

Afghanistan must include the liberation of its women. Any future government talks must have the women of Afghanistan at the table.

#### AVIATION SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I may be joined by other colleagues. I am not sure at this point. This evening I wanted to talk about the issue of aviation security in the aftermath of the tragedies of September 11, and I must say that in many ways I would like to start out by responding to the special order given by some of my Republican colleagues just a few minutes ago.

I want to express my disappointment in what they said, and basically almost emotionally if I could explain why I am so disappointed in the statements that were made by some of my Republican colleagues just a few minutes ago.

In my district in New Jersey, I represent right now two counties. We had about 150 victims of the World Trade Center who died. We have been to a lot of funerals. We have been to a lot of vigils. We have been to a lot of services over the last 2 months or so. I have to say my constituents really have lost patience. They no longer believe that this House of Representatives is going to do anything effectively on the issue of airport security. They wonder why we are even debating this issue tonight and why this issue was not disposed of within a week or two of those tragedies.

It is now October 31, about a month and a half since September 11. In fact, it is about 2 or 3 weeks I believe since the Senate took action on the bill that my Republican colleagues have been criticizing, and I would ask initially this evening as I begin, why have we waited? If they do not like the Senate bill, why did not they bring up a bill in the House the next day, 2 or 3 weeks ago, to address this problem? Why have they waited for a month and a half to even address the issue? I sincerely doubt their willingness to address the issue of airport security.

I believe that what they are doing now, what the House Republican leadership is doing now in bringing up this bill tomorrow is nothing but a ruse. I do not think that they want to change the status quo at all. I believe that they like the status quo, and I believe that the reason they are not bringing up the Senate bill tomorrow and they are bringing up a new House Republican bill is because they hope that they can pass that bill on a partisan vote, send it to conference, and because it disagrees significantly from the Senate bill, they will simply kill any legislative initiative to try to address the airport security issue, and as a consequence, those corporate interests,

those airline interests that do not want to see any changes in the status quo will triumph. That is what is going on here.

No one can tell me that this House of Representatives cannot act quickly in the aftermath of the type of tragedy that we had on September 11. No one can tell me that if the Senate bill passed 2 or 3 weeks ago that we could not have passed a bill within a few days of that.

What is happening now is that the momentum is building in my State and around the country where people are outraged over the fact that we have not taken action on this measure, and the Republican leadership knows that the public wants something like what passed in the other body, like the Senate bill, and that they want a Federal workforce and that they do not like the status quo.

So now the Republican leadership in the House feels that they have to bring up something, even a fig leaf. So they will schedule a vote tomorrow and they will start a debate, knowing full well that once that bill passes, it will go to conference and nothing will happen and the status quo will continue.

I heard some of my Republican colleagues talk about the fact that they do not like Federal workforces. I do not really care whether they like or do not like Federal workforces. I mean they can stand up here and they can talk about whether they like the Postal Service or they think it should be privatized, whether they like the Border Patrol or they think it should be privatized, whether they like the Customs Service or they think it should be privatized. The bottom line is that we know that whatever system, and in this case a private corporate system that was in place on September 11, failed, and it failed miserably.

The fact of the matter is that it has not changed. I have my constituents come to my town meetings. Because I am not very far from Newark airport, we are maybe half an hour away, if not maybe less, and they tell me when they go to the airport nothing really has changed. Their baggage is not being screened. They are able to get through with devices to bypass the screening machines, and they are very, very disappointed in the quality of the workforce.

I heard my colleagues say that they do not like the existing workforce. Well, the existing workforce is a private workforce that is put in place by the airlines, and there is no way in the world that we are going to create competition and create some sort of private enterprise system that is going to correct it. There is no money available.

I heard one of my colleagues say, well, maybe they should be paid \$16 an hour, they are only being paid minimum wage, maybe they should be paid \$16 an hour. Is he going to mandate in the legislation that they get paid \$16 an hour? The problem we have now is that the airlines, many of them, are

bankrupt. Many are in very bad shape. They have no incentive to go out and hire people and pay them a living wage. They have no incentive to do the type of training that would be effective.

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And the people who are manning these screening devices do not have any esprit de corps. They do not have pride in what they do.

If my colleagues were to go to Newark Airport, they could go to the screening device and look a few feet away and see some of the fast food restaurants. Some of the people working in the fast food restaurants are being paid more than the people manning the screening devices. Why should they have any more pride in what they do if they are not getting properly paid and they have no benefits? They are not going to have pride in what they do.

One of my Republican colleagues said, well, 80 or 90 percent of them are not even U.S. citizens. What do my colleagues expect? Should we expect that U.S. citizens are going to take minimum wage jobs under the conditions they have to work with these screening machines? Of course not.

The only way that we can do anything is if we make a radical change. And I say "radical" because I understand that putting together a Federal work force something like the Customs Service or the Post Office or the Border Patrol, I understand that is a radical change from what we have now, but I do not have a problem with it. Not because ideologically I think a Federal work force is superior, but just because I know the current system does not work and we cannot just tweak it.

One of my Republican colleagues said, well, we will make sure that at every entrance to the airport there is a Federal employee, but I do not want the people manning the screening devices to be Federal employees. What are we afraid of? Is it some sort of ideological nonsense or something in my colleagues' minds that somehow this is socialism or communism or something? I just do not understand it. I just think that this is a practical problem that needs a practical solution and that we cannot wait for some tweaking of the system when we know that we have to do something dramatic to change it because the status quo is currently not working.

I just wanted to mention, if I could, a few talking points about the Senate bill. I call it the House Democratic Aviation Security Bill, which I understand will be the alternative tomorrow, the substitute, that hopefully we will be allowed to vote on in lieu of this House Republican bill.

If I could just talk about this bill, first of all, understand that this passed the Senate, the other body, 100 to nothing. In the other body they were not being partisan. There were a lot of people in the other body, in the Senate, who are very right-wing ideologically, but they were willing to join together,

Democrat and Republican, 100 to nothing, unanimously, to say that we need to make some major changes, we need to have a Federal work force, we need to create a new body of people that are going to screen and do the security and who will take pride in what they do.

I do not understand why if the other body, the Senate, could eliminate all the ideology and do something on a bipartisan basis, why the House Republican leadership cannot do the same here.

The Senate bill, and now the House Democratic alternative, ensures that Federal security personnel screen and check all individuals and baggage before boarding a plane. Specifically, the bill federalizes all security screening functions at the 140 busiest airports to ensure a professional, well-trained and well-qualified air security law enforcement force.

Now, some of my Republican colleagues said, well, why are we only dealing with 140 of the busiest airports? For over 250 smaller airports the legislation would allow the Justice Department the flexibility to use Federal law enforcement personnel or State and local law enforcement under strict Federal oversight as screeners. My colleagues said, that is not fair, we have different systems, different standards for the larger airports than the smaller airports. I think the reason is basically recognizing the fact that the smaller airports do not have, maybe, the same responsibilities.

But if my colleagues on the Republican side do not like the two-tiered system, then let us federalize everyone. Let us not say that because the Senate bill does not allow the smaller airports to have a Federal corps of employees that we should not have them for any of them. I think the answer is, if there is strong objection to a two-tiered system, make them have Federal law enforcement officers at all of the airports, small and large combined.

What we are trying to do, and I want everyone to understand this, what we are trying to do with this Federal security screening work force is to ensure that the security screeners are more highly paid, rather than continuing the practice of private contractors hiring personnel at minimum wage basically. Experts, including the General Accounting Office, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Transportation Department have all indicated that low wages and high turnover are the major problems in aviation security.

Under the bill, under the Democratic alternative, the Senate bill, screener applicants would be required to pass a rigorous selection examination and complete classroom and on-the-job training. It also gives the government flexibility to suspend or terminate underperforming employees.

Under the Democratic alternative, there is a mandate that all checked baggage be screened by explosive detection equipment. We require screening of all persons, vehicles and other equip-

ment entering secure areas, including catering and other companies with access to secure areas. All current air carrier, airport and screening personnel have to submit to background checks and criminal history record checks.

There are many other things that we do, and I would like to go into some of them, but I see that one of my colleagues is here, and I know that he is very interested and has been involved in this issue, so I would like to yield now to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I thank my colleague for yielding to me and for being here tonight. I know it is late tonight and the gentleman is working out here making things happen for our communities, and I know this issue is a key issue.

Aviation security is a national security issue, and it is something that we need to take a look at from that perspective. The current system is broken, and we do have a lot of problems with it and we need to begin to do a lot of things. This bill brings it in that direction, begins to open it up, begins to look at one of the key problems that we have, and that is that we have in the past privatized some of the inspection efforts.

As the gentleman well knows, some of the companies have not done a good job of hiring people. They have not been doing background checks, and their turnover rates in some cases are over 400 percent because of the fact that they pay very low wages. So there is a real need for us to get professionals there. Just like in law enforcement, we want people that are well-educated, that are professionals, and we should have nothing less to make sure that we secure the airports.

When we look at the security of our President and the security of our Nation, we would not even consider privatizing that. So when we look at securing our airports and the public, we should consider nothing less than the most important thing, and that is to make sure we provide the best in security.

When we talk about privatization, yes, sometimes things are improved upon. Private companies might do a lot of things a lot better. But with time, one of the basic principles about that system is that it is a for-profit system, so sometimes they will start cutting corners to make a profit. So when we look at that issue, I think it is important that we federalize our screeners and we make them part of the system.

We have great professionals at Customs; these people check baggage, and I can share a couple of incidents. We caught a terrorist on the Mexican border because, as they were crossing back into Mexico, one of the persons was just asked where he was headed, and the individual hesitated in terms of responding. That was a clue that there was something wrong. These people that are professionals are able to catch them, and that is what we need to do.

We are hoping that we do not politicize this bill, that we do the right thing on behalf of all the people in America, which would be to federalize those workers. I know that the Senate, 100 percent of them, voted for it. I know Senator HUTCHINSON, Senator GRAMM from Texas, both Republicans, supported it, and I am hoping that we can pass it out of the House.

It has been almost 7 weeks since September 11. We need to move forward on this and hopefully make this happen, because we have a lot of work, as the gentleman well knows, that we still need to do in a lot of other areas where we still feel very uncomfortable.

And I just want to thank the entire Nation as a whole, because I know we have come together after this incident. This is a war that we have to win and this is a war that we have no other choice but to go forward with and make sure that we pull it off. I know that we can, but we have to continue to work together; and one of the first things we have to do, as we all know, is secure our borders. We need to secure our borders. Airport security is part of that effort.

There still are a lot of other efforts. I know we filed, as Democrats, other pieces of legislation on bioterrorism that talk about making sure that we have those first response teams also. That is also extremely critical. Throughout this country a lot of our towns and cities and communities are having a lot of difficulty. Some might not have as many qualified as they should to do that first response, but that will be very important, that we provide those resources.

So we need to look at that piece of legislation that is very comprehensive, that looks at our borders and at a lot of our agencies.

As we move forward, there will be a variety of other pieces of legislation, and I want to thank the constituents out there because they have been providing us with ideas as to what we need to do and not do. Most of these ideas have come from back home, our constituents, who have the answers to a lot of these questions.

As we move forward, we are hoping that we can come to grips with this. Yes, a lot of it is trial and error. We have never been in this kind of situation before. But I know that we can begin to solve these problems and, working together, we can make some good things happen.

I am looking forward to pushing forward on this particular piece of legislation on aviation, on national security at our airports, because this will be one bill that would allow that sense of security. We still have a lot more, but it is definitely going to be helpful in moving in that direction.

We also need to do a lot when it comes to our infrastructure. I know the GAO just came out with a major report talking about our bases throughout this country and the fact that a lot of them are vulnerable. We

have started in that area. We need a lot of resources to make sure from an infrastructure perspective there are safeguards at all our bases, not to mention our facilities and where people meet.

There have been a lot of comments from people as to, what can I do, what is the best thing that we can do; and I would just say, educate yourself. Let us continue to move forward. It has been an educational process for all of us. I think that we need to learn how to act and be able to react appropriately to certain crises and certain things that occur. Part of that is doing the right thing, and the right thing is making sure that we have good, qualified people and that we just do not go to the lowest bid when it comes to our security people in the airports. So I am hoping that we will be able to pass that legislation.

And once again I want to thank the gentleman for allowing me to be here with him tonight.

Mr. PALLONE. I thank my colleague from Texas.

When the gentleman started off and he was talking about the federalization of the work force, he made me think about my Republican colleagues that were here for the first hour tonight. I was wondering, if we proposed that the Capitol Police, for example, if they should be privatized, whether they would support that.

It is sort of ironic, because here we are and we are protected by a Capitol Police force. They are not contracted out. We know that there is a certain pride that we see with the Capitol Police officers. My colleagues have no problem with the force here that is federalized, but they do not want to see it for the average person at the airports.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I apologize for interrupting, but our leadership here is also protected by Federal workers. Our President is protected by the Secret Service that are Federal workers. We should not expect any less when it comes to our airports. It is a national security issue. It should require Federal workers that are well-trained, well-equipped and well-paid to make sure they do the right thing.

And I was told, well, what about if they make a mistake; we are not going to fire them. We have made some stipulations on that. If they are not doing their work, they are going to get fired. So it is important for us to move forward on that versus what we have right now, which is a shambles, a 400 percent turnover.

And by the way, 82 percent of the people, based on what the Washington Post says, say that they want Federal workers there making sure they check our baggage and making sure they check on people as they move forward.

So I think if we expect that for our President, and we should expect the best, then we should expect it for our public and for our airports throughout this country. So I am hoping we can make that happen. And I am optimistic that we will get a lot of Republicans

like we have on the Senate side where we got over 49 Republicans to vote with us.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentleman again for his comments, and I want to now yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. First of all, I want to commend the gentleman for his leadership on this matter. I really stand with my colleague and all of the people from his area, all those families, who after 9-11 their lives will never be the same.

I hope the gentleman will take a look that I have on black and orange for Halloween. This is October 31. But, my colleague, we might be in for another trick tomorrow. Tomorrow, the House leadership may not bring up the aviation security bill after all.

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Would that not be a horrible trick on the people of the United States?

After September 11 we all pulled together to stand by this country and to make sure that we moved forward together with one voice. I cannot believe that 7 weeks after September 11 we have not had an opportunity to vote on an aviation bill. When we were passing the airline bailout bill, I told my colleagues then that we should have included airline security in that bill. We should have made sure, as the airlines were getting \$15 billion and not a dime for the workers, and to this date not a dime for the workers.

In addition to that, I have not heard anything about those schools that train pilots. As we speak here on the floor, there are aviation schools training pilots today, terrorists, today. Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that people can walk into a school and give \$25,000 cash, and they will train pilots; for what? It is ironic that one of the planes that went down in Pennsylvania on September 11, that the people on that plane pulled together. They took a vote and they voted that they were going to stop this plane and those people. They are heroes.

Here we are in the House of Representatives, the people's House, 7 weeks after September 11, and we have not had a vote. We have not had a discussion on the floor. The Senate on a bipartisan vote of 100 to zero passed the bill. We need to take up that bill and pass that bill. By tomorrow afternoon that bill can be on the President's desk. He can sign it and we can move on to other things.

Aviation security is just one area that we need to work on. We also need to work on port security, rail security, bus security. We need to change the way we do business in this country. The economic stimulus package which passed this House, the same old big dogs were eating. Nothing in there for all of the areas of security that we need to address, like the United States Coast Guard, giving them additional monies to patrol our ports. The list goes on and on.

A lot of people during election times say it does not matter who is in charge. It does matter because if the Democrats were in charge, we would have had an aviation security bill on this floor, and not one person would be delaying and delaying and delaying that bill.

Mr. Speaker, I am outraged that on October 31 we have not yet discussed or debated an aviation security bill and what should be included in the bill. One of the things that should be included is cockpit security. The pilot and the flight attendants all agree that is one of the things that should be included, one of the things. In addition, marshals, U.S. Marshals on all of the planes.

The only question it seems is whether or not the people that screen the luggage should be Federal employees. We have Members here who say they do not like Federal employees; but more than that, they might join the union. They might join the union.

I have something to say, Mr. Speaker. We have been honoring some great Americans, the pilots that went down on September 11, the flight attendants, the police and firefighters, every single one of them were union men and women who were fighting and died for this country on September 11. We have not done one single thing to make sure that does not happen again. I am very disappointed in the leadership of this House. This is the people's House. We should have been first in addressing the needs of the American people.

One of my colleagues said that the big dogs always eat first. A lot of people want to know what do we mean by the big dogs. I am talking about the lobbyists with the money. That is what is driving it. There are some people that want to make sure that the companies that really failed us on September 11, those are the ones that are going to continue to have the business and pay minimum wage. Minimum wage with no training, what do Members expect. America is better than that.

I am hoping tomorrow we will pass an aviation security bill, and that tomorrow evening at this time that bill will be on the way to the President's desk and that we can move forward and look at other security needs in this country. It may not be a perfect bill. I have been here for almost 10 years, and we have never passed a perfect bill; but it is a perfect beginning. Let us pass that Senate bill tomorrow and move forward for the American people.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, and if I can comment on a few things she said.

I am embarrassed when I have town meetings, and I have had a town meeting almost every weekend, and my district is about a half hour from Newark airport. I talk about aviation security, and they do not want to laugh, but some literally laugh when I talk about what we are going to do. They go to the airport and they witness the same

problems that existed before September 11. They cannot imagine how the tragedy of September 11 does not spur us to action.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, some of the changes are just cosmetic. Unless we agree to screen all of the luggage, have background checks and communication between the FBI and CIA and the airport security, it does not work. We need to put a system in place that protects the American people. This is not a game. We talk about bipartisanship. I am for it. I am for it as far as it goes, but that is not what we have. It is my way or nothing at all. That is the rule of the House of Representatives. It matters who is in charge of the House of Representatives. This is the people's House. The people should have an opportunity to put their issues on the floor and have an up-or-down vote.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman points out so well that if this Senate bill was taken up here tomorrow, if it passed, if the Republican leadership did not do whatever they could to try to prevent it from passing, it would immediately be signed by the President. There is no question about it. Our colleagues this evening were talking about the conference.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it was disgusting. They were talking about why were we rushing. I would have passed the bill on September 12. Here we are 7 weeks later and we are rushing? I am on the House Committee on Transportation and the Infrastructure. We have not had a discussion, a debate. What we passed out should have been on the floor. But we have the leadership refusing to take up a bill. The Senate passed a bill on October 11, I think.

Mr. PALLONE. It has been several weeks.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Yes.

Mr. PALLONE. And our Republican colleagues were talking about the conference. It was a foregone conclusion that they were going to conference, which the gentlewoman knows can take weeks.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. We understand who runs the House. People talk about we are working together, but the proof is in the pudding. Let us pass an aviation security bill for the people of the United States.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I have come to the floor tonight because we are in the cusp of a pivotal vote tomorrow. The vote will decide whether to make a full commitment of the United States to a secure and meaningful airline security bill or, at the bidding of some very well-paid lobbyists for some companies who have a large financial stake in this, will adopt a half-baked half-measure, a low-bid proposal that will continue the loophole driven, Swiss cheese, alleged security system we have at the gates of our airports.

I think the choice is that stark. In the last decade the United States has engaged in an experiment. That experiment involved having private companies who sent in their low bids to airlines that were routinely accepted, that as a result got the cheapest employees with the least training, with zero certification under FAA supervision, under the supervision of the Federal Government. That was the experimental system that we have had for the last 10 years.

That experimental system failed on September 11 big time, as someone said. Yet some of our colleagues, the leadership in the Republican Party, because of this fixation of anti-union sentiment, want to continue that failed experiment because the meat and bones of their proposal is this: Let us continue to have private companies with low-bid contracts supervised by the FAA handle security at airports.

Members have to understand that they have dressed this up with a few ribbons, but the proposal is to continue this failed relationship. The reason it is a failed relationship is because of something that is happening tonight as we speak.

The reason that this system has not worked is that every single time the FAA and the U.S. Congress has even talked about having meaningful training and standards for these employees, these employees with million dollar contracts, and to some degree the airlines, have gotten on the phone to the lobbyists and instructed them to go to Capitol Hill and tell Members to lay off. We do not want to spend another dollar on safety. It is going to cut into our profits.

As a result, Congress has not acted. The FAA has not acted, and we have had low bid, no certification, no training, no citizens, no speaking English, felons hired to do this job.

Our friends across the aisle, at least the leadership, want to continue this failed experiment. We are going to get the same result. If we do the same thing time after time, there is no reason to expect anything to change. Tonight we are seeing that same thing happen.

On Halloween, Members are going to hear the kinds of things that one hears on Halloween, but we are also going to hear the sound of arms breaking, because some arm breaking is going on by the Republican leadership. We have Federal employees who are our border guards and our Capitol Hill police, and there is no reason these airport security screeners are not Federal employees. Lobbyists for these low-bid companies are so afraid they are going to lose their contracts they want Members to back off and adopt this half-a-loaf approach.

These companies and their lobbyists who are asking our friends on the other side of the aisle to vote to continue their failure, they are afraid that they are going to lose their contracts, and they should be. They should lose their

contracts and should be out of business. They should be seen as failures. We should not allow the Republican Party, at the largess and the request of their favorite lobbyist, to allow that continued failure.

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We should go in there and do what we ought to do.

I have heard that they have said that some of the European countries, that there are some other countries that have some other systems, that have some private employees doing their work. I always kind of thought America was supposed to lead the parade, not follow it. If they pull this off in Lithuania or Germany, fine, but in Germany, apparently the companies cannot come in and tell the government not to enforce safety rules. They have been effective in doing that here, in part because of the effectiveness of their lobby. That is why in this country we need the same kind of safety we have with our border guards, to have government employees to be certified to do this job.

I will mention one other thing before I defer. We have been working, many of us have been working for the last weeks, to try to convince the majority party to have an insistence that the baggage that goes into the belly of an airplane is screened for bombs, because as you know, 90, 95 percent of it is not screened today. Why is it not screened? It is the same thing we talked about. They send the lobbyists down to the FAA and say, we don't want to spend a buck to do this and the FAA has backed off and they have had some of their friends on the other side of the aisle back off. The same thing has happened.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. If the gentleman will yield, is the technology available to screen the luggage?

Mr. INSLEE. Yes. The good news is that these machines are built, many of them are in airports today, but unfortunately the airlines have not turned them on. They stick them in a corner. The U.S. Government spent \$400 million 5 years ago for a technology called CTX-5000s; they are machines with a very good success rate of finding explosive devices. Many of the airlines took them, put them in a corner and did not even turn them on, literally. We have finally got them to turn them on, but the problem is, we do not have enough of those machines yet; we need to buy some more and we need to get them into these airports.

We have finally prevailed on the majority party to put some at least sugar-coating language to say they are going to do this to get these machines into airports. That is great. We have finally got them to put some language in there like that. But if you have people falling asleep working for these low-bid contractors at the machine, it does not matter how good your machine is if you have still got incompetent ex-felons who cannot read directions on the machines, how to run them.

So if we are going to do this, we need certified people to do it. We also need a way to pay for it. The Senate bill, which we are proposing, specifically allows the Airport Improvement Trust Fund to be used by airports to bring these airports up to speed. They do not have any way to pay for it.

I have proposed an appropriation that was rejected by the Republicans. The Senate bill allows the Airport Trust Fund to be used to help airports. We have got to find a way to pay for this. So what I am saying is, if we are going to have a real screening of bags to keep bombs out of the belly of airplanes, we have got to pass the Senate bill.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. I agree with the gentleman 100 percent. Following that up, I am just concerned that the Europeans, he mentioned them, they talked about their system. But I want to be clear. Those jobs in Europe and other places are not minimum wage jobs.

Mr. INSLEE. That is right. As the gentlewoman knows, that is exactly what we have ended up with. And as has been pointed out, with a 400 percent turnover rate.

Mr. PALLONE. If I could just mention one thing, one of the things that really irked me tonight was when we had the conversation among some of our Republican colleagues about the value of competition. They were talking about how, if we have a Federal work force, we are going to eliminate competition. All I kept thinking in my mind is, how can it be competition when you are paying people minimum wage, you are not providing them any benefits, they have no pride in the work force, you are going to create competition?

Half of these airlines are bankrupt or near bankruptcy. There is no incentive in a competitive process to do any better. The whole notion of competition in this atmosphere where there is not the money and they are not paying the wages is just nonsense.

Mr. INSLEE. To me, this is a relatively easy question. We can have arguments about what goes on in Europe and everything else, but the question is, are there certain functions that are so important to Americans' lives, the issue is if this job is done well, people live and if it is done poorly, they die; and are there certain functions that are so pivotally important to the continuation of human life that you make sure you have the government do it.

We do that in certain cases. Firefighters, we do not privatize firefighters because people die if it is not done well. Police officers, we do not privatize police officers; people die if it is not done well. Capitol Police, the same thing. Border Patrol, the same thing.

FBI agents, the nature of this function is a law enforcement function. It is not an administrative, baggage handling function; it is a law enforcement function. These people should be treated as law enforcement officers.

I will just leave by saying one thing. It is a well-established American value that our law enforcement people ought to work for Uncle Sam. I think that is the right thing to do. I hope the House votes in that way.

I thank the gentleman for letting me join him this evening.

Mr. PALLONE. I appreciate his comments.

I do not like to sound morbid, but as I started out tonight, people have died. We had 6,000 people die at the World Trade Center, many of them my constituents. It is just incredible to me to think that with all of that happening that we have not moved on this and that that does not move the House Republican leadership to take up this bill that was adopted unanimously, 100-to-nothing.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Many of us went to Ground Zero a couple of weeks ago, over 100 Members of Congress, and everyone talked about the physical devastation. What stands out most in my mind was the number of people that lost their lives. We cannot put that back together. How many families got destroyed? We can rebuild the buildings, but we need to do what we can in this House to make sure that that never happens again.

That was my commitment. I wish it was everybody's commitment, in particular the people on the other side of the aisle. I do think it is not most of them; it is just a few people that are holding up our passing a meaningful aviation security bill. Shame on them. Shame on them.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentlewoman. She expresses better than I do how I feel about this right now. I really appreciate what you have said.

I want to yield to my other colleague from California and stress that this evening part of the argument that I have been trying to make is not only that the Republican House leadership has refused to bring up an aviation security bill, but by contrast, they have instead last week brought up this so-called economic stimulus package with all these tax cuts that go primarily to corporate interests and wealthy people.

I think we estimate that of the money that is given back in tax breaks in that Republican economic stimulus package that was passed last week, very narrowly, by two votes, I think, of \$100 billion in tax cuts in the next year, 2002, \$70.8 billion benefits corporations and \$14.8 billion benefits affluent individuals.

So here we have where two-thirds, I guess, of the money that they would like to allocate with these tax breaks is going to corporate interests, and then at the same time they will not pass a bill on aviation security because those same corporate interests refuse to spend the money or make a commitment to do the aviation security. It is part and parcel of the same thing. Where are the priorities? The priorities for the Republicans in trying to get the

economy going again are to give money to the corporate interests.

I do not see how in the world that stimulates the economy in the way that they hope it to be stimulated. I think just the opposite occurs. Of course, the Democrats had an alternative last week, which did not pass because we are not in the majority, that does the opposite. It gives money back to the displaced workers, it gives unemployment compensation, it gives health benefits, it provides for a major component of funding for security not only for airlines, but for all other means of transportation as the gentlewoman from Florida said. That is the kind of thing that would create the economic stimulus and create the jobs and get people back to work, and they are not willing to do it.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Just one last point. Recently, for the past couple of weeks I have been flying into Orlando. Orlando aviation has over 30 million people flying through there. It was very disturbing that nobody was there. Why? Because if you want to stimulate the economy, pass aviation safety so people will feel confident and secure in traveling again, so we can get the economy moving. Let us put the money, the economic stimulus, into security.

In closing, one of my favorite scriptures is "To whom God has given much, much is expected." The people of this country are expecting a lot from the Members of the House of Representatives. They are expecting us to put aside partisan bickering and do the people's business in the People's House.

Mr. PALLONE. Well said.

I yield to my colleague from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my continuing concern over the economic stimulus package passed in the House and to urge my colleagues in the Senate to put forth a more balanced, effective stimulus that will stimulate our economy in the short and long term and provide help to those who have been most affected by the events of September 11. We need a smaller, more targeted, more temporary and more bipartisan stimulus package.

Congress should act to restore consumer and investor confidence in the safety, security and solvency of America. We cannot use the economic predicament or the war as an opportunity to merely revisit priorities and agendas we advocated before September 11, thus spiraling Congress into budget-busting deficit spending. This would threaten the fiscal discipline that prompted much of the 1990s' economic boom. Already, long-term interest rates remain high despite the Federal Reserve's cut in short-term rates because of market concerns that deficit spending is making a comeback.

We must concentrate on boosting the economy by doing everything possible

to restore confidence in the management of our government, in the prosecution of the war, and in the development of a stronger and more secure nation. We should not be providing more of a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, who have already enjoyed their fair share of tax cuts this year or for the Nation's most powerful corporations. Renewed fiscal discipline is important because we must maintain our standing in the world financial markets and ensure the solvency of the stock market.

Further, we do not know yet how much this war on terrorism will cost. We must make sure that our military personnel are well-equipped and well-trained and, as Secretary Rumsfeld has stated, this is a marathon, not a sprint. We need to be prepared to support the cost of a long war without spending erroneously at the outset.

But perhaps most importantly, we need to stimulate the economy by putting money in the hands of people who will spend it immediately. This is the true meaning of an economic stimulus.

We need to focus on ensuring unemployment relief, training and reemployment opportunities for workers laid off as a result of the terrorist attacks. We also need to help the unemployed maintain their health insurance and provide relief for laid-off workers who would otherwise slip through the cracks in the current unemployment insurance system. By providing unemployment benefits and health care coverage to those laid-off workers, we will be targeting those who are most likely to spend and, thus, most likely to help in reviving the economy.

If you give financial assistance, whether it is tax cuts or unemployment insurance, to people who can put the money in savings, they are not going to spend it; it is not going to stimulate the economy. If you provide unemployment or health benefits to a laid-off worker, they are going to spend it immediately. The rent is not discretionary. Food is not discretionary. Medicine is not discretionary. This is an effective economic stimulus.

I have introduced legislation that I believe can be an essential component of these efforts to help those affected by September 11. My bill, the COBRA Coverage Act of 2001, would provide a 50 percent tax credit toward COBRA coverage for laid-off workers. We simply cannot allow so many hard-working Americans and their families to go uninsured. We must find a way to make COBRA coverage more affordable for the thousands of laid-off workers trying to recover from the September 11 attacks.

This bill does exactly that. The COBRA Coverage Act of 2001 provides continuing health care coverage for laid-off workers at half the price. Under this legislation, laid-off workers would be eligible for a tax credit of 50 percent towards the COBRA coverage premium, receiving an immediate benefit, not having to wait till the end of

the year to claim the tax credit. Nearly identical legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senators JEFFORDS, LINCOLN, CHAFEE, BAYH and SNOWE. Our bipartisan effort will ensure that American families can afford to remain insured in case of sickness or injury.

We must take the lead in ensuring that the thousands of hardworking Americans who have fallen victim to the effects of September 11 are not further set back by a lack of health insurance. We must remain diligent in our efforts to protect the American people, and that starts right here in the U.S. Congress.

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Our commitment to sound, effective government must be reflected in our ability to provide relief to laid off workers and jump start the economy during our war on terrorism.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort to make COBRA coverage more affordable for laid off workers and to offer the people of this country an economic stimulus package that actually works.

Mr. PALLONE. Reclaiming my time, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF). I do not think there is any questions that what is happening with the Republican leadership in terms of this economic stimulus package is very similar to what is happening on the aviation security issue. And that is, nothing is happening.

We know that last week when the Republican leadership put forward this so-called economic stimulus package, they knew full well it was not going to go anywhere. They were barely able to get the votes. I remember at one point at the end of votes there were more votes against it than for it. And we saw some of the Republican leaders going around and strong arming their colleagues so they could turn around a few votes. I think it ultimately passed by one or two votes maybe at the end.

We know the way the procedure works around here. If a bill passes on strictly a partisan vote and then it goes to the other body, the Senate, where the Democrats are in majority and totally disagree with this bill because of the way that is structured, that nothing is going to happen. There either never is a conference where the two Houses get together or if a conference occurs, there is no meeting of the minds.

So once again, just like with the issue of aviation security, my major criticism of the House Republican leadership and my colleagues who spoke earlier on the Republican side tonight is that they keep talking about the need to go to conference, which really means the need to delay, delay on aviation security, delay on economic stimulus. Meanwhile, the economy does not get any better and the problems with aviation security at the various airports continue.

I just think it is very sad. People want action. Regardless of whether we

agree or disagree they want action and we are not getting it. We are certainly not getting it on the part of this leadership on the Republican side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I know there is only a few minutes left, but I just want to point out the contrast which you did so well on what the Republicans had in mind with this economic stimulus package. I mentioned of the \$99.5 billion in tax cuts proposed for the next year, 2002, \$70.8 billion benefits corporation, \$14.8 billion benefits affluent individuals, and only \$1.37 billion goes to workers with lower incomes who did not get the previous rebate. A lot of it is even going to finance multi-nationals so the money would not even be spent here, which is incredible to me. How can you have an economic stimulus package when you have a provision that allows multi-national corporations to defer U.S. income taxes on profits from certain offshore activities so long as they are kept outside of the country. That is \$260 million next year, \$21.3 billion over 10 years.

Now, by contrast what we did, as was pointed out with our Democratic substitute, is provide rebates or tax breaks or unemployment compensation for displaced workers or money for aviation security and other investments in public infrastructure. That would be mean dollars immediately going into the economy either because the person who gets the unemployment compensation would spend it or because we would be hiring people for these various public infrastructure necessities such as the security that we talked about earlier this evening.

I do not understand. I do not know an economist on the face of the Earth who would suggest that what the Republicans tried to pass last week would do anything significant to benefit the economy. And I do not know what we do. I think the only thing we can do is to simply come here every night as we are, as Democrats, and demand action, demand that whether it is a security issue or an economic issue that the Republican leadership take some action, work in a bipartisan way so we can actually accomplish something. Nothing is being accomplished here. We just have to continue to demand that something be accomplished in a bipartisan way that can achieve some progress in these areas. But so far we are not getting it.

Mr. Speaker, with that I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

#### CIVIL RIGHTS ABUSES UPON AFGHAN WOMEN

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, the subject I was going to speak on tonight is the treatment of women in Afghanistan.

In 1996, I had the opportunity with Senator Brown on the Senate side to