

House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I hope the gentleman from Illinois will be helping his seniors sign up for this program. It is a good program, and my constituents in Texas are benefiting from it.

But I came tonight to talk a little bit about the President's pandemic plan from a legislator's perspective. The past is prologue. We saw in 2003 the beginnings of an outbreak of an illness called SARS. SARS ended up killing 800 people which is a significant number of deaths, but nowhere near as high as it could have been.

Did we defeat SARS with an antiviral, no. Did we defeat SARS with a vaccine, no. In fact, we did not get a vaccine for SARS even though the CDC and the NIH very quickly came up with the genetic sequencing for the DNA on the SARS virus. But SARS was beaten the old-fashioned way, by carefully epidemiology sleuthing and quarantine.

I had a radio host ask me the other day, he thought SARS was perhaps a sham. He kind of dismissed the idea, but the reality is that this disease was contained by those old-fashioned methods, and in fact, it never materialized to the threat we thought it would be. In fact, ask the good people in the tourism business in Toronto if they felt that SARS affected them in that area.

But as we move on to the discussion of avian flu, I am a Republican. I believe in limited government. So do we need a big government solution to the pandemic profile that we may be presented? Well, I have also believed in empowering the individual and believe there is a degree of inertia in big government that hampers the ability to respond to a rapidly evolving crisis. Look at what happened down at the gulf coast with the hurricanes.

But there is a role for government in this situation because the potential for human death and destruction is so vast. It is going to involve the public sector, the private sector, and academia, and all of those areas will need to be on their best game in order to defeat this virus.

What can Congress do and what should Congress do and specifically, what should the House of Representatives do? Well, we hold hearings and we do that pretty well. We have held several hearings in Energy and Commerce about the problem of the pandemic flu. They have educated Members.

Congress can certainly travel. We do that well. In fact, several Members have traveled to other areas in Asia. I know Secretary Leavitt from HHS traveled to Southeast Asia to see what is happening with the virus in birds in that part of the world, and I know several Members who are planning travel in the future. That is a good thing.

We can communicate and talk to the press and talk to the media and talk to each other. We can educate each other and make certain that we are all individually educated about this threat

and that we communicate with our State departments of health and our local health departments. This has the potential for being such a big issue that 1 to 2 million Americans dying is so significant that it requires a commitment. It requires reform. It requires change, and I would like to add that it requires a promise.

Under commitment, we have got to commit the money for research and development on vaccines and technologies. We have to streamline the regulatory process at the FDA. The FDA is very close to approving a vaccine for the current bird flu. But the reality is if the virus becomes active in humans, it will change. It will do that through mutation, and this virus may not be effective against the vaccine that is being developed.

So if the virus mutates, there has got to be a way to quickly get that approval through the FDA for the new vaccine.

The distribution network. We are still seeing areas of the country that cannot get the current flu vaccine to distribute to their citizens, so the distributive network for this vaccine is going to have to be significantly improved.

Most importantly, these manufacturing facilities are going to have to be sited within the United States. With all due respect to the former speaker, and wanting to get drugs from Canada and other areas, can we count on the good people in Belgium to give us the vaccine if we need it when their citizens need it as well? This vaccine will have to be manufactured within our shores.

We have to improve the science on producing vaccines. We saw what happened last year with the egg-based vaccine for the flu vaccine: A bacterial contamination ruined a large batch and it was unavailable. We are going to have to progress to the cell-based system. It is time for vaccine manufacturing to come out of the 1950s and get into the 21st century. Our commitment of research and development money will help that happen, and when that happens, the time required to develop the vaccine and get it available to people will vastly improve.

Under the reform criteria, medical liability reform. The medical justice system has to be fair. We are going to need to provide some limits on liability for not just the vaccine itself, but adjuvants that might be added to the vaccine, preservatives that might be added to the vaccine. And what if the outbreak is so severe and the vaccine is in short supply, and it is required to dilute the vaccine. We need some degree of liability production, but at the same time, to ensure indemnification of those first responders who we are going to require to be on the front lines if this pandemic really picks up speed.

We need to change. There is going to have to be some degree of antitrust reform, and this Congress may have been called upon to do that. Some compa-

nies have been proactive in discussing what can be done to ramp up productions of vaccines or antivirals, such as Tamiflu.

And finally, a promise. The concept of guaranteed purchase or product or advanced purchase. We need to look to the future. We need to find a universal vaccine.

Mr. Speaker, The Los Angeles Times, on November 14, 2005, wrote, "Instead of being bamboozled by the flu virus' showy costume changes, scientists would pick dowdy, less prominent parts of the virus, the housekeeping features that do not change year to year and are common to all strains. Presenting these pieces to the human immune system would prompt the vaccinated person to recognize and fight off any influenza virus."

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#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4297, TAX RELIEF EXTENSION RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. PUTNAM, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-330) on the resolution (H. Res. 588) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4297) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 201(b) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

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

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#### CHENEY'S SCORCHED EARTH POLITICS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

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

There was no objection.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the White House is fast approaching a new low when it comes to smearing those of us who oppose the disastrous Iraq War. Before the Thanksgiving recess, Vice President DICK CHENEY declared that suggesting the administration deceived the Nation to justify the Iraq invasion, and I quote him, "is one of the most dishonest and reprehensible charges ever aired in this city."

Well, first of all, being called "dishonest" by DICK CHENEY is kind of like being told by Imelda Marcos that you have a shoe fetish. I thought it was