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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOUSTANY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 17, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

O to be chosen.

What a joy, O Lord, to be selected by others. But to what depths are we awakened once we know You have called us to be Your very own.

There is a surprising freedom found in being God's children. You watch over and protect us as we obey Your commands. Our destiny is in Your hands as we try to follow Your holy inspiration.

You open our hearts and our hands to care for the poor. You comfort the alien in our welcome. You bind us together as each goes about the daily task that we may give You glory and honor every day of our lives, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RENZI 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 14, 2006, at 11:08 am:

That the Senate concurs in the House amendment S. 655.

That the Senate disagrees to the House amendments and agrees to Conference; appoints conferees S. 250.

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 109.

That the Senate passed S. 3525.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support Republican efforts aimed at curbing our Nation's immigration problem.

House Republicans are determined to send a bill to the President that will secure our borders, punish employers who knowingly use illegal labor, make English our official language, and remove incentives for immigrants to enter our country illegally.

However, some Democrats seem determined to undermine our Nation's immigration laws. They support the Reid-Kennedy bill, which will allow 60 million new immigrants to enter our country over the next 20 years and will guarantee Social Security benefits to immigrants for the time they were in America illegally.

Mr. Speaker, rewarding those who break our laws is not the way to deal with America's immigration problem. This is an issue we cannot afford to compromise on, and I encourage my

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colleagues to support strict immigration reform in the interest of national security.

SECURE THE BORDERS FIRST

(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, we are seeing it everywhere we go and we are hearing it from all of our constituents every time we go home, every time we hold a town hall meeting, and every time we show up in a local community: illegal entry into this country and the presence of those who have made a decision to break the law to come here.

Illegal immigration is an issue to be addressed, and here it is on the front page of The Washington Post. Twelve hundred miles from the border, U.S. border town, yes, indeed, by those individuals who would choose to enter the country illegally. Every town has become a border town and every State has become a border State.

I encourage our colleagues to hang tough in this debate and stay with the House bill where we secure the border first.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2006

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4075) to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to provide for better understanding and protection of marine mammals, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4075

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 ''Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 2006''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT REFERENCES.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to such section or other provision of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.).

SEC. 3. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) COMMITTEE REFERENCES.—The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) is amended by striking ''Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries'' each place it appears and inserting ''Committee on Resources''.

(b) OBSOLETE REFERENCE TO SECTION.—Section 118(c)(3)(A)(i) (16 U.S.C. 1387(c)(3)(A)(i)) is amended by striking '', except that'' and all that follows through ''is valid''.

SEC. 4. LIMITED AUTHORITY TO EXPORT MARINE MAMMAL PRODUCTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(a)(6) (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(6)) is amended by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (C), and by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) A marine mammal product may be exported from the United States if the product—

''(i) is legally possessed, and exported by, a citizen of the United States for noncommercial purposes in conjunction with travel outside the United States and the product is imported into the United States by the same person upon the termination of travel;

''(ii) is legally possessed, and exported by, a person that is not a citizen of the United States for noncommercial purposes;

''(iii) is legally possessed and exported as part of a cultural exchange, by an Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo residing in Alaska; or

''(iv) is owned by a Native inhabitant of Russia, Canada, or Greenland and is exported for noncommercial purposes—

''(I) in conjunction with, and upon the completion of, travel within the United States; or

''(II) as part of a cultural exchange with an Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo residing in Alaska.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 101(a)(6)(A)(i) (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(6)(A)(i)) is amended by inserting ''for noncommercial purposes'' after ''United States'' the first place it appears.

SEC. 5. CAPTIVE RELEASE PROHIBITION.

Section 102(a) (16 U.S.C. 1372(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4) by striking ''subsection 104(c); and'' and inserting ''section 104(c);'';

(2) in paragraph (5) by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(6) for any person that is subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to release any captive marine mammal unless specifically authorized to do so under section 104(c)(3)(A), 104(c)(4)(A), or 109(h), except that this paragraph shall not apply to the temporary release of any marine mammal that is maintained in captivity under section 7524 of title 10, United States Code (including any progeny of a marine mammal maintained under that section).''.

SEC. 6. ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENT.

Section 103(f) (16 U.S.C. 1373(f)) is amended in the first sentence, by inserting ''and notwithstanding Public Law 104–66'' after ''thereafter''.

SEC. 7. PERMIT CLARIFICATIONS.

(a) CLARIFICATIONS.—Section 104 (16 U.S.C. 1374) is amended as follows:

(1) Subsection (c)(7) is amended by inserting ''notwithstanding any other provision of law'' after ''requesting the permit''.

(2) Subsection (c)(9) is amended to read as follows:

''(9)(A) No marine mammal may be exported—

''(i) for the purpose of public display, unless the Secretary of Agriculture evaluates and verifies, and thereafter notifies the Secretary, that the receiving facility meets standards that are comparable to the requirements that a person must meet to receive a permit under this subsection for that purpose; or

''(ii) for the purpose of scientific research or enhancing the survival or recovery of a species or stock, unless the receiving facility meets standards that are comparable to the requirements that a person must meet to receive a permit under this subsection for that purpose.

''(B) The Secretary may not require or request, through comity or any other means, that any marine mammal or its progeny remain subject to the jurisdiction of the United States when located in waters or on lands that are subject to the jurisdiction of another country.''.

(3) Subsection (c)(10) is amended—

(A) in the first sentence by inserting ''held within the lands and waters of the United States'' after ''marine mammals'' each place it appears;

(B) by inserting after the first sentence the following: ''The Secretary shall update the inventory on an annual basis.''; and

(C) in subparagraph (D) by inserting ''ownership, or other'' after ''date of''.

(b) REVIEW AND REPORT REGARDING INVENTORY.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior shall, by not later than 12 months after date of the enactment of this Act, jointly conduct a review of the inventory maintained under section 104(c)(10) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1374(c)(10)), the use of the information in the inventory, and the costs, benefits, and issues associated with the development of an online inventory.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the review, the Secretary shall consult and solicit input from persons who are required to provide information for the inventory.

(3) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit a report to Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on the findings of the review under this subsection. The report shall include the following:

(A) Recommendations on whether the inventory should be maintained by the Secretary or by another person under contract.

(B) How the Secretary would oversee maintenance of the inventory carried out under contract.

(C) How public access and access by Federal agencies to the inventory can be maintained if the inventory is maintained under contract.

(D) How the Secretary can minimize duplication on the information the Secretary receives from public display facilities and reduce the paper work burden on those facilities.

(E) An estimate of the cost of maintaining the inventory.

(F) A description of how the Secretary will ensure the secure maintenance of the data in the inventory.

(G) An analysis of the potential that online availability of the information in the inventory could adversely affect the safety of the animals.

(c) LIMITATION ON NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 104(c) (16 U.S.C. 1374(c)) is amended in paragraph (2)(E) in the first sentence, and in paragraph (8)(B)(i)(II), by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', except that if the transport is for purposes of public display and the transfer is between facilities where the ownership and care of the marine mammal will be under the same license or registration issued under the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) then only a notice of transport is required''.

SEC. 8. FINES AND PENALTIES.

(a) FINES AND PENALTIES, GENERALLY.—Section 105 (16 U.S.C. 1375) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1) by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$20,000''; and

(2) in subsection (b) by striking ''$20,000'' and inserting ''$30,000''.

(b) VESSEL PENALTY.—Section 106(b) (16 U.S.C. 1376(b)) is amended by striking ''$25,000'' and inserting ''$35,000''.

SEC. 9. MARINE MAMMAL GRANTS.

Section 110(a) (16 U.S.C. 1380(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE; ANNUAL REPORT.—

''(1) AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may make grants, or provide financial assistance in such other form as the Secretary considers appropriate, to any Federal or State agency, public or private institution, or other person for the purpose of assisting such agency, institution, or person to undertake research in subjects that are relevant to the protection and conservation of marine mammals.

''(2) REPORTS.—

''(A) REPORTS BY SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall include a description of the results of research carried out with assistance under this section in the annual report required under section 103(f).

''(B) REPORTS BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The head of each Federal agency that conducts and provides funds for research on marine mammals shall report annually to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on funding provided and research conducted regarding marine mammals during the preceding year.

''(3) CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this section, the Secretary may accept, solicit, receive, hold, administer, and use gifts, devises, and bequests.''.

SEC. 10. FISHERIES GEAR DEVELOPMENT.

Section 111 (16 U.S.C. 1381) is amended as follows:

(1) Subsection (a) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) FISHING GEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce (in this section referred to as the 'Secretary') shall—

''(A) carry out a program for the purpose of devising improved fishing gear and methods so as to reduce to the maximum extent practicable the incidental taking of marine mammals in connection with fishing operations; and

''(B) make every practicable effort to develop, evaluate, and make available to owners and operators of fishing vessels such gear and fishing method improvements as quickly as possible.

''(2) COORDINATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.—The Secretary may coordinate with other countries to foster gear technology transfer initiatives to reduce to the maximum extent practicable the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals throughout the full extent of their range.''.

(2) By adding at the end the following:

''(e) GEAR IMPROVEMENT MINI-GRANT PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary may establish a grant program to provide financial assistance for developing, manufacturing, testing, or designing new types of fishing gear designed to reduce to the maximum extent practicable the incidental taking (including incidental mortality and serious injury) of marine mammals.

''(2) GRANT AMOUNT AND PURPOSES.—The amount of a grant under this subsection may not exceed $20,000.

''(3) GRANT APPLICATIONS.—To receive a grant under this section, an applicant must submit an application in such form and manner as the Secretary may prescribe.

''(4) CONSULTATION REGARDING CRITERIA.—The Secretary shall consult with the Secretary of the Interior and the Marine Mammal Commission regarding the development of criteria for the awarding of grants under this subsection.

''(5) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Of amounts available each fiscal year to carry out this subsection, the Secretary may expend not more than $40,000 to pay the administrative expenses necessary to carry out this subsection.

''(6) CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this section, the Secretary may accept, solicit, receive, hold, administer, and use gifts, devises, and bequests.''.

SEC. 11. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

Subsection (c) of the Dolphin Protection Consumer Information Act (16 U.S.C. 1385) is amended in paragraph (2) by striking ''160 degrees west longitude'' and inserting ''150 degrees west longitude''.

SEC. 12. TAKE REDUCTION PLANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 118 (16 U.S.C. 1387) is amended as follows:

(1) In subsection (a) by striking ''commercial'' each place it appears in paragraphs (1) and (5).

(2) In subsection (c)(1) by striking so much as precedes subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(c) REGISTRATION AND AUTHORIZATION.—(1) The Secretary shall, within 90 days after the date of enactment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 2006—

''(A) publish in the Federal Register for public comment, for a period of not less than 90 days, any necessary changes to the Secretary's list of fisheries published under section 114(b)(1) in the Federal Register on August 24, 1994 (along with an explanation of such changes and a statement describing the marine mammal stocks interacting with, and the approximate number of vessels or persons actively involved in, each such fishery), with respect to—

''(i) commercial and recreational fisheries that have frequent incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals;

''(ii) commercial and recreational fisheries that have occasional incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals; or

''(iii) commercial fisheries that have a remote likelihood of or no known incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals;''.

(3) In subsection (c)(1) in subparagraphs (B) and (C) by striking ''commercial''.

(4) In subsection (c)(2)(A) by striking ''commercial''.

(5) In subsection (c)(3)(A) in the matter preceding clause (i) by striking ''a commercial fishery'' and inserting ''that fishery''.

(6) In subsection (c)(3)(E) by inserting ''commercial'' after ''any''.

(7) In subsection (c)(5)(B) by striking ''commercial''.

(8) In subsection (d)(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by striking ''commercial fishing operations'' and inserting ''fishing operations in a fishery listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(9) In subsection (d)(3) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by striking ''commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(10) In subsection (d)(4) as follows:

(A) In the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by striking ''commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(B) In subparagraph (A) by striking ''commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(C) In subparagraph (B) by striking ''commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(D) In subparagraph (C) by striking ''commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(11) In subsection (d)(5) by striking ''commercial fishing operations'' and inserting ''fishing operations in fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(12) In subsection (e) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''commercial'' each place it appears; and

(B) by striking ''this Act'' and inserting ''this section''.

(13) In subsection (f) by striking so much as precedes paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(f) TAKE REDUCTION PLANS.—(1) The Secretary shall develop and implement a take reduction plan designed to assist in the recovery or prevent the depletion of each strategic stock which interacts with a fishery listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii), unless the Secretary determines, after notice and opportunity for public comment, that the level of fishery related mortality and serious injury is having a negligible impact on that stock. The Secretary may develop and implement a take reduction plan for any other marine mammal stocks which interact with a fishery listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) which the Secretary determines, after notice and opportunity for public comment, has a high level of mortality and serious injury across a number of such marine mammal stocks.''.

(14) In subsection (f)(2)—

(A) by striking ''6 months'' and inserting ''9 months''; and

(B) by striking ''commercial fishing operations'' each place it appears and inserting ''fishing operations in fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(15) In subsection (f)(3) by striking ''commercial''.

(16) In subsection (f)(4)(B) by striking ''commercial fishing operations'' and inserting ''fishing operations in fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(17) In subsection (f)(5)—

(A) in subparagraph (A) by striking ''6 months'' and inserting ''9 months''; and

(B) in subparagraphs (A) and (B) by striking ''commercial'' each place it appears.

(18) In subsection (f)(6)(A)—

(A) by striking ''(not later than 30 days)''; and

(B) in clause (ii) by striking ''commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(19) In subsection (f)(6)(C) in the second sentence, by inserting before '', and others'' the following: '', where appropriate a representative of the office of General Counsel of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a representative of the National Marine Fisheries Service having responsibilities related to fisheries science, a representative of the National Marine Fisheries Service having responsibilities related to law enforcement, and a representative of the appropriate National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Administrator''.

(20) In subsection (f)(7)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)(i) by striking ''6 months'' and inserting ''9 months'';

(B) in subparagraph (B)(i)—

(i) by striking ''not later than 60 days'' and inserting ''not later than 120 days''; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following: ''Before publishing any plan that is different than the draft plan proposed by a take reduction team, the Secretary shall reconvene the team and explain to the team the differences between the published plan and the draft plan proposed by the team.''; and

(C) in subparagraph (B)(ii)—

(i) by striking ''6 months'' and inserting ''9 months''; and

(ii) by striking ''not later than 8 months'' and inserting ''not later than 11 months''.

(21) In subsection (f)(7)(C) by striking ''Not later than 60 days'' and inserting ''Not later than 90 days''.

(22) In subsection (f)(7)(D) by striking ''commercial''.

(23) In subsection (f)(8)—

(A) in subparagraph (C) by striking ''Not later than 60 days'' and inserting ''Not later than 180 days''; and

(B) by striking ''commercial'' each place it appears.

(24) In subsection (f)(9) as follows:

(A) In subparagraph (A) by striking ''commercial fisheries or restrict commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii) or restrict such fisheries''.

(B) In subparagraphs (B) and (C) by striking ''commercial'' each place it appears.

(C) In subparagraph (D) by striking ''commercial fishing operations'' and inserting ''participation in a fishery listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(25) In subsection (g)(1) by striking ''commercial fisheries'' and inserting ''fisheries listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(26) In subsection (g)(3)(B) by striking ''commercial''.

(27) In subsection (g)(4) by striking ''commercial fishery'' and inserting ''fishery listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) or (ii)''.

(28) In subsection (j) by inserting ''including observer, research, and education and outreach programs,'' after ''For purposes of carrying out this section,''.

(29) By amending subsection (d)(1)(C) to read as follows:

''(C) identify current fishery regulations and changes in fishing methods or technology that may increase or decrease incidental mortality and serious injury.''.

(30) In subsection (f)(2) in the last sentence by inserting ''conservation benefits of'' before ''State or regional fishery management plans.''.

(31) By amending subsection (f)(4)(A) to read as follows:

''(A) a review of the information in the final stock assessment published under section 117(b), any substantial new information, a review of the conservation benefits from current State and regional fishery management regulations;''.

(b) STOCK ASSESSMENTS.—Section 117(a)(4) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (C);

(2) by inserting ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (D); and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(E) potential conservation benefits provided by State and regional fishery management regulations;''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 101(a)(5)(E) (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)(E)) is amended by inserting ''or recreational'' after ''commercial'' each place it appears.

SEC. 13. PINNIPED CONTROL PROGRAM.

Section 120 (16 U.S.C. 1389) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(k) NONLETHAL REMOVAL AND CONTROL.—(1) The Secretary shall conduct a program on the nonlethal removal and control of nuisance pinnipeds. The program shall include a review of measures that have been taken to effect such removal and control, the effectiveness of these measures, and the development of new technologies to deter nuisance pinnipeds.

''(2) The Secretary shall include, among the individuals that develop the program under this subsection, representatives of the commercial and recreational fishing industries and, as appropriate, individuals with scientific proficiency, technical credentials, and expertise.

''(3) The Secretary is encouraged, where appropriate, to use independent marine mammal research institutions in developing and in conducting the program.

''(4) The Secretary shall, by December 31 of each year, submit an annual report on the results of research under this subsection to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

''(l) QUALIFIED NONLETHAL CONTROL PROJECTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may, to the extent amounts are available to carry out this subsection, provide a grant to any eligible applicant to carry out a qualified nonlethal control project in accordance with this subsection.

''(2) APPLICATIONS.—The Secretary shall—

''(A) publish guidelines for and solicit applications for grants under this subsection not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this subsection; and

''(B) receive, review, evaluate, and approve applications for grants under this subsection.

''(3) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT.—To be an eligible applicant for purposes of paragraph (1), an applicant must—

''(A) be a State, local government, or interstate or regional agency; and

''(B) have adequate personnel, funding, and authority to carry out and monitor or maintain a nonlethal control of nuisance pinnipeds project.

''(4) QUALIFIED CONTROL PROJECT.—To be a qualified control project under this subsection, a project must—

''(A) by humane and nonlethal means, remove, deter, and control nuisance pinnipeds in areas where they are a recurrent and persistent threat to public health and safety; and

''(B) encourage public notice, education, and outreach on project activities in the affected community.

''(5) GRANT DURATION.—Each grant under this subsection shall be to provide funding for the Federal share of the cost of a project carried out with the grant for up to 2 fiscal years.

''(6) REPORTING BY GRANTEE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A grantee carrying out a control project with a grant under this subsection shall report to the Secretary at the expiration of the grant.

''(B) REPORT CONTENTS.—Each report under this subsection shall include specific information on the methods and techniques used to control nuisance pinniped species in the project area, and on the ensuing results.

''(7) COST SHARING.—

''(A) FEDERAL SHARE.—Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), the Federal share of the cost of a project carried out with a grant under this subsection shall not exceed 75 percent of such cost.

''(B) APPLICATION OF IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—The Secretary may apply to the non-Federal share of costs of a control project carried out with a grant under this subsection the fair market value of services or any other form of in-kind contribution to the project made by non-Federal interests that the Secretary determines to be an appropriate contribution equivalent to the monetary amount required for the non-Federal share of the activity.

''(C) DERIVATION OF NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal share of the cost of a control project carried out with a grant under this subsection may not be derived from a Federal grant program or other Federal funds.

''(8) CLARIFICATION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted as suspending or waiving any requirement under any other provision of this Act.''.

SEC. 14. MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION.

(a) NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES.—Section 206(5) (16 U.S.C. 1406(5)) is amended by striking ''; except that no fewer than 11 employees must be employed under paragraph (1) at any time''.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—Section 206 (16 U.S.C. 1406) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4) by striking ''(but at rates for individuals not to exceed $100 per diem)''; and

(2) in paragraph (5) by striking ''Financial'' and all that follows through the end of that sentence.

SEC. 15. STRANDING AND ENTANGLEMENT RESPONSE.

(a) COLLECTION AND UPDATING OF INFORMATION.—Section 402(b)(1)(A) (16 U.S.C. 1421a(b)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting ''or entangled'' after ''stranded''.

(b) ENTANGLEMENT RESPONSE AGREEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 403 (16 U.S.C. 1421b) is amended—

(A) by amending the section heading to read as follows:

''SEC. 403. STRANDING OR ENTANGLEMENT RESPONSE AGREEMENTS.''; and

(B) in subsection (a) by inserting ''or entanglement'' before the period.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents at the end of the first section is amended by striking the item relating to section 403 and inserting the following:

''Sec. 403. Stranding or entanglement response agreements''.

(c) LIABILITY.—Section 406(a) (16 U.S.C. 1421e(a)) is amended by inserting ''or entanglement'' after ''stranding''.

(d) ENTANGLEMENT DEFINED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 410 (16 U.S.C. 1421h) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (6) in order as paragraphs (2) through (7); and

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) the following:

''(1) The term 'entanglement' means an event in the wild in which a living or dead marine mammal has gear, rope, line, net, or other material wrapped around or attached to it and is—

''(A) on a beach or shore of the United States; or

''(B) in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 408(a)(2)(B)(i) (16 U.S.C. 1421f–1(a)(2)(B)(i)) is amended by striking ''section 410(6)'' and inserting ''section 410(7)''.

(e) JOHN H. PRESCOTT MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM.—

(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 408(h) (16 U.S.C. 1421f–1(h)) is amended by striking ''$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001 through 2003'' and inserting ''$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2010''.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND EXPENSES.—Section 408 (16 U.S.C. 1421f–1) is amended—

(A) by adding at the end of subsection (a)(1) the following: ''All funds available to implement this section shall be distributed to eligible stranding network participants for the purposes set forth in this paragraph and paragraph (2), except as provided in subsection (f).''; and

(B) by amending subsection (f) to read as follows:

''(f) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND EXPENSES.—Of the amounts available each fiscal year to carry out this section, the Secretary may expend not more than 5 percent or $80,000, whichever is greater, to pay the administrative costs and administrative expenses to implement the grant program under subsection (a). Any such funds retained by the Secretary for a fiscal year for

such costs and expenses that are not used for such costs and expenses before the end of the fiscal year shall be provided as grants under subsection (a).''.

(3) EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.—Section 408 (16 U.S.C. 1421f–1) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3), and by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary may also enter into cooperative agreements, contracts, or such other agreements or arrangements as the Secretary considers appropriate to address stranding events requiring emergency assistance.'';

(B) in subsection (d) by inserting ''(1)'' before the text, and by adding at the end the following:

''(2) Funding for emergency stranding projects shall not be subject to the funding limit established in paragraph (1).'';

(C) in subsection (e)—

(i) in paragraph (1) by striking ''The non-Federal'' and inserting ''Except as provided in paragraph (2), the non-Federal'';

(ii) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3); and

(iii) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.—No non-Federal contribution shall be required for funding for a response to an emergency stranding event.''; and

(D) in subsection (g) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3) and inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.—The term 'emergency assistance' means assistance provided for a stranding event that—

''(A) is not an unusual mortality event as defined in section 409(6);

''(B) leads to an immediate increase in required costs for stranding response, recovery, or rehabilitation in excess of regularly scheduled costs;

''(C) may be cyclical or endemic; and

''(D) may involve out-of-habitat animals.''.

(4) CONTRIBUTIONS.—Section 408 (16 U.S.C. 1421f–1) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(i) CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this section, the Secretary may solicit, accept, receive, hold, administer, and use gifts, devises, and bequests.''.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR MARINE MAMMAL UNUSUAL MORTALITY EVENT FUND.—Section 409(3) (16 U.S.C. 1421g(3)) is amended by striking ''$500,000 for fiscal year 1993'' and inserting ''$125,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2010''.

SEC. 16. SCRIMSHAW EXEMPTION.

Any valid certificate of exemption referred to in section 18 of Public Law 103–238 (16 U.S.C. 1539 note) that was valid under that section on April 29, 1999, shall be valid during the 11-year period beginning October 31, 1999.

SEC. 17. POLAR BEARS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

''TITLE V—POLAR BEARS

''SEC. 501. DEFINITIONS.

''In this title:

''(1) AGREEMENT.—The term 'Agreement' means the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population, signed at Washington, D.C., on October 16, 2000.

''(2) ALASKA NANUUQ COMMISSION.—The term 'Alaska Nanuuq Commission' means the Alaska Native entity, in existence on the date of enactment of this title, that represents all villages in the State of Alaska that engage in the annual subsistence taking of polar bears from the Alaska-Chukotka population and any successor entity.

''(3) IMPORT.—The term 'import' means to land on, bring into, or introduce into, or attempt to land on, bring into, or introduce into, any place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, without regard to whether the landing, bringing, or introduction constitutes an importation within the meaning of the customs laws of the United States.

''(4) POLAR BEAR PART OR PRODUCT.—The term 'part or product of a polar bear' means any polar bear part or product, including the gall bile and gall bladder.

''(5) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of the Interior.

''(6) TAKING.—The term 'taking' has the meaning given the term in the Agreement.

''(7) COMMISSION.—The term 'Commission' means the commission established under article 8 of the Agreement.

''SEC. 502. PROHIBITIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—It is unlawful for any person who is subject to the jurisdiction of the United States—

''(1) to take any polar bear in violation of the Agreement;

''(2) to take any polar bear in violation of the Agreement or any annual taking limit or other restriction on the taking of polar bears that is adopted by the Commission pursuant to the Agreement;

''(3) to import, export, possess, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase, exchange, barter, or offer to sell, purchase, exchange, or barter any polar bear, or any part or product of a polar bear, that is taken in violation of paragraph (2);

''(4) to import, export, sell, purchase, exchange, barter, or offer to sell, purchase, exchange, or barter, any polar bear gall bile or polar bear gall bladder;

''(5) to commit, solicit another person to commit, or cause to be committed, any offense under this subsection; or

''(6) to violate any regulation promulgated by the Secretary to implement any of the prohibitions established in this subsection.

''(b) EXCEPTIONS.—For the purpose of forensic testing or any other law enforcement purpose, the Secretary, and Federal law enforcement officials, and any State or local law enforcement official authorized by the Secretary, may import a polar bear or any part or product of a polar bear.

''SEC. 503. ADMINISTRATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, shall do all things necessary and appropriate, including the promulgation of regulations, to implement, enforce, and administer the provisions of the Agreement on behalf of the United States. The Secretary shall consult with the Secretary of State and the Alaska Nanuuq Commission on matters involving the implementation of the Agreement.

''(b) UTILIZATION OF OTHER GOVERNMENT RESOURCES AND AUTHORITIES.—

''(1) OTHER GOVERNMENT RESOURCES.—The Secretary may utilize by agreement, with or without reimbursement, the personnel, services, and facilities of any other Federal agency, any State agency, or the Alaska Nanuuq Commission for purposes of carrying out this title or the Agreement.

''(2) OTHER POWERS AND AUTHORITIES.—Any person authorized by the Secretary under this subsection to enforce this title or the Agreement shall have the authorities that are enumerated in section 6(b) of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3375(b)).

''(c) ENSURING COMPLIANCE.—

''(1) TITLE I AUTHORITIES.—The Secretary may use authorities granted under title I to enforce this title.

''(2) ADDITIONAL AUTHORITIES.—Any gun, trap, net, or other equipment used, to aid in the violation or attempted violation of this title shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture under section 106.

''(d) REGULATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to carry out this title and the Agreement.

''(2) ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS.—If necessary to carry out this title and the Agreement, and to improve compliance with any annual taking limit or other restriction on taking adopted by the Commission and implemented by the Secretary in accordance with this title, the Secretary may promulgate regulations that adopt any ordinance or regulation that restricts the taking of polar bears for subsistence purposes if the ordinance or regulation has been promulgated by the Alaska Nanuuq Commission.

''SEC. 504. COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT; AUTHORITY TO DELEGATE ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, may share authority under this title for the management of the taking of polar bears for subsistence purposes with the Alaska Nanuuq Commission if such commission is eligible under subsection (b).

''(b) DELEGATION.—To be eligible for the management authority described in subsection (a), the Alaska Nanuuq Commission shall—

''(1) enter into a cooperative agreement with the Secretary under section 119 for the conservation of polar bears;

''(2) meaningfully monitor compliance with this title and the Agreement by Alaska Natives; and

''(3) administer its co-management program for polar bears in accordance with—

''(A) this title; and

''(B) the Agreement.

''SEC. 505. COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS; COMPENSATION, TRAVEL EXPENSES, AND CLAIMS.

''(a) APPOINTMENT OF U.S. COMMISSIONERS.—

''(1) APPOINTMENT.—The United States commissioners on the Commission shall be appointed by the President, in accordance with paragraph 2 of article 8 of the Agreement, after taking into consideration the recommendations of—

''(A) the Secretary;

''(B) the Secretary of State; and

''(C) the Alaska Nanuuq Commission.

''(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Both of the United States commissioners shall have knowledge or expertise in polar bears.

''(3) SERVICE AND TERM.—Each United States commissioner shall serve—

''(A) at the pleasure of the President; and

''(B) for an initial 4-year term and such additional terms as the President shall determine.

''(4) VACANCIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Any individual appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of any term of office of a United States commissioner shall be appointed for the remainder of that term.

''(B) MANNER.—Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

''(b) ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Alaska Nanuuq Commission, shall designate an alternate commissioner for each member of the United States section.

''(2) DUTIES.—In the absence of a United States commissioner, an alternate commissioner may exercise all functions of the United States commissioner at any meetings

of the Commission or of the United States section.

''(3) REAPPOINTMENT.—An alternate commissioner—

''(A) shall be eligible for reappointment by the President; and

''(B) may attend all meetings of the United States section.

''(c) DUTIES.—The members of the United States section may carry out the functions and responsibilities described in article 8 of the Agreement in accordance with this title and the Agreement.

''(d) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—

''(1) COMPENSATION.—A member of the United States section shall serve without compensation.

''(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the United States section shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the United States-Russia Polar Bear Commission.

''(e) AGENCY DESIGNATION.—The United States section shall, for the purpose of title 28, United States Code, relating to claims against the United States and tort claims procedure, be considered to be a Federal agency.

''SEC. 506. VOTES TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES SECTION ON MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMISSION.

''In accordance with paragraph 3 of article 8 of the Agreement, the United States section , made up of commissioners appointed by the President, shall vote on any issue before the United States-Russia Polar Bear Commission only if there is no disagreement between the United States commissioners regarding the vote.

''SEC. 507. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall take all necessary actions to implement the decisions and determinations of the Commission under paragraph 7 of article 8 of the Agreement.

''(b) TAKING LIMITATION.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary receives notice of the determination of the Commission of an annual taking limit, or of the adoption by the Commission of other restriction on the taking of polar bears for subsistence purposes, the Secretary shall publish a notice in the Federal Register announcing the determination or restriction.

''SEC. 508. APPLICATION WITH OTHER TITLES OF ACT.

''The authority of the Secretary under this title is in addition to, and shall not affect the authority of the Secretary under, the other titles of this Act or the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3371 et seq.) or the exemption for Alaskan natives under section 101(b) of this Act.

''SEC. 509. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this title and the Agreement $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2010.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE V—POLAR BEARS

''Sec. 501. Definitions.
''Sec. 502. Prohibitions.
''Sec. 503. Administration.
''Sec. 504. Cooperative management agreement; authority to delegate enforcement authority.
''Sec. 505. Commission appointments; compensation, travel expenses, and claims.
''Sec. 506. Votes taken by the United States Section on matters before the Commission.
''Sec. 507. Implementation of actions taken by the Commission.
''Sec. 508. Application with other titles of Act.
''Sec. 509. Authorization of appropriations.''.

(c) TREATMENT OF CONTAINERS.—Section 107(d)(2) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1377(d)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''or other conveyance'' and inserting '', other conveyance, or container''; and

(2) by striking ''or conveyance'' and inserting ''conveyance, or container''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, which reauthorizes portions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, authored by Resources Chairman RICHARD POMBO.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act was enacted in 1972 with the purpose of protecting and restoring marine mammal populations. The act has been very successful over its 30-year history in recovering marine mammal populations, and this legislation builds on those accomplishments.

Recently, there have been many news reports on the status of polar bears and other arctic marine mammal species. H.R. 4075 includes language which will allow for increased international cooperation to help protect the shared U.S.-Russia polar bear population. In fact, without these provisions, the future of polar bear populations in Russia is very much in jeopardy. It also authorizes much needed research which will afford us the opportunity to better understand the needs of marine mammals and give us the means to better conserve these species for future generations.

H.R. 4075 also authorizes the Prescott Marine Mammal Stranding program. The Prescott program has been very successful in recovering and rehabbing thousands of stranded marine mammals. The Prescott program supports a network of facilities around the Nation that have dedicated themselves to the recovery of stranded marine mammals.

H.R. 4075 includes additional provisions which will support the development of cleaner fishing gear to reduce interactions with marine mammals. It also authorizes research to develop nonlethal measures to control nuisance pinniped populations. Finally, H.R. 4075 clarifies the permit requirements for marine mammals on public display.

While it is not a major reauthorization of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, these amendments have been carefully crafted and are specifically designed to enhance the fundamental conservation goals of this important law. This is a good conservation bill. It is good for marine mammals, and it should be overwhelmingly adopted.

Finally, I wish to thank Chairman HENRY HYDE of the International Relations Committee and Chairman BILL THOMAS of the Ways and Means Committee and their staffs for their cooperation in moving this legislation. At this time I will include in the RECORD an exchange of letters between our committees on this bill.

I urge an ''aye'' vote on H.R. 4075.

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2006.

Hon. WILLIAM M. THOMAS,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I ask your cooperation to help schedule consideration by the House of Representatives of H.R. 4075, the Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 2006, during the week of July 17–21, 2006. I have proposed an amendment to this bill which includes text from S. 2013, the United States-Russia Polar Bear Conservation and Management Act of 2005. The Committee on Ways and Means has a jurisdictional interest in this Senate bill because of its inclusion of trade measures.

My staff has worked with yours to develop a mutually-agreed on text for this amendment, and I have enclosed this amendment for your review. I ask that you not seek a referral of H.R. 4075 based on the inclusion of this language to expedite Floor scheduling. Of course, this action would not be considered as waiving or affecting your jurisdiction over the subject matter of the amendment, nor as precedent for any future referrals of similar measures. Moreover, if the bill is conference with the Senate, I would support naming Ways and Means Committee members to the conference committee for the trade provisions. I would also be pleased to include this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the Floor.

Mr. Chairman, I have been very pleased with the tremendous degree of cooperation between our two Committees. Your staff, especially Angela Ellard and Steven Schrage, has been responsive and thoughtful, and my staff very much appreciates their support and teamwork. I hope that you will give my request serious consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

RICHARD POMBO,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2006.

Hon. RICHARD W. POMBO,
Chairman, Committee on Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN POMBO: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4075, the ''Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 2006,'' which is scheduled for floor consideration during the week of July 17th.

As you noted, the Committee on Ways and Means maintains jurisdiction over trade

measures. H.R. 4075, as amended, includes text which falls within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means. However, in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action. This is being done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I appreciate your cooperation in this matter and agree to your offer to include this exchange of letters in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Best regards,

BILL THOMAS,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 12, 2006.

Hon. HENRY J. HYDE,
Chairman Committee on International Relations, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I ask your cooperation to help schedule, consideration by the House of Representatives of H.R. 4075, the Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 2006, during the week of July 17–21, 2006. I have proposed an amendment to this bill which includes text from S. 2013, the United States-Russia Polar Bear Conservation and Management Act of 2005. Obviously, the Committee on International Relations has a jurisdictional interest in this Senate bill.

My staff has worked with yours to develop a mutually-agreed on text for this amendment, and I have enclosed this amendment for your review. I ask that you not seek a referral of H.R. 4075 based on the inclusion of this language to expedite Floor scheduling. Of course, this action would not be considered as waiving or affecting your jurisdiction over the subject matter of the amendment, nor as precedent for any future referrals of similar measures. Moreover, if the bill is conferenced with the Senate, I would support naming International Relations Committee members to the conference committee for the polar bear provisions. I would also be pleased to include this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the Floor.

Mr. Chairman, I have been very pleased with the tremendous degree of cooperation between our two Committees. Your staff has been responsive and thoughtful, and my staff very much appreciates their support and teamwork. I hope that you will give my request serious consideration, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

RICHARD POMBO,
Chairman.

Hon. RICHARD W. POMBO,
Chairman, Committee on Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter concerning H.R. 4075, the ''Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 2006.'' I understand that the text of your proposed amendment contains text from S. 2013, the ''United States-Russia Polar Bear Conservation and Management Act of 2005.''

The language in question does impact the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on International Relations. However, since our committees have developed a mutually agreed-upon text for this amendment, I will agree not to seek a referral of H.R. 4075 in order to expedite your Committee's ability to schedule this for House consideration.

I appreciate your willingness to support the appointment of conferees from this Committee on this matter, should it go to conference. Please place our exchange of letters into the Record during the debate on this matter.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

HENRY J. HYDE,
Chairman.

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

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

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

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, in 1972 Congress enacted the Marine Mammal Protection Act to protect marine mammals from harmful human activities. It is a landmark statute in our pantheon of national environmental laws, providing for the conservation and management of whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals, sea lions, and other marine mammals.

In the past, consideration of amendments to MMPA was done on a bipartisan basis, such as significant changes made by Congress in 1994. However, during this Congress, I have stood opposed to further consideration of MMPA legislation the Resources Committee approved almost 1 year to this day, until today. Let me emphasize that my opposition was until today.

This was because the bill would have eliminated a fundamental mandate of MMPA known as the ''deadline for the zero rate mortality goal.'' In other words, we, as a Nation, are to strive to put into place management regimes which will reduce, and ideally eliminate, marine mammal fatalities at the hands of human beings.

The troublesome provision which would have eliminated the deadline has been dropped from the legislation we are now considering. In this regard I would like to express my appreciation to Chairman POMBO for agreeing to this, and I am pleased to say that I support the bill as amended today and urge its approval by this body.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4075, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, MASSACHUSETTS ACT OF 2006

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4376) to authorize the National Park Service to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of Springfield Technical Community College, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4376

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 ''Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Massachusetts Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) The Site commemorates the role of the Springfield Armory in the Nation's military history, a role that the Armory served for almost 200 years.

(2) The role of the Springfield Armory began in 1777, when the site was selected as the location for a magazine and laboratory for the development, production and storage of guns and powder during the American Revolution.

(3) Following the American Revolutionary War, in 1794 Congress officially established the Springfield Armory and for much of the 19th century the Springfield Armory developed and supplied most of the military small arms manufactured by the United States for the United States Armed Services.

(4) In addition to its historical role in the development and manufacturing of small arms, the Springfield Armory was also the site of Shay's Rebellion.

(5) In 1968 the Armory was deactivated as a military installation and in 1974 Congress established the Springfield Armory National Historic Site. A portion of the Site is administered by the National Park Service. The remainder of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site, known as the ''Preservation Control Area'', is owned and administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of Springfield Technical Community College.

(6) The Preservation Control Area contains several historic buildings that are in a state of disrepair. The deteriorating condition of these historic buildings threatens to undermine the character and integrity of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site and their repair, renovation, maintenance and rehabilitation is essential to the continued preservation of the Site and its museum and collections.

SEC. 3. PRESERVATION CONTROL AREA DEFINED.

For purposes of this Act, the term ''Preservation Control Area'' means that portion of the Site that is owned by the Commonwealth, as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts dated August 21, 1999.

SEC. 4. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE PRESERVATION CONTROL AREA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the National Park Service, may enter into a cooperative agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of Springfield Technical Community College to provide financial assistance to that college for the purpose of maintaining, preserving, renovating, and rehabilitating any historic structures within the Springfield Armory National Historic Site, including historic structures located within the Preservation Control Area.

(b) FIFTY PERCENT MATCH.—The Federal share of the cost of activities carried out using any assistance or grant under this Act shall not exceed 50 percent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) and the gentleman

from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 4376, introduced by Congressman RICHARD NEAL of Massachusetts and amended by the House Resources Committee, would authorize the National Park Service to enter into a cooperative agreement with the State of Massachusetts on behalf of Springfield Technical Community College to maintain and preserve lands the college owns and administers within the Springfield Armory National Historic Site.

This is a noncontroversial bill, and I urge its adoption.

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

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

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

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the majority has already explained the purpose of H.R. 4376, which was introduced by our colleague from Massachusetts, Representative RICHARD NEAL.

For nearly 200 years, the Springfield Armory was important to the manufacture of U.S. military small arms.

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The national historic site, which was established in 1974, includes historic resources administered by the National Park Service as well as historic resources owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of the Springfield Community College.

The gentleman from Massachusetts, Representative NEAL, is to be commended for his efforts to preserve this historic site. He has worked diligently to maintain and enhance the relationship between Federal, State and local interests involved in the preservation and interpretation of the historic resources located at the Springfield Armory site.

Mr. Speaker, we support H.R. 4376 and urge adoption of the legislation by the House today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to add a personal note, if I could.

In 1960, my father, Major General Gene Renzi, went to Springfield Armory and bought two 30.06 sniper rifles that were used in the Korean War. We bought them for $1 each. We restored them, and those are the same deer hunting rifles that I used and I now pass on to my son. The guys coming back from the Korean War and World War II would actually dispense these rifles through the Springfield Armory.

So for a guy who is a deer hunter, who is not that good of a shot, but for a guy who is a deer hunter, my first 30.06 we ever got came out of the Springfield Armory Works.

So I am thankful today to be able to work with the ranking member and see this legislation pushed through.

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

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4376, the "Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Massachusetts Act of 2005." This legislation authorizes the National Park Service to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of Springfield Technical Community College.

Over 30 years ago, in 1974, my predecessor, Congressman Edward Boland, and Senator KENNEDY were successful in creating the Springfield Armory National Historic Site. This Boland-Kennedy legislation set in motion three decades of cooperation between the National Park Service, which manages the armory museum, and Springfield Technical Community College.

The National Park Service and Springfield Technical Community College are neighbors that together occupy the National Historic Site.

The Springfield Armory was the first national armory in the United States. In fact, the armory was founded in 1777, when the site was selected as the location for a magazine and laboratory for the development, production, and storage of guns and powder during the American Revolution.

Following the American Revolutionary War, in 1794 Congress officially established the Springfield Armory. George Washington visited the site, which also happened to be the site of Shay's Rebellion. For much of the 19th century, the Springfield Armory developed, manufactured and supplied most of the small arms used by the United States armed services. The Springfield Armory National Historic Site has a rich heritage that is an integral part of our Nation's history.

In 1968 the armory was deactivated as a military installation and in 1974 Congress established the National Historic Site. The National Park Service has operated the armory museum on these grounds, and it houses the most outstanding and historically significant arms collection in the country.

The future and fate of both the armory museum and Springfield Technical Community College are inextricably linked. Many of the historic buildings on the site are actually located on the college's property, not National Park Service land, although a visitor to the campus would not be able to tell where NPS property ends and college property begins.

The land outside the portion of the site administered by NPS is known as the "Preservation Control Area." These college-owned buildings are subject to strict architectural and preservation rules. Many of these historic buildings owned by the college must be preserved and maintained pursuant to standards defined by the Secretary of the Interior. But these historic buildings are in a state of great disrepair and the college cannot easily move to maintain and preserve them absent the full participation of the Park Service. Not only does this deterioration of the facilities hurt the college, but also undermines the attractiveness of the National Park Service area, including the armory museum.

My legislation seeks to recognize and update the partnership that has existed over these many years between the Park Service and the college by authorizing the Park Service to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Commonwealth for NPS to provide financial assistance to the college for the purpose of maintaining, preserving, renovating, and rehabilitating the many historic structures within the Springfield Armory National Historic Site.

The Park Service frequently enters into such cooperative agreements where the object of the agreement is of direct benefit to the Park Service and its mission or for other public purposes. If these great historic buildings on the site can be renovated with the assistance of the Park Service, it will bring forward a more vibrant and attractive historic site and museum. The Park Service and the college will be able to partner on many joint educational ventures that utilize these revitalized historic facilities.

The Springfield Armory National Historic Site is a treasure to the city of Springfield, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to the Nation. The site is in desperate need of renovation. Enactment of this legislation is the first step toward ensuring the preservation of a site, which has played so vital a role in our Nation's history.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4376, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TRAIL OF TEARS STUDY ACT

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3085) to amend the National Trails System Act to update the feasibility and suitability study originally prepared for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and provide for the inclusion of new trail segments, land components, and campgrounds associated with that trail, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3085

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

SECTION 1. REVISION OF FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY STUDY OF TRAIL OF TEARS NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.

Section 5(a)(16) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)(16)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking "subsections" and inserting "sections"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(C) Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the

Interior shall complete the remaining criteria and submit to Congress a study regarding the feasibility and suitability of designating, as additional components of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, the following routes and land components by which the Cherokee Nation was removed to Oklahoma:

''(i) The Benge and Bell routes.

''(ii) The land components of the designated water routes in Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

''(iii) The routes from the collection forts in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to the emigration depots.

''(iv) The related campgrounds located along the routes and land components described in clauses (i) through (iii).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 3085, introduced by Congressman ZACK WAMP of Tennessee and amended by the House Resources Committee, would amend the National Trails System Act to update the feasibility and suitability study originally prepared for the Trail of Tears in 1987 to provide for the inclusion of new trail segments, land components, and campgrounds associated with the trail, particularly the Bell and Benge segments.

As my colleagues are aware, the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail encompasses the primary water route and northern land route used during the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from its homelands in the Southeast United States to Indian Territory, which is present-day Oklahoma.

I urge adoption of this bill.

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

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

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

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the majority has already explained the purpose of H.R. 3085 which was introduced by our colleague from Tennessee, Mr. ZACK WAMP.

There is wide support for a trail study and designation by members of the Cherokee Nation and others interested in the history of the forced removal of Native Americans from portions of the Eastern U.S. It is our hope that the study of these additional trail segments will help to develop the most appropriate means to preserve and interpret this important aspect of our American History.

Mr. Speaker, we support H.R. 3085 and I have no objection to adoption of the legislation by the House today.

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

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. ZACK WAMP, the author of the bill.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank both gentlemen, the gentleman from Arizona and the gentleman from West Virginia, certainly the chairman of the full committee, Mr. POMBO, the subcommittee chairman, the ranking member of the subcommittee as well, and everyone who has worked on this bill. I am very proud to be the lead sponsor of H.R. 3085. I think it is a very important issue for the Congress to take up, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

H.R. 3085, the Trail of Tears Study Act, is cosponsored by 20 of my colleagues, all from districts and States in which the additional components are located. I would also like to add that S. 1970, the Senate companion bill, is sponsored by Senator TOM COBURN and cosponsored by the majority leader, BILL FRIST, and Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER.

As a consequence of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, a detachment led by John Benge traveled 734 miles starting at Fort Payne, Alabama, and continuing through Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

The treaty party group, led by John A. Bell, traveled 765 miles, starting at Charleston, Tennessee, traveling through 10 counties in Tennessee, passing through Arkansas, and on to Oklahoma. Also included are 29 forts and immigration depots located near Fort Payne, Alabama; Ross's Landing, present-day Chattanooga; and Fort Cass, present-day Charleston, Tennessee, where the Cherokee initially were taken after being rounded up from their homes.

Consequently, the intent of H.R. 3085 is to study an expansion of the current Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, which Congress designated in 1987, to include these additional documented components into the National Trails System Act.

The proposed additions have been documented by the National Park Service historians, military journals and newspaper accounts. The bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to complete within 6 months the remaining criteria necessary to determine the designation of additional routes to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Even today, many interpretation activities along the Trail of Tears seek to remember the historic routes taken by the Benge detachment and the Bell Treaty party as we are considering inclusion in the National Trails System.

I want to be very clear that it is my intent that this legislation respect private property rights absolutely. I believe the National Park Service has demonstrated strong partnerships geared toward respecting the private property of citizens and administration of the current Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and will continue to do so upon the addition of these routes.

The designation and interpretation of the sites and trails associated with the Cherokee removal will enhance public understanding of American history. Our greatness as a Nation is our ability to look at our own history objectively and in proper perspective, being mindful of the errors of the past in order not to repeat them.

Through this legislation, we will honor the historic footsteps taken by the Cherokee, document their courage, and highlight their character as a great tribe of strong people.

Finally, because of historical significance, H.R. 3085 enjoys broad support not only within Congress, but also with the Cherokee Nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokee and associated trail organizations such as the Trail of Tears Association. This legislation is a wonderful example of how Congress can better understand a national event through commemoration of the Cherokee story.

I believe the Secretary of Interior will find that the additional routes meet the historical significance, suitability, and feasibility required by the National Park Service for designation as part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

On June 29 of last year, I introduced H.R. 3085 at a press conference with Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation Chadwick Smith, the Vice Chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Nation Larry Blythe, the Trail of Tears Association, and many of the original cosponsors like Congressmen CHARLES TAYLOR, JIMMY DUNCAN, TOM COLE, MARION BERRY and LINCOLN DAVIS.

I would like to thank Rob Howarth and the entire National Park Service staff, the staff of the House Resources Committee and the subcommittee, and my legislative director, Melissa Chapman, for a job very well done.

I would also like to say anecdotally, in east Tennessee we are claiming the Trail of Tears as part of our heritage, as part of our strength. On the Tennessee River, we have the Moccasin Bend National Archeological District now being implemented by the National Park Service. We have the passage at Ross's Landing, which is an extraordinary waterfall leading down to the Tennessee River, which in Cherokee art tells the story of the Trail of Tears. Up river at Blythe Ferry we have the Cherokee Memorial Park under construction, where 8,000 Cherokee all crossed the Tennessee River at the same time, and now the Trail of Tears Documentation Act. So we are very grateful for the cooperation and participation we have had.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3085, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

NATIONAL CAPITAL TRANSPORTATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3496) to amend the National Capital Transportation Act of 1969 to authorize additional Federal contributions for maintaining and improving the transit system of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3496

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''National Capital Transportation Amendments Act of 2006''.

(b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

(1) Metro, the public transit system of the Washington metropolitan area, is essential for the continued and effective performance of the functions of the Federal Government, and for the orderly movement of people during major events and times of regional or national emergency.

(2) On 3 occasions, Congress has authorized appropriations for the construction and capital improvement needs of the Metrorail system.

(3) Additional funding is required to protect these previous Federal investments and ensure the continued functionality and viability of the original 103-mile Metrorail system.

SEC. 2. FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM.

The National Capital Transportation Act of 1969 (sec. 9–1111.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''AUTHORIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION FOR CAPITAL AND PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

''SEC. 18. (a) AUTHORIZATION.—Subject to the succeeding provisions of this section, the Secretary of Transportation is authorized to make grants to the Transit Authority, in addition to the contributions authorized under sections 3, 14, and 17, for the purpose of financing in part the capital and preventive maintenance projects included in the Capital Improvement Program approved by the Board of Directors of the Transit Authority.

''(b) USE OF FUNDS.—The Federal grants made pursuant to the authorization under this section shall be subject to the following limitations and conditions:

''(1) The work for which such Federal grants are authorized shall be subject to the provisions of the Compact (consistent with the amendments to the Compact described in subsection (d)).

''(2) Each such Federal grant shall be for 50 percent of the net project cost of the project involved, and shall be provided in cash from sources other than Federal funds or revenues from the operation of public mass transportation systems. Consistent with the terms of the amendment to the Compact described in subsection (d)(1), any funds so provided shall be solely from undistributed cash surpluses, replacement or depreciation funds or reserves available in cash, or new capital.

''(c) APPLICABILITY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR MASS TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROJECTS RECEIVING FUNDS UNDER FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION LAW.—Except as specifically provided in this section, the use of any amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization under this section shall be subject to the requirements applicable to capital projects for which funds are provided under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code, except to the extent that the Secretary of Transportation determines that the requirements are inconsistent with the purposes of this section.

''(d) AMENDMENTS TO COMPACT.—No amounts may be provided to the Transit Authority pursuant to the authorization under this section until the Transit Authority notifies the Secretary of Transportation that each of the following amendments to the Compact (and any further amendments which may be required to implement such amendments) have taken effect:

''(1) An amendment requiring all payments made by the local signatory governments for the Transit Authority and for the cost of operating and maintaining the adopted regional system are made from amounts derived from dedicated funding sources. For purposes of this paragraph, a 'dedicated funding source' is any source of funding which is earmarked and required under State or local law to be used for payments to the Transit Authority.

''(2) An amendment establishing the Office of the Inspector General of the Transit Authority in accordance with section 3 of the National Capital Transportation Amendments Act of 2006.

''(3) An amendment expanding the Board of Directors of the Transit Authority to include 4 additional Directors appointed by the Administrator of General Services, of whom 2 shall be nonvoting and 2 shall be voting, and requiring one of the voting members so appointed to be a regular passenger and customer of the bus or rail service of the Transit Authority.

''(e) AMOUNT.—There are authorized to be appropriated for grants under this section such sums as are made available to the Secretary of Treasury to make payments to the Transit Authority pursuant to section 9(k) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1338).

''(f) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization under this section—

''(1) shall remain available until expended; and

''(2) shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, amounts available to the Transit Authority under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code, or any other provision of law.''.

SEC. 3. WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY INSPECTOR GENERAL.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (hereafter referred to as the ''Transit Authority'') shall establish in the Transit Authority the Office of the Inspector General (hereafter in this section referred to as the ''Office''), headed by the Inspector General of the Transit Authority (hereafter in this section referred to as the ''Inspector General'').

(2) DEFINITION.—In paragraph (1), the ''Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority'' means the Authority established under Article III of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact (Public Law 89–774).

(b) INSPECTOR GENERAL.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—The Inspector General shall be appointed by the vote of a majority of the Board of Directors of the Transit Authority, and shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, or investigations, as well as familiarity or experience with the operation of transit systems.

(2) TERM OF SERVICE.—The Inspector General shall serve for a term of 5 years, and an individual serving as Inspector General may be reappointed for not more than 2 additional terms.

(3) REMOVAL.—The Inspector General may be removed from office prior to the expiration of his term only by the unanimous vote of all of the members of the Board of Directors of the Transit Authority, and the Board shall communicate the reasons for any such removal to the Governor of Maryland, the Governor of Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and the chair of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

(c) DUTIES.—

(1) APPLICABILITY OF DUTIES OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH ESTABLISHMENT.—The Inspector General shall carry out the same duties and responsibilities with respect to the Transit Authority as an Inspector General of an establishment carries out with respect to an establishment under section 4 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App. 4), under the same terms and conditions which apply under such section.

(2) CONDUCTING ANNUAL AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.—The Inspector General shall be responsible for conducting the annual audit of the financial accounts of the Transit Authority, either directly or by contract with an independent external auditor selected by the Inspector General.

(3) REPORTS.—

(A) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS TO TRANSIT AUTHORITY.—The Inspector General shall prepare and submit semiannual reports summarizing the activities of the Office in the same manner, and in accordance with the same deadlines, terms, and conditions, as an Inspector General of an establishment under section 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App. 5). For purposes of applying section 5 of such Act to the Inspector General, the Board of Directors of the Transit Authority shall be considered the head of the establishment, except that the Inspector General shall transmit to the General Manager of the Transit Authority a copy of any report submitted to the Board pursuant to this paragraph.

(B) ANNUAL REPORTS TO LOCAL SIGNATORY GOVERNMENTS AND CONGRESS.—Not later than January 15 of each year, the Inspector General shall prepare and submit a report summarizing the activities of the Office during the previous year, and shall submit such reports to the Governor of Maryland, the Governor of Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and the chair of the Committee

on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

(4) INVESTIGATIONS OF COMPLAINTS OF EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS.—

(A) AUTHORITY.—The Inspector General may receive and investigate complaints or information from an employee or member of the Transit Authority concerning the possible existence of an activity constituting a violation of law, rules, or regulations, or mismanagement, gross waste of funds, abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety.

(B) NONDISCLOSURE.—The Inspector General shall not, after receipt of a complaint or information from an employee or member, disclose the identity of the employee or member without the consent of the employee or member, unless the Inspector General determines such disclosure is unavoidable during the course of the investigation.

(C) PROHIBITING RETALIATION.—An employee or member of the Transit Authority who has authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action, shall not, with respect to such authority, take or threaten to take any action against any employee or member as a reprisal for making a complaint or disclosing information to the Inspector General, unless the complaint was made or the information disclosed with the knowledge that it was false or with willful disregard for its truth or falsity.

(5) INDEPENDENCE IN CARRYING OUT DUTIES.—Neither the Board of Directors of the Transit Authority, the General Manager of the Transit Authority, nor any other member or employee of the Transit Authority may prevent or prohibit the Inspector General from carrying out any of the duties or responsibilities assigned to the Inspector General under this section.

(d) POWERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General may exercise the same authorities with respect to the Transit Authority as an Inspector General of an establishment may exercise with respect to an establishment under section 6(a) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App. 6(a)), other than paragraphs (7), (8), and (9) of such section.

(2) STAFF.—

(A) ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERALS AND OTHER STAFF.—The Inspector General shall appoint and fix the pay of—

(i) an Assistant Inspector General for Audits, who shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Inspector General relating to audits;

(ii) an Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, who shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Inspector General relating to investigations; and

(iii) such other personnel as the Inspector General considers appropriate.

(B) INDEPENDENCE IN APPOINTING STAFF.—No individual may carry out any of the duties or responsibilities of the Office unless the individual is appointed by the Inspector General, or provides services procured by the Inspector General, pursuant to this paragraph. Nothing in this subparagraph may be construed to prohibit the Inspector General from entering into a contract or other arrangement for the provision of services under this section.

(C) APPLICABILITY OF TRANSIT SYSTEM PERSONNEL RULES.—None of the regulations governing the appointment and pay of employees of the Transit System shall apply with respect to the appointment and compensation of the personnel of the Office, except to the extent agreed to by the Inspector General. Nothing in the previous sentence may be construed to affect subparagraphs (A) through (B).

(3) EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES.—The General Manager of the Transit Authority shall provide the Office with appropriate and adequate office space, together with such equipment, supplies, and communications facilities and services as may be necessary for the operation of the Office, and shall provide necessary maintenance services for such office space and the equipment and facilities located therein.

(e) TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS.—To the extent that any office or entity in the Transit Authority prior to the appointment of the first Inspector General under this section carried out any of the duties and responsibilities assigned to the Inspector General under this section, the functions of such office or entity shall be transferred to the Office upon the appointment of the first Inspector General under this section.

SEC. 4. RESTRICTIONS ON DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN PROPERTIES.

(a) PROHIBITION ON DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (hereafter in this section referred to as the ''Transit Authority'') may not sell, lease, or otherwise convey or dispose of the property described in paragraph (2) unless the Transit Authority meets each of the following conditions:

(A) The Transit Authority has held a separate, additional public hearing after October 20, 2005, regarding the disposition of the property at which members of the general public had the opportunity to comment.

(B) The Transit Authority has submitted a report to the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate on the costs and benefits associated with the disposition of the property, the impact of the disposition on parking facilities available at the Vienna Metrorail station, and the effect of the disposition on the capacity of the Vienna Metrorail station and the entire Metrorail system.

(2) PROPERTY DESCRIBED.—The property described in this subsection consists of approximately 3.75 acres located in Fairfax County, Virginia, and is contained in all or part of the following parcels on the Fairfax County tax map:

(A) Parcel 48—1((1)), 90 Portion.

(B) Parcel 48—1((1)), 91B Portion.

(C) Parcel 48—1((6)), 7A.

(D) Parcel 48—1((6)), 8B.

(E) Parcel 48—1((24)), 38A.

(b) CONDITIONS FOR DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Transit Authority may not sell, lease, or otherwise convey or dispose of the property described in paragraph (2) unless the Transit Authority meets each of the following conditions:

(A) The Transit Authority has met with the Mayor and members of the Council of the City of Takoma Park, Maryland, and community representatives to discuss each of the following issues related to the disposition of such property:

(i) The movement of buses and other vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles to and from the Takoma Park Metrorail station.

(ii) The provision of bus bays, based on recommendations of the Transit Authority and the Maryland Transit Administration's Ride-On program.

(iii) The enhancement of public green space on the property, based on the Central District Plan for Takoma DC.

(B) The Transit Authority will work with residents and elected officials of Takoma Park, Maryland, and the Takoma area of the District of Columbia throughout the planning phase of the development of such property.

(C) The Transit Authority has submitted a statement to the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate certifying that the Transit Authority has met the conditions described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(2) PROPERTY DESCRIBED.—The property described in this paragraph consists of Lots 820, 821, 822, 823, 829, 831, 832, 833, 839, 840, 841, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, and 851 in Square 3352 and Lots 811, 812, and 813 in Square 3353 of the District of Columbia Real Property Assessment Database.

(c) RESTRICTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT OF CERTAIN PROPERTIES.—

(1) RESTRICTION.—The Transit Authority may not sell, lease, or otherwise convey any of the real property described in paragraph (2) other than in accordance with a development plan for the property which meets the following requirements:

(A) The plan shall require that any portion of the property used for residential purposes shall be used only for owner-occupied, multifamily dwellings.

(B) The plan must provide for the use of a portion of the property for commercial purposes.

(C) The plan shall be developed in consultation with appropriate representatives of the local governments and communities for the area in which the property is located.

(2) PROPERTY DESCRIBED.—The property described in this paragraph is any real property of the Transit Authority which is located within one mile of the Largo Town Center Metro Rail Station.

(d) NO EFFECT ON OTHER AUTHORITIES.—Except as specifically provided, nothing in this section may be construed to affect any law, rule, or regulation governing the development or disposition of real property of the Transit Authority.

SEC. 5. STUDY AND REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General shall conduct a study on the use of the funds provided under section 18 of the National Capital Transportation Act of 1969 (as added by this Act).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit a report to the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate on the study conducted under subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, is the gentlewoman opposed to the motion? If not, I request the time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia opposed to the motion?

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to the legislation, nor should anybody else in this Chamber be.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman from Texas opposed to the motion?

Mr. HENSARLING. I am, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XV, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING)

will be recognized for 20 minutes along with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS).

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3496, as amended, the National Capital Transportation Amendments Act of 2006. This important legislation would establish critical new oversight and accountability mechanisms for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, including an inspector general and an increased Federal presence on the Authority's board of directors. These steps are being taken to ensure that the funding provided to the Authority by Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and the Federal Government are being spent as effectively and efficiently as possible. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

In 1960, President Eisenhower signed the National Capital Transportation Act to provide for the development of a regional rail system for the Nation's Capital. He did so in recognition of the need to provide reliable access to government facilities for Federal workers, contractors, and citizens. Over the years, other Presidents have also recognized this need: Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, and most recently, President George H.W. Bush.

Past Congresses have done so as well. In 1969, the National Capital Transportation Act was signed into law. Subsequently, Congress passed amendments to this act in 1979 and 1990. The sentiment expressed by Congress in supporting Metro in 1979 remains the same today: ''Congress finds that an improved transportation system for the National Capital region is essential for the continued and effective performance of the functions of the Government of the United States, for the welfare of the District of Columbia, for the orderly growth and development of the National Capital region, and for the preservation of the beauty and dignity of the Nation's Capital.''

The sole purpose of the previous authorizations was to provide the easy and reliable access to government for Federal employees and citizens that President Eisenhower envisioned. Today, the Metro system remains an indispensable resource for the Federal Government. At peak times, over half of Metro riders are Federal employees and contractors. Metro's record ridership have occurred during historic events, where people from all over the country flocked to the Nation's Capital for the national gathering; President Reagan's funeral, the Fourth of July celebrations, Presidential inaugurations.

□ 1430

In times of national crisis, the Metro system has also proved indispensable to the Federal Government, such as during the September 11 terrorist attacks in which Metro served as the primary means out of a city under lockdown.

In many ways, the Metro system is the lifeblood of the Federal Government. More than 15 Federal agencies in the National Capital region are located adjacent to Metro stations. This is not a coincidence. Federal agencies rely on the Metro system to get their employees to and from the workplace year round in all types of weather. Unfortunately, as was recently evident when Metro suffered delays due to torrential rains that hit the region, when Metro shuts down, the Federal Government shuts down.

In 1965, 1969, 1979 and 1990, Congress recognized the unique relationship between the Federal Government and Metro, acknowledging the shared responsibility in maintaining the Metro system to make sure it keeps pace with the growing service demands.

Without a similar commitment today, Metro will no longer remain a viable transportation option to the Federal Government or the region. Last month, as part of the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act, the House voted to devote funds from future OCS receipts for Metro revitalization.

The bill today sets out other measures necessary to ensure that these dollars are well spent. Before I detail what this bill does, let me detail what it does not do. It does not authorize any additional appropriations for the Metro system. This bill is about good government, something I am sure we can all agree on.

Specifically, this bill requires the three jurisdictions comprising WMATA, Maryland, Virginia Virginia and the District, to come up with a dedicated revenue source to cover capital and operational expenses.

As GAO recently reported, Metro is unique among major transit systems in that it only derives a tiny amount of its budget from dedicated sources. This legislation would require the local jurisdictions to come together and rectify a long-standing discrepancy.

The bill also creates an Inspector General for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Most major transit systems have an IG in place already. There is no question Metro is a complex organization with many moving parts. Thus, it is especially important that appropriate controls are in place to identify and address managerial, financial, and operational discrepancies and problems.

Without the legislation we are considering today, the Federal funding for Metro that was authorized as part of the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act last month would have no strings attached to it. The purpose of H.R. 3496 is to establish an Inspector General to monitor the operations and to ensure that the Federal funding generated by the OCS receipts would not be allocated unless the local jurisdictions have committed to equally share the financial responsibilities with the Federal Government.

Finally, the bill adds four Federal members to the WMATA Board of Directors, including for the first time a Federal presence on the WMATA board. Since Metro is such an integral part of the Federal Government's day-to-day operations, it stands to reason there should be a direct Federal representation in Metro's affairs.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is not about funding; it is about the good use of funding. Congress has long recognized the national significance of the Metro system. The provisions of this bill will ensure our Nation's subway is a model of efficiency and good performance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

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

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

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition of H.R. 3496 for several reasons. Number one, Mr. Speaker, I don't quite understand why this is on the suspension calendar today.

Second of all, Mr. Speaker, the Federal taxpayer is paying a lot of money already to help subsidize this particular transit system. I am not sure if more payments are really worthwhile at this time.

Next, Mr. Speaker, we have over 10,000 Federal programs today. At what point do we say enough is enough? And, Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that when the dots are connected, the dust settles, whatever metaphor you want to use, that unfortunately the taxpayers will be on the hook for an additional $1.5 billion that they had not counted on. And that money ultimately, Mr. Speaker, has to come from somewhere.

First, Mr. Speaker, let me address the concern I have of why we have this on the calendar in the first place. Certainly under our House Republican Conference rules, legislation creating new Federal programs, I thought, was not supposed to be put on the suspension calendar.

As we all know, typically our suspension calendar is used frequently to honor somebody with the naming of a post office, to congratulate a sports team, to declare breast cancer awareness week. I don't think it is to put

taxpayers on the hook for $1.5 billion, which ultimately, if this bill passes, I believe could be the result.

Now, I have no doubt that since it is on the suspension calendar that it will receive a very, very healthy vote as Members just start to arrive and, frankly, do not pay as close attention to the suspension calendar as opposed to bills coming up in regular order.

But I fear at the end of the day, again, this does authorize a new program. If it did not authorize a new program, why are we here today? Why did we not simply have a Member propose an amendment to perhaps the transportation bill or the homeland security bill? So in that respect, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that this is being handled on this particular calendar.

Next, Mr. Speaker, how much is enough? I admit the Federal Government has had a lengthy partnership with the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority. $6.2 billion or 60 percent of the construction costs, I believe, were picked up by the Federal taxpayer; 40 percent of the capital costs over the last decade. But the WAMTA is already receiving formula grants under titles 5307 and 5309. So they are already receiving Federal funds, if you will, a dedicated revenue source from the Federal Government already. I believe in inflation-adjusted terms that is about $1.5 billion over the last 10 years.

And I think if you look back, these annual grants are now more or less three times what they were 10 years ago. Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask the question, how much is enough? You add it all up, Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of money.

Now, I certainly applaud the gentleman from Virginia for wanting to put in greater oversight and greater accountability into the system. I know that his committee provided a number of articles from a Washington Post expose, I think, dating back 9, 10, 11 months ago, that indicated that trains broke down 64 percent more often now than several years ago, that the Washington Metro Transit Authority had spent $383 million on 192 rail cars, and those cars break down almost as often as the old cars.

Several hundred million, according to The Washington Post, was spent to refurbish old cars from the 1980s and those refurbished break down even more often. $93 million was spent to renovate 178 escalators, and a third break down more often than before renovation.

So I would say if there was a system that perhaps was in need of a little greater oversight and a little greater accountability, this is it. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, I fear that what we would be doing is punishing success and rewarding failure. I certainly hope that the gentleman from Virginia indeed did take these steps in his bill. And for that aspect of the bill, I certainly congratulate that portion of it.

But, Mr. Speaker, the thing that concerns me the most is at a time that our Nation is facing unparalleled national debt, when we are a Nation at war, at what point do you say ''no'' to a new program? Again, according to the Heritage Foundation, we have over 10,000 Federal programs spread across 600 different agencies. How much is enough?

I believe in our last budget we have $75 billion, more or less, in transportation funding. Now that is up 83.5 percent in just 10 years. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we have almost doubled the Federal contribution to transportation, almost doubled in just a decade.

Again, how much is enough? I believe we have over 28 Federal programs dedicated to mass transit. And I believe in the most recent SAFETEA–LU bill, that translates to $45.3 billion.

Are the number of government programs only limited by our imagination, the imagination of Members to come to the floor and propose it? No matter how worthy they are, again, how many are enough? Maybe, Mr. Speaker, we should start limiting government programs by the ability of taxpayers in future generations to pay for them.

Now, I certainly want to applaud the gentleman from Virginia from attempting to offer an offset to the spending. I think I may agree to disagree with the gentleman, but my fear is again when the dots are connected and the dust settles, I am not sure it is a real offset. My fear is that it will prove to be a mirage.

What happens here, Mr. Speaker, is that the gentleman is claiming offsetting receipts from H.R. 4761. Now, when that bill was originally written, it was coming to the floor violating our Budget Act, violating our budget resolution. I am happy to say that that was corrected by a manager's amendment.

But it appears that receipts from the Outer Continental Shelf drilling are spoken for, between State revenue sharing and several new entitlement programs that were included in H.R. 4761. I know that this is an authorization bill; but had it been a mandatory bill, if it had ultimately resulted in real spending, CBO would have scored this money in such a way that it would have busted the budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the funding does materialize, again in the years that it is spent, it will end up contravening our budget. And I don't see that the revenue-sharing agreement is going away with the States. I don't see these other mandatory programs going away. So maybe the gentleman did indeed secure an offset. Maybe his program is fully offset. But, Mr. Speaker, if his program is fully offset, somebody else's program is not.

At the end of the day, it is a little bit like musical chairs; and I fear when the music stops, the taxpayer is the only one who is left standing.

Next, Mr. Speaker, I am a little concerned about what is happening in our Congress with respect to earmarks. According to the Heritage Foundation, this particular bill, weighing in at $1.5 billion, may constitute the largest earmark ever. I thought this was the House that wanted to start reforming earmarks, which among other things I would hope would lead to fewer of them, and perhaps less costly earmarks.

I mean, recently we have had the bridge to nowhere, weighing in at about $250 million; the railroad to nowhere, weighing in at about $750 million; and now we have everything, the bike improvements, the curb extensions, the bus bays, the new rail cars of the WMATA weighing in at about $1.5 billion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of money. And ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, someone is going to have to pay for all of this; and part of our job in Congress is to decide upon priorities and make some very, very tough decisions. But, again, if this all comes to fruition, ultimately there is $1.5 billion more that is going to be spent over 10 years than was expected.

There are only three places that money ultimately comes from: either we place more debt on our children, we raise taxes, or we end up spending less somewhere else. Now, right now we are awash in tax revenues. We have the highest number of tax revenues we have had in the history of America. Corporate tax revenues are up roughly 40 percent last year. Individual tax revenues are up roughly 15 percent. We do not seem to have a taxing problem in the Nation's Capital.

I do think, though, Mr. Speaker, maybe we have a spending problem. We are spending over $23,000 per American household for only the fourth time in our Nation's history. Since I was born, the Federal budget has grown seven times faster than the family budget.

In the last 10 years alone, Federal funding for international affairs is up 89 percent; agriculture, 118 percent; education, 113 percent; and as I mentioned earlier, the transportation function, 83 percent.

Meanwhile, inflation over the same period grew 25 percent; median family income, 33 percent. We are more than spending over inflation, and the Federal budget is growing beyond the family budget. When do you say enough is enough? Let's look at the national debt. Although we have had great news recently in reducing the Federal deficit, the debt continues to increase.

We have gone from roughly $5.5 trillion to $8 trillion in just 5 years. Unless we balance the budget tomorrow, every new program's cost is going to get added to the national debt, and ultimately that burden is borne by our children and our grandchildren.

We know that our entitlement spending, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, is growing way beyond our ability to pay for it. And we know that we are facing a rather nasty fork in the road. If you look at CBO, OMB, GAO and anybody who has looked at Federal budgetary trends, they will tell you.

□ 1445

Within one generation, either we are going to have no Federal Government,

except Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. There will be nothing else left to give the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, much less the border security or FAA or anybody else. Or the other fork in the road is we will have to double taxes on our children and grandchildren just to balance the budget.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we have to make tough decisions, and I have no doubt that the gentleman is sincere in that this money would go for a very, very good purpose. But there are lots of good purposes out there, Mr. Speaker, including the purpose of ensuring that our children and grandchildren do not inherit an America with greater debt and less freedom and less opportunity.

If we say ''yes'' to every Member's program today, no matter how worthy it may be, we are going to end up saying ''no'' to our children's future tomorrow. Because of that, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to say ''no'' to H.R. 3496.

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

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Could I ask how much time is remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) has 14½ minutes remaining and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), who has been a champion of transportation in the Washington area during his tenure in Congress.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill. The bill brings accountability. I have a note here and I quote, ''CBO expects that the proposed amendment would not authorize any additional appropriations.''

I would read that one more time: ''CBO expects that the proposed amendment would not authorize any additional appropriations.''

I rise in support of the bill, H.R. 3496, the National Capital Transportation Amendments Act. The legislation would ensure, and what Mr. DAVIS is trying to do, accountability for the Federal funding that is provided to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or, as they call it, Metro. The bill would require an IG office to be established and to provide oversight of the system.

You would have thought that the system would have had an IG, but it requires Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia to identify dedicated funding sources to the Metro system.

The bill also adds Federal members to the Metro board of directors, and I think these are good ideas. The Metro system in Washington, as Mr. DAVIS has said, is known as the Nation's subway system.

Visitors from all over the country and the world use the system daily when visiting our Nation's Capital, and Metro's highest ridership, as Mr. DAVIS said, occurs when national events are taking place, such as Presidential inaugurations when people come from all over the country.

The Metro system also supports the Federal workforce. Federal employees rely on the system. Many people up here on Capitol Hill and other agencies, FBI, CIA, DIA, DEA, all the other ones, commute back and forth to work every day. During peak times, over half of Metro's riders are Federal employees.

Finally, this system is vital to the emergency needs of the region. During the terrorist attack of 9/11, Metro was a reliable way to ensure that thousands of people were able to safely and quickly evacuate the city. In order to help hold Metro accountable, which Mr. DAVIS's bill has done, is accountability for Metro for the use of its Federal funds.

I urge adoption of this measure.

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

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. I recognize the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, when I was asked did I want to accept time in opposition, when I said nor should any Member of this body, I was not being rhetorical. This bill is indispensable to the Federal Government, and it is indispensable to the 20 million visitors who come every year.

I don't want anyone to think that the chairman and the Members who have come forward would have the chutzpah to come forward and say support a local transportation system.

This system was created by the National Transportation Act. It was not created by Maryland, Virginia, or the District of Columbia but by the Federal Government. It was created by the Federal Government, because by 1969, the Federal presence had spread to Maryland and Virginia, and it was very clear that the Federal Government itself could not operate without a modern transportation system allowing what amounts to 200,000 workers today to get from one place to the other.

Meanwhile, the gentleman from Texas has cited the many programs and the transportation funds that the local jurisdictions get, and that, of course, is what has supported this system ever since. What this funding is necessary for is capital funding in order to keep the system up and operating because of pressure put on the system by the Federal Government and nobody but the Federal Government. Almost half of those who ride every day are Federal employees.

Without dedicated funding, and here is where the chairman and the Members of the region deserve real credit because there is no dedicated funding for the system, so it has to be funded on an annual basis. The chairman's bill, supported by all of us, essentially says no funding is available unless there is a dedicated funding source.

So it performs the task that is responsible to the Federal Government by saying, here is your share that you must give, and it says to the local jurisdictions, you do not get the Federal share unless you come forward not just with funding, but with dedicated funding. The purpose of this bill is to deal with the initial investment that the Federal Government made, which is now going down the drain because the local jurisdictions cannot in fact, by themselves, deal with the maintenance and capital costs that Federal pressure has put on it.

Let me tell you what I mean by Federal pressure. We are so dependent on this system, that we subsidize Federal workers to, in fact, take Metro. As it is, you cannot, in fact, get on the roads here, even with Metro. Imagine what would happen if Metro were not available; but it is becoming unavailable because its cars are so crowded that there are many Federal workers who believe that they should just as well take a car, something that the roads coming to and from the District cannot stand.

I am a member of the Homeland Security Committee. I do not believe there is a single Member who would not not understand what in the post-9/11 world this transportation system means to the safety and security of this region. But I can tell you from my work, and the chairman is also on the committee, that it adds to the necessity that President Eisenhower saw in 1969, and an additional one that we cannot turn our heads from.

Ask your own constituents how they get around Washington when they come. There are 20 million of them. They are not my constituents, and they are not Chairman DAVIS's constituents, they are yours. And they would be lost without the Metro system.

The beauty of the bill is that it is going to get the local jurisdictions to do what all of our hectoring has not made them do until now, and that is to get the dedicated funding so that the cars, which are now overloaded with Federal workers every morning, you cannot get on these cars, will indeed have additions to them; so the facilities, indeed, can be maintained. The gentleman complained about that. He was perfectly right. There are not the funds to maintain it and keep it operating if you depend only on the three local jurisdictions.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), a strong transportation advocate.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. DAVIS, the chairman of the Government Reform Committee, for his leadership on this very important national issue.

As my colleague Ms. NORTON pointed out, the Federal Government was there at the creation of the Washington Metro system, and has a huge investment already in the Washington Metro system. This legislation is designed to

help protect the Federal investment, the investment taxpayers have already made in that national system. I don't know why anybody would not want to provide the accountability measures to ensure that this investment is protected going forward.

We have, as we know, a system that the Federal Government relies upon to bring thousands of employees to work every day: workers who work in our national security agencies, workers who work at the Department of Health and Human Services, and all the other Federal agencies that help provide services to the American people every day.

This system is also a critical link in any evacuation plan of the Nation's Capital. Imagine everyone trying to get out of this city without using the Metro system to take thousands of people out. You would have gridlock. You wouldn't be able to do it.

Now, Mr. DAVIS has already pointed out this House is already on record just a few weeks ago in providing the Federal investment. We have done that. The only question now is whether we are going to provide the accountability piece, whether we are going to say to the Washington Metro system, you are going to be held accountable for that Federal investment in order to protect the Federal taxpayers. That is what it is all about.

I think it is worth underscoring the four major accountability provisions. Number one, we are asking the local jurisdictions that contribute to the system to make sure that they do it.

Why would we, the Federal Government, want to be at the whim, on a year-to-year basis, of whether local jurisdictions are going to be able to provide their part of this Federal-local partnership? That doesn't make any sense from the point of view of the Federal Government.

Second, it requires the establishment of the inspector general. Don't we want somebody there to make sure we protect that investment, an independent auditor who can look after that Federal taxpayer investment?

Third, we add four new members to WMATA's board. Right now, none of the board members are accountable to the Federal Government. Don't we want board members who are accountable to the Federal taxpayer, as well as board members who are accountable to the other contributing jurisdictions?

Fourth, it requires that Metro take on some other issues that have festered over a period of time and which make it more difficult to fulfill its Federal mandate and its responsibilities to the Federal Government.

Now, I want to commend the Metro system for doing what they have done with the budget they have got. But there is no doubt in order to keep the system viable going forward, the Federal Government needs to maintain its historic contribution and the local partners need to continue to make theirs.

The only question with this bill is whether we are going to be asking WMATA to make sure it has accountability provisions in place to protect that very important Federal investment. I would say, why wouldn't we want to protect the taxpayers who have made an investment in this very important national transportation infrastructure right from the beginning?

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would recognize my distinguished colleague from northern Virginia, a neighbor, and also a strong transportation advocate, Mr. MORAN, for 3 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Government Reform Committee and applaud him for his leadership, as well as Mr. WOLF's, particularly when Mr. WOLF was chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Transportation, Ms. NORTON representing the District of Columbia, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN representing the Maryland suburbs.

We are a team. We are a team, but we are representing the interests of the entire Congress. The principal reason why we need the Metro system is to transport our employees, the Federal workforce. If we did not have this Metro system, our Federal Government could not function. We don't have the road capacity to get them to and from work.

Even with Metro, we have the second-worst congestion in the country, and it is the most expensive. We need a better Metro system, and the only way that we can meet today's demands is by having a dedicated source of revenue. That is what this bill does.

But the funding has already been taken care of. It passed the House. The House voted for it. This is not about finding the money for Metro. This is about insuring that it gets used properly.

□ 1500

This is about putting limitations on Metro, providing more Federal oversight for the Metro system, ensuring that local governments in the Washington area contribute their fair share, as should the State governments. The local and the State governments are willing to do that, as long as the Federal Government does; and the Federal Government should, because the principal people it serves are the Federal workforce.

President Eisenhower condemned the land that established the transit system. President Nixon and President Carter both signed legislation to get Metro on track.

Imagine if we did not have a Metro system when we have the Presidential inauguration, when we have these major national events in our Nation's Capital. We could not function. We are primarily dependent upon this transportation system so that this government, the government of the Nation's Capital, the principal government of the entire free world can function.

Everything does not happen here on Capitol Hill. Everyone can't live here. People have to travel to get here. They have to get back home. You have to have a regional economy and a regional population; and in a dense metropolitan area you have got to have a Metro system, so that they can function. And it ought to be a first-class Metro system. This does not even ensure it is going to be first class, but at least it ensures it is going to be able to be adequate to meet the needs of the local, the State and the national governments, and it ensures that there is going to be Federal oversight and that it will serve the needs of our Federal workforce.

Again, I applaud the chairman for bringing it to the floor today and securing its financing last week.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have listened very carefully to this debate, and I am unconvinced at the end of the day that the combination of these two bills is not spending additional taxpayer money. In fact, I have in my hand the committee report, before the two bills were separated, dated April 26 that on page 11 it clearly says for those grants, the bill would authorize the appropriation of $1.5 billion to the Secretary. I admit that is a report before the two bills were separated.

But a combination of the two, again, is going to put the taxpayer on the hook for an additional $1.5 billion, and I think, Mr. Speaker, what we have to do is peel away the layers of the onion here and see what we have.

Again, we already have Federal programs in place to help fund WMATA. We already have moneys flowing. So either we are looking at new funding today, or we are looking at a new program, or we are looking at both.

Regardless, a combination of the two, I believe, will spend more money, and Mr. Speaker, even if it was budget neutral, even if it was budget neutral, when we are looking at a Federal debt that has gone from roughly $5.5 trillion to $8.5 trillion in just about 5 years, I am not sure I want any new Federal programs until we do a better job in preventing this debt from being imposed upon our children, at a time when we have the highest level of tax revenues we have ever had in the Nation's history.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we don't have a taxing problem. We have a spending problem, and I am not here to say that there are not many worthy provisions of this bill, and I am glad to hear about all the accountability features of the bill. I don't quite know why that has to be combined with a billion and a half new spending since, again, the Federal taxpayer is already contributing to this mass transit system at a very healthy clip.

But one of the reasons I would be leery of authorizing new funds, as President Reagan, one of my favorite Presidents, once said that the closest thing to eternal life on Earth is a Federal program. So what happens in the

outyears as this program continues on and on and on? I am not sure anybody here on this floor today knows for certain.

I can tell you this: I got into the fatherhood business 4 years ago. I now have a 4-year-old daughter and 2½-year-old son; and I can tell you once I helped bring them into the world, they have been very hungry, very expensive, and very needful people. Now, I love them very much, but again, using this analogy, they can get very expensive in the outyears.

So, Mr. Speaker, another point I would like to address as many speakers came here today to make a very compelling argument that this was a vital transportation program, that it was a very vital program related to our homeland security, God forbid should another 9/11 occur. But if this is true, Mr. Speaker, I ask the question, why was this program not originally funded in the homeland security appropriations bill? Why was this project not originally funded in the transportation appropriations bill? Many competing interests come together in those bills, hopefully within a budget constraint, and decisions are made about Federal priorities. So, again, if this is such a priority, I am wondering why it was not included there.

But again, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, my concern here is that somehow, some way a combination of these two bills is going to mean at a time when tax revenues are at their highest, at a time when the national debt is at its highest, at a time where we already have 10,000 Federal programs and they grow each day, that we are going to have a new Federal program, and again, no matter how worthy it may be, without taking away some other lower-priority Federal program, and I just do not believe that the OCS dedicated revenue stream that was already spoken for, that even if the gentleman from Virginia has been successful, and maybe he has been, in dedicating that funding to his bill, then some other program has gone unfunded; and therefore, again the Federal taxpayer today in the future will be on the hook.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I would urge defeat of the bill.

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

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Before I begin, I would ask unanimous consent to put the memorandum from Greg Waring of the Congressional Budget Office into the RECORD noting that CBO has reviewed the proposed amendment and it does not authorize any additional appropriations, score of zero.

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

There was no objection.

NATURAL & PHYSICAL RESOURCES COST ESTIMATES UNIT CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,

From: Greg Waring
Sent: Tuesday, July 11, 2006 5:42 PM
To: Puccerella, Ed
Cc: Robert Murphy; Mark Hadley
Subject: HR 3496 budgetary impact

ED: CBO has reviewed the proposed amendment to H.R. 3496. The language would link funding for the capital and preventive maintenance projects to the authorization of appropriation provided in Section 30 of H.R. 4761, as passed the House of Representatives on June 29, 2006. CBO expects that the proposed amendment would not authorize any additional appropriations.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

GREGORY WARING,
Analyst.

From: Puccerella, Ed
Sent: 7/11/2006 4:52 PM.

GREG: Per our conversation with Budget Committee and you all at CBO here is the revised appropriation language that the Chairman would like to add to H.R. 3496 when it goes to the floor. Can you please confirm that this language would not authorize any additional appropriations that are not otherwise authorized under H.R. 4761 as passed by the House? We would like this language to be effectively budget neutral.

Thanks, Ed

(e) Amount.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are made available to the Secretary of Treasury to make payments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority pursuant to section 9(k) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1338) .

(f) Availability.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization under this section

(1) shall remain available until expended; and

(2) shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, amounts available to the Transit Authority under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code, or any other provision of law.

EDWARD J. PUCCERELLA,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
TOM DAVIS,
CHAIRMAN.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this is not a new program. This program was authorized in 1960 and signed by President Eisenhower. It has been reauthorized four times; and I hope it has a long life, a long productive life, taking commuters off clogged roads and using mass transit so we can reduce our energy dependency on foreign oil.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an authorization of funds. It is about making sure, as my colleagues have said, that this money is spent well. If this goes down, the money still goes through without any checks and balances and Inspector Generals or any of these being set up. If you vote against this bill, you are not saying we should not spend any extra dollars on the Metro system. You are not saying that. You are saying they can spend the extra dollars without the congressional oversight.

Statistics show that Metro is, in fact, one of the best run systems, but I am not willing to say they are so good that no improvements are required and additional oversight is not required.

The provisions in this came from a GAO report. It is our responsibility in Congress to ensure Federal dollars are well spent. There should be nothing contentious about requiring an Inspector General, adding Federal members to the board, or requiring the jurisdictions to truly provide stable funding to the system.

So I urge my colleagues to offer this bill their full support.

I appreciate the comments of my colleague. He has long been a supporter of no further Federal spending, but we are out the barn door on this. That happened under the previous legislation, under the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act. This refines it and controls it and makes sure the money is well spent.

I hope my colleagues will join us in legislation that scores zero with the Congressional Budget Office and reauthorizes this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3496, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY EMERGENCY TOLLING ACT OF 2006

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3729) to provide emergency authority to delay or toll judicial proceedings in United States district and circuit courts, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3729

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 ''Federal Judiciary Emergency Tolling Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. EMERGENCY AUTHORITY TO DELAY OR TOLL JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 111 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 1660. Emergency authority to delay or toll judicial deadlines

''(a) TOLLING IN DISTRICT COURTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency situation requiring the closure of courts or rendering it impracticable for the United States Government or a class of litigants to comply with deadlines imposed by any Federal or State law or rule that applies in the courts of the United States, the chief judge of a district court that has been affected may exercise emergency authority in accordance with this section.

''(2) SCOPE OF AUTHORITY.—(A) The chief judge may enter such order or orders as may be appropriate to delay, toll, or otherwise grant relief from the time deadlines imposed by otherwise applicable laws or rules for such period as may be appropriate for any class of cases pending or thereafter filed in

the district court or bankruptcy court of the district.

''(B) Except as provided in subparagraph (C), the authority conferred by this section extends to all laws and rules affecting criminal and juvenile proceedings (including, prearrest, post-arrest, pretrial, trial, and post-trial procedures), civil actions, bankruptcy proceedings, and the time for filing and perfecting an appeal.

''(C) The authority conferred by this section does not include the authority to extend—

''(i) any statute of limitation for a criminal action; or

''(ii) any statute of limitation for a civil action, if—

''(I) the claim arises under the laws of a State; and

''(II) extending the limitations period would be inconsistent with the governing State law.

''(3) UNAVAILABILITY OF CHIEF JUDGE.—If the chief judge of the district is unavailable, the authority conferred by this section may be exercised by the district judge in regular active service who is senior in commission or, if no such judge is available, by the chief judge of the circuit that includes the district.

''(4) HABEAS CORPUS UNAFFECTED.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

''(b) CRIMINAL CASES.—In exercising the authority under subsection (a) for criminal cases, the court shall consider the ability of the United States Government to investigate, litigate, and process defendants during and after the emergency situation, as well as the ability of criminal defendants as a class to prepare their defenses.

''(c) TOLLING IN COURTS OF APPEALS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency situation requiring the closure of courts or rendering it impracticable for the United States Government or a class of litigants to comply with deadlines imposed by any federal or States law or rule that applies in the courts of the United States, the chief judge of a court of appeals that has been affected or that includes a district court so affected may exercise emergency authority in accordance with this section.

''(2) SCOPE OF AUTHORITY.—The chief judge may enter such order or orders as may be appropriate to delay, toll, or otherwise grant relief from the time deadlines imposed by otherwise applicable laws or rules for such period as may be appropriate for any class of cases pending in the court of appeals.

''(3) UNAVAILABILITY OF CHIEF JUDGE.—If the chief judge of the circuit is unavailable, the authority conferred by this section may be exercised by the circuit judge in regular active service who is senior in commission.

''(4) HABEAS CORPUS UNAFFECTED.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

''(d) ISSUANCE OF ORDERS.—The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee may request issuance of an order under this section, or the chief judge of a district or of a circuit may act on his or her own motion.

''(e) DURATION OF ORDERS.—An order entered under this section may not toll or extend a time deadline for a period of more than 14 days, except that, if the chief judge (whether of a district or of a circuit) determines that an emergency situation requires additional extensions of the period during which deadlines are tolled or extended, the chief judge may, with the consent of the judicial council of the circuit, enter additional orders under this section in order to further toll or extend such time deadline.

''(f) NOTICE.—A court issuing an order under this section—

''(1) shall make all reasonable efforts to publicize the order, including announcing the order on the web sites of all affected courts and the web site of the Federal judiciary; and

''(2) shall, through the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, send notice of the order, including the reasons for the issuance of the order, to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

''(g) REQUIRED REPORTS.—A court issuing one or more orders under this section relating to an emergency situation shall, not later than 180 days after the date on which the last extension or tolling of a time period made by the order or orders ends, submit a brief report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, and the Judicial Conference of the United States describing the orders, including—

''(1) the reasons for issuing the orders;

''(2) the duration of the orders;

''(3) the effects of the orders on litigants; and

''(4) the costs to the judiciary resulting from the orders.

''(h) EXCEPTIONS.—The notice under subsection (f)(2) and the report under subsection (g) are not required in the case of an order that tolls or extends a time deadline for a period of less than 14 days.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 111 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''1660. Emergency authority to delay or toll judicial deadlines.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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 materials on H.R. 3729 currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3729. This legislation would grant the chief judge of any district or appeals court the authority to enter an order to delay or toll any deadlines on pending cases whenever an affected court has closed due to a natural disaster or other emergency situation.

While the court can generally be expected to give consideration to the difficulties faced by litigants in such cases, this legislation is designed to ensure that the court also gives appropriate consideration to the unique burdens that may be imposed on the Federal Government in responding to an emergency.

When a disaster occurs, the field offices of Federal law enforcement agencies may lose access to case files, evidence and other materials critical to the timely prosecution and adjudication of pending cases. Additionally, the government may be forced to reallocate personnel and other resources to address critical, often life-threatening, situations that arise as a consequence of such disasters. Last year's devastating hurricanes that struck New Orleans and much of the gulf region provide a recent example of circumstances where this bill would help ensure that justice can continue to be administered.

The version of H.R. 3729 we consider today reflects bipartisan, clarifying changes adopted in committee based on discussions with the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and the Department of Justice. This legislation preserves the primacy of State law by expressly providing that the bill's authority does not extend to any statute of limitation for a criminal or civil action if the claim arises under State law and extending that limitation would be inconsistent with the governing State law.

Additionally, the bill expressly provides that the bill not be construed to authorize suspension of habeas corpus, and places a limitation of 14 days on the amount of time a deadline may be extended or tolled while preserving the ability of a judge to seek additional time extensions.

Finally, this legislation requires that a court issuing an order to toll or delay deadlines make all reasonable efforts to publicize the order on the Web sites of the Federal judiciary and all affected courts and notify the House and Senate Judiciary Committees when such action is taken.

Mr. Speaker, this bill helps ensure that the fair and timely administration of justice, which is central to our form of government, is not imperiled by natural disasters or other emergency circumstances.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of H.R. 3729.

The bill, as has been indicated, makes several key changes to current law which will help guarantee our Federal court system will be able to adequately function in the wake of a natural disaster or other emergency.

First, it provides the chief judge of a Federal judicial district with the appropriate level of discretion to toll or delay deadlines for any class of cases pending before the court at the time of a natural disaster or emergency.

It also, in a newly proposed section 2 of the bill, includes important language which makes clear that this bill is not to be construed to authorize the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, as has been noted as a very important consideration.

Third, the legislation limits the amount of time that a chief judge may

extend or toll a deadline to no more than 14 days, except where the judge determines that an emergency situation requires additional extensions.

And finally, for any court that decides to toll or delay a deadline, the legislation creates a notice requirement. Among other things, this notice requirement would direct courts to make all reasonable efforts to publicize the order, including announcing the order on Web sites of all affected courts and the Web site of the Federal judiciary and require the director of the Administrative Office of the Courts to send copies of each notice, including the reasons for their issuance, to the House and the Senate Judiciary Committees.

□ 1515

It is worth noting that this latter provision will go a long way toward helping our committee conduct adequate oversight and assist in our efforts to detect any possible abuses.

In closing, I thank the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, for his willingness to work with Members on this side of the aisle to address many of our concerns regarding the legislation. This is truly bipartisan. I urge my colleagues to support this worthwhile measure.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3729, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

VOLUNTEER PILOT ORGANIZATION PROTECTION ACT OF 2006

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1871) to provide liability protection to nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations flying for public benefit and to the pilots and staff of such organizations, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1871

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 ''Volunteer Pilot Organization Protection Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Scores of public benefit nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations provide valuable services to communities and individuals.

(2) In calendar year 2001, nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations provided long-distance, no-cost transportation for over 30,000 people in times of special need.

(3) Such organizations are no longer able to reasonably purchase non-owned aircraft liability insurance to provide liability protection, and thus face a highly detrimental liability risk.

(4) Such organizations have supported the interests of homeland security by providing volunteer pilot services at times of national emergency.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to promote the activities of nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations flying for public benefit and to sustain the availability of the services that such organizations provide, including transportation at no cost to financially needy medical patients for medical treatment, evaluation, and diagnosis, as well as other flights of compassion and flights for humanitarian and charitable purposes.

SEC. 3. LIABILITY PROTECTION FOR NONPROFIT VOLUNTEER PILOT ORGANIZATIONS FLYING FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT AND TO PILOTS AND STAFF OF SUCH ORGANIZATIONS.

Section 4 of the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 (42 U.S.C. 14503) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively;

(B) by inserting ''(A)'' after ''(4)'';

(C) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) the harm was caused by a volunteer of a nonprofit volunteer pilot organization that flies for public benefit, while the volunteer was flying in furtherance of the purpose of the organization and was operating an aircraft for which the volunteer was properly licensed and insured, unless the conduct constitutes a Federal crime of terrorism (as such term is defined in section 2332b(g)(5) of title 18, United States Code) or an act of domestic terrorism (as such term is defined in section 2331 of such title), or unless the entity has been convicted of an offense under section 2339A of such title.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by amending the heading to read as follows: ''CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITY OF VOLUNTEERS'';

(B) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''Nothing''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the liability for negligence of a volunteer of a nonprofit volunteer pilot organization that flies for public benefit with respect to amounts within the limits of liability insurance coverage that such volunteer is required to obtain pursuant to subsection (a)(4)(B) for liability protection under this section.''; and

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''Nothing''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a nonprofit volunteer pilot organization that flies for public benefit, and the staff, mission coordinators, officers, and directors (whether volunteer or otherwise) of such organization or a referring agency of such organization, shall not be liable with respect to harm caused to any person by a volunteer of such organization, while the volunteer is flying in furtherance of the purpose of the organization and is operating an aircraft for which the volunteer is properly licensed and has certified to such organization that such volunteer has in force insurance for operating such aircraft. Such referring agency shall include, among others, any nonprofit organization that provides disaster relief services that place staff, volunteers, evacuees, goods, supplies, or cargo on aircraft flights being coordinated by volunteer pilot organizations in circumstances of disaster response and relief.''.

SEC. 4. REPORT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.

(a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Attorney General shall carry out a study on the availability of insurance to nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations that fly for public benefit. In carrying out the study, the Attorney General shall make findings with respect to—

(1) whether nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations are able to obtain insurance;

(2) if no, then why;

(3) if yes, then on what terms such insurance is offered; and

(4) if the inability of nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations to obtain insurance has any impact on the associations' ability to operate.

(b) REPORT.—After completing the study, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the study. The report shall include the findings of the study and any conclusions and recommendations that the Attorney General considers appropriate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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. 1871 currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1871, the Volunteer Pilot Organization Protection Act. This bill is narrowly tailored to correct specific liability exposure for volunteer and nonprofit activities.

In 1997, Congress passed the Volunteer Protection Act to shield volunteers from liability from some forms of negligence in response to concerns that America's lawsuit culture was inhibiting this country's rich tradition of volunteerism. However, that act does not protect volunteers who operate an automobile, vessel or aircraft, nor does it protect the organizations that coordinate the volunteers.

There are approximately 30 separate volunteer pilot organizations flying for the public benefit, the largest of which function together as Angel Flight America. These organizations coordinate almost 8,000 volunteer pilots, who fly anywhere from one to 50 volunteer missions a year, all at their own personal expense. These pilots conduct

public benefit aviation, which includes activities ranging from environmental observation, wilderness rescue, delivery of medical supplies and organs, and transport of medical patients. In the area of medical patient transport alone, volunteer pilot organizations provided free, long-distance transportation to over 40,000 patients and their escorts in 2003.

As beneficial as these groups are in the normal course, they are crucial in times of crisis. For example, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Angel Flight America, through its role with the Homeland Security Emergency Air Transportation System, flew over 500 missions in the first week after the storm, bringing in emergency workers, agency staff, volunteers, and supplies.

These volunteer pilots also flew high-risk individuals to safer locations, and once there assisted groups such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in reuniting parents and children separated in the evacuation of New Orleans. Overall, Angel Flight America coordinated over 2,200 flights in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina, second only to the United States military.

Despite the invaluable services they provide, these groups are not protected from liability by the Volunteer Protection Act and face difficulty in obtaining the necessary insurance because of liability exposure fears. In many cases, the volunteer pilot organizations cannot obtain, at any cost, the type of liability insurance that they need. In addition, hospitals and other medical establishments are sometimes reluctant to refer patients to volunteer pilot medical transport services because of their own fear of liability exposure based upon the simple act of recommending needy patients to nonprofit volunteer pilots.

This legislation limits the liability exposure for volunteer pilots and organizations by bringing them within the scope of coverage of the Volunteer Protection Act. The legislation will not confer blanket immunity. Liability will attach for gross negligence or reckless, willful, or criminal misconduct. The bill would also have an added benefit of allowing hospitals, clinics and other organizations, including those organizations active in rescue operations like the American Red Cross, to refer needy patients for no-cost medical transport with less fear of their own liability exposure.

Further, the bill requires that the pilots purchase insurance in order to be covered by the liability protections.

I would also note that this bill contains two amendments that address specific concerns that were raised about earlier versions of this bill. The first amendment, which was adopted during the committee markup, ensures that the liability protections do not extend to anyone who engages in terrorist activities.

The second amendment, which was negotiated after the markup with Representative SCOTT of Virginia and Representative DRAKE, provides that volunteer pilots, who are required to carry insurance under the bill, can be liable up to the limits of that insurance. The pilots would not, however, be personally liable for any amounts above their insurance for simple negligence.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1871 will end the cycle of litigation and the threat of such litigation that has stifled the efforts of public-minded volunteer pilots who risk their lives to assist others. The bill is supported by a wide array of charitable organizations, including the American Red Cross, the National Organization For Rare Disorders, Angel Flight America, and the National Air Transportation Association.

In 2004, the House overwhelmingly passed similar legislation with the support of 385 Members. I would urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as much as I appreciate volunteer pilot organizations and the pilots, this bill creates a number of problems for me that I would like to bring to the attention of our membership, and it makes it difficult for me to support H.R. 1871.

If you didn't know that there was a Volunteer Protection Act already on the books, this would sound like something that is very important and very necessary. But there is, and H.R. 1871 undoes the balance achieved in the Volunteer Protection Act by exempting pilots and aircraft carriers from liability, and it applies not only to pilots but it applies to staff of an organization, mission coordinators, officers and directors of the volunteer pilot organizations, referring agencies, whether they are for profit or not for profit. And it would leave innocent victims without recourse in some situations by reducing the standard of care applicable to pilots.

It does nothing to tackle the real problem which is underlying in this bill. What is it? Well, it is that the insurance industry has failed to offer insurance to the volunteer pilot organizations and they can't get it. They can't get insurance. And so this measure flies in the face of already enacted law named the Volunteer Protection Act, which was passed 8 years ago and extending over five Congresses.

The Volunteer Protection Act, as opposed to this measure, was carefully deliberated and negotiated. But this measure before us wipes the slate clean by giving volunteer pilots protection from liability, despite the fact that the Volunteer Protection Act specifically excluded that category of volunteers from protection.

Under the Volunteer Protection Act, pilots and those operating aircraft were specifically left out of the liability exemption because of the highly dangerous nature of the activity and the fact that States already require these pilots to have insurance. The measure undoes that and exempts pilots from liability.

Moreover, it goes further than the Volunteer Protection Act by giving this exemption to not only the pilots but also to the staff, the mission coordinators and directors of the organizations and referring agencies. In the Volunteer Protection Act, Congress made sure it was only the volunteers being protected. We don't do that here.

Finally, as I have said, the real problem is with the insurance industry. Why won't they offer insurance to volunteer pilot organizations? Well, during the hearing of this legislation in the 108th Congress, it was suggested that these nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations need liability protection because they can't get insurance. If this is the case, why not have a bill that requires insurance agencies to offer insurance to these organizations? Why not that instead of in the reverse, exempting everyone almost under the sun from liability.

So what we are establishing here is a national policy specifically allowing certain pilots to operate their aircraft negligently and still escape liability. Thank goodness we haven't had any cases like this, but by immunizing both the negligent pilot and the organization that arranges and provides the transportation, this bill could leave victims of an air tragedy and their surviving families with no means of seeking compensation for their loss.

I hope that the House of Representatives will not turn its back on the victims of air tragedies, and I hope that none of them will occur. But for those reasons, I cannot support the passage of this bill.

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

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the author of the bill, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE).

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, allow me to begin by thanking key individuals whose efforts brought this legislation to the floor today. First, let me thank Chairman SENSENBRENNER for his diligence in moving this bill through the Committee on the Judiciary.

I would also like to thank Ed Boyer of Angel Flight America located in Virginia Beach for raising this important issue and whose vision will help hundreds of private citizens respond in time of crisis.

I would also like to thank my friend and colleague, Mr. BOBBY SCOTT, for working with me to bring the best possible bill to the floor today.

Finally, allow me to thank Sarah Hamlett, who put in countless hours to make this bill a reality.

Today, we have an opportunity to take important action that will encourage the natural altruism and patriotism that Americans have repeatedly demonstrated in times of crisis.

In the past 5 years, our Nation has seen two great disasters, one at the

hands of terrorists and one at the hands of Mother Nature. In both cases, Americans responded with a tremendous outpouring of compassion, lending their time, skills and dollars to a range of charitable organizations.

□ 1530

In response to both 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, the thousands of civil aviators who make up Angel Flight America, stood ready to serve and, indeed, played a major role in the disaster response.

Flying over 150 missions following 9/11 and more than 2,200 missions in response to Katrina, these pilots led an aviation disaster response second only to that of the U.S. military.

But providing a coordinated aviation response during national emergencies is only a part of the underlying mission for most nonprofit volunteer organizations. Their most common mission is to provide emergency medical transportation services for needy families.

Each year, volunteer pilots transport hundreds of people with life-threatening illnesses thousands of miles in order to receive specialized medical attention, as well as transporting patients in remote locations who would otherwise be unable to receive care. Yet, despite the importance of their mission, these organizations have been left out of the Volunteer Protection Act in its current form.

This legislation addresses this mission by amending the Volunteer Protection Act to include organizations such as Angel Flight so they may continue to fulfill their mission and provide a critical service for needy families, seeking specialized medical attention.

It is important to note that I have worked closely with Congressman SCOTT to ensure that this legislation does not shield pilots from liability in instances of criminal misconduct or gross negligence.

Instead, this legislation provides nonprofit volunteer pilot organizations the security they need to grow and expand their mission to more parts of our country and provide a well-coordinated response in times of national emergencies.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1871, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CLARIFYING TREATMENT OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT FOR PURPOSES OF LIMITATION ON STATE TAXATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4019) to amend title 4 of the United States Code to clarify the treatment of self-employment for purposes of the limitation on State taxation of retirement income, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4019

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

SECTION 1. CLARIFICATION OF TREATMENT OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT FOR PURPOSES OF THE LIMITATION ON STATE TAXATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 114(b)(1)(I) of title 4, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(or any plan, program, or arrangement that is in writing, that provides for retirement payments in recognition of prior service to be made to a retired partner, and that is in effect immediately before retirement begins)'' after ''section 3121(v)(2)(C) of such Code'',

(2) by inserting ''which may include income described in subparagraphs (A) through (H)'' after ''(not less frequently than annually'',

(3) by adding at the end the following: ''The fact that payments may be adjusted from time to time pursuant to such plan, program, or arrangement to limit total disbursements under a predetermined formula, or to provide cost of living or similar adjustments, will not cause the periodic payments provided under such plan, program, or arrangement to fail the 'substantially equal periodic payments' test.'', and

(4) by adding at the end the following: ''(4) For purposes of this section, the term 'retired partner' is an individual who is described as a partner in section 7701(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and who is retired under such individual's partnership agreement.''.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by this section apply to amounts received after December 31, 1995.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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. 4019 currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4019, a bill to amend title 4 of the United States Code to clarify the treatment of self-employment for the purposes of the limitation on State taxation of retirement income.

This bill makes technical and clarifying amendments to the legislation enacted in 1996 to restrict the ability of States to tax certain pension income received by their former residents and nonresidents who earned income in that State.

Virtually every State correctly interpreted the law to encompass all retired individuals as Congress intended, and adjusted their tax systems accordingly. However, after 10 years, at least one State has sought to promote an interpretation of the law at odds with congressional intent by taxing the retirement income of partners who no longer live in the State or who may never even have ever lived there.

H.R. 4019 clarifies and reiterates the policy Congress wrote into Public Law 104–95, that States are prohibited from taxing the retirement income of all nonresident retirees, whether the individual is a retired employee, partner or principal.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, which enjoys bipartisan support, merely restores fairness and the original intent of Congress by reaffirming that States should treat all retirees equally.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4019, and I support the measure which is intended to clarify current law that prohibits States from taxing the retirement income of any nonresident, whether the individual is a retired employee, partner or a principal, and says that the benefits reduction calculations under the bill include components from both qualified and nonqualified plans.

Now, since 1996, States have adjusted their tax system to reflect the policy and to allow several different interpretations. The policy would upset expectations and reliance upon the law. And what we are doing is eliminating that possibility. This would also, without this change, further confuse the tax system and certainly lead to unnecessary litigation.

It should be noted that the States affected by Public Law 104–95 have adjusted their tax schemes to comply with the law as they understood it. However, there is one State presently that construes the statute in contravention of the original intent, and if this State, New York, is permitted to implement its interpretation of the bill, other States may follow. This, in turn, would most definitely spur an unlimited amount of needless litigation. So it is essential that for consistency and uniformity that this legislation before us be enacted.

We should note that neither the Federation of Tax Administrators nor the

National Governors Association are opposing this clarification.

This clarification is needed to protect the current State taxation policies, and I am proud to support it and urge my colleagues to do as well.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman SENSENBRENNER, Ranking Member CONYERS and Representatives WATT for their work and leadership on this legislation.

H.R. 4019 is a technical amendment to Public Law 104–95. This legislation clarifies that all retirees should be treated the same with regard to how States may tax retirement payments.

In 1996, Congress passed Public Law 104–95 to prohibit States from taxing the retirement income of nonresident retirees. Essentially, if retirees, most of whom are on fixed incomes, are not living in the State, then no State except the State where the individual resides should tax the retirees' incomes.

After passage of the 1996 law, most States interpreted the law, as it was intended, to apply to all retirees, including employees and partners. One State, however, has recently taken the position that it can treat retired employes of a company and retired partners from partnership differently. This State's interpretation is contrary to the original intent of the law and would allow for a State to tax the retirement payments of a person who retires from a partnership, no matter where that retiree is living. This was not the intent of Congress when the bill was passed, as was emphasized at our hearing by our former colleague Mr. Gekas, who was chair of the subcommittee when Public Law 104–95 was enacted. Congress intended for all retirees to be treated the same under the law, and H.R. 4019 simply clarifies that intent. States must treat all retirees similarly.

I have worked with the State tax administrators and crafted a manager's amendment that passed the full committee by voice vote in order to alleviate their initial concerns, an appreciate their efforts in coming to the table to reach agreement.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4019.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4019, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 38 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable Charlie Norwood, Member of Congress:

U.S. CONGRESS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 17, 2006.

Hon. J. Dennis Hastert,
Speaker, House of Representtives, Washington DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a civil deposition subpoena, issued by the Superior Court of Fulton County, GA, for documents and testimony.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the precedents and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

CHARLIE NORWOOD,
Member of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 3085, by the yeas and nays;
H.R. 3496, by the yeas and nays;
H.R. 3729, by the yeas and nays.

The first and third electronic votes will be conducted as 15-minute votes. The second vote in this series will be a 5-minute vote.

TRAIL OF TEARS STUDY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 3085, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3085, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 356, nays 5, not voting 71, as follows:

[Roll No. 375]

YEAS—356

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doggett
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hunter
Hyde
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Pallone
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark

Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Weldon (PA)
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)

NAYS—5

Coble
Flake
Foxx
Jones (NC)
Paul

NOT VOTING—71

Abercrombie
Andrews
Beauprez
Bilirakis
Blumenauer
Bonilla
Boozman
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Burgess
Calvert
Cannon
Case
Costello
Cramer
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Deal (GA)
Dingell
Doolittle
Evans
Fattah
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Ford
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Green (WI)
Gutierrez
Harris
Hayes
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Istook
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lantos
Lee
Lipinski
Matheson
McKinney
Miller, George
Nadler
Northup
Nussle
Owens
Oxley
Pascrell
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Rothman
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Sessions
Shuster
Strickland
Sweeney
Terry
Towns
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Wexler
Young (FL)

□ 1855

Mr. COBLE changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. BAKER, JOHNSON of Illinois, GOODE, and RUSH changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL CAPITAL TRANSPORTATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 3496, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3496, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 242, nays 120, not voting 70, as follows:

[Roll No. 376]

YEAS—242

Ackerman
Allen
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bass
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bilbray
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Capito
Capps
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Castle
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Costa
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doggett
Doyle
Dreier
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Ferguson
Filner
Foley
Fortenberry
Fossella
Frank (MA)
Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gonzalez
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hall
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hunter
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
King (NY)
Kirk
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lynch
Maloney
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Nunes
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Pallone
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Pickering
Platts
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Rahall
Rangel
Regula
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stupak
Tanner
Tauscher
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Weldon (PA)
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)

NAYS—120

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Biggert
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Bonner
Bono
Bradley (NH)
Brown (SC)
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Capuano
Carter
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Conaway
Cooper
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, Jo Ann
Drake
Duncan
Everett
Feeney
Flake
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gibbons
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Gutknecht
Hart
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Hyde
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
Kline
Knollenberg
Lewis (KY)
LoBiondo
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
McCaul (TX)
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Obey
Otter
Paul
Pearce
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pitts
Poe
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Rehberg
Reichert
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shaw
Sodrel
Stark
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thornberry
Tierney
Upton
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Wilson (SC)

NOT VOTING—70

Abercrombie
Andrews
Beauprez
Bilirakis
Blumenauer
Bonilla
Boozman
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Burgess
Calvert
Cannon
Case
Costello
Cramer
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Deal (GA)
Dingell
Doolittle
Evans
Fattah
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Ford
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Green (WI)
Gutierrez
Harris
Hayes
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Istook
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lantos
Lee
Lipinski
Matheson
McKinney
Meeks (NY)
Miller, George
Nadler
Northup
Nussle
Owens
Oxley
Pascrell
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Rothman
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Sessions
Shuster
Strickland
Sweeney
Terry
Towns
Waxman
Weiner
Weller
Wexler
Young (FL)

□ 1906

Mr. MCGOVERN changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY EMERGENCY TOLLING ACT OF 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 3729, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3729, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 363, nays 0, not voting 69, as follows:

[Roll No. 377]

YEAS—363

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)

Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doggett
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hunter
Hyde
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Pallone
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—69

Abercrombie
Andrews
Beauprez
Bilirakis
Blumenauer
Bonilla
Boozman
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Calvert
Cannon
Case
Costello
Cramer
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Deal (GA)
Dingell
Doolittle
Evans
Fattah
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Ford
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gordon
Green (WI)
Gutierrez
Harris
Hayes
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Istook
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Kind
Kingston
LaHood
Lantos
Lee
Lipinski
Matheson
McKinney
Miller, George
Nadler
Northup
Nussle
Owens
Oxley
Pascrell
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Rothman
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Sessions
Shuster
Strickland
Sweeney
Terry
Towns
Waxman
Weiner
Weller
Wexler
Young (FL)

□ 1922

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes today, July 17, 2006, due to a delay in my flight back to Washington, DC. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: H.R. 3085—"yea"; H.R. 3496—"nay"; H.R. 3729—"yea".

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote during the following rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted as indicated below:

Rollcall No. 375, H.R. 3085—To amend the National Trails System Act to update the feasibility and suitability study originally prepared for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and provide for the inclusion of new trial segments, land components, and campgrounds associated with that trail, and for other purposes, I would have voted "yea".

Rollcall No. 376, H.R. 3496—National Capital Transportation amendments Act of 2005, I would have voted "yea"

Rollcall No. 377, H.R. 3729—Federal Judiciary Emergency Tolling Act of 2005, I would have voted "yea".

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast recorded votes on rollcall Nos. 375 and 377. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both votes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from Washington on Monday, July 17, 2006. As a result, I was not recorded for rollcall votes Nos. 375, 376 and 377. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall Nos. 375 and 377. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 376.

SNAKES IN THE GRASS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in west Texas, rattlesnakes are king. They are deadly. They are poisonous. In the vastness of the heat, these snakes roam every town, every ranch. No place is safe, especially in the summer.

When their well-known rattle whistles through the air, it is a warning for all to beware. And if they bite you, you die. They still lock down their poisonous jaws on prey, ranging from people to cattle, inhabiting the snake-infested land. These snakes live among us and they kill us.

Mr. Speaker, Hezbollah is a snake in the grass, a terror ring funded by Iran, living beside the Israelis, slithering in the cloak of night, knowing no borders. Taking lives, claiming victims.

We have heard Hezbollah's rattle. Why are we surprised? A rattlesnake does not change. You cannot negotiate with one. The snakes of Hezbollah are terrorists, and Israel has every right to turn and fight now that they have heard the rattle and seen this sneak snake attack.

And that's just the way it is.

THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the question is, Does silence mean agreement?

The United States is the only superpower in the world; yet the President has been on the sidelines since the start of the Middle East crisis.

There are 25,000 Americans in harm's way in Lebanon, but the President has yet to reassure them, or us, that the United States is doing everything possible to protect our citizens and get them out of harm's way. A U.S. warship was ordered to sail out of the Port of Haifa. Why weren't U.S. helicopters flown in to evacuate Americans visiting Israel? And why are we only now flying helicopters into Lebanon to begin evacuating Americans?

The President had days to speak, but waited, and then let the G–8 nations issue a joint communique.

Why didn't this President dispatch the Secretary of State to the region immediately?

The United States must lead if there is any hope of restoring stability to the region. The President's silence is unacceptable. In the midst of this crisis, his silence is intolerable. He is AWOL.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 88, MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT

Mr. GINGREY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109–573) on the resolution (H. Res. 918) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 88) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to marriage, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROTECTING FLORIDA'S MANATEE POPULATION

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill H.R. 4075, the Marine Mammals Protection Act, legislation that protects a true wonder of nature, the Florida manatee.

Living in Florida's streams, swamps, and rivers, manatees are beloved throughout my district and especially in Citrus County.

The Marine Mammals Protection Act provides new and increased protections for the manatees from fishermen and from wildlife loss.

Chairman RICHARD POMBO deserves credit for bringing this bill up for a vote and helping to protect one of Florida's most precious natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will provide grants and protections to help ensure that Florida's sea cows will be around for my grandchildren, my great grandchildren, and everyone to enjoy years into the future.

There actually is a preserve in my area where the manatees, once they are injured, can go for treatment, and it is a wonderful, wonderful resource. Thankfully, the manatee has come back from being endangered.

THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when you are home in your district, there are those who are looking at the crisis in the Middle East and asking what is the response of the United States. And, yes, of course Israel has the right to defend. But the President of the United States, the Executive, has the right as well to stand and call boldly for a cease fire.

We are the superpower of the world. We do have Americans in harm's way. I myself have students in the Mickey Leland internship program who are making their way back home from Israel.

What I would say is that this is a time for engagement. This is a time for drawing parties from the Arab states as well as Israel and others who would go into the Mideast, sit down in Jordan or other states that are surrounding the area, and actually have a confrontation, a meeting, an understanding, if you will, to bring some solution.

It is important for us to be in the way of saving lives. It is important for us to acknowledge the necessity of finding balance so that we can save lives.

Soldiers should be returned, but we should not ignore the opportunity for engagement. We must be in the Mideast. We must draw the parties together. We must find a solution. We must save lives.

□ 1930

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOUSTANY). 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.

BLAZING GUNS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, news from the second front: The border war continues. It sounds like a scene from Lonesome Dove or some other western movie. Hundreds of shots were ringing out over the Rio Grande River, piercing the night for a period of minutes. But movie villains, this was not. These are real outlaws that are shrouded in darkness and shooting at Americans, just like in the old days.

The gunfire belongs to the border, the U.S.-Mexican border. Just last week, in the moonlight, was a scene of machine gun madness. It could have been a fatal barrage of bullets.

Last Wednesday night, Border Patrol and Hidalgo County, Texas, sheriff's deputies patrolling the Rio Grande River, the international border between Mexico and the United States, stumbled upon two boys from Mexico that were running from outlaws on the Mexican side. They had just raided their ranch and kidnapped their father and killed a ranch hand, so they were fleeing these criminals.

They were swimming to the safety of the United States. They were hiding in the cornfields of Mexico for several hours while machine gun carrying killers were looking for them.

But violence did not end on the Mexican side of the river where it started. The victims swam across the river to their escape into the hands of U.S. law enforcement officers. Seconds after stumbling on the boys, law enforcement officers on the border and sheriff's deputies were engulfed in a barrage of bullets.

The bad guys on the Mexican side of the border, these thugs who were lying in wait, would wait no more, and they decided to fire on American peace officers from their side of the river. As many as 10 men with machine guns turned their guns to fire 200 to 300 rounds of ammunition at law enforcement officers on the American side of the river.

Luckily, the Americans had built a levee on the American side, just like a fortress, and they were protected from these kidnappers who would shoot their automatic weapons as if they were on the Israeli-Lebanon border. Their bullets ricocheted off this dirt wall. The deputies dove behind it, but they never returned fire to the Mexican side.

This gang-style rural warfare you hear about on battlefields is in our own American backyard. In just the last year and a half, this is the fifth time Border Patrol has been shot at.

Former Texas Ranger Doyle Holdrige put it best. He said, ''After dark on the Texas-Mexican border, it gets western.''

You won't even normally find Hidalgo County deputies in that area of the border. Their sheriff doesn't allow them to go there. He said it is too dangerous to patrol that portion of the river. Instead, the sheriff only reacts to calls for help, spending the rest of the time trying to make their presence known in neighborhoods that are in fear living on the border.

Sheriff Lupe Trevino says the Federal Government has left the gate wide open, allowing thugs, plain criminals, to do damage on the American side of the border. He says drastic cuts have washed away homeland security funding and drained funds from community policing from this border area in South Texas.

Sheriff Trevino says a lack of enforcement, lack of funding and lack of Federal support has left local authorities to stand by, while guerillas fire machine guns at them, invaders take over their neighborhoods and leave local law enforcement in harm's way while on border patrol.

Mr. Speaker, this shootout of 200 to 300 rounds barely made the news last week. We hear all about the border shootings on the Israeli-Lebanon border, but, Mr. Speaker, our government should be as concerned about the gunfire on our border as we are about blazing guns in the Middle East.

And that's just the way it is.

IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support, my strong support, for the Nation of Israel as it exercises its right to self-defense in the face of terrorist attacks.

I am sure my colleagues are aware that back on June 25th, members of the Hamas terrorist organization attacked an Israeli military post outside the Gaza Strip. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and another was captured. Israel responded to this clear act of war with appropriate force, seeking the return of its soldier and an end to rocket attacks coming from the Gaza Strip. The violence continued, though, with Gaza-based terrorists firing a rocket into a high school in the city of Ashkelon.

Many of Hamas' top leaders have advocated the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, including the Palestinian Foreign Minister, who said in March that Hamas should kidnap Israeli soldiers and exchange them for jailed Palestinian terrorists.

Of course, attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip were just the beginning. Last week, Hezbollah terrorists attacked Israeli soldiers in northern Israel, killing eight and kidnapping two. They also began firing rockets on northern Israeli towns, including Haifa, the third-largest city in the country.

Israel again responded to this act of war by seeking to defend themselves. They entered Lebanon in an attempt both to rescue the kidnapped soldiers and prevent Hezbollah terrorists from committing further acts against Israel. They also blockaded the country to prevent Iran and Syria from sending further supplies, arms, and terrorists into Lebanon to support Hezbollah's actions.

This weekend, however, with increasing attacks from Hezbollah, Israel officials are now warning civilians as far south as Tel Aviv to be on alert for rocket attacks. There is also word that Iranian Revolutionary Guard soldiers are in southern Lebanon, helping to train Hezbollah and equip them with new, longer-range missiles and rockets, so they can threaten more Israeli citizens.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, world leaders have not solidly backed Israel's right to self-defense. While the Bush administration expressed support for Israel's actions, support for our ally in the Middle East has not come from all corners. In fact, last week the European Union criticized Israel's response as ''disproportionate.'' I would like to know what the EU would think if one of their member nations were attacked by terrorists and the U.S. referred to their response as ''disproportionate.''

The EU has also condemned Israel for its air and sea blockade of Lebanon. That blockade is necessary, however, because we know that otherwise Iran and Syria would continue to funnel more and more weapons and personnel into southern Lebanon.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday I wrote to the current EU president to express my strong disapproval of the European Union's comments. I will include for the RECORD that letter.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that Israel has complied with international agreements, such as U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, by withdrawing from Lebanon. Unfortunately, the Lebanese Government has not held up its end of the bargain, failing to control southern Lebanon, rein in Hezbollah and support peace and security on their southern border, as required by Security Council Resolution 1559 from September 2004.

Hamas, meanwhile, called Hezbollah's actions ''a heroic operation.'' Despite what many international observers thought might happen, Hamas is not acting like a responsible government. Instead, they are sticking to their roots as a terrorist organization, encouraging the sort of attacks that flared up in the recent violence.

Mr. Speaker, the international community needs to stand behind the State of Israel and support it as they defend themselves against terrorist attacks. I understand that tomorrow we are going to consider a resolution on the House floor that would express support for Israel and condemn the attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah, and I urge my colleagues in the strongest possible terms to vote for this resolution.

For the sake of the Israeli people and all residents of the region, I hope the current violence ends soon. But we must recognize Israel's right to defend itself and do what it must to end terrorist attacks against their soldiers and their people.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the letter referred to earlier.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

Prime Minister MATTI VANHANEN,
President in Office, Council of the European Union, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER VANHANEN: I am writing to express my strong disapproval of comments made by the European Union (EU) and individual member nations in reaction to Israel's response to terrorist attacks against them.

As you know, on June 25 members of the Hamas terrorist group attacked an Israeli military post in southern Israel, killing two Israeli soldiers and kidnapping another, Cpl. Galid Shalit. In response, Israel took actions to try to rescue Shalit, end attacks against its citizens, and hold the Palestinian Authority responsible. It is well-known that top Hamas leaders, including Ahmed Jaabari and Jamal Abu Samhadna, helped plan the attack on the Israeli post.

Later, on July 12, members of the Lebanese-based Hezbollah terrorist group attacked northern Israel, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two others. These actions came despite the fact that UN Security Council Resolution 425 requires Lebanon to reestablish its authority in the southern portion of the country and to work towards international peace and security along its border with Israel. In response, Israel has imposed an air and sea blockade on Lebanon and sought to reduce Hezbollah's ability to attack Haifa and other Israeli population centers.

Despite the fact that Israel has exercised past restraint and is now acting in clear self-defense to protect its people, the EU issued a statement criticizing Israel for a ''disproportionate use of force''—comments echoed by French President Jacques Chirac and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. The EU also said that ''the imposition of an air and sea blockade on Lebanon cannot be justified.''

I find those comments to be misguided and unfair to Israel. In order to defend itself and its citizens from attacks on two sides, Israel has responded with the intent of ending the terrorist organizations' capacity to carry out further violence. The blockade is necessary to prevent further arms, military supplies, and terrorists from entering Lebanon and being used against Israel. It is widely known that Hezbollah has long been funded and aided by both Syria and Iran, and that assistance would continue during the violence if Israel were not to impose the blockade.

The United States has stood behind Israel and supported them as a democratic ally in a troubled region. It is disappointing to see that the EU does not seem to understand the need for Israel to defend itself against terrorist attacks.

I strongly urge you to reconsider your comments and instead issue a statement in support of Israel's right to defend itself.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, Jr.
Member of Congress.

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

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

RAISING AWARENESS OF AND FUNDING FOR RADIO AL MAHABA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will take up H. Res. 784, a resolution I introduced that honors Radio Al Mahaba, an Iraqi radio station that offers the Middle East's only programming for women. The station began broadcasting on April 1, 2005, as an educational tool for the women of Iraq.

Historically, Iraqi women were extremely well educated, but the educational oppression brought on by Saddam Hussein led to the illiteracy rate for women rising to 75 percent. Saddam's regime drove women back to confinement and the extremists restricted them with harsh rules and practices, mostly imported from Iran and Saudi Arabia.

After Saddam was ousted, the women of Iraq needed some way to reach out to all women nationwide, to talk to them directly and provide help.

Bushra Jamil, an Iraqi who was living in Canada, saw this as an opportunity to empower the women of Iraq as it transitioned to a democracy. Bushra returned home and created Radio Al Mahaba.

Once the station began broadcasting, the response from Iraqi women was astonishing. Radio Al Mahaba programs

included news, call-in talk shows, covering various legal, health and educational topics, as well as music programs. The station became so popular that they were broadcasting 16 hours a day in three languages: Arabic, Kurdish and English.

While we take radio shows that cater to women for granted, this was a revolutionary concept in the Middle East. Women who had been oppressed for years were finally able to hear their side of the story. And Radio Al Mahaba provided a forum for women to make sure that their voices were heard.

The station received 100 calls a day from women asking questions, giving advice and voicing their opinions of how to rebuild their country. The radio station had found an audience, and they were financially in good shape as well from new sponsorships.

But last October, Radio Al Mahaba fell silent. The terrorist attack on the Palestinian Hotel in Baghdad destroyed their transmitter. And while the radio station was not the target of this attack, many leaders in Iraq were not all that upset that these women's voices were silenced once again.

But the women of Radio Al Mahaba were resilient. They found another transmitter, but it wasn't as powerful as the one they lost during the terrorist attack. The new transmitter could only reach about one-third of their listening audience. And less listeners meant less sponsorship revenue for the station.

Unfortunately, the rented transmitter died about a month ago, and they are in desperate need of funds to get back on the air. Once they receive this funding, they plan to expand listening audiences to include all of Iraq and its neighbors. They also plan on broadcasting in Persian to reach the women of Iran, who have been oppressed for nearly 30 years.

If democracy in Iraq is going to succeed, women will have to play a role, a vital role, in making sure that it goes forward. The radio station can be the place for women in Iraq and throughout the Middle East to learn about the issues that will affect their lives. It allows them place to be heard without often violent consequences for the first time in their lives.

The right to educate yourself and to be heard are cornerstones of our democracy, and these characteristics should be carried over to the new Iraq.

At this point in Iraq's history, the station is in the midst of a battle. But not just a military battle, but also in the battle for Iraqi women's rights against fundamentalists.

The station's 28 full-time and part-time staff risk their lives every day to make sure that the voices are heard. Despite this terrible risk, they are all very dedicated because, in one of the staffer's words, ''they want to reach out and touch people's lives. They want to give hope and knowledge, empowerment support and the passage of freedom to Iraqi women.''

Mr. Speaker, I recently had a chance to talk to President Bush about this station and he was very enthusiastic about the role it will play in democracy in Iraq. It is my hope that the passage of tomorrow's resolution honoring the radio station will raise awareness and find funding for the station so they can continue their message of hope to the women of the Middle East.

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

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Exensions of Remarks.)

A PARODY OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, something odd has happened. There are a lot of odd things that happen around here, but the Republican Web site, the one that they use for scheduling the weekly activities of Congress, has been hacked by writers for the John Stewart Show, and they don't seem to mind. So we are going to be a parody of Congress this week instead of a real Congress this week, despite the fact that we are borrowing $1.4 billion a day to run the government, we are running a $2 billion a day trade deficit, average families haven't seen their wages go up in 5 years, and we are raining tax cuts on the wealthy.

There are a few real things that we could deal with that the American people are concerned about. Maybe high gas prices. No, those things are not on the agenda. We have the faux agenda for Congress, which is designed purely for either entertainment purposes or for political purposes.

Well, what are we doing? We are taking up an amendment to ban the threat of gay marriage. Now, let's see. The Senate didn't pass it.

□ 1945

That means it is not going forward. But, nonetheless, the House is going to use valuable time to vote on banning the threat of gay marriage even though we know that the constitutional amendment cannot move forward because the Senate has already disapproved this venture.

But it is good for the ratings, entertainment value. The John Stewart writers thought it would be fun to bring that up in the House. So we are going to bring it up. Then we are going to do another thing here called ''court stripping.'' We are going to say there are only two and a half branches of Congress, or maybe one and a half, the President and half a Congress, and the judiciary only if they are pets of the President and the Congress.

That is, no judge will be allowed to hear a case challenging the Pledge of Allegiance. Now, no judge has found the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. Quite the opposite, they have found that the use of the words ''under God'' is diminimus in the Pledge and have upheld its use.

But the Republicans, they do not even want judges to hear those cases any more and reject those claims any more, because they think that this might provide entertainment value or excite some strange people in the Republican base. So we will spend a day on court stripping instead of dealing with high-energy prices.

Then we are going to take up two phony bills on a serious issue, stem cell research, could have tremendous benefits for the American people. The President is opposed to stem cells, the Republicans are opposed to stem cell research. The United States is falling behind the whole rest of the world.

Americans will have to go overseas to get procedures that have been developed by stem cell research that could cure Parkinson's or other debilitating diseases, because the Republican right wing does not want research on using stem cells, but the American public does want that research.

So we are going to take up two fake bills, two pretend bills. We are going to ban a practice that is not happening called fetal farming, and everybody will probably vote for that, and then we are going to authorize them to do what they can already on the President's lame program that is not working and is having America fall behind on stem cell research. So you see, we are really for stem cell research.

Well, not really, because the lines they are using are all corrupted and it is not going anywhere. And then the real bill, the real compromise bill that passed the House, it passed the United States House of Representatives, is going to probably pass the Senate this week. It will go to the President and he will veto it.

So in order to give them political cover or to provide entertainment value, they will vote on two fake stem cell bills, and then vote to support the President in vetoing the real stem cell bill that could provide tremendous advances in research for the American people.

So this is a sort of play Congress week. Maybe it was not the Stewart writers, maybe it was Colbert who was going through interviewing Members of Congress, and he might have gotten some of the data there.

But in any case, instead of dealing with very real problems that are confronting Americans, instead of dealing with world crises, instead of dealing with high energy prices, growing debt, stagnant wages, you know, access to better education for our kids, health care, high-cost pharmaceuticals, adequately funding veterans benefits, no, none of that is on the schedule this week.

This week we do not have time for those things because we are playing

Congress taking up bills that are not going anywhere, or that are pretend bills that will go somewhere to cover up the fact that they are killing the real bill that would do something useful and also that, you know, we are taking up constitutional amendments that are not going to pass. Hooray for the Republican majority.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOUSTANY). 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. 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.)

IS THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPT?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of signs that the United States economy is not working well. One of the signs is our national debt. The latest figures show we are somewhere ever $8 trillion in the hole, and every day the hole gets deeper. You would think someone here in Washington would pay attention.

Back in the year of 2000, as a result of major decisions made during the 1990s by the Congress, by then President Clinton, we were able to balance the annual budget and were actually paying down this enormous debt, the accumulated debt of the country.

So things do not look too good there, and the United States has to cover those borrowings by borrowing from foreign interests. We know nearly half of U.S. debt securities are now purchased by foreign interests, and the United States is in hock, having to pay every year hundreds of billions of dollars in interest, interest to those foreign holders of our debt, interest we could be spending here at home; dollars we could be spending here inside the borders of the United States, rather than to those who are loaning us the money.

Another sign of our predicament is this, that is, the monthly and annual trade deficits of our country, where more imports are coming into our Nation, more and more and more every month, every day, every year, than we export out.

It is not that we are not exporting things. We are. But we are importing vastly more than we are exporting. In fact, the latest figures, compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, indicate that in the month of May, the last month for which we have final figures, our goods and services deficit went up another $63.8 billion in 1 month. In 1 month.

That means, if you look at these monthly figures of our trade deficit, more imports coming in here than exports going out, in January of this year, they surpassed the debt, the trade debt from last year, in February, in March, in April, and then in May. May was worse than April. Without question, this year will go down as one in which the United States will have amassed the largest trade deficit in history.

We are literally in uncharted waters, because when these goods are purchased in our country, those dollars that are then forked over for those goods go somewhere else. Go somewhere else. And then those countries, take China, for example, or Korea, any of the nations with whom, or Japan with whom we have huge trade deficits, have those dollars to spend. We do not have them to spend. They do.

So they are literally taking our earned assets, and they are trading them internationally. In fact, the State of Indiana just did something incredible. They made a decision to lease out the Indiana Turnpike to foreign interests. This is unbelievable.

This is unbelievable. So the poor State of Indiana, the taxpayers of that State that had paid off the bonds on the turnpike over 30 years ago are now in hock to Spanish and Australian investors for the next 99 years. Unbelievable.

It is like a fire sale. Chicago Skyway did the same thing. Leasing out a public asset to foreign interests. And then we not only owe them the annual interest payments; but our children and our grandchildren, you can just see the pieces of America being taken away because we are not paying our own way.

There was an article in a London paper, the Telegraph, the headline of which is, ''U.S. could be going bankrupt.'' And it is really talking about at what point do you officially declare bankruptcy. And it says, the United States is heading for bankruptcy, and research by Professor Laurence Kotlikoff for the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis said the United States is indeed bankrupt insofar as it will be unable to pay its creditors, who in this context are current and future generations to whom it has explicitly or implicitly promised future net payments of various kinds.

Certainly pension benefits, certainly health care benefits, all of those endangered because the Nation is in hock. We owe others. What is interesting about that Indiana turnpike deal is that the tolls have been doubled now. So the foreign interests to which the Indiana turnpike was leased out have now doubled the costs on the U.S. consumer. We do not have control of our own future until we get the trade accounts and our budget accounts in order.

Certainly the President ought to submit a balanced budget. Certainly this Congress ought to pass one. That has not happened during the Bush administration.

[From the Telegraph (UK), July 14, 2006]

US 'COULD BE GOING BANKRUPT'

(By Edmund Conway, Economics Editor)

The United States is heading for bankruptcy, according to an extraordinary paper published by one of the key members of the country's central bank.

A ballooning budget deficit and a pensions and welfare timebomb could send the economic superpower into insolvency, according to research by Professor Laurence Kotlikoff for the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, a leading constituent of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

Prof. Kotlikoff said that, by some measures, the U.S. is already bankrupt. ''To paraphrase the Oxford English Dictionary, is the United States at the end of its resources, exhausted, stripped bare, destitute, bereft, wanting in property, or wrecked in consequence of failure to pay its creditors,'' he asked.

According to his central analysis, ''the U.S. government is, indeed, bankrupt, insofar as it will be unable to pay its creditors, who, in this context, are current and future generations to whom it has explicitly or implicitly promised future net payments of various kinds''.

The budget deficit in the U.S. is not massive. The Bush administration this week cut its forecasts for the fiscal shortfall this year by almost a third, saying it will come in at 2.3pc of gross domestic product. This is smaller than most European countries—including the UK—which have deficits north of 3pc of GDP.

Prof. Kotlikoff, who teaches at Boston University, says: ''The proper way to consider a country's solvency is to examine the lifetime fiscal burdens facing current and future generations. If these burdens exceed the resources of those generations, get close to doing so, or simply get so high as to preclude their full collection, the country's policy will be unsustainable and can constitute or lead to national bankruptcy.

''Does the United States fit this bill? No one knows for sure, but there are strong reasons to believe the United States may be going broke.''

Experts have calculated that the country's long-term ''fiscal gap'' between all future government spending and all future receipts will widen immensely as the Baby Boomer generation retires, and as the amount the state will have to spend on healthcare and pensions soars. The total fiscal gap could be an almost incomprehensible $65.9 trillion, according to a study by Professors Gokhale and Smetters.

The figure is massive because President George W. Bush has made major tax cuts in recent years, and because the bill for Medicare, which provides health insurance for the elderly, and Medicaid, which does likewise for the poor, will increase greatly due to demographics.

Prof. Kotlikoff said: ''This figure is more than five times U.S. GDP and almost twice the size of national wealth. One way to wrap one's head around $65.9 trillion is to ask what fiscal adjustments are needed to eliminate this red hole. The answers are terrifying. One solution is an immediate and permanent doubling of personal and corporate income taxes. Another is an immediate and permanent two-thirds cut in Social Security and Medicare benefits. A third alternative,

were it feasible, would be to immediately and permanently cut all federal discretionary spending by 143pc.''

The scenario has serious implications for the dollar. If investors lose confidence in the U.S.'s future, and suspect the country may at some point allow inflation to erode away its debts, they may reduce their holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds.

Prof. Kotlikoff said: ''The United States has experienced high rates of inflation in the past and appears to be running the same type of fiscal policies that engendered hyperinflations in 20 countries over the past century.''

Paul Ashworth, of Capital Economics, was more sanguine about the coming retirement of the Baby Boomer generation. ''For a start, the expected deterioration in the Federal budget owes more to rising per capita spending on health care than to changing demographics,'' he said.

''This can be contained if the political will is there. Similarly, the expected increase in social security spending can be controlled by reducing the growth rate of benefits. Expecting a fix now is probably asking too much of short-sighted politicians who have no incentives to do so. But a fix, or at least a succession of patches, will come when the problem becomes more pressing.''

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.)

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

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

DROUGHT ISSUES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call to my colleagues' attention a dire and worsening situation developing in South Dakota and in several other States across the Great Plains. South Dakota is currently experiencing a severe, if not historic, drought; and it is getting worse.

Almost every week we are breaking records for lack of rainfall and high temperatures in communities across the State. Keep in mind that South Dakota was one of the hardest-hit regions of the country during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. We have seen droughts before, and this one may ultimately rank among the worst.

I have beside me the most recent Drought Monitor map released last Thursday. As you can see, a significant portion of central South Dakota indicated here on the map is considered in an exceptional drought, the most severe category the Monitor recognizes.

A considerably larger portion of the State is experiencing extreme drought, and 80 percent of the State is currently experiencing some drought today. Let me share some statistics with you. The ranching communities of Kadoka and Newell both experienced their second driest June on record. For the months of April and June combined, the communities of Timber Lake, Kennebec, and Faulkton experienced the driest conditions ever for those communities. And we have records going back more than 100 years.

The first 6 months of this year were the driest ever for Timber Lake. That community received 3.61 inches of precipitation for the entire 6-month period, a mere 35 percent of average. It also set an all time record temperature on Saturday of 112 degrees.

Also last Saturday, it was 116 degrees in Mobridge, South Dakota, a regional trade center, larger than the other towns I have mentioned. Mobridge, located near the North Dakota border along the Missouri River, it is a regional trade center, larger than the other towns that I mentioned. It had the driest 6 months ever recorded in that community, only 2.23 inches of precipitation over an entire half year.

This is less than 25 percent of their average rainfall. This is farm and ranch country and the effects have been devastating. Agricultural conditions are very dire and deteriorating. I have heard reports of ranchers completely liquidating their cattle herds as feed and water disappear. There is insufficient grass to get the entire herd through the summer; there is no hay to get these animals through the fall and winter. Wheat fields have burned up and hopes for a decent corn and soybean harvest are fading fast.

The record high temperatures of last week have come at the time that the corn is tasseling, a critical time for the crop. A farmer can lose up to 8 percent of yield a day under conditions of such severe stress. Conditions on the afternoon of July 15 on the family farm of one of the leaders of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association was 112 degrees in the shade, only 20 percent humidity, accompanied by 42 mile-an-hour winds. This in the center part of the State as well, but a bit more south and east.

Despite burn bans in many counties in the State, wild fires are becoming an increasing problem as well. As just one example, on July 5, a prairie fire began near Wakpala, South Dakota, and it burned across 600 acres of grassland in 25 minutes.

The water level in Lake Oahe, the largest of South Dakota's four Missouri River reservoirs, continues to drop and is now only about 4 feet above the record low set 2 years ago. Unfortunately, the precipitation outlook is not good. According to Weather Service computer models and projections, there is no relief in sight. Any new rainfall is expected to be light and isolated, and temperatures are expected to be much warmer than average in the coming weeks.

The temperature in our State capital of Pierre on Saturday was 117 degrees, an all-time record temperature. The Climate Prediction Center's most recent drought outlook predicts that the current drought will not only continue; it will worsen in the Dakotas and may expand across eastern Montana, Minnesota, and parts of Iowa.

Unfortunately, compared to other natural disasters, drought suffers from some real public relations disadvantages. First, they do not get memorable names to personify them like hurricanes. They creep in slowly and quietly, and they don't destroy buildings or sweep away trees; they do not inundate cities.

In other words, they simply do not make for good video on the evening news. But the damage they wreak is just as real as any other natural disaster. Droughts devastate family farms and ranches, small businesses and local economies. Families and communities suffer the same kind of economic and emotional toll from droughts that are caused by other natural disasters.

The stress for families worsens as the cattle herd is sold and nonfarm or ranch employment is sought if any can be found in smaller rural communities.

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Sometimes, such severe droughts even weaken the intrinsic optimism of the people who live and work and raise families in rural America. That is what is beginning to happen in central South Dakota today. Conditions there are truly devastating, and it is becoming increasingly clear that Congress must do something to address this situation.

Many other areas of the country are similarly affected and they deserve our attention and our assistance, just as much as do victims of hurricanes or floods or earthquakes or any other natural event that devastates economies and lives.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to bring this situation to my colleagues' attention, and I look forward to working together to address this important matter.

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

(Mr. WELDON of Florida 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 Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CRASH OF TWA FLIGHT 800

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, today is the 10th anniversary of the tragic crash of TWA Flight 800, which took the lives of 230 men and women off the coast of Long Island, near my congressional district. It is important that we keep alive the memory of those who perished over the Atlantic just moments after departing for home or on a school trip or to visit loved ones, and we must do all that we can to safeguard the flying public against future disasters.

Just as importantly, the brave families of those who lost their loved ones during the Flight 800 disaster deserve our recognition, as do the emergency personnel, volunteers and neighbors who selflessly worked for days on end in the recovery efforts.

Like other challenging times our Nation has faced, the reaction to the Flight 800 catastrophe brought out the best not only in my constituents, but in so many others in the surrounding towns, States and across the Nation who joined in mourning the loss of so many lives and helped a community recover from its most horrific tragedy.

Throughout and despite their grief, the families of the victims worked tirelessly to build a permanent memorial with the help of Navy Seabees and thousands of dedicated local and building trade union members. Today this solemn monument serves as a constant reminder of our tremendous loss one decade ago.

The memory of the passengers of Flight 800 lives on because of the continued work of people who will always remember what happened. I have visited the site of the Flight 800 Memorial many times. The recent completion of the monument offers some measure of closure to everyone who was affected by this terrible tragedy.

In the 10 years since Flight 800, hundreds of thousands have visited the park in an acknowledgment of a shared sorrow for those who died. The monument ensures that future generations can do the same.

As we recognize the 10th anniversary of the Flight 800 disaster, it is important that we take stock of our progress in preventing air disasters over the last decade.

We have made some great strides in aviation safety, particularly, for example, with design upgrades for planes and an ongoing effort to mitigate fuel tank flammability, the cause of the Flight 800 crash.

But what haven't we done? Regrettably, we have not addressed the underlying cause of the Flight 800 explosion. The FAA has delayed taking on this challenge for years, and we still do not have a final FAA directive that will protect every air traveler.

The cause of the Flight 800 catastrophe was determined years ago, and we know how to prevent similar disasters. We have the technology to protect against another tragedy like the one witnessed 10 years ago, but to date we still don't have the mandate for change.

Last year, I introduced H.R. 4174, the Transport Aircraft Fuel Tank Safety Act, which requires the FAA to retrofit all planes with new technology and to increase safety. In addition, I have recently petitioned the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to hold hearings on the safety of fuel tanks on airplanes and get to the bottom of why we don't upgrade all planes with the necessary technology.

I am hopeful that my colleagues here in the Congress will work with me to bring an end to this delay. With the completion of the Flight 800 monument, we have taken significant steps towards maintaining the memory of Flight 800, but we should also ensure that we don't have another Flight 800.

I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the surviving families and friends of the victims of Flight 800, and to commend them on the grace and dignity with which they handled unspeakable pain.

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

(Mr. GILCHREST 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 gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO WITHDRAW OUR TROOPS FROM IRAQ

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

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House for 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, I urge this administration to take immediate action on a plan to withdraw our troops from Iraq. The American people were misled into this war, and they want the leaders of this Nation to take responsibility and end this war now.

I was among those who opposed the tragic decision to launch this war. I warned that the invasion and occupation of Iraq would plunge us into a bloody quagmire of violence that would only intensify the instability in the Middle East and leave our own Nation less secure and less able to protect our national interest.

The sad truth is that all the grimmest predictions have now come true. Today, the Taliban are mounting a major comeback in Afghanistan. Iran is on the verge of producing a nuclear weapon. Somalia is dominated by an al Qaeda-inspired militia, and the Hezbollah has attacked Israel. In return, Israel has attacked Lebanon. Here at home, our Nation is at risk.

As fundamental recommendations of the 9/11 Commission remain unfulfilled, those who still support the Iraq war often claim it has made this Nation a safer place, that it has kept away the terrorists and stopped another 9/11 tragedy.

Unfortunately, such wishful thinking is only an effort to justify the horrendous human suffering that we have caused by this misguided mission, an effort to justify a war that was never properly planned and executed, a war that has wounded thousands and cost the lives of 2,547 American soldiers.

The human toll of this war is still climbing, and throughout the world terrorism is on the rise. This administration talks a lot about national security, but without doing anything about it.

Those in Congress know the war in Iraq has made America a more vulnerable Nation. Congress is appropriating millions and millions of dollars on homeland security projects. The U.S. Capitol complex is saturated with security, and certainly no one in this body behaves as if the war in Iraq has made our Nation safe from terrorism.

In fact, the Iraq war has only inspired terrorism. Democracy is not flourishing in the Middle East, and the costs of the Iraq war and our global antiterrorist operations will top $500 billion next year.

It is time to bring our troops home and to devote our resources to protecting the American people.

SUPPORT ISRAEL IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REICHERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, today I was proud to be one of the speakers outside the United Nations in New York at a huge rally in support of Israel. It was attended by tens of thousands of people and showed strong support for the people of Israel as they struggle against terrorism. I would hope that later on this week there will be a resolution on the House floor to once again show Congress' bipartisan support for Israel.

Mr. Speaker, Israel's fight against terrorism is our fight. The war on terrorism is our war. It is everybody's war. We need to support Israel in this time of struggle. It makes no difference whether terrorists drop bombs on Haifa or send planes into the World Trade Center or blow up innocent commuters on their way to work in India or London or Madrid, or blow up people in hotels in Bali and other places.

Terrorism is terrorism, and those of us who think that terrorism is only over there are certainly kidding themselves. Terrorism is everywhere, and the only way to stomp out terrorism is to show a resolve and to get the job done by defeating terrorists. That is precisely what Israel is trying to do.

Let us remember who started this war. Israel pulled out of Lebanon 6 years ago, so there is no pretext of any occupation. There is no pretext of anything other than the fact that terrorists would like to destroy democratic societies such as Israel, and Israel remains the only democracy in the Middle East.

These terrorists want to destroy the democratic way of life, not only in Israel, but in America and all other democracies of the world. That is why Israel's fight is the fight of all decent nations, including the United States of America.

These terrorists want to destroy life. Israel is standing up to them and saying enough is enough. We should let Israel finish the job.

Israel wants to knock out the terrorist group Hezbollah for good, so they can never return to south Lebanon and threaten Israel's communities from the south of Lebanon on the northern border with Israel. We should let them do that because the status quo is not acceptable. We have already heard words from the naysayers telling Israel to use restraint.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that we can use restraint, or that Israel can use restraint, or that any country can use restraint towards terrorists that are out to kill them and us. We should let Israel finish the job.

Let us remember how this started. The terrorists came down from Lebanon, raided Israel, went on Israeli territory, killed Israeli soldiers, captured a couple of them, took them across the border. That is how it started.

Imagine if this had happened to us, if someone came from the Mexican border or the Canadian border, attacked U.S. soldiers on U.S. soil, killed some of them and then took them back over the border.

Mr. Speaker, we would be just as outraged, and we would have every right to go after those terrorists. That is what Israel is going to do.

Hezbollah is a terrorist organization. It is fighting a proxy war for Iran and Syria. Iran and Syria lurk behind this. Iran and Syria are the biggest supporters of terrorism.

A couple of years ago, this Congress passed and the President signed the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. I wrote that act. I was the lead sponsor of that act, along with my good friend, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. That act slapped sanctions on Syria for the first time in history.

President Bush has only implemented some of the sanctions in that act, and I call on the President to now implement all of the sanctions on the act. Now is the time. Now we have to show Syria and other countries that support terrorists that we are resolved to defeat terrorism.

I was very happy when the United States vetoed the one-sided resolution at the United Nations, once again condemning Israel, once again discrediting the United Nations. The United States needs to be steadfast in support, and this Congress needs to do so as well.

So in conclusion, let me say I look forward to a resolution later on in this week. The United States needs to stand by its friend, Israel, and Israel needs to stand by its friend, the United States, and all peace-loving and democratic nations in the world ought to stand shoulder to shoulder firmly against terrorism. Because if terrorism is not contained in one area of the world, it surely will come to every other area of the world.

THE U.S.-OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, tonight we rise at a time when people all over the world are watching the Middle East, are watching the bombs that have lit up both Israel and Lebanon, are watching the troop movements and are hoping earnestly for peace.

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Certainly the support of Israel is going to be loudly and consistently articulated in this Chamber this week, but we also have an opportunity to do something substantive, to improve our engagement with the Middle East in the coming week.

This week, we have an opportunity to vote on a substantive agreement which will bring one of the nations of the Middle East closer to the United States, promote economic opportunity and integration in the region, and lay the groundwork, in my view, for closer ties between the United States and some of our key partners in the Middle East and one in particular.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight as cochairman of the Middle East Economic Partnership Caucus, and I expect to be joined by a couple of my other cochairmen, to talk tonight about the benefits of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement, which we expect to be voted on in the House this week.

At a time when there is great instability in the Middle East, at a time when we are concerned on how the Middle East affects our homeland security, at a time when we want to do something positive to create economic opportunities in a region where the lack of them has spawned terrorism, this is a small, but important, opportunity.

The Middle East, we believe, is increasingly becoming economically integrated with the West, and if we want to fight the root causes of terrorism, we should be encouraging that. It is critical that now, more than ever, we encourage this integration to promote closer ties, democracy and social liberalization through a process of economic interaction and close cooperation.

In recent years, America's dialogue in the Middle East has been deepened by the addition of bilateral and, ultimately, strongly bipartisan free trade agreements, first with Israel, then with Jordan, then with Morocco and, most recently, with Bahrain.

The U.S.-Oman FTA, slated for a vote in the House Chamber this Thursday, largely builds off of the successful model that was set by the U.S.-Bahrain FTA, further supporting openness and stronger ties between the U.S. and the Middle East and the Maghreb regions.

Over the past year, Oman has clearly demonstrated a powerful commitment to this agreement and closer relations with the West, both in terms of its political will and institutional resources, making significant strides in improving its labor practices and opening its markets and being accountable for intellectual property issues and cracking down on intellectual property violations.

In numerous communications with our U.S. trade Representative, Omani leaders have promised to take a number of concrete steps by October 31, 2006, to build on the strong labor reforms already implemented, and in my view, as a member of the Trade Subcommittee who has closely followed this process, Oman has come further than virtually any other country we have ever engaged in this manner in dealing with core labor issues. Their commitment shows Oman's determination to address all concerns, while respecting the rule of law and its legislative processes.

In addition, all of these commitments are fully verifiable because Oman has agreed to have all of them reviewed under the FTA's labor consultation mechanism. The U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement provides one of the highest degrees of market access of any U.S. free trade agreement to date and accounts for a substantial market access across Oman's entire services regime.

This agreement will make 100 percent of U.S. imports and exports and consumer and industrial goods duty free on the day the agreement enters into force. It also provides duty free treatment to 87 percent of our agricultural exports from day one. In terms of being accountable for intellectual property rights violations, Oman has agreed to criminal standards for copyright infringement and stronger remedies and penalties. It will increase criminal and civil protection against unlawful encoding of satellite TV signals and criminalize end-use piracy, providing strong

deterrence against piracy and counterfeiting.

This is just a small sample of some of the benefits of the U.S.-Oman FTA, and this agreement is far more important than the small market that Oman would suggest.

We recognize that Oman is a small place. It is probably the equivalent, in terms of purchasing power comparability, of entering into a free trade agreement with our own North Dakota, but it is extremely significant because it is a part of a much larger Middle East puzzle. It is part of a region that we expect, in coming years, to build much closer ties with, and the Oman agreement, as it has been laid out and as their government has agreed to embrace, is a very strong model for going forward with future agreements in this region.

The U.S.-Oman FTA is, after all, a comprehensive and high-standard agreement. High standards are provided for including comprehensive protection for intellectual property rights, government procurement transparency, and trade facilitation. Developing a high-quality FTA with Oman will establish a high standard for all of the other Gulf Cooperation Council Members and set a very high standard for them to meet.

Consequentially, the FTA represents a significant benefit to U.S. trade that extends well beyond those benefits that currently exist in Oman. The FTA establishes a secure, predictable, legal framework for U.S. investors in Oman and includes high-standard legal protection for their model on U.S. legal principles, such as substantive due process and the ability to comment on proposed laws and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, the FTA also creates and expands opportunities for U.S. goods and services. This FTA will broaden and strengthen the bilateral, commercial relationship between the United States and Oman beyond the approximately $748 million generated in two-way trade during 2004. One hundred percent of this bilateral trade in consumer and industrial products will become duty free under this agreement.

The U.S.-Oman FTA will build upon the trade and investment framework agreement signed between our two countries on July 7, 2004, and will spur continued growth of U.S. direct investment which in 2003 was $358 million, a substantial increase over the previous year. In addition, the FTA will increase the competitiveness of U.S. exporters and service providers in the Omani market, providing for an increased market share for U.S. manufacturers and service providers. In 2004, U.S. goods exports were $330 million, up 2.3 percent from 2003.

Oman, in my view, is a likely market for U.S. oil and gas equipment and services, transportation equipment, water and environmental technology, medical equipment, electrical and mechanical equipment, power generation and transmission equipment and services, telecommunications equipment and services, franchising, and U.S. poultry and beef. In each of these areas, we potentially will get a leg up on our foreign competition.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the FTA will encourage greater political and economic reforms. It is worth remembering that in 1997 Omani laws were enacted guaranteeing Omani women equal rights in both education and employment. Women have the right to vote and run for office in consultation council elections, which are held every 4 years.

In 1992, in an attempt to balance growth on its non-oil sector with concern for its natural resources, Oman developed a national conservation strategy, which was subsequently approved by the Council of Ministers and spells out the need and procedures for incorporating environmental considerations in the development plans.

In 1994, Oman became a member of the International Labor Organization, the ILO, and has satisfied various labor-related accession requirements for membership to the WTO.

In 2003, it is worth noting the government adopted its first comprehensive labor law that allows workers the right of association and to pursue labor disputes in court. That law abolished the 1973 prohibition on the right to strike. This is a radical move in a part of the Arab world where labor rights is increasingly an important movement.

The U.S.-Oman FTA advances modernization programs, implemented by Sultan Qaboos. In accordance with its accession to the WTO in 2000, Oman announced its intention to eliminate mandatory shelf life standards for shelf stable foods and to adopt internationally recognized CODEC standards for the labeling of prepackaged foods.

Additionally, as part of its WTO accession, Oman has adopted derogations to the Gulf Cooperation Council patent law to comply with its obligations under the TRIPS agreement, and has committed itself to begin negotiations to join the WTO agreement on government procurement.

In 2004, Oman removed its temporary ban on imports of U.S. poultry and poultry products, moving ahead of some of our other trading partners.

We need to recognize, Mr. Speaker, this agreement also provides support for an important strategic ally in the war on terrorism. This, I think, is as strong a reason to support this agreement as any.

The United States has maintained relations with the sultanate since the early years of American independence, and that friendship has grown over time. Oman supported the 1979 Camp David Accords and was one of three Arab League states that did not break relations with Egypt after signing the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in 1979.

In April of 1994, Oman hosted the plenary meeting of the Water Working Group of the peace process, the first gulf state to do so.

Oman occupies a strategic position on the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Following the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Oman was the very first of the gulf states to formalize defense ties with the U.S. Oman has been a party with the U.S. to a military cooperation agreement since 1980, which was recently renewed in 2000. May I say, Mr. Speaker, when I joined a delegation that went to Oman just a year ago, I was very impressed by the commitment of Sultan Qaboos, as he articulated it to us, to continue and to strengthen this relationship.

It is worth noting that the Oman-U.S. Facilities Access Agreement has provided crucial support to the protection of Kuwaiti tankers in 1987. In 1988, during the Persian Gulf crisis, Oman assisted the U.N. coalition effort. Military bases in Oman were used in 2001 by U.S. coalition forces involved in ground raids against both the Taliban and Afghanistan and against Osama bin Laden.

The U.S.-Oman FTA, in other words, in my view at least, is a key building block toward building a broader set of economic relationships in the Middle East that can encourage economic growth. It is consistent with the 9/11 Commission's observation and recommendation, and here I quote: ''that the U.S. Government has announced the goal of working toward a Middle East trade area. A comprehensive U.S. strategy to counterterrorism should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and to enhance prospects for their children's future.''

This important statement by the 9/11 Commission I think is consistent with moving forward this week to approve this Oman FTA.

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Mr. Speaker, in assessing the impact of the Oman FTA, I have done a lot of research and I have tried to, I think, come up with an honest assessment of how this free trade agreement will affect our balance of trade.

As the Speaker well knows, I have spoken here many times about my concern about our large trade imbalance, about the fact that we are running a record trade deficit, and I am happy to say that my research suggests that the U.S.-Oman FTA will be a move in the right direction, if adopted. This FTA builds upon a well-established and receptive market for U.S. goods and services.

In 2005, U.S. exports were $593,000,000, up significantly from 2004. And again, I would note that 100 percent of bilateral trade in consumer and industrial products will become duty-free effective immediately on passage of this agreement, creating a substantial market in that part of the Middle East for our exports beyond what we have already.

Additionally, this FTA benefits key U.S. export and service sectors such as

the banking, securities, audio visual, express delivery, telecommunications, computer and related services, distribution, health care, insurance, construction, architecture and engineering sectors.

This agreement, as I have noted before, also contains tough intellectual property rights provisions to enforce strict antipiracy and counterfeiting laws. While we continue to call for an ambitious outcome of the negotiations of the WTO-Doha Development Round, we also recognize that it is important that we go forward with bilateral agreements such as the Oman agreement.

The passage of this FTA would send a strong signal to the world that the U.S. is going to continue to be a leader on trade policy, and that we were committed to opening a very important additional beachhead in the Middle East.

I think that when I talk to people in northwestern Pennsylvania, an area where we export a lot of manufactured goods, people want to know if this or any other new FTA has the potential to create future trade imbalances. I think it is particularly instructive that the U.S. International Trade Commission has done a study of the Oman FTA, and I would like to read from a part of the executive summary.

The finding of the ITC was as follows: The U.S.-Oman FTA will likely have a small but positive impact on the U.S. economy. The benefits will likely be moderated by the relatively small size of Oman's economy and Oman's share of U.S. trade. Oman accounted for less than .5 percent of total U.S. goods trade in 2004. The trade and welfare effects of tariff elimination on trade and goods will likely be negligible, reflecting not only the small volume of trade between the United States and Oman, but also the low tariffs on current bilateral trade. Tariff liberalization under the FTA will likely have little effect on the U.S. economy, industry and consumers because U.S. imports of most goods from Oman already enter duty-free or at low duty rates. Tariff liberalization will likely have a greater effect on U.S. imports of apparel from Oman, albeit from a small and diminished 2005 base. As such, the expected increase in U.S. apparel imports from Oman will be small in absolute value and quantity terms. In addition, the resulting increased annual levels of U.S. apparel imports from Oman will likely remain below the 2004 level of U.S. apparel imports from Oman. Most of the expected growth in U.S. apparel imports from Oman will likely displace U.S. apparel imports from other countries rather than domestic production.

Continuing, the FTA will likely increase export opportunities for U.S. firms when Oman immediately removes its uniform tariff of 5 percent ad valorem on U.S. goods and as it phases out its other tariffs on U.S. goods. The 5 percent tariff applied to 91 percent of U.S. exports to Oman in 2004. These exports consist mostly of machinery, transportation equipment, and measuring instruments. The FTA will also likely increase opportunities for U.S. providers of services through improved market access and greater regulatory transparency. For example, the FTA will liberalize provisions affecting trade in insurance services as well as banking and securities services such as asset management services.

So I think the point here, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a great opportunity for us, not a great threat, but is also an opportunity, I think, for closer economic engagements in the Middle East.

With that, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. RYAN, who is cochairman of our caucus, for such time as he may consume.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I just want to congratulate the gentleman for all his leadership on this issue. And I too want to come to the floor of the House of Representatives to talk about how important this Oman trade agreement really is and how it fits in the whole scheme of things with respect to our strategy for the Middle East.

Now, a lot of people are paying attention to the Middle East. We watched over the weekend all of the awful things that are happening in Israel and southern Lebanon, and we realize that if we are to win the war on terror, we have to look at a short-term strategy and a long-term strategy. And when I think about the things we want to accomplish with the Middle East and with moderate Arab countries, democracy. Democracy and freedom and individual rights are the ultimate, the ultimate weapon against terrorism. When a young person grows up into a closed society with no opportunity to reach his or her destiny or his aspirations or dreams, they are going to be more susceptible to the likes of al Qaeda. They are going to be more susceptible to joining into some kind of a perverted ideology that can convince a young man or a young woman to strap on a suicide belt and go into a pizza parlor and blow themselves up. But people growing up in free societies, in democracies, are people who have a chance to reach their aspirations, to channel their energies to better themselves and their families. By growing up in a free society, that is how we can ultimately make sure that our children aren't fighting the war on terror that we are fighting, aren't confronting the kind of awful terrorism we are confronting.

Why does anything that I just said have anything to do with the Oman trade agreement? Well, here, Mr. Speaker, is what it has to do with the Oman trade agreement. With these trade agreements, we don't get just lower tariffs for corn and soybeans and cars and plastics; with these trade agreements, we get good government. With these trade agreements, we get these countries who voluntarily change their rules and their laws to be more free and open to their own people. By engaging in a trade agreement with the United States of America, a country in the Middle East such as Oman, embraces the rule of law, embraces enforceable contracts, individual rights.

Let me just go through a few of the things that Oman has agreed to as a consequence and as a part of this free trade agreement.

Political reforms. Oman has enacted reforms to increase public participation in government, extending voting rights for its consultive council to all citizens over the age of 21, and appointing women to key positions in its government, including the first female Ambassador from an Arab country appointed to serve in the United States. Oman is a leader in women's rights. Oman is a leader in suffrage so that women are treated more equally in the Arab gulf.

Economic reforms. Oman has enacted broad economic reforms to open itself to trade and investment and provide opportunities to its citizens. In fact, the economic freedom of the world 2005 ranks Oman 17 of 127 countries analyzed in terms of economic freedom. They are the second highest ranking among all countries in the proposed Middle East free trade area.

Labor reforms. This is where a lot of progress has been made. Oman has unilaterally, across all labor laws, through decrees and commitments, upgraded their labor standards for their workers, for their employees, for their citizens to at least the ILO core standards. This is the strongest labor agreement, trade agreement, we have ever had with the free trade agreements with the United States.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Will the gentleman yield for a moment on that point?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Because the gentleman really was, on the floor, our leading not only advocate for but expert on the Bahrain FTA, comparing this free trade agreement and the commitment the government has made on top of it at a time certain, to the agreement made by Bahrain, how does this compare in strength?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. This exceeds the Bahrain agreement because, like Bahrain, Oman agreed not only to the core ILO, International Labor Organization standards and worker rights, but with the Bahrain agreement, Bahrain simply agreed to introduce legislation to their Parliament and then try to pass the legislation, upgrading their labor standards.

Oman went beyond that. Oman agreed to decree, to put these into law. So not only, with Bahrain we got the promise to propose legislation; in Oman we got the law. We got the changes. Changes are taking place right now as we speak. Some changes took place last week. All of the labor standard increases will take place by October 30 of this year. So the fact is with Oman, because of the negotiations of the free trade agreement, we are rising the tide of worker rights. We are

rising the quality and openness of this society. We are looking at an ally who has been a tremendous ally in the war on terror. They have ended their Israeli boycotts. They have opened up and are opening up trade with Israel. They are giving women unprecedented rights relative to other Arab countries. And all of this is being done because of trade agreements.

We didn't send a division of soldiers to Oman. We didn't parachute the 82nd Airborne into Oman. We didn't fire a bullet. We didn't put a boot on the ground. We engaged in trade negotiations and trade agreements, and this democratization, this openness, this free economic model, is being embraced by the Omanis because of these trade agreements.

So what we are accomplishing here is the single most important aspect of our war on terror, the single most important aspect of making sure that our children are safe from a world of terror when they reach our age group, when they come of age; and that is, making the Middle East more free, more democratic, more open, so that young people growing up in these countries will have opportunities to pursue their dreams, to pursue their aspirations, to determine the direction of their own lives.

That, in a nutshell is why these agreements are so important in the Middle East. That is why this particular agreement with Oman is so important to pass because of all of the wonderful things they are doing to help their own countrymen, to open up their society, to liberalize their economy, to give people individual rights in their economy so they can reach those dreams, all with an agreement that is in our best interest economically.

It is good for our jobs. We will sell more of American-made equipment. We will sell more American-made agricultural products. We will get more jobs out of the deal, and they will get closer to a much more open society. That, Mr. Speaker, is what I call a win-win situation. That is why I think it is so important that we take all of these wonderful reforms that they have enacted and pass the rest of these into law by implementing this Oman Free Trade Agreement, because it is good for Omanis, it is good for Americans, and it is, most importantly, good for keeping democracy alive in the Middle East, keeping freedom alive, and keeping terrorism at bay.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Will the gentleman yield again?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I would be happy to.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. On that point, I think it is important that the listeners and our colleagues understand some of the labor standards that are being implemented here. We are talking about a commitment by Oman to strengthen collective bargaining laws, to protect the right to strike, to ensure the reinstatement of wrongly dismissed workers, to allow multiple union federations, to ensure adequate penalties for antiunion discrimination, to end the government involvement in union activity and to do things like strengthen efforts against child labor that have been such a blight in that region.

Oman, at a stroke, is taking a real leadership role in moving forward in this area that is going to set this up as a modernizing government and as a modernizing society that really is going to be a good example in the region. And I wonder if the gentleman agrees with me that this breakthrough by Oman is something not only important for us to sustain in terms of our economic opportunities, but also, I think, fulfills part of our role as a liberalizing force in the world and setting the right sort of example in the Middle East.

□ 2045

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I will. And if the gentleman will yield, I just want to read a quote from the 9/11 Commission report which talked about these FTAs, and the 9/11 Commission which revealed what should America do to win the war on terrorism to make Americans safer again. They said a ''comprehensive U.S. strategy should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and enhance the prospects of their children.'' That is why we should engage in these FTAs, these free trade agreements in the Middle East.

This new breakthrough from Oman on all these higher labor standards that they are raising is precedent setting. It does encourage its neighbors just like Bahrain is now engaging in. It encourages their neighbors to increase not only their standards of labor for their citizens but to increase their citizens' access to prosperity, access to opportunity, access to bettering their lives for themselves. That is what is accomplished by seeing this dialogue take place. That is what is accomplished when we as Americans engage in mutual economic agreements like this.

The thing that also impresses me with the Oman Free Trade Agreement, just like we had with Bahrain and Morocco and others, is our governments are getting to know each other much better. Because we are involved in a global war on terrorism, it inevitably involves a strong level of dialogue between the United States Government and the United States Congress and the governments and the leaders of those countries. But what we are lacking is human-to-human interaction, people-to-people interaction, understanding of the American people, of the citizens of Oman, the citizens of Bahrain, the citizens of Middle Eastern countries.

That is what trade accomplishes. Trade brings people together. Trade brings people into engaging in mutually beneficial endeavors, the people of America, farmers, manufacturers. We make tractors, Case Construction Equipment in Racine, Wisconsin. We sell cheese. We grow corn and soybeans, General Motors cars. We want our people to go to these countries and understand them, know them, sell them their products and have people-to-people interaction. And if we have people-to-people interaction through trade, through business agreements, through business arrangements, then we have better understanding of one another. And better understanding of one another, better friendships will bridge the gaps between cultures. That will help us fundamentally understand what is going on in the Middle East, and it will help them understand us.

My biggest fear is that people in the Arab world, they call it the infamous ''Arab Street,'' that they will look at al Jazeera or VH1 or some distorted lens of what Americans stand for, of who Americans are, of what American culture is, and that is how they will frame their opinions. That is not what I want them to think America is all about. What I hope people in the Arab world think America is all about is by meeting an American, is by meeting somebody from America who can engage in an agreement of mutual economic behavior, who can engage in trade, who can sell corn and soybeans and things like that.

That is how we help bridge this gap, bring understanding of each other, and work together to fighting the war on terror. By bringing moderate Muslim countries in allegiance with us and growing our alliances and growing our strategic allies, we will help defeat the terrorists. The minority of Islamic fundamentalists in this part of the world that seek to do them and us harm, we can work together and defeat that. And what the best consequence of it at the end of the day is people become more prosperous. There are more jobs created at both sides of the ocean, both sides of the equation.

That is why I think this is such an important trade agreement, and that is why this is an important part of our continuing efforts to increase ties and economic engagement with countries in the Middle East. And this is, of all things, one of the most successful foreign-policy tools we have at our disposal, and it is a sign of respect. It shows these countries, Oman in particular, that we respect them. We respect their people. We respect their leaders. We respect the reforms that they are implementing to give their people more freedom. That is a sign of respect, and I think with respect you get better understanding, better allies, and better strategic alliances, and that is all to the good.

I just want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for having this hour to discuss this. We will be voting on this in a couple of days, and this is yet again a very, very important piece of our foreign policy and our economic policy to create more jobs here and to make us more safe. And I just want to

thank the gentleman for having this discussion tonight.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for coming forward and so vividly presenting on the floor a positive vision of how we can engage the Middle East, how we can help them create opportunities, and how we can offer a positive agenda for fighting Islamofascism by getting at its root causes, by creating economic opportunities for young Arab men, by creating economic opportunities for these communities at a time when, in lieu of those opportunities, increasingly they turn to a dark vision of the world.

I think tonight, as the skies are lit up in Lebanon and over Israel, it is important for us to be able to offer a different approach for engaging those countries and for ultimately bringing them into the economic mainstream. I thank the gentleman for his extraordinary remarks.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. If the gentleman will yield further.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. I will yield, and I believe we have another speaker as well.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I think it is important to note the bipartisan nature of these agreements in the past. We had the best vote count of this session of Congress on a trade agreement in the last Bahraini Free Trade Agreement. We passed with large bipartisan votes the Moroccan Free Trade Agreement. We passed with great bipartisan votes the Jordanian Free Trade Agreement. The Oman Free Trade Agreement already passed with a very large bipartisan vote in the other body, the Senate.

We, hopefully, will continue to pass these things with good bipartisan agreements because in this sense it is very important that as we go overseas on an issue that is so important that we speak with one voice, as Democrats and as Republicans, that we make these bipartisan. And I am very pleased with the fact that Congress has for large measure treated these important Middle East free trade agreements on a bipartisan basis. Our caucus includes three Republican cochairmen and three Democrat cochairmen. So I do believe that we will see support from the other side of the aisle. I do not know how big it will be, but it is very important that we speak with one voice, saying it is not just the Republicans who want to do this, it is not just the Democrats. It is that the Americans want to engage in trade with the Middle East countries we are talking about. We want to support their efforts to modernize, their efforts to open, to liberalize their economies. And that to me is a very important signal.

I see that we have been joined by the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am most grateful and delighted that a strong advocate of trade and fair trade has joined us tonight to speak out on the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) on this point.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding.

And I am delighted to be here on the floor with two of my colleagues who have been tremendous advocates of this free trade agreement and of the concept of free trade, the principle of free trade internationally and in our country.

I want to make two general points. I am sorry that I wasn't able to be here earlier, and I do not want to repeat what my colleagues have said. But there are two important overall points that I want to make that, even if you have made them, are worth thinking again about.

First is why free trade is important. Retirees simply do not, by definition, buy enough consumer goods to drive an economy our size. We are accustomed to a standard of living that is, frankly, the highest in the world. Our children expect to grow up and participate as adults in an economy that is thriving, in well-paying jobs that can provide them with a standard of living that my generation has enjoyed. Yet as the number of retirees explodes and the number of young people in the workforce contracts, our own Nation cannot provide the demand for goods that can produce the overall gross national product that will assure the standard of living we are accustomed to. So future generations are going to be more dependent on trade than we have been, and we must open markets for their goods.

The American population will not be able to buy the amount of stuff that would drive an economy that can produce the standard of living that we have enjoyed. So if we do not have consumers around the world, and, remember, the great majority of consumers are outside the United States, if we do not cultivate them, if they do not open their markets to our products, then we cannot sustain the level of economic well-being, the standard of living to which we have been accustomed, and we thereby disadvantage our children.

This small agreement with one small country will allow consumer and industrial goods to enter that country 100 percent duty free. One hundred percent duty free. And agricultural products will enter 87 percent duty free and over 10 years reach 100 percent duty free. This is a small market, but we are making these agreements with country after country after country. And most startling, our exports are growing most rapidly and the majority of our growth in export goods is with those countries that we have negotiated trade agreements with. Now, that stands to reason because if you sell your goods into a country where there is no duty, they are going to do better than if you sell them into a country where there is a 20 percent, 30 percent, 40 percent, 50 percent duty that pushes that price right up.

So in the big picture, our children, our grandchildren cannot do well unless we lay the foundation by opening markets for American products all across the world. So our economic well-being depends on free trade agreements. Those free trade agreements, and the gentlemen here on the floor with me tonight have been strong advocates of fair trade agreements, these free trade agreements address labor standards, environmental standards. We are the only Nation in the whole world that pushes those issues in the negotiation of trade agreements with other countries, and we are reaching new standards as we move forward and gain more experience.

Now we do not just require labor standards. We help nations build institutions to enforce those standards. So we look at do you have a department of labor. We look at does the department of labor have sufficient staff to enforce the law. We look at do the regulations take seriously the responsibility of enforcement. And we literally help nations not only understand how labor standards help them deliver the benefits of world trading to all in their society, but we help them understand that just having the standards to support all their people is not enough.

You do have to be able to enforce those standards. You do have to be able to take action against the exploitive employer. So these trade agreements are good for our kids. They are good for peoples of the world.

And that brings me to my second major point. Our security depends on agreements like that we have negotiated with Oman. The 9/11 Commission report cited our Middle Eastern free trade agreements and call for action on ''a comprehensive U.S. strategy that should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and enhance the prospects of their children's future.'' In other words, the 9/11 report was saying if you do not address the causes that are creating terrorism and the willingness to be terrorists in other societies, you cannot solve the problem.

And I want to just conclude by saying how very impressed I was when Ways and Means Committee members a little less than 2 years ago made a trip to the Middle Eastern nations that were interested in trade agreements and whose other trading agreements were about to expire.

□ 2100

We knew that they would need to think about this in advance carefully.

We know that participating in trade agreements means other countries have to modernize their law to meet high international standards. We knew it would take time, and we wanted to be sure to alert these other countries to the challenges that lay ahead for them in negotiating these free trade agreements and to the enormous benefits that would accrue to their people

in not only the present but future generations.

I must say, I was extremely impressed with the Sultan of Oman. He understood exactly what this was going to mean to his people. He is one of the Middle East leaders who understands that oil is a limited resource and he must prepare a broader base for economic success for his people in his own country, and he is doing some of the work in the more advanced areas of desalinization, thinking about the importance of water to his people and the demand in the world economy, particularly in the Middle East, for potable water.

He is a very forward-looking man. He is very committed to participation in the political process by women as well as men. He has appointed successful women to his top council. They do things slightly differently because they are coming from a different path, but he was very proud to have started worker committees. That was his initiative, because he knows workers have to have a better voice. They have to be free to talk about the problems, to work with management, to work with owners for everyone's success.

In this agreement, he has moved light years ahead, looking at the labor laws of other countries, understanding what it is going to take to provide the kind of support and protection that working people need in order for the benefits of trade to affect the lives, the quality of lives, the hopes and dreams, the opportunities of all the people in each society.

So when you look at not only the way this agreement opens markets and what that means for our people, when you look at what this means for our security as this great friend of ours, for over 170 years, and a leader in the region in economic and governance reforms, what they accomplish by moving forward into new thinking and new institutions to modernize their economy, all embodied in this trade agreement, you know it means not only greater prosperity for his country and for our country, it means greater peace for the world.

Free trade is about peace and prosperity. It must be fair trade. It must help all take part in the benefits of the trade agreement.

This is a remarkable agreement, and I very much appreciate the two gentlemen on the floor here, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for their diligent participation in all the consultative processes, because Congress is a part of developing these free trade agreements, that make these agreements possible. Your knowledge and expertise is truly a great service that you have given this country and that you have given our friend, Oman.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I would simply like to thank the gentlelady for her extraordinary and insightful comments in capsulizing the very powerful argument for passing this free trade agreement and ultimately recognizing the key role of Oman in that region.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin if he would like to make concluding remarks, and then I would like to make a further contribution, with the inspiration of the gentlelady from Connecticut.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to draw off the inspiration I just received from the gentlelady from Connecticut's comments.

As I listened to her give this excellent overview of not only the benefits of these trade agreements, but of this one in particular, of all the work that the Omanis have gone through to bring this up into shape, to increase their worker rights, to increase their transparency, to increase their participation in women's rights, I just couldn't help but thinking, What if we don't pass this? What if we say no? What if we here in the House of Representatives this week say, that is not good enough, sorry, no, to the Omanis?

The Omanis are taking a risk in their neighborhood. They are choosing whether or not to go down the path of the Iranians and the Syrians and others like that, or to go down the path of openness, of freedom, to be an ally with the U.S. in fighting the war on terror and giving people freedom.

What if we say no to that? I just cannot imagine the consequences of us working with this ally of ours, getting them to agree to all of these enormous amounts of reforms and concessions to make this trade agreement work, and then only to say no. That, in my opinion, Madam Speaker, would be a tragedy.

It would be a tragic mistake to say to this country, this ally, these people whom we have the utmost amount of respect for, to say, sorry, partisan politics. It is an election year. Didn't mean to have you as collateral damage, but no. That to me would be an outright tragedy if that happened.

So I want to conclude on a high note, and that high note is just as we helped lift the tide of freedom and economic engagement and economic freedom in Morocco, in Israel, in Jordan, in Bahrain, so too do I think we will do this in Oman this week. And all of that is going to increase U.S. jobs. Yes, it is going to help us sell more products to the region. But, most importantly, it is going to help the people in these countries have a better life. It is going to help them be more free. And that is going to help make sure that my children, my kids, who are 4, 3, and 1 year old, make sure that they live in a peaceful America, that they don't have to fight the fight against terror that we are right now engaged in. That is what this means to me when I put my card in the voting machine and vote on this agreement in a couple of days.

That is why this is so dearly important. That is why this is not just your rank-and-file trade agreement for widgets and corn and dairy or whatever. That is why this is an important trade agreement.

I really encourage all of my colleagues, put the partisan blinders aside for that day and vote with America, vote for your kids, vote for good economics and vote for freedom in the Middle East.

Madam Speaker, with that, I would be happy to conclude and say thank you to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. ENGLISH, for all your leadership on this issue. Thank you for hosting this discussion tonight. I think it has been very helpful. I just look forward to making sure this actually occurs, I think on Thursday when we do this.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

With that, I want to thank the gentleman again for his leadership on this issue, his vision and his commitment to building closer ties between the United States and the Middle East region.

The gentleman raised the very important question of not only the substance of the Oman agreement, but also its symbolism, because I think there will clearly be consequences to not passing the Oman FTA, if that were to happen in the House.

Oman, as the gentlelady noted, has been a steadfast ally of the United States for over 170 years. Oman has been a hugely valuable partner on the war on terror and has hosted U.S. soldiers and permitted the U.S. to use Oman as a critical launch site for ongoing operations in Afghanistan. Oman has embarked on what is clearly a large-scale, if not unprecedented, reform effort.

In terms of labor rights, worker safety, women's rights, Oman has shown tremendous commitment to improving these standards for both Omani workers, as well as the large number of expat workers currently working in Oman. They have a large number of guest workers, and this is part of their initiative.

Reforms in the area of labor have been commendable, even exceeding the level of commitment made by Bahrain as they entered into FTA with us. Were the Oman FTA not to receive the support of a wide majority of Congress, it would send tonight absolutely the wrong signal, not only to Oman, but to the entire Middle East region at a very sensitive moment. Passage of the FTA is not only in the commercial and political interests of the United States, it is also necessary to support the reforms in Oman and to deliver an important shot in the arm to stability in the Middle East region.

It is clear that despite turmoil within the Middle East, Oman has risen to become a regional leader, improving its labor standards, opening its markets and being accountable for intellectual property rights violations, among others.

Furthermore, our pact with Oman solidifies the strong U.S.-Oman alliance in the global war on terror. We listened tonight to the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, and also we have the March 2006 National Security Strategy specifically citing the need to advance trade and economic liberalization in the Persian Gulf region as a key part of a comprehensive U.S. strategy to bolster security, to fight terrorism and to oppose Islama-fascism. However, America's influence in the region has to be measured by more than projected military might. If we are going to help anchor the Middle East in the modern world, we clearly must reduce conflict in the region by promoting growth and opportunity.

As the gentleman from Wisconsin said tonight, the U.S.-Oman FTA is a win-win policy that only builds upon our country's goal of strengthening economic relations and increasing trade, fair trade, with our partners in the Middle East. By strengthening our ties with the key strategic ally committed to trade liberalization and economic reform, the U.S.-Oman FTA will demonstrate to other countries in the region the benefits of free and open rules-based trade and engagement with the United States.

I hope that come Thursday, my colleagues on a bipartisan basis, as the gentleman put it, will put aside their partisan blinders and consider supporting this trade pact when it reaches the floor. A ''yes'' vote means yet another step on the long road to expanding new economic opportunity for both of our regions.

IRAQ WATCH

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, once again we come to the floor this evening as part of Iraq Watch. We do so this evening with both heavy and somber hearts for everything that is going on as we currently speak in the Middle East. Our hearts especially go out to our great ally Israel, as it wards off vicious attacks by Hezbollah. Once again, it only underscores the need for us in this body to do the kind of oversight and review and have the kind of dialogue and discussion that has been absent on the floor of this House and in our respective committees.

Madam Speaker, as we have on so many of these occasions, we begin this evening by once again honoring as well those brave men and women who wear the uniform of our country. They serve this Nation so valiantly.

Let me also acknowledge so many veterans and individuals who have played such a key role, especially those from the Vietnam era, in understanding and helping us recognize that it is so important to differentiate between the warriors and the war. So we salute those brave men and women who are in harm's way, who are dealing with untenable situations they are confronted with in Iraq.

I especially want to draw attention again to a bill that we have before this body that we are still seeking more signatures to, and requesting and asking the Speaker and the majority leader to bring it to the floor by unanimous consent.

□ 2115

I do not believe that there is anyone in this body that does not understand the need for making sure that the Iraqi government does not grant amnesty to those who kidnap, kill, torture and maim American citizens and American troops.

And so I think it is so vitally important that this message be sent, especially as the insurgency only intensifies in the region. Brookings Institute and others who have polled find that 47 percent of the people in Iraq believe that it is okay to kill Americans. It is time that we send a clear message. That is why we come to the floor on successive evenings to send a clear message to the American public about what is transpiring before our eyes.

We pause, as I said earlier, both in somber and peaceful resolution that this conflict can be resolved speedily and we especially pray for those Americans who need to be evacuated from harm's way.

Madam Speaker, I am joined this evening by several of my colleagues who have come to this floor on repeated occasions to talk about a new direction that is needed in the Middle East, a new direction that needs to be taken by this Congress, a new direction that needs to be taken by this President, so we provide an opportunity for this great country of ours to once again move us forward out of harm's way and into a peaceful resolution to what has become consistently a quagmire known as Iraq.

With that, I recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Connecticut. It is good to be joined by my other colleague from New York (Mr. BISHOP) and Chris Van Hollen from Maryland.

Madam Speaker, I would like to speak for just a moment regarding what is happening in terms of the war on terror. We should all be alarmed. We see the events of recent days unfolding in Lebanon, Israel, in Gaza. And it is clear that terrorism is spreading. It is not declining.

I would submit that those events were inevitable, the law of unintended consequences, if you will, that many of us predicted when the resolution that authorized the invasion of Iraq came to the floor. I dare say that in the Mideast today there is an awareness on the part of world opinion that the war in Iraq has increased the likelihood of terrorist attacks around the world.

A recent poll that was commissioned by the BBC, and again, this was a poll that was taken in some 35 countries, found that 60 percent of the world believes that the threat of terrorism has increased some 60 percent, while only 12 percent believed that it has declined.

And the nexus was the war in Iraq, and the conduct of the war in Iraq. They saw the war in Iraq as an impediment to the defeat of terrorism. And the experts agree. There was a survey done of more than 100 individuals with extensive foreign policy experience and national security backgrounds.

And what was particularly disturbing is that among the experts, 84 percent said that the United States was not winning the war on terrorism, and some 86 percent said that the world was becoming more, not less, dangerous in terms of terrorism because of our involvement in Iraq.

This is extremely frightening. And let me put forth a premise to you, to my colleagues. I would suggest that it is not unrelated that we see Hamas and Hezbollah asserting themselves today, in the past several weeks, because there is a growing awareness that the United States is bogged down in Iraq, and that world opinion in terms of the role of the United States in Iraq is highly negative.

And what do we see in terms of the new Iraqi government and its relationship with Iran, a sponsor of Hezbollah and a sponsor of Hamas? We see exchange of diplomats. We see a billion dollar line of credit coming from Iran to Iraq. We see a military corporation agreement between Iran and Iraq. Iran, the sponsor of Hezbollah and Hamas. That is what we see. That is what we are seeing.

And we are listening to the foreign minister, the foreign minister of Iraq when asked about the United States pressuring Iran to disclose where they are in the development of nuclear technology, to disclose whether any of those efforts could be utilized to develop a nuclear bomb, a nuclear weapon.

And the Iraqi foreign minister is saying, do not pressure the Iranians; accept their word. I mean, what is happening? Are the American people aware of these particular events? And then of course at the same time, the forgotten war, if you will, the country that harbored al Qaeda, that was ruled by a radical Islamists sect called the Taliban is on the verge of unraveling.

The Afghan defense minister recently made this statement: we need five times the number of security forces to address the issue of a resurgent Taliban. Without them we are in real danger of collapse. So everywhere we look in terms of the Middle East, we see danger and we see danger to Israel, we see danger in the entire region. And we hear, ''Stay the course.''

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, the gentleman makes a great

premise that he asks us to respond to. But what I would like to do, if I could, is respond by quoting from a column in the New York Times yesterday by Frank Rich, who said: ''The Bush doctrine was a doctrine in name only, a sales strategy contrived to dress up the single mission of regime change in Iraq with the philosophical grandiosity worthy of FDR. There was never any serious intention of militarily preempting either Iran or North Korea whose nuclear ambitions were as naked then as they are now, or striking the countries that unlike Iraq were major enablers of Islamic terrorism. 'Axis of evil' was merely a classier brand name from the same sloganeering folks who gave us compassionate conservatism, and 'a uniter not a divider.'''

Madam Speaker, with that I would like to yield to my distinguished colleague from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut for yielding, and I thank him also for his leadership in organizing these very important discussions on the administration's failed policy with respect to Iraq, and for that matter the administration's failed policy with respect to the conduct of our foreign affairs in general.

It is a subject that we discuss all too infrequently in this Chamber. Let me just pick up on the point that Mr. LARSON just made. It was 4½ years ago that the President came into this Chamber to deliver his State of the Union Address for 2002.

It was in that address that he first characterized North Korea and Iran and Iraq as the Axis of Evil. And I think it is without argument, without debate today, that all three of those states present this country, our country, with greater threats to our safety and security than they did when they were first characterized as the axis of evil, and that is because we have embarked on a failed strategy in Iraq that has bogged us down, that is apparently without end, without success, and yet prevents us, because of our preoccupation with Iraq and because of the troop strength that has been needed in Iraq and prevents us from dealing with the threat that is now posed and was posed at the time by North Korea and the threat that was posed and is now posed by Iran.

Let me also comment on something that Mr. DELAHUNT from Massachusetts said repeatedly, the war in Iraq has been characterized as the centerpiece of the war on terror. It is frankly not at all the centerpiece on the war on terror. It is a diversion from the war on terror. It is a diversion that does not serve either the country well or serve our allies well.

We have a foreign policy, it seems to me, that is rooted in ideology as opposed to pragmatism, and we are learning the limits of applying that ideology as we deal unsuccessfully with the situation in North Korea and the situation in Iran.

We see the Middle East in flames as we speak, and we recognize that we have a long history that nothing good happens in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian territories unless the United States is intimately involved in being an honest broker to bring about resolution of vexing and difficult issues.

Let me share just a couple of statistics that I think speak to just how far off track we are in Iraq. The number of insurgents in 2003 was 5,000. Today that number stands at 20,000. I am sure we all remember when the insurgency was described as a few dead-enders.

I am sure we all remember when the Secretary of Defense rather dismissively described what was happening in Iraq by saying that ''freedom is messy.''

□ 2130

We now have a situation where those dead-enders, so to speak, have metastasized into 20,000 insurgents. The average number of daily attacks has risen in just 1 year from 53 to 75. This does not sound like an insurgency that is in its final throes, and yet that is what we were told.

The number of civilian casualties resulting from sectarian violence has increased by 600 per month, now to a total of nearly 1,600 lost innocent lives per month. That is the equivalent of a 9/11 every 2 months in Iraq. Would any one of us stand for that if that were happening in this country? We certainly would not. Yet the carnage continues, and sectarian violence has increased dramatically over this period of time.

Financially, the burn rate has doubled from nearly $4 billion per month to $8 billion per month over the past 2 years, and I am sure we all remember how dismissively the administration handled the early estimates of the war. When Mr. Lindsey first said it would be $100- to $200 billion that was dismissed out of hand, and we were told that it would be no more than $50- or $60 billion for the war. We are now $300 billion and counting, as I say, with no end in sight.

We all wish that we could believe the administration's happy talk with respect to stability taking hold, with respect to progress being made. But we are now 3½ years into this tragic conflict, and we are no closer to the goal of an Iraqi state that does not pose threats to the safety and security of this Nation.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I want to thank the gentleman from New York for his insightful comments, many of which were echoed by Paul Krugman in a New York Times article today called March of Folly.

With that I would like to yield to the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague from Connecticut, and thank him for his leadership on this very important issue of national security, and thank my colleagues Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. BISHOP of New York for all of their leadership.

I would just like to pick up where Mr. DELAHUNT and others left off with respect to the forgotten war in Afghanistan. I do think it is important, when we look at the situation in the world today, and we look at the violence erupting in the Middle East, we do remember what happened here in the United States back on September 11, 2001, and the origins of that attack.

As he reminds us, the attack on the United States, September 11, 2001, came from al Qaeda, al Qaeda that was sheltered by the Taliban government in Afghanistan; and that the world was with us when we responded, fully and forcefully, to those attacks of September, 2001.

In fact, the United Nations unanimously passed a resolution supporting us, our NATO allies universally supported us. In fact, they enacted a charter, part of a NATO charter saying an attack on one was an attack on all.

Yet today we are seeing in Afghanistan there has been a resurgence of Taliban activity, and at a very time when we are facing that resurgence, the United States is not providing a commitment that we need to make sure that we succeed against those who began and perpetrated the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Back then, instead of focusing on that battle against those who attacked us, we did divert our resources and our energy in Iraq.

The President gave a number of reasons back then for the action we were taking. We remember well the twin pillars of the argument. He said, well, they have got weapons of mass destruction. Many of us said, let's let the U.N. inspectors have a little more time to see whether that is true or not true.

The President said, no more time, we are going in. He also said there was collaboration between al Qaeda and the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The 9/11 Commission and many others have proven that that is not true either.

But it is important to remember that the President also advanced some other reasons for going to war in Iraq. One of the arguments he made was by the United States going to Iraq. By invading Iraq, we would help build stability in the Middle East, that we would promote democracy in the Middle East, that we would reduce the influence of the hardliners in the area and increase the influence of the moderates.

In fact, just a few weeks before the invasion of Iraq, in a speech before the American Enterprise Institute, here is what the President had to say. I think it is important to reflect on his words then as we look now at the terrible violence erupting in the Middle East.

He said then, and this was one of the rationales he gave us for going to war in Iraq, success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace and set in motion progress for a truly democratic Palestinian state. The passing of Saddam Hussein's regime will

deprive terrorist networks of a wealthy patron that pays for terrorist training and offers rewards to families of suicide bombers, and other regimes will be given a clear warning that support for terror will not be tolerated. That was a word of his to Iran and others.

Without this outside support for terrorism, Palestinians who are working for reform and long for democracy will be in a better position to choose new leaders.

Well, in fact, what has happened in the Middle East, since the invasion of Iraq is the opposite of what the President has said.

We know now that when we invaded Iraq, we took the lid off Pandora's box, that we set in motion longstanding grievances within different groups within Iraq, the Sunnis, and Shiias and the Kurds, and that outsiders exploited the mess that was created in Iraq, and al Qaeda, that had never operated out of Iraq, did become active in Iraq.

In fact, what happened was our invasion of Iraq strengthened the hands of extremist groups throughout the region. It made it more difficult for the more moderate Arab governments to support the United States, because people in their countries saw that the United States had invaded Iraq, and they said there was no reason for this war of choice against Iraq.

The big winner, the big winner, of course, as Mr. DELAHUNT pointed out, has been Iran. Iran has very successfully exploited the chaos and the vacuum that has been created in Iraq as a result of the mess there. They have gone into Iraq. They have many agents there, and they, as we know, are also exploiting the feelings of others throughout the region, especially Hezbollah. They have provided missiles to Hezbollah, missiles that are now being used to rain down on northern Israel.

Iran, Iran, as a result, has become much more of a power in the region. Iran, one of the other countries the President named as the axis of evil, has, in fact, been strengthened by the President's decision to go to war in Iraq.

You just need to read the comments of other Arab leaders in the region, from some of the more moderate Arab countries who say today, they ask, this is quoted in The New York Times, Who is benefiting, asked a senior official of one of the Arab countries, critical of Hezbollah. Definitely not the Arabs or the peace process, but definitely the Iranians are benefiting.

Arab leaders have long been concerned about Iran, and the great irony of our invasion of Iraq is it has greatly strengthened the hand of Iran and greatly strengthened the hands of the extremists in the region who have been fueled by the antagonism that is unleashed toward the United States and the West by our actions there.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. The gentleman makes an excellent point. Every time I travel back to my district, the question that more often than not is raised at every forum, every community gathering, every town hall meeting is, How is it that the United States could go from a position in the aftermath, the immediate aftermath of September 11th, with having the entire world on our side, to the point where we are today where so many are opposed to our policies?

What is it that took us down that perilous course? How could it be that the former President, Bush the first, if you will, and his advisers, were the most outspoken critics about going into Iraq, warning this current administration of its folly, of its danger?

I can remember very distinctly being in Saudi Arabia with JACK MURTHA and talking to our Ambassador there, and saying to him that, oh, it seems as though you have a gathering storm here in Saudi Arabia, in August of 2002.

He said, gathering storm? He said, Congressman, you are from New England, aren't you? I assume you either read the book or saw the movie. He says, we have over 35 percent unemployment. We have a median income that has dropped from 28,000 to under 7,000 per household. What we have here is not a gathering storm, what we have here is a perfect storm.

If we preemptively strike this toothless tiger in Iraq, we will unwittingly accomplish what Osama bin Laden failed to do. We will create a united Islamic jihad across the Middle East and drive it into chaos. The voices of reason, the voices screaming out at the time were Snowcroft, Eagleburger, Baker, Kissinger, all warning against this folly.

Yet as you point out, we persisted.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, I think that is absolutely right. You see this whole shift, overnight, in world opinion, again from the world being on our side and willing to fight alongside us in the war on terror that had been precipitated by the attacks of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. That was one day.

After the invasion of Iraq that turned out to be based on totally false premises, you saw the world turn against us. Some people here ask, Why does it matter whether people around the world like us or support our policies? Why does it matter if people in the Middle East have a positive view of the United States? Why does it matter if the Islamic world has a positive view of the United States?

Well, here is the problem. If you don't have the support of those countries, it is very difficult to get their cooperation in the war on terror. It is very difficult for them to say we are going to help you in the United States in this battle on terror. That is one problem.

The other problem is, it is a total contradiction between our efforts to promote democracy in the region, on the one hand, and to say we don't care what the people in those countries think, on the other hand. Because if we want to promote democracy, which means that we want leaders in the region to be elected by the people, then we better make sure that the people who are electing them support our goals and support our objectives.

Because if the people who are electing the leaders in Middle East countries hate the United States and want to bring harm to the United States, it is very difficult for someone running for office there to say they support our efforts and support our policy.

You saw the election in the Palestinian areas of Hamas and the extremists as opposed to the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority had said, we want to work with the United States, and we want to work with Israel toward a peace process. But the people, when they had a choice, for all sorts of reasons chose the more extremist Hamas.

So the perceptions of the United States and our policies overseas have a direct bearing on our own security here at home. You cannot say you want to promote democracy in the Middle East, on the one hand, and say you don't care if they hate America, on the other hand.

□ 2145

If they hate America, they are going to elect leaders who reflect the will of the people, and that is bad for the United States, and yet our actions have fueled that kind of antagonism and hatred and actually made us less, not more, secure.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, we have been joined by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) who certainly has embodied from the outset in opposition to this war the voice of reason as it relates to getting us out of Iraq.

Ms. WATERS. I thank very much Representative LARSON. I would like to thank you for the leadership that you are providing in putting together these opportunities night after night on the floor to illuminate what is going on in Iraq. You are absolutely right.

I am the Chair of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and we have our 1-year anniversary as of this week. We organized because we understood very well that something was very wrong with this war. It was not a popular thing to do, but increasingly, Members began to join. We do have 72 Members. We have other Members who are recognizing, as they work in their districts across this country, that the people of America are sick and tired of this war. They believe that the President of the United States has mismanaged this war, and they want to bring our troops home.

The violence that we are witnessing on a daily basis in Iraq is absolutely unconscionable. The violence is such that not only are the Sunnis being attacked by the Shiias, but innocent people are being killed. Civilians are being killed day in and day out, and to tell you the truth, Mr. LARSON, and other Members here and Mr. DELAHUNT who has worked on this issue so long and so

hard, I think it is easy for us to conclude at this point, no matter how difficult it is, that we have destabilized Iraq with our occupation.

When we went into Iraq supposedly because they had weapons of mass destruction and discovered that there were none; when we decided to change our tune, that is, the President of the United States and talk about wanting to instill a democratic government, the American people said, okay, the President of the United States must know what he is talking about.

So they have a new government. Saddam Hussein is behind bars. There are no weapons of mass destruction, and you know what is going on? The civil war that this President and this administration is in denial about, but if you read the papers today, you even have Sunnis that are saying, well, we do not like the Americans, we do not like this occupation, but you know, we need them now to help us be protected against these attacks that are coming at us on a daily basis.

So we recognize that the President of the United States started this discussion about the training of the Iraqi soldiers and how we were doing such a good job, there was a turning point, and they were going to be able to take over and to provide security for that country.

Well, in the first place, we did not go there. The President of the United States did not tell the American people we were going there, to be in the middle of a civil war, to protect one group from the other. Never said that. And now that is the only reason we are there, because we have got to protect the Sunnis from the Shiias? I mean, that is what our American soldiers are supposed to be doing. Our American soldiers who come from these towns and these hamlets do not know a Shiia from a Sunni, and then they get in situations where they are shooting to kill, and people would criticize them when they do not know what it is they are confronted with. We are there because we have to negotiate this civil war by way of warfare.

I think it is unconscionable what is happening there, and I think it is time for this administration to admit that not only have they made a mistake, but they have not trained enough Iraqi soldiers to take over the security of this country, and there is no number of Iraqi soldiers being trained in sight that will take over the security of this country. These groups who have been at each other's throats for centuries and maybe were contained by a strong man, right or wrong, are in the throes of a full civil war.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I think the gentlewoman asks a very legitimate question, but I do not think you were present in the Chamber when I referred to a statement dated July 13 coming from the Afghan defense minister, a gentleman by the name of Abdul Rahim Wardak, who said that the Afghan Army cannot secure the country without at least 150,000 more troops, five times what it has today, and that in his opinion, and he clearly represents the sentiment of the government, it is an opportunity for the United States to double the assistance given to Afghanistan. In other words, we left Afghanistan before we finished the job.

What I find particularly interesting is that we do not hear that from this administration, but the new head of NATO, the NATO force in Afghanistan, a British general, David Richards, made this observation: Afghanistan's Taliban rebels have taken advantage of a power vacuum and grown stronger because the world's attention has been distracted by Iraq.

How true. I agree with him. I agree with him. And if one looks around the landscape again, I am sure it has not been on the front page, but we all here present in this Chamber today know what is happening in Somalia. Radical Islamist warlords have taken over Somalia. Winning the war on terror, you know, the rest of the world believes that we are losing the war on terror.

Many of the gentlemen that were referred to, Eagleburger, Lawrence Cobb, and others that have served in Republican administrations, agree that because of Iraq we are losing the war on terror today and eroding our own national security.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I would just like to expand on a point that the gentlewoman from California made. She talked about the report in today's New York Times that Sunni leadership is now asking American troops to stay to deal with the sectarian violence, and it points out the folly, if you will, of what purports to be our exit strategy.

I mean, the President has said repeatedly that as the Iraqi Army stands up, then we will stand down. We have now stood up a significant number of Iraqi soldiers and law enforcement officers, and yet here we have the Sunni leadership, which has been adamantly opposed to our presence in the country, adamantly opposed to our occupation of the country, now asking us to stay.

And so what does that suggest? It suggests that we do not have an exit strategy at all, or the one that has been put out there by the President is one that has absolutely no chance of yielding any kind of beneficial result in Iraq.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. That is what the General Accountability Office says as well. The GAO report calls for a new direction in Iraq. The GAO report of July 11 says that the administration's national strategy for victory in Iraq is questionable and victory cannot be achieved without significant change in the President's current stay-the-course strategy. It is unclear, it goes on to say, how the United States will achieve its desired end-state in Iraq, given the significant changes in assumptions underlying U.S. strategy.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, it was alluded to earlier that not only were we distracted from doing the job in Afghanistan and we have ended up in this morass in Iraq, it was reported, and I do not have the documentation for it, that Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr. CHENEY and some of the other war hawks had said, once we are in Iraq, we tie down; then on to Iran and on to Syria. Now, I do not know if that is true, if Iraq was to be used as a staging ground to then move on to the attack in Iran and in Syria, but I think that the Iranians believe it, and I think the Syrians believe it.

I watch what we are learning every day about the fact that many of those missiles that are being launched from Beirut are missiles that have been manufactured in Syria, and we also know that the Iranians have their hand in support of Hezbollah and what is going on.

Now, this says an awful lot, and you guys alluded to it a bit earlier. Here we are, here we are tied down in the middle of a civil war in Iraq and having threatened with no more than talking about the axis of evil but even beyond that, going into these neighboring countries, and now I think they are about to put us on the run, trying to distract us and have us react in different parts of the Middle East. And of course, we cannot do that with Kim Jong Il looking over our back in North Korea, launching missiles over into the Japan Sea. And we have got Tehran who has told us that they would certainly continue with their development of nuclear capability.

So here we are, Afghanistan, we are spending much of our soldiers' time trying to protect Karzai who is sitting in Kabul and not doing anything, and as you said, the Taliban and the warlords are really running it.

We are getting overwhelmed. We are getting outmaneuvered. We are placing the American people at great risk, and it is about time we just go ahead and tell it like it is. We have created more risk than not, when in fact this war on terrorism was supposed to be about making the American people safer.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, if my friend would just yield for a moment just to confirm points that were made by everybody, but specifically by CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, there is a GAO report that was issued in April of 2005 that speaks to the issue of deepening and broadening anti-American sentiment all over the world. We have all seen the polling data. It is frightening. Talk about a world opinion that threatens our national security.

And the GAO specifically alluded to the fact that it has the potential to dramatically hurt our commercial interests. One only has to check the price of oil. One only has to look at today's stock market report. Everywhere we turn the implications and consequences of this failed policy is hurting the American people, our national security, our commercial interests and everything that is attendant thereto.

Then, when we start to examine the relationship between the new government in Iraq and Iran, why have we spilled the blood of more than 2,500 Americans and already have appropriated taxpayer dollars on the way to $500 billion?

□ 2200

And by the way, I am sure if you haven't, that you will find in your mail tomorrow a letter, a Dear Colleague letter from our friend and colleague from Illinois, Jan Schakowsky. And she makes the point that on July 7, the Iraqi, not Iranian Parliament Speaker, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani had this to say. He accused Jews of financing acts of violence in Iraq in order to discredit Islamists who control the Parliament and government so they can install their agents in power.

Some people say we saw you beheading, kidnapping and killing. In the end, we even started kidnapping women who are our honor. These acts are not the work of Iraqis. I am sure that he who does this is a Jew and the son of a Jew. I can tell you about these Jewish Israelis and Zionists who are using Iraqi money and oil to frustrate the Islamic movement in Iraq and come with their agents.

Is this what we have wrought?

These words should be condemned by the President. I am sure we all would join in a resolution condemning the words of this head of the Iraqi Parliament, this Iraqi Government that has executed a bilateral military agreement with Iran.

Where are we heading, my friends?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Would the gentleman yield?

The sad part about so much of this is that so much of it was foreseeable, if only the President and the White House had listened to people who knew what they were talking about in this very important foreign policy area.

I quoted earlier this evening the words of the President in a speech that he gave at the American Enterprise Institute on the eve of going to war in Iraq, when he talked about the fact that our invasion of Iraq would create a new era of stability in the region. It would help create a domino effect of creating new democratic movements in the region. It was sort of the big bang of creation of democratic governments in the region. That was what the President said.

But the fact of the matter is at the same time the President gave that speech, the experts were telling him the opposite, and yet they were ignored because their advice did not fit the decision that President and some of his advisers had made.

Just a month ago, Paul Pillar, who was the head of the Bureau of Near East and South Asia at the Central Intelligence Agency at the time of the invasion, testified; and here is what he told the Congress just recently. He told the Congress that what is happening was, in fact, predicted in the national intelligence estimate of that time. Here is what he said. And on the situation, this is his testimony about a month ago. And on the situation that would be faced in post-Saddam Iraq, the Intelligence Community produced, on its own initiative, its assessment of the likely challenges there. It presented a picture of a political culture that would not provide fertile ground for democracy, and foretold a long, difficult, and turbulent transition. It forecasted in a deeply divided Iraqi society there was a significant chance that sectarian and ethnic groups would engage in violent conflict unless an occupying power prevented it. It also assessed that the war and occupation would boost political Islam, increase sympathy for terrorist objectives and make Iraq a magnet for extremists from elsewhere in the Middle East.

This is the assessment of the Central Intelligence Agency before we went to war in Iraq. The people who knew the region, the people who understood the consequences of an invasion were ignored by this White House.

So we have to ask ourselves, where is the accountability in this system?

From day one in this administration, the people who got it wrong have been rewarded, and the people who got it right have been ignored. And yet what this administration says to us is ''Trust us.'' Just stay the course. More of the same.

Well, we have had years of failed policy. No one has been held accountable. What do we expect in the years ahead and the days ahead and the months ahead from an administration that refuses to hold those who get it wrong accountable and ignores all those who get it right?

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is an excellent point, my friend, if you would yield for just one minute.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But what is most disturbing is that this House, run by the Republican Party, has failed to ask those questions of this administration, and thereby abrogated its responsibility to the American people to ask the questions that would have made a difference.

Did Mr. Pillar come before this Congress?

I can enumerate name after name of voices that, well, I could put up a long list of generals, General Batiste, General Eaton, General Zinni, who spoke truth to power, who said, This is the wrong course.

And listen, we never had a hearing until just recently in the committee of jurisdiction, the House International Relations Committee. Shame on us. Shame on this institution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Will the gentleman yield?

The gentlemen, I think, words of both my distinguished colleagues from Massachusetts and Maryland are summed up very well in Frank Rich's article yesterday when he said, This Presidency never had a vision for the world. It, instead, had an idea fixed on one country, Iraq, and in pursuit of that obsession, recklessly harnessed American power to a gut-driven improvisation and PR strategies, not doctrine, that has not changed, even now.

And with that, let me at this point recognize our colleague, the distinguished lady from Texas, who has also come to the floor this evening.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished vice chairman for his leadership, his consistent leadership, along with my colleagues. And I particularly thank Congresswoman WATERS for the vision of the Out of Iraq Caucus.

As I listened to many of you isolate or emphasize intelligence failures, leadership failures, generals who had the expertise of war, I wanted to bring as we talk this evening, to the forefront the whole concern, the human toll.

As I know that we are speaking tonight, there are thousands of military families who are about the American fabric across the land. We already know that some of them are barely making ends meet. Some of them are on food stamps.

But just this past weekend we sent 140 more of those from my congressional district out of Ellington Field. Some have been redeployed before. Some are on their first, second, third redeployment.

If you speak to our Armed Services Committee, they will tell you that we have depleted most of the back-up of our military prowess. The battalions that were in Kuwait are not one, two, three and four. They are down to maybe one battalion, if you will, that is in reserve. And so we have a crisis not only that is impacting the direction of the Iraq war, but the overextending of our military.

The 20,000, 15- to 20,000 injured, who are physically maimed and mentally maimed; resources in the Department of Defense appropriations, not enough to cover the mental health needs of these individuals, and as well, the silence of their injury, not being seen by the American people, and the cost that will be put upon society without, I believe, any direction in any harvesting of dollars that will help these military personnel.

The very crux of where we are today in Iraq has a lot to do with some of the misdirection, the political misdirection of our soldiers. They won the war, but yet they were expected to be policemen. They are expected to be political officers, if you will; they are expected to build infrastructure with no guidance. And so out of that frustration comes Haditha. Out of that frustration comes the brutal murder of a young woman and her family, because you are talking about redeploying soldiers once, but then two, three, four, times.

I met a soldier in the airport, and they said, four times I have been redeployed.

□ 2210

So as I look at the crisis in Israel and Lebanon and now to the other side of us, North Korea, frankly, any talk about attacking Iran begs the question of whether or not we have the kind of military resources to even engage in that kind of conversation.

I think we failed in Iraq because we did not engage. We did not first develop a political and foreign policy that could engage the region. Not Saddam Hussein. We know he was a despot. But the region, to ask for our allies' support, to ensure that the inspections had gone forward.

And now with Israel our hands are tied. We know that we want to ensure that soldiers are sent back to their sovereign country. Israel has a right to defend herself. But we also realize that the United States has to show a balanced perspective, calling for a ceasefire, sending an envoy team of high-level reporting directly to the President, and engaging in foreign policy that says we realize that the region is important. A secure and safe Israel, a two-state response to the Palestinian issue, but the region is important.

And when we went into Iraq, we said to the region you are not important. We can be an aggressor. We can go in and attack. We thought we could go in without any fallback, with impunity. And now we see that our generals are now disagreeing with us, that our allies in the Arab states are now falling away from us, that the crisis is at such a level that our credibility is so shattered that when the region needs us most, which is now, there is a question of whether or not we have the kind of leadership and credibility going in. This is what Iraq has brought to us and the American people.

I commend my colleagues for organizing this special order to discuss the conduct and costs of the war in Iraq. I look forward to engaging in dialogue with my colleagues about the most important issue facing the country today and the most fateful and ill-considered decision of this Administration.

I. THE BUSH IRAQ POLICY HAS HARMED THE U.S. MILITARY

A few weeks ago we learned the sad news that the 2,500th soldier has been killed in Iraq. More than 19,000 others have been wounded. The Bush administration's open-ended commitment of U.S. troops to Iraq has weakened the U.S. Army, the National Guard, and the Army Reserves. The extended deployments in Iraq have eroded U.S. ground forces and overall military strength. A Pentagon-commissioned study concluded that the Army cannot maintain its current pace of operations in Iraq without doing permanent damage to the quality of the force. So more than three years of a continuous deployment of U.S. troops to Iraq has:

Contributed to serious problems with recruitment, with the U.S. Army missing its recruitment targets last year;

Forced the Army to lower its standards for military recruits; and

Led to military equipment shortages that hamper the ability of U.S. ground forces to do their job in Iraq and around the world.

II. THE IRAQ WAR HAS BEEN MISMANAGED AND THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS

Quotes from the retired generals calling for the ouster of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld:

We went to war with a flawed plan that didn't account for the hard work to build the peace after we took down the regime. We also served under a secretary of defense who didn't understand leadership, who was abusive, who was arrogant, who didn't build a strong team.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Batiste.

My sincere view is that the commitment of our forces to this fight was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results.—Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold.

They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda. I think that's a mistake, and that's why I think he should resign.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Riggs.

We grow up in a culture where accountability, learning to accept responsibility, admitting mistakes and learning from them was critical to us. When we don't see that happening it worries us. Poor military judgment has been used throughout this mission.—Retired Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni, former chief of U.S. Central Command.

I really believe that we need a new secretary of defense because Secretary Rumsfeld carries way too much baggage with him. . . . I think we need senior military leaders who understand the principles of war and apply them ruthlessly, and when the time comes, they need to call it like it is.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Charles Swannack.

He has shown himself incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically, and is far more than anyone responsible for what has happened to our important mission in Iraq. . . . Mr. Rumsfeld must step down.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton.

III. WAR IN IRAQ HAS DIVERTED RESOURCES AND ATTENTION FROM OTHER FRONTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL TERRORIST NETWORKS

The killing of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi was a major success for U.S. troops, but it is not likely to diminish Iraq's insurgency. Iraqis make up 90 percent of Iraq's insurgency, unlike foreign fighters like Zarqawi, and a primary motivation for Iraq's insurgency is the U.S. troop presence. Even after the Samarra shrine attack in February threatened to push Iraq into all-out sectarian civil war, the vast majority of attacks still target U.S. forces.

Outside of Iraq, the Bush administration has failed to present a realistic strategy for countering the threat posed by the global terror networks. In a recent survey of more than 100 of America's leading foreign policy experts conducted by Foreign Policy magazine and the Center for American Progress, eight in 10 (84 percent) do not think that the United States is winning the war on terror. The War in Iraq has not helped America win the broader fight against global terrorists. Instead:

By invading Iraq without a realistic plan to stabilize the country, the Bush administration created a new terrorist haven where none had previously existed.

By maintaining an open-ended military presence in Iraq, the Bush administration is presenting U.S. terrorist enemies with a recruitment tool and rallying cry for organizing attacks against the U.S. and its allies.

According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center, the number of large-scale terrorist attacks in Iraq increased by over 100 between 2004 and 2005, with a total 8,299 civilians killed in 2005.

Osama bin Laden remains at large and Al Qaeda offshoots proliferate.

By diverting resources and attention from Afghanistan to an unnecessary war of choice in Iraq in 2003, the Bush administration has left Afghanistan exposed to a resurgence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The United States needs to complete the mission in Afghanistan and cannot do it with so many troops bogged down in Iraq.

By focusing so many U.S. resources on Iraq, the Bush administration has taken its eye off the ball in places like Somalia, which was overrun by Islamist militias tied to Al Qaeda last week.

IV. THE WAR IN IRAQ HAS INCREASED THE BURDEN ON U.S. TAXPAYERS WITHOUT STABILIZING IRAQ OR MAKING AMERICANS SAFER

Over the last three years, the United States has spent more than $300 billion in Iraq, yet the investment has failed to stabilize Iraq or improve the overall quality of life for most Iraqis. According to the Congressional Research Service, total assistance to Iraq thus far is roughly equivalent to total assistance, adjusted for inflation, provided to Germany—and almost double that provided to Japan from 1946 to 1952. Yet on key metrics like oil production, Iraq has failed to advance beyond pre-war levels, and quality of life indicators remain dismal:

Oil production is below pre-war levels (2.6 million barrels per day in 2003 vs. 2.1 million barrels per day in May 2006);

The majority of water sector projects and health care clinics planned in 2003 remain not completed, despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars;

One in three Iraqi children is malnourished and underweight, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

Rather than a record of progress and achievement, the Bush administration's record is one of corruption and waste:

Remaining unaccounted for is $8.8 billion given to Iraqi ministries by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), according to the Congressional Research Service;

Iraqi Defense Ministry officials spent $1 billion on questionable arms purchases;

The Interior Ministry has at least 1,100 ghost employees, costing $1.3 million a month.

In short, we have no strategy, no support from allies or friends in the region, a nascent civil war in the country we are supposed to be helping, an overstretched military, a misdirected counterterrorism effort, and a massive diversion of funds in support of a failed effort.

V. MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS HURT MORALE AND FAMILIES—MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS TAKING TOLL ON MILITARY FAMILIES, ANSWERS QUESTIONS OF HOW TO HELP FAMILIES OF DEPLOYED SERVICE MEMBERS

Military families need greater psychological, emotional, and organizational assistance according to the results of a new survey released March 28 of this year by the National Military Family Association (NMFA).

The study, "Cycles of Deployment Report," which focused on the needs of military families, shows service members and military families are experiencing increased levels of anxiety, fatigue, and stress. In response, NMFA outlined recommendations for meeting these challenges amid multiple and extended deployments, increased rates at which service members are called upon for service,

and the heavy reliance on National Guard and Reserve forces.

This report clearly shows the range of support programs for families has expanded since the start of the War on Terror. However, multiple deployments and a high operations tempo mean different types of support are needed for families' continued success before, during, and after deployment. The survey results provide the Department of Defense a detailed roadmap for making sure families are taken care of during this important time.

Key findings from this study about the impact of deployment includes:

Almost half of respondents reported they have used or would use counseling services such as anger management classes and family counseling. Three quarters of those who stated they were better able to deal with subsequent deployments found counseling services to be helpful.

Two-thirds of military families surveyed did not have contact with their unit or unit network volunteer during the critical pre-deployment stage.

Less than one-half reported a consistent level of family support through the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases. Seventeen percent reported no support was available.

Many respondents are concerned that volunteers who help families adjust to life during deployment and what to expect after the reunion are becoming fatigued and subject to "burn-out." They stated that the leaders of unit family groups should be paid or have paid professional support personnel assigned.

Military family members with civilian jobs face pressure to avoid taking time off before, during, or after deployment. Sixty percent of military spouses are employed outside the home and many have either quit their jobs or are considering it.

Military families are worried about how the reunion will go with their deployed family member even as they are worrying about their servicemember's safety in the field. Unfortunately, many families are not taking advantage of specific return and reunion briefings and activities.

Many respondents expressed that when entering a second or third deployment, they carry unresolved anxieties and expectations from the last deployment(s). While they may have gained knowledge of resources available to them, respondents whose servicemember deployed multiple times reported being more fatigued and increasingly concerned about their family relationships.

Although challenged by the demands of deployment, families noted they are proud of their servicemember and their service to our country. They understand that family support is primarily their personal responsibility, but they expect "The Military" to provide support as well.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEAL WITH STRESS OF MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS

The National Military Families Association has developed a series of recommendations for how the Department of Defense (DoD) can better train and support military staff and civilian volunteers to assist military families, including:

Expand program and information outreach. Create formats for families to access support services and maintain touch with their commands and unit family group that live too far from either the unit or from other military families.

Assist families in developing in realistic expectations and then meet them. Educate military families about what to expect before, during, and after deployments.

Direct more resources to support family volunteers. Increase the level of resources and paid professionals both counselors and administrative, to support the logistics of family support and conducting family readiness activities.

Address return and reunion challenges throughout the deployment cycle. Help with the reintegration of a sevicemember with the family after deployment.

Recognize that family time is important. Encourage service leaders to give family time a higher priority when planning operational activities, especially for servicemembers who have only been back from deployment for a few months.

Continue deployment briefings throughout the year. Never assume families have all the information they need. Ongoing deployment briefings can especially help new spouses or the parents of new recruits. Experienced family members also may find new challenges during a subsequent deployment or find the accumulated stress from multiple deployments creates the need for re-engagement with the family readiness/support group or for accessing different support personnel.

VII. IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT OF NATIONAL GUARD

In addition, Madam Speaker, the large and extended deployment of National Guard units overseas has undermined the ability of the United States to deal with terrorist attacks or natural disasters. For example, State officials in Louisiana and Mississippi struggle to overcome the absence of National Guard members from their States in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In Louisiana, about 100 of the National Guard's high-water vehicles remain abroad—even as the State continues to rebuild from Hurricane Katrina. Coastal North Carolina is missing nearly half its Humvee fleet, and Guard officials there say shortages have forced the State to pool equipment from different units into one pot of hurricane supplies.

In addition, the equipment the Guard needs to help in the aftermath of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina is in shorter supply because the gear is in use in combat zones, is battle-damaged, or has been loaned to cover gaps in other units.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, our troops in Iraq have never faltered and they have never failed. They were never defeated in battle. They won the war they were sent to fight. They completed their mission. They performed magnificently.

They have earned the right to return home and be reunited with their families and loved ones. Now is not the time for us in Congress to falter or fail. Now is the time to embrace a plan for our troops in Iraq that offers a chance of success. We need a plan that will work. There is only one such plan. It is the Murtha Plan I support.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for joining us again and again pointing out that she, like so many of us, has said good-bye to troops, mainly to Reservists and members of the National Guard who have been deployed and redeployed, and our hearts go out to their families and, as we have at the outset at the end of every one of these Iraq Watches, spoke about the difference between the warriors and the war, and we continue to salute them. And I thank the gentlewoman from Texas.

We only have a few more minutes, and I want the gentleman from Massachusetts and the gentlewoman from California to have the opportunity to close. But I do want to thank the Members for coming down here from New York and Maryland, Texas, California, and Massachusetts and say to the American people that we come here out of love of country. It is because of love of country and because we are more often than not denied a voice on this floor, not only denied a voice on this floor but in the committees, where oversight and review is so important.

Why is that so, you might ask? It is so, unfortunately, because this is a one-party town where our erstwhile colleagues on the other side are in control of the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the executive branch of government. And they are able to shut off debate and stifle this side of the aisle even from coming forward with alternative resolutions on matters so important.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

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

H.R. 42. An act to ensure that the right of an individual to display the flag of the United States on residential property not be abridged.

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

H.R. 5441. An act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 5441) ''An Act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.'', requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. GREGG, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BYRD, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

SPREADING FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for half the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the privilege of being recognized here in the United States House of Representatives. And I came to the floor to talk about a number of things that I am convinced are of importance to Americans.

And as I sat through this discussion over the last 45 minutes or so that I have tuned an ear to this, I cannot help but move into some of my disagreements with the remarks that were made by some of my esteemed colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

And I want to state first that I appreciate the tone of their remarks tonight. Sometimes they are not so tolerant, they are not so patient, and the tone gets a little more intense than it was. It does not change my disagreement. I just appreciate the approach that they bring in our disagreement. And that is what we are supposed to do here. We are supposed to air our differences, Madam Speaker, and lay those things out, and the American people tune in on what we do, and they weigh in with each of us, and we draw our conclusions based upon our convictions plus the input that comes from all over this country.

So I would first say that the statement was made consistently that we invaded Iraq totally on false premises. And, first, I would remind the body of resolution 1441, the last United Nations resolution that finally was the last straw. There were a number of other resolutions that Saddam Hussein violated. And we know that it was not our responsibility to prove that he did not have weapons of mass destruction. It was his responsibility to comply with the United Nations, to comply with the weapons inspectors. He did not do that.

The war that took place in 1991, Desert Storm, that war was never over because it was not completed because Saddam did not comply with the conditions of the cease-fire.

So the resolutions came before the United Nations. Resolution 1441 was the last-straw resolution, and that was supported by, of course, all members of the Security Council, and it passed the United Nations. Someone needed to enforce the resolution if the United Nations was to have any teeth in anything that they did. If there was to be peace in the Middle East, someone had to enforce that resolution. And if we were going to keep Saddam Hussein out of his neighbors' territory, like Kuwait that he went into that began this in the first place, someone had to enforce the resolution.

So the second generation of Bushes stepped forward and built a magnificent coalition, a coalition of more than 30 countries, a coalition of the willing that went in and liberated Iraq beginning in March of 2003 and crossed that country with armored columns into Baghdad, the largest city ever in the history of the world to be liberated and occupied by a foreign power. That happened in a matter of weeks, Madam Speaker. It was a magnificent military accomplishment. And it was done with fewer troops than the first time, I agree.

But as I listened too, I will not call it the dissent on this side because certainly we have not read the majority opinion. I hear from this general, he disagreed with the number of troops, and this general thought that we could not probably keep the Iraqis on our side, and this one thought there was going to be a civil war, and some of the people in the CIA disagreed, and a GAO analysis tells us that we really should not be there.

Who are these people, Madam Speaker? Who are they to be directing our foreign policy? Are these elected individuals that are the voices of the people? Are they the Commander in Chief? Do they speak for the Commander in Chief, Madam Speaker? What business do they have weighing in? Is their voice in the wilderness of any more volume or any more credibility than the next person on the street, the next person that might be your neighbor? Do they have any more credibility than the elected Members of the United States House of Representatives or the United States Senate?

My answer to that is no. Some of them were involved in foreign policy. Some of them were involved in military policy. I will grant that. I heard three generals that were named. I think I could probably come up with six to nine generals that disagree with the President's policy. But if it is nine generals, I will see your nine generals and I will raise you 9,000 generals who do not disagree with the President's policy and have not disagreed with the President's policy.

And I would like to lay this out for the mission that it is. There is a Bush doctrine, and this Bush doctrine was finally recognized by the national news media when on the west portico of this Capitol building, President Bush gave his second inaugural address, and in that second inaugural address, he laid out his vision.

Now, it was laid out prior to that. It was laid out at least in his State of the Union address January 28, 2003. It was laid out in his defense strategy for the United States of America, which came out in the previous September, 2002. And he made it clear that his vision was to promote freedom, to promote liberty, especially in these countries that fostered and bred terrorists. It was a clear policy established. ''The Nationality Security Strategy of the United States'' was the name of the document published in September of 2002. Very consistent with the President's speeches. Freedom beats in the heart of every person. All people yearn to breathe free. Free people do not go to war against other free people.

And I have often, on the floor of the House of Representatives, Madam Speaker, talked about the similarities and the corollaries between the end of the Cold War and how we can get to the end of this global war on terror. And I point out that November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall came down. It came down from the force of a people that wanted to be free. They yearned to get out of that trap that they were in.

□ 2220

They yearned to reach across to their fellow man, their neighbors, their family members that were divided by that wall down through the middle of Berlin. But it was the yearning for freedom that made the difference.

When they climbed up on top of that wall, they took hammers and chisels and chipped the stone out and the concrete out, and when they broke bottles of champagne on there and climbed up on top and danced and sang and celebrated, it was a glorious day.

Much of the world missed the point. Much of the world, and I remember watching the network news media at the time, much of the world was talking about how families were being reunited, how important it was that we saw this joy of the reunification of families that had divided since after World War II.

As I sat and watched that, it occurred to me that when the Berlin Wall came down, the Iron Curtain came crashing down with it. The Cold War, the beginning of the end of the Cold War was over. In fact, it was over on that day. It took a little while to clean up the mess, but what happened when that wall was breached by people that yearned for freedom was the echo of freedom. Once they got past that wall, once they got through the Brandenburg Gate, it echoed across Eastern Europe. It echoed across Eastern Europe with a crescendo. And it was almost a blood-free revolution. For practical purposes, it was virtually blood-free.

As country after country yearned for freedom, Romania and Poland and Czechoslovakia, country after country, the Soviet Union collapsed, Madam Speaker and they had a measure of freedom far greater than they had ever seen before, and they still have a measure of freedom greater than they had seen prior to the end of the Cold War.

Hundreds of millions of people breathe free today because the Berlin Wall came down, because Ronald Reagan's vision, ''Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.'' When that happened, when that vision was realized and freedom echoed across Eastern Europe and hundreds of millions of people became free, they stood in the square in Prague and rattled their keys together by the tens of thousands and came to power and later had their velvet revolution and separated those two countries without blood, and they live compatibly today as two separate countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Those things happened in the blink of a historical eye, and it was a historical miracle. But that miracle that we look back on now from a period of 15 years or so, 17 years, that miracle that took place was the kind of miracle that can be emulated again.

The second George Bush, Bush 43, came to power, and this Nation was attacked. And when this Nation was attacked, it was clear that we had an enemy that was determined to annihilate us. They attack our value system, they attack our culture, they attack Western Civilization itself. And they believe that their path to salvation is in killing people who are not like them. In fact, they kill more Muslims than they do Christians or Jews, it is just that Jews are their preferred tar gets, Christians are their second preferred targets, but they will kill whatever target is in front of them if they think they can sow some kind of discontent that might breakdown social order, and if the social order gets broke down, then they think they can somehow emerge into power.

So this is how this thing unfolded from 1989 quickly until today. The Bush doctrine is the vision of freedom echoing across the Arab world the way it echoed across Eastern Europe after the Berlin Wall came down in 1989.

Now, I direct the attention of the Speaker and the public to the vision of what the world looks like today. What has changed in the world since September 11, 2001? How much different is the map of the world today?

If we would paint that map with freedom, you can go to Afghanistan. When we made a decision to go into Afghanistan, people on that side of the aisle said it will be another Vietnam, it will be another quagmire. No nation has ever been able to go into Afghanistan and invade, occupy, liberate, be able to operate in that foreign country in an effective fashion. Everybody has been defeated, everybody has been run out. The British have lost, the Russians have lost. You can go back through history and no one has succeeded in Afghanistan.

Yet a month, actually less than a month after September 11, we had operations beginning in Afghanistan. And just a few months later, the Northern Alliance, coupled with coalition forces, routed the Taliban, surrounded and destroyed many al Qaeda and liberated Afghanistan.

There is a proud National Guard unit from my district that was on the ground in Afghanistan that protected the voting locations, the voting booths and the routes to them, and some of the areas other troops from our coalition forces protected in the rest of the areas, and on that date and that location, the people in Afghanistan went to the polls for the first time in all of history and cast their ballots for a free government and they ratified a Constitution that now directs a free people, and Afghanistan is an up-and-running free country.

This up-and-running free country has its problems, yes. And now that there has been an acceleration in the violence that has taken place in Afghanistan, the people who were afraid to criticize over these last 3 to 4 years or more are now starting to criticize again.

The level of their criticism goes up in direct proportion to the number of casualties that go up in Afghanistan. And it is the same in Iraq. You could index it. If you could listen to the decibels from the other side of the aisle, the decibels of criticism of our Commander-in-Chief, undermining our efforts to free the rest of the world and free this burden of terror off the American people, if you could measure the decibels of objection from your side, you could index that directly to the number of casualties of American and coalition troops, because it is political opportunism that raises the objections.

When the casualties go down, the objections go down, because the credibility diminishes. The casualties go up, the critics get up here, come to the floor and unload more and more. And when they do that, they are undermining our military who are on the line.

But some of these other points that were made. Interesting things. Why does it matter if people like us in the first place? I would ask that question. There is much concern about the rest of the world doesn't like us. We need to do something so people can like us again.

I recall going to the Greenbriar on a weekend that would have been the latter part of February in 2003. We had a bipartisan retreat where we got to know each other. We had breakout sessions and we brought in experts, especially from around the Middle East.

There was an entire handful of experts that had lived in the Middle East and knew the culture and history and had a sense of how they could explain to us what was going on. We hadn't studied the Middle Eastern culture very much as a nation. We know a lot more about it today.

But as these experts sat around and they started up the discussions and we had these sessions, and I didn't know the other colleagues very well, I had only sworn into this job a month earlier. So I spent a lot of time listening. It was important for me to learn what my colleagues didn't know and also to find out what they knew that they could impart to me. But I wanted to make sure that when I shared my viewpoint, that it was going into a place where there was a knowledge void so we could help fill that up. I hope they are doing the same thing with me. That is one of the ways things work.

The author and journalist Tom Friedman gave an address to start that weekend out, and that set the tone for the whole weekend. The question was, well, they don't like us very well, and they are not going to like us any better when we get done with them. If we go into Iraq, and hadn't gone in at that point, if we go in, they are going to start to hate us even more.

So we sat around and spent the weekend agonizing about how to make people like us. Well, how in the world can you decide to go make people like you when they just got finished bombing us, flying four airplanes into America, killing 3,000 Americans and believing that the 19 hijackers that were on those planes are now off in the next life with their 72 virgins each.

That is their belief system. And we are worried about people like that liking us? I will submit that you can't worry about that. You can't negotiate with people like that. The only thing you can do is stall them off with fear or take them out with force. Those are our alternatives.

A statement was made over here tonight, Madam Speaker, that we are in the middle of a civil war and we are being asked to protect the Sunnis from the Shiites. The middle of a civil war. There was a revolution that was introduced here that declared we are in a civil war. The junior Senator from Iowa introduced a resolution in the Senate that declared we are in the middle of a civil war in Iraq. The middle of a civil war.

They have declared that now, oh, since, 3, 4, 5 months ago. I haven't noticed that there has been an acceleration in the Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence in the 3 to 4 to 5 months since they began to talk us about being in a civil war.

Wishing it were so does not make it true. I can define ''civil war'' so the American public can identify this easily. We go back and look at our own Civil War. That was when brother was fighting against brother. Yes, it was North against South, but sometimes they lined up on opposite sides of the line and they shot at each other, and sometimes brother shot at brother, and I imagine that occasionally brothers actually killed brothers.

□ 2230

Friends that went to the military academy met on the line. I am thinking about General Armistead, and I believe it was General Reynolds on the line at the corner and the angle, at the battle of Gettysburg, facing each other, unit to unit. That was the Civil War. Half of the people in the military, or a number approaching that, took off their blue coats and put on grey coats, and they went to war against each other. They chose up sides and went to war against each other, Madam Speaker

If there is going to be a civil war in Iraq, it will be when the Iraqis who are in uniform today, 257,000 strong, trained, in action, defending the security of that nation, all wearing the same uniform, some Kurds, some Shiias, some Sunnis all mixed up in their different units.

Unlike the local police that more reflect the ethnicity and the religion of their locality, the military is mixed up

with about an even mix and unit by unit of Kurds, Shiias and Sunnis. I ask them, when I go over there, what is most important, the fact that you are a Shiia, the fact that you are a Sunni, the fact that you are a Kurd, or the fact that you are an Iraqi?

And they have always answered, Madam Speaker, it is the fact that I am an Iraqi. And these Iraqis, 257,000 strong, defending Iraqis from terrorists who are within their midst, in ever-reducing numbers and ever-reducing resources are standing together shoulder to shoulder, fighting together.

They are not fighting each other. They are fighting together against the terrorists in their midst. This is not a civil war. A civil war would be when the Iraqis that are in uniform defending Iraqis, 257,000 strong, choose up sides and start to shoot at each other. That is not happening. It has not happened. And if it begins to happen, that does not mean that they are certainly in a civil war, but that would be an indicator to start watching pretty close, Madam Speaker.

So also the argument from the gentleman from Massachusetts, we cannot secure Afghanistan with less than 150,000 more troops than we have, quoting some expert, well, I think the experts that the President has employed in both Afghanistan and Iraq have done pretty well.

In fact, it was essentially the same people that planned Afghanistan, that planned Iraq. They had the right number of troops in Afghanistan. They said it could not be done, but it was done. And it is a magnificent success. The troops that they sent into Iraq were absolutely adequate for the job of liberating Iraq.

Now, the circumstances that follow afterwards apparently are not bad enough for the people on the other side to say, well, I thought you should have had 500,000 troops there, but now I think you ought to have no troops there. And how can you say that we should have more but yet we should not have any? There is not a consensus on the other side of the aisle. I believe we need to follow our Commander in Chief.

The other statement, we do not have an exit strategy in Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I was sitting in the Cloakroom, and I heard my good friend and colleague from Iowa refer to the gentleman from Massachusetts. And I just wanted to clarify for him it was not I that said to stabilize Afghanistan what is needed is 150,000 more troops; that was the defense minister of Afghanistan.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time. Madam Speaker, I did refer to him as some expert, because I did not pick out how you defined that. But I did attribute it to an expert.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If you continue to yield for just a moment, I do not want to interfere with the gentleman's hour.

But I would suggest to my dear friend that the defense minister of the country in question, Afghanistan, should be considered the ultimate expert. And, again, my good friend earlier indicated that there were Members on this side of the aisle that were reluctant, or were critical before we went into Afghanistan.

Again, with all due respect, I would suggest that the vote in this institution was something along the lines of 430–1. So that that particular authorization received unanimous support. And I dare say it was a good decision and a right decision.

The problems that I and I know some of my colleagues on this side, as well as some of your colleagues on the other side, have is that we left there too early and that is why the expert in this case, who is the defense minister of Afghanistan, said that for the country to be stabilized so that democracy, which we both, I think we all want to see for the Afghanistan people can really take hold, five times the security forces that exist today are necessary.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time. I pose the question to the gentleman from Massachusetts, and that is, Are you advocating that we send 150,000 troops to Afghanistan? I yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. No. What I am suggesting is that we should participate in training Afghans to meet those particular numbers, because we had set a benchmark of some 70,000. And that benchmark has been revised downward, downward from 70,000 to under 50,000.

And the defense minister in Afghanistan says we need more resources. In fact, I am sure the gentleman is aware of this, but President Bush just recently said that he would take under consideration, Madam Speaker, doubling the $2 billion that were appropriated so that more training could be provided. My problem is we should have done it 4 or 5 years ago.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time. I do appreciate the gentleman's sentiment on this. I know that you are right on the vote. I am confident that I can go back through the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and pick out the rhetoric that supports my remarks.

But I guess it is a balance that there was one vote against the resolution. I do recognize the gentleman's point. I look forward to bringing all of the resources necessary to protect America in the future anywhere we have to in the world.

I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts. Picking up on my next point, it is that the statement made here on the floor that we are not winning the war on terror, ''the rest of the world believes we are losing the war on terror.''

I do not believe that is true at all. In fact, who would want to trade places with the other side? How would you like to try to conduct or construct an optimistic scenario if you were, say, Zarqawi before he was sent to the next life by the United States Air Force?

How would you put together a scenario by which you could possibly win? I would point out that listening to one of our experts, one who is actually under the command of our Commander in Chief, General Casey, who said the last time I was over there, he said the enemy cannot win if the politicians stay in the fight. That is what I am about, Madam Speaker, is seeing to it that the politicians stay in the fight.

Our solders and marines deserve it. They deserve everything we have to support them. When they approach me in Iraq and say to me, I am proud to put my life on the line and commit a year out of my life to defend freedom and give the Iraqi people a chance at freedom, but why do I have to fight the United States news media too, why do I have to fight the anti-war detractors, my answer to them has been, you should not have to do that. That is my job. And it is a job of all of us, to stand up together.

But also the criticism that we do not have an exit strategy in Iraq. That is not a criticism that sets on very solid ground from my perspective. I support the President in that. You cannot give people a date that you are going to pull out. And so I would submit to the other side of the aisle that has found some experts to support the position that they are advocating, they should listen to an expert that I would think that they should support, and that would be the expert called former President Bill Clinton, who said, and agreed with President Bush, that we cannot give the enemy an exit date or they will just simply go underground.

He said, you cannot give them a date. Bill Clinton, 2 days ago supporting President Bush and his position not to telegraph when we might be ready to deploy out of Iraq. And so the selective process is going on, pick the people that support your position and then declare them to be experts. And I generally stand with my position. But, let's see. The people who got it right were ignored; the people who got it wrong were rewarded.

□ 2240

I think it is a bit early to declare such a thing. I think historians will make that decision. I think the advisers that got us into Afghanistan successfully and successfully have managed the liberation of Afghanistan got it right.

I think the same advisers were there to put together the strategy for Iraq, and given the military operations that are there, the liberation of Iraq, they got it right. To maintain the safety and security in that country has been difficult, but the strategy, there is not a consistent viewpoint here, to get Americans out is what we hear from people like Mr. MURTHA, because they are targets of the enemy.

If we pull out to the horizon, which we found out, I thought the horizon might be over there where the sun sets or where the sunrise is or up on the

hill, the other side of the hill, just some place out of sight would be the horizon. We found out a month ago their horizon is really Okinawa. He said let us redeploy our troops to Okinawa, then if things get bad, we can go back in there.

So the Out of Iraq Caucus, I wonder how large a caucus that is, but their position doesn't have a futuristic view. What takes place in the Middle East?

I would say this: We need to be looking at the Bush doctrine, we need to be looking at when the Berlin Wall went down, and that echo of freedom that I talked about earlier, we need to be looking at the way a map of the world looks today, and a free Afghanistan, 20, 25 million people and a free Iraq; 25 million people, an Iraq that is far safer than the news media would have us believe, that cameras are trained on the IEDs before they go off, but they are not trained on the happy Iraqi playing children.

We have a new conflagration in the Middle East. We have the circumstances with Israel, an Israel that has been trading land for peace. When there is no rational reason to trade land for peace, there is no historical model of somebody trading off land and getting peace.

We could go back to the prior, to World War II, you would think the focus on that, if that history would be pretty acute, the trade-off for the Sudetenland, to Hitler, to get peace, and finally, the carving up of Poland between the Germans and the Russians, and ultimately war.

It always happens, you can never trade land for peace, and yet the Israelis pulled out of Lebanon, and I understand why. It was costly to be there, but the agreement was that Hezbollah would not be operating in southern Lebanon or in Lebanon at all.

Finally, most of the Syrian troops got out of there, not the Syrian intelligence people, but the Syrian troops. Hezbollah accelerated and built up their forces there, and they smuggled in missiles from Syria, probably from Iran to Syria and into Lebanon. Israel sits there today in a two-front war, being shot at from Gaza and being shot at from Lebanon, missiles raining down from the north, raining up from the south.

I would submit that if they had succeeded in moving the Israeli people, the Jewish people out of the West Bank, moved them up against the fence, or inside the fence, if they had succeeded in allowing an autonomous West Bank, they will be firing missiles from the West Bank as well, and the only area Israel would not be shot at from right now would be from the sea.

The sea, of course, is the place where the neighbors of Israel would like to drive all Israelis, and they don't have very long. They cannot make very many mistakes. I am glad that they have stepped up to defend themselves, and I am glad that they began operations north and in the south.

It is the right thing to do, and talk of negotiating for peace without the eradication of Hezbollah in Lebanon would be a mistake. They must go in, and they must take out Hezbollah, take them out, take out their entire ability to conduct military operations there, pacify southern Lebanon, before they can come back out of there again. It has got to happen. If it doesn't happen, there will not be peace. The missiles will continue to rain in.

The Syrians, complicit in this, sitting up there, providing military weapons; and Iranians, we believe, were down in Lebanon helping advise and helping to fire off some of the rockets that were fired, especially the one that went to the Israeli ship.

We have acts of war being conducted by Iran against Israel, and I believe acts of war being conducted against Israel by Syrians. The Israelis have to be looking to the south to Gaza, to the north to Lebanon, and over to Syria and on over to Iran.

They have got to look at their sites at four different locations. We must stand with them every step of the way. We have got to do so with a vision, with a vision of how this end game might work. We need to be thinking that the nuclear capability, the growing nuclear capability of Iran in the very belligerent hands of Ahmadinejad is far too dangerous.

We have to believe that if he had the capability to drop a nuclear warhead into Tel Aviv, this would be about the time. We have to understand that Hezbollah is conducting operations and firing missiles into Israel at the direction of Iran.

Iran has been and is providing the supplies. Iran has recruited, founded, recruited and trained Hezbollah. Hezbollah is an arm of Iran. They cannot shake the responsibility that when Hezbollah acts in an act of war against Israel, it is really an act by a surrogate of Iran.

I came to the conclusion in September of 2004 that there was a 95 percent probability that we would have to go in and take out the nuclear capability of Iran. We cannot sit and let a rogue nation have that capability, a nation that deals with, trades with, and probably is able to swap nuclear secrets with North Korea.

These two axes of evil are still out there, and they are still dangerous, and they are getting ever more bold. When we have people here in this Congress, that say we are losing this war on terror, that Iran is a winner, that Hamas is a winner, that Hezbollah is a winner, I don't know how they can be winners when they are being taken out 24 hours a day by the IDF.

But that scenario gives them hope. Members of Congress think they are winning. Then their optimism will be stronger, or they will probably lack the defeatism that we think they are getting.

So we must look at Israel, we must look at this end game with the idea that if we have to take action, then we may have to do it in a more urgent fashion than we might otherwise, because of the war that is breaking out in the Middle East, the war that is breaking out with Israel.

On that subject matter, I trust our Commander in Chief to be putting an end game in mind. I stand with him in his vision on this safety and this security and on a strategy to get to the end of this global war on terror. I would ask the American people to envision this, envision how freedom echoed across Eastern Europe in 1989.

Country after country after country became free, and today they go to the polls, and they choose their leaders. They direct their national destiny, and they join the European Union, and they join NATO, and they are good allies, and they join the coalition and our operations in Afghanistan and the coalition of our operations in Iraq.

The people who are the newest to freedom are the first to fight for the freedom of others. I stood in a military base in Basra some time back, where a British general was commanding the region down in the southern part of Iraq. In that group, that group of soldiers, if you look at the flags on their shoulders, there were British soldiers, Australians, Romanians, Polish, Danish, Netherlands, I am forgetting one or two, but that was all, just happened to be those in a group. I lined them up and took a picture. That is the true coalition forces. They are there.

Shortly after I came back from Iraq, the Australians doubled their troop involvement in Iraq. They doubled it, just simply doubled their troops. Do you think it made the news in the United States of America? Only one or two news outlets when we did a LexusNexus search, but, you know, al Jazeera picked it up. You know, al Jazeera scooped the major news media in the United States, because they were paying attention.

□ 2250

So, Madam Speaker, we will stand with the Commander in Chief with the vision for freedom, and we will look forward to the day that the Arab world breathes free, and when that day comes, country by country, piece by piece, the people that get up in the mornings there then can turn their outlook from teaching hatred, from making bombs and trying to kill others to try to drag the rest of the world down, they can turn that focus to building their homes, building their families and their communities and their mosques or their churches, building their country into a model of prosperity instead of a model of destruction.

I think in the amount of time that I have, I am going to shift subjects, and we will talk about the security on the other side of the United States. I would point out that we have also a security concern on our southern border; and down there, that 2,000-mile long border

that runs from San Diego to Brownsville, Texas, that border has, according to the Border Patrol testimony at the Immigration Subcommittee hearing, as many as 4 million people pouring across that southern border annually. That is about 11,000 people a day, 4 million people annually.

In the past year, in 2005, they stopped and turned back 1,188,000 people, most of them run through, identified, put on a bus, taken to the border and sent back through the turnstile into Mexico. The year before, there was 1,159,000. The number has been growing. It has crept up from 900,000 on up to now nearly 1.2 million, 1.2 million people caught when we are catching a fourth to a third, by most of the testimony that comes here.

But when I go down on the border and I meet with the Border Patrol officers down there, Madam Speaker, I ask them and I propose that number, are you stopping 25 percent. I found no one down there on a regular basis that told me that they stopped 25 percent of the illegal border crossings. Most of them, they gave me the number of 10 percent, and one, when I submitted the 25 percent number, actually went into hysterics and said, oh, it is not more than 3, perhaps 5, percent; 3 percent of illegal crossers and 5 percent of the illegal drugs that are coming across the border.

Now, when we talk about numbers of those size, it is hard to put it into perspective. So I would put it this way: every time an illegal comes into the United States across the Mexican border, that is an average of one every 8 seconds. In the United States, every 8 seconds, there is a baby born in America, and it might be an anchor baby and a baby born to an illegal mother. That baby will have citizenship here in the United States. I am opposed to that policy, but every time a baby is born, an illegal walks across the border into the United States. As our population grows, half of it is an illegal population.

A bull ride is 8 seconds long. For the length of a bull ride, a baby is born, and an illegal crosses a border. A cowboy rides a bull another 8 seconds, only they are not riding 24 hours a day, we are having babies and having illegals come across every day, 24 hours a day.

How many people are 11,000 daily? To measure 11,000, I would put it this way. Santa Ana's army that entered into Texas that began the great war that ended up in a free Texas and ultimately Texas, a great State in this Union, Santa Ana's army was about 6,000 strong. When they stormed the Alamo, they were 2,500 to 3,000. He had split his forces; 2,500 to 3,000 storming the Alamo, and we think that was a massive armed force, and it was. But Santa Ana gathered all his army up together and he came across the border one time and wreaked havoc across Texas; twice that number marches across that border every single day. And what does America have to say about that? Hohum.

Well, we can find a way. They have absorbed themselves into our society. Somebody needs somebody to do some cheap work, and so we really should not concern ourselves with this. I disagree with that, Madam Speaker. I think that a country that does not control its borders cannot very much longer declare itself to have borders, and a country without borders is not a country, a simply amorphous mass of a North American continent.

We have to have borders and we defend them, and we have to defend those borders for all the reasons that we know, but there are other reasons that most of America does not know, and that is, as we hear the President say, we cannot stop people from coming across the border that just want to come here for a better life. Well, we cannot? Of course, I think we can.

And yet, if he will concede that point, that point that we cannot stop them unless we legalize them so that they can come back and forth in some legal fashion, if that cannot be done, how in the world then does the President or anyone else propose that we can stop the force of $65 billion worth of illegal drugs coming into America? Ninety percent of the illegal drugs in America cross our southern border and that is according to the DEA. That is $65 billion worth. That is marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin that comes in from China and gets funneled up this way. It is cocaine that comes from Colombia.

Colombians used to have a pretty lucrative trade on cocaine until the Mexican methamphetamine brought their market down; and on top of that, when September 11 came, we tightened up the security of our airports, and it is a lot harder for them to smuggle cocaine into the United States. So now they have a transportation route that comes up around the inside of the gulf, along the rail line in Mexico, a lot of it controlled by MS–13, the most brutal gang this continent has ever seen.

But you have Colombian cocaine, you have Mexican methamphetamine, you have Chinese heroin and Mexican marijuana coming into this country, totaled up value, $65 billion. Now, the force of a $7- or $8-an-hour job for someone that wants to come and pick lettuce, tomatoes or apples or whatever it might be, that is one thing. Somebody wanting to walk across the desert to pick apples, it is hard to fathom somebody that wants a better life that much, although we have to sympathize with that and solution-wise in fixing Mexico, not in draining off all of the discontent, and the poor people that are in Mexico and in the United States. But the problem is we can deal with that.

What we have not done is taken steps against the $65 billion worth of illegal drugs; and as I go down there, Madam Speaker, and I sit along that border at night and listen to the infiltration of the illegals sneaking through the brush, being unloaded out of the vehicles, picking up their packs and marching off through the brush, when it gets light and I go and look at the tracks and see where they are marching off through the desert and they are carrying a 50-pound pack of marijuana, pack trains of people, 10 or a dozen or 50 or even as high as 100 people, each with 50 pounds of marijuana on their back, marching across the desert because they cannot drive a vehicle across there in some of those locations now because we put in vehicle barriers, well, the vehicle barriers are environmentally friendly. They have let the desert antelope crawl through. And a man with 50 pounds of marijuana can throw his pack through there, crawl through, put on his pack and walk across the desert. That is what is going on.

So we need to force all traffic through the ports of entry. That is my mission. That is why I believe we need to build physical barriers to do that, Madam Speaker.

So I have designed one. I have spent my life in the construction business. We build things, design things, pour structural concrete, make it out of steel. You name it, we have done it. Mostly it is earthwork of all kinds. So I submit that on this desert floor, when I go down there, it lays pretty good for this job.

I would, Madam Speaker, dig a trench like this in the desert floor, dig a trench down through that desert floor, and I will demonstrate another thing. As that trench is dug, we pull a slip form trencher right along behind it. It will be pouring concrete right in the trench. As you move the trench, the concrete would move along like that. You come along in a couple of days when this cures, leave a slot in the middle, and start setting precast panels right up in this slot that I have. These would be already made, already cured. They would be about 10 feet wide or 13½ feet long, and they are designed to be a 12-foot high constructed height.

And we just pick them up with a crane, set them in like that. You can see how easy this is, Madam Speaker. Once you get the trench and the footing poured, it is a simple task to set the precast concrete panels right into the footing and into the slot.

Now, that builds us a 12-foot high concrete wall. I do not submit that this wall be built right on the border because I think it is important for us to be able to do surveillance on both sides of this wall.

□ 2300

I would submit that right on the border, we put up a 10-foot-high chain link fence, a chain link fence with about four barbs tipped out to the south. I would hang a sign about every quarter of a mile, in Spanish, that tells people go to this Web site or go to the U.S. consulate and here is where you apply to come into the United States legally. That would be my approach.

And then, when they cut through the fence, when they dug under the fence,

when they went around it, over it, or through it, whatever they did, that would tell us that is a location where we need to beef it up.

And I would pull back 60 feet. I would put this footing in, and I would drop this concrete fence, and they will have demonstrated that we need it because they have violated the one that was the lighter fence that they didn't respect.

And so, we have this concrete wall. It is about 6 inches thick. It ends up 12 feet high, 10-foot-wide panels, one after another. And our little construction company could toss together about a mile a day of this once we got going. Now, we won't be bidding any project like this, but we have the capability of doing it is my point.

And certainly there would be a little bit of engineering design that would be touched up on it. But this is basically the design that I believe we would be ending up with. It costs about $1.3 million a mile.

Now we are spending $8 billion on our southern border, $8 billion. That is $4 million a mile every year, and we are paying Border Patrol people to drive back and forth on HUMVEES, to park and look at it and be a deterrent just for being there, and we are paying all the administration that it takes to support the people and, of course, their weapons and all the technology.

And I am for supporting this wall with additional technology. And it is okay with me if they want to fly drones around and let us know when people are approaching the wall. But I will tell you, they will find that this wall doesn't let them cross it.

And people will say, well, if you build a 12-foot wall, I will show you a 12-foot ladder. And that might happen, Madam Speaker. So I have a little bit of a solution for that. And that solution consists of, this is actually a little piece of solder, but just a little nice little concertina wire to put on top of this wall as a deterrent. Easily installed. And you can see that it can provide that deterrent effect.

Now, I also submit that we run a little current through this wire, and that provides also as a deterrent. Now it is up there where you would have to have a ladder to get your hands on it. But that will keep people from putting a ladder up against it. And then we will have our borders respected and protected.

And if we fail to do this, Madam Speaker, we are going to continue to see 11,000 people a day, one every 8 seconds, $65 billion worth of illegal drugs pouring across this border.

Whenever we built the fence in San Diego they went around the fence. And each time that you do that they will go around it because the money is too great, $65 billion. We have got to shut it off. And we will build this thing where they don't respect a more modest barrier, and continue to build until such time as all traffic goes through the ports of entry. And that means legal and illegal, through the ports of entry. And then we will beef up our people there. We beef up our technology there.

And if we do that we can then finally say we have control of this border. And if we enforce there, if we end birthright citizenship, and if we enforce employer sanctions, those three things will solve this issue.

And I would ask the President commit to enforcing our immigration laws, commit to controlling the border, spend the next years of your administration establishing that. And when that is done, while the next President is campaigning for the 2008 election to be sworn into office here in 2009, that campaign can be about whether or not we need guest workers in this country and how many we might need and of what skills they might come from.

But we cannot build a guest worker plan on a false foundation, a foundation of the promise of enforcement. And the only way we can ever know that we have enforcement is to actually enforce, prove it can be done. If we prove it can be done, then we will have something solid to build this guest worker plan on. But without that, we are building a guest worker plan on hypotheticals. The hypothetical will be that we will enforce the law. That has not happened. It has diminished over the last 20 years. An employer under Bill Clinton was 19 times more likely to be sanctioned for hiring illegals than under our current President. And so I am asking, let's enforce the law. Let's demonstrate that we can do it. Let's put fixtures on the border, because this $1.3 million per mile is a one-time investment that will free up other people.

As I asked in the testimony down in Laredo of the sector chief for the Border Patrol there, I said, if you have a wall like this, does it take more or less border patrol officers to protect that border? And his answer, even though it isn't the administration's position to support this, was it takes less border patrol officers to enforce this wall.

So, Madam Speaker, that is my encouragement for the President. That is my encouragement for our Commander in Chief. That is my encouragement for the American people. Stand up and support our military in the Middle East and defend this country, and we will continue to be a great Nation.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to address the House. And we would like to also thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have the time.

As you know, the 30-something Working Group, we come to the floor daily to share not only with the Members of the House, but also the American people, about plans we have that is in holding or in waiting, not because of the fact that we are not willing to move forth on behalf of the American people, it is because the Republican majority has decided not to govern on the side of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this is very, very hard core for everyday Americans, because they are in waiting, not only in the area of minimum wage, but also affordable fuel prices and real solutions as relates to protecting our country and also making sure that our veterans who have allowed us to serve, who have allowed us to salute one flag, will be honored in the area of health care and other areas that we have promised them.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to start off my comments, and I am glad Mr. DELAHUNT is here, and I know others are on their way to the floor, to at least talk about this minimum wage conversation that we are having here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I feel that we should take action. We want to take action on this side of the aisle, Democrats united in making sure that some 6 million-plus Americans are able to get a pay increase, something that Members of Congress have enjoyed over a number of years, but everyday working Americans are not able to receive more minimum wage than what they are receiving right now. They are, right now, making $5 and some change. And I mean, it is unconscionable, Mr. Speaker, for Members of the House to be able to walk away with an increase, cost-of-living increase; meanwhile, those individuals that are punching in and punching out every day, are still making the same rate that they were making in 1997. It would be an uproar here in this House if Members of Congress had not received a pay raise since 1997.

One thing that I can say here on this side of the aisle, the Democratic leadership and the Democratic Caucus has said we will not stand for an increase for Members of Congress to make more money if we are not going to raise the level of minimum wage for everyday Americans.

And so, again, Mr. Speaker, we come with third-party validators. We come with the facts to share with the American people, and we come to let the American people know, and Members on the majority side, that we have the will and the desire to lead, and we will if we have the opportunity after November.

I just wanted to share a few things because there are a lot of folks that are out there saying that they are fighting on behalf of the everyday American. So I thought I would just bring a couple of visual aids, and also some information. This is the source of the College Board 2005 as it relates to the census and what Americans are dealing with.

I want to start with this next chart here. I want to start with this chart.

Minimum wage. And this is real economic change under Bush. Here you have the minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, that is at zero starting in 1997 to now. Since 1997 to now, whole milk has gone up 24 percent. Bread has gone up 25 percent. A 4-year public college education has gone up 77 percent. Health care insurance has gone up 97 percent. Meanwhile, Americans are still making $5 and change. Regular gas has gone up 136 percent, Mr. Speaker. Still no message from the Republican majority for everyday working Americans that punch in and punch out every day.

□ 2310

Here are some other statistics: still from 1997, no increase in the minimum wage for everyday working Americans. College tuition has gone up in private institutions 40 percent. Gas prices, again, as it relates to the middle class, has gone up 47 percent and 55 percent for prescription drugs. I think it is important that we look at those.

To go further, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we share this. The facts are hard, but they are true. In 1998 a Member of Congress received a raise of $3,100. That was in 1998. In 1998 the minimum wage was zero. Again, in 2000 Members of Congress received a $4,600 raise. That is more money. Everyday working Americans in 2000, minimum wage, zero, thanks to the Republican majority.

I just said in 2000, Mr. DELAHUNT, Members received a pretty substantial raise. In 2001 Members of Congress received a $3,800 raise. Of course, we are not minimum-wage workers. The American people in 2001, zero. Nothing. The Republican majority said they are not going to have it. In 2002, again a $4,900, that is a lot of money, increase for Members of Congress. The American people in 2002, zero.

It pays to have a voting card in Congress. You can give yourself a raise, but the folks that elect you just have to suck it up.

Now, this is like on a roll here in Congress. In 2003, a $4,700 increase in Members of Congress' pay. The American people, guess what, zero. Nothing at all, thanks to the Republican majority. In 2004, a $3,400 raise for Members of Congress. Guess what, Members, American people, minimum wage raises, zero.

These are the facts. I challenge any Member on the Republican side, the majority, to come down and challenge me on these facts.

In 2005 it continues, a $4,000 raise. Once again, you are a Member of Congress that comes up here, who say they are representing you, it is a wonderful thing. Get a raise in 2005, $4,000. The American people, zero, Mr. Speaker.

In 2006 Members of Congress' proposed raise, $3,100, Mr. DELAHUNT. My 9-year-old son and my 11-year-old daughter can guess, the American people to this date, Mr. Speaker, zero.

Now, I want to go back to this chart because I think it is very revealing and very accurate: ''I have been in this business for 25 years, and I never voted for an increase in the minimum wage and I am opposed to it, and I think that a vast majority of our conference is opposed to it.'' That is the leader of the Republican Congress. That is the majority leader.

Now, Mr. DELAHUNT, there are Members that come to this floor and say the Democrats are just demagoguing. There are people who come to this floor and say we are for you; they are not for leading.

I think it is important, Mr. DELAHUNT, that we come to the floor and share with the American people and the Members of Congress that we will not rest even though we are in the minority, that we are still willing to fight for them.

Now, the difference between the Republican majority and the Democratic minority, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the majority has the power to be able to make things happen here in this House on behalf of the American people as it relates to the minimum wage, and it is fair play. I went through this list. Pay increases year after year, $4,000 here, $4,700 there, $3,100 here, and zero since 1997 on behalf of the American people who punch in and punch out every day.

Meanwhile, health care cost is up. Meanwhile, the cost of bread and milk is up. Meanwhile, gas prices are up by 136 percent. But back at the ranch and here in this House, the Members of Congress are being taken care of. The special interests are being taken care of. But guess what, the individuals who woke up early on a Tuesday morning for representation are being left behind since 1997, and there are Members on the majority side saying over their dead bodies, literally, will they receive an increase because they are so indebted, Mr. DELAHUNT, to their special interests.

So all we can fight with, Mr. Speaker, here is the fact, not fiction but fact, that we have a Republican majority that is willing to govern for the few, for those individuals who have the opportunity to come to Washington and to be able to gain access through the K Street Project and other programs that allow them to give politically and have gangs here in the House.

A former Member of this House used to boast about the fact that if they were not on the list of contributors, they couldn't come in and see them. That is a former Member of the House, and if anybody wants to challenge me on it from the majority side, I will be happy to reveal that former Member's name. I think we all know, and it was an active program in the House, and I believe there are still some elements of that program now. The fact that special interests do not want an individual making $5 and some change to receive a couple dollars' increase is very unfortunate. And, Mr. DELAHUNT, I am very concerned about that.

Let me just take 3 more minutes, Mr. DELAHUNT, and then I am going to yield to you because you have some very interesting charts over there.

Let us talk about who is getting what. In the past you have heard me read this, and I want to read it again because, when it comes down to when their constituents want to know whose side they are on, I want the Members to be armed with the facts.

I am proud that I am trying to do everything I can do on behalf of my constituents back in the 17th Congressional District in Dade and Broward County. But by their sending me to Congress and Mr. DELAHUNT to Congress, they federalized us to represent the people of the United States of America, and I think it is our obligation, Mr. Speaker, to share the facts.

Members can follow me. They can go on Washingtonpost.com. This was an article November 16, 2005, on the front page: ''A White House document shows that executives from big oil companies met with Vice President DICK CHENEY's energy task force in 2001, something long suspected by environmentalists but denied as recently as'' a week ago ''by industry officials testifying before Congress. The document, obtained this week by The Washington Post, shows that officials from the ExxonMobil Corporation, Phillips, Shell Oil Company, and BP America Inc. met in the White House complex with the Cheney aids who were developing national energy policy, parts of which became law and parts of which are still being debated'' here in the House.

This is an article. It is not from the Democratic Caucus. It is not from my office or Mr. DELAHUNT's office.

Let us see what happened. That meeting, Mr. DELAHUNT and Members, was in 2001. Here are the profit margins of big oil companies since that meeting: in 2002 I think that was a pretty good meeting to go to, $34 billion in profits, thanks to the Republican majority's passing policy that would allow oil companies to spend the taxpayers' dollars and to be able to have subsidies and make these profits. In 2003 $59 billion in profits. I think that meeting was worth going to and whoever recommended and got them into the White House complex to meet with the Cheney aides, I think they got a promotion and possibly a bonus.

□ 2320

In 2004, $84 billion oil profits up. Guess who is paying for it? The American people. In 2005, $113 billion in profits. And the numbers are not even in from 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I know that these facts have to have some Members who may be in their offices right now or sitting up in their beds feel uncomfortable. But, unfortunately, that is not happening, because it continues.

Why is this man smiling here? It is nothing against him. I don't have anything personally against oil companies. They are getting what the majority Republican Conference here in this House has allowed them to have. It is

one thing for someone to say ''I will support you and your political endeavors.'' It is another thing for you to say ''I am with you all the way, even if it costs my constituents more at the pump.''

Here is a man that a lot of workers wish they had such a deal. A $398 million retirement package and a $2 million tax break ala the Republican majority. An Exxon former executive.

It is almost, Mr. Speaker, unfair. Someone may say that. If I didn't have the third-party validators, the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and votes by the majority to back up what I am saying, some folks would say that is unfair. I wouldn't even be able to walk the halls of Congress or talk to my colleagues on the Republican side if I wasn't telling the truth.

I think it is important that everyone understands, if you are a Republican, you have to have a problem with what I just presented. You have to. If you are a Democrat, you have to have a problem, the information I am sharing with you that the Republican majority is allowing to happen.

We on this side have called for an increase in the minimum wage. We on this side have called for tough legislation on price gouging. We on this side have talked about making ourselves energy independent; not investing in the Middle East, but investing in the Midwest as it relates to E–85.

So I think it is important that everyone understands when we are in the majority, if the American people see fit, we will put forth policy that will benefit all Americans. I think it is important.

If you are an independent, you have to have a problem with the fact that Members of Congress have received thousands upon thousands of dollars of raises since 1997, and still no response from the Republican majority as it relates to the minimum wage.

Mr. DELAHUNT, those are the facts for now. This book is full of facts. These books are full of action; balancing the budget, real homeland security, where local communities don't have to tax themselves because we have done away with the COPS Program. We made it difficult for local communities to be able to apply for homeland security, home front security, because, guess what, when something goes down in a city, be it small or big, it won't be the Department of Homeland Security showing up, it will be a local police department.

This is my last one here, and it is a real plan, ready to go, Mr. Speaker, on energy. Anyone can go on House Democrats.gov and get all of these plans. They just didn't come up tonight. We have been coming to this floor, and now the American people are going to have an opportunity to be not Democrats, not Republicans, not independents, but voting on behalf of this country, and to make sure that we have representation here in this House.

Mr. DELAHUNT?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. MEEK, I want to commend you on that eloquent exposition of the issues that I know resonate with the American people. Could you do me a favor? Could you hold up that last book once more?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Which one?

Mr. DELAHUNT. The last one. Hold it up, will you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The energy plan. Yes, sir.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just show it. I hope that those that are watching can see the cover. Except I would expand on the title, ''Energy Plan.'' I would add a dash, and I would add the words ''A Blueprint to Win the War Against Terrorism,'' because therein, in that plan, lies the secret, and it shouldn't be a secret, because I think it is obvious to many of us, that if we can adopt an energy plan, no longer will we find ourselves hostage to governments and societies that disagree with our values. And that is the case now.

Six years into this administration, and gas has gone from $1.40 a gallon at the pump to now it is over $3. The Middle East is destabilizing.

But the reality is, and we spoke about this, myself and some other colleagues earlier, today we are losing the war on terror. At least that is the opinion of people, including the American people, in 34 countries out of 35 where a poll commissioned by the BBC was taken. Just recently, a bipartisan group of experts in foreign policy and national security concluded that we are losing the war on terror.

Now, in the previous hour my good friend from Iowa made the observation, why should we care whether people like us or not? Why should we care? Because, again, if you take a look other polls, and not just, by the way, in the Middle East, but on every continent, the image of the United States is poor. We are reviled. As the GAO said, anti-American sentiment is broadening and deepening. Yet my friend from Iowa says, why should we care?

I think what he meant is why should we care about those who are sympathetic to or are active participants in acts of terror against the United States, and that makes sense.

But we should care, Mr. Speaker. We should care about the rest of the world, because if we are going to have success in the war on terror, we need other people to help us. We cannot do it alone.

If I can just cite one example, Mr. MEEK, in a story just last week in the Washington Times, Secretary Rumsfeld was in Tajikistan, a Central Asian country, and while he was there he expressed concern about what is transpiring in Afghanistan. This is what he had to say, if I can just ask for your indulgence for a minute. I have to put my glasses on, Mr. MEEK. You know I have a birthday coming up.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is tomorrow, Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I didn't want the world to know that, but you let that secret out.

The story reads, ''U.S. forces invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 to oust the radical Taliban regime. Although the country now has a democratically-elected government, the Taliban has been making a comeback.''

Now to quote the Secretary. This is Mr. Rumsfeld. ''Western Europe ought to have an enormous interest in the success of Afghanistan, and it is going to take a lot more effort on their part for the Karzai government to be successful.'' He was alluding to the President of Afghanistan, Mr. Karzai.

□ 2330

But what he is saying is Western Europe has got to help us more. So what we are looking for is help from Western Europe to contribute troops, to contribute resources so that that fragile democracy in Afghanistan can survive.

So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it is important what the British people think of the United States. Now, again, if you would bear with me, let me go to an article, Mr. Speaker, that appears in the New York Times dated July 3. Now, let's be really clear. This is not Pakistan, this is not Tajikistan, this is not Mexico, this is not Venezuela, this is not President Putin's Russia, this is the United Kingdom, with whom it is written we have a special relationship, Mr. Speaker.

Where we have had a relationship between our peoples that is extraordinary for decades. Now, according to this poll, it was asked whether the United States is doing a bad job in Iraq, is indifferent to what the rest of the world thinks of it, and whether it is obsessed with money.

Now, according to the pollster, in an analysis by him, this was one of the prominent British papers that commissioned the poll, it indicated that there has never been a time when America was held in such low esteem on this side of the Atlantic.

The special relationship that British leaders have long believed exists between their country and the United States may still live in Downing Street and at Camp David, but it has atrophied among the British public.

Among the responders in the new poll, Mr. MEEK, 77 percent did not see America as a beacon of hope for the world. Asked to rate President Bush as a leader, more than three-quarters described him as either pretty poor or terrible. Seventy-two percent said his foreign policy, instead of being driven by a desire to build democracy, was merely a cover for American interests.

About two-thirds of responders said that they believed that American troops were doing a bad job in trying to win the hearts and minds in Iraq. Eighty-three percent of responders said the United States does not care what the rest of the world thinks.

We should care. To answer the question that was put forth by my friend and our colleague from Iowa, the reason that we have to care is because we live in a world. If we are going to

achieve our goals, we have to do them in a multi-lateral way. We need the British people to support us. We need the Irish people, we need people all over this world. We want to reach out and be that beacon of hope.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, you know it would be nice if the American people supported this administration. It would be nice if the administration had a policy that the American people could support, or that in spite of the incredible lack of support for the American people, it would be nice if the administration actually showed that that mattered to them, instead of continuing down the path of ''staying the course'' and doing exactly as they think is right and to heck with what anyone else in America thinks.

I mean, of course we care about our place in the world, and about the vision that we are viewed through, the lens we are viewed through. But I do not understand why the administration and why this President and this Republican leadership, our colleagues, do not seem to care or understand how the American people are viewing them.

I mean, there are a number of issues I know you have gone over tonight, the minimum wage is one of them. I have been witnessing the hearings that have been taking place around the country on border security and the argument over whether border security or an earned path to citizenship is more important.

And what I think has been extremely humorous is that the Republicans on the other side, the Members on the other side of the aisle, in the other body, adhering to the rules, Mr. Speaker, have taken to calling the McCain-Hagel, I think there is another Republican that is part of that legislation. It is two or three Republicans that are heading it up. And MARTINEZ, our own Senator from Florida.

But MCCAIN, and HAGEL and MARTINEZ are heading up that legislation. Yet now they seem to be calling it, or attempting to call it the Reid-Kennedy bill or the Reid-Kennedy bill, neither of whom are sponsors of that legislation.

So what they are trying to do is lead the American people, and if they say it enough times so that they believe it, that it is the Democrats that are taking the initiative on this immigration policy when it is clearly Republicans.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Are you aware, and again I know we are changing subjects here, but I do not know if you are aware that there has been a decline in the number of enforcement actions against employers for hiring undocumented workers.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Not only am I aware of that, Mr. DELAHUNT, thank you for leading me right into that lovely chart that we have here, that graphically depicts the differences between border security and immigration under a Democratic administration versus border security under this Republican Bush administration.

Let us peruse the numbers. The Republicans have been talking a good game about how important border security truly is to them, especially our colleagues here in the House. They have been beating that drum over and over again.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can interrupt just once more. Of course you are aware that the Republicans have been in the majority in this chamber for 12 years.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Well, I am quite aware of that, they have been well within control of this institution for 12 years.

Mr. DELAHUNT. They have controlled the White House.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. For 6 years.

Mr. DELAHUNT. They have controlled the United States Senate I think for 10 out of 12 years

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. So this was entirely theirs.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it is important that people understand that and understand who is Washington, D.C.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Entirely within their control to crack down on border security, to hire more Border Patrol agents, enforcement actions against employers who hire illegal immigrants illegally.

So let's take a look at the numbers. We use third party validators. By the way, it is a pleasure to join you here once again, my 30 Something colleagues. I apologize for not doing that initially when I began, just jumping in.

But let us look at the average number of new border patrol agents added per year under the Clinton administration from 1993 to 2000, versus the Bush administration between 2001 and 2005. Under President Clinton, 642 per year border patrol agents were added per year. And under President Bush they have added an average of 411.

Now there is some real commitment to border security. How about we look at the INS, which is now CIS. But the INS fines for immigration enforcement, that is fines against employers who hired illegal immigrants illegally and have gotten caught.

Okay. Under the Democratic administration in 1999, President Clinton was in office, there were 417 cases where INS fined employers for hiring, for getting caught hiring illegal immigrants. Guess how many there were in 2004, a year in which President Bush was in office?

□ 2340

Mr. DELAHUNT. That was the year that some started to express concern about border enforcement.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes. That is when you started to hear the drum beginning to beat, and beat very loudly.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Can you tell us what that number is, as compared to the 417 under President Clinton?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I would be glad to. We went from 417 immigration enforcement actions against employers under President Clinton to 3. Three under President Bush in 2004.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Three, one, two, three.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If I tried to count to 417, the hour would end, and we wouldn't be able to say anything else. So I will move on to the next one.

How about when we are talking about immigration fraud cases? If the Republicans are so committed to border security and making sure that we crack down on illegal immigrants and prevent the people who don't belong here and who are coming here the wrong way, then you would think that there would be many, many more cases under the Republicans than the Democrats. But in 1995, a year in which we had a Democratic President, there were 6,455 cases pursued against immigration fraud.

Then you fast-forward to 2003 under the Bush administration, the Republican administration, a year in which supposedly you had an entirely Republican-controlled government, and the ability for them to actually pursue more than 6,455 cases. They pursued 1,389, a 78 percent drop.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Could I just submit a hypothesis for a minute?

You know, one of the leaders in the neoconservative movement, a Mr. Grover Norquist, coined an interesting term called shrinking government, until it practically disappears. This neoconservative ideology, I suggest, is responsible for those statistics. Because what we have done in the past 6, 8 years, is reduced government to the point when no longer are we adequately enforcing our laws as well as our border.

So what we see is a real problem that was created by this Republican majority working with a Republican President.

Did you have a chance, by any stretch, to reading the lament of the former Speaker of this House, Mr. Gingrich?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I did, actually. I think we also have a graphic depiction of that. But really what this comes down to, Mr. DELAHUNT, is a clear indication of who is for immigration enforcement and border security, and who is just kidding; who is in favor of putting action behind the words, and who just speaks the words.

There is one more statistic that was more difficult to graphically depict, so I will go through this last one, which is also important, because the Bush administration has touted that in its first 5 years, it caught and returned 6 million undocumented individuals. That is actually a drop in any 5-year period under the Clinton administration.

So, you know, this is all just a lot of puffery, a whole lot of chest-pounding, which they seem to be really, really good at. But when you scratch below the surface, just a little bit, there is no depth, there is nothing there.

And, clearly, the former House Speaker, Mr. Gingrich, the warrior, arguably the architect of the so-called Republican revolution, he has had a few things to say, as we talked about our 30-something hours on this. As recently as July 14th, which was 4 days ago, this was him commenting on the broken system in Washington.

He said, Congress really has to think about how fundamentally wrong the current system is.

When facing crises at home and abroad, he said, it is important to have an informed, independent legislative branch coming to grips with this reality and not sitting around and waiting for Presidential leadership.

Clearly when it comes to border security and immigration, there hasn't been a whole lot of Presidential leadership, not when it comes to action. He has been real good at talking.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Can you tell me what his solution to the crisis that this country is now facing in terms of its democratic institutions and its relationship between a White House that has acquired incredible power and a Congress that continues to see power to the point where it has become a rubber stamp for a President that has no restraints whatsoever? What does Newt Gingrich say is that solution?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That is what has been truly unbelievable. This leadership, our Republican colleagues, have just been totally willing to cede power, just give up the legislative authority that we have, and say, Mr. President, you take it, we are out.

So Mr. Gingrich had something else to say just the other day. He said the correct answer is for the American people to just start firing people.

I don't think he was talking about anything other than this fall during the elections, because they are not, they are clearly, they clearly do not have their priorities straight. They clearly only speak words and don't back them up with action. They clearly only bob their heads up and down like the bobble-head Republicans that they have been and rubber-stamp everything that the President asks them to do.

There it is right there. There is the big old Republican rubber stamp which each of them has essentially wrapped their arms around and agreed to adhere to.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I would suggest that that is a remarkable statement by an individual who led the Republican Party to a majority in this House.

When he says it is time for the American people to start firing everyone, that is to me a demonstration that he recognizes that the government is not functioning as it ought to function. We are allowing this institution, this House, to wither.

Government isn't withering; it is not government, it is Congress that is allowing democracy to wither. That is dangerous.

Unless you have a Congress that stands up and says no, and serves as a true check and balance, then you have a democracy that is at risk.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, I can't help but grab this rubber stamp and help the Members realize that they are making history in all the wrong ways. This rubber-stamp Republican majority has allowed this President to have free rein, not only on everyday American workers, retirees, veterans and the American taxpayer dollars, this President rubber stamped, okayed by this Republican majority, has borrowed $1.05 trillion from foreign nations. At no other time in the history of this Republic, in 4 years or in 224 years, has that amount of money been borrowed.

The Republican rubber-stamp Congress has allowed that to happen.

Now we have OPEC countries, Japan, China, Korea, Caribbean, Germany, you name it. They are borrowing. Canada, they are buying our debt. We are borrowing from them. The Republican majority allowed the Bush White House to get what they want as it relates to a rubber stamp.

Like I said, it is not even fair. I mean, Time magazine, freshly minted, the 17th edition, folks can either get it in the mail or buy it, I don't have any stock in Time Warner or anything.

□ 2350

This is where we are because this time right now, when the President and the 109th Congress is history making, not history making being the Congress that did so much for the American people but the Congress that allows the President of the United States to get this country in a position that it is in because the checks and balances that are in the Constitution and how we are supposed to govern and carry out oversight was not adhered to.

Here it is, Time magazine, The End of Cowboy Democracy, what Korea, Iraq and Iran teaches us about the limits of going it alone. And then you go on to page 20, and it talks about how the White House has just now realized that they have a problem.

Now, it would be okay if it was just the White House, and this is not about the President. The President is the President of the United States. He is not running again for reelection, but Members of the House have to run every 2 years, every 6 years in the Senate.

It goes on and it outlines quotes from people that were formerly in the administration, folks that are in the administration now, and they are saying now they realize that they have a problem. Well, it is not them. It is the United States of America. You heard Mr. DELAHUNT talking about the people in the U.K. Guess what, the people in the U.K. have bought $223.2 billion of our debt. This is what they think about us. Leave alone that. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ talked about what the American people think about us.

So the alternative, in my opinion, is that we have plans on this side that is being not only demagogued by the Republican majority but not even allowed to come to the floor. HouseDemocrats.gov, okay, energizing America, farmers fueling our energy independence. Here is a little short piece on it, bigger plan.

Real Security, on the Web site once again, ready to go, will not be heard here on the House. Republican majority does not want to hear it because they feel they have the master plan and that everything is in line. You heard Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ talk about enforcement of illegal workers under the Bush administration, the funding of border agents. The facts are the facts.

The Innovation Agenda, CEOs of American companies are saying we are ready to have math and science teachers; we are ready to work on real innovation in turning out the next workforce that we need. Republican majority talks about it but has not acted on it.

So I think it is important that we continue to share this with the American people. It may be repetitive. We may have to use Mr. Gingrich quotes. We may have to use Time magazine and other national publications and periodicals to drive the point home. It does not matter what your party affiliation is. It should not matter who you voted for in the last election.

What should matter is that you are a citizen of the United States of America and you care about this country. So when your children and grandchildren ask the question, Mama, Granddaddy, Aunt, Uncle, what were you doing when all this was going on; were you just saying I am a Republican and I am voting Republican because I am a Republican? Were you saying I am a Democrat, I was voting for the person that ran the most commercials and sent me stuff through the mail and saying that I am the best? Oh, or I am an Independent, and you know, I just thought it was probably politically correct and cool for me to vote for the people that were in the majority so I can hopefully be on the prevailing side?

One thing I can say is now the American people are saying they would much rather have a Democratic Congress, probably not because that they feel now I am so-called a Democrat. No, they see what is going on. They see the minimum wage not going up. They see the prices going up at the pump. They see what other countries are saying about us, and they see the lack of oversight and enforcement by this Congress.

This Congress, the Republican majority would much rather get an invitation to the White House and have dinner and tea and cookies to be at a party of 200 people than to provide representation on behalf of the American people.

Mr. DELAHUNT. You know what, it is time for Congress to stand up and insist on answers to hard questions.

Let me go back to Iraq for one moment. I heard a rumor that the Iraqi

prime minister intends to come to Washington soon. I think we all deserve an answer to a question that was raised by one of our leaders in the Democratic Party, JAN SCHAKOWSKY, who circulated a Dear Colleague today.

Maybe you have not heard this yet, but the Iraqi prime minister, where we have spent close to half a trillion dollars and 2,600 Americans have died, the head of their parliament, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani said these offensive words. He ''accused 'Jews' of financing acts of violence in Iraq in order to discredit Islamists who control the parliament and government so they can install their 'agents' in power.''

These are his words: ''Some people say 'we saw you beheading, kidnappings and killing. In the end we even started kidnapping women who are our honor.' These acts are not the work of Iraqis. I am sure that he who does this is a Jew and the son of a Jew. I can tell you about these Jewish, Israelis and Zionists who are using Iraqi money and oil to frustrate the Islamic movement in Iraq and come with the agent and cheap project.''

This is what my friend from Iowa was earlier talking about democracy? What kind of democracy would tolerate and countenance that kind of virulent, anti-Semitic remark from the Speaker of the parliament? The same Iraqi government that has a bilateral military agreement with Iran. Does this say something about the policy of this administration that has enhanced the power and influence of Iran in the region, Iran by the way, who is the sponsor of Hamas and Hezbollah and we know and the whole world knows what is happening today in Lebanon and the Gaza strip?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. So, instead of changing course and moving us in a new direction, the Republicans want to continue to go in the direction that we are continuing, that Americans are so frustrated with.

This very week they are going to focus on the politics of distraction because, as we shine a light on what is really going on, then the American people would become even more frustrated than they already are.

Mr. Speaker, all of our charts in the 30 Something Working Group and the things we discussed tonight will be up on our Web site. People can log on to www.HouseDemocrats.gov/30Something. We encourage the Members to take a look at all the things we have got up there, and I yield back to Mr. MEEK to close us out.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much. I would like to thank Mr. DELAHUNT also and all the Members of the 30 Something Working Group for coming together with an outstanding presentation tonight for the Members of the House.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Where was Mr. RYAN this evening?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I do not know. We need to see what happened to Mr. RYAN tonight, but I am pretty sure there is a good excuse for him not being here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ talked about a new direction for America. We want to make sure that health care is more affordable for all Americans, and we also want to make sure that we have lower gas prices, helping our working families, also cutting college costs and ensuring dignity in retirement and also requiring fiscal responsibility, pay-as-we-go.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have the time, and it was an honor to address the House tonight.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ABERCROMBIE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. KIND (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

Ms. MCKINNEY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mrs. NORTHUP (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

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 Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. HERSETH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BISHOP of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CLAY, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today and July 18, 19, 20, and 21.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and July 18, 19, 20, and 21.

Mr. BURGESS, for 5 minutes, July 19.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today and July 18 and 20.

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, today and July 18.

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, today and July 18 and 19.

Mr. GILCHREST, for 5 minutes, today and July 19.

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. 3525. An act to amend subpart 2 of part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to improve outcomes for children in families affected by methamphetamine abuse and addiction, to reauthorize the promoting safe and stable families program, and for other purposes to the Committee on Ways and Means.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2872. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 655. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the National Foundation for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at midnight), under its previous order, the House adjourned until today, Tuesday, July 18, 2006, at 9 a.m., for morning hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

8562. A letter from the Secretary of the Navy, Department of Defense, transmitting notification that the Nunn-McCurdy Unit Cost has breached the ''Original'' Acquisition Program Baseline (APB) for the enclosed programs, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2433(e)(1); to the Committee on Armed Services.

8563. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisitions, Technology and Logisitics, Department of Defense, transmitting a report on the budgeting of the Department of Defense for the sustainment of key military equipment, pursuant to Public Law 109-163, section 361; to the Committee on Armed Services.

8564. A letter from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the sixteenth annual report on the Profitability of Credit Card Operations of Depository Institutions, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1637 note. Public Law 100-583, section 8 (102 Stat. 2969); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8565. A letter from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Ninety-Second Annual Report of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System covering operations during

calendar year 2005; to the Committee on Financial Services.

8566. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's status of the quardrennial report mandated by Section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 2170(k); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8567. A letter from the Acting Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Angola pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

8568. A letter from the Acting Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Turkey pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

8569. A letter from the Acting Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Chile pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

8570. A letter from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting a supplemental update of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2007, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1106; (H. Doc. No. 109-122); to the Committee on the Budget and ordered to be printed.

8571. A letter from the Acting Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's report on the activites to improve coordination and communication with respect to the implementation of E-911 services, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. 942 Public Law 108-494, section 104; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

8572. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report, pursuant to section 101 of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

8573. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the fifty-second Semiannual Report to Congress on management decisions and final actions taken on audit recommendations, covering the period October 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006 in compliance with the Inspector General Act Amendments of 1988, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8574. A letter from the Chief Administrative Officer, transmitting the quarterly report of receipts and expenditures of appropriations and other funds for the period April 1, 2006 through June 30, 2006 as compiled by the Chief Administrative Officer, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 104a Public Law 88-454; (H. Doc. No. 109-121); to the Committee on House Administration and ordered to be printed.

8575. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting notification of payments to eligible governments in the State of Illinois for Fiscal Year 2006 under the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program; to the Committee on Resources.

8576. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Seasonal Closure of Chiniak Gully in the Gulf of Alaska to Trawl Fishing [Docket No. 060307059-6135-02; I.D. 030106B] (RIN: 0648-AU15) received June 9, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8577. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean; Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Gulf of Mexico Recreational Grouper Fishery Management Measures [Docket No. 060322083-6147-02; I.D. 032006C] (RIN: 0648-AU04) received July 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8578. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Allocating Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fishery Resources [Docket No. 060227052-6139-02; I.D. 021606B] (RIN: 0648-AU06) received June 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8579. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery; Framework 18 [Docket No. 060314069-6138-002; I.D. 030306B] (RIN: 0648-AT25) received June 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8580. A letter from the Acting Deputy Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — NOAA Information Collection Requirements Under the Paperwork Reduction Act; OMB Control Numbers; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Fisheries in the Western Pacific; Correction [Docket No. 060327086-6130-02; I.D. 032306A] (RIN: 0648-AU21) received June 9, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8581. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Limited Access Program for Gulf Charter Vessels and Headboats [Docket No. 060216043-6123-02; I.D. 021306C] (RIN: 0648-AS70) received June 16, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8582. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan Regulations; Sea Turtle Conservation; Restrictions to Fishing Activities [Docket No. 040903253-5337-02; I.D. 081104H] (RIN: 0648-AR39) received June 8, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8583. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Monkfish Fishery [Docket No. 060315071-6101-02; I.D. 030906C] (RIN: 0648-AT22) received May 3, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8584. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery; Emergency Rule [Docket No. 060608158-6158-01; I.D. 051806E] (RIN: 0648-AU47) received June 26, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8585. A letter from the Director, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's 2005 report to Congress on the ''The Status of U.S. Fisheries''; to the Committee on Resources.

8586. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfin Sole by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 060216045-6045-01; I.D. 041906C] received May 3, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8587. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Mackeral, Squid, and Butterfish Fisheries; Closure of the Quarter II Fishery for Loligo Squid [Docket No. 051209329-5329-01; I.D. 051806A] received June 7, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8588. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Less Than 60 ft. (18.3m) LOA Using Pot or Hook-and-Line Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 060216045-6045-01; I.D. 052206A] received June 9, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8589. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Suspension of the Primary Pacific Whiting Season for the Shore-based Sector South of 42 degrees North Latitude [Docket No. 060424110-6110-01; I.D. 052406B] received June 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8590. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Tilefish Fishery; Quota Harvested for Part-time Category [Docket No. 010319075-1217-02; I.D. 032206A] received July 10, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8591. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfin Sole in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 060216045-6045-01; I.D. 061506A] received July 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8592. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota Transfer [Docket No. 051104293-5344-02; I.D. 061206B] received July 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8593. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final

rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Closure of the 2006 Deep-Water Grouper Commercial Fishery [I.D. 060806E] received July 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8594. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Modification of the Gear Retsrictions for the U.S./Canada Management Area [Docket No. 040112010-4114-02; I.D. 061306A] received July 6, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8595. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management [Docket No. 060216045-6045-01; I.D. 060706B] received June 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8596. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfish Sole by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management [Docket No. 060216045-6045-01; I.D. 060706C] received June 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8597. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Shallow-Water Species Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No. 060216044-6044-01; I.D. 060806A] received June 22, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

8598. A letter from the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, American Chemical Society, transmitting the Society's Annual Report and the Audited Finanical Statements for the calendar year 2005, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 1101(2) and 1103; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8599. A letter from the Congressional Scouting Caucus, transmitting the 2005 Boy Scouts of America Annual Report; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8600. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's annual report on U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Fiscal Year 2005, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8601. A letter from the Assistant Attorney, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's report providing an estimate of the dollar amount of claims (together with related fees and expenses of witnesses) that, by reason of the acts or omissions of free clinic health professionals are paid for 2005, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 233(o); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8602. A letter from the Attorney, National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, transmitting the 2005 Annual Report of independent auditors who have audited the records of the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 10101(b)(1) and 150909; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8603. A letter from the Director, National Legislative Commission, American Legion, transmitting a copy of the Legion's financial statements as of December 31, 2005; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8604. A letter from the Staff Director, United States Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Florida and Kentucky advisory committees; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8605. A letter from the Staff Director, United States Sentancing Commission, transmitting the Department's report on the Impact of United States v. Booker on Federal Sentancing as required by S. Report. No. 109-109, which accompanied Pub. L. 109-115; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8606. A letter from the Chairman and General Counsel, Washington Legal Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's 2005 Annual Report; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8607. A letter from the Director, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting notification that funding under Title V, subsection 503(b)(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, has exceeded $5 million for the response to the emergency declared as a result the influx of evacuees from areas struck by Hurricane Katrina beginning on August 29, 2005 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 5193; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8608. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, Department of the Army, Department of Defense, transmitting the Administration's position on the budgeting of the Arkansas River Navigation Study-McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Arkansas and Oklahoma; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8609. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's annual report regarding actions of foreign-flag vessels and their Flag Administrations for 2006; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8610. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting a report entitled, ''Fundamental Properties of Asphalts and Modified Asphalts-II'' submitted in accordance with Section 6016(e) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), Pub. L. 102-240, and Section 5117(b)(5) of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the extension of those provisions through FY 2005; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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:

[Filed on July 14, 2006]

Mr. SENSENBRENNER: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 4132. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide penalties for officers and employees of the Federal Bureau of Investigation who obtain knowledge of criminal conduct within the jurisdiction of State and local prosecutors and fail to so inform those prosecutors; with an amendment (Rept. 109–564). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

[Filed on July 17, 2006]

Mr. OXLEY: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 5024. A bill to require annual oral testimony before the Financial Services Committee of the Chairperson or a designee of the Chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Financial Accounting Standards Board, and the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, relating to their efforts to promote transparency in financial reporting; with an amendment (Rept. 109–565). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. OXLEY: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 5068. A bill to reauthorize the operations of the Export-Import Bank, and to reform certain operations of the Bank, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 109–566). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 5018. A bill to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 109–567). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 2925. A bill to amend the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 to extend the authority for drought assistance; with an amendment (Rept. 109–568). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 5074. A bill to amend the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 to provide for continued payment of railroad retirement annuities by the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes (Rept. 109–569). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. House Concurrent Resolution 145. Resolution expressing the sense of Congress in support of a national bike month and in appreciation of cyclists and others for promoting bicycle safety and the benefits of cycling (Rept. 109–570 Pt. 1). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. OXLEY: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 3043. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to carry out a pilot program to insure zero-downpayment mortgages for one-unit residences; with an amendment (Rept. 109–571). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. OXLEY: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 5527. A bill to extend the authority of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to restructure mortgages and rental assistance for certain assisted multifamily housing; with an amendment (Rept. 109–572). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. GINGREY: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 918. Resolution providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 88) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to marriage (Rept. 109–573). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. THOMAS: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 5684. A bill to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement (Rept. 109–574). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 1956. A bill to regulate certain State taxation of interstate commerce; and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 109–575). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 5323. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for ceremonies on or near Independence Day for administering oaths of allegiance to legal immigrants whose applications for naturalization have been approved (Rept. 109–576).

Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

REPORTED BILL SEQUENTIALLY REFERRED

Under clause 2 of rule XII, bills and reports were delivered to the Clerk for printing, and bills referred as follows:

Mr. BARTON of Texas: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 5337. A bill to ensure national security while promoting foreign investment and the creation and maintenance of jobs, to reform the process by which such investments are examined for any effect they may have on national security, to establish the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, and for other purposes, with an amendment; for a period ending not later than July 17, 2006, (Rept. 109–523, Pt. 2). Ordered to be printed.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 5808. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to make grants to public transportation agencies and over-the-road bus operators to improve security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. HART (for herself and Mr. BAIRD):

H.R. 5809. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase and extend the energy efficient commercial buildings deduction; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. DUNCAN, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas):

H.R. 5810. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to authorize funding for brownfields revitalization activities and State response programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. LOBIONDO, and Mr. FILNER):

H.R. 5811. A bill to implement the Protocol of 1997 to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. SHUSTER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. KUHL of New York, and Mr. RAHALL):

H.R. 5812. A bill to reauthorize and improve the program authorized by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. ROGERS of Alabama (for himself and Mr. MEEK of Florida):

H.R. 5813. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for improvements in the management and operations of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, and Mr. MEEK of Florida):

H.R. 5814. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. BROWN of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. MICHAUD):

H.R. 5815. A bill to authorize major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal years 2006 and 2007, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. FORD:

H.R. 5816. A bill to require budgeting for ongoing military operations; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. INSLEE (for himself and Mr. SIMPSON):

H.R. 5817. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Minidoka Internment National Monument to include the Nidoto Nai Yoni Memorial in Bainbridge Island, Washington, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. KOLBE:

H.R. 5818. A bill to modernize the legal tender of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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. NADLER:

H.R. 5819. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to exempt certain elderly persons from demonstrating an understanding of the English language and the history, principles, and form of government of the United States as a requirement for naturalization, and to permit certain other elderly persons to take the history and government examination in a language of their choice; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SWEENEY:

H.R. 5820. A bill to increase the security of sensitive data maintained by the Federal Government; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Ms. WATSON:

H.R. 5821. A bill to increase community service by students at risk of education failure and thereby reduce youth and gang violence; to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. ACKERMAN (for himself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. ROYCE, Ms. WATSON, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. SOUDER, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. HOLT, Mr. SAXTON, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MATHESON, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, and Mr. BROWN of Ohio):

H. Res. 915. A resolution expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives to the families and friends of the victims of the July 11, 2006, terrorist bombings in Mumbai, India, and sympathy to the people of India; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER:

H. Res. 916. A resolution impeaching Manuel L. Real, judge of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, for high crimes and misdemeanors; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FILNER:

H. Res. 917. A resolution providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 23) to amend title 46, United States Code, and title II of the Social Security Act to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II; to the Committee on Rules.

By Ms. NORTON:

H. Res. 919. A resolution honoring Retired Lieutenant Commander Wesley Anthony Brown for his historic achievement as the first African American graduate of the United States Naval Academy and paying tribute on the occasion of July 4 to Wesley Anthony Brown and other residents of the Nation's capital who have served in the armed forces and have continued to pay taxes, both without representation in Congress; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and 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.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 97: Mrs. MYRICK.
H.R. 98: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 356: Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 567: Mr. STARK.
H.R. 602: Mr. JINDAL.
H.R. 892: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 952: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 1020: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1131: Mr. STRICKLAND.
H.R. 1298: Mr. DENT.
H.R. 1345: Mrs. JONES of Ohio.
H.R. 1384: Mr. NUSSLE.
H.R. 1578: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania and Mrs. MYRICK.
H.R. 1658: Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 1951: Mr. MCCRERY, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, and Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 2034: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 2378: Mr. REHBERG.
H.R. 2488: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 2525: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan.
H.R. 2679: Mr. TIAHRT, Ms. FOXX, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. BASS, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. CHABOT.
H.R. 3384: Mr. DENT.
H.R. 3478: Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD and Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3949: Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H.R. 4033: Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4264: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia and Mr. WEXLER.
H.R. 4480: Mr. CHABOT and Mrs. MYRICK.
H.R. 4491: Mr. JEFFERSON.
H.R. 4517: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 4551: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.
H.R. 4618: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 4622: Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 4747: Mr. OWENS, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. HOOLEY, and Mr. OLVER.
H.R. 4829: Mr. WAMP.
H.R. 4857: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 4873: Mr. SABO.
H.R. 4913: Mr. CULBERSON.
H.R. 4953: Mr. MCHUGH and Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 4992: Mr. MORAN of Kansas and Mr. ETHERIDGE.
H.R. 5139: Mrs. BIGGERT.
H.R. 5159: Mr. AKIN.
H.R. 5182: Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Mr. ISTOOK, Mr. LATOURETTE, and Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 5211: Mr. MILLER of Florida and Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 5249: Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. GILLMOR, and Mr. ROYCE.
H.R. 5250: Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 5262: Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 5337: Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 5371: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 5382: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H.R. 5436: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. EVANS, Mr. RANGEL, and Ms. WOOLSEY.
H.R. 5444: Mr. ENGEL.
H.R. 5465: Ms. MCKINNEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WEXLER, and Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 5468: Mr. FEENEY.
H.R. 5475: Mr. PAUL.
H.R. 5483: Mr. RAMSTAD.
H.R. 5526: Mr. PETRI, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, and Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 5533: Mrs. CAPPS.
H.R. 5536: Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan.
H.R. 5562: Ms. BERKLEY.
H.R. 5583: Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 5602: Mr. SHAYS and Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 5623: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 5624: Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. NORWOOD.
H.R. 5637: Mr. CAMPBELL of California.
H.R. 5682: Mr. CARTER, Mr. BONILLA, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. LINDER.
H.R. 5694: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 5700: Mr. HERGER.
H.R. 5704: Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. BOUSTANY, and Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 5706: Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 5714: Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. NADLER, Ms. LEE, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 5719: Mr. AKIN, Mr. KLINE, Ms. FOXX, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. PICKERING, and Mr. PITTS.
H.R. 5731: Mr. STARK, Mr. MEEK of Florida, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 5755: Mr. ETHERIDGE, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. TAUSCHER, and Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.
H.R. 5771: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. OWENS, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. HERSETH, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. LEE, and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 5772: Mr. SHERWOOD, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. MELANCON, and Mr. BACHUS.
H.R. 5785: Mr. MANZULLO.
H.R. 5805: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.J. Res. 88: Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. BILBRAY, and Mr. RENZI.
H.J. Res. 90: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H. Con. Res. 340: Mr. DEFAZIO and Mr. WALDEN of Oregon.
H. Con. Res. 346: Mr. SULLIVAN.
H. Con. Res. 347: Mr. SHAYS.
H. Con. Res. 439: Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. MCINTYRE.
H. Con. Res. 448: Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. FORBES, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. WU, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. GORDON, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H. Res. 765: Mr. BROWN of Ohio.

H. Res. 773: Mr. ANDREWS.

H. Res. 871: Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. FOLEY, Mrs. SCHMIDT, and Mr. UPTON.

H. Res. 905: Mr. CANNON, Mr. STARK, and Mr. KUCINICH.

H. Res. 908: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. GERLACH, and Mr. MANZULLO.

H. Res. 911: Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. BARROW, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. PENCE, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. HOYER, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Ms. HOOLEY, Ms. BEAN, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. FARR, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. EDWARDS, Mrs. MYRICK, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H. Res. 912: Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. BEAN, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. PORTER, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. LEACH, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. BACHUS, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. PUTNAM, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, and Mr. GERLACH.