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A PLAN FOR DEFICIT REDUCTION

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, this House voted to eliminate one of the anchors of democracy: allowing Americans to check off on their IRS filing form \$3—just \$3—to promote and support the democratic process of electing the President of the United States, all in the name of deficit reduction.

But deficit reduction doesn't work without a plan. It doesn't work without thinking about the many State Departments of Transportation that can no longer fix the highways and freeways in your community; or that can promote rail mobility in order to take cars off the road; or that can, in fact, keep the doors of community colleges open; or that can support primary education while State legislatures are struggling to find resources to provide for teachers and students.

So let me say this: I want to work with you on deficit reduction. In fact, I've done it before but not without a plan. I believe that investing in the infrastructure of America is a plan that will allow jobs to be created. That's the serious way of dealing with moving America forward and allowing for the genius of America—having a plan that responds to building America and not making false projections about saving money.

HONORING SHERIFF JAMES A. ALDERDEN

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

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sheriff James A. Alderden. Sheriff Alderden served as Sheriff of Larimer County in my congressional district from January, 1999, until his recent retirement on January 10, 2011.

Sheriff Alderden served the State of Colorado in various capacities prior to becoming Sheriff of Larimer County. His resume includes periods of work for the Colorado Bureau of Investigations, the Colorado State University Police Department, as well as the Steamboat Springs Police Department. His career is a shining example of dedication to the State of Colorado.

In addition to having a great sense of humor, he is a leader. He has great respect and gives his colleagues great respect. Sheriff Alderden would incorporate all employees into the decision-making process by giving them the respect and authority they deserve to identify problems and to correct them.

As his lasting legacy, he implemented the police department's motto of serving with the acronym PRIDE, which stands for Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Duty, and Empowerment. Sheriff Alderden embodied these

virtues throughout his career. He also personifies these virtues on a personal level.

It is my great honor to stand here on the House floor honoring Sheriff Jim Alderden and thanking him for his service.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Joint Economic Committee:

Mr. BRADY, Texas, Chairman
Mr. BURGESS, Texas
Mr. CAMPBELL, California
Mr. DUFFY, Wisconsin
Mr. AMASH, Michigan
Mr. MULVANEY, South Carolina

HONORING HOUSE STAFFER MIKE WIEHE FOR HIS PUBLIC SERVICE

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, as elected officials, all of us who serve in this Chamber have the honor of representing our constituents in public service. And as elected officials, we are also fortunate that some of our best and most able Americans choose to serve their Nation and their communities by working in our offices as congressional staffers.

In my office, I have a staffer who is leaving who I want to recognize here today.

Mike Wiehe first began working for me when I served as Mayor of Dayton and has continued to work for me and for the best interests of his community for the greater part of 12 years now.

Mike is a native of Celina, Ohio, and is a graduate of Celina Senior High School and of Wright State University. He has held literally almost every single position in my office: serving as scheduler, communications director, legislative assistant, legislative director, acting chief of staff, and finally, as district director and director of military affairs. He has excelled in each of these roles by always performing his job well and by leading his fellow staffers by example.

Mike's last day in my office will be January 31. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mike for his tremendous service and for the huge sacrifices that he has made over the years in pursuit of public service.

Mike, we wish you all the best in all your future endeavors.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

THE "RIDE PAST THE WRECKAGE" IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, President Obama gave a stirring speech last night, most of which I agreed with, especially the calls for defense cuts; the investments in innovation, education, and infrastructure; and the elimination of oil company subsidies.

But given the sacrifice endured by the American people, I thought Afghanistan got short shrift—a mere two paragraphs.

The American Prospect magazine described the State of the Union as a "ride past the wreckage." I think that was because it applies to the State of the Union's treatment of Afghanistan.

The fact is that the training of Afghan security forces has been slow and ineffective. The inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction said as much this very week. The Taliban remains a vital force in many pockets of Afghanistan, and the head of the Afghan NGO safety office reports a very precarious security situation.

The President was correct when he said that Afghanistan will need to provide better governance, but it's hard to see that happening with President Karzai regularly lashing out at us and, at one point, saying he would choose the Taliban over the United States and the international community.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are tired of being talked down to about this war, tired of being told everything is fine and under control, tired of being urged to stay the course, tired of talk about progress that seems to be little more than an illusion.

The President reiterated last night that we will begin to bring our troops home in July, but there's plenty of evidence to suggest we're ramping up this war instead of winding it down.

Earlier this month, for example, 1,400 additional marine combat forces were deployed, with the possibility of additional mini-surges during the spring, that would push our troop levels in Afghanistan to the 100,000 mark.

We're also using heavily armored tanks for the first time, and there are reports that we're considering expanding the war across the border in an unprecedented way, with risky and dangerous special operations ground raids into Pakistan.

Does this sound like a war that's drawing to a close?

Then in a trip to Afghanistan a few weeks ago, the Vice President suggested to his hosts that the occupation