

Republicans paid the price at the polls this November.

When the new majority took over in January of this year, they moved to include more transparency in the earmarking process. Members of Congress would, at long last, have to put their names next to the earmarks. We Republicans had done this in the fall, but only after the appropriations season was nearly done. This was a good move by the majority party in January. As I said at the time, they had the guts to do what we hadn't when it mattered, at the beginning of the appropriation process.

There is reason now, however, to doubt the sincerity of these moves. House rules are only as good as our willingness to enforce them. And we have, as yet, not been willing to enforce these rules.

When a bill comes to the floor now, there must be a list of earmarks with Member names next to them, or a certification that the bill contains no earmarks.

When the supplemental came to the floor, there were clearly earmarks in the bill, yet there was a certification that there were no earmarks contained in the bill.

The problem is, a point of order can only lie against the bill if there is no certification. So a certification, even though it might be patently wrong, has to be accepted by the Speaker or the Parliamentarians.

The intelligence authorization bill came to the floor without a list of earmarks. The list of earmarks only came after the deadline to submit amendments to the Rules Committee; so then, again, there was no opportunity to challenge any of the earmarks in the bill. Then, despite the fact that there were more than 680 earmarks in the defense authorization bill, no amendments related to earmarks were allowed by the Rules Committee, even though some of the earmarks clearly had no relationship to defense.

Now, we hear that the Appropriations Committee plans to keep earmarks secret until the appropriation bills this year have passed the House floor. Those earmarks would later be "air-dropped" into the conference report where no amendments are possible, where no scrutiny of these amendment or, I'm sorry, of these earmarks is possible.

The vaunted sunlight that we said we were going to bring into this process is gone. We closed the drapes. We've snuffed out the candle.

Mr. Speaker, this institution deserves better than this. We can do better. We should, on a bipartisan basis, bring this sunlight back. We need to subject earmarks to the scrutiny that they should have. No spending should occur in this body without the Members' knowledge, and that's what happens when earmarks are "air-dropped" into a conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I'm convinced that in the end, the majority party will pay

the political price. I hope that we would move before that time. I hope that we can, on a bipartisan basis, simply move forward and bring sunlight back into the process. That is what I think the citizens of this country deserve. It's what the taxpayers need to have.

□ 1945

SURGING GASOLINE PRICES

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, surging gas prices at the pump surely tell us, just before Memorial Day, that something has gone wrong again with the rigged oil markets.

We've seen gasoline prices in our country set all-time highs. Ohio families are paying \$3.50 to \$3.93 a gallon, with no end in sight. And when President Bush took office, they were paying \$1.46 a gallon. In fact, when Vice President CHENEY was sworn in, Halliburton's stock was worth one-fourth of what it's worth today.

So we think about America's families and our consumers. They're being hurt. Car and truck sales are being hurt. Our economy is being hurt. It's all so unnecessary.

When you fuel up, the chances are 7 out of 10 that the crude oil for the gasoline came from an undemocratic foreign country, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Venezuela, Angola, Mexico, maybe even trafficked out of Iraq, places that do not exactly love thriving democracy.

Meanwhile, in oil-rich Iraq, this week, eight more American soldiers were killed in roadside bomb attacks near Baghdad. And this brings to nearly 3,400 U.S. service-member deaths in Iraq, plus additional Department of Defense civilian employees, and the death toll keeps mounting.

The major oil pipeline and refinery in Iraq is now being guarded by our best, the 82nd Airborne, and sundry private contractors. They're guarding oil lines and the refinery. In fact, some of that oil has been stolen and even trafficked throughout the war.

Meanwhile, a new hydrocarbon law is being pushed in Iraq, which boasts the second largest oil reserves in the world, that would privatize the majority of oil in that country to who? That's the trillion-dollar question. That's the \$23 trillion question.

How disgusting to me that our finest military have to die in an oil war. When will the American people begin to connect undemocratic oil regimes, imported oil, and the lives of our sons and daughters while our gasoline-consuming public is subjected here to the oil marketeers?

I don't think anybody would admit it is a free market in oil. It's a cartelized market. It has been for half a century.

Exxon and the other major oil companies are raking in historic profits at

the expense of our sons and daughters. We see U.S. military power fully projected in Kuwait, in Iraq, benefiting their neighbors, too, like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, who have had to hire growing legions of private security firms to hold up their kingdoms and emirates. Saudi Aramco is the largest privately held company in the world, and Exxon Aramco the most profitable oil company in history. Are you starting to see the picture?

Let me ask a critical question: Would any of the oil profits made off the pocketbooks of Americans be going to hire more security guards in Saudi Arabia, or in Bahrain, or in Kuwait? As Will Rogers would say, "You betcha."

Our Nation's military power is now fully projected in the deserts over there, and here in Washington sits Congress and a President who say they want to break oil addiction from imported sources. But since President Bush took office, we are importing a billion more barrels a year every year since 2001. It is projected we will spend a trillion dollars on the war in Iraq, and it is not anywhere close to over. Yet we passed a bill out of the House a few months ago that just put a thimble full of additional resources in renewable energy. Is there any dispatch here? Is there any urgency? Is there any seriousness? Let the American people tell us. Do you see it? Do you hear it? Do you feel it in your pocketbooks?

Citizens are expressing their frustration with our inability to rein in the abuses of the oil companies. And I have got a partial solution. This week I am introducing a bill to give something back to the American people tired of being gouged by the oil companies. It is called the "Give America Something Act of 2007," the GAS Act, G-A-S. Give every American a one-time immediate \$100 gas payment refund. They can use it to pay for higher gas prices. They can use it to pay for higher transit costs. And we pay for it by imposing a windfall profits tax on oil revenue to provide the revenue to finance the program. This is long overdue.

HONORING OFFICER ROB TARGOSZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, in the very earliest days of this Nation, Edmund Burke said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

That belief became the personal creed and call to action of Officer Rob Targosz. Mr. Speaker, this man was a hero and a model human being determined to utilize every ounce of his mind, soul, and body to protect the lives of thousands of his fellow Americans so that we could all live in a safer, more peaceful Nation. Rob Targosz was a second lieutenant in the 12th Airborne Special Forces. He was a member

of the SWAT team, and he was a police officer of the Gilbert Police Department in Gilbert, Arizona, for 12 years. He served there on the DUI Task Force because Rob felt that one of the greatest purposes of his life was to combat and prevent drunk driving.

The license plate on the back of his police motorcycle displayed the title "Agent of Justice." He defended our citizens and our laws, and he sought justice with a determination so real that it led him face to face with the very tragedy he had dedicated his life to protect others from. In one of life's great paradoxical mysteries, while on duty, Rob Targosz was killed by a drunk driver.

Mr. Speaker, drunk driving is the embodiment of apathy, callousness, and selfishness, which is the very opposite of everything that personified Officer Rob Targosz. The enemy that took Rob's life was the very thing that broke his heart and fueled his desire to battle against it. But it did not defeat him, because Rob Targosz was a man of abiding faith in Jesus Christ, whom he held as his eternal Savior. And Rob left behind him in this life a legacy of heroism, love for America, and countless Americans whose lives are preserved because he protected them with his own.

Therefore, his battle continues and his search for justice pulsates in the hearts of other Americans, who, like him, continue to defend and protect us all. Rob's life also continues in the lion heart of his beloved wife, who walked by his slain body, picked up his armor and weapons, and continues his fight by educating the public about the unspeakable destruction caused by drunk driving.

Mr. Speaker, one of the many reasons that human life is so precious is because it allows the world to see when a single man can live and do and live his life, however short it might be, so that others may be the better for it. Americans are alive and families are whole because of the life and work of Officer Rob Targosz. And the world is better because he showed us an example of a truly noble and excellent soul. May his example fire the souls of us all to continue his enduring quest to protect the innocent.

God bless Rob Targosz and his family.

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

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

EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the United States of America has more of its people in prison per capita than any other developed nation in the world, more than 2 million. The vast majority, 95 percent, of the men and women in our prisons will eventually return to the community. This means that every year more than 650,000 offenders are released from State and Federal prisons and return back to civilian life.

These men and women deserve a second chance. Their families, spouses, and children deserve a second chance. And their communities deserve a second chance. A second chance means an opportunity to turn a life around, a chance to break the grip of a drug habit; a chance to support a family, to pay taxes, to be self-sufficient.

Today, few of those who return to their communities are prepared for their release or receive any supportive service. When the prison door swings open, an ex-offender may receive a bus ticket and spending money for a day or two. Many leave prison to return to the same environment which saw them offend in the first place. But as they return, they often face additional barriers to reentry: serious physical and mental health problems, no place to stay, and lack of education or qualifications to hold a job. As a result, two out of three will be rearrested for new crimes within the first 3 years after their release. Youthful offenders are even more likely to reoffend.

One-third of all correction departments provide no services to released offenders, and most departments do not offer a transitional program, placing a heavy burden on families and communities. Considering the cost of incarceration, as much as \$40,000 per year, and all the social and economic costs of crime to the community, it is just plain common sense to help ex-offenders successfully reenter our communities and reduce recidivism.

That is why I have sponsored the bipartisan Second Chance Act of 2007, H.R. 1593, along with Representatives CANNON, CONYERS, COBLE, SCOTT of Virginia, SMITH of Texas, JONES of Ohio, FORBES, SCHIFF, SENSENBRENNER, CHABOT, JACKSON-LEE of Texas, CUMMINGS, JOHNSON of Georgia, CLARKE, and 75 other Members of Congress.

A companion bill, S. 1060, has been introduced in the Senate by Senators BIDEN, DURBIN, SPECTER, BROWNBACK, LEAHY, OBAMA, and 10 others.

The Second Chance Act will provide transitional assistance to assist ex-offenders in coping with the challenges of reentry. It will reduce recidivism. It will help reunite families and protect communities. It will enhance public safety and save taxpayer dollars. It is the humane thing to do. It is the responsible thing to do. And, of course, it is the right thing to do.

The Judiciary Committee held hearings on the bill last month and quickly voted to send the bill to the full House.

I fully expect it to pass soon. The bill has the support of more than 200 criminal justice, service provider, faith-based, housing, governmental, disability, and civil rights organizations. President Bush has signaled his support of the legislation as well.

No single piece of legislation is going to solve the reentry crisis we are facing, but the Second Chance Act is a good start. I hope that with passage of this bill, we will begin a new era in criminal justice.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that any serious effort to facilitate the reentry of men and women with criminal records to civil society must be prepared to do two things. First, we must be prepared to help with drug treatment on demand for everyone who requests it. Second, we need to find work for ex-offenders. Programs don't supply jobs. After ex-offenders have undergone rehabilitation and received appropriate training, employers will have to open their hearts and put these men and women back into the workforce. They do not belong in prison.

Many of them don't need prison, but they do need a second chance. Congress can give them that. And we should.

THE A-PLUS ACT

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Constitution Caucus, I am convinced that today, at a time when our Nation lags behind other countries in math and science testing and the Federal Government has a larger role in education than ever before, this Congress must find a way to give our schools greater flexibility, reduce the bureaucracy involved in education, and ensure these opportunities really are being given to our children.

In years past Congress has attempted to solve problems in education by simply throwing piles of Federal money into the education system. The original purpose of No Child Left Behind was to return some education policy-making authority to the States. Unfortunately, during the process of crafting, passing, and enacting this legislation, No Child Left Behind took the form of a massive spending bill that increased the Federal Government's presence in classrooms.

As a December 22, 2006 editorial in the Detroit News stated, "What our Federal legislators come up with in the Nation's Capital doesn't always translate well into the classroom."

The editorial continues: "Michigan should have the flexibility to decide how and when to measure student progress."

My daughter-in-law is a hardworking and talented teacher who has experienced firsthand the problems No Child Left Behind creates for teachers, parents, and students. As a classroom teacher forced to teach to the tests required by local, State, and No Child