

At that point we had said we would read every American's name as an official part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. In the words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, each of these heroes stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase in its blessings.

God bless each of them and keep each of the brave Americans whose memory we honor tonight in our hearts: 1st Sergeant Alan Nye Gifford, Specialist David H. Ford IV, Staff Sergeant Regilio E. Nelom, Sergeant 1st Class Lawrence E. Morrison, Specialist William L. Evans, Specialist William V. Fernandez, Sergeant Michael Egan, 1st Lieutenant Mark H. Dooley, Sergeant Pierre A. Raymond, Staff Sergeant William Alvin Allers III, Sergeant Travis M. Arndt, Specialist Scott P. McLaughlin, Specialist Kevin M. Jones, Specialist Mike T. Sonoda Jr., Sergeant Paul C. Neubauer, Sergeant Andrew Joseph Derrick, Sergeant Brian E. Dunlap, Staff Sergeant Daniel R. Schelle, Sergeant Shawn A. Graham, Sergeant Kenneth G. Ross, Sergeant Tane T. Baum, Warrant Officer Adrian B. Stump, Sergeant Patrick D. Stewart, Chief Warrant Officer John M. Flynn, Sergeant 1st Class Casey E. Howe, Master Sergeant Tulsa T. Tulliau, Private Elijah M. Ortega, Sergeant Andrew P. Wallace, Specialist Michael J. Wendling, Sergeant Howard P. Allen, Lance Corporal Steven A. Valdez, Staff Sergeant Robert F. White, Staff Sergeant Jason A. Benford, Private 1st Class Oliver J. Brown, Specialist Lee A. Wiegand, Sergeant Eric W. Slebodnik, Staff Sergeant George A. Pugliese, Staff Sergeant Daniel L. Arnold, Airman 1st Class Elizabeth N. Jacobson, Sergeant Steve Morin Jr., Sergeant 1st Class James J. Stoddard Jr., Staff Sergeant John G. Doles, Staff Sergeant Jens E. Schelbert, Specialist Joshua J. Kynoch, Sergeant Marshall A. Westbrook, Staff Sergeant Timothy J. Roark, Sergeant Larry Wayne Pankey Jr., Private 1st Class Roberto C. Baez, Specialist Jacob T. Vanderbosch, Sergeant Bryan W. Large, Corporal John R. Stalvey, Sergeant Sean B. Berry, Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian K. Joplin, Private 1st Class Andrew D. Bedard, Lance Corporal Carl L. Raines II.

Madam Speaker, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, who wrote to the mother of five fallen soldiers in the Civil War, "I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

I would also like to thank the brave men and women who continue to serve our Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world, and serve their country with distinction and honor. Our thoughts and prayers and gratitude are with you and your families at this time until you return home.

Madam speaker, in case I mispronounced any names of any of the individuals, I apologize to them and their family. This brings us to little over 2,136 names read out of the 2,246.

#### STEEL TO SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on a program back in Youngstown, Ohio in the Mahoney Valley, the old steel valley, called the Steel to Scholars Program. And this program was initiated by the president of our Chamber of Commerce, Tom Humphries. The intention of the program is to go into schools and school districts to set expectations and to highlight schools that are having success on the test scores that are mandated by the State of Ohio, and other test scores that schools take.

And I want to take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to thank Tom Humphries for taking the initiative in recognizing the importance of education in our community.

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There is a lot that needs to be done in the field of education at a State level and local level and definitely at the Federal level. But I believe that the most important thing that the Steel to Scholars program accomplishes is that it sets goals, and it rewards and highlights positive behavior and positive achievements.

Madam Speaker, we recognize throughout society, whether it is in business or in education, that the level of success that any organization has or any school district has or any team has is directly related to the level of expectations that the community or the coaches provide and the bar that is there for the students to achieve.

Regardless of what we talk about, as far as what needs to be done for education, whether it is through programs, or after-school programs, or exactly what needs to be done, there is nothing more important than telemarketing high levels of expectation, not in any particular school district, but in all school districts, and that is what the Steel to Scholars program is all about.

The competition that we have in the United States of America and around the globe is more pronounced than it has ever been in the history of the United States of America. The competition is fierce. That is why tonight, Madam Speaker, we need to highlight the responsibility and the obligation of all of our citizens. Parents need to make it a personal mission to sit down and do homework with their kids; not some parents, all parents. Teachers and priests and pastors and the Chamber of Commerce and local elected officials all need to be there to raise that bar, to raise that level of expectation so that the kids, the students, will go out and try to achieve those levels.

If we look at what has happened in the past few years, just in the past decade, the local labor pool that used to be the United States is now the globe, and high-tech, high-value workers, are rewarded with high salaries.

I feel that the United States is not making the kind of investment that we need the make. Example: China, last year, graduated 600,000 engineers; India, last year, graduated 350,000 engineers; the United States, 70,000, and half of those graduates are foreign-born.

In high-tech output, total research and development investment, U.S. patent applications, in all three of these areas the Chinese have grown and closed the gap on the United States and are projected to surpass the United States in the upcoming years. The U.S. has lost world share in high-tech exports. If we do not recognize that we need to make investments in research and development, make investments in education, but at the same time demand from local school districts, local teachers, parents, local elected officials, there is no one that cannot be involved in this project. It will lead to the success or the failure of the United States in the next couple of decades. Everyone has a role to play.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the No Child Left Behind plan that passed this Congress needs to be fully funded. We need to make sure that those components of the No Child Left Behind program that allow for tutoring and math and reading that have shown great levels of success, those children who are tutored in math and reading through the No Child Left Behind program have increased their reading scores by 70 percent in some school districts, one teacher to six kids, but the funding needs to be there.

So we have the parents, the local community, the local elected officials, and groups like the Chamber of Commerce, and people like Tom Humphries all coming together to support these kids so that we can have a better economy in the City of Youngstown and in the old steel valley.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FLAKE 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 Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. HENSARLING 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 Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### 2,000 U.S. SOLDIERS DEAD IN IRAQ

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

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, yesterday we reached a tragic milestone. Staff Sergeant George T. Alexander, Jr., of Texas, died from wounds he sustained while serving in Iraq. His death brought the U.S. death toll in Iraq to 2,000 soldiers. In addition to that, over 15,000 soldiers have been wounded, and over 400 are now amputees. My thoughts and prayers are with Staff Sergeant Alexander's family, and with all the families that have lost a loved one in Iraq.

However, I hope the administration will use this milestone as an opportunity to be honest, to square with the American people about why we are fighting in Iraq, and to develop a stronger plan that will secure Iraq and conclude our involvement in the war.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that to govern is to make choices. When it comes to the Iraq War, President Bush has made the wrong choices. Instead of putting the entire resources of the United States behind the efforts to find those responsible for the September 11th terrorist attacks, the President chose to use those tragic events as an excuse to go to war in Iraq.

Where is Osama bin Laden? Have we stopped looking for him? We have invaded Iraq. We have the shock and awe campaign. Thousands of Iraqis are dead, and now 2,000 of our soldiers are dead. We have left Iraq, and Baghdad in particular, in shambles. We have appropriated money for the reconstruction of Iraq, and we told the American people that we would basically pay for the major reconstruction with the proceeds from the oil that we would pump in Iraq. None of this is true; no weapons of mass destruction, no money coming from the oil fields in Iraq, no rehabilitation having been done. The insurgents not only are bombing all of the different sites in Iraq, they are killing schoolteachers.

We have created a breeding ground for terrorists. Oh, we claim they are coming from Syria. We claim that Iran has a hand in it. What is interesting now is Condoleezza Rice is telling us that we are going to get Iran to help us with Iraq. At the same time, Iran is developing and making more sophisticated its nuclear ability, but now we are going to try and join in with them

to help us with Iraq? With this business of trying to make the American people believe that all of the insurgents are coming from Syria, we have created a new bogeyman for the people to focus on.

But that is not all about this terrorism, in this fight against terrorism. It seems to me that the President of the United States finds occasions by which he comes to the American public and he tells us that we have to be worried about a new terrorist threat. Every now and then he reminds us that the terrorists are still out there, and somehow we have to stay in Iraq. If we do not, we are going to be vulnerable to all of these terrorists. But if we stay the course, not only is he going to help keep us safe, no matter how many sacrifices we have to make, the right thing to do is to stay the course.

Mr. Speaker, that is easy to talk about and say when you are talking about somebody else's children. The President chose to go to war based on false and misleading intelligence. Look where it has gotten us. Look at the scandals surrounding the White House today because we tried to make the intelligence fit the decision that had already been made to go to war.

We are finding, and I guess we will know soon, once the indictments come down, who leaked the information about Valerie Plame and outed her because they were so mad at her husband, who had been sent to Niger to help put the story together that somehow Saddam Hussein had been seeking yellowcake in Niger. When Mr. Wilson came back and said it was not true, then they went after Mr. Wilson. Somehow the Vice President's office knows all about this.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to bring our soldiers home. It is time for Republicans and Democrats alike to understand that we do not need to lose another American soldier in Iraq.

He chose to go to war without international support or heed the warnings of those in Congress that urged him to slow the march to war.

The President chose to send our soldiers to war without the body armor and armored vehicles necessary to keep our soldiers safe.

And, he chose to go to war without an adequate number of troops or a clear plan for how to succeed in Iraq.

For those decisions, American soldiers are paying the price—and for 2,000 soldiers they have paid the ultimate price.

It is time that the President recognizes the dangers of "staying the course" and develops a plan that accomplishes our mission in Iraq and allows all our soldiers to return to their families.

Madam Speaker, over the past several weeks, members of the Republican Caucus have been trying to cut the Federal budget by \$50 billion. They claim that it is to help pay for the rebuilding efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and Rita.

Perhaps most shocking, the Republicans are trying to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

If the Republicans are successful in their efforts to cut discretionary funding by 2 percent,

the VA's budget will be cut by more than \$600 million which translates to nearly 100,000 fewer veterans receiving health care this year.

It is heartless and cruel to cut the VA's budget in order to make room for more tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans, while 159,000 U.S. soldiers are fighting in Iraq and tens of thousands more are deployed throughout the world.

I urge my colleagues to oppose these cuts and urge the American people to call their representatives and tell them to oppose these cuts.

Our soldiers and their families have sacrificed too much for us to turn our backs on them when they return home.

Madam Speaker, I close by thanking our soldiers for their service and pray for their safe return.

#### WAR ON TERROR—PROGRESS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I take the floor tonight with my colleagues to talk about the values of freedom and the men and women who have, in very difficult places around the world, but especially in the warfighting theaters in Afghanistan and Iraq, have fought to change the world for freedom and, in doing so, to secure the United States of America, and to make us a more secure Nation, and to accrue to the benefit of generations over the next 10, 20 or 30 years.

I thought to talk a little bit about, especially following the speakers who have deplored our policy and condemned our policy in Iraq and Afghanistan, I thought it might be important to remind ourselves why we are in those theaters.

Madam Speaker, I brought tonight some of the citations for gallantry, gallantry that was carried out by American soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines in Iraq. I wanted to read one of those. Then I wanted to talk about what these soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines have purchased for the United States of America. I want to talk about the value of what they have done for our country.

This individual is Lance Corporal Aaron C. Austin. This is a commendation, a copy of a commendation, and a posthumous Silver Star medal, the Nation's third highest award for valor that was sent over to our office by the Secretary of the Navy. It talks about the incredible job that this young lance corporal, one of the guys who makes the Marine Corps work, that is an enlisted man just a couple of ranks up from private, but somebody who has taken a leadership position, who leads a fire team or a squad in places like Fallujah or Ramadi.

For conspicuous gallantry and bravery in action against the enemy as a Machine Gun Team Leader, Company