

hardship after the terrorist attacks. Just as we should not single out anyone of German, Russian, or Japanese descent for what some of their countrymen may have done in the past, we should not single out people like Mike and Sam for what 18 men with similar ethnic backgrounds did on one terrible day. I am pleased that the House has considered this bill, and I hope our communities will all take this lesson to heart.

HONORING ILLINOIS' NOBEL LAUREATES

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in honor of the Illinois Nobel Laureates. Illinois has always been well represented in this competition of the world's best and brightest, but this year three individuals from Illinois have won the Nobel Prize: Paul Lauterbur, a researcher at the University of Illinois, won for his research leading to the development of MRI technology; Alexei Abrikosov of Argonne National Laboratory; and Anthony Leggett, another researcher at the University of Illinois won for physics.

Each of these individuals works at a public institution dedicated to the exploration and expansion of human knowledge, and each of these institutions relies on public support to do the public good. These individuals and their work represent the future of our country; and if we are to maintain our status as a world leader, we must continue to support their works.

Mr. Speaker, although their work is diverse, their ability to pursue their intellectual endeavors is singular. So those who run down our public institutions, I hope they take note of these individuals' accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, these Nobel Prize winners are from Illinois, we are proud of them, but they are national treasures.

PROTECT AMERICANS IN UNIFORM ABROAD

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, the top priority of our foreign policy must be to protect Americans in uniform abroad. Our troops need allies to help shoulder the burden in Iraq. More allies will show the Iraqi people that the world community is strengthening its support for a new Iraqi democracy.

Yesterday, the National Assembly of Turkey voted to authorize the deployment of at least 6,000 peacekeepers to Iraq. Turkey has long been a NATO ally, even as she borders Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Her soldiers fought next to ours in far-off Korea in support of the United Nations.

Despite temporary problems, I thank Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul for adding Turkey's peacekeeping troops to our mission of building a free and democratic Iraq.

OUR NATIONAL DEBT

(Mr. ALEXANDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, it has been 881 days since President Bush and his party embarked on their economic plan for our country. During that time, the national debt has increased by \$1,174,114,828,749.14. According to the Web site for the Bureau of Public Debt at the Treasury Department, yesterday at 4:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, the Nation's outstanding debt was \$6,814,440,215,107.91. Furthermore, in fiscal year 2003, the interest on our national debt, or the debt-tax, totaled \$318,148,529,151.51.

COMMENDING AFGHAN WOMEN

(Mrs. BIGGERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the women of Afghanistan and to encourage my colleagues to join me in expressing strong support for their inclusion in the new Afghan constitution.

Nearly 2 years after the fall of the Taliban government, Afghan women are reclaiming their rightful place in society, returning to jobs and professions they held before the Taliban. No longer do they live in fear of a brutal regime. Instead, they are working to build a new democracy.

Under the Bonn Agreement, the people in Afghanistan will have in place in the coming months a new constitution. As the drafters continue the hard work of crafting that important document, we must continue to include the women of Afghanistan in the protection of their human rights.

It is for this reason that the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) and I introduced today a resolution commending the participation of women in Afghan government and society and advocating the protection of women's human rights under the constitution. I urge Members to support this resolution.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION CREATES JOBS

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on this Congress to pass school construction legislation to create jobs and improve education here in America. More than 3 million workers have

lost their jobs in this sorry economy; over 2 million were in manufacturing sectors alone. My State of North Carolina has seen devastating job losses in such vital industries as textiles, furniture, and tobacco.

Congress must act now to get America working again. We should start by passing legislation to put people to work building schools. In many urban and rural areas of this country, schools are crumbling and localities lack the resources to rebuild. In many communities in my district, schools are bursting at the seams from overcrowding.

Since my first term in this body, I have worked to pass school construction. This year's version, H.R. 717, will provide \$25 billion in zero interest bonds for school construction in this country. This bill will put workers back to work building quality schools for our country.

Mr. Speaker, Congress will soon consider the President's request for \$87 billion for Iraqi reconstruction, including building new schools. The President is going to get his money, but we need to spend some money here at home on schools. So Congress should pass H.R. 717 to build schools in America.

SUPPORTING THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

(Mr. RYUN of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, the Oath of Allegiance has served as the gateway to American citizenship for over 200 years. When immigrants speak its forceful words, they pledge their unfettered allegiance to America, our Constitution, and our laws.

This important symbol of American citizenship is not specified by law. However, it can be changed on the whim of a government agency. In fact, such a change was recently attempted and would have transformed an absolute commitment to our Constitution into a conditional statement, thereby weakening our citizenship. That is why I introduced H.R. 3191, which would establish the oath as Federal law.

Mr. Speaker, throughout our history, our Nation has been strengthened by immigrants who came here to pursue the American dream. Establishing the oath as the law of the land would remind all Americans that pursuing that dream also requires a full-time commitment to citizenship. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to strengthen the meaning of our citizenship.

JUNGLE CAMOUFLAGE IN THE DESERT?

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I have heard about the sweetheart deals and