

strived to rebuild a nation ravaged by tyranny and war and strife. Obviously, our work there is not yet done. But we can take comfort in the fact that some of our finest countrymen carry the torch of liberty in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the 432nd, along with all of our servicemen and -women, deserve our praise, our support, our gratitude. They are genuine heroes.

MEDICARE MODERNIZATION

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

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, since Medicare was founded, medicine has changed and seniors have changed. We all know how medicine has changed, MRIs, open heart surgery, all the dramatic procedures, all the new diagnostic tests; and Medicare has a cumbersome though slow way of accommodating its system to be able to deliver modern medicine.

More importantly, seniors have changed. They are living longer. They are living with chronic diseases. And Medicare has not accommodated at all to that dramatic change in our seniors' lives.

So I was delighted this week to announce with Secretary Tommy Thompson the implementation of those provisions of the Medicare Modernization Act which will for the first time enable Medicare to deliver to our seniors modern medical care to better support those with chronic illnesses.

Twenty percent of our seniors have five or more chronic illnesses. They use two thirds of the Medicare dollars, and we have not been able to deliver what modern medical science knows about how to prevent the progress of chronic illness. We started today through the Medicare Modernization Act which we voted through in this House, to do just that.

EMBEDDED COSTS OF MEDICAL LIABILITY

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, we have heard several times about how the embedded costs of the medical justice system, medical liability, negatively impact the medical system in this country. In fact, I think on Fox News over the weekend they had a rather dramatic piece on how the cost of soaring premiums has driven some doctors out of practice.

But make no mistake about it. While it may affect the doctors' livelihood, it ultimately affects access for patients. In my district, that has meant perinatologists, specialists who deal in high-risk obstetrics, who have closed their shops; neurosurgeons who have left town; trauma centers that have been put at risk.

Traveling to Nome, Alaska last summer, I was told by a group of doctors there that they could not afford the liability premiums for an anesthesiologist in the town of Nome, Alaska. When their obstetricians have a complicated pregnancy, they have to put that woman on a plane and send her to Anchorage. I fail to see how that furthers patient safety.

A director of a residency program told me that currently they are now accepting people they would not have interviewed for their obstetrics and gynecology program 5 years ago because young men and women do not want to go into obstetrics and gynecology.

Mr. Speaker, we have a President who will sign a medical liability bill. We have a candidate who has either voted "no" or been absent when that bill has come to the Senate.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in history, seniors across the country are about to have an option of choosing Medicare prescription drug coverage if they so desire. Beginning May 3, thanks to the improvements we made to Medicare, each beneficiary will be entitled to select a prescription drug discount card of their choice that will provide immediate savings, including a \$600 credit for qualifying low-income individuals.

Those who voted against these changes do not seem to want seniors to know that the new prescription drug coverage will help 14 million low-income Medicare recipients who need it most, those who are having to choose between food and medicines they need.

For the past 4 months, those who have voted against the drug coverage have not been sharing with seniors information about the new opportunity to sign up for prescription drug coverage.

Why should seniors not be allowed to learn that they will soon have choice and control over their prescription drug plans? Do seniors not have the right to know that their new coverage will give them better access to more prescription drugs at lower prices? Do they not have the right to know that if they already have prescription drug coverage that they can stay with their plan if they like it?

Ten days from now seniors will be free to choose for themselves.

DISPARAGING REMARKS BY JOHN KERRY

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

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with many of my fellow veterans in this body to bring attention to a seri-

ous decision facing our Nation. Very soon the American people will be asked to make an important choice. We will be asked to decide who will best lead our Nation for the next 4 years. One candidate, JOHN KERRY, would claim to have the best interests of America at heart. However, Mr. KERRY's history tells a different story.

Thirty-three years ago today, he stood before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee disparaging, disparaging our brave servicemen and -women as murderers. Yet today in pursuit of the Presidency of what he called a "hypocritical" Nation, he boasts of his service alongside them.

Every man and woman who has stood in defense of our Nation deserves our thanks. But JOHN KERRY's service does not excuse him from joining ranks with Jane Fonda and others in speaking ill of our troops or their service then or now.

On the anniversary of these outrageous claims by JOHN KERRY, I believe we must remind the veterans of our United States Armed Forces, past, present, and future of our appreciation, of our thanks for their service to our military and our Nation.

JOHN KERRY SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO AMERICAN VETERANS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, 33 years ago today, John Kerry appeared before the Senate to talk about Vietnam. Many veterans, including myself as a veteran, view JOHN KERRY's testimony that day as one of the worst public slanders ever against the valor and character of the American military.

In a sad act of political theater, JOHN KERRY accused American soldiers of rape, torture, murder, and even offered up comparisons of Genghis Khan. What he said that day has been discredited. Some of the men used as sources for war crimes later were found to have never been to Vietnam.

Yet just last Sunday on "Meet the Press," JOHN KERRY failed to apologize for his extremist accusations. His words in 1971 are important because he used false information to turn public opinion against the men who were serving their country honorably, such as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), who survived 7 years as a POW in Vietnam.

These troops returned to face unfair persecution, and John Kerry owes them an apology.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

EARTH DAY

(Mr. MICHAUD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, today is Earth Day, and the President is coming to my home State of Maine to speak about the environment.

Unfortunately, the administration has taken us backward in protecting the environment, and Maine is worse off because of it. In August, the EPA rolled back pollution controls for coal-burning plants in the Midwest and just recently announced plans to allow more mercury to be emitted into the air, just as we find that many parts of Maine do not meet quality air standards.

This is not just bad for air. It is bad for jobs. When the EPA rolled back mercury regulations in August, hundreds of pipe fitters were laid off because the pollution-control equipment they installed was no longer needed.

Protecting our air is not a partisan issue. Clean air improves public health, saves money, and can create jobs for Americans. The administration cannot just "outsource" the responsibility for protecting our environment to another country.

JOHN KERRY AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF?

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, Colonel Bud Day, former Vietnam prisoner of war for over 6 years, recalls in his book on how Jane Fonda, Ramsey Clark, and JOHN KERRY energized the enemy through their accusations and hurt them as prisoners of war.

Mr. Speaker, I was shot down over North Vietnam at that time. I can remember the anger and the disparaging remarks that JOHN KERRY made about our service. I remember the rage in all of us from his slander.

I am proud of the men and women that I served with in Vietnam and those that are serving us at great risk today in Iraq and Afghanistan and all over the world.

Even today, JOHN KERRY votes against defense, the military, veterans, and intelligence bills that would enforce the safe return of our men and women. We do not need someone that would vote like a Jane Fonda as commander in chief.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that personal attacks on Members of the Senate do not comport with the rules of the House.

JOHN KERRY'S ACCUSATIONS AGAINST AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN VIETNAM

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, when Americans watched U.S. troops take Baghdad through embedded media, they saw the American GI in his true character. They saw a GI who was compassionate, who was honorable, and who had great courage. In a way they saw also the GIs of Vietnam because in many cases those were the sons and grandsons and granddaughters of people who had fought in Vietnam, people who had the same character, the same honor, the same courage.

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Yet we have had a person who is running for President, Senator JOHN KERRY, describe those people as having murdered 200,000 people in Vietnam, being stoned on pot 24 hours a day, that is he said 60 to 80 percent of them, and ravaging the country in a Genghis Khan-like fashion.

I think Americans have a choice. If you feel that your son or daughter did those acts in Vietnam, if that was a true characteristic of American GI's in Vietnam if you served in Vietnam, if you think your husband conducted himself in that fashion, perhaps you want to vote for JOHN KERRY. If you think that is a wild-eyed, nutty statement that is not an appropriate statement for somebody running for President of the United States, vote against JOHN KERRY.

TROUBLING REMARKS BY JOHN KERRY

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today also to highlight some very troubling remarks by JOHN KERRY, who is now seeking the Presidency of the United States, our Commander-in-Chief.

In 1971, KERRY testified before a Senate committee that communism was not a real threat to the United States. He went so far as to say that the U.S. was "reacting under Cold War precepts which are no longer applicable."

Mr. Speaker, that was 1971. I think we can all agree the Cold War was very much applicable and continued to be for the next two decades.

Now JOHN KERRY has the gall to compare our efforts in Iraq to Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, as a veteran of Vietnam War, I take great offense to Mr. KERRY's statements, then and now. Our efforts in Iraq have liberated millions of civilians from a brutal dictator that has used weapons of mass destruction against his own people.

The world is a safer place without Saddam Hussein in power, and the United States is a safer place with President Bush as Commander-in-Chief.

KERRY PLANS TO ELIMINATE SMALL BUSINESS FEDERAL CONTRACTS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the Nashville Business Journal recently ran an article entitled "Kerry Plan Would Cut 100,000 Government Contracting Jobs." This was reporting on JOHN KERRY's plan to eliminate 100,000 private sector contractor jobs. Apparently, he does not feel that the private sector provides much bang for the taxpayer buck. His solution is bigger government, less competition.

According to the Professional Services Council, small businesses would bear the brunt of KERRY's return to big government. Last year, small businesses competed for and won \$63 billion in government contracts, equaling more than 25 percent of the Federal Government's contracting budget.

Study after study has shown that contracting with our Nation's small business sector reduces the cost to taxpayers, conserving taxpayer dollars. That should trump favors to special interests and big business any day.

Mr. Speaker, those of us in touch with folks outside the Beltway know small businesses make this country run.

DISPARAGING THE HONORABLE SERVICE OF VIETNAM VETERANS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago a Vietnam veteran went to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and he delivered a stinging indictment of our American troops, all of the American troops serving in Vietnam. He stated that murders and other crimes were "not isolated instances, but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command."

That individual who alleged that our military openly and systematically violated the Geneva Conventions more than any other body is now running for President, and that is Senator KERRY.

Many of these charges rose from the Winter Soldier Investigation, where activists gathered to describe these war crimes. It was later learned that many of those who confessed these war crimes never served near a battlefield. It was a fraud.

Senator KERRY disparaged the honorable service of all the countless veterans who served in Vietnam with these charges, and he should apologize for what he said against his fellow veterans.

IN DEFENSE OF JOHN KERRY

(Mr. LARSON of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address