

people of this country have been well served by this dedicated public servant. He will be greatly missed by his friends at both the Corps and on Capitol Hill. The understanding and appreciation of the Corps of Engineers here in Congress will remain strong thanks to his many years of faithful service to the Nation.

REGARDING THE ACTUARIAL VALUE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS OFFERED TO MEDICARE ELIGIBLE ENROLLEES BY A PLAN UNDER FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill designed for an important purpose—ensuring that the FEHBP continues to provide retired employees, who are eligible for Medicare, with the same prescription drug benefit that current, non-retired employees receive. There are thousands of Federal Employees in my district who have earned, and deserve, the prescription drug coverage they get under the FEHBP. In addition, this is an important example to set for the private sector to ensure that they do not begin reducing and eliminating their prescription drug coverage for Medicare eligible employees once Congress passes a Medicare prescription drug benefit. As such, I will vote in support for this bill.

However, the fact that the majority is bringing this bill up today highlights both the inadequacy of the prescription drug bill they passed last month, as well as undercuts their claim that they believe our nation's seniors deserve the same prescription drug coverage that Members of Congress and other employees covered under FEHBP receive.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad this legislation was brought to the floor today. I am glad that we can support good prescription drug coverage for federal retirees and I am glad that we can set an example for the private sector. I am also glad that the majority is willing to show just how truly disingenuous their rhetoric is about seniors deserving options similar to those of Members of Congress. If H.R. 1 truly provided a real prescription drug benefit, this legislation would not be necessary, and in that, Mr. Speaker, I take no pleasure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the majority for proving to the Nation how insufficient the prescription drug bill is that they passed two weeks ago.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE GERMAN CENTRAL FOUNDATION AND THE GERMAN CENTRAL FARM OF PARMA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the German Central Foundation

and the German Central Farm of Parma, as they become one of ten statewide recipients to receive a Historical Marker from the State of Ohio Bicentennial Commission and Multicultural and Ethnic Community Advisory Counsel.

This significant marker stands as a monument to the German Central Farm—a place transformed over eight decades as a haven and vital resource for German immigrants. The marker at German Central Farm also represents the dedication, heart and soul of the German Central Foundation, reflecting the commitment of members and leaders—past and present—to preserve, protect and promote the many colorful facets of German heritage, culture and history.

The German Central Organization embodies the spirit of America—the pioneer spirit, the immigrant spirit and the spirit of diversity of all peoples from all cultures that is the foundation of our community, our state and our nation. The German Central Organization—like thousands of cultural organizations with ancestral ties that span the globe—reflects a journey toward freedom, a struggle from oppression and the blazing of a new trail in America.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in tribute and recognition of the German Central Foundation, as the German Central Farm is honored by the State of Ohio with a Historical Marker. This gathering place along York Road in Parma has been a source of heritage, comfort, resource and pride for several generations of German Americans. The cultivation and preservation of our varied places of origin is the earth of America—it is the origin of our nation. And as America has flourished, our roots remain viable—uniting us all.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alice G. Hastings, Lt. Col. Gilbert L. Hernandez and the staff of the Long Beach Veterans Hospital for their hard work in planning and hosting the 23rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Long Beach, CA, last week.

The first games, held in 1981, brought 74 veterans to compete from 14 States. Today, these games have grown to become the largest annual wheelchair-sporting event in the world. Last year, over 480 athletes came from 44 States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain to compete.

Wheelchair sports began after World War II, as young disabled veterans began playing basketball in VA hospitals throughout the United States.

Interest soon spread to other sports and brought a sense of belonging and camaraderie to hundreds of veterans.

I want to thank all our veterans that participate in these games, both for the sacrifice they made for our country and for keeping us inspired to be the best we can be.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last night the Wabash River in northeastern Indiana crested at an incredible 25 feet. However, thanks to the extraordinary leadership of Mayor Ted Ellis and Sheriff Barry Story, Bluffton, IN, was spared a catastrophe.

Their leadership, in cooperation with Gov. Frank O'Bannon, and literally thousands of volunteers in Wells and Adams counties managed to stem the tide. Special commendation should go to Irving Material Incorporated and also to the Indiana National Guard's 2nd Battalion of the 151st Infantry. Under the leadership of General George Buskirk and Colonel Rick Shatto nearly 200 troops loaded and stacked sandbags and helped save the community of Bluffton, IN.

As more rain approaches, I urge the President to speed disaster relief to the counties in Indiana that the Governor has requested. I encourage the volunteers for their determination to move forward as the rain approaches and I urge prayers by all citizens to remember the cry of the Psalmist when he wrote, "God is our refuge and our strength, though the earth be removed, though its waters roar and be troubled, we will not fear."

FORTUNE MAGAZINE LISTS THE 50 BEST COMPANIES FOR MINORITIES

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I had the pleasure of reading in FORTUNE magazine a report by Jonathan Hickman of the 50 best companies for minorities. This important study identifies the increase in minority representation in the higher levels of major national and international corporations in terms of management positions, annual income, ownership in corporations, and leadership as exemplified by membership on corporate boards.

These figures represent an overall increase and upward mobility of African Americans, both male and female, in our economic system, which establishes that progress is being made. It corroborates the work of the Rainbow Push Wall Street Project which has annually brought together leaders from corporate America, the federal and state governments, and businessmen and women from the African American, Hispanic, and Asian American communities nationwide. Its founder Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr., has had in the annual national proceedings of Rainbow Push, a President of the United States, the Chairman of the Wall Street Stock Exchange, Richard A. Grasso, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Michael Powell, the Commissioner of Baseball, Bud Selig, and a wide variety of chief executive officers among whom can be found some of our most notable industrialists, manufacturers, wholesalers, food processors, bankers, leaders from the sports industry, heads of civil rights and human rights

organizations, church leaders, and others who have continued to break down the barriers and glass ceilings that have prevented the integration of the business and financial communities of America.

There was particular focus in the article on the Reverend Charles H. Ellis III, Bishop of Greater Grace Temple in Detroit, who partnered with the PepsiCo Urban Development Program. This corporate outreach program provides a variety of services and transportation, facilitating seniors in their everyday living by providing local visits to the homes of their family and friends, the shopping center, the doctor's office, the bank, and other places of need or interest.

There are many other corporations that deserve honorable mention and those of us who are members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the Progressive Caucus salute those companies who realize their responsibility to continue to democratize the world's most powerful economy that has been developed by this great country.

50 BEST COMPANIES FOR MINORITIES

You can slow down the economy, but you can't slow down progress. Anyone who believed that corporate America's devotion to diversity would wilt in the face of hard times should take a look at this year's Top 50. It has outdone the 2002 list across the board.

How about some good news for a change? In this year's 50 Best Companies for Minorities list, we saw minority representation rising in nearly every category we evaluate. People of color make up 19% of boardrooms, vs. 18% last year and 11% in 2001; management grew more diverse—26% of officials and managers are minorities, an increase over last year's 24% (up more than 50% from the inaugural list in 1998). Those improvements are mirrored in other areas—purchasing from minority-owned firms increased to 9% of the total purchasing budget, from 7% last year, while some areas, like diversity training and charitable contributions to minority organizations, held steady.

As in the past, we compiled our list by contacting the FORTUNE 1,000, plus the 200 largest privately held U.S. companies; 141 responded to our survey. Our questionnaire delves into all aspects of diversity. We ask how well people of color are represented in the general workforce but, more important, how many are among the most senior officials and highest-paid employees. And we ask if they're being promoted into management at the same rates as white employees. Other questions relate to the company's culture. Are managers held financially accountable for meeting diversity goals? How successfully have people of color been integrated into succession plans? We look at the way companies interact with the wider community. How strong are their purchasing programs with minority-owned businesses? Have they used minority-owned underwriters or pension-management firms? What portion of corporate charity goes to programs benefiting people of color? The data undergo a statistical evaluation and are then synthesized to produce our list: Voilà, the 50 Best for 2003.

QUESTIONING THE CASE FOR WAR

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, many questions are swirling around the country about whether President Bush and members of his Administration knowingly misled the American people into believing that Iraq was an imminent threat to our security and that we had no choice but to invade and occupy that nation. That is why I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to an editorial that appeared in today's Chicago Tribune, entitled "Questioning the Case for War."

The editorial states: "Instead of dodging questions and branding critics 'revisionist historians,' Bush must cooperate with congressional inquiries and diligently work to set the record straight. Bush has enjoyed the patience and the support of a majority of the American public. But that patience can run thin."

It continues, "The American people deserve a full accounting of the evidence. Were mistaken assertions based on faulty intelligence reports or was there a deliberate effort to trump up evidence to make the case for war?"

For the sake of his credibility, President Bush "must put to rest any suspicions that Americans accepted an argument for war that was built on a lie," the editorial concludes.

The American people deserve answers and that is why I strongly support H.R. 2625, a bill sponsored by Representative WAXMAN that would establish an independent commission to respond to the questions raised today by the Chicago Tribune. We need to get to the truth. President Bush's credibility and America's standing in the world are at stake.

[From the Chicago Tribune, July 10, 2003]

QUESTIONING THE CASE FOR WAR

Like any good salesman, President Bush highlighted the facts that made the most compelling case as he sold the American people on the urgent need for war against Iraq. In his State of the Union address in January, he spoke of 38,000 liters of the deadly botulinum toxin and as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent—all unaccounted for by Saddam Hussein. He spoke of Hussein's continued quest to build nuclear weapons.

He and his administration made the case forcefully for months, at the United Nations and elsewhere, using an impressive array of intelligence reports and satellite photos. Many Americans were convinced, as was this editorial page.

For several weeks, however, the case that Bush & Co. made has been coming under intense scrutiny, with suggestions that the president deliberately exaggerated some evidence or misrepresented intelligence reports to gild the arguments for war.

After weeks of denying those charges, the White House acknowledged Monday that one of the president's points in his State of the Union address may have been mistaken. That claim: that Hussein had attempted to buy uranium for a nuclear weapon from a nation in Africa.

White House officials wouldn't say how the president came to use the erroneous information or when he knew that the assertion was probably wrong. Bush and his team didn't fess up voluntarily. They were compelled to respond to an account in Sunday's New York Times by Joseph Wilson, a former American

ambassador who was enlisted by the CIA last year to travel to Niger to investigate claims that Hussein had tried to buy the uranium.

Wilson wrote that he found no evidence for those claims and shared his skepticism in briefings with the CIA and other agencies. Nevertheless, almost a year later, Bush cited that information in his speech. Top officials, including National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, deny that they or the president knew of Wilson's findings before he delivered the speech.

But Wilson wrote that "Based on my experience . . . I have little choice but to conclude that some of the intelligence related to Iraq's nuclear weapons program was twisted to exaggerate the Iraqi threat."

That is a logical—and deeply disturbing—conclusion.

The African uranium claim is not the only statement in question. The president asserted that Hussein had attempted to buy high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production. That claim was disputed by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and now is widely viewed as doubtful. The Pentagon has acknowledged that a Defense Intelligence Agency study last December couldn't pinpoint evidence of Iraqi weapons sites, though administration pronouncements at the time seemed far more certain of their existence.

With all those questions, it's natural to wonder what other errors—intentional or not—crept into the president's case for war. Prime Minister Tony Blair faces similar scrutiny in Britain.

Bush insists that those who raise such questions are ignoring the preponderance of the evidence, which clearly showed Hussein posed a threat to the world. There was, indeed, a strong case, starting with Hussein's longstanding defiance of U.N. resolutions and cat-and-mouse game with U.N. weapons inspectors.

Bush also complains that this debate is charged with political partisanship. Yes, in some quarters, it surely is.

But Bush seriously miscalculates if he chalks up the rising din of questions only to those who opposed the war. This debate goes to the president's most precious asset: his credibility.

The American people deserve a full accounting of the evidence. Were mistaken assertions based on faulty intelligence reports or was there a deliberate effort to trump up evidence to make the case for war?

It's time for the administration to scrub down every piece of evidence it made public and level with the American public about what, if anything, was exaggerated to make the case for war. Instead of dodging questions and branding critics "revisionist historians," Bush must cooperate with congressional inquiries and diligently work to set the record straight.

Bush has enjoyed the patience and the support of a majority of the American public. But that patience can run thin.

Americans know the hunt for weapons of mass destruction isn't over yet. They realize that no intelligence report is perfect; that such reports can be misleading or flat-out wrong. They understand that mistakenly using a faulty intelligence report does not automatically lead to the conclusion that much of the evidence for war was twisted or intentionally misused.

But they also know a too-slick sales job when they see one. History is full of presidents who fudged facts to advance objectives—be it declaring a war or more mundane domestic matters.

These questions will not fade. If anything, as the presidential campaign heats up, these kinds of questions will only grow louder.

If some of the intelligence Bush used was faulty or incomplete—as it seems to have