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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Stephen A. Owenby, Senior Pastor, Stewartsville Baptist Church, Laurinburg, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Our sovereign Lord, we praise You for the freedom to enter Your heavenly throne room. We deserve not Your favor nor are we worthy of Your grace. All we can ask is, "Forgive us our transgressions, grant us salvation and guide us in the way of righteousness."

We have prayed, "God bless America." You have. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." May we not depend upon our own ingenuity, but in You alone.

I offer thanks for these men and women You have lifted up to serve their fellow countrymen. In James chapter 1, you tell us, "If any lack wisdom, let him ask." So we ask, Please grant to these servants the wisdom necessary to carry out Your will for our Nation. We ask this in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND STEPHEN A. OWENBY

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an individual here with us who has dedicated his life to the service of others in his congregation and in his community. Pastor Steve Owenby is a selfless person who continually exemplifies servant leadership. I want to express my appreciation for his witness and the difference he makes in the lives of others each day, and thank him for being here with us to deliver this morning's prayer.

Steve has been married to his loving wife, Donna, for almost 21 years and has three wonderful children, Megan, Josh and Christy.

As a young adult, Steve began his life of service in the United States Air Force where he served 4 years honorably. He later felt called to the ministry and attended Liberty University, where he completed his Master of Theology.

He is currently the Senior Pastor of Stewartsville Baptist Church in Laurinburg, North Carolina. Stewartsville is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention and currently has about 800 members. It is a vibrant congregation that has a strong focus on missions, to the credit of Pastor Owenby and his family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in appreciation for Steve's many years of service as he leads his family, congregation, and community. I pray that others may follow his lead so that they too would understand the true meaning of life.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will recognize 10 one-minute speeches on each side.

MORE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE ECONOMY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share more good news with the American people about our economy.

Yesterday, the Commerce Department reported that consumer spending shot up by nine-tenths of a percent in January, which is the strongest gain in 6 months. In addition, Americans' personal incomes rose by seven-tenths of a percent, which is the highest rate since September.

Clearly, our economy's positive momentum is a direct result of the pro-growth agenda of our President and our Republican-led Congress.

We are the party that is holding the line on fiscal responsibility and showing our commitment to continuing economic growth. We are the party that is working to improve the lives of the American people by lowering taxes, enacting legal reform, and decreasing government interference in the lives of entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Democrats, on the other hand, continue to promote their tax-and-spend policies, because they think they know how to spend your hard-earned money better than you do. My Republican colleagues and I know better than that.

JUXTAPOSITION OF TWO NEWS STORIES

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to call the attention of the House to the juxtaposition of two news stories: one that says, relating to 9/11, Federal officials were repeatedly warned in the months before the September 11, 2001, terror attacks that Osama bin Laden

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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and al Qaeda were planning aircraft hijacking and suicide attacks according to a new report that the Bush administration has been suppressing.

And this, from the front page of today's Washington Post: a newly leaked video recording the high-level government deliberation the day before Hurricane Katrina hit shows disaster officials emphatically warning President Bush that the storm posed a catastrophic threat to New Orleans and the gulf coast, and a grim-faced Bush personally assuring State leaders that his administration was fully prepared, quote-unquote, to help.

Do we see a pattern here? 9/11, Katrina? They knew something was going to happen and they did not act. They knew that if they went into Iraq that we were looking at a disaster, that there was no way we were going to be able to run that country.

They know that global climate change poses a threat to the entire planet. Nothing is being done. There is a pattern of recklessness, indifference, callousness. The implications are deadly for the people of the United States.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY ACT

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, last September the House overwhelmingly passed H.R. 3132, the Children's Safety Act.

This bill will, among other things, overhaul and strengthen our Nation's sex offender registration and notification laws.

Over the past few years we have lost too many children to the hands of these pedophiles: Jessica Lunsford, Jetseta Gage, Sarah Lunde, Megan Kanka, Jacob Wetterling, just to name a few.

While it may not be on the national news, there are still stories every day of children being hurt by these predators.

We still have over 150,000 offenders missing, and those numbers are growing.

Mr. Speaker, the House did its job last fall by passing that bill. Now it is time for the other Chamber.

I applaud the Senate majority leader's recent decision to cosponsor the Senate version of the sex offender bill and his commitment that he made the other day to victims' parents to move the bill soon.

We must pass this bill, and we must do it now before another victim is killed.

IN SEARCH OF A COMPETENT CONSERVATIVE

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, by now we have all seen the Katrina tape of the President being briefed on the mag-

nitude of the upcoming hurricane disaster. The tape clearly shows that the President and his administration knew about Katrina's magnitude, regardless of their after-action denial.

All I can say is forget the compassionate conservative that we were promised in 2000. At this point I would settle for a competent conservative.

Remember, this administration repeatedly maintained that if American leaders in Iraq needed more troops all they needed to do was ask. But now we know that the President's top man in Iraq, Paul Bremer, asked for more troops right after the invasion and the President and the Secretary of Defense failed to respond.

This administration said that the intelligence it used as a case for the war was flawed. But Paul Pillar, a high-ranking CIA official, recently revealed that the administration intentionally distorted and cherry-picked the intelligence in order to justify the prescribed decision.

Today, we are seeing the failure of those decisions. This administration said that the Medicare prescription drug benefit would cost no more than \$400 billion. The real cost of the benefit, nearly \$800 billion, and the administration knew all along the true cost.

The President's people say people do not need to worry about security, and then we found out that neither the President nor the Secretary of Defense knew that the United Arab Emirates was about to take over the six major American ports. We do not need a compassionate conservative, a fiscal conservative. We need a competent conservative.

OUR ECONOMY IS ON A ROLL

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, if you get your news from the mainstream media, you probably don't know that our economy is on a roll.

Our tax policies, the tax relief and reform we passed in 2003 and 2005, helped get government out of the way of America's entrepreneurs, and our unemployment rate is now lower than it was in the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

Those across the aisle who voted against our tax relief for Americans, and against our tax reform, say that Americans are not paying enough and that the tax relief costs the government too much. Imagine that. They think government has the first right of refusal on your paycheck. Well, they are wrong on that.

Our tax relief generated \$160 billion more in tax revenues in 2004 and 2005 than what was anticipated, than what was expected.

Mr. Speaker, the liberals in this body think that tax relief is a gift from the government to the American worker. They are wrong on that. We Repub-

licans know that they are wrong. We know taxes are a gift that the American taxpayer sends to Washington.

EDUCATION CUTS IN THE BUDGET

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union speech, President Bush said: "Our greatest advantage in the world has always been our educated, hardworking, ambitious people, and we are going to keep that edge. But the President's budget for next year cuts education by more than \$2 billion. His budget freezes the maximum award for Pell grants for the third year in a row. That means Pell grants will be worth almost 10 percent less than they were just 5 years ago.

His budget cuts hundreds of millions of dollars from loan programs, making it more difficult for half a million low- and moderate-income students to get the financial aid they need to stay in college.

His budget totally eliminates funding for TRIO Upward Bound that helps students trying to be the first person from their family to go to college. Yet President Bush's budget adds over \$350 billion to the national debt that our children and grandchildren will have to pay.

Americans lose when the President's actions contradict his promises.

STATE OF THE UNION'S HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, the rapidly rising cost of health care has put quality coverage out of the reach of millions of families. Too many cannot afford to see their doctor. Too many put off early treatment. Too many are overwhelmed by hospital bills. Too many meet a wall of bureaucracy that stands between them and their doctor. This system costs too many lives and too many dollars.

Each side of the aisle has offered solutions: national health care on one side of the aisle, health savings accounts on the other. But these two plans deal with payments. Neither solves the problem of costly errors and inefficiency. Cost shifting is not cost savings. They only focus on who is paying, when we need to reform what we are paying for.

Electronic medical records, electronic prescribing, eliminating hospital-borne infections, accurate dates on prescription drugs, expanding patients' care management, ending defensive medicine and allowing doctors to volunteer at community health centers are among the reforms our Nation needs.

Any of us would reach out to save the life of one person. We must reform the

health care system to save ten of thousands of lives and tens of billions of dollars. Members can see more information on this at www.murphy.house.gov.

□ 1015

REPUBLICANS' FAILURES IN SECURING PORTS: FAILURES GO BEYOND DUBAI PORTS WORLD

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration's deal with the United Arab Emirates showed the American people again that securing our ports is not their priority.

The bipartisan and unanimous 9/11 Commission report clearly showed the need for increased security for our Nation's ports. Now 4 years after 9/11, less than 10 percent of the 9 million containers entering our ports are ever screened. Even worse, Republicans in this House have fought Democratic efforts to increase port security funding.

In 2003, this House voted to kill a Democratic amendment to add \$250 million for port security grants; then again, in 2005, against a Democratic proposal calling for an additional \$400 million in funding for port security.

For the record, let me say, my constituents in St. Louis, Jefferson County, and Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri, understand right from wrong. They, like all Americans, demand action from this Congress that is long overdue, and they will not go along with any deal compromising our national security.

The American people have every right to be outraged with the administration's approval of the UAE port deal. It is time the people's House make the security of our Nation's ports a priority.

HONORING GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Sam Houston from Virginia was born this day, March 2, 1793. He was unique among all Americans. He grew up in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. He befriended the Cherokees as a kid. He fought the British in 1814. He stood with Andrew Jackson and was wounded three times fighting Indians. He became a lawyer, Member of Congress, and a Governor of the great State of Tennessee. More than enough for one life. But then he left for Texas and quickly got passion about Texas independence.

On his birthday, March 2, 1836, he was one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico. General Sam was made commander in chief of all Texas armies, and on the plains of San Jacinto his outnumbered volunteer army defeated the invaders. Texas was free.

General Sam became President of the Republic of Texas, and when Texas joined the Union, he became Governor and U.S. Senator. He is the only American in history to be Governor of two different States.

His example was a majestic story of bravery, boldness, and brashness.

Mr. Speaker, his last words before he died were "Texas, Texas, Texas." Sam Houston, the stuff real Americans and real Texans are made of. And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

DEMOCRATS' EFFORTS TO ADDRESS PORT SECURITY

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, the United Arab Emirates port deal should never have been approved. Sure, the admission is now backpedaling, but despite this 45-day delay, the administration is still going to try to push this deal through.

It does not matter that the Coast Guard voiced concerns about the proposal before the administration initially approved the deal. It does not matter that large numbers of Democrats and Republicans have come out in opposition to the deal. It does not matter that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not support this deal and believe it to be dumb. Nor does it matter that the administration never checked with the affected communities before signing off on it. No, the Bush administration sees this 45-day period as an opportunity to steamroll Congress.

We simply cannot allow that to happen. Congress must play an active role in this decision. I hope, I really hope, that the House Republicans will join us in insisting that no deal move forward without a vote here on this floor. Democrats insist that in addition to the 45-day investigation there must also be a congressional vote. This is a national security decision, and it is simply too important for partisanship to take precedence over prudence.

IMMIGRATION BILL IN SENATE AND CAMPBELL AMENDMENT

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

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Mr. Speaker, today the Senate Judiciary Committee will begin work on the immigration and border security legislation the House passed at the end of last year.

This bill is one of the most important pieces of national security legislation before Congress because border security is national security.

Recently we have been engaged in debates, some of which you have just heard, about whether or not our ports are secure. This is an important debate. But we know our southern border is not secure; we know that illegal

aliens, criminal illegal aliens, are attempting to cross that border every single day, and it is time that we stop it.

In December, the House passed a good enforcement and border security bill, and the bill is a great start to address this problem and make our Nation safer. One important provision included in the bill was an amendment I had authored which will withhold Federal law enforcement funding from sanctuary cities that prohibit law enforcement officers from notifying Federal officials about known illegal aliens.

The practice of prohibiting cooperation is appalling. We should not reward these cities with Federal funds. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to include this provision and pass a strong enforcement bill without amnesty.

BUSH ONCE AGAIN SKIRTING LAW IMPACTING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, Congress should not allow the secretly decided backroom United Arab Emirates port deal to go through. It must be stopped, and House Republicans should stand up to the President in the name of national security. Our ports are not for sale to the highest bidder.

This deal shows once again the lengths the Bush administration will go to bend the laws to their advantage. The administration failed to conduct a 45-day investigation that is legally required. This, in itself, should be enough to stop this deal. The national security implications are simply too important to ignore. And, unfortunately, House Republicans have neglected our vulnerable ports since 9/11.

Over the past 4 years, House Republicans have opposed and defeated Democratic efforts to increase funding for port security. Right now, only 6 percent of cargo coming into the U.S. is being checked, producing a large hole in our homeland security.

I would hope that we can make port security a top priority.

ENTITLEMENT REFORM

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days we will take up the Federal budget. While I am pleased to see the President's budget hold the line on discretionary spending, the Congress should also get serious about entitlement reform.

The numbers speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. Three entitlement programs alone, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, currently consume about 42 percent of the entire budget. If we add defense and homeland security,

which most people would consider mandatory spending, along with all the other entitlements, we get 82 percent. Only 18 cents on the dollar really is discretionary.

Mr. Speaker, entitlements are important programs, but they will benefit no one if they go bankrupt. And we are headed for a fiscal tsunami in this country. So as we begin the budget process, let us keep in mind that runaway discretionary spending is wrong, and we would do well to rein it in.

But unsustainable entitlement spending is a greater problem that we should address as well for the sake of our children and grandchildren. Whether we like it or not, this is a very real problem. It is not going to go away.

Doing nothing is simply not an option. In fact, doing nothing is the worst thing we can do.

IT IS TIME FOR A POLICY THAT REALLY SECURES AMERICA

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of days we have seen the focus of the American conscience look toward whether America is actually secure.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time now for the administration to craft a policy that answers the enormity of the concerns that Americans have expressed in town hall meetings across America. Frankly, I think when the headlines read 1,300 Iraqi dead, our soldiers standing by, not knowing whether to engage or not in the civil war that is pending, it is actually now time for the President to acknowledge that our troops have done their job, they have won the victory, and they need to come home.

And then we speak of securing America and having conflicts cause the tension that they are causing and then we still want to say that it is all right to sell our ports to foreign entities; and, of course, I think America needs to know that in the 2007 budget there is no funding for securing the Nation's ports around America.

It is time now for the administration to craft a security posture and policy that really secures America. The time is now.

STATE TAX COMPETITIVENESS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, this week the Tax Foundation, an educational foundation for taxpayers since 1937, released its much anticipated third edition of their State business tax climate index. It ranks the 50 States on how business friendly their tax systems are.

The study finds the most business-friendly tax systems in Wyoming,

South Dakota, Alaska, Florida, Nevada, New Hampshire and Texas. The least business-friendly tax codes were found in New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont and Maine.

Low-tax States are where the job growth is. Governors and businesses and residents want jobs to flow to their States. Low taxes will do that. So low taxes in America will also keep jobs here.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a cautionary tale from this report, reminding us that we are truly competing in a global economy, and we cannot ignore the fact that low taxes indeed create new jobs.

RECOGNIZING AMBER CASHWELL'S SERVICE TO SOUTH CAROLINA

(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, as I always say, congressional schedulers have some of the hardest jobs in Washington.

While serving as a scheduler, Amber Cashwell has seamlessly planned a calendar, helped manage the office, and assisted the citizens of the Second District of South Carolina. Throughout her service she has handled her responsibilities with patience, professionalism, and good humor. Her colleagues and I truly appreciate her hard work and dedication.

A native of Spartanburg, South Carolina, Amber began her career in Washington as a staff assistant for Congressman BOB INGLIS. In May, 2004, she graduated from Converse College with an impressive double major in French and history.

Tomorrow, Amber will depart the halls of Congress to work at the Moore Van Allen law firm in Charlotte, North Carolina. I am proud of her success and pleased to congratulate Amber on this wonderful opportunity.

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

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, when I opened up my local paper the other day, I was troubled by a letter to the editor. This gentleman was lamenting the fact that he and his wife were losing a long-time doctor because the physician could not afford to remain in business. What is even more troubling is that none of this is a surprise.

Every day more and more doctors across the country are watching their malpractice rates skyrocket. These premiums are going up as the insurance companies are being forced to pay higher and higher awards for malpractice lawsuits.

Doctors need to be held accountable, yes. However, there is also a need to

recognize the institutional abuse that is far too often perpetrated in our courts by personal injury lawyers and the frivolous lawsuits they introduce. These lawsuits do not just affect doctors. They are affecting patients all across the country who either lose access to their doctor altogether or are cared for by a physician who has been intimidated into practicing defensive medicine.

While everyone is talking about rising health care costs, let us not forget to recognize there are a number of different ways to lower those costs, and starting with lawsuit abuse reform would be a genuine first step.

KATRINA EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2006

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of March 1, 2006, I call up the Senate bill (S. 1777) to provide relief for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, March 1, 2006, the Senate bill is considered read, and the amendment placed at the desk is adopted.

The text of the Senate bill, as amended, is as follows:

S. 1777

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Katrina Emergency Assistance Act of 2006".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the case of an individual eligible to receive unemployment assistance under section 410(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5177(a)) as a result of a disaster declaration made for Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita on or after August 29, 2005, the President shall make such assistance available for 39 weeks after the date of the disaster declaration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 1030

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 1777.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 1777, as amended, extends the disaster unemployment assistance for those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Unfortunately, the economy in the gulf coast area remains devastated and re-employment opportunities are greatly limited.

Currently, disaster unemployment assistance is only available for 26 weeks following a disaster declaration. March 4, 2006, is the current deadline for program assistance as a result of Hurricane Katrina disaster declarations for Louisiana and Mississippi. Unless we act, unemployment benefits will expire this Saturday. This bill would extend that period for an additional 13 weeks, making disaster unemployment assistance available for 39 weeks total. This assistance is only available to those persons who are not eligible for regular unemployment assistance.

By extending these benefits, we are helping those most in need in the gulf coast region as they continue to recover and rebuild. We extended disaster unemployment assistance benefits after September 11 in the same fashion as we are extending these benefits today. I support this legislation and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking Chairman DON YOUNG, Ranking Member JIM OBERSTAR, and, of course, my subcommittee chairman, BILL SHUSTER, for their leadership in acting together to assure that unemployment benefits are available to the many victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita who want to work.

We are acting in virtual unison, though under the wire, to pass S. 1777, the Katrina Emergency Assistance Act of 2006, which extends unemployment assistance under the Stafford Act, providing essential unemployment benefits before they lapse on Saturday. This bill extends the period that victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita would be eligible for unemployment benefits to an additional 13 weeks, for a total of 39 weeks.

Currently, the disaster unemployment assistance benefit period begins the week following the disaster or the date thereafter that the individual becomes unemployed and can extend up to 26 weeks after the declaration or until the individual becomes reemployed. This bill means 39 more desperately needed weeks, in addition to the first 26 weeks. The Department of Labor has the usual authority to administer the program.

The extension of these benefits would help untold thousands of workers who lost their jobs as a direct result of the unprecedented storms that hit the gulf region late last summer but do not qualify for regular unemployment assistance. The Labor Department reports that more than 500,000 individ-

uals have already filed new unemployment claims.

Unemployment at 12.5 percent for those who had returned in November was more than twice the national rate; and for those still displaced the rate was an amazing 27.5 percent, more than twice the rate for those who had returned.

Unemployment benefits are available, of course, only for workers in search of actual employment. These benefits may, nevertheless, of course, be used wherever these workers are living today. However, the benefits also may encourage needed workers to take the many risks associated with returning to gulf cities and towns at a time when all the basic ingredients of working communities, from housing to health care, are at unprecedented low levels.

For example, relatively few workers have returned, despite a high rate of job openings in New Orleans. With at least the guarantee of unemployment benefits during the job hunt and much more rapid and sensible job training and reconstruction policies, these benefits could leverage new work opportunities for gulf residents that were unavailable even before the storm, leave alone what the benefits could do in helping the reconstruction of the region itself.

At the same time, I regret that a provision similar to the one approved by the committee of jurisdiction in the other body to increase unemployment benefits to 50 percent of the national average of unemployment benefits had to be removed from the final bill to achieve the rapid agreement needed. Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana have the lowest unemployment benefits in the country. As a result, disaster unemployment benefits for these States are as low as \$87, \$90 and \$97 per week, respectively.

Fifty percent of the national average for unemployment benefit amounts to \$135 a week. In an area of the country that even before Hurricane Katrina suffered long-term unemployment at record levels, this increase could have made a major difference to families who need much more assistance than the typical unemployed worker, because many have lost everything, including their homes.

For the gulf victims, the job search that S. 1777 will afford is much more than finding a job. This bill will help some victims return to the gulf region to begin building their lives from scratch. Many who qualify for these benefits were in the lowest wage categories and are among the neediest for assistance. This extension will help them move forward after experiencing the worst natural disaster in the Nation's history. The American people would want us to take at least the step of passing this urgently needed legislation today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER).

(Mr. NEUGEBAUER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition today to S. 1777. One of the things that I am concerned about is we are spending billions of dollars every day on this Katrina emergency disaster, with very small results. We have people filing lawsuits against the government to keep them from being kicked out of apartments, while thousands of trailers are idle just a few hundred miles away.

Certainly, our hearts and thoughts go with the people who experienced this tremendous tragedy, but I think one of the things that I hear from the people in the 19th District of Texas is that they see we are spending billions and billions and billions of dollars, yet we are getting reports of mismanagement almost at every level of government.

One of the things that I think we have to do, and it is the reason I am going to encourage my colleagues today not to support this, is I think we have to step back and look at where we are spending our money today, the American taxpayers' money, by the way, and by the way, money that we don't have. Every dollar we are spending right now for Katrina relief is money that we are borrowing, and we are going to saddle our future generations with that debt.

So I believe that what we have to do is begin to assess what are the job creation opportunities going to be in that region. We are at a time in our country today, quite honestly, where we have record low unemployment, yet we are here today to extend unemployment benefits for another 13 weeks.

The question I have is not whether these people need a job, but the question is are we providing opportunities for them to get a job and moving them away from an environment of entitlement to an environment of empowerment, where we are investing dollars in those communities in such a way that those communities will be able to create jobs for those people that maybe lost their jobs because of this disaster that happened.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleagues today, let's vote this down. Let's sit back and assess where we are spending our resources. I know that we have a \$20 billion additional supplemental coming to the floor of this House for debate, and I think as we keep throwing money at this problem, what we hear on the national news every day is the people living in these areas are saying they are not getting any of the help. The way to make sure you have accountability is not to give someone more money, but to bring in more accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues not to support this.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, we thought of going forward with this bill under unanimous consent because we did not think there was a single Member of the House of Representatives who would want to deny to people searching for a job after the worst disaster in American history the funds that would enable them to live while they search for a job. So I am amazed. I will be amazed that there is a single vote against the bill.

But I think the chutzpah to stand on the floor and say we are throwing money at a problem, when I have just recounted what these benefits will mean in that part of the country, less than \$100 a week for families looking for work, is an amazing statement to make. We are throwing money at a problem? We are giving unemployment benefits to people looking for work who have no other means because Mother Nature has taken their means from them. Moreover, may I remind this House that twice after 9/11 we extended unemployment benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlelady for her leadership, as well as Mr. SHUSTER. I also thank Mr. YOUNG, and certainly Mr. OBERSTAR.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the bulk of Texans, those of us who are now hosting more than 200,000 Katrina survivors and Rita survivors. Might I say to my good friend who lives a little further from the gulf that he should recognize that this legislation also includes Hurricane Rita survivors, who are all throughout the southern part of Texas.

But this is not an isolated whose-State-are-we-in type of legislation. It is a legislative initiative. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I see my ranking member has come who has worked very hard on these issues, this is an answer to the cry of Americans. For anyone to suggest this is frivolous or throwing good money after bad is wrongly focused and misdirected.

Let me suggest to you the parameters, or at least the scene, that we are now talking about. We already know that we have suggested that the government in all of its power absolutely abysmally failed in its ability to save the lives of those on the gulf coast, and they knew that there was going to be a catastrophic event.

So what we are trying to do here on the floor of the House is, on the back-drop of our failure, not to look back, we wish there was a 9/11-type commission, but to go forward with solutions.

I want to applaud my colleagues for going forward. We are going forward by providing assistance to those Katrina and Rita survivors, who are scattered now through 44 States. I would like to

ask my colleague, when in the history of America did we scatter Americans throughout 44 States? This is to help those States, because many of the individuals who are there are layered on top of the citizens of Utah, the citizens of Kentucky, the citizens of Georgia, who may be themselves unemployed; and therefore it makes it difficult for them to find jobs, even to be able to develop an income to be able to return home to the gulf coast region.

Mr. Speaker, this provides a cushion for those who are scattered in the 44 States. Then it helps additionally those who are in large urban areas like Houston. Houston, of course, a percolating economy, still has its unemployment. So for you to indict people, to suggest that they are doing nothing to find work, you don't know the economy in America.

Let me also acknowledge that this particular provision will pay back communities for buying soap and food for those who have been in our community. It also provides for student scholars who are on visas, whose visas may be expiring and they have no paperwork, so they will not be deported, not because they are here illegally, but because they cannot find the paperwork coming from that region.

This is an emergency. This is a lifesaver. We will be in a devastated condition this Saturday if this bill is not passed.

Let me say that the bulk of Texans, the majority of Texans, 90 percent of Texans, understand the value of this legislation; and they want this bill to pass because we see firsthand those who are trying to struggle to survive.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the proposed legislation, S. 1777, the "Katrina Emergency Assistance Act of 2005."

As the law stands, unemployment assistance to those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is going to be running out. We urgently need to act to extend unemployment assistance to the survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

S. 1777 extends disaster unemployment assistance, DUA, to individuals affected by Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita. It does so by expanding FEMA's authority to help individuals affected by Hurricane Katrina and Rita by allowing the President to waive the limitations on direct and financial assistance and by providing 13 additional weeks of unemployment benefits.

With merely days remaining before the unemployment benefits begin to expire, the people displaced by Hurricane Katrina and Rita are facing a dire crisis. The survivors of Hurricane Katrina, and from Hurricane Rita, have faced tremendous stress over these past months. Not only have these men and women lost their jobs, but their homes have been razed to the ground, their beloved city swept away, and their livelihoods destroyed. They have suffered through unspeakable devastation, both to their mental and physical states. But, these proud people have not lost hope. Thousands of people, many in my district of Houston, are working hard to find jobs and rebuild their lives. It is very difficult for them to

integrate into their new community, and very difficult for them to find a job.

In these most trying times, however, their government is threatening to remove them from their temporary, emergency unemployment assistance. Many of these people, their last options exhausted, will be left on the streets. It is a moral, public safety and public health imperative that this not be allowed to occur. I am making an urgent appeal to my colleagues in the House to take the necessary steps to avert this disaster and vote to provide disaster unemployment assistance for the displaced persons.

Late last night I received an urgent call from a constituent of mine, Dr. Ikili Graham. Dr. Graham explained that his friends and family were affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many had lost their homes and their jobs, and were struggling to integrate in their new city of Houston. Jobs were scarce, but progress was being made.

He called to urge me to support S. 1777, a bill that would provide much needed help to those who are still unemployed as a result of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. This bill would extend unemployment assistance for just 13 additional weeks—hopefully enough time for people to find new jobs and sources of income.

I would like to passionately thank the Minority Leader and the Speaker of the House for their wisdom in bringing this necessary piece of legislation to the floor. The survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita need our continued support.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the proposed resolution for the foregoing reasons, and I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to follow suit.

□ 1045

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the comments of my good friend from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER). I certainly understand his concern about some of what has gone on in the gulf coast region, things that have not been efficiently moved forward. There have been cases of money being spent unwisely.

But on this bill, S. 1777, with the disaster unemployment assistance, this is important, to go to people that do not get normal unemployment. This goes out to people that are self-employed, small business owners. It is critical to the recovery that they have income until they are able to get their businesses back up, or if they are a professional, to get their operations running again.

So again I understand the concern of my colleague, but this bill is about disaster unemployment assistance. It is critical to get it back on line. It expires on Saturday. So I would urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. The kind of small business owners, for example, that the gentleman was talking about, if you are a hot dog vendor, those are some of

the most industrious people in society. An example would be people who are willing to work for themselves where they get no benefits of any kind, but work harder than most of us.

I used the hot dog vendor, because that is fairly typical of the kind of person we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

Mr. McDERMOTT. Thank God that the Speaker is taking a trip down to New Orleans, because we have waited for a long time for this bill. Six months ago I introduced legislation to extend unemployment benefits. But the majority party has ignored the problem until today, a few days before it is going to run out.

Now as a doctor and psychiatrist, I can tell you a couple of things: When people suffer a catastrophic loss, they need comfort and certainty, a helping hand. Instead, you have waited with unemployment benefits until they were beginning to run out before you acted. You have made matters worse for people who already have much damage to their lives.

For 6 months this body functioned like that empty FEMA trailer when it came to meeting the needs of the people devastated by the hurricanes. The White House was in the driver's seat. No more need be said.

But thankfully, at the urging of Ms. PELOSI from California, Republicans are going to do what I said 6 months ago. We are going to extend unemployment benefits to the people in the gulf coast. Later today, we will go and visit the region and tell the people all the good we are doing for them.

Now, the Republicans will take credit for acting. But there is no credit for acting 6 months late. Six months ago I said we should be protecting the children of the gulf coast. I ask today, are we doing all we can to ensure vulnerable children are protected? Have we done anything to ensure that parents receive counseling and children receive the necessary social services to cope with the trauma in their lives? The answer is "no."

We may have sent some money to the States, but we have done nothing to ensure that Federal child welfare programs receive additional resources to cope. Kids are not as important as workers. In fact, Republicans refused to even hold a hearing, despite my repeated pleas to the chairman.

We know child abuse spikes after natural disasters. We know that foster families are living in FEMA trailers. They are living with four, six and eight kids in a trailer, and the State is asking them to take more because they do not have enough places for neglected and abused kids. These trailers do not come close to passing the safety standards that we would demand of an ordinary foster home.

We cannot keep pretending that the Federal Government is responding to the gulf coast. FEMA and the White

House knew the storms were coming; we found that out yesterday. We knew they were going to devastate the area, and they failed to prepare and respond. For the last 6 months there has been nothing going on here.

We have got a chance today to follow the Golden Rule: Treat others as we would be treated. I speak as someone representing Seattle. We know that one day we will have another shaker, another earthquake. And anybody who gets out on this floor and says, oh, well, we're throwing money at Louisiana, don't you dare come near this floor asking for money when it happens to you in California or anywhere else.

This is not a local problem, this is a national problem that the Republicans refuse to respond to until it is at the last second. A day late, a dollar short.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, responding to the gentleman, we are not a day late and a dollar short. We are responding in a timely fashion. We certainly would have liked to have done this a couple of weeks earlier, but we are here on the floor today. We are going to respond to this situation in time.

I think it is important. As we move legislation forward in a situation like this, I think the folks in the gulf coast know that those of us in Congress are concerned about their situation; and that is why we are acting in time for this to be extended. I don't believe that responding 6 months prior to the need is something that is wise policy.

Let's move forward, let's study the situation and when it gets to a point where we have to extend, where we have to act, I think it is prudent that we do that.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I mentioned 9/11 because I think there is a standard here, a kind of control group. I mentioned that we had had to extend unemployment benefits twice during 9/11. This was a terrorist attack, 3,000 people killed. Thank God, the entire City of New York was not wiped out.

Compare, however, that disaster, as tragic as it was, with wiping out an entire city, the whole city gone, all means of employment gone, now being slowly revived. And I think we will have some appreciation for the American heart.

We knew what to do on 9/11. We will be there for people as long as you need us. And the wonderful thing about unemployment benefits is, they go straight to the person. And, of course, what unemployment benefits do, because the people who get them spend them for necessities in their communities, so what unemployment does at the same time is, of course, to help the community, the economy of the community where the unemployment benefits are being spent.

This is very good money for very desperate people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, as I listen to the debate here, one of the things that I keep hearing in this House is a question of what the role of government is. One of the gentlemen who spoke earlier would insist that all this is about is throwing money, good money, after bad.

I think there are people in this Congress who actually believe that government does not have a benign role in the lives of the people, except as an engine to redistribute the wealth of the Nation upwards. This legislation proves otherwise. It proves that government does have a responsibility to step up when people have a problem. It also confirms the role of the Congress of the United States.

We see in today's news that the administration was warned on Katrina. It didn't respond quickly enough. Well, the Congress of the United States has an obligation to respond here. That is what we are doing with this legislation today. That is why I support it. We know that so much of the Federal response to the economic security of the Katrina victims has been lacking.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, unemployment is a serious problem for hurricane victims. But the evacuees who are still not back in their homes, and they number 500,000 people, to them unemployment is epidemic, one-quarter of Whites, one-half of African American evacuees are still out of work.

The cause, Mr. Speaker, is not a lack of jobs. At the current time there is a labor shortage in New Orleans. The cause is a lack of housing near the job sites. The Economic Policy Institute found that simply returning home from the Katrina Diaspora makes a dramatic difference in those staggering unemployment figures.

Unemployment rates fall among Whites to 10.7 percent, among Blacks to 11.6 percent if people have a home to go to. But the unfortunately indifferent Bush administration, through the now infamous FEMA, is compounding the unemployment problems of the hurricane victims. The Federal emergency housing effort located the largest temporary housing facility for New Orleans evacuees in Baker, Louisiana, 91 miles away from New Orleans. That is not a commute for anyone, especially low-income workers.

On September 8, the President urged a proclamation to lower the wages of all workers on a Federal contract to rebuild the hurricane-affected region. He suspended Davis-Bacon, a 74-year-old law which requires that companies receiving Federal contracts pay the average wage to employees who are hired to perform those Federal contracts.

He also suspended the requirement of having affirmative action plans. Fortunately, some Members of Congress became involved in that and offered a counterbalance.

That is what we are trying to do here today. We are trying to offer a counterbalance to an administration that was not there when the American people needed some guidance.

But today this bill will show that Congress has a role, and we have to keep remembering it. Congress has a role in meeting the needs of the American people and government has a role in the life of the American people, has a positive, a powerful, a constructive role; and we have to confirm that role over and over again with our work on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this bipartisan initiative to give the people of the Katrina disaster area some additional relief. I think we need to keep focusing on what is the appropriate role of government.

Let's help people in this country with the resources we have.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Ohio's support on this piece of legislation today. But I want to remind my friends on the other side that Congress does have a role. And we took it very seriously when we set up the Katrina committee. It was the Democratic leader who refused to appoint Members from the minority to the Katrina committee.

But there were courageous Members on your side, I see Mr. JEFFERSON here today, who defied the leadership and who came to the committee hearings for the last 4 or 5 months. We did the hard work. We put forth a document that pointed out some serious problems that we had. It was critical of this administration. But the minority was MIA, missing in action from the Katrina committee.

So Congress does have a role. We took it very seriously.

And once again I just want to applaud Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. MELANCON, Ms. MCKINNEY. I hope I am not forgetting anybody. But as I said, they defied their leadership and came to these important Katrina committee hearings, and they were a big part of, I believe, the hearings and had great input into what we produced.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Orleans (Mr. JEFFERSON), the city which suffered the worst natural disaster of any big city in American history.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the time to speak on this legislation.

I want to thank the bipartisan group that has developed this legislation. We, of course, had hoped for more from it. We were hoping that we would get to

\$135 a week, as the Senate had proposed. And we, of course, hoped for other provisions in the bill.

But, nonetheless, this is an important step forward, and an important response to the needs of the people in our area. I regret that there is objection to this legislation today, because I think it can only be objected to because folks just do not understand. I will not say that anyone is so callous as to not care, but I would have to say that you cannot really understand the dimensions of this issue if one objects to what we are doing here today.

In many ways, the district that I represent and the area that I represent and the whole gulf region is frozen in time. Not a whole lot has changed since August 29 in this aftermath, except that in our city the water has been pumped out. But other than that, the city is largely depopulated. Business has still not stood up. Hospitals are not working. The school system is not working. Our city has no tax base. People do not have jobs. Many have no place to come back to, even for temporary housing.

And those few who are there, of those who are there now, some 16,000 of them who are there in temporary housing, other housing conditions that are not ones that any of us would really like to have to put our families into, 16,000 of them do not have jobs now and are seeking this unemployment extension benefit.

□ 1100

Across the Gulf there are 165,000 families who are either there or displaced some other place around our country who do not have jobs, not because they are not seeking them, not because they do not want to work, but because the storm has displaced them and destroyed not only where they live but where they worked as well.

So the things we have talked about on the committee that reviewed the Katrina lawsuit, I do want to give some compliments to those who worked on that issue, who helped to, I think, make some critical decisions about it that I think will in the future portend better outcomes for these disasters as they occur. We hope they do not occur to anybody like they occurred to us; but if they do, I think we are in a far better position to deal with them now.

I do want to say there is a great deal more to be done in our area. And we are hoping that this Congress as a result of the trip that will be taken in just a few hours down there to take some 35 or 40 Members of Congress down to take a look at this, that people can continue to develop an appreciation for the extent of this disaster. Many of us have said it was not just a natural disaster that drowned our city. There are also some man-made issues here about how our levees failed and about how we could have done more to make sure that that did not happen. Frankly, had the levees had not failed, our city would not have drowned and

we would not have had the 80 percent of our city under water, and all of the untoward consequences I just talked to you about would not have happened. We would have had a serious storm, a series of brief clean-up, and people would be back in town, and we would not have to be here talking about extending unemployment.

We are extending it today because this is a long-term set of issues here. This is not the ordinary disaster. We will be living with this for a very, very long time. It will take a lot of hard work on the part of all of us to make this close to right down the road.

So I hope this Congress is prepared to stick with the people of the region. I hope we will get a full understanding of exactly how folks are suffering and how this approach is a Band-Aid approach to helping people who are in the most dire circumstances, as I said, not because of anything they have done or have failed to do, not because they are not looking for work every day, but because they are displaced. They are disconnected. Their jobs are destroyed. They have no place to go. And they have no means of support for their families except this Congress and this country come to their aid. And this is a small measure to do that.

I am grateful to the committee for the work that it has done. I look forward to our committee realizing that there may be more work to do in this area. I hope we can make a rebound in this work as quickly as we can. But the biggest thing now is how we can keep families together, how we can give them a little support while they struggle to get back to normalcy, and how at the end of the day we can give them the choice to return to the place where they lived, where they have their cultural connections, and where they have dedicated a part of their lives and their influence and where they, frankly, want to return to.

All of us have someplace we call home around here; and for them, no matter how dangerous we think it is, how difficult it is for them, these people, all of our people, all of us want to have a way to come back and reconnect to our home, at least to make a decision about whether we want to make a reconnection or not.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue. I hope that whatever objections there are they will be withdrawn because this ought to be an issue on which we are all together, on which there is bipartisan agreement.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, thank you once again for the kind of bipartisan cooperation that I think truly reflects the spirit in which this bill comes to the floor today.

Our country is so well known for disaster relief, generously and spontaneously given to the rest of the world, that the rest of the world actually came forward and offered relief to the United States after Katrina occurred.

In a real sense the standard we have set for ourselves in the rest of the world sets the standard for what we do in our country. Will we be known when this disaster has cleared for the generosity of the response to Katrina?

Despite the sour note of one Member only at the beginning, I want to say that I have seen anything but that in the workings of our committee. It did make it necessary for us to make the case in a way we thought would have been unnecessary. For example, when you talk about throwing money at a problem, it makes me realize that some people do not even understand what unemployment benefits are about. They do not understand that you can only get unemployment benefits if you have had a job so that we are by definition talking about working people. And because many have not been unemployed, they may not understand what you have to go through to keep getting your benefits, to report to the office, to show evidence of having looked for a job.

In other words, we are talking here about people who worked, who have every desire to work, and who need a meager benefit in order to keep looking for work. That is why this bill is minimally reflective of where most Members would be. I think the bill at its base reflects the bipartisan spirit of this House when it comes to extending benefits that would allow people who want to work to, in fact, do that work.

And, indeed, if we should be so fortunate that these benefits may inspire some to go back home to places few of us would want to go because of all the future comforts that are gone, to go back home with meager benefits, with no housing, with insufficient health care, to go back home to help rebuild their community, that is the America that we all know.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 4½ minutes remaining.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor today to speak on behalf of people of the gulf region of New Orleans, of Mississippi, of Alabama who have in many ways been dismissed, marginalized, even violated. I rise in strong support of the passage of S. 1777.

Six months after Hurricane Katrina, life for Louisiana and Mississippi residents remains an uphill battle. Houses have not been rebuilt. Many are still without gas, electricity, and other needed utility service; and those who once resided in the New Orleans ninth ward are still unable to return home, and other areas also. Yes, some help has been given; however, much more needs to be done.

There has been a lot of talk in the news about how America is not a country that will cut and run. Yet that is what we are doing to Hurricane

Katrina survivors if we do not extend the services they so desperately need. If passed, S. 1777 will extend the much-needed unemployment assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The unemployment rate of the hurricane survivors has reached epidemic proportions. This effect is compounded by the fact that the affected areas had some of the country's highest unemployment rates prior to the storm. Six months have already passed, although it seems the desperate images of survivors was just yesterday. As a result, providing unemployment assistance for survivors for up to 39 weeks is not only desperately needed but it is the right thing to do.

S. 1777 will waive the \$25,000.00 limitation faced by individuals and household under existing law. As we have seen many individuals and families have to rebuild their entire lives from nothing. A recent media report chronicled the life of one woman whose sole possession after Hurricane Katrina was one dining room chair. The amount of funds these individuals receive needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at the way the press has not closed up shop and gone home after Katrina. Story after story continues to tell us what is happening in the gulf region. We have just seen Mardi Gras stories over and over again. I was pleased to see Mardi Gras celebrated in the region.

The region is doing for itself what it can do. As I think about this bill, I think that there are people who are on unemployment benefits who got a job during Mardi Gras and who came back home who no longer need unemployment benefits.

I want us to also remember that New Orleans, in particular, which is known for its Mardi Gras gaiety, this is the oil producing, the energy producing region of our country. We need it to get back on its feet.

This bill will help the region, the whole region, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, to do just that. We are helping the people, and that is the way to help the region.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments about the press talking about some positive stories coming out of Louisiana, but we should not forget there are also positive stories in Mississippi. The gentlewoman has traveled to the Gulf Coast on a couple of occasions, and the people of Mississippi were devastated as well.

The gentleman from Louisiana talked about the hard work. There is a lot of hard work left to do in rebuilding the Gulf Coast, but it is important that we at the Federal level do it in a fiscally responsible way in conjunction with the State and local governments

in the Gulf Coast. But we also have hard work ahead of us in fixing the emergency management system, and that is something we are already starting to engage in. And we are going to have, I think, a significant debate on how we move forward.

This legislation today is important. The extension of the disaster unemployment assistance, it is money that, as I said earlier, is going to people that traditionally are not eligible for normal unemployment. These are small business owners, many of them. I think the gentlewoman from the District used the example of the hot dog stand owner, people working hard, small businesses. They do not have any income, and this is going to give them that income they need to get them back on their feet.

I want to also remind my colleagues that there is not an additional appropriation required for this. This has already been appropriated. The funds are in the disaster relief funds and CBO has scored this as no net increase in spending.

So as we move forward, I think it is responsible for us to do this. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I also want to thank my colleague from the District for the work she has put into it.

This has been a bipartisan effort. I also want to thank Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member OBERSTAR. I also do not want to forget members of the committee from the Gulf Coast, Mr. BOUSTANY and Mr. BAKER, for their leadership, and Mr. PICKERING for his leadership.

I want finally to thank the majority leader for working with us to get this legislation on the floor today.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, before Katrina slammed into my city, we had 2,100 hospital beds. Now we have 400 beds between Touro and Children's. When Katrina struck, about 22 percent of Louisiana residents and 23 percent of New Orleans residents were living in poverty, \$16,090 for a family of three. Over 900,000 people or 21 percent of all residents in Louisiana had no health insurance before Katrina and after the storm 1.2 million were uninsured. Tied to these poverty and uninsurance rates, Louisiana also had some of the poorest health statistics in the country with high rates of infant mortality, chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes, and AIDS cases, and lower than average childhood immunization rates.

To this end Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN and a number of my congressional colleagues in introducing the first in a series of healthcare bills that I will be introducing in the coming weeks. The Katrina Health Access, Recovery, and Empowerment Act of 2006 or KHARE Act of 2006 has 4 main provision areas, each which addresses a key component in rebuilding the health care infrastructure in the Gulf Region, and meeting the unique health and health care needs of those displaced by the hurricanes. They include the following:

Title I: Rebuilding the Health Care Infrastructure. This title will meet the immediate

and longer-term needs of the health care providers in the hurricane-affected regions by directing the Department of Health and Human Services in consultation to provide forgivable low-interest loans to eligible small business concerns for the restoration of health care and other services connected to health care.

This title will extend tax-credits for medical malpractice insurance to health professionals whose primary place of employment is located in the Hurricane Katrina-affected area and offer grants to eligible non-profit hospitals and clinics to assist hospitals and clinics in defraying qualified medical malpractice insurance expenditures.

In addition, this title will allow healthcare professionals whose healthcare practice is located in the Hurricane Katrina-affected area and is in a high risk specialty, will be allowed to deduct from gross income an amount equal to 125 percent of the aggregate premiums paid for medical liability insurance.

Title II: Rebuilding Pipelines of Providers in Medically-Needy and Underserved Areas and Communities. This title offers support to health care facilities in the hurricane-affected areas in order to expand access to needed health and health care services for hurricane affected individuals in medically needy and underserved areas and communities. The title establishes a Healthcare Safety Net Infrastructure Trust Fund. The Trust Fund will provide Federal guarantee of loan repayment, including guarantees of repayment of refinancing loans, to non-Federal lenders making loans to eligible healthcare facilities for healthcare facility replacement (either by construction or acquisition), modernization and renovation projects, and capital equipment acquisition.

Title III: Providing Relief to Academic Institutions. This provision provides support to academic institutions, with health and health care related programs, in hurricane-affected areas in order to ensure that they have the capacity to retain health and health care-related staff and personnel, and continue to offer programs that are important to bolstering the health and health care workforce in hurricane-affected areas.

Title IV: Restoring Key Components of the Health Care Infrastructure in Medically-Needy and Medically-Underserved Areas. This title provides grants and technical assistance support to low-income communities with noted health disparities in order to implement programs to improve health and healthcare. It also provides disparity grants to organizations and others in hurricane-affected areas to implement programs to healthcare programs. Finally, this provision expands access to care for low-income hurricane-affected residents by offering disaster relief Medicaid.

Mr. Speaker, this bill codifies legislatively the framework needed to implement sound public health and healthcare practices and this bill is a start to a new direction for healthcare in the Gulf Coast region and I urge my colleagues to support this bill, so that we do what is so clearly needed to improve the health and health care for millions of Americans.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 1777, as amended. The bill provides much needed aid for individuals left unemployed after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita by extending the period of disaster unemployment assistance from 26 weeks to 39 weeks from the date of the disaster declarations. Without this extension, disaster unem-

ployment assistance for those left unemployed by Hurricane Katrina would expire this Saturday, March 4, and unemployment assistance for those left unemployed by Hurricane Rita would expire by the end of this month. There is no doubt that the people of the Gulf Coast need this assistance, and I strongly support this bill, and thank the Democratic Leader, Ms. PELOSI, for joining me in urging its consideration in the House today.

Let's be clear about what this bill does. It extends unemployment benefits for those 165,000 workers left unemployed as a result of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita for an additional 13 weeks. People in the Gulf Region are still struggling to reclaim their lives. It is the right thing to do to extend these benefits—just as we did after September 11—so that people can put food on their table. It is simply shocking to me that some Members on the other side of the aisle have stood up to oppose this bill. Where is the compassion for those who have suffered most dearly over the past several months?

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill. Nevertheless, I believe that Congress can do more, and should. Last December, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure reported H.R. 4438, the Gulf Coast Recovery Act, a bill that would have extended the period of eligibility of disaster unemployment assistance for those left unemployed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to 52 weeks from the date of the disasters. Further, the bill provided a much-needed increase to the minimum amount of assistance available to an individual. Right now, assistance provided to individuals in the Gulf Coast is among the lowest in the Nation. H.R. 4438 would have provided an increase in the amount of assistance to 50 percent of the national average (\$135 per week). Currently, the minimum is set at one-half the state average (approximately \$100 per week in Louisiana).

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4438 also addresses other pressing needs of the Gulf Region. It allows the President to provide assistance to financially distressed state and local governments to cover base pay and overtime expenses for essential response and recovery personnel for six months—from January 2006 through June 2006. At Committee hearings, and on a tour of the region, I have heard from Gulf Coast representatives, including Mayor Ray Nagin of New Orleans, that without help from the Federal government they would have to continue to layoff workers that are essential to the recovery, thereby adding to the scores of unemployed in the region and substantially hindering the recovery.

In addition, to help communities with limited resources, the bill amends the Community Disaster Loan Act of 2005 to allow local governments to receive loans up to 50 percent (an increase from the current 25 percent limit) of the local government's budget.

Further, there is considerable confusion among local governments regarding the cost of debris removal. H.R. 4438 provides clarity on this issue by establishing a 100 percent Federal cost share of debris removal for disaster declarations resulting from Hurricane Katrina or Rita.

The bill also provides an increase in the Federal cost share of the Hazard Mitigation Grant program (HMGP) to at least 75 percent for one year. Many of the Gulf Coast communities simply do not have the ability to meet the Federal cost share and that will severely

limit their ability to utilize cost-effective mitigation measures during the recovery. Mitigation saves lives, reduces property damage, and saves limited government funds. Congress should ensure that we have strong mitigation programs that will help encourage communities to rebuild safer and smarter.

H.R. 4438 also makes a permanent change to the Stafford Act and restores the percentage used to calculate the availability of HMGP funds following a disaster from 7.5 percent to 15 percent. This House has previously approved this change in H.R. 3181, the Predisaster Mitigation Program Reauthorization Act of 2003, in the 108th Congress. This change will help improve the use of HMGP for any future disasters in every part of the country.

Finally, the bill establishes a national program by which FEMA can provide grants to state and local governments to purchase or improve emergency interoperable communications equipment (including satellite phone and satellite communications equipment); mobile equipment to generate emergency power; and to train first responders and emergency personnel on how to best use such equipment. The bill authorizes \$200 million for each of fiscal years 2006, 2007, and 2008 for this program.

It is a sad fact that this Nation still does not have sufficient interoperable and emergency communications equipment that can be relied on in the event of a disaster. Since the Transportation Committee reported H.R. 4438 in December, many of the recent government investigations into what went wrong with the Federal Government's response to Hurricane Katrina have concluded that having operational, emergency communications equipment is essential to respond to any disaster. The program authorized in H.R. 4438 will go a long way to ensuring that emergency responders have this vital equipment by providing states and localities much needed resources to purchase and improve their equipment and also train emergency personnel on how to use the equipment.

H.R. 4438 is an important component to rebuilding the Gulf region. It should be scheduled for an up or down vote on the House Floor. The people of the Gulf Coast deserve at least that much.

Given that the Republican Leadership has been unwilling to schedule H.R. 4438 since the Committee reported the bill in December of last year, we are faced with passing a simple extension of the unemployment benefits for Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors or facing the prospect of 165,000 survivors losing their benefits.

Although Congress can and should do more, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to extend the hurricane survivors' unemployment benefits, and I commit that I will continue to work to ensure that the people of the Gulf Coast are not forgotten.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1777, the Katrina Emergency Assistance Act. This bill would extend jobless unemployment benefits for 165,000 survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita for 13 weeks.

In August, 2005, Hurricane Katrina laid waste to our Gulf Coast region, including the City of New Orleans, and devastated other villages and towns in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The extent of the devastation was unprecedented in our Nation's history. I have

repeatedly expressed my outrage at the failure of our Federal Government to adequately respond to this disaster.

Without this legislation, victims of the Hurricane Katrina disaster will lose their unemployment assistance this Saturday. Under current law, Federal emergency unemployment assistance expires 26 weeks after the emergency occurs. Congress must act now to ensure that these victims continue to receive our support as they attempt to rebuild their lives and their communities.

While I support the legislation before us, this is only a first step for Congress. Many of the Katrina survivors have also lost their homes and belongings. They are continuing to look for employment in the region.

Congress needs to take a bold step and enact a comprehensive approach to help the people and the region recover from this natural disaster. I have co-sponsored H.R. 4197, the Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act of 2005, introduced by the Congressional Black Caucus. I urge the House leadership to bring up this legislation immediately. This legislation would take important steps toward fully restoring the Gulf Coast and reuniting evacuees with their families. The bill addresses the needs of evacuees in the areas of health, education, housing, community rebuilding, voting rights, business, and financial services.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and again urge the House leadership to immediately allow the House to vote on H.R. 4197, the comprehensive Hurricane Katrina recovery legislation.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, March 1, 2006, the previous question is ordered on the Senate bill, as amended.

The question is on the third reading of the Senate bill.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr. SENSENBRENNER, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted an adverse privileged report (Rept. No. 109-382) on the resolution (H. Res. 643) directing the Attorney General to submit to the House of Representatives all documents in the possession of the Attorney General relating to warrantless electronic surveillance of telephone conversations and electronic communications of persons in the United States conducted by the National Security Agency, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1115

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. SENSENBRENNER, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted an

adverse privileged report (Rept. No. 109-383) on the resolution (H. Res. 644) requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit to the House of Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution documents in the possession of those officials relating to the authorization of electronic surveillance of citizens of the United States without court approved warrants, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4167, NATIONAL UNIFORMITY FOR FOOD ACT OF 2005

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 702 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 702

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4167) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. After general debate the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion. No further consideration of the bill shall be in order except pursuant to a subsequent order of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 702 is a general debate rule that provides 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. It waives all points of order against consideration of the bill, and it provides that after general debate, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion and no further consideration of the bill shall be in order except by a subsequent order of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 702 and the underlying bill, H.R. 4167, the National Food for Uniformity Act of 2005.

H.R. 4166 was introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS)

and reported out of the House Energy and Commerce Committee on 15 December 2005 by a vote of 30-18. This is a good bill, and I would like to thank Chairman BARTON and Representative ROGERS for their work in bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, currently food regulation is composed of a variety of different and sometimes inconsistent State requirements. These different State standards hamper the free flow of interstate commerce. They also result in increased costs to manufacturers and distributors that are then, of course, passed on to consumers. The greatest burden falls on our citizens and resident immigrants who are at the lowest end of the economic scale, who are struggling to pay for even basic staples.

So, Mr. Speaker, these differing standards and their effects are very similar to problems plaguing the health insurance industry, which also drive up the cost to consumers and lock the door to many low-income individuals and families who simply cannot afford basic health care coverage because of all the required, expensive and often unnecessary extra screenings, tests and procedures mandated by 50 different State legislatures.

From State to State, we have a patchwork quilt of health and insurance regulations and mandates that would create bureaucracy upon bureaucracy, driving up the costs and driving away coverage for those who need it most. These regulatory inconsistencies in both the insurance health care industry and in the food industry impose unnecessary costs and jeopardize the well-being of American consumers nationwide.

However, Mr. Speaker, the National Uniformity for Food Act would establish national standards to ensure consistency in food labeling regulation. The bill will amend the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to establish a nationwide system of food safety standards and warning requirements for food labels instead of just a hodgepodge of different and, yes, even contradictory warnings among the various and sundry States.

Mr. Speaker, establishing nationwide, uniform standards is by no means unprecedented. We already have national standards in the areas of meat and poultry products regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture. We have national standards for nutrition labeling, health claims, standards of identity, pesticide residue tolerance, medical devices and drugs regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

Mr. Speaker, for those who fear an important warning might fall through the cracks, I want to emphasize that this bill does allow States whose requirements differ from the Federal requirements the opportunity to petition the FDA to adopt the requirement as a national requirement or to exempt it from the requirement of uniformity for

their particular locality. If it is worthwhile to the State of California, as an example, I trust that the FDA would hold that it is worthwhile for the 49 other States, including my State of Georgia. This petition process will allow States to have notification requirements that address food safety issues unique to their States, bottom line.

H.R. 4167 also, Mr. Speaker, includes a provision that allows the State to exercise imminent hazard authority to prevent the sale of dangerous food by applying a State requirement that would otherwise be preempted. They can do it in that emergency situation.

With the passage of this rule, the House of Representatives will move forward today with general debate to discuss the overall merits of the bill, and we will resume consideration next week on a multitude of proposed amendments. This additional time will help to ensure an open and fair process so that we ultimately arrive at consensus legislation based on sound policy.

So I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and, ultimately, the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me this time, and I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman very much for yielding time to me. It is extraordinary that she let me go ahead of her, and I appreciate it very much because of her accommodation of my schedule.

This bill is the most sweeping change in decades to our Nation's efforts to protect the food supply. H.R. 4167 is a disaster waiting to happen. This legislation could overturn 200 State laws, laws that the American people rely on every day to ensure the safety of the food they eat and to ensure that they know what they are buying; laws that ensure that the shellfish they buy is not tainted; laws that let a pregnant woman know what foods can increase the risk of birth defects; laws that could inform consumers whether fish have high levels of cancer-causing PCBs; and laws that ensure the safety of our milk.

The opposition to this bill is strong, and it is growing stronger. Last night, 37 State attorneys general, Republicans and Democrats alike, announced their opposition to the bill.

They join the opposition of dozens of public health, environmental and consumer groups. Florida, Georgia, New York, Wisconsin, and Illinois have all written to Congress opposing the legislation. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the National Association of Food Drug Officials strongly oppose this bill as well.

I hope that next week we will be able to offer some amendments to the bill.

Since there has never been a day of hearings on the legislation in committee, I think there ought to be an open rule.

One amendment that I would like to support is the Capps-Eshoo-Stupak-Waxman amendment, and I think it must be adopted by this House. It would allow States to take the necessary steps so that consumers will be told of food that contains cancer-causing substances, developmental toxins, sulfites and reproductive toxins. It will also let States take action to protect the health of their children.

Secondly, this bill will undermine our Nation's defenses against bioterrorism, according to State and local officials, and we are proposing that this bill not handcuff the first responders who deal with food safety issues every day.

The amendment we will be offering will help preserve the authorities of the governors and State legislatures to establish and maintain a food safety system that can be responsive to the threats that we face.

I am stunned by so many of my Republican colleagues, even the gentleman that spoke on the Republican side of the aisle from the State of Georgia, suggesting that States should not have the right to go ahead and adopt food safety and labeling laws unless the FDA, a bureaucracy in the Federal Government, allows them to do so. The States have always had this constitutional authority. The States should have this right.

I have been told so many times over the decades that Washington does not and should not have one-size-fits-all for everybody. Let us let States exercise their rights to protect their own people and not preempt them.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In response to the gentleman from California, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I have got a document here of 119 groups supporting H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005, which I will submit for the RECORD at this point.

GROUPS SUPPORTING H.R. 4167—THE NATIONAL UNIFORMITY FOR FOOD ACT OF 2005

Ahold; Albertson's; Altria Group, Inc.; American Bakers Association; American Beverage Association; American Feed Industry Association; American Frozen Food Institute; American Plastics Council; American Meat Institute; American Spice Trade Association; Animal Health Institute; Apple Products Research and Education Council Association for Dressings and Sauces; Biscuit and Cracker Manufacturers Association; Bush Brothers & Company; Business Roundtable.

Cadbury Schweppes plc; California Farm Bureau Federation; California Grocers Association; California League of Food Processors; California Manufacturers & Technology Association; Calorie Control Council; Campbell Soup Company; Cargill, Incorporated; Chocolate Manufacturers Association; The Coca-Cola Company; Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc.; ConAgra Foods, Inc.; Council for Citizens Against Government Waste; Dean Foods Company; Del Monte Foods.

Diamond Foods, Inc. Flavor & Extract Manufacturers Association; Flowers Foods, Inc.; Food Marketing Institute; Food Products Association; Frito-Lay; Frozen Potato Products Institute; General Mills, Inc.; Gerber Products Company; Glass Packaging Institute; Godiva Chocolatier Inc.; Grain Foods Foundation; Grocery Manufacturers Association; H.J. Heinz Company; The Hershey Company.

Hoffmann-La Roche Inc.; Hormel Foods Corporation; Independent Bakers Association; Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils; International Association of Color Manufacturers; International Bottled Water Association; International Dairy Foods Association; International Food Additives Council; International Foodservice Distributors Association; International Formula Council; International Ice Cream Association; International Jelly and Preserves Association; The J.M. Smucker Company; Jewel-Osco; Kellogg Company.

Kraft Foods Inc.; Land O' Lakes, Inc.; Maine Potato Board; Masterfoods USA; McCormick & Company, Inc.; McKee Foods Corporation; Milk Industry Foundation; The Minute Maid Company; National Association of Convenience Stores; National Association of Manufacturers; National Association of Margarine Manufacturers; National Association of Wheat Growers; National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors; National Cattle-men's Beef Association; National Cheese Institute.

National Chicken Council; National Coffee Association of USA; National Confectioners Association; National Fisheries Institute; National Frozen Pizza Institute; National Grape Cooperative Association; National Grocers Association; National Institute of Oilseed Products; National Milk Producers Federation; National Pasta Association; National Pecan Shellers Association; National Pork Producers Council; National Potato Council; National Restaurant Association; National Turkey Federation.

Nestle USA; North American Millers' Association; Osco Drug; O-I; Peanut and Tree Nut Processors Association; Pepperidge Farm Incorporated; PepsiCo, Inc.; Pickle Packers' International; The Procter & Gamble Company; Quaker Oats; Rich Products Corporation; Rich SeaPak Corporation; Safeway; Sara Lee Corporation; Say-on Drugs.

The Schwan Food Company; Snack Food Association; Society of Glass and Ceramics Decorators Supervalu Inc.; Target Corporation; Tortilla Industry Association; Tropicana; Unilever; United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association; U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Vinegar Institute; Welch Foods, Inc.; Winn-Dixie; Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company; Yoplait.

To my friend from California, I want to point out that among these 119 just happens to be the California Farm Bureau Federation, that is in support; the California Grocers Association, which is in support; the California League of Food Processors, which is in support; the California Manufacturers and Technology Association, which is in support. I do not guess this is a California company, but interesting to note that also the H.J. Heinz Company is in support.

I think that reminds me of the past Presidential election and maybe one of the candidates from the other side of the aisle.

In regard to the preempting States, I want to remind my friends and all of our colleagues that we are dealing here with interstate commerce, and we are

not talking really about preemption, even with that, of State law, because these 200 State laws that the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) was talking about in the various and sundry States, this is part of the problem. But all of those laws, each and every one of those laws, could be incorporated, Mr. Speaker, and possibly will be, into the FDA guidelines.

I wanted to make sure that they understand that.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

□ 1130

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, warnings of mercury levels in fish, the safety of our children's milk, birth defect warnings, reducing lead in calcium supplements, cans, and wine bottle caps, if we pass H. Res. 702, the rule governing the National Food Uniformity Act, and ultimately the underlying legislation, these are but a few of the food safety laws that would be preempted.

We would be placing at even greater risk the health of millions of Americans, our children, and pregnant women. Parents would have less information about the harm their children would come to because of a simple meal. This is the exact opposite of what we should be doing. Information about the health implications of what we are assuming is abundant, and we should be an ally in helping parents to protect their children.

With this legislation, Federal food safety regulations would supplant State food safety laws. Even though our food safety system has been created to rely upon the States, the FDA will make recommendations on its Web site. But the States need to take this information and determine the best way to inform and protect their residents. There is a reason for this: 80 percent of the enforcement is at the State and local levels.

Let me take one example: mercury levels. Because of the implications of mercury in my home State of California, we have a program to place in-store notices about mercury levels. This concern about mercury has been raised by the Centers for Disease Control, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. I remember when my daughter-in-law Amy was pregnant with my granddaughter Anna. Her doctor repeatedly warned her about the harm mercury could cause her fetus. Fortunately, she was able to afford prenatal care and had the warnings, so Anna was born a perfectly normal child, free from any adverse effects of any mercury.

But what about those who do not have adequate prenatal care or have warnings? How do they learn about

these? Most of us will never think to go to the FDA Web site before putting our shopping list together. We find out about FDA warnings because our State laws require them to be posted next to the supermarket fish counter. We see the sign as we shop.

As many of you are probably aware, certain fish contain high levels that can harm pregnant women and young children. High levels of mercury can damage the brain or kidneys. And this is in adults. Imagine what this can do to a developing fetus: blindness, seizures, speech problems, as well as nervous and digestive problems. But under this legislation, this program would be gone, as would the protections for our children. All that would remain is a posting on the FDA's Web site. Under President Bush's budget, the FDA's food safety funding would be cut by \$445 million over 5 years. Where does this leave parents and the health of our children?

When it comes to our children's health, we should be setting the highest bar possible rather than the lowest common denominator. Why would we not warn parents of this potential harm? I urge my colleagues to oppose this rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate what the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) just mentioned. And certainly as a physician, and we have health care providers on both sides of the aisle, we may be hearing from a physician Member, a friend and colleague on their side of the aisle in just a few minutes in regard to similar issues, so I do, I do understand, Mr. Speaker, that there are concerns about consumption of fish; the concern for Ms. MATSUI's daughter and her granddaughter. And I am in the same category. She certainly looks a lot younger than I do and a lot prettier, Mr. Speaker, but I have grandchildren as well.

Those are legitimate concerns. However, I will point out that fish is an excellent source of nutrition for mothers, expectant mothers, pregnant mothers, and young children. It is a wonderful source of protein and polyunsaturated fats. Those of us who have had little heart problems in the past understand that it is much more healthy to consume fish than red meat, not that an occasional steak should be denied anybody, Mr. Speaker.

But it is true, as the gentlewoman says, that the mercury content is a concern, and I have done some reading on this issue. I talked just last night, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to discuss this issue with the pediatrician who took care of my children, my adult children, and who now, this same pediatrician, Dr. Larry Clements in Marietta, Georgia, of Kenmar Pediatrics, is taking care of my grandchildren, and I asked about this issue. And certainly

there is a concern about mercury levels in certain fish, but also in my reading and in talking with Dr. Clements found out what the American Academy of Pediatrics says about it, found out what the EPA says about it, and found out what the FDA says about it.

The FDA has guidance and guidelines right now that says to these women that four-tenths of a microgram per kilogram per day is a safe consumption level. And so this idea of the FDA being oblivious to the concerns about mercury, organic mercury, that the fish consume and then it gets into the blood stream of the mother; that it actually crosses the blood brain barrier, the placental fetal barrier and gets into the blood stream of a child and can adversely affect their neurological system, the FDA is certainly not oblivious to that.

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) has an amendment that we will discuss thoroughly, thoroughly, and give careful consideration to her amendment and other similar amendments that Mrs. Matsui is talking about when we do this next week. And that is one of the reasons we wanted to divide up the general debate and the debate on those important amendments because of what the gentlewoman just said.

So it is very possible that the California guidelines in regard to this concern or the Florida guidelines about mercury levels will very likely be incorporated into the national standards. Because, for goodness sake, what is good and safe for her grandchildren, I know my good friend would want the same safety standards for my grandchildren in Georgia, for example. So I think she makes a good point, and I don't object to that at all; but I feel like this national standard will take care of that.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, what this bill does, I say to the gentlewoman from California, is to create circumstances where it undermines all these food safety laws all over the States. Under the guise of promoting uniformity in food safety and labeling laws, this bill requires all State food safety laws to be identical to the requirements of the Federal Food and Drug Administration. And since the States regulate many food safety issues not covered by the FDA, many food safety laws will be voided and replaced actually with no law at all.

The uniformity to be achieved by this bill is, in many instances, the uniform absence of food safety regulation, which is desired by the food industry. So this bill is uniformly bad.

For example, the bill would preempt Alaska's newly passed law to label genetically engineered fish. The Alaskan

State legislature passed this law to ensure the State's principal industries are protected. The State of Alaska has an interest to ensure that its products and reputation are not harmed. Today, we are telling the people of Alaska that the natural Alaska king salmon cannot be distinguished from the genetically engineered version bound to enter the market one day.

Another great example of the State laws this bill is designed to undermine is California's Prop. 65. Prop. 65 provides for the labeling of products that contain compounds that cause cancer or reproductive problems. California voters approved it by a 2-1 margin in the 1980s. Since enacted, it has sped the elimination of toxic compounds from the products we use or eat every day. It led one company to remove a carcinogenic chemical from a waterproofing spray. It led to the removal of lead foil from wine bottles. It led to the removal of lead solder in cans used for food. It took lead out of calcium supplements, brass kitchen faucets, and hair dyes.

In fact, when many companies reformulated their product to avoid having it labeled as a carcinogen, they did it without telling anyone because they didn't want to draw attention to the fact that their product included dangerous chemicals in the first place.

So there are countless other examples of Prop. 65 protecting public health and the environment that we don't even know about. It is exactly this triumph of public health over large food corporations that has driven the food industry to push for the so-called National Food Uniformity Act. But it is bad policy. In fact, even President Reagan rejected attempts to undermine it.

This so-called uniformity bill will cost the taxpayers dearly. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Federal Government will have to pay \$100 million to consider States' appeals; and at the local and State level, food and safety officials would be obstructed. They perform some 80 percent of the work to ensure the safety of our food.

In 2001, States acted in 45,000 separate instances to keep unsafe food from entering our food supply. This bill simply says that the United States Congress believes uniformity is more important than food safety or the consumers' right to know.

This bill ought to be defeated. We need to listen to what the people in the States are saying about their desire to have food that is safe to eat, and this bill absolutely vitiates any effort that States make to protect their own people.

This is a bad bill. Large corporations are pushing for it, just like years ago they pushed to try to stop this Congress from investigating cigarettes that caused cancer. We need to defeat this bill. It is a rotten idea.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to point out to the gentleman who just spoke that of course one of

the major provisions of H.R. 4167 is that it does allow a State to petition for an exemption or to establish a national standard. I think even better, as I said earlier in my response to Ms. MATSUI, is to establish a national standard regarding any requirement under FFDCa or the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act related to food regulation.

It allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide such an exemption if the requirement protects an important public interest that would otherwise be unprotected. I think that is a hugely important provision of H.R. 4167.

Again, we are dealing with interstate commerce, and I have a very strong feeling and affinity for States' rights. We all do in Georgia. But, Mr. Speaker, in my opening comments about this bill, I made an analogy of health insurance mandates, that the 50 States are not the same. It would be far easier if they were the same, but 50 States have different mandates that State legislatures pass to put in a so-called basic health insurance policy that you cannot sell in the State without including provisions.

I remember very clearly when I was a State senator, before becoming a Member of this august body, that, unfortunately, one of our colleagues' mother-in-law was dying of ovarian cancer. She and he made the strong case for a screening test, a blood test to purportedly determine who is going to get or likely to get or in the earliest stages of ovarian cancer should be made part of every health insurance policy. In other words, every woman in the State of Georgia on a yearly basis could be provided with this blood test called CA-125. But, Mr. Speaker, gynecologic oncologists, medical cancer specialists, would tell you almost to a person that this is a very poor test for screening for that particular disease.

□ 1145

Yet in the State of Georgia, that is mandated. And that drives up the cost of health insurance, and it also drives up the number of people in Georgia who cannot afford a basic policy of health care. That is really what we are talking about here. We are not talking about taking away the States' rights. And after all, the FDA scientific body, they study these issues very carefully. All of these State mandates will be looked at extremely carefully, and those that need to be in the national guidelines will be there. Those that are not, the States can petition to have them included.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL).

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the previous question and also will oppose the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a letter from the Colorado Department of Agriculture. And if I could respond to my good friend from Georgia, in the letter from the Department of Agriculture, they make the point that although the States can seek waivers, in our State we believe, the Department of Agriculture believes that a State required to seek a waiver from the Federal Food and Drug Administration would incur significant legal and expert witness expenses which could be better used in conducting food and animal feed safety inspections.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bad bill. It should be rejected. It would make it much harder for Colorado and other States to protect public health and respond to acts of bioterrorism.

The bill would preempt virtually every State and local law that does not mirror Federal law, and it would require Colorado and other States to navigate a bureaucratic and costly morass if they want to act to protect the public.

In Colorado specifically, the bill would erase laws dealing with the safety of restaurants, packaged food, wholesale foods and milk. Further, it would prohibit Colorado and other States from passing laws or regulations dealing with animal feeds, feed additives, and drugs used on animals.

Additionally, States could not respond quickly to extreme public health risks like avian flu, mad cow disease or chronic wasting disease without first seeking the guidance of the Federal Government. It is shocking, I think truly shocking, that in the wake of Hurricane Katrina we would further hamstring our State and local officials when they need to respond quickly.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge opposition to the rule and the underlying bill that would undermine Colorado's ability to protect consumers and the public health.

COLORADO DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE,

Lakewood, CO, January 30, 2006.

Hon. MARK UDALL,
House of Representatives, Cannon House Office
Bldg., Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MARK UDALL: On behalf of the Colorado Department of Agriculture, I am writing to express our concerns regarding H.R. 4167, "The National Uniformity for Foods Act of 2005," which will appear before the House for action in the next few weeks.

This bill would preempt state feed safety agriculture defense programs from performing certain functions that protect citizens. Under this bill, a state would no longer be able to formulate laws and rules concerning the labeling of foods, animal feeds, feed additives and new animal drugs. Preempting state regulatory agencies from having autonomy to address food and animal feed safety concerns compromises public and animal health. Each state must have the latitude to act quickly to enact laws and rules that address local or statewide health concerns.

In addition, the waiver process required by H.R. 4167 would impose substantial financial burden on the state and federal governments. A state required to seek a waiver from the

Federal Food and Drug Administration would incur significant legal and expert witness expenses, which could be better used in conducting food and animal feed safety inspections.

Consumers benefit from strong food safety laws at the federal and state levels. Elimination of the authority of each state to set policy and take appropriate action would reduce consumer protection. Therefore, I urge you to oppose H.R. 4167.

Your consideration of our concerns is appreciated.

Sincerely,

DON AMENT,
Commissioner, Colorado Department
of Agriculture.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 45 seconds.

I just want to say to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), that in addition to the provision that I just quoted, there is this other provision that would address his concerns, and obviously it is a legitimate concern. It is very clear in the language of the bill, Mr. Speaker. It says this: it allows a State to establish a requirement that would otherwise violate an FFDCFA act, or FDA provisions relating to national uniform nutritional labeling of this act if the requirement is needed to address an eminent hazard to health, like Mr. UDALL mentioned, that is likely to result in serious adverse health consequences and if other requirements are met.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I did not have a chance to look at the calendar to find out what organization from K Street is having a big convention. But that is the only explanation for why this bill is here. This bill has not had a single hearing, not a single hearing on food safety in this country. All the relevant State agencies oppose the bill, the State Departments of Agriculture across the country, the Association of State Food and Drug Officials, the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Why are we moving a bill through here without a single hearing to give the people of California and Washington a chance to say we want to have higher standards than you guys who run FEMA, who run FEMA? Remember, this is FEMA.

One of the things that we did in Washington State when we had an earthquake was that the Washington State Department of Agriculture embargoed the movement of fish products contaminated by ammonia. That would be outside their ability, unless they went and got a waiver.

Now, why should the people of the State of Washington have to go and get a waiver from the Federal Government to provide protection for the people in an emergency? You make it more bureaucratic.

I really find it very hard that anybody in the health care industry could come out here and want to take away from the Washington State Department of Agriculture the ability to stop the movement of contaminated eggs, which were implicated in salmonella. That happened in Washington. Why would you want to stop the movement of contaminated foods and improperly labeled products? Why would you want to take that away from the States?

Oh, because we are going to make it easier for the manufacturers to slide through whatever they want to slide through. Done. However they want it done. No one trusts the States suddenly. All these States righters come out here, and those legislators who sit and listen and have hearings are ignored.

This is a travesty of the political process that you would bring out a health safety bill. Listen, we had an epidemic of problems with food from a company that was making hamburgers. We had a bunch of kids die in Seattle because they were getting undercooked hamburgers. Now, this Congress never did anything about it. But they did in the State of Washington. And if you cannot get this Congress to act on the safety of hamburgers in the country of McDonalds, you have got a serious problem. Somebody has got their foot on something someplace. And the people in the State of Washington ought to have the right to defend themselves against bad food products.

Now, I listen to Mr. GINGREY, and I understand the debating technique. If you are going to lose the argument, change the subject.

Why don't we talk about health care out here today? Let us talk about access to health care and the insurance industry and all the wonderful things they have done for us instead of talking about food safety. Talk about food safety. Why shouldn't the State of Washington, that deals with seafood products, what the heck does anybody in here know from Kansas or Nebraska or anything else, about what is going on in the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California? And even if you did know something about it, you do not allow a hearing process.

That is an insult to the American people, and it has got to be about some kind of fundraiser or something related to that. I do not know what it is. Maybe the press will follow it up and see why we have a bill rifled through here. One hour or 30 minutes before we are going to get out and go down to Katrina and look at the Katrina catastrophe, we rifle this bill through here. There is something bad about this bill. It stinks. It is a bad bill. We ought to vote against the rule and vote against the bill.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to respond to the gentleman from Washington. I think he asked about how many of the supporters, 119 that we have submitted for

the record, were K Street folks. Well, I do not know. I will ask him. The State of Washington is an apple-producing State. I will just mention one. Apple Products Research and Education Council, Association for Dressings and Sauces, Frozen Potato Products Institute. I guess that is mainly Idaho. We mentioned earlier the H.J. Heinz company. Maybe we will ask the gentleman on the other side of the Capitol how they came to the conclusion to support this bill. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the National Fisheries Institute, Nestle USA, Quaker Oats, Sarah Lee Corporation, United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association. That has got to be very important in the State of Washington.

So I say to the gentleman, I do not know about K Street. I do not know that I have ever been there. But I know that these are hardworking people, businesses, small business in many instances, that produce these consumer food products that are engaged in interstate commerce, and if we do not have national standards, the price of their products goes up tremendously. And who does it put the greatest burden on? Those at the least economic level of our society, our poorest citizens and our immigrant population. So this is a good bill.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of defeating the previous question so that we may offer a proposal to ensure that America's ports remain safe.

As we all know, a company owned by the government of the United Arab Emirates is attempting to purchase another company that runs several port terminals throughout the United States.

Even though the law requires an extra 45 days to investigate a contract like this if there is even a chance that it could threaten national security, the Bush administration chose to approve the deal without the extra investigation.

The administration approved the deal, even though we now know that a classified Coast Guard report said the deal might be a security risk.

The President and the UAE company have now voluntarily agreed to an extra 45-day investigation. But that is no longer good enough. We simply cannot trust this administration to get it right.

If we defeat the previous question, we will offer a bipartisan bill that I have introduced along with chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, Peter King, giving Congress the authority to prohibit the deal if the President decides to let us go forward when the investigation is over.

Mr. Speaker, an extra provision has been added to Chairman KING's bill to ensure that congressional leadership

cannot prevent Congress from taking action. The UAE deal is just further proof that we cannot get our port security right with this administration.

The 9/11 Commission said that the threat to our ports is as great, if not greater, than the 9/11 attacks.

And how has this administration responded? It has not dedicated enough personnel and resources to the two programs, CSI and CT-PAT, that are designed to secure our ports. As a result, high-risk container shipments enter the U.S. unchecked.

It has not created standards for container security to keep terrorists from tampering with our cargo. It has only deployed radiation detectors to equip 25 percent of the Nation's seaports. It only screens about 6 percent of the cargo that comes into this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have a problem. Our ports are not secure. By defeating this measure, we will give an opportunity for this Congress to vote on securing our ports.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California, our minority leader, Ms. PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, as House Democratic leader, I am pleased to rise in opposition to this bill in that capacity, and sorry because of the nature of the rule that we have before us.

But before I get to that point, I want to rise as a mother and grandmother to say something about the underlying bill that this rule is addressing. If there is one thing that America's families look to government for, it is clean air for their children to breathe, clean water for them to drink, and food safety. When I say one thing, I mean what their children intake is very important to their health and well-being.

Today on the floor, we have legislation which seriously jeopardizes the food safety for America's children. It is a bill that I urge all to vote against. And the rule that brings that bill to the floor is, in my view, one that allows us to speak to safety in another way as well.

□ 1200

Yesterday marked the third anniversary of the Homeland Security Department. Yet today, 3 years later, our country is not as safe as it should be. We have a port security system that is full of holes.

The ports are our first line of defense in protecting our country. Yet the backroom port deal that the Bush administration negotiated shines a bright light on the failure of the President and this Republican Congress to secure our ports.

The intelligence community tells us, and we know, that the biggest threat to our security are the fissile materials that are still out there, the nuclear materials in the post-Soviet Union world. They were formerly weapons of

the Soviet Union, and now they are out there available, available to terrorists. And the single biggest threat are those weapons in a container coming into our country.

I really cannot explain to anyone why this administration has refused to do what is necessary to protect our ports from that threat.

And it is not only our ports. When these containers come from overseas to our country, they are unloaded onto a truck, onto a train, and drive right through your city, your town, perhaps past your home. So the danger goes well beyond our ports.

Here at home 6 percent of the containers entering our ports are screened. Yet, at two of the busiest terminals in the world, in Hong Kong, 100 percent of the terminals are screened. If Hong Kong terminals can do it, why can't we?

That is why Democrats are proposing that 100 percent of the cargo that comes into our ports is screened in their port of origin long before they reach our shores and into our waterways.

Today, as we debate and vote on another issue of security, food safety, Democrats demand that attention be given to our ports. We will call for a vote on a bipartisan bill that is identical to the King bill, the King-Thompson bill, introduced by a Republican and a Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee, Mr. KING, the chairman of the committee, and Mr. THOMPSON, the ranking member. It will require a 45-day investigation of the Dubai deal. In addition, we require that both Houses of Congress have an up-or-down vote on whether or not to approve this agreement.

Congress must assert itself. Congress must take responsibility. We take an oath of office to protect the American people, and we take that oath seriously.

Today is the day that the backroom port deal will be finalized. This is our best chance to require a congressional vote on whether or not that backroom deal should go through.

I urge my colleagues to assert Congress' responsibility to protect the American people, to assert Congress' role in checks and balances in our Constitution.

I urge our colleagues to vote against the previous question.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will be asking Members to vote "no" on the previous question, so I can amend the rule and allow the House to approve a plan that lets Congress vote up or down on the President's plan to turn over six of our Nation's ports to a government-run company in Dubai.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, my amendment to the rule would provide that immediately after the House adopts this rule, it will bring up legislation to guarantee that the House will have the opportunity to vote to block the President from moving forward with his deal to transfer operations at six of our Nation's busiest ports to a company owned by the United Arab Emirates.

This legislation is nearly identical to a measure introduced by the chairman and ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee that requires a thorough, in-depth, 45-day investigation of this contract followed by a report back to Congress on the results of that investigation. The only difference is that this bill requires a vote in the House and Senate to block the agreement if the President decides to proceed.

The same administration that talks tough on terrorism and protecting Americans on every front has now negotiated a secret, backroom deal to turn the management of these vital ports over to a foreign entity. And it has done so without going through the proper channels as required by law and without including Congress in the process.

The House must have the opportunity to play a role in this matter of national security. It is time for the Republican-controlled Congress to stop giving rubber-stamp approval to this administration at the expense of our Nation's citizens. This bill is the only way to guarantee that the House and Senate have the opportunity to vote on the Dubai deal, a vote that cannot be blocked by the Republican leadership.

Whatever Members believe about this deal and whatever results from this investigation, the House should be allowed to vote up or down on whether or not we want to turn control of six of our Nation's ports over to this foreign-government-owned entity.

I urge all Members of this body to vote "no" on the previous question so we can bring up legislation that gives Congress the right to participate and to vote on this matter of significant national security. Vote "no" on the previous question.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Getting back to the subject at hand, H.R. 4167, I will draw this debate to a close so that we can move forward with consideration of H.R. 4167. Without question, this is a common-sense bill that will ensure not only economic savings for consumers, but it will also provide additional safeguards for their health. We have heard a lot of discussion about that this morning in this hour.

Mr. Speaker, all consumers should have the same access to safety precautions and lifesaving information regardless of the State in which they live. And, again, whether it is California or Georgia or your own State of Arkansas, there is no excuse to allow regulatory inconsistency to drive up costs and keep some consumers in the dark on matters that will affect their health.

As a physician, I am convinced that the FDA has the scientific knowledge and professional expertise to provide for these safeguards, Mr. Speaker. But as an ardent supporter of States' rights, I am personally reassured by the bill's provisions allowing States the ability to petition the Food and Drug Administration for either an exemption to the uniformity or application of their State's requirements on a national level.

I want to encourage my colleagues to support this rule, to move forward with the general debate today so that we can come back next week to further discuss the underlying bill and potential amendments.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me remind all of my colleagues that the minority wants to offer an amendment that would otherwise be ruled out of order as nongermane. So the vote is without substance. The previous question vote itself is simply a procedural motion to close this debate on the rule and proceed to a vote on its adoption. The vote has no substantive policy implications whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in the RECORD I insert an explanation of the previous question.

THE PREVIOUS QUESTION VOTE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

House Rule XIX ("Previous Question") provides in part that:

There shall be a motion for the previous question, which, being ordered, shall have the effect of cutting off all debate and bringing the House to a direct vote on the immediate question or questions on which it has been ordered.

In the case of a special rule or order of business resolution reported from the House Rules Committee, providing for the consideration of a specified legislative measure, the previous question is moved following the 1 hour of debate allowed for under House Rules.

The vote on the previous question is simply a procedural vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution that sets the ground rules for debate and amendment on the legislation it would make in order. Therefore, the previous question has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.

The material previously referred to by Ms. MATSUI is as follows:

At the end of the resolution add the following new sections:

SEC. 2. Immediately upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House a bill consisting of the text specified in Section 3. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) 60 minutes of de-

bate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Homeland Security; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. The text referred to in section 2 is as follows:

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Foreign Investment Security Improvement Act of 2006".

SEC. 2. INVESTIGATION UNDER DEFENSE PRODUCTION ACT OF 1950.

(a) INVESTIGATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President or the President's designee shall conduct an investigation, under section 721(b) of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170(b)), of the acquisition by Dubai Ports World, an entity owned or controlled by the Emirate of Dubai, of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, a company that is a national of the United Kingdom, with respect to which written notification was submitted to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States on December 15, 2005. Such investigation shall be completed not later than 45 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) SUSPENSION OF EXISTING DECISION.—The President shall suspend any decision by the President or the President's designee pursuant to section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170) with respect to the acquisition described in paragraph (1) that was made before the completion of the investigation described in paragraph (1), including any such decision made before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR INVESTIGATION.—The investigation under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a review of foreign port assessments conducted under section 70108 of title 46, United States Code, of ports at which Dubai Ports World carries out operations;

(2) background checks of appropriate officers and security personnel of Dubai Ports World;

(3) an evaluation of the impact on port security in the United States by reason of control by Dubai Ports World of operations at the United States ports affected by the acquisition described in subsection (a); and

(4) an evaluation of the impact on the national security of the United States by reason of control by Dubai Ports World of operations at the United States ports affected by the acquisition described in subsection (a), to be carried out in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, and relevant State and local officials responsible for port security at such United States ports.

(c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide the following information for the investigation conducted pursuant to this section:

(A) Any relevant information on Dubai Ports World from the Automated Targeting System maintained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

(B) Port assessments at foreign seaports where Dubai Ports World operates, to be conducted as part of the review for the Container Security Initiative, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection program designed to target and screen cargo at overseas ports.

(C) Copies of the completed validations conducted through the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism program by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

(D) Any additional intelligence information held by the Department of Homeland Security, including the Office of Intelligence and Analysis.

(2) ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.—The information required by paragraph (1) shall not be construed as limiting the responsibilities of the Secretary of Homeland Security in the investigation conducted pursuant to this section.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 15 days after the date on which the investigation conducted pursuant to this section is completed, the President shall submit to Congress a report that—

(1) contains the findings of the investigation, including—

(A) an analysis of the national security concerns reviewed under the investigation; and

(B) a description of any assurances provided to the Federal Government by the applicant and the effect of such assurances on the national security of the United States; and

(2) contains the determination of the President of whether or not the President will take action under section 721(d) of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170(d)) pursuant to the investigation.

(e) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the date on which the report described in subsection (d) is submitted to Congress pursuant to such subsection, the President or the President's designee shall provide to the Members of Congress specified in paragraph (2) a detailed briefing on the contents of the report.

(2) MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.—The Members of Congress specified in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate.

(B) The Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

(C) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Finance, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

(D) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Homeland Security, and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives.

(E) Each Member of Congress who represents a State or district in which a United States port affected by the acquisition described in subsection (a) is located.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL ACTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If the determination of the President contained in the report submitted to Congress pursuant to section 2(c) of this Act is that the President will not take action under section 721(d) of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170(d)) and not later than 30 days after the date on which Congress receives the report, a joint resolution described in subsection (b) is enacted into law, then the President shall take such action under section 721(d) of the Defense Production Act of 1950 as is necessary to prohibit the acquisition described in section 2(a), including, if such acquisition has been completed, directing the Attorney General to seek divestment or other appropriate relief in the district courts of the United States.

(b) JOINT RESOLUTION DESCRIBED.—For purposes of subsection (a), the term "joint resolution" means a joint resolution of the Congress, which may not include a preamble, the sole matter after the resolving clause of

which is as follows: "That the Congress disapproves the determination of the President contained in the report submitted to Congress pursuant to section 2(c) of the Foreign Investment Security Improvement Act of 2006 on _____", with the blank space being filled with the appropriate date.

(c) COMPUTATION OF REVIEW PERIOD.—In computing the 30-day period referred to in subsection (a), there shall be excluded any day described in section 154(b) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2194(b)).

(d) CONGRESSIONAL PROCEDURE.—

(1) INTRODUCTION, REFERRAL, AND COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION.—Any joint resolution introduced pursuant to this section shall be immediately referred to one committee of the House of Representatives or the Senate, as the case may be, and such committee shall report one such resolution, without amendment, not later than three calendar days after the day on which the first such resolution is referred to such committee. If such committee does not report such resolution within the time period specified in the preceding sentence, such committee shall be discharged from further consideration of such resolution.

(2) FLOOR CONSIDERATION.—After any such joint resolution is reported or such committee is discharged, on the next legislative day, the House in question shall immediately, without the intervention of any point of order or intervening motion, consider the joint resolution as follows:

(A) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—In the House of Representatives, the joint resolution shall be considered as read, and the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the Majority and Minority Leaders or their designees.

(B) SENATE.—In the Senate, it shall at any time be in order (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) for any Member of the Senate to move to proceed to the consideration of such joint resolution. Such motion shall be highly privileged and shall not be debatable. Such motion shall not be subject to amendment, to a motion to postpone, or to a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business. A motion to reconsider the vote by which such motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of such resolution is agreed to, such resolution shall remain the unfinished business of the Senate until disposed of. Debate on such joint resolution, and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection with such resolution, shall be limited to not more than 10 hours, which shall be divided equally between Members favoring and Members opposing such resolution. Immediately following the conclusion of the debate on a such joint resolution, and a single quorum call at the conclusion of such debate if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate, the vote on final approval of such joint resolution shall occur. Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate to the procedure relating to such joint resolution shall be decided without debate.

(3) CONSIDERATION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If, before the passage by one House of a joint resolution of that House described in subsection (b), that House receives from the other House a joint resolution described in subsection (a), then the following procedures shall apply:

(A) The joint resolution of the other House shall not be referred to a committee.

(B) With respect to a joint resolution described in subsection (b) of the House receiving the joint resolution—

(i) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no joint resolution had been received from the other House; but

(ii) the vote on final passage shall be on the joint resolution of the other House.

(e) RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—This section is enacted as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the House of Representatives and the Senate, respectively, and as such these provisions—

(1) are deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of joint resolutions described in subsection (b) of this section;

(2) supersede other rules of each House only to the extent the provisions are inconsistent therewith; and

(3) are enacted with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting, if ordered, on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 216, nays 197, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 18]

YEAS—216

Aderholt	Campbell (CA)	Fitzpatrick (PA)
Akin	Cannon	Flake
Alexander	Cantor	Foley
Bachus	Capito	Forbes
Baker	Carter	Fortenberry
Barrett (SC)	Castle	Fossella
Bartlett (MD)	Chabot	Foxx
Barton (TX)	Chocola	Franks (AZ)
Bass	Coble	Frelinghuysen
Beauprez	Cole (OK)	Gallely
Biggert	Conaway	Garrett (NJ)
Bilirakis	Crenshaw	Gibbons
Bishop (UT)	Cubin	Gilchrest
Blackburn	Culberson	Gillmor
Blunt	Davis (KY)	Gingrey
Boehlert	Davis, Jo Ann	Goode
Boehner	Davis, Tom	Goodlatte
Bonilla	Deal (GA)	Granger
Bonner	Dent	Graves
Boozman	Diaz-Balart, L.	Green (WI)
Boustany	Doolittle	Gutknecht
Bradley (NH)	Drake	Hall
Brady (TX)	Dreier	Harris
Brown (SC)	Duncan	Hart
Brown-Waite,	Ehlers	Hastings (WA)
Ginny	Emerson	Hayes
Burgess	English (PA)	Hayworth
Buyer	Everett	Hefley
Calvert	Feeney	Hensarling
Camp (MI)	Ferguson	Herger

Hobson	McKeon	Ryan (KS)
Hoekstra	McMorris	Saxton
Hostettler	Mica	Schmidt
Hulshof	Miller (FL)	Schwarz (MI)
Hunter	Miller (MI)	Sensenbrenner
Hyde	Moran (KS)	Sessions
Inglis (SC)	Murphy	Shadegg
Jenkins	Musgrave	Shaw
Jindal	Neugebauer	Shays
Johnson (CT)	Ney	Sherwood
Johnson (IL)	Northup	Shimkus
Johnson, Sam	Nunes	Shuster
Jones (NC)	Nussle	Simmons
Keller	Osborne	Simpson
Kelly	Otter	Smith (NJ)
Kennedy (MN)	Oxley	Smith (TX)
King (IA)	Paul	Sodrel
King (NY)	Pearce	Souder
Kingston	Pence	Stearns
Kirk	Peterson (PA)	Sullivan
Kline	Petri	Tancredo
Knollenberg	Pickering	Taylor (NC)
Kolbe	Pitts	Thomas
Kuhl (NY)	Poe	Thornberry
LaHood	Pombo	Tiahrt
Latham	Porter	Tiberi
LaTourette	Price (GA)	Turner
Leach	Pryce (OH)	Upton
Lewis (CA)	Putnam	Walden (OR)
Lewis (KY)	Radanovich	Ramstad
Linder	Walsh	Wamp
LoBiondo	Regula	Weldon (FL)
Lucas	Rehberg	Weldon (PA)
Lungren, Daniel	Reichert	Weller
E.	Renzi	Westmoreland
Mack	Reynolds	Whitfield
Manzullo	Rogers (AL)	Wicker
Marchant	Rogers (KY)	Wilson (NM)
McCaul (TX)	Rogers (MI)	Wilson (SC)
McCotter	Rohrabacher	Wolf
McCrery	Ros-Lehtinen	Young (AK)
McHenry	Royce	Young (FL)
McHugh	Ryan (WI)	

NAYS—197

Abercrombie	Edwards	Matheson
Ackerman	Emanuel	Matsui
Allen	Engel	McCarthy
Andrews	Eshoo	McCollum (MN)
Baca	Etheridge	McDermott
Baird	Farr	McGovern
Baldwin	Fattah	McIntyre
Barrow	Filner	McKinney
Bean	Ford	McNulty
Becerra	Frank (MA)	Meehan
Berkley	Gerlach	Meek (FL)
Berman	Gonzalez	Meeks (NY)
Berry	Gordon	Melancon
Bishop (GA)	Green, Al	Michaud
Bishop (NY)	Green, Gene	Millender
Blumenauer	Grijalva	McDonald
Boren	Gutierrez	Miller (NC)
Boswell	Harman	Miller, George
Boucher	Hastings (FL)	Mollohan
Boyd	Herseth	Moore (KS)
Brady (PA)	Higgins	Moore (WI)
Brown (OH)	Holden	Moran (VA)
Brown, Corrine	Holt	Murtha
Butterfield	Honda	Nadler
Capps	Hoolley	Napolitano
Capuano	Hoyer	Neal (MA)
Cardin	Inslie	Oberstar
Cardoza	Israel	Obey
Carnahan	Jackson (IL)	Olver
Carson	Jackson-Lee	Ortiz
Case	(TX)	Owens
Chandler	Jefferson	Pallone
Clay	Johnson, E. B.	Pascarell
Cleaver	Kanjorski	Pastor
Clyburn	Kaptur	Payne
Conyers	Kennedy (RI)	Pelosi
Cooper	Kildee	Peterson (MN)
Costello	Kilpatrick (MI)	Platts
Cramer	Kind	Pomeroy
Crowley	Kucinich	Price (NC)
Cuellar	Langevin	Rahall
Cummings	Lantos	Rangel
Davis (AL)	Larsen (WA)	Reyes
Davis (CA)	Larson (CT)	Ross
Davis (FL)	Lee	Rothman
Davis (IL)	Levin	Ruppersberger
Davis (TN)	Lewis (GA)	Rush
DeFazio	Lipinski	Ryan (OH)
DeGette	Lofgren, Zoe	Sabo
Delahunt	Lowey	Salazar
DeLauro	Lynch	Sanchez, Linda
Dicks	Maloney	T.
Dingell	Markey	Sanchez, Loretta
Doyle	Marshall	Sanders

Schakowsky	Stark	Velázquez
Schiff	Strickland	Visclosky
Schwartz (PA)	Stupak	Wasserman
Scott (GA)	Tanner	Schultz
Scott (VA)	Tauscher	Waters
Serrano	Taylor (MS)	Watson
Sherman	Thompson (CA)	Watt
Skelton	Thompson (MS)	Waxman
Slaughter	Tierney	Weiner
Smith (WA)	Towns	Wexler
Snyder	Udall (CO)	Woolsey
Solis	Udall (NM)	Wu
Spratt	Van Hollen	Wynn

NOT VOTING—19

Bono	Gohmert	Myrick
Burton (IN)	Hinchee	Norwood
Costa	Hinojosa	Roybal-Allard
DeLay	Issa	Sweeney
Diaz-Balart, M.	Istook	Terry
Doggett	Jones (OH)	
Evans	Miller, Gary	

□ 1234

Messrs. RUSH, PETERSON of Minnesota, CRAMER, VISCLOSKY, LARSEN of Washington, MARSHALL, and Ms. KAPTUR changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I was absent on Thursday, March 2, 2006, because of a recent death in the family.

Had I been present on rollcall vote No. 18 on the Previous Question on the General Debate Rule for H.R. 4167, I would have voted “yea.”

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, due to illness I was regrettably unable to be on the House Floor for rollcall vote No. 18, providing for the consideration of H.R. 4167, the “National Uniformity for Food Act.”

Had I been here I would have voted “yea” on rollcall vote No. 18.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and could not be present for rollcall vote No. 18. Had I been present I would have cast the following vote: “yea” on rollcall vote No. 18.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. BUYER was allowed to speak out of order.)

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT RICKEY E. JONES

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House to address a national virtue, to address the proper tone and tenor of a Nation. It is outrageous, appalling and indecent for an American citizen to commit crimes and perversions against a family grieving at the loss of their son.

Army Sergeant Rickey Jones, along with three of his comrades, was killed in Baghdad. With his body in transport to Kokomo, Indiana, someone has egged his family’s home and left harassing phone calls that said, “I’m glad your son is dead.”

My colleagues, a great virtue of the American character is our compassion. It is how we care for each other in good times and in difficult times.

It is our compassion and human decency that represent the very best of our Nation. So to condemn these despicable acts, I ask all of you to rise and join me in a moment of silence to extend to all families who have sacrificed in the name of freedom.

Thank you and Godspeed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
 THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I will yield to my friend, Mr. BOEHNER, for the purposes of informing us of the schedule.

Mr. BOEHNER. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Next week, Mr. Speaker, the House will convene on Tuesday at 12:30 for morning hour, and at 2 o’clock for legislative business. We will take up several measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of those bills will be sent to Members’ offices by the end of the week. Any votes that are called on those measures will be rolled until 6:30.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will finish consideration of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005.

Finally, we will consider H.R. 2829, the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2005. The committees are continuing their excellent and hard work to develop this bill to reauthorize laws to combat drug trafficking. The Government Reform Committee has completed its action, and we expect the Judiciary Committee will complete its work today.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for that information.

Mr. Leader, as you know, we have been considering the rule for the food labeling bill. It is my understanding we are going to be limited to general debate.

It is also my understanding that the reason we are not completing the bill is the Rules Committee has had some issues with reference to exactly the way in which we are going to consider the bill and the amendments.

Mr. Leader, as you know, this bill has had no hearings. None. As you further know, there are States who are very concerned. As a matter of fact, I think I have gotten a letter indicating there are 36 attorneys general around the country, Republican and Democrat, who have concerns with this bill.

Mr. Leader, I would hope that the leadership on your side would convey to the Rules Committee the necessity to have, A, open debate, and hopefully, as well, significant possibility of amendment.

I do not know whether it would be an open rule or certainly, I hesitate to use this word, but a liberal rule which will allow significant amendments to be considered by this House, again, in

light of the fact that it has had no hearings whatsoever as it comes to this floor.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman is probably aware, this bill has been around for many, many years. There has been lots of discussion and debate about this bill. It did come out of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

The reason for the split rule is because there are a significant number of Members going to the gulf coast this afternoon to review the recovery, and we knew we would only get through the general debate today.

The Rules Committee is expected to meet and to finalize the rule. Those discussions about what the rule will look like and the number of amendments and the type of amendments is continuing.

But I clearly understand the interest of my colleague from Maryland for a more open rather than a more closed process.

Mr. HOYER. That word will do if it becomes reality. We appreciate your comments, Mr. Leader.

The PATRIOT Act, that was supposed to be on the calendar, we thought, this week. It is not on the calendar. I see you have not mentioned it in the work for next week.

Can you tell me whether we expect it to come before us next week as a suspension bill or under a rule?

Mr. BOEHNER. We thought that we would have the bill up yesterday because the Senate was contemplating action yesterday morning. The expiration date of the temporary extension of the PATRIOT Act is soon to expire.

We expect that the Senate will take this bill up tomorrow. If, in fact, that is the case, it will be brought up on Tuesday under the suspension calendar.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that comment. Let me move on, if I can, to the budget resolution.

Can you give us a sense at this point in time of the timing of the budget resolution? We know that there have been some concerns raised in the other body; obviously, some concerns raised here. We understand that it was the intention to bring that up prior to the St. Patrick’s Day recess.

Can you tell me whether that is still the intent and when we might expect to see that bill on the floor?

□ 1245

Mr. BOEHNER. That was a rumor that was floating around. We expect that the budget resolution will move sometime soon. Whether it happens next week or the week after is still up for discussion. When we get closer to having a firm plan for moving it, you will be the first to know.

Mr. HOYER. Well, that will be a first, if I am the first to know.

Mr. BOEHNER. Once I know.

Mr. HOYER. This is a new era in which we are moving, and I cannot tell you how excited I am about that.

Mr. BOEHNER. I can tell.

Mr. HOYER. And how I stand here in anticipation of that fact. If the leader does not mind, I will hold him to that.

Mr. BOEHNER. I will do my best.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, sir.

On the supplemental appropriation, we know that the President has made a request. Can you tell us when the supplemental appropriation might be considered?

Mr. BOEHNER. In discussions with Chairman LEWIS of the Appropriations Committee, there is a lot of work being done, hearings scheduled. Again, I do not think we have a firm timetable for moving the supplemental, but over the next week or so I think we will have a much better idea. And I will be glad to inform you as soon as I know.

Mr. HOYER. I see there is not a representation, however, that I will be the first to know on this one.

Mr. BOEHNER. I am protecting myself.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate that.

Last, these are all important and while we are being humorous to some degree about when we know about these, clearly we have a lot of important business to do, and we are now going into the third month of the year. Can you tell us what your expectations are on the tax reconciliation conference report? Obviously, that was a very contentious bill as it passed out of the House as you know, Mr. Leader; and we would like to be prepared for that bill when it comes back, when the conference committee comes back to the House.

Mr. BOEHNER. The tax reconciliation bill is in conference. I know there have been some discussions. From my standpoint, I would rather have that conference report sooner rather than later. But I have not had any indication from Chairman THOMAS that it is imminent; and secondly, it is important for the House to go to conference with the Senate on the pension bill. We are approaching a very critical deadline on the interest rate used to calculate the obligations of a defined benefit pension plan that expired at the end of the year. That interest rate needs to be reset in the large pension overhaul bill. I have got to tell you that we are waiting on Senate action. Because there are tax provisions in it, they have to take up the House bill. I suspect they will reject the House bill and go to conference. But it is important for us to get into conference on the pension bill and action is going to be required rather quickly. I do expect the tax reconciliation bill, over the next couple of weeks, I would hope that they will be finished.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate the leader's information.

Again, in closing, I would ask the leader if he would use his good offices on the food bill because there is substantial controversy around the country, as well as on the House floor, on that bill to provide for as full a consideration and amendatory process as pos-

sible. I appreciate the leader's attention to that.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4167.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL UNIFORMITY FOR FOOD ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 702 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4167.

□ 1250

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4167) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements, and for other purposes, with Mr. BOOZMAN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act. The manufacturing and distribution of the things we eat and drink is now a national industry. Coca-Cola, which is based in my home State in Atlanta, Georgia, for instance, is shipped to every corner of the country and throughout the world. Many believe that it is just common sense for these types of food manufacturers and distributors to have one labeling standard for the country, not 50 standards for 50 States.

More importantly, in order to make informed choices, consumers need consistent information. When a food warning is supported by science and consumers need to know it, the same warning should be applied to food everywhere. H.R. 4167 achieves that result.

With a mobile society, inconsistent warning requirements are guaranteed to confuse. When it is a matter of health and safety, a little confusion can have catastrophic effects.

A person in North Augusta, South Carolina, for example, can walk into a store and buy a product with no warning label. The same person could walk across the street to a store in Augusta, Georgia, and buy the same product but have a warning label attached. Does this make any sense? Of course not. It does not make any more sense to the shopper than it makes here in the House today.

When people need to be warned that a food product may hurt them, everyone needs to be warned. Uniformity in food regulation and labeling is not without precedent. Meat and poultry are regulated under uniform standards. The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 requires uniform nutrition labeling. If consistency in nutrition labeling is warranted, consumers should certainly have the benefit of consistency in warning labels of the food they eat.

Some have rightfully argued that State-specific circumstances might necessitate a warning unique only to their State. This bill acknowledges that fact by inviting States to assert their unique problems and ensure that they will get a fair and fast response from the Food and Drug Administration.

I would also like to dispel some of the misinformation that opponents of the bill have been perpetuating. In no way will this bill hinder the ability of States to respond to public emergencies. If a State feels there is an imminent public health threat that must be protected by requiring manufacturers and distributors to put a warning label on their product, they can do it immediately. All this bill requires is they tell the FDA of the threat. That is something they should be doing anyway and in most cases are already doing.

Additionally, this bill does not affect a State's ability to issue its own notification to the public, to embargo a product, or to issue recalls when they deem that necessary.

Finally, this is mostly a question about food safety, but there is a broad economic aspect to it too. Making consumers deal with 50 different labeling requirements is not without cost. In effect, it divides America into 50 different markets where each of the products cost the consumer just a little more to buy.

The men who wrote our Constitution decided that letting each State wage trade wars with its neighbors was a terrible idea, so they outlawed it by putting the Federal Government in charge of interstate commerce. It is hard to see the Framers changing their minds today so that one big market for American food can revert to 50 little markets where consumers pay more and get less.

Consistent requirements will lead to consistent results for those who make our food, and consistent information will lead to consistently better and safer choice for our consumers.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4167.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this legislation.

This is the second Congress in which this bill has been approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee without the benefit of a hearing.

Committee approval of a bill with universal support is one thing. But this bill does not enjoy universal support and raises serious questions about States' rights and national security. Had we been given the benefit of a hearing, we could have learned more about the National Association of Attorneys General's opposition. We could have learned about the elements of the bill that led the Association of Food and Drug officials to conclude that this bill would "handcuff the first responders who deal with food safety issues every day."

Legislation that causes this degree of concern should not be pushed through committee and brought to the floor without the benefit of a hearing.

Mr. Chairman, this bill is an affront to States' rights. In each of the 50 States, State legislatures have passed food safety laws that offer residents additional food safety protections than federal law provides.

This sweeping legislation would eliminate those State laws. It does so in two ways.

First, the bill preempts all existing State-mandated food safety warnings.

Second, it eliminates all State food safety laws that are not identical to federal law.

In the name of food uniformity, this bill will actually disrupt State food safety enforcement activities and hinder States' ability to protect residents from unsafe foods.

The bill also would prevent State and local governments from warning residents about the presence of contaminants in local food.

In my State of Texas, this bill would nullify laws protecting Texans from unsafe food and color additives. It would have the same effect on nearly 200 laws in each of the 50 States. Jurisdiction for food safety activities has long resided with the States, which conduct 80 percent of all food safety inspections.

This bill also has serious implications to national security.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture—which opposes this bill—has highlighted the role that the current food safety system plays in national security, saying that it "forms the first line of defense against the growing threat of a terrorist attack against our nation's food supply."

According to the State Agriculture Departments, the preemption provisions of this bill "would leave a critical gap in the safety net that protects consumers."

I encourage my colleagues to protect consumers, stand up for States' rights, and ensure the security of our Nation.

Oppose this misguided bill.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, today the House takes up legislation that would overturn 200 State laws that protect our food supply. Some of them are in labeling and some actually deal with the substance of what can be in food in the State.

A year ago, the House passed legislation to try to dictate private end-of-life decisions of Terry Schiavo and her family. This intrusion of the Federal Government into personal decisions was, I think, universally condemned, and yet today the House is once again trying to usurp powers that do not belong in Washington.

Why are they doing it? Because some special interests want to overturn State laws that they never liked. The only difference is that it is the authority of State and local governments to protect against food-borne hazards that is now under assault.

In California, for example, we have candies that come in from Mexico that have lead in them. So our legislature passed a law regulating lead in candy. It is a sensible idea. Lead can cause brain damage to children. Yet the authors of this bill that is before us today, without holding any hearings, want to preempt that law.

Now, their argument is, well, we ought to have a Federal law that does the same thing. If we ought to have a Federal law to do the same thing, why has the Federal Government not done that? The Federal Government has not been involved in these areas. They have been in the area of State control.

In Maine there is a law that requires consumers to be warned about the dangers of eating smoked alewives. This is not a problem in California, but apparently it is one in Maine. Yet again it would be preempted.

I could go on and on. Wisconsin knows a lot about cheese. It has special labeling requirements for cheese. Florida has special labeling requirements for citrus. Mississippi and Louisiana have special rules for differentiating farm-bred from wild catfish, and Alaska has similar rules for salmon. Ten coastal States have special laws protecting their residents from contaminated shell fish, and all 50 States have laws ensuring the safety of milk. And all of them would be preempted.

The arrogance of the House of Representatives appears to know no bounds. The attitude seems to be that all knowledge resides in Washington and all power should as well.

This is dangerous legislation. I know the proponents are going to say to you, well, they can appeal to the Food and Drug Administration to allow them at the State level to continue with their laws. Can you imagine that? The States, the sovereign States of this country, have to go hat in hand to a Federal bureaucracy to allow them to continue laws that their people accepted, passed under their rules, the State legislature and the Governors, to protect their population?

The FDA cannot protect the food supply all by itself. The agency is un-

derfunded and overworked, and it is failing even at the core mission of protecting consumers from dangerous drugs.

You do not have to take my word for it. Just yesterday, 37 State Attorneys General, Republicans and Democrats, sent a letter to Congress opposing this radical legislation. They stated: "We write to urge you to oppose the National Uniformity For Food Act which undercuts States' rights and consumer protection." And they go on to say: "State and local governments are often the first line of defense when problems emerge. Prohibiting State and local leadership and action in this area is a serious mistake."

□ 1300

We have also had opposition from the National Association of the State Departments of Agriculture and the Association of the Food and Drug Officials. These food safety experts know that passage of this legislation would create havoc and endanger families.

For years, I have heard my Republicans say, let us allow the States to do what they need to do to protect their people. I agree with them. Do not bring everything to Washington.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS) who is the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Chairman, I thank the chairman and I want to thank our 59 Democrat cosponsors. I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) and the chairmen, Chairman BARTON and Chairman Deal, for the work that they have done on this very important piece of legislation.

I will say today that you will see great political theater, and I have the greatest respect for the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) and normally the great substantive debate that is put forth, but what we are going to see today are a lot of half-truths, or no truths at all or not even getting close to what this bill really does.

If you truly care about the health of the pregnant woman who is driving from Michigan to Florida to Illinois to meet family members all through that journey, then when she goes to that store to pick out some food, the label for her safety and the safety of her child ought to be the same. It should not be any different, the science that says that Illinois ought to label a safety provision in food; I cannot think of anything more important than the safety of our food ought to be the same.

Because you know what? Science in California or science in Alaska or science in Florida is no different. The periodic tables are the same in Michigan as they are in Florida, as they are in Maine, as they are in New York. If it rises to that level where somebody with good science and scientists who

care passionately about the safety of food and what we put in our bodies, to say we better tell people about this safety hazard, if it is good enough for one State's children, it is good enough for 50 States' children.

Matter of fact, one of the examples that my good friend mentioned about the Florida citrus example is not preemptive because it has nothing to do with food safety. You are going to hear this again and again and again today, that we are somehow doing something awful and not letting them protect their citizens. That simply is not true.

Matter of fact, if they have a standard based on good science that says, hey, we think that this food ought to have this warning label, then come to the FDA, show us the science, so we can share it with the rest of the country. Is that not the right thing to do? Do you not want to protect the children of all our 50 States? Absolutely you do.

So I will say to you, let us subside with the political theater, the half-truths, the scare tactics and say we are going to embrace what we know is the right thing to do, a single standard. It is very much a common-sense issue. You are not going to find any family in America who thinks we ought to have 50 States and 50 different organizations trying to determine what is safe in our food and what is not.

The same way we do with nutritional labeling, we went through and said the Federal Government better set some standards if we are going to have a consistency in all 50 States. It was widely supported, as this bill is bipartisanly supported.

We said, hey, we better set an organic standard so we can tell all of America that we have got one standard that rises to the ability to label it as organic. Today, we are saying food safety rises to that same level. Every American, every mother, understands it. I am sure my colleagues on the other side will as well.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

If the Federal Government wanted one uniform standard and wanted to preempt the States from different standards, they could do it. They could do it, but what this bill would do is to preempt the States from even going forward on their own initiative to look at problems and have a standard or label in their State.

The problem has never been demonstrated that there is an issue where there are too many State differences. The problem is that the Federal Government has not been involved in this area. So if we can get the States out of it and the Federal Government out of it, then processors can just sell their food and not worry about having to meet any standard anywhere.

In California, we have a law that says you must designate if some harmful substance is in food. The consequence of that warning label means that the

food producers make sure they do not have to put a warning label on because they get rid of any toxic substance that might be in their product. That is a good result of that requirement. It would be preempted by this law.

Madam Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), my colleague and a very important member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), my distinguished colleague, for not only his eloquence on this bill but all the work that he has done on public health issues and health in general for the people of our country.

I rise to oppose this bill, and I do because I believe it is an assault on public health and consumer protection. It is no wonder there has never been a hearing on this bill in the last 8 years.

So this is not about theater. This is not, as the gentleman who introduced the bill said a few moments ago, about theater and deception. This is a very, very serious debate, and it is a debate that should have been taking place in a public hearing, in a hearing of our committee; and it has not. I think that that in and of itself is an assault on the American people. It is disrespectful.

The bill will preempt any State or local food safety law that is not identical to a Federal law, and we do not have those Federal laws. So it will absolutely leave a void. Is the majority saying here that they are set to put into place, if this bill passes, God forbid, that they are going to place on the Federal books, 200 Federal laws in a nanosecond? I do not think so.

Under this bill, the FDA will have to approve any food safety law that is at variance with Federal policy, and according to the CBO, the bill will preempt an estimated 200 State and local laws dealing with food safety. Absolutely, preempt them, right away, 200 State and local laws.

It is going to cost the FDA \$100 million over the next 5 years to process petitions from States seeking to retain these laws. There is simply no credible public health justification for the extraordinary steps that this bill takes.

The attorney general of California has weighed in against the bill. I insert this memorandum to the California delegation as part of the RECORD at this point.

MEMORANDUM

FEBRUARY 10, 2006.

To: Honorable Members of the California Congressional Delegation

From: California Attorney General, Bill Lockyer

Re Opposition to H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Foods Act of 2005.

H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Foods Act of 2005, endangers important public health protections California law provides its citizens. As the measure moves toward a possible vote on the floor of the House of Representatives, I wanted to make sure members of the California delegation fully understand this threat, and urge you to

oppose the bill. Perhaps the proponents did not make clear the extent to which H.R. 4167 would deprive Californians of the particular benefits of Proposition 65. This landmark law was passed by 63 percent of the voters, and it has reduced Californian's exposure to toxic chemicals in food.

1. Scope of the Bill

The dramatic sweep of this bill may not have been made apparent:

It would forbid any state from requiring any form of health disclosure for a food, even where the FDA has no requirement in place for a given food, and is not even considering a requirement. This prohibition would even bar warnings posted in stores within a single state, and which therefore have no effect on interstate commerce, other states or a manufacturer's nationwide product label. (Proposed 2(b)(2).)

It apparently would bar states from limiting toxic chemicals in a food simply because the FDA has a general rule barring foods that are "injurious to health," even where the FDA has not set any exposure standard for specific toxic chemical states may want to regulate. (Proposed 2(a)(3).)

It would remove the incentive that currently exists for food companies to reduce toxic chemicals in food products to below the level that requires a warning under Proposition 65.

2. Examples of Benefits of State Regulation

There are many examples of how Proposition 65 has benefitted Californians. An excellent case in point is the recent effort by my office, the Legislature and Governor Schwarzenegger to address the issue of lead in imported Mexican candies. These candies are extremely popular with millions of Californians, especially our large Latino population. But they have garnered little attention from federal regulators in Washington, D.C. For years, FDA has set an allowable lead level in these candies of 0.5 parts per million. That standard, uniformly recognized by public health officials as too lax, allows approximately 20 times more lead in a piece of candy than Proposition 65 permits. Lead damages the developing fetus, and impairs nervous system development in young children. A 2003 article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concluded that levels of lead previously considered safe, actually caused a significant reduction of children's IQ. Thus, what may in the past have been considered a "trace amount" posing no real risk now is known to damage health.

Despite numerous press stories showing these candies' adverse health effects on children in the local Latino population, FDA took only limited action to enforce its own alarmingly lax standard. As a result, in June 2004, my office filed an action under Proposition 65 which will force Mexican style candy manufacturers to reduce to safe levels the lead in their candies. In addition, last year the Legislature passed and the Governor signed Assembly Bill 121, which prohibits the sale of adulterated candy containing lead, imposes fines for the sale of such candy and directs the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to set a regulatory level allowing only "naturally occurring" lead to be present in candy.

H.R. 4167 would preempt Assembly Bill 121, simply because FDA has a more lax, and largely unenforced, lead standard. Additionally, H.R. 4167 would preempt Proposition 65's warning requirement because it is a non-uniform disclosure.

The bill would preempt another important use of Proposition 65—my vigorous efforts to assure that parents and women of child-bearing age are aware of the risks to unborn babies and their small children from consuming too much fish with high levels of

mercury. This effort is largely consistent with the FDA's own policies. The FDA website warns that women who are pregnant or may become pregnant should not consume certain types of fish (such as swordfish and shark), and should limit consumption of all types of fish, because of their mercury content. California has given life to this requirement by requiring that similar information be posted in grocery stores that sell fresh fish and restaurants that serve fish. At least six other states have instituted similar public disclosure requirements concerning mercury in fish. We recently completed the evidence phase of a trial concerning warnings for canned tuna. We believe such warnings can be provided in a manner that will not conflict with FDA's advice, but will ensure the advice is seen by more consumers of fish than FDA's website. H.R. 4167 would preempt this disclosure requirement.

In addition, even well established and successful uses of Proposition 65 could no longer be enforced, unless approved by the FDA. For example:

Lead in ceramic tableware: Based on a 1991 action by then Attorney General Dan Lungren, industry agreed to substantially reduce lead that leaches from ceramic tableware into food and beverages. Manufacturers took that step because of the marketplace incentive created by the duty to post conspicuous point-of-sale warnings. While warnings initially were common, most companies have reduced lead levels to substantially below FDA requirements.

Lead in calcium supplements: In June of 1997, California reached agreement with makers of calcium supplements to reduce levels of lead contamination in their products below the level at which a warning would be required under Proposition 65. Because of the importance of encouraging women to increase their intake of calcium, this agreement was negotiated without ever providing a consumer warning. Meanwhile, FDA issued advisories concerning some sources of calcium as early as 1982, and requested additional data in 1994. But it never has taken regulatory action.

Arsenic in Bottled Water: Arsenic in bottled water has been reduced to less than 5 parts per billion under the settlement of a Proposition 65 action reached in 2000. FDA, in contrast, still applies a standard of 50 parts per billion.

Leaded crystal: Based on science showing that substantial quantities of lead leach from fully-leaded crystal (defined as 24 percent lead) into beverages, California took action to require visible warnings at the point of sale in California, as early as September of 1991. Leaded crystal—as distinguished from other types of glassware—now carries prominent warnings in California stores. Since 1991, FDA never has publicized its advisory addressing this hazard in a manner likely to be seen or read by consumers.

In other instances, quiet compliance with Proposition 65 has produced public health benefits without litigation. Lead soldered cans leach substantial amounts of lead into foods stored in the cans. As soon as Proposition 65 took effect in early 1988, our investigations found that food processors were switching to cans that do not use lead, before enforcement action was even necessary. In 1993, years after Proposition 65 took effect, FDA issued "emergency" action level. Similarly, potassium bromate is a listed carcinogen under Proposition 65. Informal surveys in 2002 of stores in California found no bread containing potassium bromate for sale. And the 2002 surveys found stores in other states sold bread containing potassium bromate. Meanwhile, FDA remains engaged in a multi-year process to encourage bakers to stop using this additive.

I recognize many have expressed concern about certain enforcement activities of Proposition 65 by private parties. That is why my office and the California Legislature have taken vigorous action to ensure that private lawsuits brought under Proposition 65 are pursued only in the public interest. In 1999, the Legislature amended the statute to require that private plaintiffs report to the Attorney General concerning their enforcement activities. In 2001, I sponsored additional legislation that requires all persons who want to bring private Proposition 65 cases seeking consumer warnings to first provide my office with appropriate scientific documentation. That statute also requires that all settlements of those cases be reviewed by my office and approved by courts in a public proceeding under specific legal standards. These actions by the state have curbed questionable lawsuits filed by private litigants, and reduced the number of settlements that are not in the public interest.

I am aware that many in the food industry have expressed great concern over the chemical acrylamide, its presence in many foods, and the potential application of Proposition 65 to those foods. The FDA has been considering this issue since 2002, and currently has no schedule for when, or whether, it will take any action concerning the matter. In the meantime, a single serving of french fries contains 80 times the amount of acrylamide EPA allows in drinking water. Accordingly, I have filed suit under Proposition 65 to require warnings for acrylamide in french fries and potato chips, so that people in California can make their own choices about their exposure to this chemical. This suit would not ban any products or require that warnings be provided in any other state. It would, however, provide Californians the health information they demanded in passing Proposition 65.

3. Petition Process

While H.R. 4167 would allow states to petition FDA for authority to impose additional requirements, it is inappropriate to require a state to seek the federal government's permission to protect the health of its citizens. Moreover, our past experience suggests the FDA would deny any such petition.

Further, the specific provisions of the petition process raise concerns. Initially, states would have six months to petition FDA for approval of existing requirements applicable to specific foods, during which time those requirements would remain in effect until disapproved by the FDA. (Proposed §403B(b).) While the bill provides for judicial review of FDA's decision, it does not establish the standard by which any denial of a petition would be judged. The lack of a review standard would leave FDA potentially limited discretion to arbitrarily strike down state requirements. (Proposed §403B(b)(3)(C)(ii)(I).)

Any general requirement such as Proposition 65 itself—and any new requirement, could be adopted only after approval by FDA. The FDA could delay that process indefinitely through extension of the "public comment period." (Proposed New §403B(c)(1), (3)(B).) Thus, it appears that any time a state official sought to apply an existing law to a food product where no specific requirement for that food had been set, enforcement of the law would be barred until and unless the FDA granted its permission.

Indeed, H.R. 4167's petitioning scheme brings to mind one of the grievances against distant British authority recorded in the Declaration of Independence. "He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them." (Declaration of Independence, 4th paragraph.)

4. Need for National Uniformity

In a few instances, legitimate reasons exist for national uniformity in food labeling and standards. These circumstances, however, already are addressed under current federal law, which also prohibits states from adopting requirements that conflict with properly adopted and necessary federal labeling requirements.

Existing section 403A of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act expressly precludes state laws mandating label requirements for a wide variety of matters on which the FDA has acted and uniformity is necessary. This preemption covers standards of identity, use of the term "imitation," identification of the weight of the product and its manufacturer, the presence of food allergens, and whether the product is pasteurized.

Other federal regulatory statutes that govern nationwide industries, such as the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), adopt a much more limited approach. FIFRA, for example, preempts only state warning requirements that would appear on the nationwide label of the product. It also allows each state to adopt more restrictive requirements for use of pesticides within that state.

Even where Congress has not expressly preempted state law, courts uniformly have held that state law must give way to federal requirements where the two are in "actual and irreconcilable conflict." The California Supreme Court applied that requirement in *Dowhall v. SmithKlineBeecham* (2004) 32 Cal.4th 910.) This doctrine sufficiently ensures state regulations do not interfere with properly adopted federal requirements.

In fact, FDA officials have demonstrated a disturbing tendency to manufacture "conflicts" in their desire to preclude states from enforcing their own laws to protect public health. FDA officials arbitrarily declare "misbranded" products for which additional warnings would be given, without even consulting state authorities. For example, last August, the FDA, at the behest of a Washington, D.C. law firm, sent me a letter asserting that state warning requirements concerning mercury in canned tuna conflicted with federal law. The FDA sent this letter without any advance notice to my office. Further, the letter was based on inaccurate information provided the FDA by the industry law firm, and was sent without awareness that we proposed only that California states provide warnings completely consistent with FDA's own published "mercury in fish advisory." In light of such incidents, it's arguable that if there is any need for legislation, it is to amend federal law to protect the states against arbitrary and informal action by federal officials who take it upon themselves to declare California law in "conflict" with federal law, without providing state authorities advance notice or any opportunity to be heard.

H.R. 4167 would greatly impede our ability to protect the health of Californians, both under Proposition 65 and under other laws that could be adopted by the voters or our Legislature. I thank those of you who are opposing this measure. For those of you still considering the bill, I strongly urge you to oppose it and for those of you who have agreed to co-sponsor the measure, I hope you will reconsider your position in light of the important consumer protections H.R. 4167 will impede.

Madam Chairman, the State Departments of Agriculture, as well as State and food safety officials from all 50 States oppose the bill because they believe it hampers their ability to protect the public from hazards in the food supply, even potential bioterrorist attacks, an issue that really should be

debated and discussed and would have been if we had ever had a hearing.

These State and local officials are responsible for conducting 80 percent of the food safety inspections in the country, and yet today we are diminishing their ability to carry out their important role.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture representing every State in the Union has come out against the bill.

The Association of Food and Drug Officials wrote that "The bill will preempt States and local food safety and defense programs from performing their functions to protect citizens."

Equally disturbing, the bill will scale back State laws designed to protect pregnant women and children from potential hazards in foods. Why would we ever take such a step?

For all of these reasons and many more, I rise in opposition to the bill. It is bad public policy and it should be rejected by the House.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) for purposes of a colloquy.

Mr. BOYD. Madam Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding time to me to enter in a colloquy so that we may clarify certain parts of this.

I, and other Members, would like to be certain that we understand how this bill affects State food safety laws. It is my understanding that the bill contains a list of 10 provisions of Federal food safety laws and that State law dealing with the same subject as the Federal law is required to be identical to the Federal law. Is my understanding correct?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BOYD. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, yes, it is.

I would add that, under the bill, "identical" means that the language in the State law is substantially the same as that in the listed sections of Federal law and that any differences in language are not material. This is important to understand.

Mr. BOYD. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his clarification.

Am I correct in also understanding that virtually all of the State laws that relate to the sections of Federal law listed in the bill are identical to Federal law already?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. If the gentleman would further yield, yes.

For example, Federal law contains what is referred to as the "basic adulteration standard," which provides that a food is adulterated if it bears any added poisonous or deleterious substance which may render the food injurious to health. All States have a provision that is identical to this provision of Federal law.

Mr. BOYD. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

Is the basic adulteration standard to which the gentleman has referred the standard that the Federal Government or States would rely on to deal with the presence of unsafe levels of contaminants in food? Would that provision permit a State to take action against a terrorist threat to food supply?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. The gentleman is correct on both of those points.

Mr. BOYD. Madam Chairman, a lot of us are confused. There have been a lot of allegations coming from all directions. There are folks who oppose the bill, that have produced a list of 77 State laws that would purportedly be nullified under this bill.

If the gentleman would, is that an accurate portrayal of the effects of this bill?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, if the gentleman would continue to yield, no, it is not.

Careful analysis of that list shows that of the 77 State laws listed, 55 would not be preempted. Let me give you two examples. First, included on the list is an Alabama law that sets nutritional standards for grits. This uniformity bill does not deal with nutritional standards or with grits, so the Alabama law is unaffected by the bill.

Secondly, the list includes several State laws that require that fish be labeled as previously frozen, if that is the case. These laws are not affected by the uniformity provision because those State fish labeling requirements are not warnings.

Of the 22 State laws that would be affected by the bill, 14 authorize States to adopt requirements for food and color additives that are different from Federal requirements. Although these laws would be preempted under the bill, the fact is that none of the 14 States that have these laws have any current requirement for food or color additives that are different from Federal requirements.

So, in spite of all the wild assertions that the uniformity bill would nullify "the bulk of the State food safety laws," as one opponent has put it, the fact is it would do nothing of the sort.

Mr. BOYD. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for that comprehensive and reassuring response. I agree there is a lot of confusion about the bill, and we do not clearly understand the effects on State law and authority. I am satisfied, however, that the bill properly preserves the ability of States to take action to protect consumers, while ensuring that food safety policies will be uniform and scientifically based, and I thank the gentleman for his time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK), an important Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, who has been very active on FDA issues for a number of years.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 4167.

I find it interesting that the majority party, which calls itself an advocate for States' rights, would actually put forth a bill that eviscerates State food safety laws. If passed, this bill would be a huge setback for consumer safety, public health and America's war on terror.

Yesterday, I urged the Rules Committee to accept the Capps-Eshoo-Waxman-Stupak consumer protection amendment which would permit States to maintain or enact food safety and food warning laws that require notifications regarding the risks of cancer, birth defects, reproductive health issues, and allergic reactions associated with sulfiting agents in bulk foods.

□ 1315

Our amendment would also permit States to maintain or enact food warning laws and notify parents about risks to children.

I offered a second amendment which would allow States to maintain or enact food warning laws that require notification labeling regarding the treatment of foods with carbon monoxide. This bill, as written, would wipe out over 80 food safety laws and put our Nation's food safety standards squarely in the hands of the FDA.

Michigan maintains and has laws that would be overturned with this bill regarding sulfiting agent warnings in bulk foods, smoked fish, the safety of food in restaurants, and laws governing the safety of milk. That is why 37 bipartisan State attorneys general oppose this bill.

The bipartisan Association of Food and Drug Officials also have strong concerns. They stated and wrote to us, and I quote, "This legislation undermines our Nation's whole biosurveillance system by preempting and invalidating many of the State and local food safety laws and regulations that provide the authority necessary for State and local agents to operate food safety and security programs. The pre-9/11 concept embodied in this bill is very much out of line with the current threats that confront our food safety and security."

They also said that preemption and invalidation of State and local food safety and security activities will "severely hamper the FDA's ability to detect and respond to acts of terrorism." They added, and I quote, "Our current food safety and security system will be significantly disrupted and our inability to track suspected acts of intentional alteration of food will be exploited by those who seek to do harm to our Nation."

The danger of placing our Nation's food safety laws squarely in the hands of the FDA is demonstrated by my amendment on carbon monoxide.

Madam Chair, I would like to direct your attention to these pictures. Which meat do you think is older, the red

meat on the top or the brown meat on the bottom? It is a trick question. They are both the same age. Both have been sitting in a refrigerator side-by-side for 5 months.

You can see the date of the labels, October 2005. The meat on the top, which is bright red and looks very, very healthy, has actually been treated with carbon monoxide, which causes the meat to look red and fresh long into the future. The meat on the bottom here, the brown, is actually brown and slimy. Like I said, the meat on the top is 5 months old and looks as good as new, but what happens if you eat this? You will probably become very ill and possibly die from a foodborne pathogen like *E. coli*.

The FDA, in all of its wisdom, or lack thereof, has no objection to allowing carbon monoxide meat to be packaged. Color is the most important factor people look at when they determine which type of meat to buy, according to numerous studies. This new practice is clearly consumer deception, yet the FDA decided it was okay. The FDA either did not look at the evidence or it just didn't find this whole matter troubling. I do not know which is worse.

Right now, States may pass their own laws which label carbon monoxide meat so the consumers are well aware of what they are getting before they purchase it. All my amendment says is to allow the States to require carbon monoxide labeling if you are going to try to freshen up your meat. That is all we want to do, to allow a consumer to know what is going on. So when they go to the store and look at the meat, if they buy it based on a color which supposedly brings out the freshness, they will know it was done by tricking it with carbon monoxide, but that it is the same meat, kept for the same amount of time. All we are asking with our amendment is to allow us to prevent this.

Do we really want this? We want to let the consumer know that the meat has been chemically treated before they purchase it. This bill would prevent me from doing that.

Public health and food safety have primarily been the responsibility of the States. We should not now tie the hands of the States who want to protect the health of their citizens in the absence of FDA judgment, resources, expertise, or the will to do the right thing. I urge the majority party to stand up for the American people and allow our Democratic amendments and the Stupak carbon monoxide amendment on the floor next week for consideration.

America can make the choice. With this bill, we will get tainted meat with carbon monoxide and jeopardize the health and safety of the American people.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this bill.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STUPAK. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I think what the gentleman is illustrating is so important, because the sponsors of this bill said we need the Federal Government to protect the health of people all over the country. So let us have one uniform standard.

Well, right now, the FDA could adopt that standard and stop the use of carbon monoxide as a food additive and as a preserver of meat, but they have not acted. So if a State wants to act, why should we tell them they cannot act when the FDA hasn't done anything at the Federal level? I think that is the point you are making.

Let the States, if the Federal Government fails, sometimes because they have lobbyists up here who are more powerful, let the States at least be able to protect their own citizens to pass the laws they think are appropriate.

Mr. STUPAK. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman is absolutely correct. What we are saying, basically, is let the consumer be aware of what they are buying. Let the buyer beware.

I should know if the meat I am buying here, the hamburger, has been treated with carbon monoxide to make it look fresh and healthy, but it has been sitting for 5 months and really contains a deadly pathogen, with *E. coli*, that can kill me.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), the chairman of the Agriculture Committee.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me this time and for his leadership on this issue, and I rise in support of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005. This bill takes a measured approach to national uniformity for food by providing a mechanism for a thorough, orderly review of States' existing regulations that may differ from those of the Federal Government.

In the United States, the food production and distribution system is truly national. Products made in one State are distributed not only in all 50 States, but also the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, and many countries around the globe. Consumers, as well as food manufacturers, have a right to expect that rational, scientifically based and consistent standards will apply. Citizens of all States and territories deserve and expect the same level of food safety protection. Likewise, all citizens in this country will benefit from uniform standards.

The House Committee on Agriculture oversees a significant portion of America's food safety system. The Federal food safety functions over which this committee has jurisdiction have long employed uniform standards to protect public health, facilitate the marketing of agricultural commodities, and improve efficiency of the interstate trading of producers' goods. The adoption of uniform standards is common practice and, indeed, the general rule when

it comes to the Federal food safety efforts.

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service is responsible for the safety of domestic and imported meat in the United States. It enforces uniform standards through the authority granted by USDA, by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, the Ag Products Inspection Act, and other authorities.

Likewise, previous amendments to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which were included in the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, provided that a State may not set tolerance levels for pesticide residues that differ from national levels unless the State petitions the Environmental Protection Agency for an exception based on a State-specific situation.

Moreover, uniformity is not limited to those areas of food safety. Congress has repeatedly recognized the importance of uniformity in food regulation in other sectors. For example, the FDA, as authorized by the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act, implements uniform standards for nutrition labeling, health claims, and standards of identity.

With the world's safest food supply, every American benefits from this system of national food safety standards. H.R. 4167 builds on this record of success by extending this same approach to food safety standards used by USDA and other agencies to the FDA's food safety programs. This is an important step forward in ensuring consumer confidence in the food they buy for their families, and I urge all Members to support H.R. 4167.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I am now proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), who is the chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that deals with the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Agency.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Madam Chairman, every time this body considers a bill on how we regulate the food of this country it is designed not to strengthen existing law, but to weaken it, and this despite the fact that we face many threats to our food supply: avian flu, BSE, and bioterrorism. Today, we debate the National Uniformity for Food Act. This bill would make our food safety laws uniform: uniformly weak, uniformly toothless.

Right now, it is States, not the Federal Government, that conduct the body of our food safety work. State and local agencies do 80 percent of the food inspections in the United States. They are on the front lines. They test food products and they manage food emergencies. Yet under this bill, State laws requiring warnings and labels on foods would be superceded or eliminated.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that 200 State laws would be immediately affected by this

bill's passage, requiring States to submit requests for waivers to the FDA. The cost to the FDA for reviewing these waivers would be \$100 million. Does this bill authorize another \$100 million to FDA? Of course not. This, at a time when the administration's budget proposals cut Federal food safety funding by over \$450 million.

One of my colleagues talked about this being theater. This is not theater. Many of us have been asking for more funding for food inspections and food safety over the last several years, and the administration and the leadership in this House have refused to do it.

This bill has other problems. States regulate shellfish, milk production, and other food products. In the absence of any Federal standards, those State protections will disappear. The bill undermines our ability to respond to bioterrorism and other food emergencies. It would require the notification of the Secretary of HHS before responding to a food emergency. They could only respond once they have received assurance that the Federal Government is not taking enforcement actions of their own. The State would then be required to apply for waiver, after the fact, to justify their actions. This is absurd.

If this Republican Congress wanted to make our food safety laws uniform, it would create a single food agency that would regulate the safety of our food, as some of us have suggested over and over again. We have 12 different agencies and 35 statutes currently in place to regulate food safety at the Federal level. If you want to be serious about this issue of food safety, let us have one single agency whose responsibility it is to make sure our food supply is safe and ensure the public health of this Nation.

We need to do a better job of coordinating our efforts to protect the public health, but we do not get there by weakening our laws; we get there by strengthening them. And that is something that this bill does not even begin to attempt to do.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise today in support of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act. If enacted, this important legislation would set much-needed national standards for food safety and put an end to the confusing and often contradictory standards that exist across many States.

This is important, given that consumers have a right to expect the same scientifically based safety standards everywhere in the United States. By establishing a single national system based on comprehensive, science-based standards, consumers and businesses will be clear about what is safe, what is permissible, and what needs to be labeled. This is an opportunity to bolster consumer confidence.

The legislation would ensure that the FDA incorporates the best safety and warning practices of States, and allows States to continue to carry out sanitation inspections and enforcement. It would also create a process by which States can petition the FDA to adopt their own regulations as the national standard or to seek an exemption from national uniformity. A State's requirements would remain in effect while the FDA considers the State's petition. And where no Federal requirement exists, States could proceed pursuant to their own standards.

H.R. 4167 is good, commonsense legislation. It is greatly needed, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

□ 1330

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I don't think consumer confidence is going to be bolstered when we pass a law that the State Attorneys General say would strip State governments of the ability to protect their residents through State laws and regulations relating to the safety of food and food packaging. Some of the more obvious State level warnings that almost certainly would be challenged include consumer warnings about mercury contamination of fish, arsenic in bottled water, lead in ceramic tableware, the alcohol content in candies, the content of fats and oils in foods, and postharvest pesticides applicable to fruits and vegetables. The States would not be allowed to do that.

Now, the previous speaker said that we ought to have a Federal requirement. But he was mistaken when he said that if there were no Federal requirement States can pursue their own standards. He is wrong because the bill before us would stop the States from pursuing their own standards unless the Federal Government allowed them to do so. And I think that is an intrusion on States' rights, a usurpation of power by Washington and an ability for the industries involved to be able to make their claim to the Federal Government to stop States from doing exactly what they think is appropriate to protect their public and to bolster consumer confidence.

I don't think that the confidence of the consumer should be bolstered when we have a bill on the floor that has been around for a number of years and no committee has ever held a hearing on it. We did not allow the scientists to come in and tell us whether it is a good idea or not. We didn't hear the problems from the industry that should justify this bill. We didn't hear the opponents and the arguments that they might make. Instead, in committee we had a mark-up where Members could debate what we were told by different groups, but not based on a hearing record. I think that the confidence of the American people in Congress should be very, very low; and if this bill passes the confidence of the Amer-

ican public about their food supply should be also in doubt.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON).

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act. As ranking Democrat on the Agriculture Committee, I support this bill because it provides uniform food safety standards and warning requirements, and it creates a single national system for food and food products regulated by the FDA.

Establishing uniform standards increases efficiency and safety as we have seen in practice today with the USDA and the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Inspection Act, and other authorities that were referred to by the chairman in his remarks a short time ago.

Consumers gain with this consistency and uniform regulations for packaged food all across the 50 States under this jurisdiction of the FDA. If a food product is safe in one State, it is safe in all States.

With the world's safest food supply at the lowest cost to its consumers, every American benefits from this system of national food safety standards. H.R. 4167 builds on this record of success by extending the same approach to food safety standards used by USDA and other agencies; and, therefore, I believe this bill should be supported.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill and to oppose any amendments that weaken or attempt to gut the commonsense approach of this legislation.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to read a portion of a letter from Tommy Irvin who is from the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he said, "The bill is craftily written to disguise its true effects on our authority to protect consumers. Both vague and broad in scope, this legislation will, in reality, go far beyond the stated purpose of uniformity. The real effect of this legislation will be the deregulation of the United States Food Industry."

Madam Chairman and my colleagues, we have at the Federal level, the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture has a dual mission: to protect consumers from unsafe agriculture products, particularly meat and chicken. But they also have the obligation to bolster the agriculture industries in this country. And they always have this tension about who to respond to first.

We also have the Food and Drug Agency, and they regulate food additives and the food supply that the USDA does not cover. Well, as Representative ROSA DELAURO mentioned,

we ought to have one food agency, but we have never been able to do that because people fight over their turf.

Well, while the Federal Government is fighting over its turf, this bill would take away the jurisdiction from the States to protect their own people, and that is why we never hear a bill labeled as the "usurpation of power in Washington to take away from the States the ability to protect consumers of food." They do not call it that. They call it the "National Uniformity Bill for the Food Product," or something along those lines. They always have a very nice sounding label for legislation.

Well, do not be fooled by the label that this bill has, because it misleads the consumer and the American public into thinking we are doing something to protect them, when I fear it is going to make them weaker.

Madam Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. Wu).

Mr. WU. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding, especially under these circumstances where I am not completely decided about this legislation. I have a sincere inquiry for my friends on the other side of this debate, and I realize that there are Democrats and Republicans on both sides of this debate.

Given my background in securities law, if one wants to sell securities across this country, there is one layer of regulation at the Securities and Exchange Commission, but you have to run the securities through the blue sky laws of every single State in the United States.

Similarly, there is banking law at the Federal level; but if you want to do, say, furniture lending and consumer lending, you have to do compliance work under consumer protection laws for every State in the Union. I used to do this kind of legal work when I was in the private sector.

I had not intended to participate in the debate today; but, quite frankly, I was eating. And as important as securities and insurance and other issues are, it seems to me that Americans truly care about the safety of what they are eating and the ability to know what it is that they are putting down the hatch. And I am truly curious about the folks on the other side of this debate.

What is it that distinguishes the food industry so that it does not have to, say, like the securities industry, comply with both Federal and State law, or with furniture lending, comply with both Federal and State law? Because it seems to me that the food industry is pretty healthy in this country and making good money, and we do not need to give it, if you will, an artificial boost.

I would be happy to yield to someone from the other side.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding. They would have to comply with both. But what

this deals with is labeling. If there is a label that is necessary for your people in Oregon to protect their safety, then it ought to be necessary for the people of my State of Georgia, and it ought to be uniform in that regard, and that is what we are saying.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

And in response to the gentleman's point, which I think is an excellent one, industries in this country often have to meet State standards as well as Federal standards. I have always heard that if it ain't broke, why fix it. And I have never heard a reason why we need this bill. What are we fixing? What is the problem? I do not see what the problem is, except some people would like to overturn State laws. And if they have the case to do that, they ought to make it at the State level, or they ought to come to the Federal Government and say this particular law is too burdensome; we ought to have a Federal law in its place.

But that is not what we are having proposed to us today. We are having proposed to us a bill that just would, in a blanket way, allow the preemption of all duly adopted laws at the State level.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Chairman, the National Uniformity for Food Act would actually foster greater cooperation among the States and the Federal Government on an issue that I honestly believe is very important to every American family, and that is food safety. Consumers across the country deserve a single set of science-based food warning requirements, not the confusing patchwork that we have today.

I am a supporter of States' rights, and our friends across the aisle have not stood up for States' rights many times in the past, and I really don't think they are doing so today. They are standing up for what they love most, which is lots of government regulations.

The bill before us, the National Uniformity for Food Act, strikes an important balance between States' rights and Federal responsibility. The bill really enhances the model for a Federal-State regulatory cooperation that already occurs in many areas of food safety. The bill gives the FDA authority where it would have authority and should have authority, which is general and scientific oversight over packaged food safety.

It leaves to the States the fundamental tasks that are best handled at that level, ensuring proper sanitation and making sure that the manufacturing plants, refrigeration facilities, and food transportation all meet or exceed minimum standards.

I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of the bill.

Mr. WAXMAN. May I inquire of my colleague how many speakers he has remaining?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I am prepared to close.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will close the debate on our side.

Madam Chairman and my colleagues, let me just go through the kinds of laws we are talking about. There are 50 State laws regulating the safety of milk. They are not identical. And I don't know if there will be one uniform law for the safety of milk at the Federal level, and I am not sure that it would make sense to have it. There may be differences that are justified. But that debate could go on, and it could be resolved by itself. But meanwhile, we shouldn't jeopardize 50 laws on the subject when there is no Federal law to take its place.

There are 50 State laws regulating safety of food in restaurants. Why should the restaurants in a State be regulated by Washington if their State chooses to have a food safety disclosure or other food law?

There are 10 State laws regulating the safety of shellfish. Why should those laws be eliminated?

There is an Alabama law regulating infested, moldy, or decayed pecans and other nuts. That may be a problem that Alabama has. Why shouldn't they be able to act on it, and why should we have to have that same law elsewhere or have no law anywhere on the subject?

California law requiring consumers to be notified when food contains contaminants that cause cancer or birth defects, a California law limiting the amount of lead in candy, a Florida law regulating labeling of citrus fruit and citrus products, a Maine law requiring disclosure of the risk of eating smoked alewives, whatever that may be. A Maryland law, prohibiting the sale of frozen food that has been previously thawed. A Minnesota law requiring labeling of the types of wild rice. A Mississippi law requiring the labeling of farm-raised catfish. A Virginia law prohibiting the removal of sell-by date labels, a Wisconsin law requiring a label showing the age and type of cheese made in Wisconsin.

I don't know whether those are all good laws or not, but the legislatures probably had hearings, and they got the input from people who are supporting it, and opposing it. And they adopted it and their Governors signed the laws.

We are now about to overturn those State laws with a bill that had no hearing here in the Congress of the United States, and will turn it over to the FDA, a Federal bureaucracy, to decide whether those States may have those laws in their States still in effect. I think it is wrong. I do not see the problem it is solving. I think that this is

legislation that has been poorly thought out. I hope we get a chance to offer amendments to the bill next week when we start considering it. Especially since it has never had a day of hearings, we ought to have an open rule. There are a limited number of issues to debate. We ought to at least be able to debate them and have votes on those issues so that Members can make a determined judgment as to whether this bill ought to pass the House of Representatives.

I urge a "no" vote on the bill.

Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1345

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, this has been a good debate, and I appreciate the interest and concern.

And to my good friend, Mr. WAXMAN, who has handled it on the other side, I am glad he has now become converted to being a States' righter. Back in 1990 when he was the author of the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990, we heard exactly the opposite arguments. I was not here, but I am told those were the opposite arguments because as far as nutrition labeling, it does require uniformity across the country.

Now, if labeling on nutrition requires consistency, why should not there be consistency in warning labels of the foods that people eat?

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. WAXMAN. I do recall and I can explain the situation.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Does it require uniformity?

Mr. WAXMAN. It does because there was no nutritional labeling at the State level. It had been done by the industry voluntarily, and they had different kinds of labels, and it was not in a way that we could compare the calorie content, the carbohydrate content, the fat content. So we decided that since this was all under Federal jurisdiction anyway, we ought to standardize the labeling.

It was not an issue of usurping the power from the States because the States look to the FDA to make that decision.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. You would not advocate repealing that law and giving it back to the States, I would assume?

Mr. WAXMAN. No, of course.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. All right. Thank you.

Mr. WAXMAN. You would not, however, want the Federal Government to legislate in every area that any State thinks ought to be done in their State?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. No.

Reclaiming my time, let me give the Members of this body examples of some of the things that are excluded from it.

The gentleman mentioned shellfish. Shellfish are specifically excluded from

the provisions of this act. Some of the ones that I think most of us think of as the kinds of labels that may have peculiar application to locales that may not have application nationwide and that are therefore not included or prohibited from being placed on products are some of the following: open date labeling, grade labeling, State inspection stamps, religious dietary labeling, organic or natural designations, returnable bottle labeling, unit price labeling, and statement of geographical origin. Those all still continue to be allowed; they are not preempted by this legislation.

I believe we have heard from a wide variety of people who represent points of view from their committee assignments on the Democrat side as well as the Republican side. The gentleman quoted my Democrat commissioner of agriculture from the State of Georgia. I called on my Democrat Member from the State of Georgia, who has served on the Agriculture Committee here in the House of Representatives, who said exactly the opposite of what our State agriculture commissioner says.

Now, I think that the overall conclusion that we should reach is that this is a good piece of legislation. It is time that we recognize that there is a necessity for uniformity in labeling of food products, and this legislation moves us in that direction. I would urge the adoption of the bill when it is considered next week.

Madam Chairman. I ask that this exchange of correspondence be included in the debate on H.R. 4167.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2006.

Hon. JOE BARTON,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BARTON: In recognition of the desire to expedite consideration of H.R. 4167, the "National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005," the Committee on the Judiciary hereby waives consideration of the bill. There are several provisions contained in H.R. 4167 that implicate the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary. Specifically, the legislation contains a number of judicial review provisions.

The Committee takes this action with the understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 4167, the Committee on the Judiciary does not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment to any House-Senate conference on this legislation and requests your support if such a request is made. Finally, I would appreciate your including this letter in your Committee's report for H.R. 4167 and in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during consideration of H.R. 4167 on the House floor. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2006.
Hon. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House
of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SENSENBRENNER: Thank you for your letter concerning H.R. 4167, the

National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005, which the Committee on Energy and Commerce reported on December 15, 2005.

I appreciate your willingness not to seek a referral on H.R. 4167. I agree that your decision to forego action on the bill will not prejudice the Committee on the Judiciary with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or future legislation. Further, I recognize your right to request conferees on those provisions within the Committee on the Judiciary's jurisdiction should they be the subject of a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation.

I will include our exchange of letters in the Committee's report on H.R. 4167, and in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

Sincerely,

JOE BARTON,
Chairman.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act.

Food safety labeling standards currently vary from state to state, which has created a patchwork of different and inconsistent requirements. H.R. 4167 would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) to provide for national, uniform food safety standards and warning requirements. I am co-sponsor of this bipartisan legislation because it will enhance consumer protection through coordinating and harmonizing federal, state, and local food safety requirements. Consumers deserve the same high level of protection against unsafe food regardless of where they may live.

While H.R. 4167 would provide for national, uniform food safety standards and warning requirements, the legislation, however, does not affect state authority in several areas that are traditional local food enforcement matters, including: freshness dating, open date labeling, grade labeling, state inspection stamp, religious dietary labeling, organic or natural designation, returnable bottle labeling, unit pricing, and statement of geographic origin. Further, states would be exempted from national food safety standards to respond during times when substantial concerns are raised about the safety of food. I support H.R. 4167 because it provides these important exceptions to national standards, which will ensure authority of states in traditional local food enforcement matters and allow states to act if presented with an imminent food safety crisis.

Food safety labeling standards are an important public health issue, and I support H.R. 4167 because it will provide uniform, national standards to ensure greater consumer protection.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Chairman, the National Uniformity for Food Act deserves our full support.

This act is consistent with our long tradition of cautious Congressional oversight of interstate commerce to protect American consumers. The act is simple. By requiring states and the FDA to provide consumers with a single standard for food safety, this important legislation delivers protection to American consumers.

I strongly believe the National Uniformity for Food Act is the best way to apply the safeguards we now have over meat, poultry, drugs, and many other products to packaged food. Under the bill, states would retain their important functions such as sanitation, inspections and enforcement. The act also contains

mechanisms to review state food safety laws and consider them for national application.

This act provides important federal protections, while retaining valuable input from states and coordination between state and federal food safety experts. I strongly appreciate my good friend Congressman MIKE ROGERS' efforts to ensure that Americans are confident that packaged food they find on our store shelves is safe for them and their families. I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this important act.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005. I am opposed to this legislation for two reasons.

First, and foremost, this legislation would completely eliminate any State or local food safety law that is not identical to requirements established by the FDA. Even laws that go beyond the federal requirements to protect their citizens would be pre-empted. For example, in my home state of New Jersey, a number of labeling requirements for milk, restaurant food safety and many other State laws would be completely negated, thereby placing the health and well-being of our citizens at increased risk. How is that good public policy?

I also have to oppose this legislation for the way it has completely violated the legislative process. This bill has escaped any real scrutiny from the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over such food safety matters. No hearings were held, no witnesses were called to testify, and no effort was made to determine the actual impact this bill will have on the safety of our nation's food supply. It is clear that this bill was insufficiently reviewed and I fear that Congress is acting far too quickly to enact legislation that will have such sweeping affects.

I believe improving the quality of our nation's food supply is one of the most important challenges facing Congress today. A vote for this legislation, however, would put consumers at increased risk. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. UPTON. Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act.

This is common sense legislation that will benefit both consumers and businesses— and particularly small businesses.

Consumers will benefit from being able to rely on scientifically-based national food safety and warning standards, just as they now rely on national standards for nutrition labeling.

When we think of the food manufacturing industry, we may not realize that small manufacturers account for the bulk of the industry. Specifically, nearly 73 percent of food manufacturers have fewer than 20 employees. These smaller firms are especially burdened by having to comply with up to 50 different food safety and warning regimens if they are in or wish to enter interstate commerce.

I know many of us have heard from our governors about important state food safety and warning requirements that could be pre-empted by a national standard. But it is important to underscore that this bill provides for a 180-day period after enactment for states to petition the FDA and make their cases for either permitting a state requirement to remain in place or to make a state requirement a national standard. Further, the state require-

ments will remain in place until the FDA makes a determination on the state's petition.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mrs. DRAKE). All time for general debate has expired.

Under the rule, the Committee rises. Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DEAL of Georgia) having assumed the chair, Mrs. DRAKE, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4167) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY,
MARCH 6, 2006 AND HOUR OF
MEETING ON TUESDAY, MARCH
7, 2006

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday next, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, 2006, for morning hour debate.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DRAKE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF HON. MAC
THORNBERRY AND HON. FRANK
R. WOLF TO ACT AS SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN EN-
ROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESO-
LUTIONS THROUGH MARCH 7, 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAC THORNBERRY and the Honorable FRANK R. WOLF to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through March 7, 2006.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointments are approved.

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

NO PLACE BUT TEXAS

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, today is my favorite day in Texas history. March 2 marks Texas Independence Day. On this day, 170 years ago, Texas declared independence from Mexico and its evil dictator, Santa Anna, the 19th century Saddam Hussein, and Texas became a free nation.

In 1836, in a small farm village of Washington-on-the-Brazos, 54 "Texians," as they called themselves in those days, gathered on a cold rainy day like today to do something bold and brazen: They gathered to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence and once and for all "declare that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign, and independent republic."

As these determined delegates met to declare independence, Santa Anna and 6,000 enemy troops were marching on an old, beat-up Spanish mission that we now call the Alamo. This is where Texas defenders stood defiant and determined. They were led by a 27-year-old lawyer by the name of William Barrett Travis. The Alamo and its 186 Texans were all that stood between the invaders and the people of Texas. And behind the dark, dank walls of that Alamo, William Barrett Travis, the commander, sent a fiery, urgent appeal requesting aid.

His defiant letter read in part: "To all the people in Texas and America and the world, I am besieged by a thousand or more of the enemy under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannon fire for the last 24 hours, but I have not lost a man."

"The enemy has demanded surrender at its discretion; otherwise, the fort will be put to the sword. I have answered that demand with a cannon shot, and the flag still waves proudly over the wall. I shall never surrender or retreat.

"I call upon you in the name of liberty and patriotism and everything that is dear to our character to come to my aid with all dispatch. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.

"Victory or death," signed William Barrett Travis, commander of the Alamo.

Madam Speaker, after 13 days of glory at the Alamo, Commander Travis and his men sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom. The date was March 6, 1836.

Those lives would not be lost in vain. Their determination for the cause paid off, and because heroes like William Barrett Travis, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and others held out for so long, Santa Anna's forces took such great losses they became battered and demoralized and diminished. As Travis said in his last letter, "Victory will cost the enemy more dearly than defeat."

He was right.

General Sam Houston, in turn, had devised a strategy to rally other Texas volunteers to ultimately defeat Santa Anna at the battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. The war was over. The Lone Star flag was visible all across the bold, brazen, and broad plains of Texas. Texas remained an independent nation for over 9 years.

The Alamo defenders were from every State in the United States, 13 foreign countries. They were black, brown, and white, ages 16 through 67. They were mavericks, revolutionaries, farmers, shopkeepers, and freedom fighters. They came together to fight for something they believed in. Liberty. And, Madam Speaker, they were all volunteers.

In 1845, Texas was admitted to the United States by only one vote. Some have said they wished the vote had gone the other way. Be that as it may, every day, each school day, kids across the vastness of Texas pledge allegiance to not only the American flag but they also pledge to the Texas flag; and by treaty with the United States, the Texas flag flies next to the American flag but never below it.

We all know that freedom has a cost. It always has. It always will.

And we also pause to remember those who lost their lives so that Texas could be a free nation. And as we do so, we remember the brave Americans in our military that are fearlessly fighting in lands far, far away to preserve and uphold freedom from a new world threat of terrorism.

Texas Independence Day is a day of pride and reflection in the Lone Star State. Today we remember to pay tribute to heroes like William Barrett Travis, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, Juan Seguin, Jim Bonham, and General Sam Houston and the rest of those volunteers who fought the evil tyrant and terrorist, Santa Anna.

Madam Speaker, I hope that Congress and the rest of the country will join me in celebrating Texas Independence Day. In Colonel Travis' final letter and appeal for aid, he signed off with three words that I leave you with now. "God and Texas." "God and Texas." "God and Texas."

And the rest, as they say, Madam Speaker is Texas history. And that's just the way it is.

PORT SECURITY

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, it is hard to believe, but the Bush administration, through its Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, has given a nod and green light to the Dubai Ports World deal.

Mr. Negroponte says the Bush administration "assessed the threat to U.S. national security posed by Dubai Ports World to be low. In other words, he said, "We didn't see any red flags come up during the course of our inquiry."

Now the questions I have to ask: Why should we trust the Bush administration or their analysis on intelligence on anything certainly when it comes to the Middle East? It seems to me their record on assessing risk is not good.

Let us review some of their intelligence predictions:

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, back in February, 2003, said about the war in Iraq, "It is unknowable how long that conflict will last. It could last 6 days, 6 weeks. I doubt 6 months." That is what he said. His estimate was dead wrong.

Vice President DICK CHENEY, March, 2003, said, "We will, in fact, be greeted in Iraq as liberators . . . I think it will go relatively quickly . . . in weeks rather than months." His estimate was dead wrong.

President Bush told us that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Well, the United States called off that search in January, 2005. There were no weapons of mass destruction. His estimate proved to be dead wrong.

□ 1400

This administration seems to make wrong decisions about a lot of things, like knowing who the enemy really is, like knowing what causes enemies to rise in the first place, and working to prevent that by avoiding cozy deals with dictatorships of all stripes.

I think it is clear to even the least interested of observers that the architects of this war, starting with the President, the Vice President and the Secretary of Defense, allowed our troops to go to war in insufficient numbers, with inadequate resources, with fantastic escalating costs and with absolutely no plan whatsoever to win the peace. Globally, their approach is yielding more terrorism every day. Their approach is yielding more anti-Americanism every day globally.

Why then should we trust the Bush administration? Why should we believe their intelligence that the Dubai Ports World deal will not risk U.S. national security? Those who seek to do us harm know a lot about ports. Two weeks ago, in Yemen, 23 al Qaeda members escaped from prison. Thirteen of them were men convicted in involvement in the 2000 suicide attack on the USS *Cole* that occurred in Yemen's harbor which killed 17 American soldiers. The others were attackers of the French supertanker Lindbergh in 2002.

Some of those who are our enemy have spent decades working the oil fields and sea lanes of the Middle East.

Supertankers like the Lindbergh now wend their way to our shores because we irresponsibly are dependent on oil imports to sustain this economy. Those who want to harm us know this system well.

The quagmire in Iraq is bringing contempt for the United States around the world and our enemies seek to harm us. That is why port security must be upmost in our minds.

America is fast becoming a dependent Nation, dependent on other countries for oil, for food, for autos, for electronics, for toys, even for clothing. Our maritime system includes over 95,000 miles of open shoreline, and 316 U.S. ports and ships carry more than 95 percent of our non-North American trade. But only 2 percent of what comes into this country is even inspected. Just last week, we saw what happened in Saudi Arabia as an al Qaeda attack occurred at their largest oil facility.

In this era, when vastly more is shipped into our ports than goes out, we had best be on the alert to protect our portals. I am introducing legislation to prohibit any foreign government or foreign-owned company from owning, leasing, or in any way controlling a U.S. port. The bill will ask our Coast Guard to assume full oversight and control over these bloodlines and all inspection of all cargo flowing into them until America is no longer at war.

The Federal Government controls and operates the agencies that admit people into this Nation. Our Federal Government controls and operates the systems and agencies that admit airplanes into this Nation. We should have the very same system of control over our port systems, one that, by the way, is increasing and expanding at a very rapid rate. In 2005, more than 11 million containers came into our country from abroad, and the estimate is that will quadruple in the next 20 years if we don't get this trade balance in line.

We have invested billions in other systems and pennies in our port system. Isn't it time to put America's national security first before any private deals?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

HONORING THE LIFE OF IDALIA
LUNA SMITH

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

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Idalia Luna Smith. Idalia was a caseworker in my district office. She was also a dear and loving friend to hundreds in our region of California. She was a community activist, and she was a loving wife and mother of three children.

Idalia passed away on Saturday, February 18, 2006, ending a long and difficult battle with cancer. She is survived by her husband, John, and her two sons and daughter: Jack, Patrick, and Veronica.

Idalia was born and raised in East Los Angeles. Her interest in politics and social justice developed early in life. At the age of 14, she was influenced by her father's involvement in the famous 1970 Chicano Moratorium, an event which raised political consciousness for thousands in the Mexican America community of greater Los Angeles. As a teenager and college student, Idalia became politically active in her community, fighting for the equal treatment of Latinos and other underrepresented people.

Idalia graduated from Sacred Heart of Mary High School, then studied pre-medicine at Immaculate Heart College and Chicano studies, journalism and theatre at East Los Angeles Community College. She then earned her bachelor of science degree in biology at the University of La Verne.

Upon graduation, Idalia went to work for the Southern California Edison Company. In her 20 years there, she worked in many departments, including power production, informational technology, health care, and occupational health and safety. As a testament to Idalia's good will and generosity, she organized several blood donation drives and health fairs at Southern California Edison.

In 2001, seeking to combine her love of science, children and education, Idalia went back to school to earn a teaching credential at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. From 2001 to 2003, she taught science to young children at Beatitudes of our Lord School at La Mirada, California. However, her time at Beatitudes was unfortunately cut short by breast cancer. For the next 3 years, Idalia underwent the difficult rigors of chemotherapy and other treatments. Through her strength and courage, she was determined to return to help her community.

In 2003, Idalia did just that as she joined her husband, John, in founding the Robert F. Kennedy Democratic Club in La Mirada. In this way, Idalia continued the legacy of fighting for social justice that she began in East Los Angeles 30 years earlier.

In just one year, Idalia and John Smith increased the RFK Club's mem-

bership from 20 to 112 people. In acknowledgment of her work, Idalia was named the 2005 Democrat of the Year for the 60th Assembly District of California by the Los Angeles County Democratic Party, and that same year she was honored by her local peers with the 2005 Community Service Award from the Robert F. Kennedy Democratic Club.

Over the past year, I had the pleasure of getting to know Idalia well as she worked in my district office as an office manager first and then a caseworker. Idalia's humor, optimism, and general goodwill always brightened our office and the lives of the constituents that she served. Not a day went by that she did not make us smile and laugh.

As a caseworker, she tirelessly worked to help others with their problems, all while she struggled with cancer. Despite her own health concerns, Idalia always lent an empathetic ear and dedicated herself to the individuals she helped. She was incredibly modest, humble, and charming. My staff and I will miss her greatly.

Through it all, Idalia believed in being proactive. She was committed to learning about her disease and did what she could to help others facing the same pain. I urge everyone to follow Idalia's example and make a personal commitment to ease the suffering of others as well and to help eradicate the horrible disease of cancer.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in honoring Idalia Luna Smith. May God bless her and ease her family's pain as they mourn for their loss.

U.S.-INDIA AGREEMENT MAKES
WORLD A MORE DANGEROUS
PLACE

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, as if we haven't done enough damage to the cause of global peace and security in Iraq, today the President has continued to make the world a more dangerous place with his misguided agreement on nuclear energy with India. If this deal is ratified by the Congress, and, believe me, I will do everything in my power to see that it is not, we will be sharing sensitive nuclear technology with a nation that was testing nuclear weapons as recently as 1998. We will be rewarding India for its refusal to sign on to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, a treaty which has helped keep the world safe in this nuclear age for nearly four decades.

What message does the India pact send to Iran and North Korea? What leverage do we now have with these countries to give up their nuclear ambitions? Especially when, even though they are dangerous regimes, they have done nothing to violate the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

While Great Britain, France and Germany are going back to the negotiating table to persuade Iran to give up its nuclear program, the United States is giving away nuclear technology to a nation that has rejected the NPT. How can we call ourselves a responsible global superpower when we thumb our noses at established international law? Is it any wonder that America is losing credibility and respect around the globe?

How will we now deal with India's neighbor and rival, Pakistan, which will likely demand the same nuclear concessions from the United States, and which has a dishonorable history of sharing nuclear technologies with other rogue states? The India-Pakistan border, which has been called the world's most dangerous nuclear flash point, will now be more dangerous, thanks to this agreement.

The President claims that this deal is about easing the pressure on the global energy supply given India's enormous population and soaring energy demands. First of all, where does the confidence come from that there can be an airtight firewall between India's civilian and military nuclear programs? Technology used for one can inevitably benefit the other.

Furthermore, it is laughable to hear concern about fossil fuel consumption from a President who never saw an ocean floor or wildlife refuge he didn't want to drill holes in. But I don't support nuclear power plants, because I believe it is not the answer to global energy and our energy challenge.

So if the President is serious about this issue, he will aggressively promote conservation and renewable energy right here in our very own United States of America, the world's hungriest energy consumer; and he will do it with real programs and investments, not a few lines of rhetoric in the State of the Union. But I am not holding my breath.

This acquiescence to India underscores more than ever that we need a new approach to our national security. To that end, I have offered a new strategy called SMART Security, SMART standing for Sensible, Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. I have been working on this idea with groups like Physicians For Social Responsibility, the Friends Committee For National Legislation, and Women's Action For New Directions.

SMART has five major components: first, prevent future acts of terrorism, not with military force, but better intelligence and multilateral cooperation; second, stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction with aggressive diplomacy, vigorous inspection and a commitment to nonproliferation; third, address terrorism's root causes with a humanitarian effort to invest in poor nations and conquer the depravation and despair that fosters terrorism in the very first place; fourth, rethink our budget priorities, in other words, less spending on Cold War weapons systems and more spending on efforts like

energy independence that are relevant to the security threats we face today; and, fifth, pursue alternatives to war, exhausting every conceivable diplomatic channel before resorting to armed conflict.

Finally, let me note the ironies of the President's deal with India. On the one hand, here we are feeding the nuclear appetite of a nation that has failed to show the responsibility expected of a nuclear state. On the other hand, we have sacrifice 2,300 Americans and \$250 billion on a war that was launched because of nuclear weapons that never existed.

□ 1415

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

(Mr. PAUL 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 California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF 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 Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

HONORING AMERICA'S FALLEN IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, March 18 will mark the 3-year anniversary of America's involvement in Iraq. Two thousand two hundred ninety-six American military personnel have now given their lives fighting in Iraq. Two hundred seventy-seven Americans have also fallen in the line of duty in Afghanistan.

We owe these great men and women and their families a debt of gratitude that can never be fully repaid.

Last year I led a bipartisan group of 21 Members of Congress in reading the names of the fallen into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We made a commitment to continue to read the names of our fellow citizens as long as the fighting continues.

In the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, each of those heroes stands on the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase in its blessings.

God bless and keep each of the brave Americans whose memory we honor today:

1st Lieutenant Robert C. Oneto-Sikorski

Private 1st Class David J. Martin
Sergeant 1st Class Jonathan Tessar
Petty Officer 2nd Class Allan M. Espiritu

Sergeant Daniel A. Tsue
Private 1st Class Tyler R. MacKenzie
Specialist Benjamin A. Smith
Specialist Joshua J. Munger
2nd Lieutenant Mark J. Procopio
Specialist Dennis J. Ferdner Jr.
Captain Michael D. Martino
Major Gerald M. Bloomfield II
Major Jeffrey P. Toczylowski
Specialist Darren D. Howe
Sergeant 1st Class Daniel J. Pratt
Staff Sergeant Kyle B. Wehrly
Gunnery Sergeant Darrell W. Boatman

Private 1st Class Dustin A. Yancey
Captain James M. Gurbisz
Specialist Timothy D. Brown
Staff Sergeant Jason A. Fegler
Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Wren
Sergeant 1st Class James F. Hayes
Captain Joel E. Cahill
Lance Corporal Ryan J. Sorensen
Private 1st Class Mario A. Reyes
Specialist Robert C. Pope II
Staff Sergeant Brian L. Freeman
1st Lieutenant Justin S. Smith
Sergeant 1st Class Alwyn C. "Al" Cashe

Lance Corporal Jeremy P. Tamburello

Lance Corporal Daniel Freeman Swaim

Sergeant Joshua A. Terando
Staff Sergeant Michael C. Parrott
Sergeant Tyrone L. Chisholm
Private 1st Class Antonio Mendez Sanchez

Corporal Donald E. Fisher II
Staff Sergeant Stephen J. Sutherland
Lance Corporal David A. Mendez Ruiz
Lance Corporal Scott A. Zubowski
Corporal John M. Longoria
Lance Corporal Christopher M. McCrackin

Major Ramon J. Mendoza Jr.
Lance Corporal Nickolas David Schiavoni

Private 1st Class Travis J. Grigg
Specialist Matthew J. Holley
Staff Sergeant James E. Estep
Private Dylan R. Paytas
Sergeant Jeremy E. Murray
Specialist Alexis Roman-Cruz
Corporal Joshua J. Ware
Corporal Jeffrey A. Rogers
Lance Corporal Roger W. Deeds
Lance Corporal John A. "JT" Lucente

2nd Lieutenant Donald R. McGlothlin
Specialist Vernon R. Widner
Staff Sergeant Ivan Vargas Alarcon
Sergeant Luis R. Reyes
Private 1st Class Anthony Gaunky
Private Christopher M. Alcozer
Lance Corporal Tyler J. Troyer
Lance Corporal Miguel Terrazas
Specialist Michael J. Idanan
Specialist Dominic Joseph Hinton
Corporal Jonathan F. Blair
Staff Sergeant Edward Karolasz
1st Lieutenant Dennis W. Zilinski
Master Sergeant Anthony R. C. Yost

Sergeant Dominic J. Sacco
Private 1st Class John Wilson Dearing
Sergeant Denis J. Gallardo
Specialist Allen J. Knop
Sergeant William B. Meeuwesen
Staff Sergeant Aram J. Bass
Private 1st Class Ryan D. Christensen.

Mr. Speaker, President Abraham Lincoln once wrote to the mother of five fallen soldiers, "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 with distinction.

Our thoughts, prayers and gratitude are with you and your families at this time until they return home.

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

(Mr. MCCOTTER 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 California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California 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 Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DINGELL 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 Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS 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 Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan 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. GENE GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas 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 Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity given to me by the leadership and by the Republican Conference to come and share a few words this afternoon. This is something that we call the Official Truth Squad, and we have been coming to the floor of the House almost every day that we have been in session this year.

We who have organized it are the freshman class. There are about 25, 26 members of the Republican freshman class. We are the new folks on the block. We have been in Congress now for about 14 months. And one of the things that disturbed us so, being here, was the tone of the debate, was the level of incredible partisanship, the remarkable and distasteful distortion of facts, the personal attacks, some of which we have heard within the past 30 minutes. The hyperbole and the disinformation and the misinformation that goes on here in Washington seems to be kind of the order of the day.

What we thought we might be able to do to contribute to kind of raising the level of the rhetoric and the tone is to develop what we call the Official Truth Squad. And our effort and our desire is to try to bring a positive view of America, a truthful view of America, point out some of the wonderful and great things that go on in our Nation and that our citizens are involved in. Because truth is incredibly important to public debate.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, if are you not dealing with truth in the area of public policy, you cannot reach the right solution, you just cannot get to the right end point. That is what is so disheartening about much of the debate that goes on here. And I say that in all sincerity, understanding, as I know my constituents do, that these are not Republican problems or Democrat problems, these are American challenges that all of us face. So truth is so incredibly important.

In my former life, I was a physician, and I knew that if I did not have truthful, accurate information going in to take care of a patient, that I could not make the right diagnosis. If somehow the information was distorted or not accurate, then it just was not possible to get to the right diagnosis.

The same is true in the public policy arena. If we are not talking about truthful items, then it just becomes that much more difficult to reach ap-

propriate conclusions. I know that when I go home and talk to my constituents. They say, do you not get tired of all of that negativity up there? And I do. And I know that you do too, Mr. Speaker.

But that is why our goal is to try to put a little positive spin on exactly what is happening here in Washington and present to the American public an optimistic view of where we are.

And we have in the Official Truth Squad many quotes that we are fond of. One of the ones I am most fond of is one from former New York U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He says, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts." Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but not their own facts.

And it really is so true about much of the debate that goes on here in Washington. Because with many people, everybody obviously has their opinions. But oftentimes they are not supported by facts. And we have heard recently some incredible accusations given about, for example, the Dubai Ports deal.

Now, I am not certain that I support that at all, but I do know that unless you are dealing with truth and with fact, you cannot reach the right conclusion. And one of the things that has come to the floor is this huge accusation that there just has not been any money for port security, that Congress has been delinquent, that the White House has been delinquent, that they are not even paying attention to what is happening at the ports.

Well, here are the facts. Here are the facts. Port security funding in 2001, prior to 9/11, was at a level of about \$250 million. \$250 million. Fiscal year 2006, port security nearly \$3 billion. Nearly \$3 billion. The request for 2007, over \$3.5 billion.

So when you look at the facts, they do not back up the rhetoric of so many individuals who are obviously playing politics. And you cannot take the politics out of politics, I understand that. But it is important that we talk about truth. It is important that we talk about real numbers when we are trying to get to solutions to these incredible challenges that we have before us.

So there are the facts on port security funding. Almost a 700 percent increase since 9/11. Mr. Speaker, that certainly is not inattentiveness to port security funding.

We have also heard recently about the "cuts" in certain budgetary items; and the other side is fond of saying that there are cuts in Medicare and cuts in education. And so what I would like to do today is just share very briefly with folks what the actual facts are, what the truth is.

This is Medicare funding. This is Medicare spending from 1995 to 2005. These are not my numbers, these are Treasury, budget office of the U.S. Government: 1995, \$156.9 billion; 2000, \$187 billion; 2005, \$294 billion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not know where you went to school, but I do not

think that they would call moving from \$187 billion to \$294 billion a "cut." It is simply not. And so when people describe it as such, then all they are doing is playing on the fear of the American public. And that does a disservice to the debate. It is dishonest. It does not help get us to the right conclusion. Medicare spending every single year has increased.

Education spending: Many are fond of saying that the amount of money spent on education over the past 5 years has been cut. You have heard them say that. I heard them say that. I always shake my head when I hear it, because if you look at the facts, if you look at the truth, what we have here is total education spending since the year 2000 to 2005 has grown, on average, 9.1 percent each year over the past 5 years.

Those are the facts. That is the truth.

So when you hear people talk about the kind of allegations that they have regarding decreases to, cuts in spending, it simply is not so. What they are talking about it a decrease in the increase; only in Washington is that described as a "cut."

So it is important that we talk about truthful things. It is important we talk about facts, important that we agree on those items before we get to the solution to the remarkable challenges that we have.

Today we are going to talk a little bit about the economy. And if you were just getting your information from the major media markets, the major television stations and the networks, or the major newspapers across this Nation, you might not appreciate that the economy is ticking along pretty dog-gone well. And so we are going to bring some information today, some facts, some truth about the economy, that we hope will be helpful to the debate and also helpful information for the American public.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joined today by many of my colleagues, and initially, Congresswoman SHELLY MOORE CAPITO from West Virginia. Congresswoman CAPITO is a veteran here compared to us freshmen. She is from West Virginia and has been a real leader in the area of our economy, and a real leader in the area of health care, has been working actively to make certain that health care costs do not continue to skyrocket because they play into our economy to a great degree.

So I am so pleased that you are able to join us. I yield to you and look forward to your comments.

□ 1430

Mrs. CAPITO. I would like to thank my colleague from Georgia for his leadership on so many issues, but also on his leadership of the Official Truth Squad.

I think one of the things that I find when I go back to my home district is people do not get what the real truth is. The way we debate here in Congress, it is almost who can besmirch somebody's character. Who can besmirch

somebody's program. Who can say in the most sensational way why something is not good, instead of actually looking at the facts and debating the truth on the facts.

That is why I am pleased to be here today, because I want to talk about something that I think is very good news for the American public, and certainly the State I represent, West Virginia, is one of these and that is the state of our economy.

The American economy in 2005 was the envy of the world. Just yesterday, the Prime Minister of Italy, Silvio Berlusconi, was here extolling the virtues of a democratic government, extolling the virtues of the enormous economic engine that the United States has and brings to the global economy. And I think he made us realize that, number one, we should not take this for granted and, number two, we should recognize it.

I will talk about facts. We will stick with the facts today. Just the facts, ma'am. That is what they say. The economy grew at a robust 3.5 percent rate in 2005, making this the fourth year of expansion. For 10 of the last 11 quarters, the economy has grown at better than 3.3 percent and that is sizable. Furthermore, our economy's fundamental health was underscored by the fact that gulf coast hurricanes and rising energy prices could not derail significant growth, much to our relief.

We have now seen 29 consecutive months of job gains. During this period, 4.8 million jobs were created, and 193,000 just this past January. The latest national employment figure, 4.7, is the best since July 2001, two months shy of September 11. In my home State of West Virginia, we have perennially fought high unemployment. We have perennially fought low economic gains, but I am really pleased West Virginia is part of this economic boost we are feeling across the country.

Our seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in January; 3.8 percent is the lowest seasonally adjusted rate we have ever had in the history of keeping statistics in West Virginia. In December alone, the statistics of unemployment was the lowest rate that had ever been in the history of any December when that rate was recorded in the State of West Virginia. That is wonderful news for our State.

The numbers do not lie. They are real results, and the results like these do not happen by accident. Not so long ago in late 2001 during the recession, the economy was being afflicted by serious problems in the wake of 9/11, corporate scandals, and other problems. Economic growth was lagging, and Americans had stopped investing like they used to. There was no job growth, or very little. Fortunately, we here in the House acted on a piece of common-sense legislation. The less you tax something, the more you get. That goes for income, but it also goes for investment. So Congress responded with real tax relief in 2003, encouraging

more Americans to invest their earnings.

The Jobs and Growth Act of 2003 lowered all individual tax rates, but lowered the individual tax rate on dividend and capital gains to 15 percent. This loosened the shackles on every individual and freed the genius of the American economy. Since May 2003 when the Jobs and Growth Act was enacted, 4.7 million jobs have been created. Now, that is a truth that is undeniable.

After nine straight declining quarters of business, we have seen 10 straight quarters of rising business investment. Unemployment had reached 6.3 percent in 2003; and as I said today, the 4.7 figure is lower than the averages of the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

An added benefit of the tax cut was that the Federal Government actually collected more tax revenue from capital gains even though the rate was lowered. From 2003 to 2004, revenues from capital gains taxes increased from \$50 to \$60 billion. Last year, the Federal Government received \$75 billion in capital gains tax revenue. In fact, overall government tax revenue is currently at its highest level in American history, and our State revenues are reflecting this as well. So we need to keep that tax rate at 15 percent.

We recently passed H.R. 4297, and this bill would make the 15 percent tax rate permanent, and I am hopeful that will pass. But, you know, it is not Washington, D.C. that drives the economy. It is the daily choices of millions of free Americans that drive it. Small businessmen and -women, miners, farmers, taxi drivers, doctors, teachers, all these people who contribute to what we call the national economy. And we should always remember that we owe the strength of our economy to all these hardworking Americans who quietly make this country work every single day.

I would like to take just a few more minutes about my home State of West Virginia. I am very proud that we have had low unemployment. It has been spiraling downward over the last several months. Our homeownership has gone up. We are at one of the highest levels of homeownership across the Nation.

Our crime rate, which we are very, very pleased is perennially low, is lower than ever. I think that is indicative of the rise of the economy and the feeling of robustness and optimism that they have that they can provide for their families.

In West Virginia, more people are going to college than ever before. To me that is an indicator of several things: people are preparing to engage in the knowledge-based economy that we see in our future. Also, if they are able to go on to college right after high school, what does that tell you? It means they can improve their education and they do not need to go into the workforce right away to help their families. And this is a positive step, I

think, in broadening and making our West Virginia economy much greater.

As everyone knows, coal is very important to our West Virginia economy. We are a resource-based economy. We always have been. We have had some very sad times recently in our coal industry, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the Nation for their heartfelt prayers and sincere thoughts concerning the loss of our miners in West Virginia.

It has been very difficult for us because we are a small State. We care about each other very much and one person's loss is every person's loss. That is why we are working in a bipartisan way to do mine safety legislation here in Congress to help with oxygen supplies, to help with tracking miners, to help with communications, to help with response times. And I think that we will get to a good bipartisan resolution on how we can prevent these accidents from happening in the future.

We have over 12 new mines opened in West Virginia. Twelve more than last year. Over 1,200 new miners. This shows you the strength of our economy. Over 50 percent of the electricity generated in this country is generated through coal, and we are very, very pleased about that.

So I think that the problems now that I am hearing or whenever I go out to my town meetings or around grocery shopping or wherever I happen to be, I ask people all the time, how is it going? How is your business? How is work? How are you feeling about the economy? And honestly, to a person, the optimistic flavor of West Virginians both in the State and national economy is immeasurable.

It is so much greater than it has been in the past, to the point where, what am I hearing now: I cannot find enough people to employ; I need 50 more people; we need more miners; we need more electricians; we need more clerks. So I think that we are going to see a time of national prosperity, as we have now, continue to grow and to continue to make that American Dream possible for every American family: the ability to buy a home, to raise your family in a community that you know is safe, to be able to enjoy those small-town values that States like Georgia and West Virginia provide in abundance to Americans.

So I am very pleased that the growth and jobs packages that we have put forward in this Congress are translating into the real meat-and-potato issues on the dinner tables of America. So I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am going to be speaking about this a lot because I think not only do people realize it, but they need to be reminded that these things do not happen by accident; that policies go into place that bring about the economic changes that bring about more jobs, lower unemployment, more homeownership, more people going to college, and a more optimistic attitude about our future.

Again, I would remind you if you did not see the Prime Minister from Italy yesterday, he had a very powerful message for Americans on several fronts, national security certainly, but also the fact of the admiration that people around the world and countries around the world have for our American economy.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentlewoman from West Virginia so much for sharing those words and what a wonderful, wonderful picture you paint about West Virginia, about the economy and about the policies that we adopt here and their effect on the Nation and each and every State.

I too was struck by the Prime Minister from Italy, Prime Minister Berlusconi yesterday. It was really a moving time to have him speak to us in his native tongue and to describe what he said he saw in America. And that is the leader of the world in the area of democracy, in the area of freedom and liberty but also in the area of the economy, and how those things are so interwoven and intertwined together. So I appreciate you bringing that up. Thank you ever so much for being with us today.

Mrs. CAPITO. Thank you.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I want to very briefly comment about how all of our hearts go out to West Virginians and the miners and their families. We had a committee meeting yesterday on mine safety, and I know that we will reach the right conclusion on trying to get to the tracking and the oxygen and resources for them. Thank you ever so much.

Mr. Speaker, did you hear the numbers that were described by the gentlewoman from West Virginia? Did you hear the unemployment numbers: 3.8 percent in West Virginia. Most economists will tell you that 5 percent, or even some will say 6 percent, is full employment. If you have unemployment of 5 or 6 percent, then you are at full employment because of people desiring to be between jobs; but West Virginia is at 3.8 percent, which tracks relatively well to the entire Nation.

Again, the Official Truth Squad's desire is to put real information, honest information, truthful numbers out for the American public and just let them draw the conclusions that they draw, understanding that the conclusions that we draw when we look at these numbers are pretty doggone optimistic, pretty positive, not what you normally hear coming out of Washington.

This chart here talks about the unemployment rate and the jobs rebound. And the graph here goes from January of 2003 to just the end of last year, the end of 2005. Now, it ought to go further. I have to get this updated because the trend of these lines continues in the same direction. And this upper line here, the red line here, is the unemployment rate; and the green line down here is the number of jobs. And as you see, there was a peak of unemployment around the beginning to the middle of

2003, and that rate at that time was somewhere in the range of 6.1, 6.2 percent.

What we have seen since that time is a steady decrease in unemployment and a consistent increase in jobs. As the gentlewoman from West Virginia mentioned, in January 193,000 new jobs. And although this has the unemployment rate at 5 percent, which it was toward the ends of 2005, the unemployment rate now for the Nation is 4.7 percent.

□ 1445

4.7 percent, as she mentioned, is the lowest monthly rate since July of 2001.

I think it is important when we talk about these numbers, again truthfully, honestly and openly, to give folks an opportunity to compare them to something. What are you going to compare it to?

The best thing to compare it to is the history. What is our history? Where has the rate been? Well, the rate that we currently have now, 4.7 percent, is lower than the average for the decade of the 1970s, decade of the 1980s, and the decade of the 1990s. You remember the boom time in the 1990s?

Lower than the average for the 1970s, the 1980s and the 1990s. Over 2 million jobs created in the last 12 months and over 4.7 million jobs created since 2003.

I am fond of charts and pictures because I think they just paint the story so much better than I can describe it. There is also a line here, this vertical line here of the dotted green color, and what happened at that point, curiously enough, is what again the gentlewoman from West Virginia mentioned, and that is, that the Jobs and Growth Act went into effect, the fair tax decreases went into effect so that there was more money to put into the economy so people had more disposable income. And when you give people back more of their own money, what happens? The economy booms, the economy increases and gets better. So it is a cause-and-effect relationship without any doubt.

I mentioned the number of new jobs, 4.7 million new jobs, and again, with a picture being able to paint it so much better than I can describe, on this axis down here, we have January 2002, all the way over to January 2006. These are the percentages of unemployment, the monthly change each month in the number of jobs, the amount of unemployment, and before the fair tax decreases went into effect, what you see is a decrease in the number of jobs available, lower jobs available.

Then, as soon as that happens, as soon as those tax decreases went into effect, what happens? We see significant increases in the number of jobs available; so much so that it is a steady run, and it continues as such, again, 193,000 new jobs in January of this year.

So these are facts. This is the truth. The picture tells the story, and it is a story, again, that you often do not get

if you are paying attention to your nightly news or your friendly newspaper.

So we are proud and pleased to come before the American people and tell this kind of optimistic and positive story.

I am always pleased to be joined by the gentlewoman from Virginia, another fellow freshman who, like I, was somewhat distressed at the tone of the rhetoric that we heard in Washington and was really a prime mover in getting this started, this Official Truth Squad, to bring a positive message to the American people.

And today, talking about the economy, a successful small business woman; and I am so pleased to have you join us again. I yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE).

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank you, Congressman PRICE, and I really do appreciate the effort you have made to make sure that the American people truly understand what is happening within our economy today. I know you and I share a lot of very similar beliefs.

I just wanted to start today by reminding you and bringing to mind again a really wonderful quote by former President Ronald Reagan, when he said, "There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of human intelligence, imagination and wonder," and that is part of what you are seeing in this increase in job growth.

We believe that the strength of our Nation lies with the individual and that each person's dignity, freedom and ability and responsibility must be honored. We believe that free enterprise and encouraging individual initiative have brought this Nation opportunity, economic growth and prosperity.

But there is an alternative to what we believe, and that alternative belief is one that seeks a solution that consists more of invasive government. And not surprisingly, Ronald Reagan had something to say about that as well. I think we as Americans remember the quote very, very well, and it is that "The government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

In economic terms, we will all remember the 21st century began slowly. The telecom bubble burst. We were attacked in the heart of our financial sector. Certain industries lagged, and we had entered a recession. It is during these difficult periods that we require leadership more than ever. We needed to pursue positive economic policies that would put the American people back in the driver's seat.

I know you and I share the belief that our tax policies should be one that supports our economy, that it increases our revenue, and so that is why I wanted to talk today about what changes have come about in the past 5 years, these changes that support our

American families and support American businesses.

You will remember in the 2001 tax cuts that the first objective was to put money back in the hands of individuals and families. In June of 2001, tax cuts were enacted through the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act. Some of the most important aspects of that act are that they lowered marginal income tax rates, reduced the marriage penalty and the death tax, and increased the child tax credit, all things that are very important to American families. This was comprehensive legislation that reduced the tax burden on all Americans.

In the 2003 tax cuts, the objective was to create a more favorable climate for industry and small business to invest and to create job growth. In the years preceding the 2003 Jobs and Growth Act, business investment spending had steadily declined. We needed to pull businesses and entrepreneurs back into the market through investment-friendly tax policies, restoring economic competitiveness and employment opportunities. So Congress took decisive action.

Despite the naysayers, the results speak for themselves, and the results are very clear. Growth in our economy is one of the least told stories. I believe, and I know that you believe that if we allow Americans to keep more of their hard-earned dollars, that they will save that money, they will invest that money, they will create new jobs with that money.

And business investment has grown in every quarter. Today, small businesses, small businesses like mine, represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms. They employ nearly half of all private sector employees, and over the past decade, on average, have generated 60 to 80 percent of the net new jobs.

Job creation, as you were showing the chart there right now, nearly 4.7 million jobs have been created since President Bush signed the 2003 Jobs and Growth Act, with 2.1 million of those created in the past year.

Today's unemployment rate is at 4.7 percent and is lower than the decade averages of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. What an incredible statement. And they are good jobs. Real, after-tax income has risen at a rate higher than inflation since 2001, and personal income has grown above inflation in 49 of our 50 States.

Most importantly, Federal revenues have been rising during this time. If we let people save their money or create new jobs, create new revenues, that creates additional tax revenue for the Federal Government. In May of 2003, receipts were under \$1.8 trillion. In fiscal year 2005, they rose to an all-time high of \$2.15 trillion.

We realize that we cannot feed the Federal Treasury by starving American businesses, but thanks to these policies, more low- and middle-income Americans looking for a job will be

able to find one simply because there are 2.1 million more jobs this year.

But you and I realize there is more work to be done, that America agrees, and I think it is in everyone's minds that we do need complete tax reform, and I know that is something we will be working on.

I really think that there are models across the world for us, and I think the most compelling story today is the story of Ireland. In the mid-1980s, Ireland's economy was faltering; we all know that. College graduates could not find a job and were leaving the country in droves. Confidence in the Irish economy was at an all-time low. Change was necessary, along with the leadership necessary to implement it.

The corporate tax rate today in Ireland is 12.15 percent, far below the rest of Europe. This attracted foreign investment necessary to boost economic growth. Today, nine of ten of the world's top pharmaceutical companies and seven of the top ten software designers currently have operations in Ireland, and it is currently the second richest country in the European Union with a per capita GDP higher than that of Germany, France and Britain.

Now we have to ask ourselves, do we continue to encourage American businesses by creating the climate necessary for success or do we allow them to go somewhere else?

So I thank you for the opportunity, thank you for your work in making sure that we do tell the American people the good news story that we are in as a result of the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003. It is our responsibility to make sure that we maintain a solid policy, tax policy that grows our economy, grows our revenues and benefits each and every American.

Thank you for what you are doing.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, you are very kind. I appreciate you coming and sharing those words and, once again, words of optimism, words of truthful perspective as it relates to the United States.

I was struck by your description of the tax policy because what we saw with that tax policy is the increase in the child tax credit, the decreased marriage penalty. These are family-friendly things. This is what some of the folks on the other side of the aisle will call tax cuts for the wealthy. It just is not so. Again, we have got to talk about truth if we are going to get to the right solution.

When you decrease taxes, as you well know, on small business, which is the engine of our economy, small businesses across our Nation, what happens is that you allow individuals more opportunity for employment. When people have jobs, then they are able to care for their families and, again, a family-friendly environment that we have in this Nation now as it relates to tax policy. Those are the kinds of things that need to continue.

People say, well, what difference does it make who is in charge there in

Washington? I am here to tell you, elections are about choices and the choices we are going to have this year are fairly stark from individuals on one side who will tell you that, no, you do not need to have the kind of tax decreases, the tax cuts, that we have had; what the government needs is more of your money. That just is not the case, as we have demonstrated time and time again here with The Official Truth Squad.

But when you put more people's money back in their pockets, what happens? They are happier, their families are more secure, the communities are more secure, and businesses and the economy flourish.

So thank you very much for sharing those kind words.

I was also struck by the description of Ireland, which nobody a few years ago would have said was an economic engine or a powerhouse, but now it is. It is again because of their tax policy that is friendly to business, which, in turn, becomes friendly to communities and friendly to families, and that is how economics work.

If you appreciate and you understand how a capitalist economy works, and then you understand that it is important to put more money, more people's money back in their own pockets; that it is not the government's money, it is the people's money; and that we here in Washington do not have a revenue problem, we have got a spending problem.

So I am so pleased to be able to be joined by my colleagues to bring light to that, and one of my great freshman colleagues who has just been a wonderful contributor and supporter and innovator in the Official Truth Squad joins us now, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX). She is a great friend, has a great history in the arena of education, but understands clearly the importance of a positive economic outlook and a positive economic perspective and economic policy.

So I welcome and yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman PRICE for yielding. I appreciate it very much, and as our colleagues have expressed to you before, we thank you for organizing these meetings and helping to get the Truth Squad out here.

Many of us have been concerned for the past several months that there is a lot of disinformation out there and that the time has come for us to set the record straight, and I think that it is very important that we do so. Just saying things will not make them so, but if they are not responded to, then people will believe that they are so.

I thought that our colleague, the gentlewoman from the State of Virginia (Mrs. Drake), was doing a great job of talking about several of the issues that I think are important, and talking about Ireland as a great success story is important to do.

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Our economy is doing great, and talking it down does not help our situation and our country. I think we do need to be positive and talk about how things are going great.

I speak to a lot of school groups, and they will often ask me what is the difference between Democrats and Republicans, and I generally give them several things to think about. But as my colleague pointed out, the biggest difference between Democrats and Republicans is we believe that the public knows how to spend its money better than the government knows how to spend their money. That is sort of a short definition. If we left it up to the Democrats, they would basically be taking all the money from everybody and giving it to government bureaucrats to spend.

I think the whole issue of family friendly taxes is very important too. We are not a party of extremely wealthy people, as we are portrayed to be. In fact, there is a lot more wealth on the other side than there is on our side, but they do a pretty good job of trying to hide that.

I want to talk about some specific numbers also, in addition to talking about in general terms some things that may have already been said by some of my colleagues. I have been out meeting with constituents, so I am not sure of all the things that were said, and I hope I do not repeat too many of the same things.

I think it is important to talk about the fact that our unemployment rate right now is 4.7 percent, the lowest monthly rate since 2001, and lower than the averages of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Just today I was talking to a man with a very large business down in North Carolina in the fifth district, and he was saying they could grow their business by 300 or 400 people if they could get the skilled workers that they need to grow that business. That is a very significant point for us. Our economy could be doing even better, but we do lack skilled folks. I talked with him and I will be working with the community college system down there to try to help him get the programs established that he needs so that they can get people with the backgrounds that they need.

I am not sure if Congresswoman DRAKE mentioned this, but real household net worth right now is \$51.1 trillion, an all-time high in this country. Our GDP, of course, is growing at a much higher rate than anybody thought it was going to grow. The fourth quarter grew at 1.6 percent, and the estimate had been 1.1 percent. This encouraging economic news is proof that lower taxes plus restrained Federal spending equals economic growth.

That is a math equation that the Democrats just cannot seem to grasp. Maybe it is because they keep trying to substitute new variables and it just does not work. Taxing plus spending

will never equal economic growth and prosperity. But the Republican formula of lower taxes and restrained Federal spending will always come out in favor of the American taxpayer and his checkbook, and that is what we need to be concentrating on.

I am going to throw out a few more facts to go along with what we are trying to do through the Truth Squad. We have got high consumer confidence these days, too. It rose to 106.3 in January, the highest level in over 3 years. So we are doing our best to make sure people know the economy is doing well and to raise consumer confidence.

We know that incomes rose in December, and we are up 1.4 percent in 2005. Again, very, very good news. Retail sales rose in December. We are up 6.4 percent in 2005 over 2004. Our manufacturing continues to expand. Manufacturing activity grew for the 32nd consecutive month in January. There is tremendous expansion out there, so we want that to continue to grow.

Construction spending is at an all-time high. Construction spending rose 1 percent in the month of December alone. For 2005, spending reached a record \$1.120 trillion, an increase of 8.9 percent over the previous record set in 2004. Housing starts continue to go up.

So our economy is doing very well, and, again, it is based on the fact that Republicans believe in lower taxes and leaving more money in the pockets of American families. That is the way we can grow the economy. I hate hearing the words "government investment." The government never invests. It spends.

We have to get people to understand the language. As my colleagues know, language is a very important thing to us. How we use words is important because it gets people's minds set about what those words mean. We need to stop government spending, and we need to leave as much money as possible in the hands of the American taxpayers. We need to keep this economy growing vitally, and the way to do that is to keep Republicans in charge.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Congresswoman FOXX, thank you so very, very much for coming and joining us today and really painting a wonderful picture.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you heard all of the items that Congresswoman FOXX ticked off there, but this is positive news. This is great news. This is good, good news.

Consumer confidence increasing, incomes up across the Nation, average real after-tax income per person has risen 7.9 percent, retail sales increased, manufacturing continues to expand, durable goods orders on the rise, new orders for durable goods increased 1.3 percent in December with new orders for machinery rising 6.5 percent, the highest level since the series began tracking that in 1992. That is good news. Productivity growth is strong.

Productivity increased 2.3 percent and has grown 3.2 percent, at that annual rate, since the end of 2000. That is good news. Construction rates up; all-time high. Again, remarkable. Remarkably good news.

And that is what the Official Truth Squad is all about, coming to the floor to give honesty to the debate. Truthful numbers. Real numbers. Because it is important that people have that in order to make decisions.

Something that has been alluded to a number of times as we have had our discussion here today is the effect of tax decreases. I call them fair tax decreases. Some people call them tax cuts, I guess. I call them fair tax decreases. And what they will say is, we cannot have any more tax cuts. We cannot have any more tax decreases or even keep what we have. That is what the other side says, we cannot allow you to keep your money because government needs it. That is the way the line goes.

But what is the effect of tax decreases? What is the effect from an economic standpoint? Well, again, a picture paints it better than anything I could ever say. Down here is the year 2000 all the way to 2005. The vertical line there, the vertical dotted green line is when the tax decreases, the Jobs and Growth Act, went into effect. And the red line is revenue coming in to the government, how much money the government is receiving based upon the taxes.

Again, remember, revenue going down here from 2000 to 2003, decreasing money coming into the government. So what do the President and the Republican Congress do? Well, they decrease taxes. A fair tax decrease. That is what happened here. Then what happens? Revenue increases. Money coming into the government increases.

That seems counterintuitive, but that is what happens. President Kennedy knew that. That is what happened when he had his tax decreases. President Reagan knew that. That is what happened when he instituted his tax decreases. And what happened with President Bush's tax decrease? Same thing.

You would think there was a trend there, Mr. Speaker. You would think that, in fact, if you decreased taxes, you would increase governmental revenue. Well, that is the secret. That is what happens. And why does that happen? Because as we have talked about, the economy flourishes. The economy flourishes when you put more of the people's money in their back pocket and in their purses, and not in the government's purse. What happens is that the economy flourishes.

Now, I mentioned a little earlier that we in Washington, that government does not have a revenue problem. It has enough revenue. That is clear. It has a spending problem. So Congress is trying as hard as it can to decrease the amount of spending. And it is a difficult thing to do in this environment

where you have the distortion and the misinformation and the disinformation and the incredible personal attacks that are given. So it is a difficult thing to do.

But all last year what we tried to do is to work on what is called a deficit reduction act, which is spending less money. Ultimately, it took a little over a year, but in January when we came back, in early February we passed the Deficit Reduction Act that saved, that saved \$39.8 billion. That is a good thing. That is a positive thing.

I asked my staff to see if they could get me a poster of the number of folks on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats, that supported a decrease in spending, which is what they say they want to do all the time. How many folks on the other side of the aisle voted for that? And I have that chart here somewhere. I found it. I found the poster that has the name of every single Democrat that voted in favor of a \$39.89 billion decrease in spending.

There it is. Right there. Not a one. Not a one. I point up the other charts because, as I say, they are truthful. This is truthful. This is the slate of individuals on the other side of the aisle who are interested truly in stepping up to the plate and working hard together. Because these are not Republican problems, and they are not Democrat problems. But, Mr. Speaker, when only one party is interested in working positively, it gets pretty doggone hard to do something here. It really does.

So those are the folks willing to help us on the other side in terms of decreasing spending. So that is what the Official Truth Squad is all about, bringing appropriate, honest, truthful information to the American people. And we get terribly frustrated, as I mentioned, with what has been described as the politics of division. Many people practice it here in Washington. It is kind of tried-and-true; but, again, it does not get to the right answers. It does not help. It has been used for a long time, but it is not positive, it is not a productive activity, and it does not serve people well back home.

One gentleman who knew that well was Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln knew that the politics of division are destructive, and he talked about it in a way that I think is more eloquent than anybody has ever said. What he said was: "You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot encourage the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence. And you cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could do for themselves."

Remarkable words from one of the pillars in our Nation's history. It kind

of crystallizes the American philosophy. It puts it better than, frankly, I have ever heard it.

So what the Official Truth Squad is all about, Mr. Speaker, is bringing truth and enlightening information to the American people and trying to give them a little alternative to what they oftentimes hear coming out of Washington. We try to make sure there is a positive tilt to it, because we live in the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth. We live in a glorious and wondrous Nation. It is a Nation that still is seen by men and women around the world as a beacon of liberty and a repository of hope.

I am so honored and proud to serve in the United States House of Representatives and to have the opportunity to share a positive perspective and a positive vision with my colleagues and with the American people.

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MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, President Bush's brief stopover in Afghanistan yesterday gives us an opportunity to take stock of the progress that has been made there. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on what the world might look like today if the United States had adopted a wiser foreign and national security policy after the terrible attacks on our country on September 11, 2001.

After that tragic day, the world united behind the United States and our determination to destroy Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and the terrorists responsible for those attacks. We sometimes forget here that within days of the attack the United Nation's General Assembly, friends and foe alike, unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the attacks on the United States. And NATO, for the first time in its history, invoked article 5 of the Washington Treaty stating an attack against one is an attack against all.

When the brutal Taliban regime refused to support action against al Qaeda, the United States took appropriate military action to force out the Taliban and attempt to destroy the al Qaeda terror network. That was the right action and had the strong backing of the American people. And Afghanistan is a much better place today.

However, while we succeeded in driving out the Taliban from the capital city of Kabul and killed a number of al Qaeda leaders, we have not finished the job. Indeed, Osama bin Laden, the man responsible for masterminding the 9/11 attacks, is still alive and likely to be somewhere along the Afghan-Pakistan border, less than 100 miles from where President Bush stood just yesterday.

And the continued presence of active Taliban and al Qaeda resistance in Afghanistan and along the Pakistan border represents a lost opportunity. Instead of finishing the job against al Qaeda, the President decided instead to attack Iraq, a nation with no weapons of mass destruction and a government that was actually an ideological adversary of al Qaeda.

As a result of invading Iraq, the Bush administration squandered a huge opportunity to keep both our forces and the international community focused on defeating al Qaeda and its brand of radical Islam. The goodwill that the United States had developed throughout the world in the aftermath of 9/11 evaporated as we switched our focus from the enemy that attacked us to one that had not. As a result, our invasion of Iraq has fueled radical Islamic and anti-American forces and allowed al Qaeda to gain new recruits around the world.

Today, the United States is tied down in an increasingly volatile Iraq, and the man actually responsible for launching the attacks on the United States, Osama bin Laden, remains at the top of his terrorist network.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to make mistakes that will hamper our ability to put the Taliban and al Qaeda out of business permanently. First, the United States is sending the wrong message by reducing the number of our forces in Afghanistan. Just yesterday, as President Bush was arriving in Afghanistan, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, General Maples, told Members of this Congress that the insurgency in Afghanistan is growing and will increase this spring, presenting a greater threat to the central government's expansion of authority than at any point since 2001. And the greatest threat of Taliban resurgence is in southern Afghanistan, the area from which the United States will be withdrawing more than 2,000 troops.

While we welcome the additional NATO forces in Afghanistan, it would be far wiser to use these NATO troops to supplement rather than replace the U.S. forces in the region. We should not be sending the wrong signal to the Taliban and al Qaeda at this delicate time. We are still living with the consequences of neglecting Afghanistan in the past.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the United States must end the abuse of the detainees at the prison at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. Recent evidence suggests that the abuses that have taken place there are even worse than those that occurred at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad.

The United States must lead by example. The abuse of prisoners is wrong and will only strengthen the hands of al Qaeda and the extremists. We cannot credibly demand that others adhere to the rule of law if we are flouting international human rights standards. The President's stopover in Afghanistan

gave him a chance to declare that such abuse is unacceptable.

Like so much else, however, it was another missed opportunity. As a result of many missed opportunities since 9/11, the United States is less secure than we could be. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda are still in operation. The Taliban are feeling emboldened. We are bogged down in Iraq, and our weakened moral standing around the world has made it more difficult for us to influence events and protect our security. Let us stop missing opportunities to strengthen our security. We must not reduce our commitment to the people of Afghanistan, and we must increase our commitment to human rights.

Mr. Speaker, we can and should do better, much better.

THE PRESIDENT'S 2007 BUDGET

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I plan to yield to several of my colleagues. Mr. SCOTT from Virginia is also going to speak, and as soon as Mr. SPRATT, the ranking member on the House Budget Committee, comes out of an important hearing on the Dubai ports issue, he will be able to join us as well.

Mr. Speaker, the 2007 budget takes America down a wrong and unsustainable path. The decisions the President made in this budget favor the wealthy over the working class. These decisions reward those who live off what the IRS considers to be unearned income, while making those who have to work long hours every day, to support themselves and their families, pay far more in taxes. In fact, I think you would have found bipartisan agreement if we could have worked out tax cuts that were more in the interest of the working class and those hardworking families.

But, in fact, when you combine the focus of the tax cuts on those who live primarily off unearned income and the spending cuts that purportedly are necessary to offset the cost of these tax cuts, the majority of young people in this country will find it harder to go to college. It will be harder for low-income elderly to get the nutrition and health care they need, and it will be much harder for our grandchildren to pay for the future needs that their generation will face.

The decisions made in the President's 2007 budget, like his budgets since 2002, define a Nation, a community, if you will, that is not the America that we know. In fact, his priorities are just the opposite of what makes America great.

We heard from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle; they call it a so-called Republican truth squad. It boggles your mind.

But the fact is that the Bush administration has raised spending while they have cut taxes. You can't fight two wars on four tax cuts, ladies and gentlemen.

The gentlewoman from North Carolina suggested that the government never invests, it only spends. Well, what does she think is the purpose of the interstate highway system that enabled our economy to fulfill its potential during the Eisenhower administration and subsequent administrations, or the money that we have put into the public schools systems to empower our working class?

And that is what we are talking about, investment that will give us sustainable benefits versus tax cuts that are immediately lost, most of which seem to be invested overseas, and cuts in the real safety net that can make America achieve its greatness.

The conscious choices made in this budget reflect the flawed policies of an administration that has taken this country down a terribly wrong path, one that consists of waging an unnecessary and extraordinarily costly war, delivering huge tax cuts to the very wealthiest of this Nation, and taking the Federal debt to depths never before experienced, while reducing services to working Americans.

First, the 2007 budget is heavily impacted by the consequences of a reckless foreign venture, namely, the war in Iraq. The President's 2007 budget sets aside another \$120 billion supplemental to cover the cost of waging this war in fiscal 2007. Of course, this is on top of a regular defense budget of over \$450 billion. And, in fact, we have now allotted over \$400 billion, when you look through fiscal 2007, primarily for this war in Iraq, and very little for the war in Afghanistan that was referred to by our colleague from Maryland.

The money that is requested in these Iraq war supplementals is \$40 billion more than we request for transportation, \$33 billion more than we request for education and training, more than \$40 billion more than we request for the care of our military veterans, more than \$90 billion more than we will set aside to protect our environment and natural resources, and more than \$80 billion for what is considered diplomacy, but is spent on dealing with the AIDS crisis, on dealing with the ethnic cleansing, the genocide in Sudan and throughout the world, places where we could have such a constructive, positive effect.

The amount of money that is being requested in fiscal 2007 for this war in Iraq will bring the total amount requested by the Bush administration to \$490 billion, an enormous sum. The American people have to ask, has this been worth it, given the results to date? But we know the results are more than 2,300 Americans who have lost their lives in Iraq; more than 16,700 who have been wounded; tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Iraqi casualties; and yet Osama bin Laden is still

on the run. Iraq now appears to be descending into an all-out civil war and al Qaeda recruitment levels are reportedly stronger than ever.

But while our men and women are risking their lives overseas, at the instruction of this administration, and of course, we have great regard for their courage and sacrifice, we are not being asked to sacrifice at home; and, in fact, the people who have been the most rewarded by this great economy—that was built on the investments that have been made in prior generations—they are being asked to sacrifice the least. In fact, they are actually being rewarded. The same time that these men and women are going to war, we are continuing trillions of dollars of tax cuts that primarily benefit the very wealthiest in our society. And yet these tax proposals are going to cost the American people about \$3 trillion, \$3 trillion over the next decade. The benefits from these tax cuts are heavily skewed toward the wealthy.

If they were to fix the alternative minimum tax for the middle class, that would be one thing. If they were to help working-class families deal with the vulnerabilities they face in providing for their families, that would be one thing. But that is not where most of it goes. More than half of these benefits go to the 4 percent of Americans who make over \$200,000 annually.

Four years from now, in 2010, taxpayers with incomes of more than \$1 million a year will receive average tax cuts worth \$155,000, 100 times the tax cut that the average taxpayer will receive. Is that fair? Is that smart? I don't think it is appropriate, and I don't think it reflects America's priorities. And they come at a huge cost to the fiscal security of this Nation; causing massive amounts of annual Federal deficits.

Over the last 4 years, we have seen the largest deficits in the history of our Nation. Mr. SCOTT is going to show you what has happened over the last 5 years on a chart. I hope you will pay close attention. It is unbelievable.

The current fiscal year, 2006, is expected to produce the largest deficit ever in the history of our country at \$423 billion. And this doesn't even take into account the supplemental spending requests that the President will send up to the Hill any day now which will increase the 2006 deficit to well over half a trillion dollars. And fiscal 2007 will be another year of historic deficits predicted to be \$354 billion.

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In fact, since President Bush took office, we have had the largest annual deficits in the history of this country, and those numbers are net numbers after you take the Social Security surplus and offset it against general fund deficits. So you can add another \$200 billion annually to each of those numbers.

So we are creating debt of over \$500 billion a year, Mr. Speaker. These deficits and the \$8 trillion in debt we now

have as a result of prior deficits will place on our children and grandchildren an unprecedented level of debt burden.

Because of these policies, every child born today automatically inherits \$28,000 as their share of the Federal debt. And under the President's budget proposals, a child born just 5 years from now will inherit a much larger share. In fact, they will be paying taxes for nearly the first 5 months of every year just to pay the interest on the debt that their parents' generation incurred.

The President's massive budget deficits also require us to borrow from foreign governments. Foreign investors now hold half of the country's publicly held debt. China alone holds \$250 billion of the public debt, which is more than 300 percent the amount that China held only 5 years ago. They have a fiscal guillotine over our necks if they chose to use it. We are so dependent upon China's being willing to borrow all this debt that we generate year after year.

Let me just show you a chart, in fact, of this foreign debt; Mr. Kahn, our very able staff director on the House Budget Committee, has put this together. This is the aggregate U.S. national debt held by foreign countries.

Now, the debt was climbing during the Reagan years in the 1980s, continued to climb during the Bush years. During the beginning of the Clinton years, it started to top off, and then with President Clinton having adopted the pay-as-you-go policy of the first President Bush, having to pay for tax cuts as well as additional spending, we got the budget under control. We had an estimated \$5.6 trillion surplus predicted for the succeeding decade. So foreign debt would have gone down just like this. And as our foreign debt went down, our national security would have gone up.

But this administration decided they did not want to adopt the policies of the father. They did not want any pay-as-you-go. They just wanted to cut taxes. The heck with paying it. We will send a credit card to the next generation. They can pay off our debt. That is their problem, not ours. We are going to live high off the hog. We are going to reward our contributors. And the fact is that that is exactly what has happened, and we have driven this Nation into debt.

But even more seriously, look at what has happened to foreign debt. Foreign debt has gone up like this to here. We are now at \$1.5 trillion. Here we are at \$1.175 trillion and here we are over \$2 trillion in 2005, a substantial share being purchased by China, as I just said, a 300 percent increase in China's share of the foreign debt. But imagine what has happened to foreign debt since 2001 when this President took office. Talk about endangering national security.

Now, who pays for all of this? Well, what happens is that the American

people obviously pay. Our children will pay most of it. But even today the sick and the elderly who need care that cannot be provided by their families will pay. We will have our college students pay in reductions in student loans, and basically the dignity and the upward mobility of the American working class is going to suffer for these policies. Mr. Speaker, this is a situation that is not sustainable, that has to be reversed.

Now, everyone is entitled to their own ideological opinions. I do not think they ought to be entitled to their own set of facts. This is factual information. You can check in any of these budget documents put out by the government. You can find that the amount of debt has skyrocketed. The amount of debt held by foreign nations has skyrocketed to an even greater degree. We are dependent on countries like China to keep us afloat.

And, in fact, the working class has suffered. Our children are going to pay the bill, and we are involved in a war that we are only paying for by borrowing from the future. We have not paid one dime of the cost of the Iraq war nor have we paid for the tax cuts that we have so blithely passed.

Mr. Speaker, with this, I would like to yield to Mr. SCOTT, who has been on the Budget Committee for several years, and he is going to show you some shocking charts as well.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Virginia for yielding to me.

My colleague from Virginia, you have done an excellent job in outlining what the problem is.

I like to use charts as I describe what the problem is. Our previous speaker indicated, the Truth Squad, as to what the truth is. I would like to point out exactly what he is talking about because this chart shows the deficit back through the Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton administrations, up to a surplus and what has happened in the last 5 years.

When they talk about bragging about fiscal responsibility from the Republican side, this is the line they are talking about, the one they are bragging about right here.

When they ask what the Democratic plan is to get us out of this mess, I would say, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic plan is this blue line right here. That is what we had under President Clinton. My colleague from Virginia will remember in 1993 the first budget passed under the Clinton administration. It passed without a single Republican vote, House or Senate, and we took that budget and took it up to a surplus.

In 1995, when the Republicans came in and took control of Congress, they passed a different kind of budget, and President Clinton vetoed that budget. In fact, they threatened to close down the government if he did not sign those tax cuts, and he vetoed it again and the government was shut down. President

Clinton would not sign an irresponsible budget. And as a result, we have almost a straight line up into a surplus.

When President Bush came in, everything collapsed. They stopped paying for tax cuts or paying for spending cuts. Pay-as-you-go dissolved, and here is what you have. And this is the line they are bragging about.

Now, unfortunately, it is going to get worse before it gets better. The President says that he wants to cut the deficit in half in 5 years. That is a fairly, what I would say, modest goal, taking into consideration the fact that you had a huge surplus to begin with to say that you are only going to clean up half of the mess, but the fact is he cannot even do it if we make the tax cuts permanent and do other things that he has suggested. And they are passing.

This is the line we are going to follow for the next 10 years. Deep into deficits. This green line is the promise, which is not much, but the red line is what we are going to probably do.

This little blue line up here is an interesting line because that is the budget from this administration in 2003 before they continued cutting taxes. They showed that by now we would be up into surplus. 2003 is significant because that is after 2001. After the war we still had projected, before we continued to mess up the budget, we were supposed to be in surplus now, but here we are deep in the ditch. In fact, as my colleague from Virginia has indicated, we had, when this administration started, a projected \$5.6 trillion surplus for the following decade. We have dropped almost \$9 trillion to, the same year, a \$3.3 trillion deficit, a turnaround of \$8.9 trillion.

Now, let us put that number in perspective because it is a big number. If you add up everybody's individual income tax, what everybody pays on April 15, every individual, what your individual tax is, it averages year by year to be about \$800 billion. An average deterioration in the budget, almost \$900 billion, deterioration in the budget. And when you talk about the war, the gentleman mentioned less than \$500 billion, 0.5.

Talk about Katrina, \$200 billion, we might want to pay for the Katrina aftermath, 0.2. An \$8.9 trillion deterioration; you cannot blame it on 0.5 and 0.2. And since that happened, it looks like you would have changed course somehow to accommodate it. No, you kept going straight. But you cannot blame 0.5 and 0.2 on a \$9 trillion deterioration.

Now, the Truth Squad indicated a blank slate of the Democrats who voted for the spending cuts in 1991. That is true. But they did not tell you what the spending cuts were. Food stamps and health care for the working poor, and I say "working poor" because when you cut, you cut from the top. The ones that are struggling, the ones that are just barely making it, you

whack them. The very poor are untouched; it is just the working, struggling poor that get whacked with food stamps and health care.

They also cut child care, child support enforcement, foster care. We had a group come into my office the other day talking about the effects on foster care. Many at-risk children who are in foster care now will not have resources to help them. These are the ones at most risk of getting into trouble, getting into other problems that we are going to have to deal with. Those are the ones that got whacked by that budget, as well as, as the gentleman indicated, student loans. That is what we did not vote for.

But he also did not say what that was a total package of. They had spending cuts and they had tax cuts. The spending cuts were less than \$40 billion. The tax cuts were \$70 billion. Had we passed the plan, we were going to be \$30 billion worse off, further in the ditch than we started off. These are some of the problems with the budget.

And let me get these other charts which point out that when you run up that kind of deficit, that is kind of esoteric, but at some point not only do you have to pay it back, but in the meanwhile, interest on the national debt. By 2010, compared to where we were on the line on interest in the national debt, we are going to be spending over \$200 billion more in interest on the national debt, \$227 billion more in interest on the national debt than we had projected.

At \$22,000 a year for a job, how many people can you hire with \$227 billion? Answer: 10 million. There are only 8 or 9 million people looking for work, drawing unemployment today. You could hire each and every one of them with a \$22,000 job and have money left over with the additional interest in the national debt that we are going to have to pay.

Now, as you have indicated, we are running up debt. This chart shows the Social Security cash flow. What we are spending now, the little blue line, shows that we are bringing in more than we are paying out. In 2017, we are going to start paying out more than we are bringing in. Right at the time we are deepest in the debt, paying the most in interest on the debt, we are going to need to come up with cash to pay for Social Security.

Now, there is an old adage that goes, "If you don't change directions, you might end up where you're headed." Let us look at what where we are headed with this budget. This black line shows the taxes if we continue making these tax cuts permanent, as the Republicans have continued to pass. Where are we headed? By 2040, this line goes across and shows that we could be able to pay for the blue, interest on the national debt; the yellow, Social Security, and we would have to borrow a lot of money to pay for that because you are not even covering Social Security; but we would also have to borrow for

the red, which is Medicare and Medicaid; and green, which is government spending like defense, education, FBI, and everything else we do, all with borrowed money.

□ 1545

Obviously, this is not a sustainable direction. We have to change directions, and we need to start now. It is not getting any better.

I thank you for leading this Special Order. We have a lot of work to do. Again, if people want to know what the Democratic plan is, the democratic plan is the blue. We dug ourselves deeply out of debt and ran up a surplus sufficient to have an over-\$5 trillion surplus.

Mentioning Social Security, to pay for Social Security for the next 75 years, we would need today \$4 trillion more in the trust fund, \$4 trillion more. We had over a \$5 trillion surplus squandered away, turned into a deficit. We had the Social Security problem licked because we had gone into surplus. We could have paid Social Security for the next 75 years. But, no, we went in a different direction.

We need to get back to the Democratic plan and certainly reject more of what we have been doing for the last 5 years.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank my good friend from Virginia. Let me just clarify a couple of points. In the Democratic plan, it was basically based upon the pay-as-you-go concept of 1990 with the first President Bush, a bipartisan plan to pay for any subsequent tax cuts, to have sufficient revenue to pay for whatever spending occurred, but to balance the budget each year. By those efforts to balance the budget, it actually created a surplus.

Now, I know that the gentleman voted after 9/11 to go to war in Afghanistan, to go after the people that attacked us, Osama bin Laden, as I did; but that is a small fraction of the money that we are spending on the Iraq war.

The gentleman knows a lot of people, men and women, who have been financially successful. Does he feel that if they had been asked to sacrifice to pay for the war to go after those people who attacked us on 9/11, that they would have readily foregone tax cuts so that we could keep the budget balanced and avoid deficits being passed on to future generations?

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. If the gentleman would yield further, not only that, and the way the question is framed, it is significant, because the overwhelming portion of the tax cuts are going to people that make more than \$200,000.

There is one tax cut that goes into effect this year, colloquially known as PEP and Pease, dealing with standard deductions and other kinds of deductions that can be made. To make a long story short, it only affects the wealthy. If you are making more than \$1 million, you get out of this tax cut, when

it is fully phased in, about \$19,000. If you are down between \$75,000 and \$100,000, on average you will get \$1. If you are under \$75,000, you get zero. This shows how we are going to spend \$20 billion a year when this thing is fully phased in.

It would seem to me this is how we get into deficit, with those kinds of cuts. \$20 billion a year, let's put that into perspective. All the BRAC base closings that you suffered in Northern Virginia and I suffered in Hampton Roads, Virginia, all of the BRAC closings, we will be lucky to save \$20 billion over 20 years. \$20 billion a year, when people under \$75,000 don't get a dime; people over \$100,000 might get \$1; \$100,000 to \$200,000 might get \$25, over \$1 million, \$19,000. That is how we are spending \$20 billion a year in that tax cut.

It seems to me before we pass tax cuts like that, we ought to get the budget straight. Let's not be down here in the dumps talking about more tax cuts, particularly when they are weighted overwhelmingly toward the wealthy.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank the gentleman for illuminating those misplaced priorities, and I thank him very much for his extraordinarily illuminating set of charts and numbers.

Mr. SCOTT, do you have one further thing you wanted to share with the American people? I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I would say that if we had actually improved the economy with all those tax cuts, it might have been worth it. But this chart shows that the economic improvement, the number of jobs created since Herbert Hoover, it shows that after we have run the budget into the ditch, we still have ended up with the worst job performance since Herbert Hoover.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Unbelievable charts. So for all of those Presidents since Herbert Hoover who had a net loss of job creation because of the Great Depression, Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan and the first President Bush, and then President Clinton, of course, they all created far more jobs than this Presidency, the worst job creation record in our lifetimes, in the last, what, 65 years. So, it is an unbelievable record. We thank you for sharing it with us, Mr. SCOTT.

We will now hear from the gentleman from Long Island, New York, TIM BISHOP, a member of the Budget Committee, and very much concerned about the fiscal policy of this administration.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding, and I thank both gentlemen from Virginia and Mr. SPRATT and all of our colleagues on the Budget Committee for their leadership and diligence in making the case against the Republicans' failed economic strategy and misguided budget priorities.

These shortcomings are conspicuous in the President's fiscal 2007 budget. If the last few years have taught us anything, the emerging Republican budget resolution to be considered by this House in the coming weeks will mirror the problems and missteps called for in the President's proposal.

On one hand, we are hopeful, even optimistic, that the promise of his competitiveness agenda represents a down payment on the long-term priority investments we need to make in order to maintain our competitive edge in the global economy. Yet, on the other hand, this budget is perhaps the single most disappointing, counterintuitive, and hypocritical proposal of his six requests thus far. Calling for deep cuts in education and health care, for example, while advocating a competitive workforce, represents a fundamentally incompatible strategy. Americans shouldn't be surprised, though, given this administration's history of cutting taxes for the wealthiest individuals and corporations at the expense of middle-class priorities.

After a dozen town hall meetings in my district in recent weeks, my constituents have spoken loud and clear about how these budget cuts are making it tougher for their families to stay ahead in today's economy.

Let me focus on two aspects of the President's budget proposal, each of which reflects deeply flawed policies.

First, education. Under the so-called Deficit Reduction Act and the President's 2007 budget request, student loan programs are cut by \$12 billion, Pell grants are frozen for the fourth year in a row, and the Federal portion of the Perkins loan fund is recalled. This decision alone will take out of the student loan system another \$600 million per year.

As a consequence, the rapidly expanding gap between the amounts of available student aid compared to the total cost of obtaining a college education is growing out of control. Yet this administration's response is that colleges should simply charge less.

But it is not making the same demands of other industries that are equally critical to our economy's infrastructure and competitiveness. While the budgets of college students and their families are stretched to increasingly thin margins and the dream of obtaining a higher education is placed farther out of reach, the administration isn't calling upon the drug companies or the oil and gas companies or those industries operating with banner profit margins to make the same sacrifices.

The central point is this: we can propose a competitiveness agenda, but it is simply an empty promise if our policies are going to make it more difficult for students to attend college. We can educate all of the AP students we want, we can have the best AP teachers in the world we want, but if once they finish those AP courses they don't have access to a higher education, our com-

petitiveness agenda is simply an empty promise. It is a sham.

Investing where the government's help is needed the least, including \$16.5 billion worth of tax breaks and generous subsidies for the most profitable oil and gas companies, at the expense of extending a helping hand to those Americans that need it the most is an economic strategy headed for failure.

Similarly, the President has chosen to scale back investments in the other pillar of America's competitiveness and critical infrastructure, health care. His plan to cut \$36 billion from providers through fiscal year 2011 could result in Medicare reimbursements to medical facilities in my congressional district of approximately \$28 million over the next 5 years, this on top of the \$1.2 billion in cuts already enacted.

Reasonable people simply have to ask what kinds of priorities are revealed by these policy initiatives. More importantly, what kinds of values are revealed by these policy initiatives? Cutting funding for medical facilities doesn't save taxpayer dollars; it passes the costs on to local communities and places a greater strain on the middle class. Our health care system is already in tatters. The Medicare part D drug benefit remains in shambles, and more families are joining the ranks of the 46 million uninsured Americans.

These are the consequences of the Republicans' flawed policies. America needs a new prescription for competitiveness, one that we should rewrite as we take up the budget resolution in the weeks ahead.

If we are truly committed to sharpening our competitive edge and meeting the goals set forth in the President's budget, I suggest that we back up our promises by fully funding our health care and education priorities.

Mr. Speaker, this budget reflects priorities and values that simply cannot be supported. We can do better, and I look forward to working with my colleagues towards that end.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we are very appreciative of the gentleman's comments. Thank you very much, Mr. BISHOP.

I yield to the very distinguished gentleman from Washington State, BRIAN BAIRD.

Mr. BAIRD. I thank my good friend and colleague. This is an important topic, because it strikes at so many issues important to our families back home and the people we represent.

This administration has said repeatedly, no new taxes. What they are not telling you is while they say on the one hand no new taxes, they are in fact passing a host of hidden fees that are tantamount to taxes onto the backs of the American people.

Let me give you some examples that directly impact my constituents, the first of which is, indeed, according to the administration, a new tax. If you listen to President Bush and our friends on the other side of the aisle, they will tell you that if we do not ex-

tend the capital gains and dividend tax cuts that go to the wealthiest Americans, that is equivalent to raising taxes. In other words, if you don't extend the tax cut, then you have effectively raised taxes. Yet the President's budget does not extend deductibility of the State sales tax that affects people in my State of Washington and six other States across the country.

How much is this matter worth? Last year our deduction for sales taxes, which we fought to put in on a bipartisan basis, saved the taxpayers of Washington State alone \$500 million. If the President believes that we don't need to extend that, then the President, according to his own logic, would raise taxes on Washington State taxpayers to the tune of \$500 million a year, which would be \$5 billion over the next decade.

A second effective tax increase that is going to strike the Northwest comes from the President's ill-conceived proposals for dealing with Bonneville Power Administration revenues. The President would force Northwest taxpayers and the Bonneville Power Administration to take additional revenues from Bonneville and send them to the Federal Treasury to disguise the true cost of the deficit, rather than using them to lower the power rates, which currently are 50 percent higher than they were before the 2001 energy price crisis, which, not coincidentally, was precipitated by the actions of this very administration.

Friends, if policies of this administration increase your utility bill 10 percent above the current levels, that is equivalent to a tax from an administration that swore it would have no new taxes.

□ 1600

The President also is going to shift critical fees and expenses that also amount to an effective tax onto our local communities through their proposals to cut dramatically the Secure Rural Schools Initiative.

In my district, two of the highest recipients in Washington State, two counties are the highest recipients, Lewis and Skamania Counties, absolutely depend on this money to make their counties operate.

As we have seen curtailments in timber harvests and resulting revenues, these counties have come to depend and desperately need this money for public infrastructure, education and safety, yet this administration would first cut the funding for this program and, second, require that we sell off Federal lands again in a short-term effort to disguise the deficit, that we sell off Federal lands in order to provide the meager funds that would remain.

Our local communities depend on this creative, collaborative effort by environmentalists and timber companies and timber interests to get responsible, practiced harvests in the woods, that would be decimated. We cannot let this go forward.

That the Federal Government would also renege on its fundamental commitment to community safety by cutting this figure is astonishing, up to 80 percent of Federal support for local law enforcement programs.

Come to my district, Mr. President and my friends on the other side of the aisle. Talk to my local sheriffs and police officers who fight the daily battle against the scourge of methamphetamine, other drugs and other crimes. Ask them, can you do without Byrne Grants? Can you sustain the kind of cuts we are talking about in the COPS program? Can we really support further cuts in the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area? We are making progress in the battle against methamphetamine, but increasingly international supplies are coming through our virtually open borders.

Our young people, even middle-aged people are getting addicted to this horrific drug, and this administration says, now is the time to cut funding that the Federal Government provides local communities. It is bad policy, friends, and it amounts to a tax on our local communities because they will be left to pick up the tab of the reduced Federal dollars. And it is a tax on you if your home is burglarized, if your family is assaulted, if your workplace no longer functions effectively because of the effects of this drug. It is a tax, my friends, and it is being levied by the policies of this administration.

Finally, last month, we had a number of folks from our local school boards in my office. And they talked to me about the proposed cuts to critical education programs and the shortfalls in key educational opportunities. We all know that this administration and this Republican-led Congress has proposed to increase the cost of student loans even as college costs are skyrocketing.

But we need to know too that folks who are not planning to go to college, the folks who need a vocational education, who want to learn a trade or a skill will be dramatically and adversely impacted by this ill-conceived budget.

The President has proposed zeroing out the Perkins Grant program which local high schools and community colleges and voc programs absolutely depend on to sustain their voc education program.

It happened to me last month that we had school board members and community college board members in my office one day talking about how devastating these cuts would be. The next day I heard from Josh Bolten, the President's OMB Director, who said everything is going to be just fine.

Mr. Bolten, Mr. President, please come to my district. When we finish talking to law enforcement about what you are going to do to them, we will come talk to our educators about what your proposals will do to them. It is a tax on our schools. It is a tax on our students. It is a tax on our families if you cut these resources.

You cannot continue to do this. You are funding a war without paying for it. You are funding tax cuts without paying for it. You are passing the debt onto our children and our grandchildren, and all the while you are cutting vital and essential services and you are trying to disguise the costs of our cuts by increasing the rates on our northwest electrical ratepayers, by shifting costs to local communities, and by trying to sell off the Federal lands.

None of that is responsible policy. The American people should know about it. And we must reject this ill-conceived budget plan by this administration, and our friends on the Republican side. I yield back to you.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank the very astute gentleman from Washington State. And now we have our very diligent, conscientious member of the Budget Committee from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Ms. SCHWARTZ.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, the President's budget is fiscally irresponsible and cuts services vital to American families. I rise today in opposition to the President's proposals to cutting funding for homeland security.

I represent the Port of Philadelphia, the world's largest freshwater port and one of the Nation's strategic military seaports. Over 3,000 ships load and offload at the Port of Philadelphia each year, making it one of the busiest ports on the Atlantic coast, and the fourth largest port in the United States for the handling of imported goods.

In addition to the port, the greater Philadelphia region is home to other critical transportation economic infrastructure, such as a large portion of Amtrak's northeast corridor, SEPTA and PATCO high-speed lines, and major highway infrastructure.

Situated around this transportation hub are almost 5.7 million people. These factors led to the Insurance Services Office, which assesses risks for the insurance industry, to conclude that Philadelphia is among the 10 cities most vulnerable to a terrorist attack.

Madam Speaker, the President's cuts to port security and first responder funding will adversely affect the ability of Philadelphia and cities across the Nation to protect those who live, work and visit the city, to protect them from traditional and emerging threats.

Specifically, the President's budget slashes funding by 25 percent for first responders. These are the very dollars that allow American cities to equip, hire and train police officers and firefighters. The President's budget eliminates funding for law enforcement terrorism prevention, and the President's budget eliminates funding for port security grants which were created by Congress in 2002 as a means of directly funding the installation of security perimeters, surveillance technology, and

other very important counterterrorism measures at our ports.

These cuts come at a time when the administration is allowing our major ports, including Philadelphia, to be managed by Dubai Ports World, a UAE-owned company, a company located in a country whose key agencies, including security and monetary agencies, al Qaeda has claimed to have infiltrated since 2002.

While the President justifies this decision by saying that the Federal Government, not Dubai Ports World, will be responsible for security, he has proposed to eliminate funding for port security by the Federal Government. Neither justification nor the President's proposals will make Americans safer.

My colleagues, while it is good that the Nation is finally focused on the critical issue of securing our ports, our rhetoric and our passion about Dubai must be matched by the funding necessary to keep our ports and our citizens safe.

That is why when the House Budget Committee votes on the President's proposed budget in the coming weeks, I will lead the fight to restore these and other harmful cuts to port security. The security of our Nation depends on our making the right investment and the right funding choices to protect America.

I yield back.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank the Congresswoman from Pennsylvania.

I am happy to yield to the Congressman from Alabama, Congressman ARTUR DAVIS. Thank you for your leadership, particularly on the Budget Committee.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) for what you and Mr. SPRATT and Mr. SCOTT and so many others do.

Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCOTT, one of the helpful things about these colloquies and these special orders at the end of the day is that they have enormous nutritional content for people who really want to understand the budget issues. They expose some of the argument that happens on the floor.

As you know, when we have our full-fledged budget debate, we match each other in bits of 1 minute, 2 minutes, and it is hard to get clarity in 1- and 2-minute exchanges. These kinds of conversations allow for a lot more light to be shed.

And one of the points that you have made, that my friend from Virginia has made, and others have made, is exactly how fundamentally unserious the administration is about restraining spending. That is the point we ought to make over and over again, Madam Speaker, because when people hear these budget debates, they often think that folks on our side of the aisle are enamored with spending, they think the people on the other side of the aisle are resistant to it.

Well, you cannot be serious about spending cuts when you pass a reconciliation package that cuts spending

by about \$45 billion, and then you push just as hard for revenue cuts, for tax cuts to the tune of \$70 billion. That is a simple matter of math and arithmetic. You cannot be fundamentally serious about spending cuts when your administration has presided over the largest rise in discretionary spending in the last 10 years for a variety of programs.

So the American people ought to understand, this is not an argument about who wants to spend more and who wants to spend less. It is an argument about a far different set of issues. That is what we value and what we prioritize.

As so many have pointed out during all of these debates, Mr. MORAN, the reconciliation packets that passed a few weeks ago, the budget that we will debate in committee next week will not make much of a dent in the deficit when all is said and done. But it will wreak havoc with a lot of families in this country.

Just a few weeks ago, this body thought it was so important to start this session of Congress out by passing a bill, a reconciliation package, that will mean that 13 million working poor and poor families will have to dig deeper in their pockets to go to the doctor.

This House thought it was so vitally important to open this session of Congress by passing a package of cuts that took the heart out of the Federal Government's efforts to collect child support, that took the guts out of a program that the administration said was one of the best performing programs in the government.

And you will see it again and we will see it again in committee next week. You will see a budget that does very little to rein in spending, when all is said and done, but yet will have a disproportionate impact when it does make cuts on the people who are struggling in our communities right now. And that is what the people ought to understand this debate to be about.

We can do all kinds of things, cut spending that will attract support from both sides of the aisle. We can do all kinds of things to rein in the deficit that would attract support from all sides of the aisle. But every choice that the administration and the majority have made has been aimed at one set of people, the weaker people, the older people, the younger people, the people who are struggling to get by. And it is just wrong to put them in isolation. It is wrong to make them bear the brunt of these kind of cuts.

So as we move through this budget debate next week and over the next several weeks, I hope the American people understand, it is not an argument about cutting spending, it is an argument about what we value. It is an argument about what we prioritize. And finally it is an argument about who we give value to.

We know who the administration and our friends on the other side of the aisle often value. They often value peo-

ple who are doing rather well in this society and they often reward that. They do not put a lot of value in some of the people who are living in my district, which happens to be the fifth poorest district in the United States. They do not put a lot of value in their needs.

So if you believe in a better way of looking at the American people, if you believe in a more principled way of understanding that everyone should count and not just some people, you will vote against this budget, you will reject this budget. And that is the kind of debate that we ought to be having in the next several weeks.

So, Mr. MORAN, I thank you for your leadership. Mr. SCOTT, I thank you for your leadership, and I yield back.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank the gentleman very much, and particularly for revealing the real effects upon the hard-working people in your congressional district. Many of them are poor because they have not had the opportunities to be as prosperous as others. And that is a situation perhaps more pronounced in your rural district, but it is the case through so many parts of the country.

We need to be investing in as strong an America as we can possibly create. Our strength is in America's workers, and the education our children receive, in the roots that our families put into their communities.

And I know your total commitment to the people of your district as well as to the country and I appreciate your input. Thank you, Congressman DAVIS.

We now call upon the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY), the former State insurance commissioner who watches this budget very carefully. And he is going to share with us some of his concern about the direction our fiscal policy has taken over the last 5 years.

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and thank him and all of my colleagues, Democratic colleagues, on the House Budget Committee.

I have previously served on the House Budget Committee and the task before you points out the absolute lunacy of the Republican budget plan. This is extremely important. Thank you for the time you are spending on it today.

Earlier this morning I was at an event where we heard from several Republican Congressmen and the Vice President of the United States. They were sharing the same talking points. Because even the phrasing was identical in speech after speech. And it was something like this: The economy is going great. Growth is strong. Unemployment is down. We deserve a lot of credit.

What they did not tell you, what they did not tell the crowd this morning, made no mention of it at all, is that this crowd is funding the government on borrowed money.

□ 1615

The good times we are seeing today are very much like someone that might

be living down the street, living high and mighty, driving nice cars, wearing fancy suits and doing it all on borrowed money.

There is a wonderful television commercial that has a very self-contented man. He says, I have got a nice family. I have got a nice house. I have got a nice car. And then he looks at the camera and says, And I am in debt up to my eyes. Because what they are doing is artificially creating today the appearance of prosperity while they mask the depth of debt they are pushing our country into. That is what is so important on this chart.

We have had the most significant financial swing in the history of our country going from projection of surpluses as this crowd took over to the deepest deficit we have ever had in the history of the country. Record deficit in 2003. Record deficit in 2004. Record deficit in 2005. And this year the biggest kahuna of them all, the deepest deficit ever, which is why they have brought this case in the national debt. It seems like this crowd and their wonderful economy have borrowed so much money the Nation has maxed out its credit card limit. They are at the edge of what we have authorized them to borrow.

Now, we have already increased this debt limit by votes of Congress on three different occasions under this President. I feel like the loan officer as a Member of Congress. They keep coming back for more and more and more. And now even while they proclaim how wonderful things are, they are presiding over the deepest deficit in the history of the country and an increase in the national debt limit authority down to \$3.3 trillion of debt.

This is going exactly the opposite of the values of the families I represent. Household after household in North Dakota and across the country, you have got moms and dads at the kitchen table working hard to make ends meet and sharing a conviction that, no matter what, things are going to be better for their children; no matter what, they are going to make sure that their children have more opportunity.

Do you know what? A recent survey shows that more than half of the people in this country believe that it is going to be worse for our children than we ourselves have had it. Now, I ask you, why should Congress run this "live for today economy," racking up debt for our children, doing exactly the opposite, living for today, reducing the prospects for tomorrow for our kids when individually the families of America would do anything to leave things better for their children than they themselves had it? In my opinion, that is the heart of this budget debate.

Are we going to pay our way? Are we going to take the stand now to leave things better for our kids? Well, you sure would not have known from this morning. They are crowing about the happy economy and not saying one word about pushing our Nation into the

deepest debt it has ever been in, leaving our children to clean up this mess. I believe they should be ashamed of themselves.

As I prepare to yield back, I again want to express my appreciation for the efforts of the House Democrats on that Budget Committee fighting this fight and getting the word out. We should not fund today's good times based on tomorrow's debt that our kids are going to have to take care of. We ought to pay our own way, and I intend to work with Republicans and Democrats to get us back to that point. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) for his extraordinary leadership and his very deep and genuine concern over the fiscal policy direction of this country.

Even beyond the immorality of this wild, profligate spending and then sending the bill to our children to pay, what American family would take a credit card, max it out, and then tell the credit card company, Do not worry about it. Send the bill to my kids after I die.

And that is what is going to happen. The amount of debt and even the interest on that debt is going to cripple generations to come.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to my good friend from Virginia.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank my good friend from Florida, the son of one of our most distinguished Members, who is rapidly becoming a leader in his own right.

I mentioned to him that yesterday I stood transfixed at the television set watching his speech on the floor, and it brought up the issue of security. And I trust the gentleman will underscore the national security implications of this budget deficit, because the only way that we are able to spend so profligately, get away with it, is that we have found people who are willing to buy our debt. Not here, but overseas. And for some reason, China seems just as happy as they could be to increase the amount of American debt that they hold by 300 percent over the last 5 years. Billions of dollars they hold; and all they have to do is to say, we do not think that we are going to buy your debt in the manner and to the extent that we have in the past, and our stock market, our economy would crumble.

Imagine putting this country into that kind of vulnerability where we are dependent upon a communist nation buying our debt just so we can continue this misguided fiscal policy.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership, and I look forward to watching

him and reading his statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD tomorrow too. You have been terrific on this. Thank you, Congressman MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you. We in the 30-something Working Group, and as other Members come to the floor, we talk about these issues that are facing Americans and this issue of selling off our country, borrowing off of our country to foreign nations. You start talking about China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, even the Caribbean countries. They cannot do it by themselves. They have been able to accumulate over 45 percent of your debt thus far because the Republican majority has handed it to them.

I must say, you are a part of Congress, and a number of you who are part of Congress were on the floor when we balanced the budget. The Republicans are talking about cutting it in half. We actually have experience in following through on our side. So we have to continue to come to the floor and share not only with the Members but with the American people about what we can do and what we want to do. We do not want to sell off our country, and that is what it is all about.

The work that you all do in the Budget Committee is so very, very important to us all.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You are welcome. I must say, Madam Speaker, it is an honor to come to the floor once again. I know that the Members appreciate the information that we provide to not only the Democratic Members but also Members of the Republican side, the majority. I think it is also important for us to point out issues that are working against Americans and those issues and bipartisan pieces of legislation that are working for America. And we have to see more of that.

I think it is important for us to also reflect on the fact that right now more than ever we need to have a forward lean in getting our fiscal house in order as we start moving through this budget process and also making sure we come clean with the American people on all fronts.

This afternoon we are going to not only talk about our fiscal house but we are also going to talk about making sure we are straight with the American people. The whole reason we come to the floor is there are so many disturbing things that are happening in our country. I am not talking about everyday Americans. I am talking about those who are elected to come here and represent, need it be a lack of oversight or need it be something that the executive branch has done, that this Congress, the majority side has rubber stamped.

Here on this side we have a number of examples of how we have tried to put America back on the right track, not only in leveling with them on homeland security, leveling with the American people as it relates to protecting

our ports and our airports and seaports, but also as it relates to the dollar. A lot has happened in the last 4 years, and we have to share that information with them.

I am so glad my good friend and also a part of the 30-something Working Group, Mr. ARTUR DAVIS from Alabama, is continuing on. I know you were part of the last hour with the Budget Committee. I appreciate the work that you all have done thus far, the work that you are doing, looking at what the President has done.

I was hoping maybe you could shed some light on when we start talking about the President during the State of the Union. We were both here. He talked about innovation. He talked about it; and when he released his budget, I heard the talk, but I did not see the walk afterwards as it relates to the fiscal situation. But I appreciate your work on the committee, and maybe you can shed some more light on this, sir.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I am always pleased to see you and Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ lend your eloquence on these issues.

Let me make a couple of points. You touched on something enormously important about the President's commitment to more competitiveness in the economy and the strengthening of our workforce. You and I remember, we both came one Congress ago. We came here in January, 2003, and I remember the President's first State of the Union. He was standing not far from where we stand now. And the only line, frankly, I recall from that speech was a rather memorable one.

He said that this Congress should not put off what future Congresses would do and this generation should not put off for future generations what it could do for itself. That sounded good. It sounded like a bold President saying that we have real opportunities today if we are daring. Well, you look several budgets later. You have a verbal commitment to make the economy stronger. You have a pattern of cutting student loans and making them harder to get, and by the way, changing the eligibility outside the budget process in the dead of night in a way that it is not even debated by this Congress.

You have a promise of more effort to make the country competitive. You see reductions every year in workforce development programs. You see promises every year to strengthen our schools, and you see continued cuts in all of the educational programs in this country or so many of them, and the outright elimination of many of those programs. In fact, almost half of the title items in No Child Left Behind are gone with the wind now as we approach reauthorization.

And you see a promise by this President to make America stronger; but it appears, Mr. MEEK, that making America stronger does not include making our workers stronger and creating

more fair, stronger conditions for them.

As I said in the last hour, that is what this debate is about. It is not about cutting spending. You are not serious about cutting spending when you say, I am going to cut \$45 billion and then cut taxes another \$70 billion. The math works against you on that.

You are not serious about cutting spending when you have had the greatest level of discretionary spending increase in the last 10 years, in the last several budgets. You are not serious about those things. What we have is an administration and a Congress that, frankly, is not somewhat serious about cutting spending. They are very serious about changing the definition of what we owe each other as Americans.

They want to move us away from a world where we feel connected and obligated to each other across all kinds of lines, and they want to more or less move us to a place where you have got to take care of yourself.

These 13 million families on Medicaid who have got to dig deeper in their pocket now to go to the doctor, well, we have decided that it is such an important proposition that poor people pay more for health care that we rammed that into the budget reconciliation several weeks ago, or they rammed it in.

They think it is so important to spend less money on child support that they rammed that into the reconciliation package several months ago. It goes on and on. But the question is what exactly do we think we owe each other as Americans.

There are some people and some of them sit on the other side of the aisle who believe that we owe each other very little. There are some of us who believe that we can be no stronger than some of our people who are weak and who are hurting through no fault of their own.

□ 1630

There are a lot of kids in this country who will be pushed off Medicaid because of this reconciliation bill a few weeks ago. There are a lot of kids in this country who will not get the doctor visits they need because the Federal Government changed them the Medicare rules a few weeks ago. Those kids are blameless. They did not ask to be born into families under Medicaid or the distressed communities they live in.

So it is very much a matter of priorities and values and choices, but as I close out, I want to make one other point.

You talked about the importance of candor with the American people and the importance of leveling with the American people, not promising you are cutting and spending when you are actually causing the deficit to go up. You talked about the importance of not pretending that you are not taking people off programs, but in fact, you are moving them off programs.

I do not know if your office has been like mine in the last week. I have received so many phone calls from people wondering why their government cannot be more straight with them on what is going on with our ports right now. So many people have called our office and they are wondering exactly why we do not have a stronger shipping industry in the United States, why we have not built stronger port operators in this United States and why we have to keep delegating this stuff out. They hear all the procedural stuff about the 45-day review period, but really, what they wonder is why in the world are we doing a \$6 billion deal with a country that helped launder money for the people who attacked our towers, a country that is a very strong and vociferous opponent of our strongest ally in the region, why are we doing business with a country that does not follow any of the rules that we said we want for good trading partners.

It is interesting. It is as if the administration's policy on this issue is completely unconnected to common sense and, frankly, completely unconnected from values because one value would be if you want to do business with the United States, well, maybe you need to do better in terms of your human rights policies; if you want to do business with the United States, maybe you need strong money laundering laws so people cannot pervert your system and finance terrorists; if you want to do business with the United States, maybe you need to be far stronger than this country has shown itself to be on the question of freedom around the world.

These are the values the President talks about every time he stands up there and does a State of the Union. He talks about exporting democracy. He talks about we are this great beacon of democratic freedom. He talks about countries all over the world that are not up to our standard. If that is the case, what signal are we sending?

The last point I want to make is the President wanted to know what signal are we sending to our friends in the Arab world if we do not do this deal. The question is, what signal are we sending if we do it? Here is the signal. The signal is you can fall short of every value and standard that we have in this country, and we will pick you up on the back end and we can make a good enough deal with you.

Now, this is the administration that said it built a foreign policy based on our best moral values. Those moral values appear to be watered down to the way to do a deal, have we got a deal for you, and that is wrong. It has upset people all over this country. It does tie into this debate about the deficit because I think people are wondering who is it we are trying to help; why are we not standing up more for our people who need help and why are we not being more candid about what we are doing.

I really predict to you, as I close today, I think when we come back here

after the elections in November, I think that our side of the House will be the side that has got more people. I think the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) will honor us by being the first female Speaker of the House. I am being stronger convinced that you will be the new chair of the subcommittee that you serve on so ably as ranking member, and Mr. RYAN and I will get to move up the dais, too, because I think the American people are getting this. They are getting that the side that says it is strong and says it is serious is neither as strong nor as serious as they have said.

People are really smart. They are smart in my district and yours and all over the country, and I think that what we will see is a change in the politics of this country, a change in the leadership of the House. I welcome it when we stand up here next year crafting the budget, and it will matter. The Democratic alternative we are putting together right now, it will really matter next year because we are going to be in the majority, and we will be crafting a budget and sending it to the President and saying, Mr. President, we dare you to veto a stronger commitment to education and health care and growing our economy; we dare you to veto a stronger commitment to strengthening working families. I would be happy to. He has not vetoed anything in 6 years.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, our friend Mr. DAVIS is on the Budget Committee, and I think when he talks about you are preparing a substitute right now, what the Democrats are going to do when we are in charge, Madam Speaker, we have a track record already, and Mr. MEEK has the statistics, and we have the charts here.

MIKE THOMPSON from California offered a vote on pay-as-you-go to make sure everything we spend money on was budget neutral, so we did not go into deficit. CHARLIE STENHOLM, when he was in office, offered it. Republicans voted against that, and voted against MIKE THOMPSON's bill.

DENNIS MOORE of Kansas offered a pay-as-you-go amendment to a piece of legislation that got shot down. Every Democrat voted for it. Every Republican voted against it.

Mr. SPRATT offered amendments within our budget that we were providing to try to amend the budget resolution, on two occasions, in March of 2005 and again in March of 2004. Zero Republicans voted for this.

So when Mr. DAVIS says this is what the Democrats are going to do when we are in charge, that is what we are talking about here, making sure you pay for your bills as you go along, not this reckless spending.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, let me follow up on what my friend from Ohio just said.

This PAYGO rule you talk about, we call it PAYGO for various reasons. Really, it is the be-like-the-American-family rule. Every family I know,

yours, mine, every other one, has to decide, if we are going to go out and buy some new things, we better make some more money or we better pull into our savings. All this rule says is if you are going to have new spending, you have got to pay for it. You can do it one of two ways, with spending cuts by making changes in the marginal rate or changes in revenue. That is the honest stuff, that is the candor stuff.

The reality is, why would anybody not want to do that? If you are a fiscal conservative, why would you not want to go to a world that says let us just be no better or worse than the American family?

So this is an argument, once again, about whether we follow the same rules and the same principles that people follow all around the country.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I mean, we are willing to follow the rules. We are ready. We are ready to do what we have to do to be able to put this country on the right track.

The bottom line is that the Republican majority, time after time, because they are not doing their job by keeping the executive branch in check, Madam Speaker, things like videos that are broadcast throughout the world, commander-in-chief says I did not know anything about Hurricane Katrina, it was a shock to me, I learned 72 hours after the hurricane, blankets and everything is on the way to New Orleans, and we are going to do what we have got to do. Then lo and behold, in this great democracy of ours, a video surfaces where the President was informed of the power of this hurricane and that 12,000 people evacuated or went to some sort of high ground in the Superdome and that we are going to have massive flooding, and that this was bigger than Hurricane Andrew that hit my community almost 12 years ago, Madam Speaker. The President's in Crawford, Texas, on video phone, and he says we are ready and we are prepared to respond. Then he shows up a couple of days later, goes back to the White House acting like he is shocked.

That is what I am talking about, leveling with the people, but it is easy to say that you do not know because you have said it before. Well, I did not know anything about the intelligence, no one told me, no one told me about a special port deal dealing with the questionable, quote, unquote, new ally. No one told me; I did not know. I feel sorry for the White House spokesperson. Goodness gracious. I mean, the guy must have an ulcer by now because he has to come week after week, day after day now, and say, well, you know, we did not know, we did not know.

I am sick and tired, and I do not care, if I had no party affiliation in this House, I am sick and tired of folks here in Washington saying they do not know. Somebody knows. This stuff just does not happen on its own, and it is very, very wrong for someone to sit up here and insult the American people. I

think the American people have had enough of this stuff. The polling indicates they have had enough of it and the Republican majority.

We are here saying let us get together on innovation. Let us make sure our country is ahead of other countries in innovation and the sciences and math. Let us educate our children in broadband access. We are here with this innovation document almost every day. Madam Speaker, we encourage Members to go on housedemocrats.gov. We say it every day. This has been out for several weeks. The ink's pretty dry. We can bring the big binder down here if someone wants to get a copy of that.

They do not want to level with the American people. We have got men and women in harm's way right now based on weapons of mass destruction, and a lot of folks are running around here saying we did not know. We have got CIA agents that have been outed; oh, I did not know anything about that; I do not know how that happened; I do not even know the lady. Okay.

I just want to go down memory lane here, and it is continuing to unfold. Here the Republican majority just last year this time, well, let us just put it this way, 3 months ago, this time embracing and boasting about the K Street Project. Yes, we have the K Street Project, and guess what, if the lobbyists are not in tune with us, then they do not even get to come into our office, if they are not a part of the K Street Project.

It is basically you pay your dues to the Republican National Committee or the Republican Congressional Committee and you get access. Oh, well, that is fine. And are you a part of that project? And Democrats, who if they even have a Democratic affiliation, they could not even go into a lobbying firm. They had to be okayed and checked off by this so-called K Street Project that grew out of the Capitol, not into the Capitol.

So I do not blame lobbyists and special interests for that. I blame folks that walk in here and have voting cards just like we do on the majority side.

I am going to say this, too, Madam Speaker, it is disturbing. Folks run around here saying we need lobbying reform. Well, you know, I do not recall the lobbyists walking in here knocking on the door of the Republican majority, saying you know something, I want you to make me contribute to your campaign; I want you to make me hire your ex-staffers; I want you to make me do things that I ordinarily would not do because I think I need to have some sort of approach for the best person; but if you send a person to me and I want to have access to this House, to this Senate and to the White House, I have got to play by your rules.

I doubt if that happened. I guarantee you that did not happen, and now after a certain lobbyist has said guess what, you are an attorney and you were educated at one of the best schools here in

this country. A man says, okay, I know you accuse me of being a part of the Washington inside game, what a lobbyist does, he goes to trial, do we have to go through a jury pool selection? The guy says I am guilty, right here, handcuff me, please hurry up before I do something else, and I am willing to help you with some folks on Capitol Hill that I did business with on a daily basis for access into the process, okay, then the Republican majority comes out and says that K Street Project, hey, that is wrong. All right. Well, there is something really, really wrong with that.

Then you wonder exactly what you are talking about, how did we get to allowing countries to borrow \$1.16 trillion of the American apple pie. How did Japan infiltrate the United States of America, owning a piece of the American pie? How did Red China get into it? How did the OPEC Nations like Saudi Arabia and other questionable lists get there when people start talking about this?

So when folks come to the floor and try to have a moment of clarity, I have to kind of just stand up and say, hey, the 30 Something Working Group, we have been talking about this stuff. Folks can talk about a green assault or they can come with a positive message. I am going to take from Mr. RYAN. You show me a way to talk positively, how we are selling our country off to foreign Nations and we will do it if it is okay.

I know Mr. RYAN wants to say something, and I am going to go to Mr. DAVIS because he has been holding something for a very long time, but I had to get that out, because as an American, let us just put the Democratic thing aside.

This is our country, too. This is our country, too, but Madam Speaker, I may represent too many veterans, too many troops in harm's way, allowing us to salute one flag. Maybe I am just a little bit too attached to my constituency, but I tell you one thing, they defended this country for us to be up here in this chamber representing them in a way they should be represented.

I will be doggone if we let whoever it is in the majority or what have you run this country, continue to run this country into the ground, and we do not have the prerogative to say anything.

We are in the minority. There is very little we can do because we cannot put a bill on the floor, but we are going to do everything we can do to step on the line, cross the line, because this country's being sold over to foreign Nations, and folks are running around here talking about security. They do not even want to level with the American people even about a hurricane.

□ 1645

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. I thank the gentleman for yielding. All of my colleague's points are so powerful that they inspire other thoughts and ideas

that just want to tumble out of you. So let me go back a little bit to what you were saying, because you make a very important point.

I think there has been an interesting flip between where our party was at one point and where the Republicans are at this point. We are all fairly young guys. This is a little bit before our time, but we hit a zone as a party in the 1970s and 1980s where we would make decisions as a party and sometimes they would not be smart decisions. But we, frankly, couldn't and wouldn't defend them.

We would just say to the American people and some folks in our party would say to the American people, you know what, trust us. We have the facts, we are diligent, we know what is right, we have more information than you do, so you ought to just trust us. And, frankly, Mr. MEEK, that didn't work terribly well as a strategy for our party and people started to lose confidence in us. And they started to think, well, we put you there, so you have to tell us more, you have to level with us more.

Now, what have we seen in the last several weeks, essentially, when everybody all over the country is saying, why can't we find a country that doesn't have a history of terrorist ties to help police our ports, pretty simple question? What do they say? They say, trust us. They say we have got the facts, we have got information you don't have, we know more than you do, let us do our jobs. Trust us.

And they have said it before. They say it with these budgets. They say, yes, there is a lot of stuff in here nobody understands, and they bring them to the floor and we get a few hours to look at it. But they say, trust us, we have the information, we have the facts and we know what is right for the American people.

And I am sure a lot of folks are probably thinking right now that they did that back in March 2003, and they said, no, you don't have all the intel, you don't have all the evidence, but we do. Trust us and we will get us in and out of this war real quick. And if you doubt that, well, trust us.

This "just trust us" politics took us from having, what was the number we had, it was 292, was the maximum we got to. We had 292 seats here at one point, but we lapsed into the "just trust us" politics and now we are down to 203.

Well, I think now they are the "just trust us" folks, and they have started to move down the scale in the numbers, and I think they are going to be moving from around 231 to about 208 or 209 or so in not too long.

The American people put us here. We get whatever little authority we derive from the Constitution and from them. So we do owe them candor, we do owe them explanations, we do owe them a sense of direction. It is not enough to say, just trust us, is it?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, Mr. DAVIS, the bottom line is, and Mr.

RYAN said it last night and I will say it again, the American public is very coachable. The bottom line is: So shall it be written, so shall it be done out of the White House, and we have got to protect the President.

Let me tell you something. The President has Secret Service, all that good stuff, and about 100 staffers, or more than that.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Actually 1,000, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. A thousand staffers. A whole army of them wearing suits. And I will tell you this. Everyone respects the commander in chief, but the thing about our Constitution, our democracy, and the three branches of government means that we don't have to follow the President when he is heading us down the road.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. He is not a king, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. He is not a king. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. Thank you for making that very clear.

But it seems that folks don't understand that that is the case.

Now, I have Republican constituents that are very highly upset. Some of them got into the Republican Party looking for fiscal responsibility because that is all they sold, Madam Speaker. But the bottom line is, when you look in the final analysis, who is spending the money now? Who is borrowing the money now?

The thing is, we balanced the budget. We had surpluses as far as the eye could see, yet within a matter of a few, short, single-digit years this country is far beyond a point of return if we don't stop this Republican Congress from doing what they are doing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield, I thought it was very interesting when our friend talked about trust. I couldn't help but see earlier our friends, the Truth Squad, and they were talking about all the spending increases and spending increases, all borrowed money. All of it is borrowed. And it is not having results. We are talking about results. We are talking about having an impact.

And as my friend, Mr. DAVIS, said, who I just enjoy being around him. I mean he is good.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. He is real good.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I want to be friends with you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You are friends, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I am friends with him.

But the point that he made, Mr. MEEK, talking about their saying, trust us; and Republicans say that the American people should trust them. But we have a history here that says we have trusted you and you have misled us.

You misled us with the facts of the war, you misled us on the economy, you misled us on the results of what the tax cuts would be, you misled us when you said government was going to be smaller under your reign, you misled us when you said government

would be more responsible under your reign. It has failed time and time again.

I have two images in my head, Mr. MEEK, about the real incompetence of the Republican majority to be able to run government. I have a picture of 11,000 trailers that are sitting in Hope, Arkansas, in the mud right now that cost the taxpayers \$300 million that are sitting in the mud, and we still have people that are not in their homes in the gulf coast. That is a government that does not work.

And what the Democrats are saying is that we have solutions to this. We are not going to participate in cynicism and the lack of responsibility and responsiveness on the Republican side for not providing any oversight to all this.

Then we have the administration come out and say they didn't know anything about it, but memos leak out, and we find out they knew about it. Now, all of a sudden we get videos that are out saying that the administration knew exactly what the threat was and what would happen yet still not being able to respond.

That is the bottom line. The people of this country, Mr. MEEK, want a responsive government. It doesn't have to be big, and in today's society, government should not be big, but it should be responsive, effective, efficient, nimble, flexible, able to change with different scenarios as the scenarios change and as society changes.

Our Republican friends, and I mean that sincerely because I consider many of them friends, they just lack the ideas to try to move the country forward. So it is not anything personal, it is just that they do not have the ideas, Madam Speaker, to move this ahead.

What the Democrats offer, and this is the thing, Mr. MEEK, for us personally, definitely in the 30-somethings, and I know our Democratic friends believe, profit is not a dirty word. Profit is good. Greed is bad; profit is good. We want more profit, because that means more people are going to get hired. But in the end, our friends on the other side, on the Republican side, cannot put forth an adequate reform agenda that will move the country forward.

All we have to do, Mr. MEEK, is look at what the budget looks like right now. Look at what the budget looks like right now.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ just joined us, and I can tell both my colleagues right now what is wrong here. We talk about folks not leveling with the American people, which is wrong, and they are still not. They are still not.

We come to the floor because we think it is important that people understand what is going on. We have been talking about the debt ceiling being raised, and I want to be able to raise this again, because this stuff is historic. We know it, but I want to make sure the Members know what is going on. This is historic.

It is historic in a way that in the middle of the holiday season last year, on the 29th of December, when I was with my family.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Getting ready for New Year's.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Getting ready for New Year's, looking forward to the New Year, and Members of Congress were back in their districts, as we all should be, with pies being baked and all kind of good stuff.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Cabbage and sauerkraut.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, things like that. And Secretary Snow obviously was in his office that day, the 29th of December 2005, Madam Speaker, and he wrote this letter to one of our Senators informing him of the current \$8.1 billion ceiling that we had.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Sorry to interrupt, Mr. MEEK. It's trillion.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Currently, the debt limit is \$8.1 trillion. He wrote billion in this letter. I am just reading what he says there. It says billion. It doesn't say trillion, it says billion.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Wrong.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, it could be a typo.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is a big typo.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. But he is basically just talking about the debt ceiling, that it will be reached in 2006; at this time, unless the debt ceiling is raised, we will no longer be able to continue financing government operations.

This is on the 29th of December. On February the 16th he writes another letter, Secretary Snow. We talk about him. We have his portrait here. He is a nice guy. He is just trying to figure out how to run this thing because the Republican Congress is handing him a fixed deck.

He writes John Spratt, who is the ranking minority member on the Budget Committee here in the House, an honorable man, and he says, on December 29th I wrote the Congress regarding the need to increase the statutory debt limit. Because the debt limit has not been raised, I must inform the Congress that pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8438(h)(2) that it is my determination that by reason of the fact the public debt limit has not been raised, I can no longer pay into the retirement system.

That is the retirement system that we call the G Fund, which basically puts forth the dollars for us to be able to invest in the retirement system of the Federal employees. He can no longer do it. He goes on, to relieve the Federal employees, that when the debt ceiling is raised that he would be able to continue the investment there.

Now, if you can just bear with me for 1 second, because I have to go through this and make sure everyone is clear. Again, this chart is one of the most famous charts; one day it may appear somewhere over in the National Archives, because it is history. It is history in our country. Unfortunately, it is bad history, not good history. And we keep things because we have to

make sure we never make this mistake again.

In the 224 years prior to this President and the Republican Congress getting their opportunity to have free rein on borrowing, 42 Presidents before President Bush only borrowed \$1.01 trillion. That is a fact. Anyone can check it out. This is the U.S. Department of Treasury. That is our third-party validator, Madam Speaker.

President Bush, along with friends and colleagues in the Republican Congress, has borrowed \$1.01 trillion and counting from foreign nations.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Unbelievable.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let us talk about these foreign nations just for a second. This is a silhouette and map of the United States of America, one of the greatest countries on the face of the Earth. I think it is important that we talk about the people that own all the parts of the American apple pie.

I challenge Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and any Member of this U.S. House of Representatives, Democrat or Republican, that can explain to me a better way to say that this is a good thing for the American people.

Canada. We will put that up there. They own \$53.8 billion of the American apple pie.

□ 1700

Korea, they own \$65.5 billion of the American apple pie that we have borrowed from these countries. \$65.7 billion, Germany owns a piece of the American apple pie, thanks to the Republican majority and the President, with their policies. The UK, some may say friend and ally, they are friends and allies of our efforts that are going on. They own a piece of America right now at \$223.2 billion. That is a lot of money. OPEC nations. I am going to put that here, down there by Texas. They own \$67.8 billion of the American apple pie. And I think it is important.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. MEEK, will you yield for one moment?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I will yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I just want to let the Members know according to the Department of Treasury, again, third-party validator, the OPEC designation includes those countries, what is it, \$65 billion?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. \$67.8 billion and counting, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Okay. That is what we have borrowed from them. Iran, Iraq, Libya, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bahrain, Ecuador, Oman, Venezuela, Qatar, Nigeria, Kuwait, Indonesia.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Did you say Iran?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I said Iran and I also said Iraq. I also said UAE, which has been in the news lately. But I just wanted to clarify for you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So it is not shocking from this administration to get anything from folks that may have a questionable past in the effort against terrorism. Am I correct, sir?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Iran, all the nuclear issues, all the conflict and controversy, we are borrowing money from them to finance the Republican spending spree that is rewarding their wealthy contributors.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So they hold the note on the United States of America?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Them, along with a lot of other countries, yes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Be happy to yield.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Because, Mr. MEEK, what you are saying here, it is not simply a matter of fact. It goes beyond just factual accuracy that you are talking about. There is risk when it comes to this much debt being owned, this much of our debt being owned by another country. And then that doesn't even take into consideration whether the country that owns that debt, how friendly they are towards us.

Let us just talk about some recent comments by some of the leaders of the nations that own our debt. The Japanese Prime Minister, obviously Japan is an ally of ours and not one that we have to do a lot of hand wringing about, but Prime Minister Hashimoto just recently, I think this was a couple of weeks ago, stated, "We hope we don't have to succumb to the temptation to sell off U.S. Treasury bills." And later that same day the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 192 points, one of the largest declines in points in history. So there is real risk to accumulating that much debt in each of these nations economically in our country and economically across the world.

I have heard many of our colleagues, very flippantly on the other side of the aisle, write off the issue of debt as if it is not a big deal. Debt, in someone's household individually, would be a big deal. When we talk about the deficit and deficit spending, which is obviously a separate issue, that is a very big deal. Debt is something that we should begin to move away from. Yet, instead of that, what Secretary Snow has been asking us to do is continually increase it. And what did they do recently, just during that February 16 letter when the Secretary indicated that the debt limit needed to be raised again? Because the Congress has not done that, he had to dip into the pension fund. He actually had to, because something has to give. If Congress is not raising the debt limit, then he has got to cover that debt somewhere.

What I have found ironic for a very long time is that the Republicans like to throw around the L word when it comes to us and that we are tax-and-spenders. Honestly, first of all, that certainly is incorrect. But beyond that, what has been equally, if not more, irresponsible since they have been stewards of this economy is the borrow-and-spend philosophy that they have engaged in, because during the Clinton years there was a surplus. We were

only arguing over what we were going to do with that surplus. And now we don't have the ability to talk about that. So how much we are borrowing and dipping into our reserves, so to speak, other people's reserves, is really inappropriate.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You are 110 percent right, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are not done yet.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There are so many people, so many countries, questionable and nonquestionable, ally and non-ally, Madam Speaker, that have a part of the American apple pie.

China. There are a lot of concerns about China. Red China, Communist China. Guess what? In the shining example of a democracy, they own \$249.8 billion of our debt. They have it.

Taiwan, a lot of things are made there in Taiwan. \$71.3 billion in Taiwan that they own of U.S. debt.

Japan. You heard of Japan and we just finished talking about Japan, \$682.8 billion.

Now, Mr. RYAN, if you were to take all of the State budgets, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and all of us, you were a senator, State senator, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and I were State Senators once upon a time, we understand State budgets. They have to balance. But I guarantee you can put all of the State budgets together in the United States, including Alaska and Puerto Rico and Hawaii, you name it. It doesn't total up to the amount of debt that Japan owns of the United States, which is the \$682.8 billion.

Now, that is history and that is the present. The only one way we can have a paradigm shift, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, is to do what Mr. RYAN talked about earlier. We share with the Members, time, examples, page, routing numbers, all of those things that the American people and these Members and the Republican Members can go back and see where we have tried to stop them from doing this. You pay as you go, like you said.

If you end up finding yourself in a financial situation, what do you do, go out and get another credit card? No, you start saying I have to pay for things because I can't get any more credit.

But the thing about this Republican majority, Madam Speaker, and the President of the United States, they just feel it is okay. Oh, I can go out and talk to one of our other friends and say, buy our debt.

Mr. RYAN, would you take that chart where you talk about domestic borrowing. You go over that, but I want to make sure that you share with the Members exactly what they are doing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, let us do this here. This is the debt increases that you were referring to in the letter. Already, this President, and this Republican Congress have raised the debt ceiling, which means this country can now go out and borrow more money

from the countries that Mr. MEEK was talking about.

June 2002, this Republican Congress okayed raising this debt ceiling by \$450 billion. In May of 2003, \$984 billion increase in the debt ceiling. November of 2004, \$800 billion, raising the level of the debt ceiling again. And then the pending increase, \$781 billion increase in our debt ceiling. That is a total of \$3 trillion, \$3 trillion that this Republican Congress has okayed, Madam Speaker, and will go out and borrow from the countries that Mr. MEEK just spoke of.

Now, real quick, of that increase, since 2001, this country has borrowed \$1.18 trillion, which is signified by the blue bar there on the far left. Of that money, of the \$1.18 trillion, \$1.16 trillion, the orange bar is foreign debt borrowed from foreign countries. And over here, this bar, you could barely see, Mr. MEEK, that is domestic borrowing. So of all these, of this debt of the money we are borrowing, it is almost 100 percent from foreign countries. Piece by piece by piece.

It is not just the ports. It is not just the ports, Mr. MEEK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is our future. It is this country that is getting mortgaged, and we have to pay interest on that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I yield to you to talk about that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, because, you know, the concept of the debt and the deficit is kind of hard to get your mind around sometimes because the numbers are so big and the concepts are somewhat complex. So we always try, in our 30-something hours, to translate these concepts into what it means to everyday people. So let us just talk about the interest payments on the debt that we owe to these countries that Mr. MEEK slapped up on our Nation's map.

What we could do with the money, just on the interest payments, just the interest payments on the debt that we pay for veterans: we could be spending about \$35 billion, billion with a B, more money on services for our Nation's veterans.

We could be spending about \$20 billion on homeland security. Billion with a B. Certainly we could dedicate all that money to port security, because we spent about \$18 billion since 2001 and 9/11 on airport security. I think we could probably equal it out just with the interest payment on the debt.

Let us take a look at education. We are seriously underfunding the No Child Left Behind Act and preventing children from getting themselves prepared for the path that they choose in life. And we could take just the interest payments on the debt and spend that on education. That would be about \$75 billion for education. Or we could continue to spend it on the interest, which is now at \$250 billion.

Let us take it a little bit further and translate that even more specifically. What else could the government do with the interest that the country pays every day on this publicly held debt?

We could invest \$1 million a day in every single congressional district. Now, I think all 435 of us could find something good we could do to improve the quality of people's lives with \$1 million a day.

We could provide health care to almost 80,000, 79,925 more veterans in this country. And we know each of us in our districts hears from our veterans about the pitiful health care services that they are receiving and the struggle that they have in just getting an appointment to get health care from the Veterans Administration.

We can enroll 60,790 more children in the Head Start program, which we are going in the wrong direction in right now and enrolling fewer because we are not funding it adequately.

Or we could improve the solvency of Social Security, which this President has said is in crisis. We have differed with his definition of crisis; but even if it is half as big a problem as he says, we can improve Social Security solvency by almost half a billion dollars, just by using the interest that this Nation pays on the national foreign debt that other countries hold.

Now, if you went to a town hall meeting in each of our districts and asked our constituents, and the three of us have a diverse constituency. We represent all different kinds of folks between the three communities that we represent. Universally, they would prefer that that money be available to be spent on these items rather than making interest payments on debt that we owe to foreign countries.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And in addition to the money that we could be investing, and those are all investments, those are paying our Head Start, a million per Congressional district that is going to get spent on health and education and pushing it into our future making sure that we keep our promise to our veterans who we have promised that we would provide health care for.

But at the same time, when you balance the budget, you keep interest rates low. And we notice now how interest rates are starting to creep up every few months another quarter point, quarter point, half. It keeps going up. We want to balance the budget here like President Clinton and the Democratic Congress did in 1993 without one Republican vote, Madam Speaker, without one Republican vote, balanced the budget. Interest rates stayed low, and people went out and borrowed and invested in the economy.

So it is not government's job to go out and create work. We have a responsibility, and one of the things is to keep the budget balanced, keep interest rates low, and then allow that money to be borrowed by the private sector, so people can go out and make a profit and hire people and put that money back into the economy.

Be happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, the bottom line is that you really started to paint a picture here. What has happened over the last 4 to 5 years of this Republican Congress rubber stamping what the President has proposed has driven this country almost to the point of the 50 percent mark of foreign countries owning the United States of America financially. We owe them. Countries that don't even recognize, folks want to talk about an effort against terrorism.

Right now there is something major going on in the Middle East. You have the countries that are a part of this port deal that don't even recognize Israel. I mean, they are like, well, we don't even want to do business with them. Okay? As a matter of fact, Iran wants to blow Israel off the map. You have folks that are there saying all these statements every week about our friends and allies: if this is about the war on terror, we have to make sure that we do what we need to do and stick close to our friends.

□ 1715

And what is wrong here, Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, is that the President is still making statements, Madam Speaker, such as, well, I have not changed my mind. They are going to have their 45-day review and all that kind of stuff.

It happens to be a U.S. statute, I must add.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. A small detail.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Saying that if anyone, anyone, raised any concerns, any concerns, one of the lowest bars of statutory language, that there should automatically be a 45-day review.

Do you remember that we went for 72 hours, Madam Speaker, and no one bothered to open the statute books to say we should have had an investigation because there is a questionable pass of this country and that it should be done. But the administration came out stonewalling and trying to strong-arm this House of Representatives and the Senate, saying, we are going to do what we have got to do and we are going to stick with it, and we think it is the right thing to do. And the statutes were on our side, on the people's side, saying, no, there should be a 45-day review.

So we are going to see what is going to happen.

But I hope, Madam Speaker, that the Republican majority here in the House and in the Senate no longer says, well, Mr. President, we still have our stamp. If you say we should do it, we will figure out a way to do it, and we will not object because we have got to be close to our friends.

Well, we are going to find out the leaders from the followers. The bottom line, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. RYAN, is, are you with them or are you with our allies, our true allies? That is the question.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yesterday the amazing thing about this whole port deal that you are alluding to, in the Financial Services Committee we had an opportunity to question the representatives of the administration. Do you know that they testified that six different entities within the White House were aware of the proposal to close this Dubai Ports World deal, and the President still did not know about it, with six of his offices in the White House knowing about it? No explanation in committee for why that happened.

Really, this picture says it all. We are essentially outsourcing America's security to a foreign-government-owned company. We are not talking about just a foreign company.

I think I can tell you that I recognize that we are not going to shut down foreign companies from owning and operating facilities in our Nation's ports. We are a global economy now. But is it appropriate to allow foreign governments to have intimate knowledge about America's security in our ports and run the terminal operations inside those ports? Overwhelmingly, I think Republicans and Democrats in Congress are saying "no." Why is the President saying "yes"? This is a person who supposedly thinks that America's national security should be a priority. It has left Americans scratching their heads.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think, at the end of the day, this is symbolic of what is happening in all these other areas that we talked about tonight. It puts a face, so to speak, on what is happening, that Mr. MEEK talked about, all the foreign borrowing, the deficits and everything else. Now, it is like, well, it is our ports, my goodness gracious. Well, that is just the tip of the iceberg, unfortunately.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is indifference, Mr. RYAN. It is indifference, that there is a total disconnect between what the American people care about and understand are their needs and what this administration and this President understand.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As we have been saying for a long time in the 30-something group, we have got to try to convince, Madam Speaker, the Republican majority to start putting the country before their own political party, and I think we would be okay.

The Web site, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something, Madam Speaker, for all the Members who want to access this. All the charts that you saw here tonight, Madam Speaker, are accessible on this Web site for Members to access.

To my friend from Florida, I thank you for the opportunity to be here with you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. With that, Madam Speaker, we would like to thank Mr. Jim Moran, who was with us earlier, Mr. Artur Davis also and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and definitely Mr. RYAN for coming to the floor. We would

like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have the hour.

APPOINTMENT AS INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. Foxx). Pursuant to clause 6 of rule II, and the order of the House of December 18, 2005, the Chair announces the joint appointment by the Speaker, the majority leader and the minority leader of Mr. James J. Cornell of Springfield, Virginia, as Inspector General for the United States House of Representatives to fill the existing vacancy.

OMMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2006, AT PAGE H447

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 2141. An act to make improvements to the Federal Deposit Insurance Act; to the Committee on Financial Services; in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HINCHEY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

Mr. HINOJOSA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of business in the district.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

Mr. SWEENEY (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for February 28 and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

Mrs. BONO (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

Mr. GOHMERT (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of business in the district.

Mr. NORWOOD (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of a death in the family.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DINGELL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONYERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Member (at the request of Mr. PRICE of Georgia) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, March 7.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 449. An act to facilitate shareholder consideration of proposals to make Settlement Common Stock under the Alaska Native Calims Settlement Act available to missed enrollees, eligible elders, and eligible persons born after December 18, 1971, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, March 6, 2006, at noon.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6397. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's report on the United States Radiological Threat Reduction Program, pursuant to Public Law 109-58, section 631(b)(2); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6398. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's report entitled, "Impact of Energy Policy Act of 2005 Section 206 Rebates on Consumers and Renewable Energy Consumption, With Projections to 2010," pursuant to Public Law 109-58, section 206(d); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6399. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's report on the Failure to Comply with Deadlines for New or Revised Energy Conservation Standards, pursuant to Public Law 109-58, section 141; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6400. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting a copy of a report required by Section 202(a)(1)(C) of Pub. L. 107-273, the "21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act," related to certain settlements and injunctive relief, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 530D; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6401. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmit-

ting a copy of a report required by Section 202(a)(1)(C) of Pub. L. 107-273, the "21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act," related to certain settlements and injunctive relief, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 530D; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6402. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting a copy of a report required by Section 202(a)(1)(C) of Pub. L. 107-273, the "21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act," related to certain settlements and injunctive relief, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 530D; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6403. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the report on the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act covering the six months ended June 30, 2004, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 621; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6404. A letter from the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, transmitting Determination not to petition for a writ of certiorari in the case Ramirez-Landeros v. Gonzalez, No. 03-71743 (9th Cir. 2005); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6405. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting a letter concerning grants made during FY 2005 under Section 2806(b) of the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-561) to improve forensic science services; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6406. A letter from the Office of Public Information, Supreme Court of the United States, transmitting a copy of the 2005 Year-End Report on the Federal Judiciary; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6407. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works, Department of the Army, transmitting a copy of the the Final Feasibility Report of the Stillaguamish River Ecosystem Restoration project in Snohomish County, Washington; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6408. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Chicago New Year's Celebration, Lake Michigan, Chicago, IL [CGD09-05-135] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received December 28, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6409. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Notification of Arrival in U.S. Ports; Certain Dangerous Cargoes; Electronic Submission [USCG-2004-19963] (RIN: 1625-AA93) received January 10, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6410. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AICW), Cape Fear River, Northeast Cape Fear River, NC [CGD05-05-102] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6411. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; North Portland Harbor Dredging Operations; Portland, Oregon [CGD 13-06-002] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received January 24, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6412. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Town Creek Channel, Grace Memorial and Silas Pearman Bridges, Charleston, South Carolina [COTP Charleston 05-143] (RIN: 1625-AA97) received January 24, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6413. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Cooper River, Hog Island Channel, Grace Memorial and Silas Pearman Bridges, Charleston, South Carolina [COTP Charleston 06-003] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received January 24, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6414. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone Regulation; Tampa Bay, FL [COTP ST Petersburg 05-163] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received January 24, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6415. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Mission Creek Waterway, China Basin, San Francisco Bay, California [COTP San Francisco Bay 05-011] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received January 24, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6416. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Bayou Lafourche, LA [CGD08-05-049] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received January 24, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6417. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Housatonic River, CT [CGD01-05-102] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received January 24, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6418. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Niantic River, Niantic, CT [CGD01-06-011] received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6419. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Connecticut River, Old Lyme, CT [CGD01-06-005] received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6420. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Shark River (South Channel), Avon, NJ [CGD05-06-005] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6421. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Security Zones;

Pearl Harbor and adjacent waters, Honolulu, HI [COTP Honolulu 06-002] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6422. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Security Zone; Choptank River, Cambridge, Maryland [CGD05-06-009] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6423. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Security Zone; Superbowl XL, Detroit River, Detroit, MI [CGD09-06-001] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6424. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal; Romeoville, IL [CGD09-05-142] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6425. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zones; North Portland Harbor Dredging Operations; Portland, OR [CGD 13-06-002] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6426. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Alaska, South Central, Cook Inlet, Kamishak Bay [COTP Western Alaska-6-001] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6427. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Cuyahoga River, Cleveland, OH [CGD09-06-002] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6428. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Gulf of Alaska, Narrow Cape, Kodiak Island, AK [COTP Western Alaska-06-002] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 23, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6429. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Willamette River, Portland, OR [CGD13-05-023] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received December 23, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6430. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Mianus River, CT [CGD01-00-228] (RIN: 1625-AA09) (Formerly 2115-AE47) received December 28, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6431. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department

of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Sacramento River, Isleton, CA [CGD 11-05-035] received December 28, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6432. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Connecticut River, CT [CGD01-05-110] received December 28, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6433. A letter from the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting a letter of support for the Iran Nonproliferation Amendments Act of 2005, Pub. L. 109-112; to the Committee on Science.

6434. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Import Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the annual report on the activities of the Foreign-Trade Zones Board for fiscal year 2004, pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 81p(c); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6435. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's twelfth report on the impact of the Andean Trade Preference Act on U.S. trade and employment for 2005, pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 3205; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6436. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled, "Report to Congress on Adoption and Other Permanency Outcomes for Children in Foster Care: Focus on Older Children," pursuant to Public Law 108-145; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6437. A letter from the Principal Deputy Director, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, transmitting the Office's report containing an Information Plan for the Information Sharing Environment, pursuant to Public Law 108-458, section 1016(e); to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

6438. A letter from the Director, Office of Legacy Management, Department of Energy, transmitting the Annual Report on Contractor Work Force Restructuring for Fiscal Year 2004, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7274h; jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Energy and Commerce.

6439. A letter from the Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, transmitting the "Plan Colombia/Andean Ridge Counterdrug Initiative Semi-Annual Obligation Report, 1st and 2nd Quarters Fiscal Year 2005," pursuant to section 3204(e) of Pub. L. 106-246; jointly to the Committees on International Relations and Appropriations.

6440. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting a copy of a draft bill entitled, "To amend 40 U.S.C. 590 relative to child care services for Federal employees in Federal buildings"; jointly to the Committees on Government Reform and Transportation and Infrastructure.

6441. A letter from the General Counsel, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting the report to the President and to Congressional Committees on the Conflict of Interest Laws relating to Executive branch employment, pursuant to Public Law 108-458; jointly to the Committees on Government Reform and the Judiciary.

6442. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, Department of Commerce, transmitting the annual report on the activities of the Economic Development Administration for Fiscal Year

2004, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 3217; jointly to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Financial Services.

6443. A letter from the Architect of the Capitol, transmitting the Report on the Requirements of the Energy Act of 2005 Related to Congressional Facilities; jointly to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Energy and Commerce.

6444. A letter from the Chairperson, National Council on Disability, transmitting a copy of the Council's report entitled, "The State of 21st Century Long-Term Services and Supports: Financing and Systems Reform for Americans with Disabilities"; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

6445. A letter from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the Board's Congressional Justification of Budget Estimates for Fiscal Year 2007, pursuant to 45 U.S.C. 231f(f); jointly to the Committees on Appropriations, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SENSENBRENNER: Committee on the Judiciary. House Resolution 643. Resolution directing the Attorney General to submit to the House of Representatives all documents in the possession of the Attorney General relating to warrantless electronic surveillance of telephone conversations and electronic communications of persons in the United States conducted by the National Security Agency; adversely (Rept. 109-382). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER: Committee on the Judiciary. House Resolution 644. Resolution requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit to the House of Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution documents in the possession of those officials relating to the authorization of electronic surveillance of citizens of the United States without court approved warrants; adversely (Rep. 109-383). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. MILLER of Florida (for himself, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BUYER, and Mr. EVANS):

H.R. 4843. A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2006, the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HYDE:

H.R. 4844. A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require any individual who desires to register or re-register to vote in an election for Federal office to provide the appropriate State election official with proof that the individual is a citizen of the United States to prevent fraud in Federal elections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. SWEENEY, and Mr. TIAHRT):

H.R. 4845. A bill to better prepare and develop the United States workforce for the global economy, and remove barriers that stifle innovation; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Science, Education and the Workforce, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. GOODE, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. FORBES, Mr. WOLF, Mr. CANTOR, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mr. SMITH of Texas):

H.R. 4846. A bill to authorize a grant for contributions toward the establishment of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 4847. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for legal permanent resident status for certain undocumented or nonimmigrant aliens; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 4848. A bill to provide for permanent resident status for any alien orphan physically present in the United States who is less than 12 years of age and to provide for deferred enforced departure status for any alien physically present in the United States who is the natural and legal parent of a child born in the United States who is less than 18 years of age; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 4849. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide that individuals who are eligible to join the Armed Forces of the United States are also eligible to be security screening personnel; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 4850. A bill to provide for prices of pharmaceutical products that are fair to the producer and the consumer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 4851. A bill to provide for general revenue sharing and assistance for education for States and their local governments; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 4852. A bill to curtail the use of high-stakes tests in elementary and secondary schools; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 4853. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose an additional tax on taxable income attributable to contracts with the United States for goods and services for the war in Iraq; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky (for himself and Mr. OSBORNE):

H.R. 4854. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income interest received on loans secured by agricultural real estate and rural housing; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia (for himself and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 4855. A bill to amend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 to reauthorize for 5 additional years the public and private school tuition assistance programs established under the Act; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Ms. BEAN:

H.R. 4856. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit to homeowners for Energy Star qualified homes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Miss McMORRIS (for herself, Mr. DICKS, Mr. OTTER, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, and Mr. WALDEN of Oregon):

H.R. 4857. A bill to better inform consumers regarding costs associated with compliance for protecting endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. JEFFERSON (for himself, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Ms. LEE, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. WATERS, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. WYNN, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, and Mr. OWENS):

H.R. 4858. A bill to provide for the restoration of health care-related services in Hurricane Katrina-affected areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PORTER (for himself and Mr. CLAY):

H.R. 4859. A bill to amend chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the implementation of a system of electronic health records under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Ms. GRANGER (for herself and Mr. HOYER):

H.R. 4860. A bill to reduce and prevent childhood obesity by encouraging schools and school districts to develop and implement local, school-based programs designed to reduce and prevent childhood obesity, promote increased physical activity, and improve nutritional choices; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FERGUSON (for himself, Mr. TOWNS, Mrs. BONO, Mr. GORDON, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

H.R. 4861. A bill to authorize the Federal Communications Commission to impose licensing conditions on digital audio radio to protect against the unauthorized distribution of transmitted content; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CAMPBELL of California (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. DREIER, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. HAYWORTH, Mr. HERGER, Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, Mr. KIRK, Ms.

ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. MACK, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. OTTER, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. UPTON, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. AKIN, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. KLINE, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. PITTS, Ms. FOXX, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. PENCE, Mr. FORTUÑO, and Mr. MCHUGH):

H.R. 4862. A bill to amend the Internet Tax Freedom Act to make permanent the moratorium on certain taxes relating to the Internet and to electronic commerce; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida:

H.R. 4863. A bill to establish a pilot program in the Department of State for improvement of government-to-government relations with the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. EVERETT:

H.R. 4864. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Corridor in Alabama and Georgia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. CONAWAY:

H.R. 4865. A bill to require every Senator and Representative in, and Delegate and Resident Commissioner to, the Congress to obtain copies of the Constitution of the United States of America and distribute them to their staff and require that they all read such document; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. FORD:

H.R. 4866. A bill to promote responsibility by improving development education; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, Education and the Workforce, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FORTUÑO (for himself, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. HOYER, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. HYDE, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. PENCE, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. WELLER, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. BONILLA, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CANNON, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. NUNES, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. RENZI, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. DENT, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. POE, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MICA, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan, Ms. HART, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. MACK, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. WAMP, Mr. COBLE, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. HOSTETTLER, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. KELLER, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr.

GOHMERT, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. WYNN, Mr. KIND, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mrs. TAUSCHER, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 4867. A bill to provide for a federally sanctioned self-determination process for the people of Puerto Rico; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. GORDON:

H.R. 4868. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow certain agricultural employers a credit against income tax for a portion of wages paid to nonimmigrant H-2A workers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOEKSTRA:

H.R. 4869. A bill to require the Director of National Intelligence to release documents captured in Afghanistan or Iraq during Operation Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, or Operation Iraqi Freedom; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

By Mrs. KELLY:

H.R. 4870. A bill to establish certain rules for Surface Transportation Board approval of waste management company applications to become rail carriers; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 4871. A bill to ensure the coordination and integration of Indian tribes in the National Homeland Security strategy and to establish an Office of Tribal Government Homeland Security within the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 4872. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow medical care providers a credit against income tax for uncompensated emergency medical care and to allow hospitals a deduction for such care; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RAMSTAD:

H.R. 4873. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage investment in affordable housing; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ROSS:

H.R. 4874. A bill to authorize the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita by placing manufactured homes in flood plains, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. SALAZAR):

H.R. 4875. A bill to amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to help reduce the increased risk of severe wildfires to communities in forested areas affected by infestations of bark beetles and other insects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Resources, Ways and Means, and Science, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico:

H.R. 4876. A bill to ratify a conveyance of a portion of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation to Rio Arriba County, State of New Mexico, pursuant to the settlement of litigation between the Jicarilla Apache Nation and Rio Arriba County, State of New Mexico, to authorize issuance of a patent for said lands, and to change the exterior boundary of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation accordingly,

and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico (for herself and Mr. LANTOS):

H.R. 4877. A bill to direct the Attorney General to study how private entities and State and local government agencies store explosives, and to issue regulations providing for the safe and secure storage of explosives by such entities and agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.J. Res. 80. A joint resolution proposing an amendment the Constitution of the United States limiting the number of consecutive terms that a Senator or Representative may serve and providing for 4-year terms for Representatives; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CANTOR (for himself, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. LANTOS, and Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD):

H. Con. Res. 350. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. COSTA (for himself, Mr. REGULA, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. HOBSON, and Mr. SHADEGG):

H. Con. Res. 351. Concurrent resolution recognizing and honoring the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BERRY (for himself, Mr. ROSS, Mr. BONNER, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. MELANCON, Ms. HERSETH, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. KIND, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. FILNER, Mr. EVANS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. LEACH, Mr. FORD, and Mr. CLAY):

H. Res. 706. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should enact legislation to provide direct emergency assistance to American farmers who were adversely affected by natural disasters and unforeseen production costs during the 2005 crop year; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey:

H. Res. 707. A resolution condemning the Government of Iran's offer of assistance to Hamas, a known terrorist organization which currently controls the Palestinian Authority, and its call for other Arab nations to do the same, and the anti-Israeli and anti-American statements of the leaders of Iran; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. GUTIERREZ:

H. Res. 708. A resolution recognizing the centennial of Christopher House in Chicago; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. PAUL:

H. Res. 709. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to ensure that Members have a reasonable amount of time to read legislation that will be voted upon; to the Committee on Rules.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, private bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. LATOURETTE:

H.R. 4878. A bill for the relief of Karen Poppell; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MICHAUD:

H.R. 4879. A bill to reliquidate certain entries of salmon; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 94: Mr. TIBERI, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, and Mr. BROWN of Ohio.

H.R. 147: Mr. RENZI and Mr. DEAL of Georgia.

H.R. 182: Mr. ISTOOK.

H.R. 198: Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 215: Mr. ANDREWS.

H.R. 224: Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 282: Mr. OSBORNE.

H.R. 390: Ms. MCKINNEY and Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 450: Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. KLINE, and Miss MCMORRIS.

H.R. 503: Mr. YOUNG of Florida.

H.R. 521: Mr. EVERETT.

H.R. 552: Miss MCMORRIS.

H.R. 583: Mr. RAHALL, Mrs. BONO, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. ROSS, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. CARSON, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. OTTER, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.

H.R. 591: Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H.R. 625: Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 693: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 699: Mr. LANGEVIN.

H.R. 807: Mr. FORD and Ms. HOOLEY.

H.R. 880: Mr. MORAN of Kansas.

H.R. 994: Mr. OWENS and Mr. WEINER.

H.R. 995: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. MURPHY.

H.R. 998: Mrs. CAPITO and Mr. MCCREERY.

H.R. 1002: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 1016: Mr. MORAN of Kansas and Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 1053: Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 1125: Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 1249: Mr. GERLACH, Mr. RENZI, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 1298: Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. LAHOOD, Mrs. DRAKE, and Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 1351: Mr. FORD.

H.R. 1356: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, and Ms. BEAN.

H.R. 1393: Mr. FORD.

H.R. 1426: Mr. BOOZMAN and Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 1578: Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. POMBO, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 1592: Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois.

H.R. 1603: Mr. GOODE.

H.R. 1634: Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. OTTER, Mr. WALSH, and Mr. POMBO.

H.R. 1663: Mr. PALLONE and Mr. CANNON.

H.R. 1707: Mrs. MALONEY and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.

H.R. 1749: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.

H.R. 1806: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 1823: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1950: Mr. SHAW.

H.R. 1951: Mr. COLE of Oklahoma and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.

H.R. 2014: Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 2238: Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky.

H.R. 2305: Mr. BROWN of Ohio.

H.R. 2317: Mr. LANTOS and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 2328: Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 2345: Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 2356: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 2369: Mr. STUPAK, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, Mr. LINCOLN

DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. BEAUPREZ, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. WU.
 H.R. 2370: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
 H.R. 2389: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
 H.R. 2421: Mr. MEEKS of New York.
 H.R. 2525: Mr. KLINE.
 H.R. 2671: Mr. LAHOOD.
 H.R. 2684: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. STARK.
 H.R. 2727: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
 H.R. 2943: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
 H.R. 3142: Mr. CONYERS.
 H.R. 3145: Ms. BALDWIN.
 H.R. 3278: Mr. MICHAUD.
 H.R. 3307: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
 H.R. 3312: Mr. WAXMAN and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
 H.R. 3413: Mr. SWEENEY and Mr. KUHL of New York.
 H.R. 3449: Mr. ANDREWS.
 H.R. 3559: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SHERWOOD, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, and Mr. MORAN of Kansas.
 H.R. 3778: Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. AKIN, and Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida.
 H.R. 3917: Ms. MCKINNEY.
 H.R. 3933: Mr. ROTHMAN.
 H.R. 3949: Mr. PETRI.
 H.R. 3997: Mr. SHAYS.
 H.R. 4005: Ms. WATERS, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. LANTOS, and Mr. UPTON.
 H.R. 4156: Mr. CUMMINGS.
 H.R. 4188: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
 H.R. 4197: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
 H.R. 4215: Mr. BROWN of Ohio.
 H.R. 4228: Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan.
 H.R. 4239: Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin.
 H.R. 4265: Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. FORTUÑO.
 H.R. 4296: Mr. SOUDER.
 H.R. 4298: Mr. JEFFERSON.
 H.R. 4303: Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. OWENS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. CARSON, Mr. CASE, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. DEGETTE.
 H.R. 4343: Mr. WEXLER, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. REYES, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. SKELTON, and Mr. EVANS.
 H.R. 4366: Mr. FARR.
 H.R. 4394: Mr. GONZALEZ.
 H.R. 4408: Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California and Mr. GOODE.
 H.R. 4434: Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. COOPER, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 4435: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. FATTAH, and Ms. HARMAN.
 H.R. 4450: Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia.
 H.R. 4452: Ms. HART and Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 4460: Mr. LANTOS and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
 H.R. 4466: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. WYNN, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. GONZALEZ.
 H.R. 4542: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. CLAY, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. POMEROY, and Mr. ACKERMAN.
 H.R. 4561: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.
 H.R. 4575: Mr. GERLACH.
 H.R. 4596: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin and Mr. CARNAHAN.
 H.R. 4597: Mr. TERRY.
 H.R. 4604: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
 H.R. 4606: Mr. CONYERS.
 H.R. 4608: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida and Mrs. LOWEY.
 H.R. 4621: Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 4622: Mr. FORTUÑO, and Ms. MCKINNEY.
 H.R. 4657: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
 H.R. 4666: Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. GORDON, Mr. FILNER, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

H.R. 4675: Mr. PAYNE.
 H.R. 4681: Mr. LINDER, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. GONZALEZ, and Mr. ROSS.
 H.R. 4685: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California and Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 4704: Mr. MURTHA and Mr. CLEAVER.
 H.R. 4729: Mr. KUHL of New York and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
 H.R. 4732: Mr. GIBBONS.
 H.R. 4740: Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 4749: Mr. HONDA and Ms. DEGETTE.
 H.R. 4755: Mr. MELANCON, Mr. MANZULLO, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. GORDON, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. KIRK, and Mrs. CAPITO.
 H.R. 4760: Ms. NORTON, Mr. OWENS, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCKINNEY, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. CLAY, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.
 H.R. 4761: Mr. MCHUGH and Mr. WESTMORELAND.
 H.R. 4773: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. JEFFERSON.
 H.R. 4776: Ms. HARRIS and Mr. MCCOTTER.
 H.R. 4780: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.
 H.R. 4792: Mr. DICKS.
 H.R. 4793: Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. EVANS, Mr. PAYNE, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
 H.R. 4798: Mr. BACA.
 H.R. 4799: Mr. GERLACH.
 H.R. 4800: Mr. INSLEE and Ms. LEE.
 H.R. 4807: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. BOREN, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts.
 H.R. 4813: Mr. MEEKS of New York and Mr. CAMP of Michigan.
 H.R. 4824: Mr. GERLACH.
 H. J. Res. 16: Mr. PRICE of Georgia.
 H. Con. Res. 85: Mr. GERLACH.
 H. Con. Res. 137: Mr. CLAY.
 H. Con. Res. 272: Mr. HONDA.
 H. Con. Res. 299: Mr. WAMP and Mr. KUCINICH.
 H. Con. Res. 314: Mr. FARR.
 H. Con. Res. 318: Mr. STARK and Ms. WOOLSEY.
 H. Con. Res. 343: Mr. KUHL of New York.
 H. Res. 521: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida.
 H. Res. 603: Ms. WOOLSEY.
 H. Res. 635: Mr. SABO.
 H. Res. 643: Ms. HOOLEY.
 H. Res. 658: Mr. MEEKS of New York.
 H. Res. 681: Mr. BOEHLERT.
 H. Res. 685: Mr. PALLONE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. LEE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. CONYERS, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. WATERS, Ms. MCKINNEY and Mr. STARK.
 H. Res. 691: Mr. OWENS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. BURTON of Indiana and Mr. MCDERMOTT.
 H. Res. 698: Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. UPTON, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan.
 H. Res. 699: Mr. FOLEY.
 H. Res. 703: Mr. MCCOTTER.

DISCHARGE PETITIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XV, the following discharge petition was filed:

Petition 11, February 28, 2006, by Mr. JOHN BARROW on House Resolution 614, was signed by the following Members: John Barrow, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Jane Harman, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., David E. Price, John Lewis, Janice D. Schakowsky, George Miller, Fortney Pete Stark, Patrick J. Ken-

nedy, Barney Frank, Louise McIntosh Slaughter, Michael F. Doyle, Bart Stupak, John B. Larson, Earl Blumenauer, Michael R. McNulty, Tom Udall, Steven R. Rothman, John D. Dingell, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Timothy H. Bishop, Joe Baca, G. K. Butterfield, Al Green, Lynn C. Woolsey, John W. Olver, Martin T. Meehan, Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., Bennie G. Thompson, James P. Moran, Jerrold Nadler, Juanita Millender-McDonald, Jim McDermott, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ellen O. Tauscher, Carolyn McCarthy, Betty McCollum, Tammy Baldwin, Shelley Berkley, Dennis Moore, James R. Langevin, John Conyers, Jr., and Gwen Moore.

DISCHARGE PETITIONS— ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

The following Members added their names to the following discharge petitions:

Petition 3, by Mr. EDWARDS on House Resolution 27: Tim Holden, Barbara Lee, John Conyers, Jr., and Gwen Moore.

Petition 4, by Ms. SLAUGHTER on House Resolution 460: John Barrow, John Conyers, Jr., and Gwen Moore.

Petition 5, by Mr. WAXMAN on House Resolution 537: John Conyers, Jr. and Gwen Moore.

Petition 6, by Mr. ABERCROMBIE on House Resolution 543: Janice D. Schakowsky, Fortney Pete Stark, Marcy Kaptur.

Petition 7, by Ms. HERSETH on House Resolution 568: Nick J. Rahall II, Alcee L. Hastings, Anna G. Eshoo, Albert Russell Wynn, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Bob Etheridge, John F. Tierney, Dale E. Kildee, Russ Carnahan, John Lewis, Ruben Hinojosa, Janice D. Schakowsky, Patrick J. Kennedy, Dennis A. Cardoza, Barbara Lee, James E. Clyburn, Michael F. Doyle, Tom Udall, Steven R. Rothman, John Barrow, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Joe Baca, Lynn C. Woolsey, Martin T. Meehan, Major R. Owens, Bennie G. Thompson, James P. Moran, Marcy Kaptur, Jim McDermott, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ellen O. Tauscher, Betty McCollum, Tammy Baldwin, Lois Capps, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger, John Conyers, Jr., Gwen Moore, and Steny H. Hoyer.

Petition 8, by Mr. WAXMAN on House Resolution 570: Nick J. Rahall II, Michael H. Michaud, Alcee L. Hastings, Anna G. Eshoo, Albert Russell Wynn, Jane Harman, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Bob Etheridge, John F. Tierney, Dale E. Kildee, John Lewis, Ruben Hinojosa, Patrick J. Kennedy, Dennis A. Cardoza, Barbara Lee, Michael F. Doyle, Bart Stupak, Earl Blumenauer, Tom Udall, Steven R. Rothman, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Lynn C. Woolsey, Major R. Owens, Martin T. Meehan, James P. Moran, Mark Udall, Marcy Kaptur, Jim McDermott, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ellen O. Tauscher, Betty McCollum, Tammy Baldwin, Lois Capps, Dennis Moore, John Conyers, Jr., and Gwen Moore.

Petition 9, by Mr. BOSWELL on House Resolution 584: Nick J. Rahall II, Anna G. Eshoo, Tim Holden, Diane E. Watson, Albert Russell Wynn, John F. Tierney, John Lewis, Fortney Pete Stark, Patrick J. Kennedy, Henry A. Waxman, James E. Clyburn, Sherrod Brown, Michael F. Doyle, John B. Larson, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, G. K. Butterfield, Al Green, Lynn C. Woolsey, John W. Olver, Major R. Owens, Martin T. Meehan, Bennie G. Thompson, Jerrold Nadler, Ben Chandler, Juanita Millender-McDonald, Betty McCollum, Dennis Moore, Raul M. Grijalva, Artur Davis, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger, John Conyers, Jr., and Steny H. Hoyer.

Petition 10, by Ms. HERSETH on House Resolution 585: Nick J. Rahall II, Anna G. Eshoo, Tim Holden, Diane E. Watson, Albert Russell Wynn, Bob Etheridge, John F. Tierney, John Lewis, Fortney Pete Stark, Patrick J. Kennedy, Henry A. Waxman, James E. Clyburn, Sherrod Brown, Michael F. Doyle, John B. Larson, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, G. K. Butterfield, Al Green, Lynn C. Woolsey, John W. Olver, Major R. Owens, Martin T. Meehan, Bennie G. Thompson, Ben Chandler, Juanita Millender-McDonald, Betty McCollum, Raul M. Grijalva, Dennis Moore, Artur Davis, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger, John Conyers, Jr., and Steny H. Hoyer.