But today it is under fire, and I am proud to come to the defense of an excellent piece of Republican legislation—the Davis-Bacon Act.

To be sure, the time has come to update and reform this venerable act. But in no way has the time come for us to abandon an act which has so admirably fulfilled its mission of benefiting America.

What, exactly, does Davis-Bacon do? The reality is often obscured by the rhetoric of those who wish to abolish the act. The act does nothing more than say that for Federal contracts, contractors must pay workers the prevailing wages for their local area.

Contrary to what some on the other side say, this law does not require all workers to be paid prevailing wage. Those who are enrolled in a recognized apprentice program, receive a training wage that can be as low as 40 percent of the prevailing wage.

Davis-Bacon ensures that when the Federal Government comes into our districts, that cut-rate, low-wage, low-skill contractors do not take the jobs that should rightfully go to our constituents. Outrage over such occurrences is what impelled the Republican legislators who created this bill to draft their legislation.

In fact, Davis-Bacon recognized we had fly-by-night contractors coming into New England from other parts of the country stealing jobs away from the local economy. We are talking about making sure that when the Government contracts for a building, taxpayers get a quality product, and that will only happen if we hire quality labor.

Some argue that Davis-Bacon drives up the cost of Federal projects. Those who make such an argument are not looking closely at the crucial question of productivity. A well-trained worker simply produces more each hour than does an ill-trained, poorly paid worker.

This act simply guarantees taxpayers that their tax dollars will go to the best workers, not to the cheapest. That their tax dollars will go to open opportunity, not to shut people out of opportunity. That workers of all ages and races will have an avenue into the middle class, and not have the road to progress blocked.

Remember, we are talking about workers and working families in our districts. We are talking about middle-class families trying to stay independent. We are not talking about extravagant paychecks here. We are simply talking about paying people a living wage.

For a bricklayer or stonemason from Woonsocket, RI the prevailing wage for building construction is $19.90 an hour. Considering the state of our economy and the weather in Rhode Island, a bricklayer from Woonsocket would be lucky to work 30 weeks a year, or about 1,200 hours a year, for a total of $23,880 a year. That's it. Nothing more.

For a bricklayer or stonemason from Bristol working on highway construction the prevailing hourly wage is $18.35. Once again, at 30 weeks a year this comes out to just over $22,000 a year.

For a bridge construction project in East Providence, the operator of a forklift would be paid $17.34 or $20,808 a year.

For a welding machine operator from Providence working on a sewer line project, Davis-Bacon means being paid $14.62 an hour or $17,544.

What does the Republican Party have against paying a worker $17,544 a year? Mr. Speaker, how can a Congress that is talking about valuing work, that is talking about helping the middle class, propose the elimination of Davis-Bacon?

I urge my colleagues to look closely at this issue, to listen carefully to their constituents who are worried about economic insecurity, and ask themselves if pulling away this support for people makes families more secure? A careful look will show that repealing Davis-Bacon will put people in danger of slipping back, of losing ground, of losing hope.

I urge my colleagues to join me in saving Davis-Bacon.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY RESTORATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. BRYANT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRYANT of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House will take up the National Security Restoration Act.

The goal of the Contract With America is to make sure that if aggressors threaten us, our Armed Forces will be strong enough to fight and win. The bill would keep our defenses prepared for a worst-case scenario of two major regional conflicts occurring at about the same time. It would keep us prepared for a variety of possible circumstances around the world. We saw how effective defensive systems such as the Patriot missile were in Desert Storm. This bill would provide for the development of systems to protect our country and our allies from attacks with weapons of mass destruction. We are committed to implementing this type of system at the earliest practical date.

Despite reduction and shortfalls in defense funding, the President has deployed U.S. forces on more peacetime and humanitarian missions per year than ever before. At the end of last year, over 70,000 United States personnel were serving in places like Iraq, Bosnia, Macedonia, the Adriatic Sea, Rwanda, Haiti, and Cuba. And yet, the President has requested cutting defense spending to $10.6 billion below 1995 levels.

Even though we still have the best armed forces in the world, we keep seeing readiness decline, because all the peacekeeping efforts are being funded with military readiness funds. As Senator JOHN WARNER noted, ''That's been the cookie jar into which the hand dips to get the needed dollars when we elect to send our troops here, there, everywhere in the cause of freedom or otherwise.''

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We are not going to allow a return to the hollow forces of the Carter administration. One of the most egregious things that needs correction right now is military pay is nearly 13 percent lower than pay for comparable civilian jobs. Close to 17,000 junior enlisted men and women have to rely on food stamps.

A real commitment to quality of life for military personnel is necessary for morale and is the right thing to do.

The National Security Restoration Act has the following: It establishes an advisory commission to assess our military needs. It commits the United States to speed up the development and deployment of missile defense systems to protect U.S. territory and U.S. troops in battle. It restricts deployment of U.S. troops to missions in our national interest. It demands U.S. troops be commanded by U.S. commanders and not placed under foreign commanders. It reduces the cost to the United States of U.N. peacekeeping missions and demands the U.S. Mission to the U.N. press for reforms in the notorious U.N. management practices. It tightens controls and reporting requirements for the sharing of U.S. intelligence information with the United Nations. It expresses the sense of Congress that firewalls be restored between the defense and discretionary domestic spending for the upcoming budget years, and it reemphasizes the commitment of the United States to strong and viable NATO alliances, urging the emerging Eastern European democracies be assisted in the transition to full NATO membership.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working hard to keep our Contract With America. In the contract we promised we would make sure no U.S. troops are forced to serve under foreign command, and that we restore the necessary part of our Armed Forces to keep our defenses strong and maintain our credibility around the world. We are keeping our promises.

ANOTHER ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Happy St. Valentine's Day, America, and happy St. Valentine's Day to my wife, Laurie, in Michigan.

On this St. Valentine's Day we debated a crime bill, but justice was not done on the crime bill we debated today. In fact, what happened today is

more like the St. Valentine's Day massacre.

We had 10 hours, 10 hours over 2 days to debate a $30 billion crime bill. The majority called that debate an open rule.

An open rule in this body means Members come to the well of this institution, offer an amendment. It is freely debated and it is voted on, not at the end of 10 hours we cap it off and say that is it, we are going home, we are going home on the crime bill.

Crime is the No. 1 issue across this Nation. People feel insecure in their homes. They are insecure when they walk the streets. They want Congress to provide some leadership.

So what leadership did we provide them tonight? Ten hours worth of debate; 10 hours worth of debate. In that 10 hours, you had to get your amendment accepted. I was one of the fortunate ones. I had an amendment that was accepted by both sides of the aisle, because it made a lot of sense. But I also had amendments for the Byrne grants. I was given 1 minute and 15 seconds to debate a Byrne grants amendment. Byrne grants, a program that has been around for a long time, we wanted to fight crime for more than 1 year. We wanted to provide steady funding for Byrne grants over 5 years. That funds our DARE programs, multijurisdictional undercover drug teams, and even Alabama used Byrne grants to run the prisons. One minute and 15 seconds.

I had another one, another amendment, for rural communities to share in some of this $30 billion. We wanted 30 percent, and other Members had good amendments that were never offered. They were denied the opportunity to offer their amendments. They were denied the opportunity to debate, because we had 10 hours of debate.

Members come from all walks of life, like myself, having been a police officer for 12 years. I have some ideas on how I think crime should be fought in this country. You know, when I was a police officer, I went to work knowing that I had to put in my 8-hour shift, but many times that shift would go 10 hours, 12 hours, 16 hours. I could not stop at the end of 10 hours when I was fighting crime or doing a investigation.

At times there were major incidents that occurred in my State of Michigan; I was mobilized. I was gone for days from my home. I could not say it is 10 hours, I want to go home. Crime knows no time limit. Crime does not stop for Valentine's Day. You do not fight crime for 10 hours and then you go home because of St. Valentine's Day.

Crime occurs on Valentine's Day. Remember back in the thirties, the St. Valentine's Day massacre? Well, the old saying is history repeats itself. That is what we had here again today, Saint Valentine's Day massacre.

Let me ask the majority party who pushed through this rule on a party-line vote, when you have a missing child, are you going to stop missing that child after 10 hours? When you have a bank robbery or breaking and entering, do you stop that investigation at the end of 10 hours? If you have a kidnaping, do you stop at the end of 10 hours? If you are getting close to the end of your shift, do you stop because you cannot go past 10 hours? You cannot apprehend a criminal because you are at that time limit?

Well, that is what happened here today. We should have stayed on the job, debated each and every amendment, and there were some of my friends on the Republican side of the aisle that never had an opportunity to offer their amendments or have them debated. We stopped at 10 hours because the majority said, ''We have a Contract on America. We have to get it done.''

You heard tonight they are going to start the national security debate. And guess what, we have 10 hours to debate national security. That is the kind of Contract on America they have, and they want for this country.

I want to move forward, and I want to debate these issues in an open and free rule where there are not time caps.

So remember, when crime strikes your family, when crime strikes in your community, you can thank the other party, because instead of doing something about crime tonight, we ended up going out to dinner because it is Valentine's Day.

We have more important things to do. We have plenty of amendments. Let us not run out on America. Let us not run with a contract that cannot be debated, a contract that cannot be amended, and the only value that we place on crime and national security is 10 hours.

Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately the Contract on America has turned into another St. Valentine's Day massacre.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS 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 Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR 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 Texas [Mr. GENE GREEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE FDA DOES ITS JOB

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of debate in Washington about the role of the Federal Government. You hear a lot said about Federal agencies and what they do.

Let me tell you a little story about one Federal agency. Two weeks ago this agency got a phone call and a tip, and the tip was that some people in northern California shopping at a major supermarket chain had bought some infant formula, and the color of it did not look right. So they called this Federal agency in Washington, DC, which thought it was serious enough to launch an investigation.

The net result of that investigation was the discovery that someone was counterfeiting baby formula. In fact, they were taking the label that everyone might recognize of one of the most popular brands of infant formula in America and filling the contents of the can with something other than that infant formula. As a result of that discovery and the investigation, last Friday this Federal agency turned over information to the Department of Justice and an individual was arrested in Mission Viejo, CA, and charged with trafficking in counterfeit goods, and a warrant was issued for a second person.

That Federal agency discovered that this conspiracy to release these counterfeit baby formulas involved people not only in California but also in Maryland. This agency seized 38,000 pounds of fake infant formula and recovered another 6,000-plus pounds that had already been put on grocery shelves.

The agency believes that they have now confiscated all of the phony formula and they have told consumers not to be worried.

No details of the arrests have been made, because, of course, the investigation is ongoing. It turns out these counterfeiters had purchased bulk infant formula that had been manufactured for export overseas, and it turns out that infant formula manufactured for export does not have to meet the same criteria in terms of nutritional value as the infant formula does in the United States.

My kids are all grown up, and I have not bought infant formula for a long, long time, but these cans of infant formula were selling at $10 a pop, so the folks who were out there with the counterfeit formula had a lot of money to be made if they just could have pulled this off.

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They did not get the job done.

I might mention one other thing. This agency also discovered that the plastic scoop that was enclosed in the infant formula can—everybody is familiar with it, where you take a certain measure, put a number of scoops in the bottle before you add water for