

why it is so important that the NRA's twisted worldview must come before DC residents' wishes and safety.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

CONGRESS SHOULD NAME POST OFFICES, BUT NOT AT EXPENSE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, on the subject of the marriage amendment, the House majority leader said earlier today, "It is our job to make the laws in this country. And as easy as life would be for us, if the most controversial bills we had to vote on was to rename a post office, that's not what we were elected to do."

I find it ironic that the majority leader used the naming of post offices, especially for this Congress. I have done my own research. As it turns out, this Republican Congress, the 108th Congress, the House and the other body, has been hard at work at naming post offices. In fact, under the Republican leadership, we have named an impressive 92 post offices, and we just did 4 more today.

We have also named 22 Federal buildings, passed 34 resolutions honoring athletic teams, and introduced 35 resolutions creating commemorative postage stamps. That is in stark contrast to when the Republicans first took control of the House in the 104th Congress. They only managed to name 12 post offices. This Congress has done 92.

In the 106th Congress, they only squeaked out a pitiful three resolutions honoring sports teams and sports achievements. Clearly, the 108th Congress, this Republican Congress, has proven to be the most adept at naming post offices and Federal buildings, and honoring sports achievements and conceiving of new postage stamps.

Now, let me tell you something; it takes a lot of time and effort to name a post office. First, you have to decide which post office. Then you have to figure out what name. Then you have to pick a name and build support for it among your colleagues. The final test is to get a vote on the name, which is no small feat when you consider that, historically, only 1 out of every 100 bills ever sees a floor vote. In this Republican-led Congress, however, 80 percent of the post office naming bills introduced in the House have actually passed. That is something to be proud of.

But while we have spent all this time naming post offices, we could have

been dealing with the problems which are facing the American people. After all, while this Congress is busy alleviating the apparent backlog of nameless post offices in America, we have lost 1.7 million private sector jobs. Median household incomes have fallen by more than \$1,500. Household bankruptcies have skyrocketed, and today we see in articles that health care costs in America are rising at close to three times the rate of inflation.

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In Iraq, more than 1,000 Americans have been killed. Reconstruction has been pushed to the sidelines. There is mounting violence, and we have not found any weapons of mass destruction or had any oversight hearings in this Congress as to why we went to war on that premise.

Mr. Speaker, today the majority leader quoted former President John Kennedy in justifying the votes we had. So in the same spirit, I will quote President Kennedy: "To govern is to choose." And unfortunately this Congress, the Republican Congress, has made some tough choices. Time after time the Republican leadership has been forced to choose at their own making between naming post offices and using its control in the House, Senate, White House, and Supreme Court to improve the lives of millions of Americans. More often than not the Republican Congress has chosen to name post offices.

Please do not misunderstand. I am not opposed to naming post offices. In fact, I cosponsored a few of them myself. Congress should do these things, but we should not do it at the expense of our other responsibilities.

We should not do it as an excuse not to deal with the health care crisis, not to deal with the access to higher education crisis we have in America, not to deal with the fact that wages and income are stagnant in America, not to deal with the fact that we have a war being waged and we do not have a policy or a President that is cognizant of the fact that it is a burning morass, as three leading Republican Senators said last week.

We have only passed one of the 13 appropriations bills we are required to pass. We have not passed a Transportation bill that we are required to pass that would employ millions of Americans. We have not passed a higher education reauthorization bill as we are required to pass. We have not passed a budget under a Republican Congress. We have failed to reauthorize a series of things we are required to do, and yet we have taken on the responsibility of naming 92 new post offices.

Our Nation and economy rely on the most basic functions of this Congress, yet we have failed in both those activities. We can do better. Congress can name post offices and keep our Nation moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, Election Day is only weeks away. I hope when the American

people go to the polls, it will reflect on the kind of job this Congress has done. The Republican leadership made their priorities clear. The 108th Congress will be remembered for its leadership on the naming of post offices.

PROSECUTING GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the tremendous job our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines have been doing in prosecuting our global war on terror.

Just recently, I returned from a trip where I visited both the Afghan and Iraq theater of operations. Last year, I made a similar trip to Iraq, and now I can say with some certainty that we have made demonstrable progress.

Americans should not think we are without friends in this region. President Musharraf of Pakistan has been a brave and determined ally in the fight against terrorism. Strong leaders such as President Karzai and Prime Minister Allawi are beginning to emerge in Afghanistan and Iraq. They have put their lives on the line and trusted the word of the United States. We must not let them down, for our security is linked with their success in rebuilding their countries and defeating terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to Iraq, U.S. forces are achieving daily successes in confronting terrorists while Iraqi troops and police are starting to undertake the tough everyday work of rebuilding and defending a civil society. In a recent Armed Forces hearing, Army Colonel Michael Linnington, former brigade commander with the 101st Airborne Division, testified that it was not uncommon for his troops to be building schools by day and patrolling for insurgents at night. Or for that matter, it was not uncommon for U.S. troops to be fighting insurgents in one part of a town while helping with elections in another part. The troops believe in their mission and are committed to seeing it through.

Mr. Speaker, our troops have met with daily success in Iraq. However, some observers have not accurately portrayed the results of their efforts. Moreover, it is important to note that we are not the only country suffering casualties in the fight for a free Iraq. In addition to our Coalition allies, hundreds of Iraqi policemen and national guard members have been killed as they fight to ensure the future of their own country.

With respect to Afghanistan, it is quite clear that the Afghan government is progressing in securing modern rights for its people every day. Mr. Speaker, over 10 million people have registered to vote in the upcoming October presidential election in Afghanistan, and 5 million Afghans are now