

RAP vehicles proven to save lives in Iraq. We voted to give our troops a pay raise that the President called "unnecessary." We strengthened military health care with the Wounded Warriors Act to clean up the inadequate care of wounded soldiers at Walter Reed and other facilities. And the Democratic House voted to provide the largest increase in funding for VA health care in the history of this country.

Mr. Speaker, these investments that support our veterans and troops overseas are just a few examples of how our Democratic Congress is taking America in a new direction.

ENERGY POLICY FOR THE FUTURE

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, a new cellulosic ethanol plant recently began production in my district, which will use high-energy sugar cane to yield ethanol. It is yet another reminder of the importance of domestic energy production not only for southwest Louisiana but for our entire Nation.

But we must recognize that we have a strategic dependence on fossil fuels and foreign oil. The farm bill currently working its way through Congress should not pick winners or losers but encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. It is a critical piece to our national energy plan with renewable agri-based energy solutions.

Home-grown energy as a part of our national energy strategy reduces our dependence on foreign energy supplies, helps the environment, and will promote our rural communities and keep them strong.

This Democratic Congress has failed to produce a viable energy policy. I challenge the Democratic leadership to work with us in Congress to produce such a viable energy policy.

NOW IT'S CHOLERA

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, let me talk about a surge in Iraq the President is not talking about. An outbreak of cholera is spreading across the country, harming and killing innocent Iraqi people. Five hundred new cases were confirmed in Kirkuk in the last 5 days.

The World Health Organization says there have only been 12 deaths so far, but there are 3,000 confirmed cases and 30,000 more Iraqis are sick. As a medical doctor, let me tell you that cholera is caused by human waste contaminating the water supply. In other words, the sewage treatment plants that we were supposed to rebuild that worked prewar are still not working after the surge. And innocent Iraqis are suffering.

When a Seattle church group sent me to visit Iraq in 2002, they asked me to

see firsthand how Iraqi children were suffering from the effects of the first war in 1990, the subsequent economic sanctions and how their suffering would only get worse in a new war. They were right.

Cholera is the latest example of a failed war. Instead of talking about the surge, the President should be talking about the scourge of cholera.

HIGH-TECH BOUNTY HUNTING

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, high-tech bounty hunting is now occurring in the United States. The Internet allows law enforcement to track down known sex offenders in the United States. States can find convicted sex offenders that must register under the new Adam Walsh Child Safety Act. Failure of a child molester to register is a Federal crime.

So these convicted sex offenders who do not register with local authorities are now being arrested using LexisNexis Internet tracking.

Florida police were hunting for a known sex offender. They traced him to Illinois, but Illinois officials claimed the offender was dead. The Internet search tools tracked the child molester to Indiana, where he was arrested for absconding and for failure to register as a known sex offender.

Studies show that convicted sex offenders often remain dangerous and become recidivists once released from prison. Sex offenders are now being held accountable for failing to register; law enforcement is informed of known sex offenders' whereabouts; future recidivism is prevented; and, meanwhile, children are safer because of high-tech bounty hunting.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1030

IT'S TIME TO HOLD DEFENSE CONTRACTORS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, there are as many private contractors in Iraq as U.S. soldiers on the ground. Outsourcing our military should be a cause for concern for all Americans, but the recent uncovering of indiscriminate hostility toward Iraqi civilians and unprovoked killings by security contractors in Iraq is a siren warning that demands immediate attention.

Blackwater, a company that has reaped over \$110 million from the taxpayers since 2006 in U.S. contracts, offers one of the most egregious examples of what is wrong with our occupation of Iraq.

Last week, Blackwater security protecting State Department officials

opened fire in a Baghdad neighborhood, and in what appears to be an unprovoked incident, Blackwater guards killed at least 11 innocent Iraqi civilians and wounded 12 others. But because of a decree delivered in 2004 by our Ambassador Paul Bremer on his last day on the job, these contractors are granted immunity from Iraqi law and will likely face no charges at home.

This lack of accountability is anathema to our fundamental principle of equal justice under the law and exemplifies why the occupation of Iraq has been such a failure.

BIPARTISAN COOPERATION ON IRAQ IS THE BEST WAY FORWARD

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House, we took a great first step forward, I think, in finding bipartisan common ground on the way forward in Iraq with the passage of H.R. 3087.

The issue of our troop presence in Iraq has caused great debate across our country; it has polarized this Congress and our Nation. I believe this first step is a demonstration that a bipartisan way forward can happen. In fact, it must happen for the good of our Nation and our ultimate success in Iraq. We can draw that day closer if we in this Congress and we in America continue to work together to forge consensus instead of resorting to partisan attacks.

The report of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker last month has given us reason for hope that progress is being made and our troops can begin returning home. As our troops so bravely continue their mission, let us continue ours and build upon the momentum that we started yesterday in this House. Let us all hope that the day is coming soon when our troops, who have protected our Nation and exported liberty, freedom and democracy, will come home. We owe them nothing less than our best effort to make this hope a reality.

PRESIDENT'S VETO THREAT OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE BILL

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

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this Congress sent the President bipartisan legislation to reauthorize and strengthen the Children's Health Insurance Program. This bill will provide 10 million low-income children with health care coverage, including 4 million uninsured children who are currently eligible for the program but not yet covered. Unfortunately, President Bush just vetoed this bipartisan legislation.

The President's opposition to this bill puts him squarely in the minority.

The legislation has received overwhelming support from a wide variety of groups such as the AMA. A new Washington Post/ABC News poll shows that 72 percent of Americans support the reauthorization of the CHIP program.

Mr. Speaker, I am heartened that 45 of my Republican colleagues in this body joined Democrats in passing this critical legislation. However, if the President wants to veto it, I hope other House Republicans will stand with America's children instead of with the President and vote to strengthen the CHIP program.

BURKE COUNTY FOCUSES ON EDUCATION

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, the strength of a community is best judged by how it deals with and faces adversity. Burke County, North Carolina exemplifies and illustrates how strong communities defeat hardship by channeling their efforts and resources for improvement.

When unemployment nearly quadrupled in 5 years, my constituents there banded together to build a better future. They recognize that an educated workforce is the key to economic growth, so they developed a plan to ensure that all high school graduates in the county have the opportunity to go to the local community college for a 2-year degree. Western Piedmont Community College is that college where they are offering it.

Through the hard work of Arrick Gordon and the Burke Alliance for Youth, the Burke Education Endowment Program is nearly at that goal. This weekend, the Overmountain Jamboree and Barbecue Cookoff, which will combine two powerful forces, North Carolina barbecue and country music, will be held this weekend in Morganton, and that will raise the final sum needed to provide that much-needed education to the local youth. It shows the strength of the community, and it shows the strength of the people of North Carolina.

BLACKWATER USA

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's hearing in the Government Reform Committee left me with many concerns. I am concerned about Blackwater's role when they get involved in U.S. military operations.

In April and November of 2004, Blackwater personnel attached themselves to U.S. troops and engaged enemy positions. These actions may have set a bad precedent and may have been a catalyst that led to the September 16 shooting death of Iraqi civilians.

I also am concerned about Blackwater's unprecedented rise in procurement of Federal Government contracts. Initially, Blackwater was awarded no-bid contracts for security services in August of 2003 and June of 2004 worth more than \$73 million, and the President just today vetoed a bill for children's health that was worth \$11 billion.

HOUSE GOP GIVES PRESIDENT BLANK CHECK ON WAR FUNDING BUT NICKEL AND DIMES CHILDREN'S HEALTH

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

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to funding the war in Iraq, President Bush and the House Republicans are willing to write blank checks for billions of dollars with absolutely no questions asked. After billions misspent and mismanaged, the President is preparing a new war funding request for the upcoming year that is expected to cost the American taxpayer another \$190 billion. Contrast that with the disregard both the President and the majority of House Republicans have shown towards bipartisan legislation that would ensure that 10 million low-income children have access to health insurance.

President Bush has just vetoed a bill that would invest \$35 billion more in the CHIP program over the next 5 years and allow us to reach 4 million more children who are already eligible for the program. House Republicans will now have to decide if they will once again stand with a President who suffers from misguided priorities or if they will listen to the American people's will.

I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, it's time to stand up for our kids and stand down from a discredited President.

PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to decry our unprecedented use of unaccountable private security contractors in Iraq.

By some estimates, there are over 50,000 private security personnel working in Iraq. These contractors operate outside U.S. and Iraqi law, raising animosity toward Americans in the field and losing us hearts and minds in Iraq.

The activities of one of the most prominent contractors, Blackwater, highlight why they are a counterproductive influence in Iraq, and their activities must be curtailed.

Two weeks ago, Blackwater personnel guarding a State Department group were involved in a shootout that resulted in the deaths of as many as 17

Iraqis. Yesterday, the Government Reform Committee disclosed that Blackwater has been involved in 195 escalation of force incidents since 2005; and in 80 percent of those, Blackwater fired the first shots. These incidents, combined with others, clearly indicate that we need to stop putting contractors in Iraq and bring those there under control, which is why I have introduced legislation to freeze the number of contractors operating in Iraq at September 1 levels. And I am a proud co-sponsor of the bill we will vote on today, the MEJA Expansion Act, to bring these contracts under control.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2740, MEJA EXPANSION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2007

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, by the direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 702 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 702

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2740) to require accountability for contractors and contract personnel under Federal contracts, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous