

change there. However, now is the time for us to stand against President Chavez and for the United States government to firmly protect our nation and our economy against an oil war with Venezuela and its allies. That is why I have called for having proactive policies in place, such as increasing our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. I believe that it is in our national security interest to begin increasing our Strategic Petroleum Reserve in order to replace Venezuela's supply to the United States. By doing this, we will let the markets know that the United States government will protect the American people from those who sponsor terrorism and would use oil as an economic and political weapon against our nation.

The FARC is despised across Latin America and many Venezuelans are openly denouncing President Chavez for his alliance and open support of a terrorist organization. In President Chavez's effort to take the focus off of his failed domestic policies and his recent loss in the December referendum, Mr. Chavez is increasingly trying to create an international crisis with neighboring Colombia and he is seeking to destabilize all of Latin America. We must recognize this gathering storm and must stop Mr. Chavez in his tracks by designating Venezuela as a state sponsor of terrorism. By taking this prudent step, we will be standing against President Chavez and his menacing alliances and we will be defending the people of the region against a dangerous thug and dictator in Latin America.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

CONNIE MACK,
Member of Congress.

RECOGNIZING CAL STATE FULLERTON ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 3 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my alma mater, California State University, Fullerton as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. In 1957, California State University, Fullerton was founded by an act of the California legislature. The enrollment at that time consisted of 452 students when those first classes were offered in leased quarters at Sunny Hills High School prior to the college moving to the temporary buildings that became a permanent site in 1960 in Fullerton. Half a century after its founding, more than 185,000 graduates have successfully developed careers in hundreds of industries.

Each year, more than 36,000 students attend classes at Cal State Fullerton, choosing from 105 different degree programs including 55 undergraduate, 49 graduate and a doctorate in education at eight distinct colleges: Arts, Business and Economics, Communications, Education, Engineering and Computer Science, Health and Human Development, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics, all of which provide an outstanding education to the students.

Its studies have led students to careers in teaching, nursing, business, the arts, communications, health care, engineering, sports, the sciences and more. Cal State Fullerton graduates have gone on to successful careers and their impact is felt not only in the State of California and the Nation but throughout the world. Among these graduates are Academy Award-winning actors and screenwriters, television news reporters, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists, successful novelists, doctors, lawyers, judges, teachers, professional athletes, entrepreneurs, scientists and business leaders and even a NASA astronaut who served on the crew of the Space Shuttle Endeavor that launched into space in August of 2007.

Cal State Fullerton's student body also reflects the diversity of the State of California. As one of the most diverse campuses in the State and in this Nation, the university welcomes students of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions. In fact, many of these students are the first in their families to earn a university diploma.

The university received full accreditation from the Western College Association in 1961 and Cal State Fullerton now holds 14 national accreditations and associations. In addition, "Titan Pride" has been the rallying cry for 12 national team championships in seven different sports.

Finally, Cal State Fullerton is known for its distinguished faculty, many of whom have garnered international and national reputations in their respective fields.

It is with great pride that I recognize Cal State Fullerton for 50 wonderful years.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SUTTON) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Lord God of the universe and eternal Creator, this morning, long before dawn, the space shuttle *Endeavor* lifted from the surface of the Earth to find orbit in space. This exploratory journey into the beyond to the international space station is designed to be the longest shuttle mission in history.

Lord, guide and protect the seven astronauts as they work to expand build-

ing in space and prepare for future scientific discoveries. Help the United States to remain a leader in encouraging the development of technology, space medicine, architecture, and understanding that will better human life on Earth and life in this universe.

May this global mission, with its Japanese component of the Kibo laboratory and the Canadian robotic device called Dextre become splendid additions to the international space station and inspire young people to study science and to build global harmony.

In You, O Lord, we build trust, and with You, O Lord, we uncover the mysteries of the universe, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 66. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 175th anniversary of the commencement of the special relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Thailand.

CONGRESS IS TAKING ACTION TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMY AND CREATE JOBS

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, this Congress has finally understood and is realizing what the American people have known for so long, that after 6 years of mismanagement of our economy by the Bush administration that our economy has failed America's working class.

This Congress is working to change that, having already passed a bipartisan economic stimulus package that will help jump-start the economy and create up to half a million new American jobs. Later this spring, recovery rebate checks of hundreds of dollars will be in the hands of 130 million

Americans. Most will use it to pay bills, but hopefully some will help to spend it on the economy. Late last month we passed an energy bill that will help create hundreds of thousands of high-paying green collar jobs, lower energy prices, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. And to address the housing crisis, we expanded affordable mortgage loan opportunities, strengthened consumer protection against risky loans, and raised loan limits to increase liquidity in the mortgage market.

Madam Speaker, this Democratic Congress is working to create more jobs, jump-start our economy that has clearly stalled. We are committed to addressing those issues that affect America's working class, not just the top 1 percent.

SUPPORT VICTORY IN IRAQ

(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. Madam Speaker, today I have introduced a resolution calling on Congress to recognize and embrace the success we have seen on the ground in Iraq and dedicate ourselves to support these efforts in achieving victory.

I have visited our troops in Iraq nine times. I have seen firsthand the success of the surge. While meeting with General David Petraeus last week in Baghdad, he reported an over-60 percent reduction in violence, with al Qaeda on the defense in Anbar province.

The success our military men and women and people of Iraq have achieved is real. The best way to protect American families is to stop terrorists overseas. The best way to end the war is through victory. We, as representatives of the American people, must put aside politics and recognize what is at stake in Iraq. As my resolution states: "Congress must support the idea that the war in Iraq is not lost" and that it "will do all it can to ensure coalition victory."

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

FISA

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, House Democrats are fully committed to ensuring that the FISA law is focused on giving the intelligence community the tools it needs to protect our national security at the same time protecting the constitutional rights of innocent Americans.

We've already passed the RESTORE Act, which modernizes FISA, to address these two critical needs. Today, congressional leaders continue to negotiate differences between our bill and a bill passed by the Senate earlier this

year. If congressional Republicans were really concerned about our Nation's national security, you would think they would be sitting at the negotiating table ensuring their concerns are addressed. They've been asked to join the talks, but to date they have refused.

And National Intelligence Director Mike McConnell says that the President is holding up the legislation in order to get blanket immunity for the telecommunications industry.

Madam Speaker, congressional Democrats are committed to strengthening our intelligence community to keep our country safe. And we urge Republicans to put aside partisan politics and work with us on this important piece of legislation.

FISA AND THE HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

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

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, my colleague from Kentucky has just raised an important point, which is that we need to revise the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. But I think he's a little misinformed.

He says that there are bipartisan negotiations going on. The Speaker hasn't even appointed conferees. You can't even have negotiations with the Senate. The negotiations are going on between the Democrat leadership and the conservative Democrats that want to pass a bipartisan Senate bill and have written a letter to your leadership about it.

We are now on day 25 when we have had the Protect America Act expire. All we need to do is to be able to listen to foreigners in foreign countries without a warrant. The Senate bill has unprecedented protections for Americans' civil liberties, more than are in the 1978 law that all of us in this House support. But, instead, the liberal Democratic leadership is blocking the will of the majority of this House.

It is time for Democrats to stand up to your own leadership and demand that the protection of this country is more important than special interest groups that have a hold on the Democratic leadership.

Security must come first.

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY LEAVES AMERICAN FAMILIES STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET

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

Mr. SIREs. Madam Speaker, during these uncertain economic times, American families are struggling to make ends meet.

Consider that oil and gas prices are at an all-time high. Health care costs continue to skyrocket out of control, leaving more Americans either unin-

sured or underinsured. Food prices recently experienced their biggest price increase in more than 3 years. If all that is not bad enough, the U.S. economy lost 63,000 jobs last month. The February jobs numbers are the latest sign that economic growth has virtually stalled.

President Bush has the dubious distinction of being tied with his father as the two Presidents with the worst jobs record since the Great Depression.

Madam Speaker, congressional Democrats are working hard to strengthen the American economy and create jobs. We worked in a bipartisan fashion on the economic stimulus package that will not only help hard-working Americans pay their bills but will also jump-start our economy and create 50,000 new jobs in America.

This was the only the beginning. Strengthening our economy remains a top priority for this Democratic Congress as we move through this year.

URGING PASSAGE OF THE SENATE FISA BILL BEFORE EASTER RECESS

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

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, today is day 25 since the Democrat majority let the bipartisan Protect America Act expire, leaving our intelligence community without the full range of resources necessary to monitor foreign targets and leaving our country in danger.

It's truly disappointing that the strong bipartisan Senate bill might not be considered by the House before we go into a 2-week Easter recess period. Our intelligence community needs a long-term fix for the gaps in our intelligence laws, not short-term Band-Aids or political holdups.

Senator JOHN ROCKEFELLER, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, after the bill passed the Senate a few weeks ago, said: "This is the right way to go in terms of the security of our Nation."

In the House, 21 Democrats have urged the Speaker to support the Senate-passed bill, and the House Republican conference supports the Senate bill. The support for the bipartisan Senate bill is strong and continuing to grow. Now is the time to act to provide our intelligence community all the tools necessary and to provide important retroactive liability protection that our telecommunications companies deserve when we ask for their help.

I urge the House to pass the Senate FISA bill before we leave this week. Anything short of passage is an unfortunate and dangerous risk.

DEMOCRATIC BUDGET IS FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE BUT ALSO FUNDS CRITICAL PRIORITIES

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