

over 30,000 people that are killed a year and for those that are injured, not to say how much it would save on our health care costs. We have the laws on the books. We must enforce them, but we need the tools to do so.

THE LADIES OF THE GULF

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the second lady of the gulf named Rita came across the shore of Texas and Louisiana, howling her winds and bringing her thundering rain this past weekend. Like her sister storm, Katrina, she took aim at the low-lying towns and the energy capital of the world that is located in southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana.

Nine of the 26 refineries in Port Arthur, Texas, alone were shut down. These refineries in and around Port Arthur refine 27 percent of the Nation's gasoline. Sixty percent of the Nation's gasoline is refined from New Orleans to Corpus Christi, Texas. Offshore drilling rigs were also shut down, and the start-up time is still undetermined.

Being a target in the hurricane alley, these refineries and oil rigs are vulnerable to nature. That is one reason why the United States must explore opening up new oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico, off the coast of Florida, off the coast of California.

This is a national security issue; and we must, with proper environmental safeguards, drill in these areas so that the energy does not cease because of the anger of the ladies of the gulf.

POLITICAL APPOINTEES

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, words that will be remembered for a long time, unless the White House can erase them: "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job." That was the President to Michael Brown, the political appointee head of FEMA, while people were drowning in New Orleans and in the southeast. The President was apparently unaware of the lack of assistance being provided by FEMA. Mr. Brown was shortly thereafter sent back to Washington and then resigned.

That might be good if it was an isolated instance. Unfortunately, it is not. This permeates the entire 3,000 so-called plum jobs that the President gets to appoint without any regard to qualification.

I mean, Mr. Brown's predecessor was the President's campaign manager who downgraded, demeaned, and ultimately submerged a previously very functional agency, FEMA, into the Homeland Security bureaucracy. Since then, many of the top people have left, and the agency has become totally demor-

alized, although we do find with new focus in the last week. Hopefully, that will last.

Just about the same time that Mr. Brown was going down, the government's top procurement official, that is the person in charge of all purchasing by the Federal Government, \$300 billion a year of taxpayers' money, a gentleman by the name of Safavian, was being led off in handcuffs by the FBI, but not before he had let out a few more billion dollars in no-bid contracts to the usual suspects in the wake of the Katrina disaster.

He has been found to have not only perjured himself but has taken illegal gratuities and bribes from the now-infamous lobbyist Mr. Abramoff. That was the top procurement official appointed by George Bush.

Beyond that, he also, of course, like Mr. Brown, had no qualifications for the job. He once had interned as a law student, helping in some minor way on a helicopter purchase at the Pentagon, and he jumped from there to his political associations with the President, to being head of all purchasing for the Federal Government.

Basically, we have here a government run by people who disrespect government. They do not like government. They do not believe in government. Their spiritual mentor, Mr. Norquist, says he wants government so small that he can strangle it in a bathtub. We find out that people drown when government starts to get kind of small because government is not there to respond. Now they are backpeddling and they are trying to pretend, oh, that is not really what it is all about, but it has been.

Incompetence threads through so many agencies, conflict of interest, and there might be other things. The one thing they do respect government for is its ability to extract money from all the working people of the United States of America and put it in a place, the Federal Treasury, that they can raid to benefit a very few people and major corporations. Government is a profit center is the way they see it, and they have a wonderful revolving door.

They have a fellow over at the FDA in charge of reviewing medical safety, 33 years old, who is a former columnist in The Wall Street Journal, stock analyst, right-wing think tank guru, attacking the FDA who is not supposed to be in charge of new drug approvals; but when a few very potentially profitable drugs did not get approved, he, as the Assistant Secretary, started leaning on the bureaucrats, the professionals, to say why do you disapprove that drug. Pfizer is going to make \$1 billion a year on it; it is a great drug. So what if a couple of people died? They probably would have died anyway.

So there is another fellow, Mr. Gottlieb, yet another outstanding appointment. Unfortunately, the government is rife with these people. There are too many to document, and what they are

engaged in is the systematic looting of the Treasury of the United States to benefit a few, to make government less functional so it cannot serve the needs of the many in times of need, like Katrina, or even in less routine times of need, like education, health care, border control.

They have got a beauty here. They have got a woman they want to put in charge of the border control of the United States of America who even the Republican Senators have questioned whether or not she has any capability, a woman named Julie Myers, another political hack. Ohio Republican Senator GEORGE VOINOVICH said he would really like to hear from Mr. Chertoff, the head of Homeland Security, come spend a little time with us, tell us personally why he thinks she is qualified for the job, because based on the résumé, I do not think you are. That is a Republican Senator. This is the woman who would be charged with keeping terrorists out of the United States of America, and that is a dysfunctional bureaucracy and has been for a long time.

That is new to the administration, but it is more essential today than ever. We need to clean house at this administration, put competent people in charge so government is there when the American people need it and stop looting the Treasury.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

IRAQ AND THE MARCH IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, Cindy Sheehan, who was arrested yesterday for simply exercising her constitutional right to freedom of speech outside the White House, has awoken a

sleeping American public. She deserves a great deal of credit for her tireless campaign against the Bush administration's lies and abuses which have governed the war in Iraq from the very beginning. Her campaign awakened the American people to realize just how awful this war truly is.

This weekend over 300,000 Americans, and I know it was more than 100,000 as reported by the press because I was there, over 300,000 Americans demonstrated the same resolve as Cindy Sheehan by showing up in force at a rally in Washington, D.C. It was one of the first times since the 1970s that so many people had descended on the Nation's capital to protest a war.

If strength of numbers demonstrates the injustice of a particular policy, then the thousands who participated in Saturday's march depicted the wrongness of the Iraq war.

Most Americans know that the war in Iraq is not increasing our national security, that by continuing to fight an unwinnable war the President is ensuring our national insecurity.

Most Americans know that the Bush administration had no plan for how to conduct the war. They had no plan for securing the country once Saddam was deposed; and now they have no plan for ending the war.

Most Americans know the terror and chaos that plague Iraq cannot be resolved simply by staying the course. I am sure the families of the 2,000 American soldiers and countless thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians killed in this war would argue that the last 2-plus years of fighting have not brought much stability to Iraq or to their lives.

Let us not forget about the thousands of American soldiers who were not killed in Iraq, but whose lives will nonetheless be changed forever as a result of injuries sustained during the war: arms and legs lost, shrapnel wounds cutting into every body part, emotional trauma. How will these wounds ever heal?

The thousands of Americans who bravely serve in our Nation's military deserve better. In fact, all Americans deserve better. They deserve better than an endless war that is slowly draining our national coffers. They deserve better than \$9 billion of congressionally appropriated funds being lost; \$9 billion lost. That is really pretty hard to imagine. Lost under the Coalition Provisional Authority's watch, or the new \$1 billion that has gone missing to the Iraqi Government, U.S. money intended for training of Iraqi security forces.

While the Bush administration is failing the American people through its foreign policies, they are also neglecting priorities at home. Just take the recent hurricanes that have bombarded the southeastern United States over the past month.

If anything, Katrina and Rita have demonstrated just how skewed our national priorities have become. The Federal Government failed to assist thou-

sands of Americans, mostly poor, mostly underprivileged, mostly African American during their great time of need.

What we need now is an independent commission to investigate how the hurricane response was botched so badly. Unfortunately, the Bush administration's response to the failures at home is just like his response given to its failures in Iraq: deflection and misdirection of any blame whatsoever.

President Bush has announced that he will establish a partisan, congressionally appointed oversight committee; but that is not what the American people need. That is not what the American people deserve. We need an impartial, independent commission to get to the bottom of why the National Guard was in Iraq and not in the United States to protect its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we need a drastic change in policies, both at home and in Iraq. The American people know when they are being lied to, when they are being misled.

It is time that Congress started doing what it was created to do: represent the will of the American people, rescue victims of natural disasters, and rescue our troops by bringing them home.

REPUBLICAN COMMITMENT TO THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this evening, many of my colleagues, with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE), who will be our leader, will be rising tonight on the floor to speak in strong support of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Violence against women is a horrific epidemic that continues to plague our world; and as a wife, as a mother, and a female Member of Congress, I realize the profound responsibility that all of us have to work together with our colleagues to pass legislation that would speak to the very heart of each and every woman.

As a result, thanks to the leadership of the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE), we have consistently supported legislation that protects women from the grave attacks on human rights that they face.

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It is vital to understand that to promote the welfare of women is also to support the subsistence of mankind.

Domestic violence is not just a woman's issue. It is a national issue that demands our utmost attention and it demands to be a priority. Legislation passed in 1994 and reauthorized in the year 2000 will expire on September 30 of this year, crippling the fight to protect women from domestic abuse. The programs funded by the Violence Against

Women Act have had a profound impact on many women who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Sexual violence in our colleges and universities has reached epidemic proportions. It is appalling to imagine that when our precious children go to school to learn they are at risk for violence. This bill would provide additional funding for the training of campus law enforcement and campus judicial boards so that universities can focus on the critical task of educating our students.

Violence against women creates significant barriers to equity for women. The Violence Against Women Act would authorize critical programs and develop new services that respond to the needs of our communities. This bill recognizes the importance of cooperation between local law enforcement agencies and the courts and court-related personnel.

Violence against women cuts across racial and ethnic lines. In fact, minority women often face additional hardships which could in turn delay the healing process. Therefore, effective community developed programs that incorporate culturally specific services can break down some of these barriers that often isolate survivors. This bill provides support to local law enforcement, prosecutors, and to victim assistance programs to both stop violence against women and help the survivors so that they can start a new life.

We have to continue to work together to ensure that a culture of equality is cultivated, where the woman's role is increasingly recognized within society. Women make an indispensable contribution to the growth of our culture and their extraordinary presence permeates every aspect of our society. Without the contribution of women, society is less alive, culturally impoverished, and peace is made less stable.

As Vice Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Women's Caucus, I have consistently fought to protect women from domestic and sexual abuse, and I am so glad that we are joined not only by my colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE), but the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), who has been a leader in our women's caucus on this issue.

So we are talking about American women here, not Republican women, not Democrat women, but American women. The Violence Against Women Act is too important an issue for it to be left to partisan politics.

FEDERAL RESPONSE TO ENERGY EMERGENCIES

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and Rita,