

AMERICAN PARITY ACT

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to 67 of my colleagues who have cosponsored my bill, the American Parity Act. They join me in supporting a funding boost for health care, education, and public safety by the same amount we have pledged to rebuild Iraq.

We are in the process now of beginning to spend down the \$1.7 billion we have dedicated to the housing, the education, the health care, and the infrastructure of rebuilding Iraq; and yet here at home our schools are closing, athletic programs are shut down, summer school activities are being shut down, hospitals are not being able to provide the health care they need, projects for economic growth and economic investment in local communities are being delayed. Yet we are in the process of being about to rebuild Iraq.

Let me give an example. The other day I pulled an RFP from USAID. Two million dollars has already been designated for Iraq and another \$70 million will be spent next year for desks, computers and supplies. Schools in Basra and Umm Qasr have already been given kits containing enough supplies for every student for the next year.

Yet here in America 59,000 kids will be eliminated from Head Start. Our teachers in our schools must buy books and supplies out of their own wages and then eventually maybe get a tax credit or be reimbursed later on. Up to \$94 million is now today being spent to give 13 million Iraqis, half the population, universal health care and maternity care for 100 percent of the population in Iraq. Yet Medicaid will be cut; 14 million Americans will be denied access to health care in this country. Up to \$680 million will now be spent over the next year and a half repairing six airports in Iraq, 100 hospitals, and 6,000 schools. Another \$5 million is pledged to complete the only deep water port in Umm Qasr, Iraq. Yet we are cutting housing here in America. We are cutting our ability to invest in local infrastructure. In fact, the Corps of Engineers is facing a cut of 10 percent in its budget. Chicago will be directly affected in the projects there.

I will support the reconstruction in Iraq, as others in this Chamber have. Yet I will not support the deinvestment in America. When President Kennedy said we will bear any burden, pay any price, he did not mean it would come at the expense of the American Dream here at home. We can only be strong overseas as long as we come together and are strong here at home.

In the last 2 years, 2.5 million Americans have lost their jobs. Five million Americans have lost their health care. Nearly \$1 trillion worth of corporate

assets have been foreclosed on, and 2 million Americans have walked out of the middle class into poverty. Those are the economic facts that our country faces.

I do not think when the American people said that they were willing to do what they needed to do in Iraq that it would come at the expense of their unity, their dreams, and their security here at home. The children of Iraq should not be provided a safer, more secure and more generous future than the one we are welcoming our GIs home to. The GIs who fought there, the people here that support the reconstruction in Iraq, who are paying for the reconstruction of Iraq, deserve the type of education, health care, and housing and economic investment that we envision for Iraq's future.

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I believe that we are on the wrong road when it comes to balancing our priorities. The American people have proven over the last 50 years that they will be a very generous people, willing to help others on their path to a more democratic and more healthy and more economically promising future. But they will not do it and pay that price when they think their dreams for their children, the security of their communities, are less than what they are providing for other people. Nor should they.

Again, I will support, as others will, the reconstruction of Iraq but not the deconstruction of America. So I am pleased I have the support of my colleagues, 67 of them, for the American Parity Act. I will continually come down to the floor to talk about what we are doing in Iraq as it compares to what we are doing here at home, because the American people I think expect us to not only have our commitment to Iraq but to fulfill our commitment to them here at home.

They cannot have 59,000 American children kicked out of Head Start, yet the children of Basra be supported by the American people for a full year of great education. We cannot have 14 million Americans kicked out without healthcare from Medicaid, yet have 13 million Iraqis get universal health care. Those are the not the choices we should be providing, and we should not have it be an either/or, and that is the choices the American people are facing today.

UNCOVERING A GOVERNMENT COVERUP

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

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are here tonight to discuss a very chilling issue, the intentional destruction of evidence by a government agency and the subsequent stonewalling and coverup by the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, as has been discussed here previously, Members of the Texas State Legislature recently properly excused themselves from the floor of the Texas statehouse in order to break a quorum, a proper procedure provided for by the House rules and by the Constitution. This angered partisan Republican interests in Washington, and thereafter the Homeland Security Department, charged with fighting terrorism in this country, used Federal Government assets for political purposes, trying to track the plane of former Democratic Speaker of the House Pete Laney.

Embarrassingly, Secretary Tom Ridge and the Department of Homeland Security has now been forced to admit that they have an audiotape and a transcript of communications between Homeland Security and Texas law enforcement; and, despite that admission they were forced to make, the Department of Homeland Security has said they will not release the tape, thus taking part in this improper coverup.

This morning, further disturbing news came out of Austin, the State's capital. As I mentioned earlier, there is an admission of communication between Homeland Security and law enforcement in Texas. When the Department of Public Safety learned that inquiries were being made to obtain this information, they went into high gear, presumably at the direction of higher-ups, because, Mr. Speaker, as we were all shocked and dismayed to learn, the information held by the Department of Public Safety was intentionally destroyed, another part of the coverup.

Here is the quote from the DPS Commander of Special Crime Service, Tony Marshall, in an e-mail uncovered by the Fort Worth Star Telegram under an open records request. The DPS got caught with this e-mail. "Any notes, correspondence, photos, et cetera, that were obtained pursuant to the absconded House of Representatives members should be destroyed immediately. No copies are to be kept."

In an attempt to cover up this coverup, DPS exacerbated the problem with this statement. "This is why DPS destroyed the records. We are prohibited under the Code of Federal Regulations, 28 CFR part 23, from keeping intelligence information that is not related to criminal conduct or activity," and it goes on.

There are only two problems with that statement. First, it simply is not true. Nothing in the regulations suggests, demands or requires the destruction of evidence. Secondly, it is improper and in violation of the law to collect this information in the first place.

You see, as with most cover-ups, they failed to tell you the whole story, and each new story makes the last story worse, because the truth is the very regulation that the DPS incorrectly cites as the reason to destroy this evidence states that there must be "a reasonable suspicion that the individual is