

Ms. GIFFORDS. Mr. Speaker, this week the Space Shuttle Discovery docked at the International Space Station to deliver the final platform of solar panels that will support additional laboratories and the arrival of an expanded crew.

As the new chair of the Space and Aviation Subcommittee and a champion of solar energy, I am delighted by the space solar alliance that will advance human knowledge and technological development.

The panels being installed 220 miles above us this week have a wingspan of a 747, and they contain over 32,000 cells, enough to power 50 homes.

Recently, First Solar, an Arizona solar panel maker, announced solar cells that will be less than \$1 per watt. Global Solar, another Arizona company, creates solar cells that can be integrated into military and police gear.

What started as an expensive niche technology is now a consumer-driven, mass-produced product. Solar was absolutely vital to America's success in fulfilling our bold commitment to explore the heavens. Today it is playing a vital role in tackling an equally daunting task, America's energy independence.

OUTRAGE TOWARD AIG

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, House Republicans share the outrage of the American people that AIG would use taxpayer dollars to award executive bonuses during this economic crisis.

But we believe the American people deserve 100 percent of their money back, not 90 percent. The American people deserve to know that this whole outrage could have been avoided.

Senator WYDEN authored an amendment banning executive bonuses, and that amendment was stripped from the stimulus bill. Senator DODD took responsibility, but he told CNN that "the administration had a problem with the amendment."

The bill on the floor today to enact a 90 percent tax on AIG employees is just a cynical attempt to divert attention from the truth that Democrats in Congress and this administration made these bonus payments possible in the first place.

House Republicans have legislation that would ensure 100 percent of these bonuses are returned to taxpayers, but they blocked the plan from receiving a vote today. The American people have a right to get 100 percent of their money back, and Mr. Geithner should resign.

WAL-MART BATTLES TO DEVELOP ON BATTLEFIELD

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, 164 years ago brave Texans and brave Vermonters fought on an historical battlefield about 60 miles south of here, the Battle of the Wilderness. There were 165,000 troops amassed there, including Vermonters from the 1st Brigade; and 1,200 from Vermont's ranks died. Among them was Daniel Lilly, a teacher in Barnard, Vermont. His funeral is still today remembered as the largest funeral in the history of that town. Another, Ed Holden, fought and survived, but saw his brother with his head shot off die on the battlefield.

Today a different battle is taking place on that hallowed ground. It is a conflict between a great American corporation, Wal-Mart, and a great American historic battlefield, the Wilderness. My friend from Texas and I have joined together to ask Wal-Mart to do the right thing and not build its facility, a 140,000-foot facility, on that battlefield where troops were massing.

The question for us is whether we can honor the fallen. And that, as my friend will tell you, is just the way it is.

WAL-MART VS. HALLOWED GROUND

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the historical comments my friend from Vermont has said regarding Union troops from his home State. The Battle of the Wilderness took place in May 1864.

On the second day of the 3-day battle with a statement made by General Lee, "Texans always move them," the Texas Brigade successfully forced back Grant's Union troops. However, the Texans sustained 60 percent casualties.

There were 165,000 troops, Union and Confederate, in this Battle of the Wilderness. That is the number of troops that we have in Afghanistan and Iraq put together on one battlefield. There were 29,000 casualties. The fighting was so fierce in the dense woods it caught fire, and hundreds of wounded on both sides burned to death. Their graves are only known by God.

Mr. Speaker, those troops from the North and South were all Americans. Mr. Speaker, here is the battlefield. It is outlined in this black line. On this hallowed ground right here, you can see this X is where Wal-Mart wants to build one of their beautiful stores. There are other locations available for Wal-Mart. So we from the North and South in a bipartisan way want Wal-Mart to build someplace else.

And that's just the way it is.

MARCH MADNESS BRINGS US TOGETHER

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, Democrats and Republicans may disagree on

things, and people in my city of Memphis may disagree on things over the years. But one thing that brings us together is March Madness, the NCAA tournament which tips off this morning.

In that tournament will be my home team, the University of Memphis Tigers. They have the longest winning streak in the country, 25 games, and they have the Coach of the Year in John Calipari. We have a great team that came just inches away from winning the national championship last year.

We were seeded number two this year rather than number one where we should have been. But this is the opportunity to show who deserves to be seeded number one. The University of Memphis Tigers that bring my community together and do something that basketball and sports can do for this country in bringing us together in difficult times and giving us a pastime that is so important will do well, and our city will cheer for them and see that they do well.

President Obama has picked them to make the Final Four. He was correct. He picked them to lose to Louisville; he was wrong. We will do well.

Go Tigers.

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AIG SCANDAL

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, today we understand that the Obama administration's stimulus bill—the \$1 trillion stimulus bill—was also the AIG bonus protection plan, because we understand now today that language is contained within the stimulus bill that would ensure that the AIG bonuses would stay with the executives who received them.

The American people are outraged. We are outraged as well. But who knew about these bonuses? When did they know about it? CBS News has reported the Obama administration has known for weeks about these bonuses. Senator CHRIS DODD also said that he knew about these bonuses, put the amendment into place, but says it wasn't his language, it was the administration's language.

This is a scandal that is brewing in Washington. We need to have answers. The American people need answers. This is their money that is being spent for these failing businesses. It's time that the American people know what the real truth is.

AIG OUTRAGE

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today in outrage over the recent news that AIG paid out over \$165 million to

executives, some of whom are no longer with the company.

Every day in southern Nevada, families face tough decisions about their economic futures; can they afford to stay in their home? Are they going to be able to provide for their children's future?

I find it insulting that the CEO of AIG said that his decision to give out these bonuses was "difficult." Difficult is trying to figure out how to keep a roof over your head when you've lost your job. Difficult is providing for your children when your hours at work have been cut back. Difficult is not deciding if you are going to dole out hundreds of millions of dollars to irresponsible Wall Street executives.

I urge Congress and the administration to act quickly to recoup the taxpayers' money.

NORTHERN IRELAND

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on March 7 and 9, the young Government of Northern Ireland was put to the test. Two British soldiers and a policeman were killed by fringe groups trying to change peace to chaos, trying to reach the future through a return to the past. They failed, and the people of Northern Ireland became stronger.

The people voted for peace and acceptance of the Good Friday Agreement. The people voted for their First Minister Peter Robinson and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, who jointly condemned the murders.

The people of Northern Ireland grew stronger when thousands of Catholics, Protestants, Unionists, and Nationalists marched together saying "No going back."

As Americans, as fellow lovers of freedom and democracy, we are with the people of Northern Ireland. We are both nations of law, and can only survive when the law is upheld.

God be with the families who have suffered a loss. And God bless the people and the peace of Northern Ireland.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 257 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 257

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of March 19, 2009, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules relating to a measure addressing excessive compensation paid to employees of corporations in which the Federal government has a significant interest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maine is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. For the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time to myself as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, people across the country are rightly outraged by the egregious nature of the AIG bonuses. It is unconscionable for AIG to pay out \$165 million in bonuses to the same top executives who mismanaged the company to the point of failure.

It is fundamentally wrong to be rewarding the very same people who ran AIG while it was losing billions and billions of dollars with risky schemes that directly led to the staggering \$170 billion bailout last year. It is a stunning example of greed and shamelessness, and it is gross mismanagement and misuse of taxpayer funds that borders on criminal.

People in Maine, my district, and around the country are angry. I have heard from hundreds of my constituents sharing their outrage. One resident of Wells, Maine, in the straightforward way that my constituents do, wrote to me in this manner. He said, "Let AIG fail. Let those greedy, blood-sucking executives find out what it means to lose their life savings. You need to tell those that want our tax dollars, these are the conditions, clear and simple. And if you don't want to use it for what we want, you will get nothing." He went on to say, "It has become a sad day in our history when we have to lose our retirements, and then have to give billions to those that have caused the problems, and then, in turn, they give it to themselves as bonuses."

Another Mainer wrote, "I am writing to you because I am absolutely appalled that we, as citizens and taxpayers, have given billions of dollars to AIG, only to have that company give us all the proverbial finger and pay out \$165 million in bonus money to their staff. AIG's conduct, given their own monetary losses that are in the billions of dollars, is criminal."

The small businesses in my State of Maine are doing what businesses around the country are doing; they are diversifying, they are freezing wages. They are using their own resources, adopting cost-saving measures, whatever it takes to stay in business and keep people in their jobs.

Like so many businesses around the country, a businessman in Portland recently chose to dig into his own pocket and use his own money so he wouldn't have to lay off his employees. And just last week, I met with the owners of a small machine shop that had been growing. They came to me with questions about how they could better use the money in the recovery package to stay in business just to stay afloat. They weren't looking to line their own pockets, they were asking for help to keep people employed and keep their business afloat. These are the types of people who are stung the hardest by the AIG bonuses.

Families and businesses in Maine and across the country are struggling to make ends meet and stay in their homes. And they are helping each other out of a shared sense of responsibility. Meanwhile, on Wall Street, we see executives who seem to think they live by a different set of rules and who refuse to take responsibility for the damage they have caused. It is a perfect example of why we have, and will continue to have, a commitment to transparency and oversight in government.

When the House passed TARP last year before I was here, this type of abuse is exactly what the American people were afraid of. We knew there was a chance of waste, fraud or abuse, and now it has come to light. We are here today to fix it. We will continue to forge ahead to fix our struggling economy.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Ms. PINGREE, for yielding the time and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

What concerns me about this scandalous AIG bonus issue is that the Obama administration was asleep at the wheel. Two weeks ago, the President's press secretary was asked, is the administration confident that it knows what happened to the tens of billions of dollars given to AIG? The response from the President's press secretary was, "It is confident."

Yesterday, we learned that the Obama administration asked the Senate Banking Committee chairman, Mr. DODD, to insert a provision in last month's so-called economic stimulus legislation that had the effect of authorizing AIG's bonuses. First, that gentleman who I just referred to said that he didn't know how the bonus authorization had made it into the legislation, but the next day he said yes, he authorized it after being asked to do so by the Obama administration.

Was the administration complicit? I think this is an issue that Congress needs to investigate. Yesterday, I made a motion on this floor that would have allowed debate on H.R. 1577, a bill introduced by my colleague, Representative PAULSEN, and the rest of the Republican freshmen, to deal with the