

Mr. Speaker, I call on the Congress to act quickly on H.R. 1415. If we can prevent a tragedy like the one that occurred at the Our Lady of Peace Church with a simple voice vote, why should we not do it right away?

**HOWARD DEAN AND WASTE,  
FRAUD, AND ABUSE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I had planned to come down to the floor tonight and talk a little bit about some of the things that I had heard from the constituents in my district; but before I get to that, I have to address some of the comments that have been made by Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean.

Everyone knows that Mr. Dean has a reputation for making outrageous and inaccurate statements, and that is really no secret. But one would think he would have toned down the false statements and the unfounded insults, given his new role as leader of the Democratic Party.

In the past month, Mr. Dean has said the House majority leader ought to "go back to Houston where he can serve his jail sentence." Mr. Speaker, that is despite the fact that the leader has not been accused or convicted of a crime.

This past week, Mr. Dean said, Republicans never made an honest living in their lives. He actually thought that was a reasonable, responsible comment. And this is just so asinine, so juvenile, that it is hard to believe that the Democratic Party would choose him to lead their party.

Mr. Speaker, the next example is so awful and so incredibly sad, I really hate to repeat it, but sometimes it is the light of truth that is the only thing that will stop people from saying things like this. In February, while addressing a group of African American Democrats, Mr. Dean said, "You think the Republican National Committee could get this many people of color in a single room? Only if they had the hotel staff in here."

I cannot fathom what is going through his head when he makes comments like these. It is increasingly apparent that he is out of touch with America and with people who do not march in lockstep with his view. We should not just let these comments slide. He is speaking for one of the Nation's major political parties, and his comments are out of line. I am glad to see that several Democratic Members in the House and Senate have disavowed his remarks, and I would hope that minority leaders PELOSI and REID would join them.

If Mr. Dean would like, maybe we should introduce him to plenty of good, hard-working conservatives who have never been given a single solitary thing, people who have made it on

their own; people who have built a business, who talk about the sweat equity that is in their business, because they have not only built it with their heart, they have built that business with their hands. They deserve the same respect any other American deserves, regardless of the party, because they know what a hard day's work is all about.

Mr. Dean's attitude and his comments are exactly why his party has failed for a decade to win back either the White House or Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to end my comments today without discussing some of the things my constituents and I have been talking about back in Tennessee. Like many of my colleagues, I have spent a great week talking with people in my district and getting their take on what we are doing or not doing here in Washington. This is one of the very best parts of my job.

I learned so much from the listening sessions in my district. We talked about our military; we honored our veterans; and, Mr. Speaker, we talked about issues like government spending, illegal immigration, and waste, fraud, and abuse, which are at the top of the list. And it is waste, fraud, and abuse that I want to touch on tonight for just a few minutes.

I have been working over the past months to target the tremendous number of taxpayer dollars that get wasted each and every year right here in Washington, and I want my colleagues to know that the folks back home are talking about this issue. They want to remind us that government has a spending problem, and that when we spend wisely, we spend less. I heard time and again from my constituents, it is a spending problem, it is a spending problem that you folks in Washington have. You do not know how to say no. They know that when we spend less and when we spend wisely, everybody benefits, especially future generations; and they know there is plenty of room, ample room for reform when it comes to government spending. They support the President's plan to reduce and eliminate underperforming programs and agencies, and they support the budget that this Congress passed that reduces by nearly 1 percent discretionary nonhomeland, nondefense spending. They want us to make even larger strides in that same direction.

We know that rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse is not going to be an easy project; it will be a long-term project, but over the next few months, we will be coming back to the floor to talk just about that issue, and I invite my colleagues to join me.

**REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2744, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006**

Mr. PUTNAM, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-105) on the resolution (H. Res. 303) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2744) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

**REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 27, WITHDRAWING THE APPROVAL OF THE UNITED STATES FROM THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION**

Mr. PUTNAM, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-106) on the resolution (H. Res. 304) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 27) withdrawing the approval of the United States from the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

**UNITED AIRLINES PENSION CRISIS**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I will submit for the RECORD an article in the New York Times entitled, "Pension Loopholes Helped United Hide Troubles."

The article, by Mary Williams Walsh, discusses loopholes in the current laws that allow corporations to grossly underfund their employees' pensions, and to do so legally. They use accounting tricks to give the appearance of healthy financial standing; and as Senator GRASSLEY says, "We saw similar practices and events at Enron but, unfortunately, this time it is perfectly legal."

These companies keep the poor health of their pension funds hidden from the public until they decide to terminate them, as United Airlines currently is doing. United knowingly underfunded its pension fund as it faced bankruptcy, shielding from its workers the truth about their retirement futures.

I would like to share two statements from hard-working people in Illinois who are personally affected by pension-accounting sleight of hand. These statements are from the more than 2,000 dedicated United Airlines employees and retirees who submitted testimony to the online hearing that the