

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I have joined several of our colleagues in a letter requesting that the Senate majority leader end the partisan wrangling and move forward with the veterans appropriations bill.

Our veterans have always been willing to man the front lines in the defense of this Nation and deserve to be honored for their service. From 2001 through 2006, this House increased funding for our veterans from \$48 billion to \$70 billion. This year the House came together in a bipartisan manner to increase funding for our veterans by an additional \$6 billion.

This is why I am so disturbed to read in Roll Call that Democratic leaders have made "a decision to delay sending the veterans bill to the President so they can use it as leverage to pass other spending bills."

In my mind, veterans and especially those waiting for services at VA facilities or working to secure their VA benefits are not bargaining chips. They are heroes. And we should not allow partisanship to interfere with our commitment to protecting their best interests.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS SHOULD WALK AWAY FROM PRESIDENT BUSH ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, last week most of the Republicans once again marched in lockstep with the Bush administration. I have just been informed that the President has vetoed the CHIP bill. That is a shame and it is a disgrace. Despite the fact that this Democratic Congress crafted a bipartisan bill with Republican input, most Republican Members chose to ignore the health care needs of 10 million children. It is a shame and a national disgrace.

The Children's Health Insurance Program has helped our Nation reduce the number of uninsured children. During each of the 8 years of the program, the number of uninsured children decreased, but over the last 2 years these numbers have actually gone up. Based on these troubling trends, this Democratic Congress did not believe that a straight reauthorization was enough. We needed to strengthen the CHIP program, and that is exactly what we did.

And now I have been informed that the President has vetoed it. That's a disgrace.

SUPPORT OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this Democrat-led Congress

has yet to send one spending bill to the President. In particular, they have failed to pass funding for our veterans, and because of their inaction, our veterans are being shortchanged and denied needed resources and benefits.

Despite widespread support for the Veterans' Affairs spending bill, the majority is refusing to take final action. This delay is jeopardizing our ability to get the necessary funding and resources to those who need it most. The bill includes \$4.1 billion for VA hospitals and clinics, \$600 million for posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury care, \$2.9 billion for mental health and substance abuse treatment for veterans, and \$480 million for research into prosthetics for wounded warriors and amputees.

We can all agree that our veterans deserve our utmost support, and as a grateful 30-year member of the American Legion, it is time for Democrats to work with Republicans for our veterans.

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

THE PRESIDENT'S VETO OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH BILL

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, during a speech at the Republican National Convention in 2004, President Bush said, "In a new term, we will lead an aggressive effort to enroll millions of poor children who are eligible but not signed up for the government's health insurance programs." But instead the President, just minutes ago, vetoed health insurance for 10 million low-income children.

The President's objections were without merit and did not warrant a veto. The bill does not expand the CHIP program. Instead, it maintains current eligibility requirements while enrolling more uninsured children. It is not a move towards "socialized health care." States will continue to receive funding through block grants, which nearly all States use. And this investment in the health care of our Nation's children is fully paid for, unlike the President's ongoing Iraq funding requests.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely had hoped the President would have a change of heart and fulfill his promise to enroll children in this health care program. But he failed to do so. Now every Member of this House must vote to override the President to provide for the health care of America's children.

STOP PLAYING POLITICAL GOTCHA AND START SERVING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think most people in politics know is that the ratings of Congressmen are very, very low. And perhaps part of the reason for that is the public can see that we are playing more political gotcha than we are in really solving problems.

Today we have just seen an example of that as Democrat after Democrat condemned the President for this SCHIP bill, which has all these little hidden gizmos, among other things that we are going to provide health care to the children of illegal immigrants. It is a massive expansion of basically Hillary socialized medicine. And yet we are going to use this children's health issue as a way to play political gotcha.

We don't need to do that with the veterans bill. The House and the Senate have both approved funding for veterans, which comes down to \$18.5 million of extra money for veterans hospitals, for prosthetics, for our wounded soldiers. Those bills are just sitting, waiting.

Are we going to use that as another way of doing political gotcha, or shall we just start solving problems and serving the American people?

Mr. Speaker, for the past few years we have heard the Democrats in Congress say they support our troops and veterans even if they do not support the war in Iraq.

Yet, many of those brave veterans who served in Iraq, as well as other military campaigns, are being denied as much as \$18.5 million a day in veteran's care that was promised to them.

The Democrat majority has delayed a vote on a bill to fund veterans care. These delays are denying our veterans millions of dollars that would fund prosthetics for our wounded warriors and amputees.

Are the Democrats hoping to save a vote on veteran's health for later in the year? Maybe, they plan to attach wasteful earmarks to that bill?

Members of Congress, you can't say that you support our troops and veterans if you won't fund their care. It's time we make good on our promises. Give our veterans what they need.

DEMOCRATIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS PRIORITIZING THE NEEDS OF VETERANS AND SOLDIERS

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Congress has a strong record of delivering on our promise to the American people and providing real and meaningful change. And we have done so in a fiscally responsible way, instituting pay-as-you-go, deficit reduction discipline.

One area where we have made real progress for the American people is by supporting the men and women who serve our Nation in the Armed Forces. Under Democratic control, this House provided substantially more than the President requested for the new M-