 584, Betty Dick Residence Protection Act; S. 1165, James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge Expansion Act of 2005; S. 1869, Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act of 2005; H.J. Res. 78, Approving the location of the commemorative work in the District of Columbia honoring former President Dwight D. Eisenhower; H.R. 374, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take certain tribally-owned reservation land into trust for the Puyallup Tribe; H.R. 1307, Musconetcong Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; and H.R. 2978, To allow the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation to enter into a lease or other temporary conveyance of water rights recognized under the Fort Peck-Montana Compact for the purpose of meeting the water needs of the Dry Prairie Water Association, Incorporated, 10 a.m., and to hold a hearing on H.R. 3350, Tribal Development Corporation Feasibility Study Act of 2005, 1 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Science, to mark up H. Res. 717, Directing the Secretary of Commerce to transmit to the House of Representatives a copy of a workforce globalization final draft report produced by the Technology Administration, 10:30 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, hearing on the Future of Air Traffic Control: The R&D Agenda, 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Aviation, oversight hearing on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and the National Airspace System, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines, oversight hearing on Transit & Over-The-Road Bus Security, 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, oversight hearing on improving and enhancing access to quality care for our nation's veterans through VISN-wide care coordination demonstrations (Project HERO), 10:30 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 29

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 1 hour), Senate will continue consideration of S. 2349, Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act, with certain Senators to be recognized to offer their amendments.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, March 29

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of suspension, H. Res.—Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that legal action in Afghanistan against citizens who have already converted or plan to convert to other religions is deplorable and unjust. Began consideration of H.R. 609—College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005 (Subject to a Rule).

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