

passing commonsense gun legislation. We can do a better job. We are fighting wars around the world. We are also fighting wars here in our own country. Every single day someone dies of gun violence. We can do a better job. We can make sure that the criminals have a harder time getting the weapons that are on our streets. We must have uniform Federal laws to protect our citizens.

LANCE CORPORAL ROBERT  
"ROBBIE" MARTINEZ, TEXAS MA-  
RINE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the great General Douglas MacArthur of World War II once commented, "I have just returned from visiting the Marines at the front, and there is not a finer fighting organization in the world." Lance Corporal Robert "Robbie" Alexander Martinez was a member of this fine fighting organization. He was killed December 1 while fighting and serving our Nation in Iraq. He was a member of the Second Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment, First Marine Division, based at Marine Corps Air Ground and Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California.

Mr. Speaker, to date, there have been 185 Texans killed since the war began in March 2003. Lance Corporal Martinez was just 20 years of age. He was on his second Iraqi tour. He had already spent 7 months on the Syrian border in 2004. He went to Iraq and into Fallujah this past June. He and nine other Marines were killed last Thursday when a roadside bomb exploded next to them in the deadliest attack against American troops in Iraq in 4 months. Martinez was scheduled to come home this past Monday but at the last minute his tour was extended for a month and a half.

Just a week ago, Robbie Martinez had just called his mother and asked her to buy a diamond because he was coming home. He had planned to propose to his "love at first sight" girlfriend, Taylor Wilkenson, as soon as he got back.

Robbie Martinez graduated from Cleveland High School in Cleveland, Texas, in 2003. While in high school, he was known as the peacemaker. By the time he started his senior year, he had already signed up for the Marines. He pre-enlisted at the age of 17 so he could be activated as soon as he graduated from high school. Martinez was a baseball pitcher at Cleveland High and dreamed of getting his degree in education and becoming a baseball coach. He put his dreams on hold to join the elite fighting forces of the United States Marine Corps. He left for basic training 2 days after he graduated from high school.

Lance Corporal Martinez's stepfather, Jeremy Hunt, called Robbie his "diamond in the rough" and one of the

greatest things that had ever come into his life. He said Robbie loved being in the Corps and was proud of it. He was proud of being a Marine. He knew he was there for a reason and he was resolving the situation in Iraq and looking forward to coming home. He had requested lots of candy in his care packages from Texas. This candy was not for him because he would hand it out to the Iraqi children that he would see.

He is remembered for his infectious smile and someone who loved spending time with his family and friends, barbecuing and making people smile. Robbie's mother, Kelly Hunt, said that her 14-year-old son Mikie wants to join the military, just like his brother.

President Ronald Reagan once said, "Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world, but the Marines don't have that problem." Lance Corporal Martinez was working to make a difference in the world when he gave his life. His bravery, his dedication, his patriotism will not be forgotten by his friends, his family and freedom-loving peoples throughout the world.

Lance Corporal Martinez died for this country, the Iraqi people and for that word freedom. His Nation made the call and he responded without hesitation with his unwavering courage and his commitment. He served his country with honor and distinction. He wanted to be in the Marines since he was 12 years of age.

Mr. Speaker, as we extend our prayers and our condolences to his parents, his relatives, his friends and his fellow students at Cleveland High School in Texas, we take time to reflect on this American hero's devotion to country and to the people of Iraq. He is a heroic representative of the State of Texas and an honorable defender of liberty and freedom.

Country music singer Brad Cotter wrote the following in his tribute to American soldiers and it is fitting right now:

"Thank God for Americans in uniform. Those who fight to keep our freedom every day. Thank God for Americans in uniform. Those who fight to keep us safe along our way."

Semper Fi, Lance Corporal Martinez.  
Semper Fi.

#### THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND COLLEGE TUITION

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, at 2 a.m. before Congress adjourned a couple of weeks ago, we passed something called the reconciliation bill, theoretically the first attempt to begin to deal with the flood of red ink that is drowning our Nation. But these were kind of mean-spirited cuts that hit at those who really can't afford to give too

much in order to protect the very wealthy.

Here is how it worked. The biggest single category of cuts in that bill was \$14.3 billion out of student loans. On the Republican side, they said, We didn't cut student loans. All we did was increase the cost of student loans. Well, it is the same impact on the students. They are going to double the origination fee on the student loans, they are going to charge students a fee to fix the rate, and they are going to give them a really high fixed interest rate instead of the rather reasonable rate that is available now. It is estimated for the average Oregonian going to a public school who borrows the maximum amount for 4 years, they will incur another \$5,800 in loan costs.

I went out to see what the students in Oregon thought about this and how they were doing. I was inspired. I went to the University of Oregon and Oregon State both, met with student government leaders and regular students who are getting financial aid. The stories were inspiring, what these young people are doing to try and better themselves. There was one couple, they had both been displaced workers. They have a child. They went through Lane Community College to get associate's degrees because it was cheaper and they borrowed \$40,000 to do it. They are now at the U of O. They estimate they will graduate with over \$100,000 in debt. There was the young woman who is holding three jobs, three jobs, and 14 credit hours. She said, Congressman, I'm going to have to reduce my credit hours. You know what that means. It's going to take me longer to finish school, which means I'm going to have to borrow more money.

They said, when you were young and you went to school, and I think a lot of the Republicans have not thought about this maybe, you could take a summer job and save enough money to pay tuition at a public school. That was true. They said, If we get a summer job and save really well, we get just about enough money to buy our books. You can work full-time year round at a minimum wage job in Oregon where the minimum wage is considerably higher than the Federal minimum wage and still not have enough money to eat and pay your tuition, let alone your housing costs.

This is a dire situation. The response of the Republicans is that these are the people who should sacrifice. These are the people who can afford to pay more to help rein in the reckless, wanton spending and debt being piled up on that side of the aisle. What is the trade-off the Republicans want? They are going to take the \$14.3 billion that these students will have to pay in additional costs, many of them will probably have to give up on getting a higher education and just go to work in a dead-end job, and they are going to give it to the richest among us. It is