

care? Why don't we have the best education? And let's get down to business and start doing it.

Any questions for Members who are listening, www.speaker.gov/30something is our Web site. E-mail is 30SomethingDems@mail.house.gov. And I have got to confess, I did not know your mom is Polish. I just figured you were 100 percent Irish.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. It is not a secret, Mr. RYAN. I am very proud of my Polish heritage. I'm glad that it has come out into the open this afternoon.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is now public.

And we yield back the balance of our time.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Welcome to the Speaker's chair and the gavel of the United States Congress. It is a big and important thing to serve in this place, and it is always an honor to walk down here on the floor. It is absolutely an honor to be seated there in the Speaker's chair that has seated so many esteemed colleagues on both sides of the aisle. And the kind of leadership that has come from there back through history, the halls and the floor here echo with their influence, and the destiny of America has absolutely been redirected by that seat and by that gavel, and will continue to do so. And I very much look forward to continuing to work in this capacity.

I come to the floor this afternoon, Madam Speaker, to raise an issue here and carry on a discussion that is the most intense discussion item across America. And I would challenge anyone to walk into a coffee shop or a place of work or anyplace where Americans gather to talk about the issues of the day, and you don't have to change the subject, just stop and listen, ask a question and see what comes up first. Maybe the weather, maybe a sports team.

But when it shakes down to it, Madam Speaker, and we have talked about all of the amenities and the niceties and the general discussion topics that don't have a lot of substance but carry on the day, in the end, in America we get down to one of two subjects, and that is either the global war on terror on which Iraq is a principle battleground, or it is immigration. And sometimes it is both.

And having just come back from another trip to the border last week about now a week ago, and having been

flush full of the things that I learned down there, I am compelled to come here to the floor, Madam Speaker, and raise the issue and begin to examine this subject and topic a little bit more.

We have now, for about 3 years, had an intense debate and discussion on immigration, and there are those of us here in this Chamber, in fact, this House of Representatives last fall voted to build a double fence/wall on the southern border, and laid out the distances, the locations and the distances from those locations. And, when calculated and totaled up, it becomes clear that Congress has mandated, the House and the Senate has mandated that there be 854 miles of at least double-walled fencing, a double fencing or a double fencing and wall constructed upon our southern border in priority areas, Madam Speaker. And last week, I went down to review some of the beginnings of that construction.

It also establishes a mandate that the Secretary of Homeland Security, Mr. Chertoff, will establish interlocking cameras and other technology along the border, and he has until May 31 of this year to complete the construction of the interlocking technology according to authorization of the Secure Fence Act, and another year to complete the construction of the double fencing and that 854 miles of that priority area. And then, with the exception of an area at Laredo that is 15 miles, that are 15 miles of either side of Laredo, and that those 15 miles can be constructed in the 2008 construction season on up until December 30 of 2008, that is the congressional mandate, Madam Speaker.

That is the mandate that was passed by a significant majority here in the House of Representatives, and a mandate that was passed by a vote that I do remember in the Senate that was 80-19. It was bipartisan, obviously. It had very solid support. And the reason that it had such solid support is this physical barrier that is mandated by Congress and signed by the President, bipartisan mandate, House and Senate, Madam Speaker; these physical barriers or these pairs of physical barriers, double fencing and walls, are something that is not an administrative decision; it is not something that is necessarily prone to human failure or human error or human lack of will to enforce. If you put those barriers in there, they are going to do some good regardless of whether there is anyone there that is maintaining and manning and guarding them or not, which, of course, we need to do.

And any kind of a structure that we put in place must be maintained, it must be guarded, it must be manned. It needs to have sensors on it. But these barriers will allow our Border Patrol officers and other backup enforcement officers that we have to be able to respond in a more effective fashion. And if they are going to defeat the barriers, it will take time to do that. And if they trip the sensors, and they should,

that will give our Border Patrol officers an opportunity to descend upon that site and make the kind of arrests that are necessary so that the word gets out that there are areas of this border at least that you had better not try to cross.

Now, this area in San Luis, Arizona is just south of Yuma. It is a community on the U.S. side that is as far southwest as you can get on the border in Arizona. This is a location that has had some rather permanent steel wall right on the border that has been there for some time, and we have added to that. Now, this permanent steel wall, this is a steel landing mat, interlocking landing mat that is welded together along that border, is being extended in both directions from San Luis. And I reflect also in hearing the remark from the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) that we need some 200,000 welders by the year 2010 or 2012, I forget which exact year that was.

I have heard those kinds of cries for help before, and I have lived through those deadlines, and we always seem to come up with the number of people we need to do the job that is necessary. One of the things we do is we just simply pay people what it is worth and they show up to do the job. But if they are short about 6 or 7 welders in 2010, they can get ahold of Secretary Chertoff who picked up a welder down there and welded some of that steel wall together right on the border of San Luis, Arizona. And that also was the case with Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON, Senator BEN NELSON, Congressman MIKE PENCE. And I am not sure, that is the ones that I saw, there were probably others that also lended a hand, as I did, to weld some of that fencing and wall together. It was more symbolic than production, but symbolism does matter in this business, and it helps encourage the people that are down there building those barriers.

And particularly, our National Guard that are down on the border, approaching 6,000 strong, they freed up at least 500 on-line slots for Border Patrol agents that can be up-front patrolling. And they are constructing fence and wall with the time that they have down there on the border. Their morale seems to be good. They act like they believe in their mission. I believe in their mission. I am encouraged by the fact that they are there, hands on, building, constructing, putting barriers in place, because this Congress mandated and the President signed, however unenthusiastically, he did sign the authorization of the Secure Fence Act that mandates 854 miles of double fence wall on our border.

And then, after the mandate and the authorization, the authorization which is the mandate, then we heard continually from the critics across the country, well, you will never fund it. And if you never fund it, then it will never be built. So it was only, the allegation that it was only the part of Congress to just simply make a promise that we