

I thank the gentlewoman very much for yielding time.

Ms. FOXX. I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) for coming in and adding to the comments that have been made by my colleagues on this issue of national security and bringing up some points that had not been made before. You have done a very, very fine job of bringing in those issues about the 9/11 Commission report and showing how we are doing the things that the 9/11 Commission has said that we need to do. It is something that I had intended to mention in my remarks, but I am glad that you brought them up because you were very eloquent in what you said.

I want to say again that the Republican leadership here, the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, we are all focused on improving national security for this country. We want to make sure that the people of this Nation know that they are secure in their everyday lives, that they can go about their jobs, go about their leisure, and go about their business every day doing what they should be doing and forgetting in many ways what happened in 9/11 because they have a government, a national government that is focused on the defense of this Nation and national security.

And I want to encourage our Democratic colleagues to hear what I know their constituents must be saying to them, that they want to remain safe in this country and they want us to deal with those issues at this level. We know no other level of government can do that. And I feel confident that over the next week, as we continue to deal with the issues that we need to deal with before we take a recess to go home and work on our campaigns, that we will focus on the most important job of the Federal Government, and that is securing this country and focusing on the defense of this country and making sure that our citizens can go about their daily lives feeling safe as we did before 9/11 hit and as we will again.

And I want to say to our leadership, you have done a wonderful job in taking us closer and closer to a time when we will be able to once again feel free to do all those things that we did before 9/11, and make sure that that kind of act never occurs in this country, and yet we maintain our constitutional rights and privileges and at the same time go after terrorists where we should be going after them.

#### IN MEMORY OF FORT WORTH FIRE CHIEF CHARLES GAINES

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes to address the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to honor the life and the memory of Fort Worth Fire Chief Charles Gaines. Chief Gaines passed away this past Saturday evening rather suddenly of natural causes. Chief Gaines was 49 years of age.

Mr. Speaker, our paths crossed several times during Chief Gaines' 4-year tenure as fire chief and my 4 years in Congress. The commitment and dedication that the chief showed to his profession was evident from the moment we met. Under his leadership, Chief Gaines was accountable for the oversight of 745 firefighters that composed the Fort Worth Fire Department. As fire chief, he also oversaw the department's response to over 57,000 incidents annually in the city of Fort Worth.

Before serving as the fire chief of Fort Worth, Chief Gaines served in the United States Air Force as a fire protection specialist. He worked on crash and rescue teams at various Air Force bases until his promotion to Air Force assistant chief. After receiving an honorable discharge from the Air Force in 1980, he continued his career as a member of the Oklahoma City Fire Department in 1981.

During the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, he served as the fire department's operations safety officer. His service and leadership during this national tragedy ensured that the first responders and government workers were informed and received all medical attention.

Fire Chief Gaines was known throughout the department as a man of integrity. While negotiating with the firefighters' union early in his Fort Worth career, his calm, collective demeanor earned him the respect of the department and his co-workers. He was able to compromise with the union and resolve differences between the two sides.

He had a detail-oriented approach to problems, and this meant that problems within his department, those issues were addressed the first time around. Chief Gaines earned his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Oklahoma City University, and he incorporated efficient management techniques throughout the Fort Worth Fire Department. This management style allowed him to incorporate and encourage innovation and alternative thinking.

Chief Gaines was able to initiate solutions that would more effectively safeguard the citizens of Fort Worth, while saving tax dollars in the process. Chief Gaines was the first African American fire chief in the city of Fort Worth. The city has a 113-year history of that department. Chief Gaines brought a new wave of energy to the Fort Worth Fire Department. His policy of requiring a minimum of four firefighters to each fire truck helped Fort Worth become one of the top 10 safest cities in America.

His leadership, professionalism and dedication will not be soon forgotten in

the city of Fort Worth or Oklahoma City. His devotion to his career and his fellow officers was absolute, and his service to the Fort Worth community will be deeply missed.

Godspeed, Chief Gaines. We will see you at the top.

□ 2245

#### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again. I want to thank the Democratic leader, NANCY PELOSI, and also the Democratic leadership, STENY HOYER, Mr. JAMES CLYBURN and Mr. JOHN LARSON, who is our Vice Chair.

I must say, there is so much to talk about tonight. Not only Members of Congress know there is serious business to discuss as it relates to the new revelations on what is happening in Iraq and the war in Iraq, but also I think it is a reflection on the lack of oversight here in this House.

I think the American people need to be very concerned about what has not happened here on this floor, in committee, in subcommittees, and as it relates to the leadership making sure that our men and women in harm's way not only have what they need in the field, need it in Afghanistan, where they are undermanned and under gun at this particular time, but due to the training of Coalition Forces many are able to protect themselves, but they need more.

In the war in Iraq, a number of unfortunate events are taking place on a daily basis. A number of Marines were lost over the weekend, and we are in our last week of session. I think that the lack of oversight and diplomacy at the same time has resulted in a new insurgence that has been created in Iraq.

I must say that Karen D. Young of the Washington Post on Sunday wrote about this. I think it is important to read it. It was on the front page. I think it is important that Members pay close attention to that and provide the kind of oversight that is needed.

I am glad to be joined by the 30-Something Working Group, Mr. Bill Delahunt, better known as Uncle Bill, Mr. Tim Ryan, who is still injured but on the floor because this is our last time before the election to be able to let the Members and the American people know what has not happened in this House. We are also joined by Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, who is my good friend and served in the district next to me in Florida.

I yield to Congressman DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Mr. MEEK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. RYAN.

I arrived some 10 minutes ago and had the opportunity to hear some of