

Mr. Speaker, people have rights. Government has no rights. Government has power and it obtains it when we forfeit our rights to the government. In this time of terrorism, our government uses high-tech surveillance to capture them. This is good. But the fourth amendment states: "The right of people to be secure from unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated."

It is the duty of the judiciary, not this body, not even the executive branch, to protect those rights and review searches.

When I was a judge in Texas, I signed hundreds of warrants. I was even the State wiretap judge, and I found that warrants make better police officers and they make better criminal cases.

In this post-9/11 era, we cannot allow our zeal to be safe to get in the way of judicial review of search warrants and wiretaps while continuing to provide tools for law enforcement to capture those terrorists. You see, Mr. Speaker, we can have it both ways. We can be safe and secure and maintain our civil rights as a free people. That's just the way it is.

MEDICARE INFORMED CHOICE ACT

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

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, there is one issue of great concern that I hear about over and over again when I am back home, the needlessly complicated Medicare prescription drug program.

Seniors are confused and frustrated as they attempt to study 60 plans in order to first decide whether to join and then to choose a plan to sign up for. Many are simply giving up.

I have already held half a dozen informational seminars on the program and every session has been packed. There is clearly a problem.

Congress could and should make the progress better, more affordable, and less confusing by allowing Medicare to negotiate prices with drug companies. But the very least that Congress must do is pass a Medicare Informed Choice Act which would delay the enrollment penalty, prevent beneficiaries from losing their employer-based coverage, and allow seniors to switch plans if they make a mistake.

Given the current confusion, it is essential that we allow beneficiaries to take their time, check the facts, and know their options without being rushed to choose. We owe no less to our seniors.

IRAQ'S DEMOCRATIC VICTORY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's New York Times proclaims loudly that "Iraqis, Including Sunnis, Voted in Large Numbers" during Thursday's historic elections.

Throughout the world, people were waking up to the great news about Iraq's most recent democratic victory. USA Today discussed the inspiring turnout in Iraq, while even Knight Ridder declared that high voter turnout in Iraq promises fully representative parliament.

The National Review reported that U.S. troops describe a festive atmosphere across Iraq. The Los Angeles Times wrote that the ballot box is the new battle ground. The Boston Globe described how, for one Sunni family, casting ballots was an act of resistance.

I was particularly pleased to learn that the BBC reported the Iraqi vote met global standards. From New York to London, the mainstream media finally recognized and reported the clear successes of the election which delivered a devastating blow to terrorists and ultimately helped protect American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

STOP THE MEDICARE INSANITY

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, very few decisions are more personal or important than health care decisions. And when Washington gets involved in health care, especially in Medicare, government must put patients first.

Decisions already made, if not changed, will result in 38 percent of the doctors seeing fewer Medicare patients, half of physicians less likely to participate in Medicare Advantage and a third of the doctors no longer visiting nursing homes.

Unless Congress acts, the ability for seniors to access quality medical care will get worse.

The way our government pays doctors for taking care of our parents and our grandparents through Medicare is unbelievably broken. Physicians will be subjected to a 26 percent pay cut over the next 5 years, and an official of the government agency in charge of Medicare said they will cut doctors pay until they stop seeing Medicare patients and then they might fix it.

Mr. Speaker, then will be too late.

Americans deserve better from their representatives. Those who care for all of us are being driven out of business by a government that cares more about money than health. Let's stop this insanity.

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RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Congress is about to go home in a few days either today, tomorrow, Monday,

Tuesday, sometime in the next few days, and this House, again, has failed to increase the minimum wage.

There are large numbers of people in this country, people with children, often single mothers, sometimes, not usually, adults in their 20s and 30s and 40s who make \$5.15 an hour. The Senate finally increased the minimum wage. The House is going to go home sometime in the next few days having failed to even bring up to a vote an increase in the minimum wage.

Since this House floor session began about 16 minutes ago, in that time, a minimum wage worker would have earned about \$1.10 or \$1.15. A CEO of a Fortune 500 company in this same 16 minutes would have earned about \$1,500. Mr. Speaker, we can do a lot better in this body than we have done this year.

GREAT AND HEARTWARMING NEWS FROM IRAQ

(Mr. HAYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, great and heartwarming news from Iraq.

Early this morning, I received an e-mail from a soldier serving in Iraq which provides one small example of how democracy is progressing in Iraq and how our troops along with the Iraqi security forces are making a difference.

He wrote: "The highlight of my day, Election Day, was in south Baghdad, where there were no polling stations in January 2005 and where many Sunnis did not vote in October 2005. I watched as two affluent local sheiks walked into the polling station together holding hands, which is a huge sign of respect here. What was moving about this was one sheik was Shia, the other Sunni. They told me how much they appreciated what the United States had done for them and that they could never repay us. The Sunni said, 'We are tired of violence and the fighting that destroys our people and our country; that they would work to make the U.S. proud and that the sacrifices of American soldiers is respected and appreciated.'"

God bless our troops.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

(Mr. FARR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, while we are locked up here today, I would like to wish my wife Sherry a very happy birthday. This week, I have been telling her, has been a real doozy for civil liberties.

We learned that both the Pentagon and the National Security Agency have been spying on thousands of innocent Americans. Apparently, the NSA was doing it at the direction of President Bush.