

Alexander Lukashenko, in the upcoming elections in 2006. The opposition is united, the people are motivated for change, and we just ask for free and fair elections.

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

(Mr. EMANUEL 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 New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

FILM SUPREME COURT PROCEEDINGS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, over the past year I have addressed many issues I have with the judgments handed down by the highest court of our country, the Supreme Court, right across the street.

Recent rulings by the Supreme Court of the United States, particularly pertaining to the separation of church and State, property rights, the right to say the pledge of allegiance, and the use of foreign law by our Supreme Court in interpreting the American Constitution, have prompted an outcry by the American people and a growing interest, or better yet, confusion, confusion on how those decisions are made.

The decisions made by the Supreme Court have a direct impact on the lives of Americans and every American in the future. With that said, I believe it is past time that every American be afforded the opportunity to see how those decisions are made in this Court.

I filed legislation that would allow cameras to broadcast Supreme Court proceedings so that we can all see the arguments made before the Supreme Court and how they make those decisions that affect our lives from now on.

I am no stranger to cameras in the courtroom. I was one of the first Texas judges to allow cameras in the courtroom. In addition, I was the first judge in Texas to oversee a capital murder trial broadcast in its entirety on television. Our sense of justice says the more open and public a trial, the more likely justice will occur.

I found that cameras only enhanced this concept. As a criminal court judge for 20 years, I have had countless cases covered by the media from all over the world. Critics argue that attorneys play to the cameras; but the truth is, they play to the jury. They always have played to the jury. Juries are the ones that make the decisions, not the audience.

Courts have the ability to prevent filming of the jurors, child witnesses, assault victims while letting the community see the public trial. Cameras make the ability of the people to view justice as it is in progress.

In the case of cameras broadcasting the Supreme Court hearings, there is no jury, just nine Justices who have the final say on the American Constitution. Because of the magnitude of the rulings handed down by this Court, these proceedings above all others should be as open to the public as possible.

While the hearings are, in fact, open to the public, not everyone has the ability to travel to Washington, D.C. and view these proceedings. This is why it is precisely time to come to the reality to open the Supreme Court to public hearings and allow their proceedings to be filmed by cameras.

Cameras can be unobtrusive. There are no big lights. There are no big cameras. In fact, many people do not even realize there are cameras in this Chamber. So it is time to film these proceedings. Opening these proceedings to the American public is much more important than seeing the child molestation trial of the King of Pop or the murder trial of some ex-football player.

Yet there was no concern over viewing these proceedings on television. Why should there be concern over a Court that has the final say on how our Constitution is interpreted? This year the Iraqi country, the Iraqi people have formed a new democracy, and part of that is a new judiciary. And yet they are already filming their trials, because the tyrant of the area, Saddam Hussein, his trial is on international television. This is their democracy and their courts seem to be somewhat more open than even ours.

Those judges and critics who do not want the public to view what they are doing in those courtrooms, Mr. Speaker, maybe should not be doing what they are doing behind those closed doors. It is time to open the Supreme Court to public viewing of their proceedings on television.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 75. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2141. An act to make improvements to the Federal Deposit Insurance Act.

CONGRATULATIONS TO APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I join my friend and colleague, Ms. FOXX, tonight. This morning I paid tribute to our wonderful men and women in uniform for a great win for freedom in Iraq.

But tonight, Representative FOXX and I want to pay tribute to a great team, Appalachian State, for a wonderful win in the national championship that they won last night in Division I-AA football. What a thrill it was to watch those young men, their fans, their school administrators, the whole Appalachian community come together through a tough play-off, exhibiting sportsmanship, hard work, commitment, incredible enthusiasm, and to win that game last night.

Take nothing away from Northern Iowa, they played hard. They played well. Appalachian prevailed. Seeing the spirit that those young men and women exhibited, coaches, who by the way, ladies and gentlemen, Coach Jerry Moore, the winning coach, was given his first coaching job by our colleague, Coach OSBORNE. And Coach Moore reflects all of the wonderful qualities of Coach OSBORNE.

By the same token, I thank Representative FOXX for calling attention to my son-in-law, Lonnie Galloway, who coaches there; and I am so proud of him and all of the folks.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to Representative FOXX for some comments.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. HAYES.

I am glad you mentioned Coach Moore serving with Coach OSBORNE, Congressman OSBORNE. I did not get a chance to mention that this morning. I agree with you: he exhibits so much of all of the wonderful traits of our colleague, and we are lucky that we have at least three people in this body who have connections to Appalachian and to the great win that they had last night.

I am really sorry that our duties here prevented us from being in Chattanooga last night with so many Appalachian students and supporters.

I would have loved to see firsthand that crushing defense in the fourth quarter led by Jason Hunter and Marques Murrell. I wish I could have been there to witness in person the courage of quarterback Richie Williams, who played through a painful ankle injury suffered last week in the semifinal game against Furman.

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Appalachian is getting a lot of attention because of this football win. But the gentleman and I know and the people of western North Carolina and, indeed, all North Carolina know that Appalachian has always been known as a first-rate college and a first-rate university. It has a very proud history,

particularly in the area of teacher administration and administrators of the public schools. And I think getting this win for the football team simply rounds out its reputation in terms of being a really top-notch school. Its academic program has been strong forever. And now with this win from the football team, the first national championship ever for Appalachian, they show that it is a number one university in all respects.

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments and, again, calling attention to this great victory. My almost 90-year-old mother was there, all my family, except for us. But we were here following the action very closely. We have an Iraqi Marine veteran who plays on that team, number 89, Mr. Stokes. I do not know how Winslow survived without me there to keep her from having a heart attack, and Barbara suffered, too.

But, again, my congratulations, heartfelt, and the gentlewoman's as well for such a wonderful performance representing North Carolina, the academic, the athletic, the school community, Boone, and western North Carolina and the mountains.

Congratulations to Appalachian. A wonderful victory. I thank them for representing us.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. And, Mr. Speaker, now we both need to say, Go Mountaineers.

Mr. HAYES. Go Mountaineers.

THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again, it is an honor to come before the House, and we would like to thank the Democratic leadership for this opportunity, Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI; our whip, Mr. STENY HOYER; and also our chairman, Mr. BOB MENENDEZ; and chairman to be Mr. JIM CLYBURN.

As the Members know, Mr. Speaker, we have a 30-Something Working Group that comes to the floor every opportunity we have to talk about the good things that are happening here under the Capitol Dome and also some of the bad things that are happening and the things that are not happening at all that should be happening on behalf of the American people.

Today, as the Members know, Mr. Speaker, there has been quite a bit said in the Capitol, very little done in the first session of this Congress, facing some of the needs that the American people are wanting to be addressed. The American people want to have issues such as health care, veteran affairs, also making sure that we have a

strategy in Iraq for success, making sure that we stand up on behalf of those Americans that have been devastated by natural disasters, making sure that we get down to the bottom and get rid of a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence under the Capitol Dome, and also making sure that we can expand jobs for Americans and also for small businesses.

But in the last 24 to 48 hours, there have been quite a few strange things that are going on here in the Capitol. There have been bills that Members have tried to put amendments on that are not passable and should not be even honored with the paper that they are printed on, of personal agendas and agendas on behalf of the special interests.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share this hour tonight with Mr. RYAN and also Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ but also with a respected Member this House with whom Mr. RYAN and I serve on the Armed Services Committee with, and he is also the ranking member on the Budget Committee and has been working very hard on a number of pieces of legislation. He is from South Carolina.

I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT).

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

And I would like to turn to a matter of some significant concern to me and to the gentleman because, as he said, we both serve on the House Armed Services Committee. We both have worked diligently to see a good Defense authorization bill put together this year and finally, we thought, put to bed last week. But here is what is happening, to everybody's dismay, on this side of the line.

On Thursday afternoon, the House appointed conferees on the Defense authorization bill to go to conference with the Senate. Thursday afternoon. Within hours, the conference committee met for the first and only time. We made a cursory review, which is all we had time for, of the conference report which staff and mainly the Republican Members had worked up and put together over the last several weeks. We reviewed it. We reviewed the salient points. We made some objections. And finally, we approved it.

This summary procedure is not my idea or I think the Framers' idea of how we would make law, particularly law that authorizes the expenditure of \$440 billion for something as important as the defense of this Nation. This kind of summary procedure should not be repeated. This year, we were late getting started. The Senate was even later getting started. So we had to do it in record time. And I am glad we got it done, but it is not the best procedure.

As bad as that procedure is, the worst was yet to come. After the conference report had been signed, signed by the Democratic conferees, signed by the Republican conferees, signed by the Senate, signed by the House, after it

had been signed, the Republican leadership decided it needed a must-pass moving vehicle, some kind of bill to which they could attach legislation that otherwise could not be passed, maybe would not stand the light of day. Reputedly, it dealt with section 527, political advocacy corporations and campaign limits. We suspected it also dealt with a bill known as Pence-Wynn. We do not know yet because we have not seen the conference report that they have tried to amend.

In any event, we know this: These bills are about campaign finance reform. They have absolutely nothing to do with the defense of the United States. This is not a technical change they are trying to make. It is not even about defense. Far from it.

Worse still, it is fundamentally serious major legislation. It is not something minor that you bobtail on or piggyback on another bill. Pence-Wynn, if that is the legislation they are trying to append to this conference report, is a major fundamental revamping of the campaign finance laws of this country, lifting the limits enormously on all kinds of corporations from PACs and individuals, creating virtual carte blanche for the wealthy of this country to contribute to political campaigns.

Our ranking member, Mr. SKELTON of Missouri, heard what was happened, to the extent that he could find out anything. He protested and pulled our names on the grounds, the House Democratic names, from the conference report on the grounds that they were amending or seeking to amend that the conference agreement that had been signed and sealed and all but delivered to the House floor for action, amending it after the fact, Members who were not even parties to the agreement trying to change the bill in a significant way without any kind of collegiality, any kind of comity, any kind of consultation with our side. He pulled our names.

In the Senate, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Republican, the very distinguished Senator WARNER, was so outraged to see this gross violation of the processes of the House, the procedures of the House and the Congress, of fundamental fair play, that he said, if the Republican leadership in the House tried to unilaterally change this agreement after it had been signed, he would vigorously object and pull out the signatories at least on the Republican side. And Mr. LEVIN, the gentleman from Michigan who is the Democratic Senator who is the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said the very same thing.

Now, we ask tonight, what is the status of this bill that has taken months to produce, that addresses our troops deployed all over the world, that contains important personnel provisions that probably will not be overlapped in the appropriations bill? Where is the bill that we have worked and produced, that we signed and had ready to go?