

elsewhere. Consequently, this bill had no chance of ever becoming law, and everyone knew it. The Senate resoundingly rejected the tax increase legislation the week before and instead passed legislation that offers a clean fix of the AMT. The majority in the House knew this, and yet they chose to pursue a political statement rather than a solution.

Instead of getting down to business and working with the Senate, House Republicans and President Bush, the majority leadership in the House has failed to repeal a tax that unnecessarily threatens 23 million Americans. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson has already made it clear that the delay in passing a fix or a complete repeal will cause delays in tax refunds for 50 million Americans. This is the price of inaction. The American people should not have to pay that price. The majority needs to bring a clean AMT fix to the floor, and not another tax increase.

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

PRESIDENT BUSH IS OUT OF TOUCH WHEN HE SAYS THE AMERICAN ECONOMY IS STRONG

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, it's hard for this Congress to get President Bush to prioritize the needs of the middle-class families when he refuses to face reality and chooses to govern by veto rather than vision.

Yesterday, the President surprised a lot of us when he said the economy is perfectly strong. That's news to them. You don't need the polls to tell you that the American people are deeply concerned about this economy. Who can blame them? With home values and wages dropping, and health care costs, home heating costs, gasoline costs, college tuition costs and food costs all rising, the hardworking American middle class is trying to make ends meet.

This Congress is not satisfied with the economic status quo that serves a very few at the very top. We've made progress over the last year easing the economic crunch. We passed legislation to address the subprime mortgage crisis, increased the minimum wage, passed legislation that cut taxes on middle-class families and made college more affordable by investing in our children.

We're proud of these accomplishments, but we know the American middle class is still struggling. And we look forward to working on creative solutions that actually address the problem instead of simply vetoing with no leadership.

POLITICAL GAMES SHOULD NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF PROTECTING AMERICA

(Mr. BOUSTANY asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOUSTANY. Yesterday, the Democratic leadership unveiled a half-trillion-dollar spending bill because they were unable to fulfill their constitutional duties.

This spending bill is 3,500 pages long, and the majority gave Members of Congress less than 24 hours to look at it. And that's simply ridiculous. We had less than 24 hours to review a bill funding our national priorities, but chock full with earmarks and frivolous spending, and it failed to go through the proper committee checks. But the liberal leadership of this House added mounds of earmarks for their friends and liberal policies that most Americans do not support.

In all of this spending, however, the glaring neglect by the Democratic leadership is our troops. Those fighting around the world, making us safer from al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, will not receive the necessary resources to continue their mission.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring our Armed Forces have the tools at their disposal to defeat the terrorist threat is one of our responsibilities in Congress. And I urge all of my colleagues to remember that.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY LEGISLATION

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

Ms. GIFFORDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a historic first step for this United States Congress; it's a step towards energy independence.

The energy bill that we're considering today recognizes a tremendous renewable resource that we literally have at our fingertips, the power of the sun. This bill includes my provisions to authorize new research and development into solar technologies. These technologies have the potential to revolutionize our energy production, not just in southern Arizona, but across this Nation.

As we develop these new technologies, we're going to need qualified workers to install and maintain the latest solar technologies. That is why this bill includes training programs specifically for solar technology.

But this bill is only a first step. I'm disappointed that we're not passing the House's fiscally responsible renewable energy tax policies and the tax incentives that go with this legislation. Those are the incentives that are really going to spur energy innovation, so we're going to continue to work for those.

I support this bill today, but we have a lot more work that we have to do. Mr. Speaker, I urge support on both sides of the aisle.

JUDGES HALL OF SHAME—AUSTRALIA

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, crimes against children continue to be a crisis in our civilized communities. How society reacts to such crimes is a reflection on the value or lack of value it places on children.

Recently, a 10-year-old girl was raped in Australia by nine males. The victim and the nine rapists were all native-born Aboriginals. The nine deviants were captured, and all nine admitted their guilt. So what did the Australian judge do to these criminals? Well, none of them went to prison. All of them received a suspended sentence, and the judge made the absurd comment at the trial that the 10-year-old girl "probably agreed to have sex with the perpetrators." I wonder what sentence the female judge would have imposed on the nine had the 10-year-old girl been of European descent. A prominent Aboriginal leader said he believed that "the chronic leniency toward offenders contributes to the abuse of Aboriginal children."

Mr. Speaker, a society is judged not by the way it treats the powerful or the rich, but how it treats the weakest among its people, like 10-year-old little girls. The judge in this case is a new member of the Judges Hall of Shame. And that's just the way it is.

VETERANS GUARANTEED BONUS ACT

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, today the House will take a huge step towards addressing one of the great injustices affecting our brave men and women in uniform. With today's passage of the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act, we will once and for all end the practice of denying combat-injured service men and women their enlistment bonuses that they were promised, that they deserve, and that they have earned.

It defies belief that some of America's combat-wounded veterans were actually sent a bill to repay their enlistment bonuses after they were injured, or that the Pentagon would stop making payments if the bonuses were paid in installments.

The American people were justifiably outraged when this situation came to light. And today Congress is going to do something about it by passing the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act. Hopefully, this bill will soon be signed into law and we can demonstrate for our brave men and women in uniform that this Congress will support our troops with our actions, not just our words.