

LAHOOD, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO INSERT EXCHANGE OF LETTERS DURING CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3, TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD an exchange of letters regarding myself and the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BARTON) regarding H.R. 3.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1700

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

LEGISLATION ADDRESSING THE SCHIAVO CASE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, as a result of a judge's decision, next week, March 18, Terry Schiavo is scheduled to have her feeding tube removed, thus sentencing her to a very slow, painful death from starvation and dehydration.

Mr. Speaker, I will submit for the RECORD the entire statement of Terry's attorney. It is a moving account of her visit with Terry. Here is a brief excerpt, "From the moment we entered the room, my impression was that Terry was very purposeful and interactive. She seemed very curious about the presence of strangers in her room. When she heard their voices, particularly her mother's voice, Terry instantly turned her head towards them and smiled. Terry established eye contact with her family, particularly her mother, who spent the most time with her during our visit."

Obviously, she is not comatose. I hope that Congress will expeditiously consider the legislation introduced by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) to address her type of case so that she does not have to die a very painful death, in accordance with this judge's decision.

A VISIT WITH TERRI SCHIAVO

(By Attorney Barbara Weller)

This past Christmas Eve day, 2004, I went to visit Terri Schiavo with her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, her sister, her niece, and Attorney David Gibbs III. The visit took place at the Woodside Hospice for about 45 minutes just before noon.

When I knew I was going to visit Terri with her parents, I had no idea what to expect. I was prepared for the possibility that the Schindlers love their daughter and sister so much that they might imagine behaviors by Terri that aren't actually evident to others. The media and Mr. Schiavo clearly give the impression that Terri is in a coma or comatose state and engages only in non-purposeful and reflexive movements and responses. I am a mother and a grandmother, as well as one of the Schindlers' attorneys, and I could understand how parents might imagine behavior and purposeful activity that is not really there. I was prepared to be as objective as I could be during this visit and not to be disappointed at anything I saw or experienced.

I was truly surprised at what I saw from the moment we entered the little room where Terri is confined. The room is a little wider than the width of two single beds and about as long as the average bedroom, with plenty of room for us to stand at the foot of her bed. Terri is on the first floor and there is a lovely view to the outside grounds of the facility. The room is entered by a short hallway, however, and there is no way for Terri to see out into the hallway or for anyone in the hallway to observe Terri.

From the moment we entered the room, my impression was that Terri was very purposeful and interactive and she seemed very curious about the presence of obvious strangers in her room. Terri was not in bed, but was in her chair, which has a lounge chair appearance and elevates her head at about a 30-degree angle. She was dressed and washed, her hair combed, and she was covered with a holiday blanket. There were no tubes of any kind attached to her body. She was completely free of any restraints that would have indicated any type of artificial life support. Not even her feeding tube was attached and functioning when we entered, as she is not fed 24 hours a day.

The thing that surprised me the most about Terri as I took my turn to greet her by the side of her chair was how beautiful she is. I would have expected to see someone with a sallow and gray complexion and a sick looking countenance. Instead, I saw a very pretty woman with a peaches and cream complexion and a lovely smile, which she even politely extended to me as I introduced myself to her. I was amazed that someone who had not been outside for so many years and who received such minimal health care could look so beautiful. She appeared to have an inner light radiating from her face. I was truly taken aback by her beauty, particularly under the adverse circumstances in which she has found herself for so many years.

Terri's parents, sister, and niece went immediately to greet Terri when we entered the room and stood in turn directly beside her head, stroking her face, kissing her and talking quietly with her. When she heard their voices, and particularly her mother's voice, Terri instantly turned her head towards them and smiled. Terri established eye contact with her family, particularly with her mother, who spent the most time with her during our visit. It was obvious that she recognized the voices in the room with the exception of one. Although her mother was talking to her at the time, she obviously had heard a new voice and exhibited a curious de-

meanor. Attorney Gibbs was having a conversation near the door with Terri's sister. His voice is very deep and resonant and Terri obviously picked it up. Her eyes widened as if to say, "What's that new sound I hear?" She scanned the room with her eyes, even turning her head in his direction, until she found Attorney Gibbs and the location of the new voice and her eyes rested momentarily in his direction. She then returned to interacting with her mother.

When her mother was close to her, Terri's whole face lit up. She smiled. She looked directly at her mother and she made all sorts of happy sounds. When her mother talked to her, Terri was quiet and obviously listening. When she stopped, Terri started vocalizing. The vocalizations seemed to be a pattern, not merely random or reflexive at all. There is definitely a pattern of Terri having a conversation with her mother as best she can manage. Initially, she used the vocalization of "uh'uh" but without seeming to mean it as a way of saying "no", just as a repeated speech pattern. She then began to make purposeful grunts in response to her mother's conversation. She made the same sorts of sound with her father and sister, but not to the same extent or as delightedly as with her mother. She made no verbal response to her niece or to Attorney Gibbs and myself, but she did appear to pay attention to our words to her.

The whole experience was rather moving. Terri definitely has a personality. Her whole demeanor definitely changes when her mother speaks with her. She lights up and appears to be delighted at the interaction. She has an entirely different reaction to her father who jokes with her and has several standing jokes that he uses when he enters and exits her presence. She appears to merely "tolerate" her father, as a child does when she says "stop" but really means, "this is fun." When her father greets her, he always does the same thing. He says, "here comes the hug" and hugs her. He then says, "you know what's coming next—the kiss." Her father has a scratchy mustache and both times when he went through this little joke routine with her, she laughed in a way she did not do with anyone else. When her father is ready to plant the kiss on her cheek, she immediately makes a face her family calls the "lemon face." She puckers her lips, screws up her whole face, and turns away from him, as if making ready for the scratchy assault on her cheek that she knows is coming. She did the exact same thing both times that her father initiated this little routine joke between the two of them.

The interactions with her family and our appearance in her room appeared to require some effort and exertion from Terri. From time to time, she would close her eyes as if to rest. This happened primarily when no one was paying particular attention to her, but we were talking among ourselves. After a few minutes or when one of the visitors approached her and started to talk directly to her again, Terri would open her eyes and begin her grunting sounds again in response to their conversations. Although I approached her, leaned close and stroked her arms and spoke to her, she did not verbally respond to me.

Terri's hands are curled up around little soft cylinders that help her not to injure herself. I understand that these contractures are likely very painful, although there was a time when Terri was receiving simple motion therapy when her hands and arms relaxed and were no longer as constricted. When the therapy was discontinued by order of her guardian and the court, the contractures returned. These contractures would apparently be avoidable if Terri were given the simple range of motion therapy she previously received. It is very sad to observe

firsthand these conditions that make her life more difficult, but that would be correctable with little effort.

When we were preparing to leave, the interactions with Terri changed. First, she went through the joke routine with her father and the "lemon face." When her niece said goodbye to her, Terri did not react. Nor did she react to me or to Attorney Gibbs when we said our goodbyes to her. When her sister went to her to say goodbye, Terri's verbalizations changed dramatically. Instead of the happy grunting and "uh uh" sounds she had been making throughout the visit, her verbalizations at these goodbyes changed to a very low and different sound that appeared to come from deep in her throat and was almost like a growl. She first made the sound when her sister said goodbye and then, amazingly to me, she made exactly the same sound when her mother said goodbye to her. It seemed Terri was visibly upset that they were leaving. She almost appeared to be trying to cling to them, although this impression came only from her changed facial expression and sounds, since her hands cannot move. It appeared like she did not want to be alone and knew they were leaving. It was definitely apparent in the short time I was there that her emotions changed—it was apparent when she was happy and enjoying herself, when she was amused, when she was resting from her exertion to communicate, and when she was sad at her guests leaving. It was readily apparent and surprising that her mood changed so often in a short 45-minute visit.

I was pleasantly surprised to observe Terri's purposeful and varied behaviors with the various members of her family and with Attorney Gibbs and myself. I never imagined Terri would be so active, curious, and purposeful. She watched people intently, obviously was attempting to communicate with each one in various ways and with various facial expressions and sounds. She was definitely not in a coma, not even close. This visit certainly shed more light for me on why the Schindlers are fighting so hard to protect her, to get her medical care and rehabilitative assistance, and to spend all they have to protect her life.

I realize that Terri has good days and bad days. There are obviously days when she does not interact with her family, as they had previously told us. There are also apparently days when Terri is even more interactive and responsive to them than she was on the day I visited. Since this visit I am more convinced than ever that the Schindlers are not just parents who refuse to let go of their daughter. There really is a lot going on with their daughter and potentially, it seemed obvious to me, Terri could improve even more with appropriate care and 24 hour a day love that can only come from a dedicated family. As I watched her, my foremost thought was that on the next day, Christmas, Terri should not have been confined to her small room in a hospice center, nice as that room was, but that she should have been gathered around the Christmas dinner table enjoying the holiday with her family.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, how appropriate as we stand and acknowledge International Women's Week and realize that maybe 20 years or 30 years ago there would not

be a Lifetime television channel that would emphasize the issues to educate not only Americans but also the world. This is Stop Violence Against Women Week, and I stand to acknowledge the great strides women in Afghanistan and Iraq have made, as cochair of the Afghanistan Caucus; and I acknowledge violence still peppers and perpetrates itself around the Nation.

In my State of Texas, nearly 2 million Texans, almost 13 percent of the State population, have been sexually assaulted. In Texas, every 2 minutes someone is sexually assaulted, and two women are killed each week by their intimate partner. It is time to stop the violence.

This week I will also emphasize my bill, Good Time Release Act of 2005, that speaks to the early release of prisoners. And I want to address the treatment of women in our Nation's prisons, women who have not perpetrated violent acts. I also stand and acknowledge violence against women in Sudan, women who are raped, brutalized, and torn away from their children. We must stand up to this kind of violence. It is not only in America; it is around the world.

Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, said, "Justice is not cheap. Justice is not quick. It is not ever finally achieved."

Mr. Speaker, we must fight for the liberation of women around the world.

I would like to thank Lifetime Television and their commitment to "Stop Violence Against Women." Their generous support has made the celebration of International Women's Day possible.

Yesterday was International Women's Day, and it was brought to my attention that in light of all these celebrations of how far women have come over the decades, it would be naïve for us to stand here and believe that we have eradicated gender based violence. Statistics keep coming in, showing that the problem is widespread for both sexual and domestic violence, and victims fear reporting the crimes to proper authorities.

In my state of Texas, nearly 2 million adult Texans, almost 13 percent of the state population, have been sexually assaulted. In Texas, every two minutes, someone is sexually assaulted and two women are killed each week by their intimate partner.

Approximately 31 percent of sexual assault victims reported that a family member also has been sexually assaulted. We must raise awareness about how we as a society can take care of the victims of such crimes. An estimate of 82 percent of rapes and sexual assaults go unreported because of shame, fear, hurt and anger. Nearly 80 percent of those raped know the person who raped them.

Family and friends not only help their loved one deal with the effects of an assault, and must manage their own feelings about the victimization of someone they care about. The impact of such a traumatic experience is severe. thirty percent of rape victims contemplate suicide, and 13 percent attempt to take their own life.

I have worked with formidable organizations such as Texans Against Sexual Assault, who work to bring voices to women who have been

victims of sexual crimes, and help them along an emotional recovery. Also, the Texas Council on Family Violence, which has connected more than 15,000 Texas victims of domestic violence with emergency shelter and protection.

I am proud to be here, and grateful to these organizations and their hard work. But this does not start here. Sexual assault and violence affects all racial and ethnic groups. These victims are our selves, our families, neighbors and coworkers. Together we must take a stand and work together for women's rights. We must work on building a brighter future, and make gender based violence a thing of the past. One day or week or month is not enough to do it all, but it's a beginning. Marian Wright Edelman, the founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund said, "Justice is not cheap. Justice is not quick. It is not ever finally achieved."

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I read from a story today in The Washington Post, page A8, "Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican, South Carolina, who has spent weeks attempting to recruit Democratic support for a plan to restructure Social Security, said yesterday that Republicans 'made a strategic mistake' by initially focusing on a proposal to create individual investment accounts," and, as he says, "We've now got this huge fight over a sideshow. It's always been a sideshow, but we sold it as the main event."

What he is talking about is that, as the President himself has admitted, the privatization of Social Security is and has nothing to do with fixing potential future financing problems in Social Security. It is a battle, in fact, if it was won under the President's terms, that would divert income from Social Security and, in fact, accelerate its financial problems from 40 years in the future to a mere 10 or 20 years in the future.

Senator GRAHAM, Republican from South Carolina, has come to the conclusion that, as many of us have been saying on this side of the aisle, we should fix Social Security first, then engage in a debate over how best to encourage or assist Americans in having more private resources through IRAs, 401(k)s or other sorts of devices for their retirement.

The basic vision of the founders of Social Security still holds: President Roosevelt said that he wanted to have a program that was not a dole; that had its own source of funding that would be guaranteed, and it would be