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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Saul Santos, Jr., Fountain of Truth Church, Fontana, California, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for being the God of all people, believers and non-believers. You are the God of all thrones, dominions and rulers. All authority in heaven and Earth are in Your hands. You are the founder of the Earth and established the heavens. You formed us from the dust of the ground and gave us the breath of life.

Today, I ask that You establish this House full of Your knowledge, Your wisdom, understanding and love.

As we pray, I ask that You extend Your hand of protection over each Representative and their families. Give them strength as they lead. Lord God, I know that You are never absent from them when they need You.

I thank You for freedom and America.

As we pray, this House is stronger; as we commit our work unto You, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND SAUL SANTOS, JR.

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to recognize a charitable, compassionate young man from my Congressional district in California, Minister Saul Santos, Jr. Minister Santos blessed us with the wonderful prayer we just heard this morning. And while only 27 years of age, he is already a licensed minister at the Christian Life Center Apostolic Church in Ontario, California.

In a world where too many of us have turned a blind eye to the problems of our neighbors, Minister Santos has led a life filled with service to others. And I say service to others. He is the founder and president of Affirming Community Initiatives, a nonprofit organization that provides food, clothing and youth programs to the underserved in our Inland communities.

Let us thank Minister Santos for serving as our guest House Chaplain today, and recognize him for the example he has set for many others to follow. He is truly a role model for us. We should all strive to live our lives in such a selfless and truly Christian manner, as he has done.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). The Chair will entertain up to 10 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

OVERRIDE PRESIDENT'S VETO OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, a new report by the Joint Economic Committee shows 1 million more children a year may need public health insurance due to the worsening economic conditions, even apart from the growing trend in coverage in our Nation. But State budgets are already strained by the weak national economy and the growing housing crisis.

This is a perfect storm that can be avoided, if Congress votes today to override the President's veto of legislation that would bring health care to 10 million children in need.

Over the next 5 years, our bill would preserve coverage for more than 6 million children currently covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program and extend coverage to nearly 4 million children who are currently uninsured.

I urge my colleagues today to vote to override the President's veto of children's health insurance.

IN MEMORY OF PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, last week the House of Representatives passed unanimously a resolution condemning the assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Included in the resolution was a reaffirmation of our commitment to assist Pakistan in the global war on terrorism and to help promote democratic principles there, a cause for which Ms. Bhutto ultimately gave her life.

I had the honor with Congressman DAVID DREIER and Congressman DARRELL ISSA to have breakfast with Ms. Bhutto at her home in Islamabad just 4 weeks prior to her murder. I was tremendously impressed with her passion for the principles of democracy and

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dedication to seeing democracy spread throughout Pakistan and the region. No doubt, these are principles which her assassins were determined to stop.

It is incumbent on us to continue to stand up for the principles Ms. Bhutto championed, to help our partner work toward a more open and democratic Pakistan, and, above all, not to tire in our stopping of the terrorists who wish to stand in the way of free and democratic societies. Stopping terrorists overseas is the best way to protect American families at home.

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

GIVE CHILDREN A CHANCE AT A HEALTHY FUTURE: OVERRIDE THE PRESIDENT'S SCHIP VETO

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, today I will proudly vote to override the President's veto of a bill to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program, for the second time. This bill provides coverage to children whose families cannot afford private insurance and would expand access to health insurance to 10 million children nationally, 200,000 of whom live in Massachusetts.

I was thinking of our children when I first voted to override the President's veto of this bill on October 18th, the same day I was sworn into office. Tens of thousands of people from my district and millions more across the country, both Republicans and Democrats, have made their support for this program abundantly clear. However, the Bush administration refuses to hear their message.

This program is especially important to my State of Massachusetts, where the program was first developed, and remains critical to sustaining the universal Massachusetts Health Care Program.

I stand with a strong bipartisan majority ready to give our children a chance at a healthy future, and I urge my colleagues to again override the President's veto.

HELPING THE ECONOMY BY BRINGING DOWN THE COST OF ENERGY

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, while Congress and the President are talking about an economic stimulus package, remember that the high costs of energy are costing us our economy.

Oil and gas prices continue to climb. Our President asked Saudi leaders to produce more oil to bring prices down. Well, something is wrong here. OPEC controls the price, OPEC funds the process, and we end up funding both sides of the war on terror.

The trade imbalance grew in November to record levels, primarily from the high cost of imported oil. But Congress votes to block drilling for U.S. oil on the Atlantic Coast, the Gulf Coast, the Pacific Coast, the Western States and Alaska. Something is wrong here. We have hundreds of years of American coal to make electricity. We should fund research to clean up the coal, not ignore it.

In the meantime, energy costs go up, food costs go up, manufacturing jobs go down, the economy goes down. Something is wrong here. If we are serious about helping the economy, let's bring down the cost of energy. The best economic stimulus package is a job.

URGING SUPPORT IN OVERRIDING PRESIDENT'S SCHIP VETO

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

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Children's Health Insurance Program, and hope that we would override the President's veto today. This will cover 3.4 million uninsured children. The number is almost too large to comprehend.

I had the opportunity to live in an oncology ward several years ago with my young daughter. There was a young boy, 2½ years old, with acute leukemia, who had to listen, or, rather, his parents were listening, as social workers came and went to see if he could potentially be covered, because they did not have health insurance, covered to receive the care my daughter was receiving.

As we enter what is possibly a recession, I see that number growing. This is something not morally right for these children. It is also a necessity for our economic betterment, to have healthy, productive individuals. I urge my colleagues all to vote to override the President's veto, for this Nation and for our children.

A PANACEA TO THE ECONOMIC GROWTH CHALLENGE: THE FAIR AND SIMPLE TAX ACT

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, as virtually everyone is talking about the need for us to have an economic stimulus package, I am very proud today to be introducing what I think is the closest thing to a panacea to the economic growth challenge that we are facing.

This plan that I have introduced is the brainchild of my friends Bill Simon, Jennifer Pollom and Mike Boskin. It is a plan that is designed to allow people at the lower end of the spectrum on their first $40,000 in income to pay 10 percent, on income between $40,000 and $150,000, 15 percent, and on income above $150,000, 30 percent.

It also, Madam Speaker, goes to the notion of encouraging economic growth by cutting the capital gains rate from 15 percent to 10 percent and cutting the top corporate rate from 35 percent to 25 percent. Remember, we have the second highest rate in the entire world when it comes to corporate tax. We need to focus on the issue of economic growth. It will actually apply the death penalty to the death tax, and it will take the alternative minimum tax and index it and ultimately eliminate it.

Madam Speaker, this is what we need to do to stimulate our economy. This is what we need to do to empower the people who will move and propel our economy forward. I urge my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, to join as cosponsors of this very important legislation.

□ 1015

SUPPORT CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT

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

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today in full support of H.R. 3963, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act. The SCHIP program in the State of Texas has been extremely successful in providing crucial access to health care for children. SCHIP coverage provides children with coverage for a full range of health services.

Uninsured children are five times more likely than insured children to use the emergency room in hospitals as their main source for medical care. The cost of an emergency room visit is more than $144 compared to only $36 for a primary doctor's visit. A number of these emergency visits should be made to primary doctors with SCHIP coverage.

The current SCHIP enrollment for the children in the State of Texas is about 353,000, and there are over 1.4 million uninsured children in the State of Texas, which is the highest rate of uninsured children in the Nation.

Madam Speaker, I am glad to support the SCHIP reauthorization act and ask my colleagues to support this bill.

IRAQ

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, over the break I had the opportunity to travel to Iraq to meet with our troops and military commanders on the ground there.

Two observations: the morale of our troops is high, and the surge is working. General Petraeus has crafted a highly sophisticated counterinsurgency strategy that has put the terrorists on

the defensive and brought some level of security to many Iraqi communities where there had been none before.

Now I know it's hard to admit when you are wrong, but there are many in this Chamber who came to this floor and opposed the surge saying it would be a failure. Well, it hasn't been. It has been a success. In fact, even the United Nations is recognizing the success of the Petraeus strategy. The U.N.'s top envoy in Iraq acknowledged the improvements in security and even tentative steps towards national reconciliation this week.

Even for the war's opponents, it is now time to admit the success of the surge strategy in Iraq. But, instead of honoring the great work of our troops, all I hear is silence.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. The Center for Public Integrity, in a report released today, has found the Bush administration led the Nation to war on the basis of erroneous information that it methodically propagated and it culminated in military action against Iraq on March 19, 2003. * * *

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I demand that the words of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) be taken down.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the words.

□ 1030

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the offending words, to the end that they be stricken from the RECORD, and that I be permitted to revise and extend my remarks for the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

Mr. STEARNS. Reserving the right to object, Madam Speaker, I will accept this time the gentleman's request to withdraw his words, but his clear and egregious violation of House rules needs to be fully understood by himself. Both sides wish to restore civility here with legitimate debate and not utter personal accusations.

With that, Madam Speaker, I withdraw my objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING CRIPPLED

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

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, February 1 is an extremely important date for us in terms of American security. You might wonder why that is, and that is because a law that we passed last summer is expiring and our intelligence agencies are going to be greatly crippled in their ability to make intelligence intercepts because of the change in the law.

What has happened is the Democrats are trying to get us to go through a very complicated procedure with the FISA court to check on surveillance before we can actually make the wiretap. What the result is going to be is that it is going to make it very, very difficult to do these intercepts.

Now we debated this at the end of last year, and we found that with the law that was being proposed, we wouldn't be able to arrest bin Laden even if we knew where he was going to be and what time he was going to be there. Since World War II, we have done these intercepts. We have intercepted Japanese and German wire transmissions.

The bottom line is quite simply we are going to lose 60 percent of our intelligence gathering if this law is not fixed.

COMMENDING IOWA FIREFIGHTERS AND MAQUOKETA RESIDENTS

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute the people of Maquoketa, Iowa, for their extraordinary sense of civic duty during the course of a severe fire that destroyed a sizable part of the city's historic downtown early Saturday morning. I also want to recognize the efforts of firefighters from Maquoketa and 27 surrounding communities to extinguish the blaze and keep it from consuming other downtown buildings.

The fire was a blow to Maquoketa's historic downtown, completely destroying five buildings and causing severe damage to several businesses and homes.

While the fire left behind physical and emotional scars, it also demonstrated what makes Iowa such a great place. Firefighters battled tirelessly through subzero temperatures and wind chills of 20 below zero to get the blaze under control. Meanwhile, hundreds of Maquoketa residents open their homes and businesses to provide warm shelter, hot food, and emotional support for the firefighters and residents impacted by the fire.

Perhaps young Maquoketa resident Kalli Muhlhausen said it best: ''They have our hearts, and we have their backs.''

Iowans dismiss such an outpouring of generosity as simply ''the right thing to do,'' but the people of Maquoketa deserve a special thank you.

DISPROPORTIONATE MEDIA COVERAGE

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, the national media continue to devote a disproportionate amount of news coverage to the Democratic Presidential campaign.

For example, on the day before the Republican primary in Michigan, NBC's Today Show gave almost 7 minutes to the race between Democrat Senator BARACK OBAMA and Senator HILLARY CLINTON, compared to about 30 seconds to the close Republican race.

NBC isn't the only network giving more coverage to the Democratic campaign. The January 7 edition of ABC's Good Morning America devoted almost 15 minutes of coverage to analyzing the race between BARACK OBAMA and HILLARY CLINTON. Just 30 seconds were given to the Republican side.

We must continue to encourage the media to report with fairness rather than partiality. Only then can the American people get the balanced coverage of this important Presidential campaign that they need and deserve.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, this week and in the coming weeks the American people need this House and Senate and the President to work in a bipartisan fashion to come up with a monetary policy and a fiscal policy here that will help our economy. It needs to be temporary, timely and targeted. And I would hope that we can work with our Republican colleagues in a bipartisan fashion to direct that to people in the middle income and lower income levels who need the help and will spend the money immediately.

To give rebates to people who are making a lot of money, people earning salaries such as we are in Congress, and others, is not the right thing to do. We need to give money to people who are suffering the most from the high gas prices, from the loss of employment, and from the other economic effects that are hurting the people at the bottom.

I ask my Republican colleagues and the President, and hopefully he will in the State of the Union, address those who need help the most and help this American and world economy.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IN MALAYSIA

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the Malaysian Government recently seized

Christian children's books written in English because they contained illustrations of Bible prophets Moses and Abraham, an alleged violation of Islamic Shariah law.

The Malaysian Government's publications and ''Religious Enforcement Police'' found that the images of Bible characters in the Christian books offended the sensitivities of Muslims and must be banished.

Malaysian Prime Minister Badawi indicated other religions must understand that Islam is the true religion for Malaysia.

The government's ''midnight raid'' on these books infringes on the basic human right of religious freedom, a right which ironically is protected in the Malaysian constitution, but nonexistent under Islamic Shariah law. This is yet another example of the problems with a State religion.

Ghandi once said, ''If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them respect ours, a study of the world's religions is a sacred duty.'' The Malaysian government expects all religions to be tolerant of the Islamic religion, but hypocritically is intolerant of the Christian faith.

And that's just the way it is.

OVERRIDE SCHIP VETO

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

Ms. WATSON. Today, I join my colleagues, Madam Speaker, to override the President's veto of H.R. 3963, which the President vetoed on December 12. Since then, we received more discouraging news regarding the growing domestic and global economic crisis. It is imperative that we look at the impact of the downturn on our Nation's children. A slowing economy will definitely lead to an increased demand nationwide for SCHIP services.

Overriding the President's veto of SCHIP is more critical than ever during this period of economic downturn. I urge my colleagues to join me to override the President's veto and to guarantee that sufficient funding levels to address the need of our Nation's uninsured children become a reality.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. STEARNS. As Congress contemplates an economic stimulus package to aid our slowing economy, we also must commit ourselves to reduce Federal spending.

As American families tighten their budgets to weather this impending economic storm, Congress should match their sacrifice. While reducing taxes is important, another aspect is to control the Federal deficits, the Federal spending. A decrease in wasteful spending would directly increase the value of the dollar and ultimately lower deficits.

The American people and businesses are better at deciding what to do with their money than the Federal Government. With more money in their hands, an increase in investment in our economy and in increase in personal savings would take hold and ultimately lead to a stronger and growing economy.

As we in Congress consider this one-time stimulus package over the next few weeks, I contend that a long-term solution to this problem is to lower spending, which will in turn lead to lower taxes and a permanent economic bounce and revitalization.

FIGHTING POVERTY

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

Mr. JEFFERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise to thank Representative BARBARA LEE for passing her resolution yesterday committing our Nation to fight poverty.

Nowhere is this commitment and action needed more than in the City of New Orleans. Ironically, on the day that the levees broke in New Orleans, 2½ years ago, the Census Bureau was releasing its report on poverty, showing that Orleans Parish had a poverty rate of 23.2 percent, seventh highest in the 290 large counties in America. Thirty-five percent of the city's African American population is classified as poor. Seventy-seven percent of the students in New Orleans participate in free or reduced-cost lunch programs. Pre-Katrina African Americans made up 67 percent of New Orleans, but 84 percent of its population is below the poverty line. And it is mostly in its 47 neighborhoods of extreme poverty where our citizens are still out of town, unable to return and share in the rebuilding of New Orleans.

So the commitment of our Nation must not be just to recover the City of New Orleans, but also to focus on the peculiar needs of its impoverished citizens, needs existing before Katrina made much more desperate since.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

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

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, today's economic debate should focus on big picture tax policies that emphasize sustained prosperity for American workers and their families.

A one-time, consumption-driven stimulus may be popular, but what we really need is tax relief that will energize economic growth. We need certainty for our industry which is currently making tomorrow's business plans today based on the assumption that taxes are going to increase dramatically.

We should also reduce tax rates on our companies from the highest tax rates in the world to instead placing American employers on an even tax footing globally.

Madam Speaker, today's economy didn't happen overnight, and tomorrow's growth and prosperity will depend on our commitment to bold, forward-looking tax policies now.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I have risen several times on the floor of the House to encourage my colleagues to consider the mortgage crisis when we talk about an economic stimulus package.

It is well known that an economic stimulus package should stimulate and it should be driven by existing law. But there is no reason why we cannot find a connector for a 90-day moratorium, a moratorium on those who are about to go over the brink and provide a freeze on those adjustable rates. An economic stimulus package is to stimulate. What more stimulation than for people to keep their homes and pay their mortgages.

Might I also say that as the mortgage collapse goes, then families are subject to not having their children covered by the SCHIP program. The debate today will be enormously important because it will cost less than $3.50 a day to provide for these children. And as well, it will help States all over the Nation, including the 1 million children in Texas that no longer have health insurance because of this horrific veto.

We need a stimulus package that provides people with housing and a stimulus package that takes care of our children.

□ 1045

THE BEST ECONOMIC STIMULUS IS A JOB

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I think we all know that the best economic stimulus is a job. It is a job that you can sink your teeth into, that you can go to work every day and you can use this job to provide for your family. So, as the debate ensues, let's keep our focus on how policies affect the environment in which job growth takes place. Of course we all want to see lower marginal rates on our income tax rate. We want to lower cap gains. We want to lower the corporate tax rate. We want to see full and immediate section 179 expensing for our small businesses. And for those of us that live in States that do not have a State income

tax, we want to see deductibility of State sales tax extended. All of these are good things and, Madam Speaker, we are working for all of these. I hope that we also will keep in mind that actions speak louder than words. So this body should use this conversation about economic stimulus as an opportunity to prioritize and reduce what the Federal Government spends. Reduce the budget. Let's spend less. And remember, the best economic stimulus is a job.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the further consideration of the veto message of the President on the bill (H.R. 3963) to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Will the House, on reconsideration, pass the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding?

(For veto message, see proceedings of the House of December 12, 2007, at page H15382)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield 30 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

Madam Speaker, I yield, also, 15 minutes of my time to the distinguished gentleman from New York, my good friend, Mr. RANGEL, and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the matter under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Madam Speaker, stock markets around the world are plummeting. Home foreclosures are ballooning. States, without exception, are facing budget crises. Employers are cutting jobs. Gas and heating oil prices are draining household budgets. The vote of my colleagues today can stop tomorrow's headline from saying American children are losing health care. This vote to override the President's veto of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007 will not only bring health care to 10 million children, it will protect children and families who may lose their jobs and no longer have health insurance. This is not lip service. This is health coverage.

The bill includes mental health services on a par with medical services. It requires dental services be afforded our children. It protects school-based health services and rehabilitation and case management services for those with disabilities. It provides outreach and enrollment grants and new funding for obesity program.

We know from a recent 2005 study that investing $1 million in State funds in Medicaid will generate 33 new jobs and $1.23 million in new wages in a year. This bill strengthens that safety net by allocating the funds that States need to protect and cover more low-income children.

It should be noted that every complaint that the administration has set forth about this legislation has been met. The bill passed with the support of 265 Members, including 43 of our good Republican colleagues. It passed the Senate with 64 Members, including 17 of our Republican colleagues.

I urge my colleagues to vote to override the President's veto. Vote to secure health care for our children. It is right, it is decent, and it is necessary.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) have 15 minutes of the time I control to control as he sees fit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I recognize myself for such time as I may consume.

Well, here we go again. Depending on how you count it, this is somewhere between the ninth and the 13th time that we have been on the floor of the House in this session of Congress debating the SCHIP program. That seems a little ironic since it's a program that both sides of the aisle support, and I would support enthusiastically.

I listened intently to what my good friend from Michigan, the dean of the House, Mr. DINGELL just said about the program, and I feel compelled to point out a few things that he failed to mention. Number 1, every American in this country, if they're below 100 percent of poverty, receives health care if they wish it through a program called Medicaid. If you are above 100 percent of poverty and are a child, right now a child is defined as an individual between the ages of birth and 19 years old, between 100 and 200 percent of poverty, you can receive health care through the SCHIP program, which is a State-Federal partnership.

The numbers are somewhat in dispute, but we believe that under the current program, in the neighborhood, I believe, of 6 million children and 600 to 700,000 adults are receiving health care through SCHIP. If you're above 200 percent of poverty, hopefully you have insurance through your own health insurance program or through a program provided by your employer.

There are some States that cover children up to 250 percent of poverty, and there are some States that cover them up to 300 percent of poverty. And there are a few States that have petitioned to cover them up to 350 percent of poverty.

So on the Republican side of the aisle, here are the principles that we adhere to in this debate. If you're a child between the ages, up to the age of 19 and your family income is over 100 percent of poverty or less than 200 percent of poverty, we believe you should have health care through SCHIP and we want to fund it, and we want to work with the States to get as many children in that category covered.

If you're an adult, we don't believe you should be covered under SCHIP, so we think that the 6 to 700,000 adults should be transitioned off of SCHIP and put back on Medicaid.

If you're above 200 percent of poverty, we want to work with the States. We want to work with the private sector to come up with innovative plans to cover those children that perhaps aren't covered and their family income is above 200 percent of poverty.

If you're not a citizen of the United States, we don't believe you should receive health care coverage under SCHIP.

So that's what the debate is about. The Democrats want to expand the coverage. There are some of them that want to use it as a surrogate for universal health care for every American in this country. I don't say that all of my friends on the Democratic side do, but some do.

So the Republicans' position is, continue the existing program, perhaps increase coverage somewhat above 200 percent of poverty; cover every child in America between 100 and 200 percent; don't cover illegal aliens; and transition adults off of SCHIP.

The law of the land, the Barton-Deal bill that we passed in December, extends the basic program that I just outlined, I believe, through March of 2009.

So, once again, we're going to have a vote on the President's veto. I predict we're going to sustain that veto. And then I'm still hopeful that Mr. DINGELL and Mr. RANGEL and Mr. STARK and Mr. PALLONE, who are the leaders on this issue in the House, will convene their various committees, and we'll do legislative hearings and then put together a bipartisan bill and mark it up in committee and then bring it to the floor, and we can have a permanent authorization of SCHIP sometime in this Congress.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask unanimous consent that I yield to myself 3 minutes and then be allowed to yield the balance of that time to Chairman STARK to control.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I stand in support of overriding the President's veto, not for the reasons given by Chairman DINGELL, because it's the right and moral position, because that has existed all of the time, and yet we've been unsuccessful.

But I would say to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) that since the last time this has come up, the President has admitted that we are going toward a recession and that the economy may be jeopardized unless the Congress supported a stimulus package.

It would just seem to me that if it's recognized that our States are going to go into deficit, our Governors are going to have serious problems, and that it is very possible, if not likely, that services for our kids would be further cut under Medicaid. It would seem to me that a legitimate argument could be made that, by providing care for these 11 million children, it allows their parents to know that they'll be able to be more productive knowing that their kids are covered by health insurance.

It's sad that the poor now have to be used merely as a vehicle to stimulate our economy. But had we taken care of these people during the robust great economic times, perhaps we would not be going through this struggle.

So it appears to me that this is another opportunity that the minority would have, not just to do the moral thing, but to do the economic thing, and to be of some assistance to the Governors who are screaming out for the continuation of this program, indeed, the expansion of it.

And we're not talking about just adults being restricted, but we talk about adults being in a better chance to be productive knowing that their kids are being taken care of. So we do have this new opportunity for the minority to rethink their position and to do it, again, because it's the economic thing to do and to know that being able to detect serious illnesses, sight problems, hearing problems for our children at an early age, that we really are strengthening the economy so we don't have to pay for these health setbacks and sometimes detection of chronic diseases at a later stage.

□ 1100

So instead of talking compassion, which obviously is not a compelling argument on the other side, let's talk economically and ask the question of economists, whether or not expanding preventative care for our children in health care is really strengthening the economy and saving money in the future with all the restrictions, you know, kicking illegal aliens out and making certain that adults don't participate, all of those things that make you feel good, we would go along with as we have in the past.

But let's make certain that every child that can be treated would be treated, and so I support the override.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As Yogi Berra once said, this is like déjà vu all over again. I think it is important to highlight that this is simply a political exercise, that the Congress has already acted to extend the children's health program through 2009. So instead of debating real reform on this program, we have a political statement being made on the floor today.

I lost track at seven times we have debated this issue. As the gentleman from Texas said, it's somewhere between nine and 13. But it doesn't change the fact that expanding SCHIP beyond its original mission of covering low-income children is a nonstarter with the Congress. Yet the bill the President vetoed would do just that, and it would allow illegal immigrants to receive SCHIP, maintains coverage of adults in this children's health care program and continues to erode private coverage.

How is it that in my home State of Michigan 87,000 eligible children don't have health care while 39,000 adults are in the program. How is it that in Minnesota, 87 percent of the enrollees in this children's program are adults?

How is it that this low-income program is covering families in New York and families in New Jersey making more than $70,000 a year? No wonder New York wanted to go to over $80,000.

The answer to all of these questions is clear: The majority does not want a low-income children's plan. They want what HILLARY CLINTON called for in 1994, the first step toward nationalized, government-run, government-controlled health care.

We should not be diluting this children's program, and we should not be diverting money away from these low-income kids.

I am proud to have introduced the Kids First Act, a bill that would return this program to its root in insuring low-income children. It covers an additional 1.3 million American children, does not raise taxes and is fully funded. That is the kind of legislation we should be debating instead of continuing this stalemate time and time again that uses children's health as a political pawn.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this veto override. Now that we have extended the children's health program, I hope that we can truly reach a compromise on this important issue and ensure that low-income American children have health care coverage.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN), who has been a great leader of health care on this, my distinguished friend, 2 minutes.

Mr. WYNN. Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment to thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue.

I rise to urge in the strongest possible terms that this House of Representatives override the President's veto.

You know, it's really sad that in the greatest country in the world we don't provide health insurance for the children of working parents. We have 4 million additional children that this bill would cover, children whose parents work every day, who work very hard; the children of single moms who work every day; some, like my stepdaughter with a 3-year-old son, who go to work every day. But if there is an asthma attack or if there is a major accident, she has to either go to the emergency room and drive the cost up for all of the rest of us or decide not to pay the rent on time so she can pay for the care she needs or go without necessary care.

That shouldn't happen in America, and that is what we are trying to do with this very important bill.

There is another thing that shouldn't happen in America. In America, a young child shouldn't die because he can't get dental care. That happened in my district. A simple dental infection expanded, grew into the brain and resulted in the death of a young man.

We worked on language in this bill to make sure that children in America of working parents could have access to dental care. That is a very important improvement, one that seems lost on the President.

Every day we spend millions of dollars. We are up to $600 billion on this war, this black hole of a war. Meanwhile, we tell Americans who go to work every day we can't provide you with health insurance. That doesn't make any sense, not in the country that we regard as the greatest country in the world.

So today, Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to really think about what this means. Don't think about the politics. Think about the parents, but more importantly, think about the children who need health insurance now.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Denton, Texas (Mr. BURGESS), a member of the committee.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

You've got to wonder why we're here today. It almost seems like another episode of that Bill Murray movie ''Groundhog Day'' where people went through the same thing over and over again.

When this last session of Congress ended in the middle of the night the

end of December, I think we all had seasonal affective disorders. We went home, but there was a new year and a new day was dawning and a genuine sense of bipartisanship that we were going to work together to have things done.

So what's the first thing we consider? A consideration of the veto override of the SCHIP bill which we voted on again and again and again. Is this the spirit of bipartisanship that we can expect out of the Democratic leadership, as we try to craft legislation to help stave off what seems to be a serious downturn in the economy?

Once again, here we are on the floor of the House being forced by the Democratic leadership to cast a vote that will serve the sole purpose of helping one side of the aisle score political points against the President. Do we need to reauthorize this program? No. We already did that. The CBO said we did it, and we funded it through March of 2009.

Then why are we here? The only reason I can think of is the fact that next week we are going to hear from the President on the State of the Union Address, and after that, the Democrats have decided that maybe a little more political theater is in order to influence the press coverage of the President's address.

So that's why we're here, not to do the people's work, to influence the press after the President's State of the Union Address.

This bill was a flawed bill when it came to our committee. My chairman referenced the 43 Republicans, but no Republican helped craft this legislation. We were not allowed to work on this bill in subcommittee. Our committee process was a sham. This bill was written in the dark of night in the Speaker's office, and no Republican participated. I dare say that no one on your side really understood what was in that bill, and we get it back again and again and again, and at the same time the American people are wondering when we are going to do the work that they sent us here to do.

Madam Speaker, one of my favorite movies is a delightful comedy called Groundhog Day. In this movie, Bill Murray plays a local television weatherman who gets trapped in a strange little town while covering a news story about a locally famous groundhog. But instead of being able to return to his home and get to the other business that he needs to attend to, Bill Murray's character is forced to repeat the same day over and over and over again. No matter what he says or what he does, every day he wakes up just to relive the same day over again.

And, Madam Speaker, after being involved in the SCHIP debate this Congress, I know that most of my colleagues on this side of the aisle are now able to relate to this movie in a very personal way. It doesn't matter what we seem to say or what seems to happen with this issue—for some reason the Democratic leadership will bring us down here to the floor of the House to have the same debate and to vote on the same bill time after time after time.

Once again, we are being forced by the Democratic leadership of the House to cast a vote that will serve the sole purpose of helping Democrats score political points against the President.

Do we need to reauthorize the SCHIP program? No, we already reauthorized through March of 2009.

Do we need to increase funding for the SCHIP program? No, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has already said that S. 2499 that was signed into law on December 29, 2007, has already fully funded the SCHIP program through March of 2009.

Then why are we here, Madam Speaker? Well, the only reason I can think of for this vote is the fact that the President is going to be delivering the State of the Union Address next Monday, and the Democrats have decided that they need a little more political theater in order to influence the press coverage of the President's address.

Well, Madam Speaker, we're going to sustain the President's veto today, and we're going to do it because the President did the right thing by vetoing this poorly written expansion of Washington-controlled, bureaucrat run healthcare that leaves the poorest kids behind. And anybody who cares about needy children can vote against this bad bill proudly.

I'm both proud and concerned that Republicans had no part in writing this legislation. Proud because this bill is an embarrassment. Concerned because we're all supposed to be legislating on behalf of children, and as everybody knows, no Republican member of this House was even asked for an opinion, much less invited to participate in writing the Democratic SCHIP bill.

I don't even think the Democrats who wrote it understand what they've done. I challenge the supporters of this bill to look people in the eye and say that they understand all of the provisions that are actually in this bill. Because I have some questions for you about some very troubling provisions in this bill.

Madam Speaker, it would be a compliment to say that the so-called process which produced this bill is an abuse of our democratic system of government. Yet, I'm sure that some will show up here with a handful of talking points from your Democratic staffers who actually constructed this legislation, and you will explain to us that it is not an abomination at all, but a wondrous triumph of bipartisanship.

Give me the name of one Republican in the entire House of Representatives who directly participated in these discussions. Name just one.

I know that the authors of this bill certainly did not consult with either Mr. BARTON or myself; I know that they have not included any members of the Republican leadership in the House; and I'm not aware of a single Republican member of the Energy and Commerce Committee or the Ways and Means Committee being invited to participate in this process.

And although we were excluded from the negotiations and the Democratic leadership has repeatedly refused to hold a legislative hearing on this bill, we have learned a few facts from the official projections produced by the Congressional Budget Office, and from what I've read, this bill isn't something that I could ever support.

For example, we know that the vast majority of the people added to the SCHIP program under the Democrats' bill will either already have private health insurance or they live in families with incomes too high to be eligible for SCHIP coverage today.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office projects that H.R. 3963 will lead to over 1.2 million new enrollees being added to SCHIP as a result of an "expansion of SCHIP and Medicaid eligibility to new populations." This means that these 1.2 million children live in families whose incomes are too high to qualify for the current SCHIP program. On the other hand, CBO projects that only 800,000 currently SCHIP eligible kids will be enrolled as a result of H.R. 3963. This means that 50 percent more higher-income kids will be enrolled than currently SCHIP eligible kids.

And who will be paying for this expansion of SCHIP eligibility to higher-income families? Well, according to the Congressional Research Service, the vast majority of the $70 billion in additional tobacco tax revenues will come from low-income families. In fact, the Congressional Research Service said that tobacco taxes are "the most regressive of the federal taxes."

So, with H.R. 3963, the Democrats really are taxing the poor in order to give to the rich.

In their defense, I guess it is difficult for the Democratic leadership to know exactly what is in their own bill since it has neither been subject to a single legislative hearing nor conferenced by the House and the Senate.

Unfortunately, we don't know when the Democrats are going to stop playing politics with the health of low-income children and begin the process of working with Republicans in a bipartisan manner to produce a long-term reauthorization of the SCHIP program. I hope that time comes soon, and when it does, I stand ready to work with them. As it stands now, I urge all Members to reject this cynical ploy and vote no.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

I'd like to take this time just to urge my colleagues to vote to override President Bush's veto on what is, in my way of looking at it, bipartisan SCHIP legislation.

We had 43 Republicans in the House who voted with us, and 17 Republicans in the other body voting with us, many of whom participated in the crafting of this compromise. It is not exactly what the distinguished ranking member from Texas asked. It takes people below 300 percent of poverty, below 50-odd thousand bucks for a family of three. The adults will be out in a year, not tomorrow. It makes an effort to reduce crowding out, and only citizens and legal residents are eligible, and there are some means by which States can enforce that.

Children don't choose to be born into families, unlike those of us in Congress, who lack health insurance, and we should be able to give the children the health care they need to become healthy, productive members of society.

It becomes more urgent now that we're in a recession, perhaps in freefall, and we should provide this safety net for families. It probably is the most urgent concern of a parent.

We're going to soon address a bipartisan economic stimulus package, and

it seems to me that if we could come together on that and deal with tax credits or tax relief and additional food stamps or additional unemployment insurance that somehow I don't follow the logic that would say that we shouldn't deal with young children.

Furthermore, I'm advised today by my 6-year-old son, who I must admit started out at about a hundred, so I kept him out of school, this was not planned otherwise, and he said, Dad, if we don't pass this health insurance they may fire all the Republicans, and I'd hate to see that.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding, and I appreciate the privilege to address this House.

This is a cynical attempt here to bring up a veto override attempt on an issue that's been decided, an issue that's been decided and a bill that's been signed by the President, is now enacted into law, to get us past the silly season of Presidential politics and on beyond November of 2008 so we can then have a legitimate discussion about what, if any, better options might be available to the American people. This is a big deal. This is already a victory for the taxpayers, and it's a victory for the kids that we're trying to take care of.

I say it this way. I said I would come back and report to the American people on how much money was saved because some of us held the line, and that dollar figure is $35.6 billion. That's billion with a B. How much money is that? The ranking member of Energy and Commerce might want to know. We could build 178 ethanol plants at 100 million gallons each and quadruple our ethanol production with that kind of capital investment money. You could put a new car in every driveway in my State for that kind of money, but no kid was even threatened to lose their health insurance premium, and we took care of the kids. We're taking care of the taxpayers.

$35.6 billion is what's on the line here. And who's paying the bill? Not us, not those of us in my generation, not those of us who are serving here in the United States Congress. Maybe our kids, more certainly our grandchildren will have to pay this price if we don't step up and draw a bright line. $35.6 billion, $6.5 billion going to illegals getting access to Medicaid because of the language that's in this legislation that erodes the standards that are required.

This is a responsible thing to uphold the President's veto and turn down this veto override attempt.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), the chairman of the Health Subcommittee, 2 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman.

I am just amazed at what's going on here on the Republican side of the aisle because I know how difficult it's going to be to get the votes to override the President's veto.

Last year at this time, we had all the State health officers coming here, many of them from Republican States, you know, where the Governor was Republican, demanding the fact that we needed to provide more money for SCHIP in order to expand coverage because they did haven't the funds. They were taking kids off the rolls, and so we responded.

We put together this bill to try to increase the number of kids to 10 million at a cost and paid for it with what I consider a very reasonable way to go about funding the program.

Now, a year later, we're still hearing Republicans on the other side saying, well, we don't need this; it's not necessary. And the situation is only getting worse. The economy's on a downturn. I'm hearing more and more every day from my Governors, my Governor and Governors on both sides of the aisle, about what the economic downturn is going to mean that more people are unemployed. They need Medicaid, they need SCHIP, because they're not going to have health insurance for their kids. So the demand is even greater.

Whatever problem existed last year that we were trying to address with this legislation, and it was dire, is going to be aggravated even more over the next few months and the next year.

□ 1115

So, I do not understand those who object to this legislation.

In addition to that, the administration issued this directive in August, August 17, that makes it even more difficult to enroll kids and for States to have flexibility. In that directive, the President actually says you have to be off health insurance for a year before you can apply and get on the SCHIP program. So, here we have the Republican administration making it more difficult for States to cover children as at the same time that the need becomes greater every day.

It is an absolute disgrace, in my opinion, that this bill was vetoed. It should pass today because of the need. And I call upon the administration to stop this negative effort to continue to make it more difficult for kids to get coverage.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to the amount of time that remains on all sides, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 9 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Michigan has 9 minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 10 minutes remaining. And the gentleman from Michigan has 10½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Congresswoman BLACKBURN of Nashville, Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I am rising today to urge a ''no'' vote on the SCHIP veto override.

You know, it seems like we have done this over and over and over again. But to my colleagues across the aisle, the time to have started this discussion was this time last year. And if they were so concerned about children's access to health care, the timely manner would have been last year to start this debate, not the end of the year.

Now, as we have heard in the discussion here today, this issue is decided. This body passed S. 2499, that's Senate bill 2499, which very closely mirrors the Barton-Deal bill that the ranking member mentioned earlier today, and it came very close to extending the program with its original intent.

Now, how many times in this body do we hear programs have strayed from their original intent, they're not what they started out? And that is how we went about making certain that this program was put in place through March 2009, getting through the Presidential debate so we didn't have to come back to the floor and talk about this. But instead, the majority wants to keep their focus on H.R. 3963.

Now, in that bill what you would find is it will increase the number of adults on SCHIP, which is the State Children's Health Insurance Plan. Why do we need to be putting adults on SCHIP? It would also allow illegal immigrants to fraudulently enroll in SCHIP. Why should illegal immigrants be getting taxpayer-funded health care? And it would create a flawed tobacco tax scheme to the tune of $70 billion.

Madam Speaker, let's vote to sustain the veto. Let's vote ''no'' on this veto override. It is disheartening that the Democrats cannot put aside their partisan agenda for children.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), who understands that this bill would allow 65,000 Maryland children to gain coverage under SCHIP.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague.

Madam Speaker, it wasn't that long ago, in fact, it was September 2004, that President Bush told the Nation, and I quote, ''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. We will not allow a lack of attention or information to stand between these children and the health care they need.'' That's what the President said just a little over 3 years ago. He has, with his veto, changed his mind. He has turned his back on what he said to America just 3 years ago.

But what hasn't changed since he's changed his mind are the needs of a

million American children; in fact, the needs have only grown greater over the last 3 years. We see rising gas prices; we see rising grocery prices; we see rising prices of going to college; and, yes, we see rising prices for health care. In fact, many more people are not going to be able to afford health care for their kids today than before as people fight a tightening economic squeeze in the months ahead.

We are trying to work together on an economic stimulus package. We worked together on a bipartisan basis when this legislation passed the House and the Senate. It is time for us to work together for the children of this country and make sure they get the health care they need at this very important time.

You know, the American people are hungry for a change in direction. They're hungry for politicians who follow through and do what they said they were going to do, and this is something the President told the Nation he wanted to do. Now that we need it more than ever and more families and more children are struggling than ever before, we need to come together and fulfill the commitment that was made.

Madam Speaker, it's time to say ''no'' to the President's veto. This bill is paid for by increase in tobacco taxes. Let's make sure we don't spend our time looking out for the tobacco companies. Let's look out for the children of America. Let's say ''no'' to the President's veto and ''yes'' to this bill.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, this is starting to feel like Ground Hog Day, the same debate over and over. By my count, this is the eighth time that we have debated SCHIP legislation on the House floor in the 110th Congress. Considering that the most recent debate was on the legislation to extend the program through March of 2009, it is hard for me to understand why the majority finds it necessary to hold this vote. This is time and, more importantly, goodwill that could be better spent discussing legislation that both Republicans and Democrats could support.

House Republicans have stated repeatedly the principles that we believe necessary to secure our votes on the legislation to reauthorize SCHIP. Those basic principles include covering low-income children first, SCHIP for kids only, SCHIP should not force children out of private health insurance, SCHIP for U.S. citizens only, and the funding should be stable and equitable.

As many of my colleagues know, I have been part of a group of Members from both sides of the aisle and from both Chambers who met for months late last year to find common ground on SCHIP legislation. For my colleagues who took part in these meetings, you know very well that the discussions were productive at times and less productive at other times. But despite our disagreements and the bumps in the road, we persisted and continued to meet because we believe that this is one of the most important issues that this Congress will address. While I believe we were making progress, we ran out of time. However, the extension provided by Congress in December gives us another opportunity to do the right thing.

It's the majority prerogative to determine when bills come to the floor, but if Democrats are serious about reauthorizing SCHIP, let's sit down and finish what we started last fall and write a bill that both sides can agree to. Partisan posturing is not going to provide relief to the working families and health coverage for kids.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER).

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I listened to a colleague on the opposite side of the aisle say, ''Why are we here?'' and I realized they don't really know why we're here. We're here for the children.

And then they said, ''You've been back eight or nine times.'' That's right. And we will be back always and forever until we provide health care for working families in America.

We want to protect 10 million children and provide health care insurance. They want to protect 6 million. It's as simple as that. What happens to the other 4 million? And in New Hampshire, we would have enrolled 8,000 more children. What happens to the children in New Hampshire and the children of America? Parents will not lie awake at night wondering do they now raid the rent budget or the food budget. Is the child sick enough now to go to the hospital because they don't have health care insurance?

Who wanted families in America to make this choice? Not the majority of the House, not the majority of the Senate, not the majority of the Governors, not even the health care industry. But the President vetoed this essential bill, and I'm asking my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in an override so that the children of America get health care.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Congressman DEAL of Georgia.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I'm beginning to think the writers' strike in Hollywood has migrated to Washington, DC. It sounds like we're having reruns, and, in fact, we are; same speeches. But the truth of the matter is the facts themselves have not changed.

The bill that is being considered for an override of the President's veto, the fact remains that if we are talking about 10 million children being covered by SCHIP, 2 million of those will be in a crowd-out, currently having private insurance but being then forced or given the enticement, because it is a government program, to move to a government-run health care program rather than the private insurance that they currently have.

The fact does not change that the bill does not have stable funding. While it dramatically increases the funding for the first 5 years, it then falls off a cliff, and the funding is cut by two-thirds.

The fact remains that this bill fails to prioritize poor children. It would repeal the current requirement from CMS that 95 percent of children below 200 percent of poverty be covered before you move up the poverty scale. It repeals that and gives no priority to poor children.

It does not cap the income eligibility. While some proponents say that it caps it at 300 percent of poverty, States could still enroll children and families above that, using what is known as ''income disregards.'' And instead of focusing on children, which it is a children's program, childless adults could continue to remain in the SCHIP program under this bill through September 30 of 2009. And parents who are adults could also stay on until September 30 of 2012 in what is supposed to be a children's insurance program.

It provides excess, unnecessary funding. It does not give States the incentive to do as they currently are required to do to continue to maintain their participation.

You know, Democrats contend that we should put more money into SCHIP because of leaner times. It would seem to me that in leaner times we should give the priority to the children in the poor families, and this bill does not do that.

Ronald Reagan is quoted as saying, in talking about welfare, ''We should measure welfare success by how many people leave welfare, not by how many are added.'' I would suggest the same criteria could be used in SCHIP legislation.

With that, I would urge a ''no'' vote on the veto override.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I am happy to recognize the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin, Dr. KAGEN, for 1 minute, who recognizes that 37,800 children in Wisconsin could gain health insurance and not have 161,000 prohibited, as they would in Georgia, if we don't override this veto.

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, this is not a political exercise nor is it a Hollywood movie, but we can give this a happy ending with a ''yes'' vote today to override the President's veto of an essential bill to guarantee health care to those children who need it most in America.

Forty-seven million citizens have no health care coverage at all, zero. And the costs for care are simply out of reach for everyone. People cannot afford to pay their doctor bills, their prescription drugs. They can't afford their

hospital tests, and they can't even afford to pay for life-saving cancer therapies. And why? It's simple. They just don't have the money. And what kind of Nation are we when children who are most in need are not being seen in a doctor's office and instead have to go to the more expensive emergency room?

We need a uniquely American solution to this crisis, and we need it now because patients cannot hold their breath any longer. Everywhere in the country people are asking, ''Whose side are you on, and why can't Congress work together?'' Well, let's work together today, this day, and reverse President Bush's veto.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the override. Let's bring an end to this national disgrace. This is for our children on whose future we all depend.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia, Dr. GINGREY.

□ 1130

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, we hear from the other side that we are here eight, 10, 12 times for the children. And certainly we are. On both sides of the aisle, we are here for the children. But we are here for the needy children. And that's what we did a month ago when enacting in almost unanimous fashion Senate bill 2499, which expands this SCHIP program for 18 months and not only expands it but increases the spending almost 20 percent, some 800 million additional dollars to cover, yes, these children that President Bush said he was determined to cover.

But what the Democratic majority wants to do is increase this program by 140 percent, cover an additional 4 million children on top of the 6 million that are already covered. And as my colleague Representative DEAL of Georgia pointed out, of those 4 million, 2 million would be children who are already covered by private health insurance.

One of my other colleagues on the other side of the aisle stood up and said shouldn't we provide health insurance for the children of hardworking Americans? Well, no, not if they're making $75,000 a year.

We are going to come back to this floor in the next week or two with a $150 billion economic stimulus package to get us out of a recession. We need the money for that. So we don't want to be squandering money to provide health insurance for those who could afford to do it for themselves. I think the program that we have enacted in a bipartisan way said it all, and if we wanted to have this override of the President's veto of this bloated program that the Democrats proffered, increasing the spending by $35 billion just so you can cover 4 million additional children, half of whom do not need that government help, then we should have had that override vote a month ago.

The reason we are doing it today is for political reasons in anticipation of embarrassing the President prior to the State of the Union Address next week. It's pure and simple politics. Reject this vote.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time I have the privilege to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished majority whip, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3963, the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Madam Speaker, hardworking American families are struggling and in dire need of assistance. I can think of no better way to help them than by providing health insurance coverage for their precious young ones. I find it shameful and downright neglectful for President Bush and congressional Republicans to turn their backs on hardworking American families by refusing to support this reauthorization bill.

As we speak, the Governor of South Carolina is proposing to cut the Children's Health Insurance Program in spite of the fact that last year the legislature overrode his veto of similar legislation. He wants to deny health care coverage to an additional 70,000 low- and middle-income children in order to cut the State's income tax on a few of South Carolina's wealthiest families.

We all know, Madam Speaker, that when children are uninsured minor health problems can become serious and chronic health problems. Those children often end up in emergency rooms, and that means that State residents with insurance ultimately will pay in higher medical costs, higher deductibles, and higher co-pays for their own care. This contributes to a less efficient, more expensive health care system for all.

I implore my colleagues to do as my State's legislators have done in a bipartisan way and override this veto. In doing so, you are taking a stand for our children and the preservation of our public health systems.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida, Congresswoman GINNY BROWN-WAITE.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak as one of the original members of the group of Republican House Members who tried very hard to come up with a bipartisan compromise to extend health care insurance to more low- and moderate-income children. Our group met many times with Democrat leaders in both the House and the Senate with the basic goal to give health insurance to more low- and moderate-income children, without breaking the bank and also without giving coverage to illegal immigrants or childless adults.

I agree with many of the speakers today here that SCHIP should be extended for more low-income children who don't have health insurance. But the measure before us today does not target taxpayer funds to those low-income children. Instead, it sends billions to illegal immigrants, childless adults, and spends too much on middle- and upper-income families, not the low-income children originally intended.

When we stand here and we try to override the President's veto of bill when we all know that the SCHIP program has been continued, it's no wonder that the American public has such disregard for Congress.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 1 minute to the distinguished Speaker of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for yielding and thank him for his leadership on behalf of insuring America's children and also commend the distinguished chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. DINGELL, for his leadership on this important subject.

Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge your exceptional presiding over this debate. You have presided over most of the debate for SCHIP, if not all. I think you are approaching, depending on what happens in the course of this debate, 100 hours of presiding in a very dignified fashion, and I want to acknowledge that because of the importance of this issue. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

All year we have been talking about the subject of how we make America healthier, how we bring many more children who are eligible to be enrolled in the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We've had the debates. We've had the outside advocacy of the March of Dimes, of Easter Seals, of the AMA, of the AARP, of Families USA, the YWCA, of the Catholic Hospital Association. Almost any organization that you can name that has anything to do with the health of the American people has endorsed the legislation that we have before us. That is important to the children, to their families, to their communities, to the economic stability of their States which have to provide health insurance for these children.

In the last few days, we have all been working together in a bipartisan way to come up with a stimulus package. The recognition that we need a stimulus package points to the need further for this SCHIP legislation to become law. Let's make our working in a bipartisan way on the stimulus package a model for how we approach other issues as well.

This SCHIP package has had strong bipartisan support from the start, in the House and in the Senate. In fact, the Senate has a veto-proof majority. Senator HATCH and Senator GRASSLEY have been major architects of this legislation, two very distinguished Republican leaders in the United States Senate.

The issue comes down to what is happening in America's households today. Unemployment is up; housing starts are down. The price of gasoline and food and health care is up; the stock market is down. So the indicators, some that are felt very closely and intimately by America's families and some that are felt by our economy, all point to the need for us to take a new direction. And that new direction says what can we do that is fiscally sound, that meets the needs of the children, that has bipartisan support, and, again, strengthens our country by improving the health of our people?

One of the things that we can do is, again, take the lead, and many children who have come here to advocate on behalf of all children in our country, whether it was through the March of Dimes or Easter Seals or any other organizations, and that is to vote to override the President's veto. Let's remove all doubt in anyone's mind that this Congress of the United States understands our responsibility to children, understands our responsibility to the future. We've had the debate. We know the facts. We know the figures. It's just a decision that people have to make about what is inside of them about what their priorities are. And I hope the message that would lead this Congress is the message that we care about children and we care enough about them that we will vote to override this veto.

I thank the gentlemen again for their leadership.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think it's important to note that this bill allows States to document citizenship, and the Social Security Administrator has said that changing the law will make it easier for illegal immigrants to get SCHIP funds as well as other taxpayer-funded benefits.

And despite this being a program for low-income children, under this bill three-quarters of a million adults will still be on the program in 2012. Under this bill more than 1.6 million children will lose their private coverage.

And let's talk about the funding. The majority has created a funding cliff that dramatically increases Federal funding to enroll new children for the next 5 years; then cuts funding for the bill by 80 percent. This will force future Congresses to make a very difficult choice: to dramatically increase funding or let American children lose their health coverage.

The other problem with this bill is that it is estimated that the bill, because it relies on tobacco taxes for funding, would require more than 22 million new smokers. Now, if there is any consistent policy the government has had administration to administration it's the discouragement of smoking. Yet this bill relies on a false funding mechanism that would require 22 million new smokers.

Madam Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. PRICE.

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentleman's leadership and his yielding time.

Regrettably, Madam Speaker, the New Year didn't bring any new ideas or new strategy on the part of our majority here. Less than 1 week into this new session, it remains all politics all the time. And you don't have to believe me. Just listen to their chairman, who was quoted in the New York Times on September 17 of last year: ''If the President vetoes this bill, it's a political victory for us.'' So all politics all the time.

As has been stated by others, we solved this issue for the time being, the next 18 months, in a bipartisan manner last year, 411–3. And don't believe me if you don't want to. Believe the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, no great friend of our side of the aisle, which says, ''Thanks to the infusion of Federal dollars, Georgia's embattled health insurance program for working class children is safe for another year and even has room to grow if the economy declines. The program called PeachCare, which was disrupted and debated last year by State officials, Congress, and the President, will have enough funding to cover the 254,820 children now enrolled and to grow by up to 40,000 children. 'I'm just relieved,' said the State Health Department Commissioner Dr. Rhonda Medows. 'This will ensure these children are taken care of.'

''Relief echoed Monday through the Georgia health care advocacy community, which fought throughout the last year to save the program known as SCHIP. 'The advocacy community can do nothing but rejoice.' '' And these comments have been voiced all around the Nation.

Last Thursday the Congressional Research Service issued a statement to Georgia officials that said that the State will receive $325 million for the 2008 Federal budget, which runs through October of this year, and that funding level is expected to continue through March of 2009.

So this isn't about policy. This isn't about policy. It's all about politics, self-admitted on the other side.

Vote ''no.''

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise vigorously to oppose the President's veto because of the 1 million children in Texas and the City of Houston that will be left out in the cold without health care.

Madam Speaker, as the chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I rise to announce that I will proudly cast my vote in support of overriding the Presidential veto of H.R. 3963, the ''Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2007.'' I rise in strong support of this legislation because I am listening, and responding to the will of the American people. Last November 2006, Americans went to polls by the millions united in their resolve to vote for change. They voted for a new direction and a change in the Bush administration's disastrous neglect of the real needs of the American people, particularly children who lack health insurance through no fault of their own. The new Democratic majority heard them and responded by passing H.R. 976, ''State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2007.'' The President vetoed the bill, basing his decision on the absurd and laughable claim that the program was thinly disguised ''socialized medicine'' and that it was too costly to provide health insurance for America's needy children.

The President's senseless veto of the SCHIP bill suggests that this administration is operating under the misimpression that it is entitled to a continuation of the ancien régime under which the Republican-led Congress look askance and gave the President a blank check to mismanage the affairs of our Nation. Following the President's first veto, the bill was revised to meet a number of concerns raised by the President including ensuring lower-income children are enrolled first and ensuring benefits are denied to illegal immigrants. While the bill again passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 265 to 142, moving to the Senate where it passed by a veto-proof 64 to 30, the President again vetoed the bill and, in so doing, denied health care to millions of deserving American children.

No matter how many veto threats the President issues, this Congress is not going to give him a blank check to escalate and continue the war in Iraq or to ignore the pressing domestic needs of the American people. It is long past time for change in Iraq and in the direction of the United States. Just as the people and Government of Iraq must accept responsibility for their own country, the people's representatives in Congress must take the lead in addressing the real problems of real Americans living in the real world.

H.R. 3963 is a necessary step in the right direction because it provides dependable and stable funding for children's health insurance under Titles XXI and XIX of the Social Security Act in order to enroll all 6 million uninsured children who are eligible for coverage today, but not enrolled. That is why I strongly support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, next to the Iraq war, there is no more important issue facing the Congress, the President, and the American people than the availability of affordable health care for all Americans, especially children. This bipartisan SCHIP bill is supported by an astounding 81 percent of the American people and the majority of Congress.

By vetoing the bipartisan SCHIP Authorization Act, the President vetoed the will of the American people. By vetoing that legislation, the President turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to the loud message sent by the American people last November.

I voted to override the President's veto because I can think of few goals more important

than ensuring that our children have access to health coverage. I voted to override the President's veto because I put the needs of America's children first.

TEXAS CHILDREN

I am extremely pleased to know that the children in the State of Texas stand to benefit tremendously from the SCHIP Reauthorization Act. Texas has the highest rate of uninsured children in the Nation, and Harris County the highest in the State. The bill goes a long way to provide coverage for the 585,500 children enrolled in Texas's CHIP program; and to reach the 998,000 children in families with incomes under the 200 percent Federal Poverty Level, FPL, who remain uninsured.

Madam Speaker, this important legislation commits $50 billion to reauthorize and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, and cover the 6 million children who meet its eligibility criteria.

Madam Speaker, SCHIP was created in 1997, with broad bipartisan support, to address the critical issue of the large numbers of children in our country without access to healthcare. It serves the children of working families who earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid, but who either are not able to afford health insurance or whose parents hold jobs without healthcare benefits.

Children without health insurance often forgo crucial preventative treatment. They cannot go to the doctor for annual checkups or to receive treatment for relatively minor illnesses, allowing easily treatable ailments to become serious medical emergencies. They must instead rely on costly emergency care. This has serious health implications for these children, and it creates additional financial burdens on their families, communities, and the entire Nation.

This year alone, 6 million children are receiving healthcare as a result of CHIP. However, stopgap funding for this visionary program expires November 16. Congress must act now to ensure that these millions of children can continue to receive quality, affordable health insurance.

As chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I can think of few goals more important than ensuring that our children have access to health coverage. It costs us less than $3.50 a day to cover a child through CHIP. For this small sum, we can ensure that a child from a working family can receive crucial preventative care, allowing them to be more successful in school and in life. Without this program, millions of children will lose health coverage, further straining our already tenuous healthcare safety net.

Additionally, through this legislation, we have an opportunity to make health care even more available to America's children. The majority of uninsured children are currently eligible for coverage, either through CHIP or through Medicaid. We must demonstrate our commitment to identifying and enrolling these children, through both increased funding and a campaign of concerted outreach. This legislation provides States with the tools and incentives they need to reach these unenrolled children without expanding the program to make more children eligible.

In my home State of Texas, as of June 2006, SCHIP was benefiting 293,000 children. This is a decline of over 33,000 children from the previous year. We must continue to work to ensure that all eligible children can participate in this important program. To this end, Texas Governor Rick Perry signed legislation in June which, among other things, creates a community outreach campaign for SCHIP.

In addition to reauthorizing and improving the SCHIP program, this legislation also protects and improves Medicare. Due to a broken payment formula, access to medical services for senior citizens and people with disabilities is currently in jeopardy. Physicians who provide healthcare to Medicare beneficiaries face a 10 percent cut in their reimbursement rates next year, with the prospect of further reductions in years to come looming on the horizon. The budget proposed by the Bush administration does not help these doctors, or the patients that they serve.

This revised bipartisan legislation addresses the concerns raised by President Bush's first veto. These revisions include ensuring that only children in families with gross incomes below $51,500 for a family of three will receive SCHIP coverage, consequently addressing the President's concern that upper-income children do not receive coverage. Furthermore, this revised legislation will require that lowest income children are served first by requiring States to enroll the lowest income first in order to receive bonus payments. This bill will also phase out the coverage of childless adults in SCHIP over 1 year, as opposed to the 2-year coverage phase out in the original bill. And finally, this bill ensures that only citizens and legal immigrants receive coverage by providing that if the Social Security Administration is unable to confirm the citizenship of the applicant, the applicant will be required to provide the State with additional documentation to confirm eligibility. If passing the Senate with a veto-proof margin was not enough to stop President Bush from once again vetoing SCHIP, then the alleviation of all his problems and issues with the previous version should ensure that this bipartisan revision of the legislation stands.

This is extremely important legislation providing for the health coverage of 6 million low-income children, as well as protecting the health services available to senior citizens and persons with disabilities. President Bush was wrong to veto this legislation. I stand strong with the children of America in voting to reauthorize this program. I urge all members to join so that we pass the bill with a veto-proof majority.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN), a member of the committee.

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Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank our Chair of the committee for allowing me to speak. Sitting here, waiting in line and listening, I am amazed at the rhetoric I hear. We had Members from our minority side talk about we have to worry about saving for the stimulus next week, and we want to vote for that. But it is amazing they want to save money from the SCHIP program to pay for a stimulus, and at the same time they don't worry about paying for the billions of dollars a month that we are spending in Iraq. It is amazing how frugal they are when they want to be.

Madam Speaker, the President's veto of the children's health care bill once again shows it is playing politics rather than embracing an opportunity to fix a system that is in need of repair. The reason we are here is over 10 years ago this House and Senate and the President at that time signed the bill. The issue was we need to cover the children first. Instead of signing this piece of legislation into law, President Bush twice vetoed a bill to provide insurance coverage to 10 million low-income American children of working parents.

The administration's reason for this veto just doesn't stand up. No Federal funding will be spent on undocumented immigrants in this bill. If they are, they are on the State's, the State of Texas or whoever else, to pay for it if they allow illegal immigrants on the CHIP plan. In 1 year, childless adults are taken off the SCHIP program, even though this administration issued waivers to allow them to be on it. Only lowest income children are covered, with a prohibition on coverage for over 300 percent of poverty, and still the President vetoed it.

We continue to spend billions of dollars a month in Iraq, and we can't even cover the lowest income children. Energy costs are up. Everything is up. Our economy is weakening, and the number of unemployed and uninsured in this country are rising. Let's at least cover the children with health care. Let's vote to override this misguided veto.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers other than myself, so I am going to reserve the time until we are prepared to close.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize for closing speeches in reverse order of opening speeches, beginning with Mr. CAMP from Michigan, Mr. STARK from California, Mr. BARTON from Texas and Mr. DINGELL from Michigan.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, at this time, I am delighted to yield 1 minute to the distinguished leader of the House, Mr. HOYER from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee for yielding. I thank Mr. DINGELL for his indefatigable advocacy on behalf of children and on behalf of the health of all Americans. I thank my Republican colleagues, as well, for a large number of them supported this legislation when it passed the House.

In fact, over 60 percent of this House voted for this legislation. Over 66 percent of the Senate voted for this legislation. We are just a percentage point short of overriding the President's veto. We are not going to override that veto today. That is unfortunate. It is not unfortunate for me. It is not unfortunate for the 434 of us who have a health insurance program, and we have the most accessible health care perhaps of any American. But it is very unfortunate for those parents who woke up this morning and prayed that their children didn't get sick and prayed

that they didn't get sick because they don't have health insurance, and they are not sure that without health insurance they will have access. They will have access perhaps if their child gets very sick, gets very badly injured, because then they will take them to the emergency room and the emergency room will see them.

There is not one of us, not a person in this Chamber, who would want their children, their grandchildren, or in my case, my great-granddaughter, in that predicament. Not one of us. The gentleman from Georgia who previously spoke talked about politics, and Mr. BARTON I think has mentioned, I haven't heard all of the debate, but mentioned this was about politics. Well, I would agree; it is about politics. Everything we do on this floor is about politics, not necessarily partisan politics, but about public policy and the politics to achieve public policy and the philosophy underlying the achievement of that policy.

You've heard me quote it before. You are probably tired of hearing me quote it. But I am going to quote it again. The President of the United States was seeking reelection in 2004. In the summer, late summer of 2004, he stood on the floor of the Republican Convention and said to all America, ''If I am reelected in a new term, we will lead an aggressive effort to enroll millions of children who are eligible but not signed up for government health insurance programs. We will not allow a lack of attention or information to stand between these children and the health care they need.''

He was reelected. And in 2005, there was no aggressive effort to enroll millions of children who are eligible but not signed up for government health insurance. And the Republicans were in charge of this House and of this Senate. There was no aggressive effort here, either. And in 2006, when the same leadership maintained, there was no aggressive effort to add millions of children consistent with the President's promise of 2004.

But when we were elected and when we took over the leadership of this House and when Mr. DINGELL took over leadership of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. RANGEL took over as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and Mr. STARK took over the chairmanship of the Health Subcommittee, lo and behold, we pursued the President's objective. Now, that may be political. But it was certainly the politics promoted by the President. It was the objective that the President said was an important one. It was a promise he made to America's children and America's families. And so we passed a bill through this House with 45 Republicans, 43 on this particular bill, and in the Senate, two-thirds of the Senate, 18 Republican United States Senators, almost half of the Senate delegation on the Republican side of the aisle voted for this bill.

And indeed, two of the senior Members, including the former chairman, Republican chairman of the Finance Committee, now the ranking member of the Finance Committee, and Senator HATCH, one of the senior Members of the United States Senate, both conservative Republicans, urged this President to sign this bill. Why? Because the facts that you are hearing on this side of the aisle are wrong, Mr. President. That's what Senator HATCH and Senator GRASSLEY said. Actually, they didn't say the facts on this side of the aisle that are being cited, but the facts that the President was saying was the reason for his veto, said they were wrong.

So, yes, we have another opportunity. And I want to tell my friends on the other side of the aisle, as the majority leader who schedules business for this floor, this won't be your last opportunity this year to address this issue. Is that politics? Maybe. And if it is bad politics, the people will not support it. But you and I both know that nigh onto 70 percent of the American public believes this bill ought to be passed, notwithstanding the veto of the President of the United States. Why did they think that? Because they know that their neighbors, maybe themselves, are challenged by their children not being covered. They are working. They are trying to make it. But as the economy tanks, hopefully we can stem that fall. They're worried.

Yes, this is about politics with a small ''p,'' about making public policy that helps our Americans who are working hard to make America a great country and expect their government to hear their cries for help.

We spent some 24 meetings trying to address some of the questions that Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE raised. Mr. BARTON was in a couple of those meetings. We didn't get there. We regret that we didn't get there. Frankly, I want to tell you that I have talked to some of the people in that room who wanted to get there and were disappointed that we didn't get there. You've talked to them, too, Mr. BARTON, on your side of the aisle.

We have an opportunity to stand up for the 4 million additional children who will be helped by this legislation if we override the President's veto. Let's give those children the health care they need, they want, and a great Nation ought to ensure.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. At this time, I reserve my time. I have no further speakers and will reserve my time for closing statements.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE).

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, we are increasingly concerned about the downturn in our economy. The declining stock market, weak dollar, high gas prices and home heating costs, and stagnant wages have caused financial insecurity for families across America. Unemployment is now at a 2-year high, and personal debts are at an all-time high.

More and more families are being squeezed financially, making it harder for them to afford basic health coverage. The SCHIP bill we are considering today affects 10 million children living in families that work hard and play by the rules but can't afford health care for their kids.

We in Congress continue to work in a bipartisan manner to stimulate the economy and help American families threatened by this recession. I can think of no better way than to vote today to override the President's SCHIP veto. Failure to do this will lead to an increase in the number of children living in America without health care.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve. I am the closing speaker.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from California. Two weeks ago, President Bush came to my district to highlight Horace Greeley School. It is a Blue Ribbon School and is recognized for Leave No Child Behind for its accomplishment in teaching children and raising their standards.

I went to that event with the President, because as he said, making sure you had qualified teachers in that school was important. I would also like to say that you need qualified nurse technicians. While you want to test kids for math, we believe you also must test them for measles. While you must worry about the principal, we also want to worry about the pediatrician. And you must have a comprehensive approach to those children, from their pediatrician to the principal, from testing for measles to testing for math and from a teacher to a technician.

One-third of the children at Horace Greeley, slightly more, are children enrolled in SCHIP. Now, those children do well because we raised their standards. They also do well because they have good health care, and we did right by them. Their parents work. Predominately, 50 percent of the school are Hispanics. The rest is mixed. About a quarter are Caucasian.

The President of the United States picked a school in the inner city of Chicago, because of the about 200 schools across the country that are Blue Ribbon Schools, those kids met the standards. Their teachers met the standards. But we did it in a comprehensive fashion. We made sure that they had qualified teachers. We are making sure that they have qualified technicians. We made sure they have a qualified principal. They also must have a qualified pediatrician. And that is what made those kids and our future brighter.

I was proud that the President came to my district and recognized a school

in a tough area doing right by kids. And the question is, will this floor do right by those children? And I am not sure. No, we won't have the votes to override the President's veto. And I told him then, ''You want to reauthorize No Child Left Behind because it raised the standard. We want to also reauthorize the SCHIP program.''

Last November, the American people said they want a change in Washington to set the right priorities, and one of those things was to work together across party lines. We did that here. Unfortunately, one thing didn't change, and that is enough Republicans that want to rubber-stamp policies that I believe are misdirected. Investing in 10 million children for the cost of 41 days in the war in Iraq will give those children more than just a blue ribbon; it will give them a chance at the future.

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Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I continue to be the last speaker, and will reserve until we are prepared to close.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ).

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, today we will again attempt an override of the President's veto of the CHIP reauthorization bill.

Over the last 6 months, while President Bush and his Republican allies on the other side of the aisle have doggedly refused to take action to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program, a public-private venture that helps middle and low-income families be able to buy private health insurance, to an additional eligible 4 million children in this country, during that time the demand by America's working families for accessible health coverage has only increased.

Amid this economic downturn, with skyrocketing energy costs, a record number of mortgage foreclosures, fewer new jobs, the rate of unemployment has jumped dramatically in the last year, adding an additional 900,000 Americans who are jobless. Two-thirds of unemployed individuals lose their health care coverage for their families when they lose their jobs. So it is times like these when CHIP is needed most for their children. According to the Joint Economic Committee, as many as 1 million additional children will likely become eligible for subsidized health coverage like CHIP as a direct result of this economic downturn and increased unemployment.

Now is not the time to turn our back on America's children. It is time for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join us in supporting America's working families when times get tough, like they are now. So they should join us, and I hope they do, because together we could and should override this misguided veto by the President, and help America's working families and their children weather this economic downturn and get health care to the children of America.

Health care should not be optional. It should be something we are sure that every American child has access to. Now is the moment when Republicans on the other side of the aisle can stand up for working families, for children in this country, and make sure that 10 million, an additional 4 million children, get health care coverage under CHIP.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. I reserve my time and am prepared to close.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, at this time I have no further requests for time and I am prepared to close if my good friends and colleagues here on the other side have that wish.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I would be glad to yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Michigan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) will be recognized for an additional 30 seconds.

There was no objection.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This Congress has already passed an 18-month extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program to March of 2009, and in that bipartisan extension an additional $800 million was provided to States to make sure that they could continue to provide health insurance to those already enrolled.

We have debated this many, many times on the floor, this flawed proposal. This so-called compromise bill did not have one hearing. I have great respect for this House as an institution, and part of that respect is the regular order of bringing bills to subcommittee, having hearings and giving people an opportunity to be heard on them so the public is aware of what is happening. This bill didn't have one hearing. It was given to the minority the night before the vote.

I think that kind of partisanship and politics, combined with the overreaching included in this compromise, it doesn't address the problem of illegals receiving SCHIP funds, it doesn't address the issue of adults in the program and focusing the program on children, it causes almost 2 million children to lose private coverage, and, not only that, has unstable funding by assuming that 22 million new smokers are going to be found over the next few years.

I would urge my colleagues to vote against this veto override, and let's get to work on going through the regular process of having a hearing, bringing forward witnesses and fashioning a compromise that not just has House and Senate support, but under our system of government, before a bill becomes law, it has House, Senate and presidential support. So let's work together in the coming year and start off this year differently than last year, which, unfortunately, this was supposed to be the easy issue we were all going to be able to come together on. But I think a lack of process and really a bill that is flawed in many ways, as the debate here has shown today, makes it impossible to support.

So I urge my colleagues to vote against the veto override.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the very dignified way in which you have overseen this debate, not just today but in all the previous SCHIP debates. You are truly a credit to the institution, and I appreciate your courtesy.

Madam Speaker, constitutionally, when the President vetoes a piece of legislation, to override that veto either the House or the Senate has to muster more than two-thirds of its Members that are present and voting.

Now, I am not sure that it is a requirement that you bring a veto vote up or whether it is just a courtesy, but in any event, the majority postponed the veto override vote from back before Christmas until today. If one wants to be cynical, you could say that veto postponement was done for political reasons, since the President is giving the State of the Union next week. In any event, here we are again, and I will predict, and the majority leader when he spoke acknowledged this, that the votes won't be there to override the President's veto.

So we will continue to operate under the extension, the Barton-Deal bill that two-thirds of the Republican Conference are cosponsors of, that this House and the Senate passed right back before Christmas, and that the President signed. That bill, as Mr. CAMP has pointed out, increases funding by almost $1 billion, or approximately 20 percent, and extends the program through March of next year. So there is no child currently on SCHIP that is going to lose coverage, regardless of the vote today.

Now, I do want to compliment my good friend Mr. PALLONE, if he is on the floor, I don't see him, but have just

been told that, lo and behold, we are going to have a legislative hearing next week on SCHIP. In his subcommittee, the Health Subcommittee, there is going to be for the first time in this Congress a hearing on SCHIP. So that tells me that there is an outside chance, and maybe better than an outside chance, that sometime in the next 2 to 3 months, if Mr. DINGELL agrees and Mr. STARK agrees and Mr. RANGEL agrees, we may actually do what we should have done 13 months ago, which is begin to craft a bipartisan compromise on how to permanently reauthorize, or at least reauthorize SCHIP for more than 15 months, and perhaps modify the program, and then expand it to cover some children that are currently not covered. So there is always hope.

But while that is yet to materialize, the vote before us today is to sustain the President's veto. I hope we do that, and then we can begin to work next week, hopefully on a bipartisan basis, to craft a compromise that the President will sign, and then we will have a signing ceremony either in the Oval Office or the Rose Garden sometime this year. But, today, vote to sustain the President's veto.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 3½ minutes.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I have great affection and respect for my good friend the ranking member of the committee, but some of the things he has just said would tend to indicate the lack of understanding that there is in this place about this legislation.

The committee has had three hearings on SCHIP. We have another hearing coming up next week. The subject will at that time be oversight, to find out how the matters are being conducted.

There have been a lot of misrepresentation, mostly by the administration. For example, the administration says in its veto message the bill covers illegal immigrants. Not so.

It says that children whose parents can afford private health insurance are included in the legislation. Not so. The ceiling on these kinds of children is $51,510 a year.

It also says that families with incomes of $75,000 a year are eligible. Not true.

It says that childless adults are covered. All of these will be removed by the end of this year under the legislation, and it should be noted that those who are now eligible under this provision are done so under waivers which have been granted by this administration.

Regrettably, we have here then either misunderstanding or just plain hard-heartedness and dishonesty on the part of the administration with regard to what this legislation does.

What we have taken care of in this legislation is children who are identical in terms of all of the conditions of eligibility of the 6 million who were covered under the original law and who have been covered up to this time. We have added to them 4 million children who are identical in every particular to those 6 million.

What is wrong with that? How is anyone here going to be able to justify to his or her conscience denying 4 million kids who are fully eligible but do not confront a situation where the Federal Government puts the money and the eligibility in place so that they can be covered? I ask my colleagues, how can you then accept this veto? How can you deny these kids, whose need is as great as the 6 million now covered, and deny that 4 million? It is impossible for me to understand that.

There are a plethora of other misrepresentations about this bill coming out of the administration, and they appear, unfortunately, in a veto message from the President of the United States. The bill prohibits States from receiving Federal funding if they exempt portions of income that go to families with incomes over $51,510. That is the ceiling, and those are families who have real need.

Let us meet that need. The number of kids who are going to be eligible and have need for health care is growing as this recession which threatens gets nearer and becomes a worse and more threatening reality.

I urge my colleagues, vote to override the veto. Vote for the kids. Vote to override the veto.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, the question of whether the Federal Government is finally going to do more to provide health coverage to children who need it is not going to go away. This is not an issue of partisan politics. It's not a complicated issue either. It's simply a matter of doing what's right.

I believe that no American child should be without access to decent health care. This is especially true given the worsening economic conditions that are battering Michigan and every other State. Rising unemployment results in more American families losing their health insurance. Not only do workers find that health coverage is increasingly beyond their reach, the problem extends to children.

A new study by the Joint Economic Committee underscores the fact that between 700,000 and 1.1 million additional children will enroll in Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Programs each year due to slowing employment growth. The projections show that more than 35,000 additional children in Michigan alone will need help. But State budgets have been hard hit by the economic downturn. They don't have the resources to provide health care coverage to millions of kids that already need it, let alone all the new children who will need help due to the economic downturn.

That's why it's vital that Congress vote to override the President's veto of the Children's Health Insurance Program bill. By doing so, we can extend health care coverage to nearly 4 million children who are currently uninsured. Let's not let America's children become casualties of the economic downturn. Vote to override the President's veto.

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, today is the second time we are voting to override the President's veto of legislation which provides health care to more low-income, uninsured children under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Last year, 64 percent of the House voted for this legislation—just a handful of votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to override. In the Senate, there is a sufficient "super majority" to pass this bill.

With the economy either in recession or on the threshold of one, the arguments for this bill are even greater than they were when we voted for it last year.

Unemployment is edging up. With more Americans out of work there will be an increase in the number of uninsured. For every point that unemployment rises, 1.2 million to 1.5 million Americans lose their health insurance.

This legislation increases to 10 million the number of children covered under SCHIP and it addresses almost every major concern that has been raised about the bill.

The bill covers only American citizens (not undocumented individuals).

The bill will cover only children, not adults.

The bill focuses on covering low-income kids and it caps eligibility to families earning less than $51,500.

The bill makes certain that coverage under SCHIP will not substitute for coverage by employer-provided and private health insurance.

The bill is fully paid for with an increase in the tobacco tax. This step not only balances the books, it saves lives and improves the health of young people. Public health experts (including a panel of the Institute of Medicine) agree that raising tobacco taxes is an effective way to reduce smoking, especially among children, and it's unfortunate that this provision is strongly opposed by the tobacco industry and the President.

With economic uncertainty facing millions of Americans at this time, I hope we will finally provide families with more security by overriding the President's veto and enacting this bill.

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of overriding the President's veto of the SCHIP bill, H.R. 3963.

In the face of job loss and a foreclosure crisis I rise again to fight for SCHIP. There are more families going hungry in my district each day, and the number of uninsured children is skyrocketing out of control.

As a parent and grandparent, I understand the despair we all feel when a child falls asleep crying in your arms and all you can do is reassure them.

I ask President Bush, how will you answer the pleas of help from these parents?

Parents are struggling. Local newspapers in my District report a 6.2 percent unemployment rate, which is much higher than the national average of 5.0 percent.

This loss of jobs translates to fewer parents covered by employment-based health insurance, which means more uninsured children.

This week we celebrated the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Let us remember him as we fight today to protect our nation's most vulnerable citizens, our children!

I urge my colleagues to join me in rescuing health care for our children, and support this veto override.

Mr. BARTON. Madam Speaker, here we are again. For the ninth time, we are here on the

floor of the House to vote on some form of consideration of the latest version of the Democratic leadership's SCHIP and Medicaid expansion bill. And if you count the votes on the Rules Committee resolutions for consideration of these bills, we will be debating this issue for the 13th time this morning.

And while the Democratic leadership has tried a dozen times to stuff their ideology down our throats on the floor of the House, the same Democratic leadership still hasn't held one single legislative hearing or completed one single legislative markup in the Energy and Commerce Committee, the committee with jurisdiction over the SCHIP program.

In December, the Democrats held their second debate on a motion to postpone consideration of the President's veto. Since that vote, Congress and the President have passed legislation that fully funds the SCHIP program through March of 2009.

It was my hope that once we passed the SCHIP extension legislation that we could come together and begin a true legislative process that could yield results. We've heard all this talk lately from the Democratic leaders about bipartisanship, but all we actually get is empty words and authoritarian process.

Then why are we here again today, Madam Speaker? Well, the only reason I can think of for this vote is the fact that the President is going to be delivering the State of the Union Address next Monday, and the Democrats have decided that they need more political theater in order to influence the press coverage of the President's address.

I thought that the reason we passed the extension legislation was to give us another 15 months to have a thoughtful bipartisan discussion on how to best craft a long-term reauthorization of the SCHIP program. I thought we were going to have legislative hearings where we could bring in policy experts to help us craft the best possible bill for the needy, low-income children in this country.

I listened to the debate on the floor. If we could write a bill based on what Members think the bill does, we may not be far off from compromise. One member said during the previous debate that this bill does not provide benefits for those above 200 percent of poverty, which is $42,000 a year. If that is what Members support, then a compromise can be had. I have heard Members say that this bill takes adults off this Children's health insurance program. If that is what Member's believe the bill should do, then there is room for compromise.

I've heard Members say that they do not want people in the country illegally getting benefits. If there is agreement on that, there is room for compromise. I have also heard emphatic pleas that this bill is needed to ensure that poor children receive health care. I agree with that sentiment also, and we have proposals to ensure that States cover poor children first.

Unfortunately, the legislation does not match the rhetoric. It is my sincere hope that Democrats will eventually stop playing politics with the health of low-income children and begin to actually work in a bipartisan manner to help them. I hope that time comes soon, and when it does, I stand ready to work with the Democrats in a bipartisan manner. As it stands now, I urge all Members to reject this cynical ploy and vote to sustain a veto that is both wise and brave, and which will force Democrats to value the health of poor children instead of using them as props.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for overriding the President's veto of the revised bipartisan SCHIP, State Children's Health Insurance Program, bill—H.R. 3963.

Overriding this veto will provide healthcare coverage for 10 million children of working families. This bill will preserve coverage for all 6.6 million children currently covered by SCHIP and extend coverage to 3.8 million children who are currently uninsured, including 80,900 in my home State of Michigan, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

In this weakening economy, more and more American parents are having difficulty finding affordable health insurance for their children. It is estimated that in Michigan, 35,600 additional children will need SCHIP or Medicaid in each year of this economic downturn. Funding the enrollment of children eligible for the SCHIP program is more critical than ever.

The bipartisan SCHIP bill is supported by 81 percent of the American people; 64 Senators, including 17 Republicans; 43 Governors, including 16 Republicans; and more than 270 organizations, including the AARP, AMA, Catholic Health Association, and Families USA.

House Democrats continue to stand strong to ensure health coverage for all of America's children, while those on the other side of the aisle persist in standing between millions of children and the health care they need. House Republicans should put our children first and override the President's misguided veto.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I fully support the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP. This legislation will ensure that 10 million children receive the vital healthcare coverage they need and deserve.

Currently, more than 218,000 children in Ohio receive care through SCHIP, and the bipartisan plan vetoed by the President would have extended care to an additional 122,000 uninsured children throughout the State.

The President's veto on December 12th denied health care to children of hardworking families across Ohio just as the state's unemployment rate reached 6 percent. With our economy experiencing a downturn, families are struggling to put food on the table, heat their homes and pay for ever increasing healthcare costs, making reauthorization of SCHIP more important than ever.

I am saddened by this failed veto override, but will continue to fight for children's health care. I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to strengthen SCHIP and improve health care for children in Ohio and across the Nation.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 217, nays 195, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 21]

YEAS—217

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NAYS—195

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor

Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—18

Baird
Baker
Berman
Costello
Davis (IL)
Hinojosa
LaHood
Lantos
Lucas
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Napolitano
Rahall
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Sherman
Solis
Wilson (OH)

□ 1235

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, January 23, 2008, I was absent during rollcall vote No. 21. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on ordering the previous question to H.R. 3963—to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 21 on ordering the previous question on the veto override of the Children's Health Insurance bill, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, will the House, on reconsideration, pass the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding?

Under the Constitution, the vote must be by the yeas and nays.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 260, nays 152, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 22]

YEAS—260

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bono Mack
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Buchanan
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Castle
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Filner
Fossella
Frank (MA)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Nadler
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Shuler
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—152

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Carter
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Fallin
Feeney
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hoekstra
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Price (GA)
Putnam
Radanovich
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)

NOT VOTING—19

Baird
Baker
Berman
Costello
Davis (IL)
Everett
Hinojosa
LaHood
Lantos
Lucas
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Napolitano
Rahall
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Sherman
Solis
Wilson (OH)

□ 1252

So (two thirds not being in the affirmative) the veto of the President was sustained and the bill was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, January 23, 2008, I was absent during rollcall vote No. 22. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on passage, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding, of H.R. 3963—to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 22 on overriding the President's veto of H.R. 3963, Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The veto message and the bill will be referred to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

The Clerk will notify the Senate of the action of the House.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, January 23, 2008, I was unable to vote on rollcall 21 and 22 due to unavoidable circumstances. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" for both votes.

APPOINTMENT OF HON. STENY H. HOYER AND HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH FEBRUARY 6, 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 23, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STENY H. HOYER and the Honorable CHRIS VAN HOLLEN to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through February 6, 2008.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Maryland, the majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring about next week's schedule.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the distinguished Republican whip.

On Monday the House will meet at 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 5 p.m., and that evening we will receive the State of the Union address from the President.

On Tuesday the House will meet at 10:30 a.m. for morning-hour debate and 12 noon for legislative business. We will consider several bills under suspension of the rules. A list of those bills will be announced by the close of business this week.

In addition, we will consider H.R. 1528, a bill to designate the New England National Scenic Trail.

The House will not be in session for the balance of the week in order to accommodate the Democratic Caucus Issues Conference.

I yield back.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that information. As he and I discussed last week, the FISA legislation that passed with, obviously, a bipartisan majority in early August expires on February 1. I think the Senate intends to bring that up on Thursday, and Senator REID has suggested a commitment from the Speaker to bring a bill up next week. I wonder if we have any information on that.

I yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I have not talked to Senator REID nor the Speaker about any commitment about bringing that bill up on Thursday. First of all, of course, next Thursday we won't be here, if they bring it up Thursday.

Mr. BLUNT. I think he's going to bring it up this Thursday on the Senate side is what I meant.

Mr. HOYER. Well, as you know, he may do that. As you know, Leader REID asked for unanimous consent yesterday for a 30-day extension of the present act which expires on the 1st of the month. Mr. MCCONNELL, the minority leader, objected to that extension.

Furthermore, obviously, the Senate has not completed its work so that we are unable to go to conference at this point in time on the bill that we passed now some months ago, or over a month ago.

When the present Protect America Act, which we passed in August, time frame comes to an end the 1st of the month, of course the intelligence community will not go dark. The authorizations issued under the Protect America Act are in effect for up to, as you well know, a full year, so that those matters that have been approved for interception will not terminate. Those authorizations do not terminate on the 1st of February; so that hopefully the administration has requested authorization for any and all targets that it believes are important for us to be intercepting at this point in time. And certainly, if they know of any, they ought to be requesting such authorization in contemplation of the possibility. If the Senate doesn't act, we won't have a bill to pass.

I want to tell my friend that, according to a New York Times story today, Kenneth Wainstein, who's the Assistant Attorney General for National Security, he said that if PAA, the Protect America Act, were allowed to expire, intelligence officials would still be able to continue intercepting, he said eavesdropping, on already approved targets for another 12 months. That is what I was asserting, and that's the basis on which I make that assertion.

The Protect America Act only requires that the AG adopt guidelines for surveillance, as you know, rather than the individualized warrants to get 1-year authorization. These authorizations do not require the NSA to specify the name, number or location of the people they want to listen to, so that the situation we will find ourselves in, should the Senate not act or be able to act on Thursday either passing legislation or sending it to us, would be simply that the NSA and the administration would be relying on the authorizations they already have.

I would hope that if the Senate cannot act and that we could not go to conference, that we could agree on this side to a 30-day extension and send that over to the Senate. They failed to do that on unanimous consent, so it would give us time to go to conference, because, as my friend knows, there is obviously substantial controversy in the other body with reference to how the immunity issue is addressed. There is substantial controversy in this House about how that question should be addressed. And very frankly, I was hopeful that the Senate would act long before this, I know you've been in a similar situation, and that we would be in conference and try to resolve those differences. We haven't been able to do that.

Under no circumstances do we think, however, that the fact that February 1 comes and goes without the passing of either an extension or new legislation will undermine the ability of the NSA and the administration to continue to eavesdrop on those targets that it believes are important to focus on for the protection of our people and our country.

□ 1300

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for his views on that, and I would hope that the Protect America Act is not allowed to lapse. I'm not as comfortable as the article that my good friend referred to or this article may have created comfort for him and other information, particularly about any new targets that might fit some past definition that arose. We've debated this before; we will debate it again.

I would think that allowing this act to expire on the basis that somehow we have a 12-month window would not be something that either I would be comfortable with or the intelligence community would be comfortable with. And we would have another day to debate that.

I do hope we continue to work both to resolve this issue permanently. The issue of immunity is an issue that's been out there long enough now that we should be able to bring it to some resolution, and I hope we can find a way to do that; and I would hope we could find a way to do that before February 1, which would almost require action next week. I understand that if the Senate doesn't bring their debate that would be initiated this week to some conclusion, it's hard for us to get that permanent solution at that time frame.

But I do think a permanent solution is important here, and I don't have the confidence that my good friend does that we would have a lot of time beyond February 1 where there is no harm by not having the ability to look quickly in those areas involving foreign individuals in foreign countries who come to our attention that are not to our attention today, but I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I understand his concern.

Obviously what concerns me is the proposition, as the gentleman puts forward, that we make sure we have the authorization to intercept those communications which may pose a danger to the United States and to our people.

I would hope and urge this administration if they know of any such targets, that they immediately request authorization under that, and they have another week essentially to do so. We believe those could be approved within, as some previous Justice Department official said, hours of application.

So in the first instance, I would hope that they would make efforts to preclude the possibility that we would have targets that aren't authorized.

Secondly, my concern is that the other body likes to put us in a position where it's take it or leave it; in other words, without discussion in terms of the very substantive important discussion on how we protect ourselves against terrorists and protect the Constitution. We think those are very important questions on both sides, not that they're either side, but we believe they can be consistent with one another, but we think we need the time to do so.

That is why I pressed so hard, as the gentleman knows, to pass a FISA bill through this House. We passed a FISA bill through this House over a month ago. It was in November, so with clearly enough time to give the other body which had also considered a bill. And when we passed our bill, we already had bills out of the Intelligence Committee; and the Judiciary Committee bill, I'm not sure whether it was out of committee or not, but it had been considered in committee.

So I think it's unfortunate that we've been put in this time frame, but I frankly, without deciding the question today on the floor, am very interested in pursuing this in the regular order to discuss between the two Houses whether or not we can reach a resolution on this immunity issue which I think is an important one, as well as reaching a resolution on what I think is a much improved process that the House passed and, very frankly, which I think the Senate bill also has made some improvements on in the Judiciary Committee.

There are differences on that, whether the Senate Intelligence Committee is a preferable item, Senate Judiciary or some blend of those two, but they have not reached a resolution on that.

So I hope I have conveyed to the gentleman that while I understand the concern, which I share, of getting this done, I was not happy in August. I voted against the bill in August as the gentleman knows. An overwhelming majority of this caucus voted against that legislation. However, many people voted for it, justifiably in the sense that we needed to get something done for the interim and set a time limit on it so that we would not be vulnerable if, in fact, we were. But we think the FISA court needs to be involved in these issues.

So, again, what I'm trying to convey to you is these are very serious questions, and they need to be thoughtfully addressed, and I, for one, am very unenthusiastic about addressing these issues on the horn of hours to go before a bill expires.

I urge the Senate not to do that to us, and we are about to find ourselves in that position. I'm not happy about it.

Mr. BLUNT. Well, I hear my friend's displeasure. In August, I think 41 Members of the majority joined with almost everyone on my side of the aisle to put the Protect America Act in place for this period of time that's about to expire.

The very fact that the Senate majority leader and others are calling for an extension leads me to believe that there is a reason to have something beyond the normal bill, the regular bill, that may or may not allow some listening to information we need to hear in the future because of what's been decided today.

Clearly, in my view at least, the Senate believes that an extension of the current law would be necessary to provide the current level of protection or they wouldn't be worried about the deadline. They'd take the gentleman's suggestion that maybe we have a year to listen to the things that we now know we need to listen to, and we shouldn't be rushed. I would not like to see the current law expire without an adequate replacement.

The goal the gentleman mentioned for the legislation, hearing those things we need to hear, and I'd paraphrase here, in the quickest possible time frame, is an appropriate goal. We'll continue to debate how we get there. I would hope that neither body allows this law to lapse with nothing to provide the level of protection the American people now have and in the future, and I yield.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

In that context, can I ask the distinguished Republican whip whether or not, if we find ourselves in that position, whether you believe your side of the aisle would be prepared to support a 30-day extension so that we would not get into that position that you're concerned about, that if something came to light that the administration and/or NSA and the intelligence community felt ought to warrant action, that they would then be able to request such action during that additional 30 days while we see if both bodies can act?

Mr. BLUNT. I appreciate the question. I would think that if we find ourselves in that situation, at least I personally would want to look for the shortest period of time when we could reasonably reach a permanent solution to this. I don't think the country benefits from a constant debate on how we move forward on this issue. I think we need to find a permanent solution or at least a longer term solution than we've found to date, and I wouldn't want to see the law lapse.

I think we want to look at the circumstances at the time, what we were dealing with with legislation, and hopefully a conference of some kind and look at it at the time.

Mr. HOYER. If the gentleman would yield?

Mr. BLUNT. I'd yield.

Mr. HOYER. I think you raise an important concern. I think we all agree on the concern. I think also there are concerns about what the Congress did in creating the FISA court, the purpose of the FISA court. The concern with respect to executive action on intercepting communications, certainly domestically, should be overseen by the court, and to the extent that there may be spillover from foreign interceptions to domestic interceptions, that ought to be of concern to us as well.

You are correct, these are very serious matters, and I would hope that they would be addressed as such from all perspectives.

What the 30-day extension does is, if the Senate, and I would suggest the Senate has not acted in a timely manner. You're going on your retreat. I'd like to get a better word than ''retreat,'' but in any event, you're going on your retreat this week. We're doing the same next week. So essentially we have two legislative days left, and one of those, of course, is a 6:30 day, and the Senate says they're going to take this bill up Thursday. Let's assume they pass it on Thursday, which I don't assume. That gives us 1 day. The Senate knows our schedule. That is not fair to the Members of this House. It's not fair to the country. It's not fair to the Constitution.

And so I would hope that if we find ourselves in that position, as I think we do, that we could agree to preclude the fear that you have and give another 30 days for the process to work, for us to go to conference if the Senate has passed a bill, to go to conference, and hopefully the Senate will go to conference. The Senate hasn't been very inclined to go to conference. We're not pleased with that. I don't think you're pleased with that.

Mr. BLUNT. We're not pleased either.

Mr. HOYER. We share that in common, and I think we're in that position, that a 30-day extension is a reasonable time in which to give the Congress of the United States, Senate and the House, to try to come together, resolve some very serious issues on which there are differences of opinion, and I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that, and I don't intend to spend any time defending the time of the working schedule of the Senate.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged concurrent resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 282

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Monday, January 28, 2008, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

SECTION 515 RURAL HOUSING PROPERTY TRANSFER IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3873) to expedite the transfer of ownership of rural multifamily housing projects with loans made or insured under section 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 so that such projects are rehabilitated and preserved for use for affordable housing.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3873

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Section 515 Rural Housing Property Transfer Improvement Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) providing rural housing for poor families in the United States has been an important goal, and the primary reason for enactment, of the Housing Act of 1949;

(2) rural multifamily housing financed under the section 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 has been an essential resource for providing affordable housing for some of the Nation's poorest families;

(3) the majority of the approximately 16,000 projects financed under section 515 that currently have loans outstanding were constructed more than 25 years ago and need new financing in order to continue to provide decent, affordable housing for families eligible to reside in such housing;

(4) many owners of such projects are working to transfer the properties, which often involves leveraging Federal resources with private and commercial resources; and

(5) the Secretary of Agriculture should protect the portfolio of section 515 projects by making administrative and procedural changes to process ownership transfers in a commercially reasonable time and manner when such transfers will further the preservation of such projects for use as affordable housing for families eligible to reside in such housing.

SEC. 3. TRANSFERS OF SECTION 515 RURAL MULTIFAMILY HOUSING PROJECTS.

Section 515(h) of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1485) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(1) CONDITION.—'' after ''(h)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(2) TRANSFERS FOR PRESERVATION AND REHABILITATION OF PROJECTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make such administrative and procedural changes as may be necessary to expedite the approval of applications to transfer ownership of projects for which a loan is made or insured under this section for the preservation, continued use restriction, and rehabilitation of such projects. Such changes may include changing approval procedures, increasing staff and resources, improving outreach to project sponsors regarding information that is required to be submitted for such approvals, changing approval authority between national offices and the State and local offices, simplifying approval requirements, establishing uniformity of transfer requirements among State offices, and any other actions which would expedite approvals.

''(B) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall consult with the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and take such actions as are appropriate in conjunction with such consultation, to simplify the coordination of rules, regulations, forms (including applications for transfers of project ownership), and approval requirements for housing projects for which assistance is provided by the Secretary of Agriculture and under any low-income housing tax credits under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or tax-exempt housing bonds. The Secretary of Agriculture shall involve the State Rural Development offices of Department of Agriculture and the Administrator of the Rural Housing Service in the consultations under this subparagraph as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(C) PRESERVATION AND REHABILITATION.—The Secretary shall actively facilitate transfers of the ownership of projects that will result in the preservation, continued use restriction, and rehabilitation of such projects.

''(D) FINAL AUTHORITY OVER TRANSFERS.—The Office of Rental Housing Preservation of the Rural Housing Service, established under section 537 (42 U.S.C. 1490p–1), shall have final regulatory authority over all transfers of properties for which a loan is made or insured under this section, and such Office may, with respect to such transfers, work with and seek recommendations from the State Rural Development offices of the Department of Agriculture.

''(E) DEADLINES FOR PROCESSING OF TRANSFER APPLICATIONS.—

''(i) PROCEDURE.—If a complete application, as determined by the Secretary, for a transfer of ownership of a project or projects is not processed, and approved or denied, by the State Rural Development office to which it is submitted before the applicable deadline under clause (ii)—

''(I) such State or local office shall not have any further authority to approve or deny the application;

''(II) such State or local office shall transfer the application in accordance with subclause (III); and

''(III) such application shall be processed, and approved or denied, in accordance with clause (iii) and only by the Office of Rental Housing Preservation, which may make the final determination with the assistance of other Rural Development employees.

''(ii) DEADLINE FOR STATE AND LOCAL OFFICES.—The applicable deadline under this clause for processing, and approval or denial, of a complete application for transfer of ownership of a project, or projects, shall be the period that begins upon receipt of the complete application by the State Rural Development office to which it is submitted and consists of—

''(I) in the case of an application for transfer of ownership of a single project, 45 days;

''(II) in the case of an application for transfer of ownership of multiple projects, but not exceeding 10 projects, 90 days; and

''(III) in the case of an application for transfer of ownership of 11 or more projects, 120 days.

''(iii) DEADLINE FOR OFFICE OF RENTAL HOUSING PRESERVATION.—In the case of any complete application for a transfer of ownership of a project, or projects, that is transferred pursuant to clause (i), shall be processed, and approved or denied, before the expiration of the period that begins upon receipt of the complete application and consists of—

''(I) in the case of an application for transfer of ownership of a single project, 30 days;

''(II) in the case of an application for transfer of ownership of multiple projects, but not exceeding 10 projects, 60 days; and

''(III) in the case of an application for transfer of ownership of 11 or more projects, 120 days.

''(iv) APPEALS.—Only decisions regarding complete applications shall be appealable to the National Appeals Division of the Department of Agriculture.''.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than July 1, 2008, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit a report to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate that—

(1) identifies the actions that the Secretary has taken to coordinate with other Federal agencies, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Internal Revenue Service, and, in particular, with the program for rental assistance under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, the multifamily mortgage insurance programs under title II of the National Housing Act, the program under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for low-income housing tax credits, and the program for tax-exempt bonds under section 142 of such Code;

(2) identifies and describes any resulting improvements within Rural Housing Service of the Department of Agriculture in expediting the transfer of ownership of projects with loans made or insured under section 515 of the Housing Act of 1949; and

(3) makes recommendations for any legislative changes that are needed for the prompt processing of applications for such ownership transfers and for the transfer of such projects.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) and the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself so much time as I may consume. I rise today in support of H.R. 3873.

Mr. Speaker, rural poverty is a particularly harsh brand of indigence. It tends to be more extreme than urban poverty, and because it develops in areas far from television cameras and

daily newspapers, to most Americans it is faceless. But its presence and its consequences are real, and they present formidable challenges to both our country and our conscience.

The poverty rate in rural areas is 14.6 percent, topping that of most urban centers. Rural families are farther from population centers and, thus, less likely or able to take advantage of basic housing services. There is desperate need in parts of our country. As Members of the people's House we have a moral imperative to help children and parents trapped in destitute circumstances.

The shortage of affordable housing is a problem nationwide and a crisis in rural communities. To reduce the barriers rural families face when trying to find affordable housing, together with my colleague from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), we have introduced H.R. 3873, the Section 515 Rural Housing Property Transfer Improvement Act of 2007, which would take important steps to help alleviate this rural housing crisis.

□ 1315

The section 515 rural housing program provides loans for the Rural Housing Service. These loans are made to nonprofit, for-profit, cooperative, and public entities for the construction of rental or cooperative housing in rural areas. The loans are made to make units affordable for low and very low-income areas in rural areas. This important program serves roughly 450,000 families.

Section 515 loans have financed approximately 16,000 projects. Of those, more than 50 percent of the projects were constructed more than 25 years ago. These aging properties are often in desperate need of renovation, which most often happens when a property is sold.

When a section 515 property is sold, the transfer of ownership must be approved by the State's rural development office. The process by which States approve the transfer of ownership of section 515 properties is too slow and steeped in bureaucracy. Families sometimes wait years for housing while loans are held back by red tape. Our bill will make several key changes to cut through the red tape so rural families can move into affordable houses.

Now, while some State rural development offices transfer section 515 applications in a timely way, others do not. Nonaction on these applications often results in deals going bad. Because of the reduced turnaround and red tape, the appraisals become outdated and invalid, so the deal cannot be underwritten.

Under our bill, if applications are not processed in a timely way by the State rural development office, the applications will be transferred for processing to the national Rural Housing Service. The State offices that process applications on time won't have to worry about provisions in the bill.

The bill will also improve the way rural housing program money is used with low-income housing tax credits. When the tax credits and rural housing programs are used together, there are often different rules and procedures required of the participants in the deals from each of the agencies involved. More red tape. Our bill requires the USDA to work with the IRS to resolve the differences. Better coordination will make tax credit deals move smoother through the USDA and leverage more money for much-needed rural housing.

H.R. 3873 will help both the owners of the property as well as residents in rural communities both in my home State of New Hampshire and across the country.

I'm pleased that 13 housing organizations support H.R. 3873, including the Council for Affordable and Rural Housing as well as the Housing Assistance Council.

The Financial Services Committee reported the bill by voice vote. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support H.R. 3873.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 3873, the 515 Rural Housing Property Transfer Improvement Act of 2007, which would expedite the transfer of ownership of rural multifamily housing projects with loans made and ensured under section 515 of the Housing Act.

First, I would like to commend my colleague from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) for his dedication to rural housing issues and for the bipartisan way that this bill has come to the floor. I would also like to thank the chairman of the full committee. Since he's sitting there, I want to thank him.

The result of these bipartisan efforts is a bill that represents a sound approach to improving the administration of the Department of Agriculture's section 515 program.

Section 515 is a direct loan program administered by the USDA that provides low-interest loans to construct and renovate affordable multifamily housing. While this program has provided numerous benefits, as my colleague has enumerated, to low-income rural families, the process by which the USDA's State rural development offices considers requests to transfer ownership must be improved.

Section 515 owners may wish to transfer the project to other entities during the terms of their loan for a variety of reasons, including changes in owner circumstances or changes in local market conditions. Transfers of ownership in section 515 can be beneficial for all parties, as it presents an opportunity to recapitalize a project for better maintenance, rehabilitation and improved management.

Unfortunately, the transfer application process is time-consuming, and many of the rural development offices do not process these applications in a timely fashion simply because they are probably overwhelmed with the process. Certain RD offices have been slow in approving transfer requests, leading to a number of problems, including inaccurate appraisals and expiration of outside financing rate guarantees and bond and tax credit deadlines. This nonaction has been a major source of irritation for owners of 515s and groups representing section 515 tenants.

H.R. 3873 would fix these impediments by directing the USDA Secretary to streamline the application process, require applications to be processed within a timely deadline, and to transfer any applications not processed within that deadline to the Office of Rental Housing Preservation that would then have sole review authority.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was approved, as my colleague mentioned, by a voice vote in the Financial Services Committee and makes commonsense changes to section 515 that would improve the ownership transfer process.

I urge my colleagues to support this worthwhile measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, so much time as he may consume.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership that my colleague and neighbor from New Hampshire has shown on this bill, and I appreciate, also, the work on the other side.

Let me begin with a very important point: People in this country, I think, and our friends in the media misunderstand the true and legitimate meaning of partisanship. Partisanship has a very essential role to play in democracy. The Founding Fathers simultaneously launched this Nation, denounced parties, and formed them, because it does seem inevitable when large numbers of people are going to govern themselves that some forms of organization come forward.

Partisanship is not only not a bad thing, it's a necessary thing in a self-governing polity. Partisanship becomes a problem if the legitimate differences that define the parties spill over angrily and make it impossible to work on issues where those differences should not exist.

I think the Committee on Financial Services, under my predecessor as chairman, Mr. Oxley of Ohio, and I hope under my own chairmanship, have shown that that is not necessary to be the case, that it is possible from time to time to have legitimate strong differences on an ideological or partisan basis without that in any way interfering with our ability to come together on areas where we should agree. This bill, obviously, today is an example of the latter.

We have a bill that has been brought forward in a totally bipartisan manner to improve the efficiency with which

assistance goes for rural housing. That's the second point I wanted to make. Much of what we do is, in fact, to improve the efficiency with which programs work, and the committee has had a chance to bring several bills to the floor that do that. We will be doing more.

The gentleman from New Hampshire mentioned one of the conflicts we are trying to resolve here is between the rules that apply when you were trying to use tax credits for low-income housing and those that apply when you were talking about the programmatic legislation. We do something about that here.

Under the leadership of the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), and the Financial Services Committee, we are working out legislation that will do that kind of reconciliation for all housing programs. And we will shortly have on the floor of this House a bill that will greatly increase the efficiency with which all housing programs can be merged, tax-based ones and appropriations-based ones, increasing the amount of housing we can build at no further increase to the taxpayer.

And the third point I would note is that this is rural housing. Too often when people think about Federal housing programs they think only about the urban areas. Urban areas are important, but so are rural areas. And I am very proud that this committee has given equal attention, or let me say appropriate attention, to both. Obviously, the need is often greater in the more heavily populated areas, but we have given fully proportionate attention to the rural areas.

So, I am very proud we have a bill today that shows how you can be bipartisan, even while there are legitimate partisan differences, that aims at increasing the efficiency with which Federal funds are spent and which recognizes that people in the rural areas have a need for housing assistance, to some extent, just as do people in the urban areas.

I thank the gentleman from New Hampshire for the leadership he has shown. I appreciate the gentlewoman from West Virginia, who has become the ranking member of the Housing Subcommittee and with whom we have very good relationships. And I hope the bill is passed.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments and reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPITO. I have no further speakers. I urge passage of this bill. We have the best of intentions here. We've worked out any kind of differences we may have had, and the end product is going to be better and more affordable and more accessible rural housing across America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentlewoman for her work in a bipartisan way on this bill. And I thank the chairman for his great leadership for rural housing over many years.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation.

This measure corrects a problem which has been culminating since 1974 when the National Flood Insurance Program began subsidizing flood insurance rates. These rates were designed to encourage participation in the program and to generate sufficient income to pay anticipated claims on these properties. Originally, Congress had expected that over time the percentage of these structures would decline and that most of them would be subject to actuarial rates. However that has not occurred.

This bill corrects this problem by removing subsidies for properties that are purchased in excess of a half of a million dollars.

Sadly, this is just one of the many problems the National Flood Insurance Program faces. Currently, FEMA is engaged in efforts to modernize flood maps throughout the country, which in many places, are horribly outdated. Utilizing antiquated data impacts millions of property owners, property owners that live on, near or around the Upper Great Lakes, which is essentially everything in the Great Lakes Basin upstream from Niagara Falls. So Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron and Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and the St. Mary's River, St. Clair River, the Detroit River and the Niagara River.

Unfortunately, FEMA's efforts in the upper Great Lakes are being conducted with flawed and outdated data. The data currently being used is from when Great Lakes water levels were at an all time high, and in the 20 years since this study was completed, lake levels have fallen for 11 years.

Let me use St. Clair County in my district as an example. In St. Clair County, FEMA is abusing the authority Congress granted them through management of the National Flood Insurance Program. As the agency continues to modernize the maps in the county, the effects will double the number of county residents who will be forced to purchase flood insurance even though they are at virtually no risk of flooding. More specifically, Lake St. Clair is currently more than 55 inches below the current flood level, and over 6 feet below FEMA's proposed flood level. This means that St. Clair County alone has subsidized the flood insurance program to the tune of $8.2 million. Using such flawed data is nothing more than a waste of FEMA's time and money not to mention the waste of taxpayer dollars.

How can the FEMA justify doing this? The agency claims these residents are at a higher risk of a flood and wants to raise the base flood elevation which determines the boundaries of the 100-year flood zone. As a result, states like Michigan become ATMs for FEMA to withdraw money and spend it in regions of the country that experience high levels of repeated flooding. In Michigan, we look down at the water, not up.

Certainly we can all agree that using sound science in this instance—when hundreds of millions of dollars are about to be assessed against American property owners—is the most prudent course of action. It is time that FEMA stop using antiquated data and forcing the American people into purchasing a product that some don't need.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I have no further requests for time and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3873.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE ACT OF 1968 AMENDMENTS

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3959) to amend the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to provide for the phase-in of actuarial rates for certain pre-FIRM properties, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3959

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PHASE-IN OF ACTUARIAL RATES FOR CERTAIN PRE-FIRM PROPERTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1308(c) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(c)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

''(2) RECENTLY PURCHASED PRE-FIRM SINGLE FAMILY PROPERTIES USED AS PRINCIPAL RESIDENCES.—Any single family property that is used as a principal residence that—

''(A) has been constructed or substantially improved and for which such construction or improvement was started, as determined by the Director, before December 31, 1974, or before the effective date of the initial rate map published by the Director under paragraph (2) of section 1360 for the area in which such property is located, whichever is later; and

''(B) is purchased—

''(i) after the date of enactment of this paragraph; and

''(ii) for not less than $600,000.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 1308(c) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(c)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''the limitations provided under paragraphs (1) and (2)'' and inserting ''subsection (e)''; and

(2) in paragraph (1), by striking '', except'' and all that follows through ''subsection (e)''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE AND TRANSITION.—

(1) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall apply beginning on January 1, 2011, except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(2) TRANSITION FOR PROPERTIES COVERED BY FLOOD INSURANCE UPON EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(A) INCREASE OF RATES OVER TIME.—In the case of any property described in paragraph (2) of section 1308(c) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended by subsection (a) of this section, that, as of the effective date under paragraph (1) of this subsection, is covered under a policy for flood insurance made available under the national flood insurance program for which the chargeable premium rates are less than the applicable estimated risk premium rate under section 1307(a)(1) for the area in which the property is located, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

shall increase the chargeable premium rates for such property over time to such applicable estimated risk premium rate under section 1307(a)(1).

(B) ANNUAL INCREASE.—Such increase shall be made by increasing the chargeable premium rates for the property (after application of any increase in the premium rates otherwise applicable to such property), once during the 12-month period that begins upon the effective date under paragraph (1) of this subsection, and once every 12 months thereafter until such increase is accomplished, by 15 percent (or such lesser amount as may be necessary so that the chargeable rate does not exceed such applicable estimated risk premium rate or to comply with subparagraph (C)). Any increase in chargeable premium rates for a property pursuant to this paragraph shall not be considered for purposes of the limitation under section 1308(e) of such Act.

(C) FULL ACTUARIAL RATES.—The provisions of paragraph (2) of such section 1308(c) shall apply to such a property upon the accomplishment of the increase under this paragraph and thereafter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, from time to time in this House we are asked to choose, to some extent, between the strong views of people concerned with excessive spending by the Federal Government and those interested in environmental protection. Let me say to the Members, today is a happier day because we bring forward a bill today out of the Financial Services Committee which is authored by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT), who will soon be speaking, which advances the legitimate concerns of both those interested in saving taxpayer money and those interested in environmental protection.

We have a Federal flood insurance program that exists because of market failure. That is, we do not believe that if you abolish it altogether the private market could entirely handle this. In fact, there are some areas where this committee is moving, and this House has voted, to expand the role of Federal flood insurance, particularly in the area of disasters. But as we do that, it is important that we do it in a responsible way.

There has been legitimate criticism of the flood insurance program as it was existing before. Frankly, this committee, both, again, under Mr. Oxley's chairmanship and recently, addressed it, and it encouraged people to build where they should not have built from an environmental standpoint and incurred too much taxpayer money. Essentially, there was too much subsidy in the program, from both the environmental and fiscal standpoints, to builders.

In the bill that we adopted last year in the previous session, we began to address that. We began to charge people a more appropriate amount, but we did not do it fully. The gentleman from New Jersey had an amendment that he wanted to offer that we considered in committee, and we had talked about it being offered on the floor. I regret that he wasn't given the chance to offer it on the floor, and I gave him my word that we would, as soon as possible, bring it forward. And it is my intention, if this bill passes today, as I expect that it will, if and when we get to work with the United States Senate on comprehensive legislation, this will be a part of this. In effect, this is a delayed amendment to the flood insurance bill we've already passed, and it will be treated in any deliberations in which I am a part as if it had been included back then.

So, I think the gentleman from New Jersey has done us a service by giving us something that is both environmentally and fiscally responsible.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I begin by saying thanks to the chairman of the committee for his help in working through this piece of legislation, and also for the ranking member for her working alongside the Chair as to facilitate the moving along of this legislation to the floor today. As the chairman indicates, we had the opportunity to discuss it in committee, which is, I think, and I think he will concur with me, is always the best way to deal with all legislation as opposed to bringing them up later on. It's best to get out there so we can have full and adequate disclosure and discussion on the issues. We were able to do that; we just weren't able to get it through the next hoop. But now we're able to jump through that hoop today, and, again, I appreciate the chairman's work on that.

What this is all about, very simply, is this. Back in 1968, that is when NFIP was created, the National Flood Insurance Program, and that was done, as the chairman indicated, way back then three or four decades ago, as I guess more and more people were building homes in places maybe they shouldn't be, along coastal lines and what have you, it was just next to impossible to buy flood insurance.

□ 1330

So Congress stepped in and created NFIP, and that allowed folks the opportunity to buy flood insurance for the first time. When they did that, however, they realized that here again we're talking about two sets of houses, those that were already in existence at the time and those that would come afterwards, called pre-FIRM and post-FIRM homes. They thought Congress back then, probably in its wisdom, realized that it wouldn't be right to tell those folks who were already in the floodplains that this new program was going to come along, that they were going to impose upon them a mandate of buying flood insurance when they bought and sold their houses; so what they did was instead to provide a subsidy for those pre-FIRM homes, and that subsidy has existed up until today. Unfortunately, we know that the flood program has had some problems in the last couple of years, most notably because of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. All the money that they have had to borrow to pay out for those huge flood losses, they are now $18 billion in debt. And that's the reason why the committee is now coming back to relook at the flood program, and that's why we have done that.

The legislation that the chairman talks about that we have already done I appreciate that we've moved through the House. I am a little bit disappointed, though, in that legislation in one regard, in that it increased the exposure to wind damage in the flood program. But despite that what I call an error in direction on that legislation, the underlying bill did make some substantial improvements to the overlying program. It updated the flood maps, increased the phase-in of actuarial rates on vacation homes and also second homes and on nonresidential properties that have been subsidized by the program since its inception.

The one area, though, that was not addressed was these pre-FIRM homes and the fact that the subsidies continue to exist. So to that effort, we have tried to get a compromise between those who said let's not do anything and those who said let's have those pre-FIRM homes immediately put in on the higher rates that would occur without the subsidization. Through the committee efforts, through the work with the ranking member and the chairman, we were able to come through with a compromise. In essence it says this: If you're a pre-FIRM home, your rates will still be subsidized until that home is basically phased in, sold and phased in on the same rate schedule as the underlying bill, and only for those homes that are sold for over $600,000. A movement in the right direction with regard to the subsidization, the problems of the underlying program, and for that reason I think we are moving appropriately, and I look forward to those deliberations that we may have sometime with the Senate on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I thank the gentleman for his kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HODES). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3959, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3959 and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 916) honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 916

Whereas America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence, but provide students more than a superior scholastic education;

Whereas Catholic schools ensure a broad, values-added education emphasizing the lifelong development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people;

Whereas the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2006–2007 academic year was more than 2,300,000 and the student-teacher ratio was 15 to 1;

Whereas Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students;

Whereas more than 25 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are from minority backgrounds, and nearly 14 percent are non-Catholics;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual, character, and moral development;

Whereas the Catholic high school graduation rate is 99 percent, with 80 percent of graduates attending four-year colleges and 17 percent attending two-year colleges or technical schools;

Whereas in the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated: ''Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives.''; and

Whereas January 27 to February 2, 2008, has been designated as Catholic Schools Week by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event co-sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and established to recognize the vital contributions of America's thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools; and

(2) congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased at this time to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), the author of this bill.

Mr. LIPINSKI. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 916, honoring the tremendous contributions that Catholic schools have made to our Nation.

Since 1974, Catholic Schools Week has celebrated the important role that these institutions play in America and their excellent reputation for providing a strong academic and moral education, as well as teaching community responsibility and outreach.

I am proud to sponsor this resolution again. And I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) for once again working with me on this resolution.

This year's theme of Catholic Schools Week is ''Catholic Schools Light the Way.'' This theme focuses on the leadership that Catholic schools provide to our Nation, producing graduates who light the way for a brighter future for all Americans and for humankind. The theme also highlights the spiritual foundation of Catholic schools by reminding students that they are called to ''light the way'' for others.

Nationally, about 2.3 million young people are enrolled in nearly 8,000 Catholic schools. These schools have more than 160,000 full-time professional staff, boasting a student/teacher ratio of 15:1. On average Catholic school students surpass other students in math, science, and reading in the three grade levels tested by the NAEP test. The graduation rate for Catholic high school students is 99 percent, and 97 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college or technical schools. These are amazing statistics in America today.

Catholic schools are also highly effective in educating minority students and disadvantaged youth. The percentage of minority students in Catholic schools has more than doubled in the past 30 years, today representing more than one-quarter of all those enrolled. And almost one in seven students in Catholic schools is not Catholic. The success of Catholic schools does not depend on selectivity. On average Catholic schools accept nine out of every 10 students who apply.

In addition to learning reading, writing, and arithmetic, students also learn responsibility and how to become persons of character and integrity. Community service is a priority in Catholic schools; 94 percent of schools have a service program, with the average student completing 79 hours of service.

I was born, raised, and I live in Chicago Archdiocese, which has one of the most successful school systems in the country. Today more than 106,000 students attend 276 schools. In my district alone, there are five Catholic high schools and 34 grammar schools, including one of the best in my home parish of St. John of the Cross in Western Springs.

My wife and I are each products of 12 years of Catholic education. My wife in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, at St. Patrick's Grade School and Bishop McCourt High School; and myself at St. Symphorosa Grammar School and St. Ignatius College Prep. Like so many others, I understand how important Catholic schools are in providing a spiritual, moral, and intellectual foundation. My 12 years of Catholic education provided me with the knowledge, discipline, desire to serve, and a love of learning that enabled me to go on to earn my Ph.D. and become a teacher before I was elected to Congress.

As we recognize Catholic Schools Week, we must pay special tribute to the dedicated teachers and administrators who sacrifice so much, usually getting paid much less than they could to dedicate their lives to teaching at Catholic schools. I have fond memories of my teachers, who taught me not only the value of a good education but also the values of faith and service. Although I began in Catholic schools 35 years ago, I still can fondly remember my teachers at St. Sym's, from Sister Mildred in the first grade to Sister Xavier in the eighth grade. And I still fondly remember Sister Diane, my coach on the Student Congress Team in high school. Millions of Americans have similar memories of sisters, priests, and lay teachers who gave their hearts and souls and made such a big difference in the lives of their students.

Mr. Speaker, Catholic schools have made a big difference in my life and in the lives of countless others. As an important complement to public schools and other private institutions, Catholic schools contribute a great deal to America. And let us not forget that every student who is taught in a Catholic school saves taxpayers money because they are not part of the local public school system.

America's Catholic schools deserve our praise and our support. And to share our praise and support, I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 916, offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI). This resolution increases the awareness of Catholic education while honoring the contributions of America's Catholic schools.

January 27 through February 2, 2008 has been designated Catholic Schools Week, an annual tradition in its 34th year and jointly sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association as well as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. With this resolution we recognize the vital role Catholic elementary and secondary schools play in providing an education with high standards of quality and excellence to the nearly 2.4 million students enrolled in Catholic schools across the country.

According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic schools have a graduation rate of over 98 percent, and about 97 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to post-secondary training at 4-year colleges, community colleges, or technical schools. This success can be attributed to the importance Catholic educators place on character and morals. By making the development of moral and social values an integral part of the curriculum, Catholic schools are ensuring that their students are not only good academicians but also good citizens.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2008 is ''Catholic Schools Light the Way.'' This theme highlights the mission of Catholic schools to provide a faith-based education that supports the whole child academically and spiritually and prepares students for future success.

Catholic schools demonstrated an enormous amount of character and compassion in their response to the devastating hurricanes that hit the gulf coast 3 years ago. In the wake of this national disaster, more than 300,000 students were displaced from their homes, schools, and communities. Catholic schools opened their doors and hearts and welcomed these students into their classrooms. They provided these children with the opportunity to continue their studies without stopping to consider the cost of that education. Instead, the Catholic schools knew their first priority was to educate these children. In addition, the Catholic schools in New Orleans have proved to be most resilient by becoming some of the first schools in the hurricane-damaged area to reopen their doors to students.

I appreciate the great work done by Catholic schools, their administrators and teachers, as well as the parents and volunteers. Catholic schools carry out their servant mission by building the academic achievement, character, and values of their students.

I again commend the gentleman from Illinois for introducing this resolution and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding and I thank Ms. SÁNCHEZ and Mr. LIPINSKI as well, and I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 916 honoring the contributions of Catholic schools across the country, for the upcoming commemoration of National Catholic Schools Week from January 27 to February 2.

Mr. Speaker, as a graduate of Catholic elementary and high schools, Sacred Heart Academy and Aquinas High School in Augusta, Georgia, I am keenly aware of the contributions that they provide to the 2.3 million students across this country they teach every year. These include 1,176 students at three Catholic schools in my district, the 11th of Georgia: St. Catherine of Siena in Kennesaw, Georgia; St. Joseph's in my hometown of Marietta, Georgia; and St. Mary's in Floyd County, Rome, Georgia.

Not only do Catholic schools, like Sacred Heart and Aquinas, provide a strong and competitive academic environment, they also teach moral and ethical standards, skills for living and self esteem, and a Christian integration of spirit, mind, and body in each of their students.

□ 1345

Upon graduating from Aquinas, I thought that the Catholic school curriculum would be what best prepared me for my future. But, Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I was wrong. While the strenuous academics at Sacred Heart and Aquinas did lay the foundation for success at Georgia Tech and the Medical College of Georgia, it was the faith and ethical standards taught at these schools that truly prepared me for life's struggles.

Mr. Speaker, while opening and running my medical practice, the respect for life at Sacred Heart and Aquinas led me to value and care for life at all stages from conception on. And now that I have left my medical career to serve as Member of this great body, I find my lessons from these Catholic schools more valuable than ever on a daily basis.

We are all confronted with difficult questions that affect millions of lives. If it were not for the moral standards and the faith in God taught at Sacred Heart and Aquinas, I do not believe that I could properly represent the people of northwest Georgia.

So, Mr. Speaker, Catholic schools in northwest Georgia and all across our great country provide an incredible valuable service to our education system and truly prepare their students for a bright future.

I urge all of my colleagues, support H. Res. 916.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, if I could inquire from my colleague how many more speakers he has remaining.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I have two more speakers.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. We will continue to reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand before you today in support of House Resolution 916 honoring the contribution of Catholic schools to the education system of this country.

In Ohio, approximately 12 percent of school children are educated by private institutions with the vast majority going to Catholic schools. These schools provide the structure and value system that are important to their families as their children receive not only a quality education but a strong moral and social foundation.

Most importantly, the choice of a Catholic education allows children to have a religious bearing in their education. Many parents make great sacrifices for their children's education by sending them to Catholic school, because at the same time they are not only paying for that Catholic education, but they also have to pay taxes to the public schools.

I applaud the hard work and dedication of the staff at the Catholic schools, as well as the parents who seek this education for their child's betterment. I am pleased to support House Resolution 916 today and to support our Catholic schools in Ohio and across this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 916, a resolution recognizing Catholic Schools Week and honoring the contributions that Catholic schools make to our Nation's country and to the youth of this Nation in particular. Having been a product of the Catholic school system in Cincinnati, Ohio, myself, having attended Holy Family School and then St. Catherine School and then LaSalle High School, and having had both of our children attend Our Lady of Lourdes School, my wife attended Mother of Mercy, as did our daughter in high school, my son is a senior at St. Xavier High School, and coincidentally they happened to win the State football championship in Ohio this year for the second time in the last 3 years, I

can say firsthand that Catholic school systems in our community and all over the country are providing significant leadership in the great education for our youth.

I also happened to be a school teacher at St. Joseph School in the west end in Cincinnati after I graduated from college. And Catholic schools provide a comprehensive and wide-ranging education to all of the students. Not only do Catholic schools promote the intellectual and physical cultivation of our most important asset, our country's youth, but they also lay the groundwork for a strong, moral upbringing resulting in well-rounded contributing members of our society.

The Cincinnati Archdiocese consists of 117 schools totaling over 47,000 students. I am proud to say that several of these schools are located in Ohio's First District, including two schools, Our Lady of the Visitation and St. James School in White Oak who recently received the 2007 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award from the Department of Education.

I want to urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I want to thank those here today for their leadership in bringing this forward.

And I might note, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia mentioned the issue of life and the moral issues that are instilled in many of us from our Catholic upbringing. I happen to be the principal sponsor of the ban on partial birth abortion, and we had many, tens of thousands of people who came here yesterday to advocate on behalf of innocent, unborn children. And we had many come by our office yesterday, older high school students, St. Xavier High School students, St. Ursula, Mother of Mercy, Our Lady of Lourdes, many schools came by. And I want to thank them for doing that and their showing that the morals, the values that they are being taught in those schools really are sinking in. And I just want to thank those in the leadership position here for bringing forth this issue. And I think it is appropriate that we honor the Catholic school systems all across the country for the invaluable work that they do for our country.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I would urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H. Res. 916.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker. I too rise in support of H. Res. 916 to honor the contributions of Catholic schools throughout the country and to support the goals of Catholic Schools Week. I believe we should continue to support all schools that graduate our youth in high percentages and prepare them for a productive future.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, Catholic schools enrolled over two million of our Nation's children during the 2006–2007 school year. With minority enrollment at 25 percent and non-Catholic enrollment at 14 percent this past year, Catholic schools continue to teach students of all backgrounds.

The high-school graduation rate of Catholic schools is an impressive 99 percent, with 80 percent going on to a 4-year college and 17 percent going to a 2-year or technical college. These rates are extraordinary and are to be commended.

Next week, January 27th through February 2nd is designated as Catholic Schools Week by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The purpose of Catholic Schools Week is to show support for the Catholic schools, including St. Emydius in Lynwood and St. Helen's in South Gate, and to their students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

I believe we should continue to support all schools that graduate our youth in high percentages and prepare them for a productive future.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 916.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the Catholic Schools not only in my home Congressional District of Staten Island and Brooklyn, but also the entire Nation as we honor Catholic Schools Week from January 27–February 2, 2008, which is sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

America's Catholic schools educate nearly 2.5 million students a year, providing the Nation's young men and women with a broad academic background emphasizing the lifelong development of moral, intellectual physical and social values.

Catholic school initiatives that reach out to disadvantaged young people have touched a diverse group of students who sometimes find themselves trapped in underachieving schools. It is not surprising to me that more than 25 percent of Catholic school students are from minority groups and nearly 14 percent are non-Catholics. Parents recognize the importance of a quality education and are willing to sacrifice to ensure their children have every opportunity to succeed in the world.

Catholic Schools Week pays tribute to the dedication, character, compassion, and values that embody Catholic education in this country. I believe it is important to recognize the outstanding contributions Catholic Schools make in our country today. Their commitment to the educational standards and values ensure our children will have the right moral framework to help lead our great Nation in the future.

As a product of Catholic education, I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

I would like to recognize all Catholic Schools in the 13th Congressional District of New York: Academy of St. Dorothy, Blessed Sacrament, Holy Rosary, Immaculate Conception, Notre Dame Academy, Monsignor Farrell High School, Moore Catholic School, Mother Francciska, Notre Dame Academy Elementary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady Help of Christians, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Benedicta, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Our Lady Star of the Sea, Sacred Heart, St. Adalbert, St. Ann, St. Charles, St. Christopher, St. Clare, St. John Villa Academy, St. Joseph, St. Joseph by the Sea High School, St. Joseph Hill Academy, St. Joseph-St. Thomas, St. Margaret Mary, St. Mary, St. Patrick, St. Paul, St. Peter's Boys, St. Peter's Girls, St. Peter's Elementary, St. Rita, St. Roch, St. Sylvester, Seton Foundation For Learning, St. Teresa, Most Precious Blood, Fontbonne Hall Academy, Our Lady of Angels, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Anselm, St. Bernadette, St. Ephrem, St. Finbar, St. Frances Cabrini, St. Patrick School, Sts. Simon & Jude, Visitation Academy, Xavarian High School, Xavarian Genesis Program.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 916, recognizing the goals of Catholic Schools Week and the success of Catholic education to the personal advancement and academic achievements of students across the United States.

I thank our colleague from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) and our colleague from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) for their work in sponsoring this worthy resolution and for their leadership on behalf of Catholic education.

The Catholic Church, and its religious orders and congregations across the United States, serve an important and invaluable role in elementary and secondary education for our youth. Many Catholic schools are model schools in the communities they serve and in which they are located. Character education and a well-rounded, balanced and challenging curriculum complemented by a variety of extracurricular activities, a dedicated teaching staff and administration, and a caring community of parents and friends, are the hallmarks of Catholic schools.

Catholic education is centered on families and communities, and it is, like the church, universal in its approach and teachings. Today, Catholic schools are diverse learning communities where a growing number of students and faculty from various faiths, backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and cultures are enrolled. This diversity adds to the richness of the learning opportunities Catholics schools provide for our young people and our families.

Students enrolled today in Catholic schools excel in math and science as well as in grammar and the arts. Students learn with and from support provided by the greater Catholic community and they are taught in an environment where Christian values and strong moral guidance are present.

I join my colleagues on this occasion in acknowledging the value of Catholic education for our communities and for our young people. The work of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Catholic Educational Association, and the Dioceses of the Catholic Church across the country, and the Religious Orders supporting instruction and development at Catholic Schools, is important to the continued success of Catholic education.

The theme of Catholic Schools Week this year appropriately emphasizes and reflects a strong attribute of Catholic education: leadership. ''Catholic Schools Light the Way,'' focuses on the leaders that Catholic Schools educate for the benefit of our communities, our country, and our world. Today, graduates

from Catholic schools enter college and embark upon careers as leaders prepared to contribute to their communities and to make a difference for all humankind.

On this occasion I recognize the Catholic community in my district, on my home island of Guam, for all of the collective efforts undertaken in support of Catholic schools. Today, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Agaña remains committed to serving the people of Guam and most especially our youth. Under the direction of the Most Reverend Anthony Sablan Apuron, OFM Cap, DD, Metropolitan Archbishop of Agaña, Catholic educational institutions on Guam continue to provide quality academic instruction to our students. The contributions of the Catholic school system to the people of Guam are reflected in the success of our local leaders in the clergy, government, and private sector who are alumni of our Catholic schools. The dedication shown by the Archdiocese of Agaña to academic excellence and to Catholic education on our island strongly reflects the theme of leadership for Catholic Schools Week, which we will join others across the country in celebrating next week.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 916.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 908) supporting the goals and ideals of National Mentoring Month.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 908

Whereas youth mentoring establishes a structured and trusting relationship between young people and caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement;

Whereas a growing body of mentoring research provides strong evidence that mentoring programs are successful in reducing delinquency, substance use and abuse, and academic failure;

Whereas research also shows that formal mentoring that is focused on developing the competence and character of the young person promotes positive outcomes such as improved academic achievement, self-esteem, social skills, and career development;

Whereas mentoring provides a supportive environment in which young people can grow, expand their vision of the future, and achieve goals that they never thought possible;

Whereas more than 4,000 mentoring programs in communities of all sizes across the United States focus on building strong, effective relationships between mentors and mentees;

Whereas public-private mentoring partnerships bring State and local leaders together to support mentoring programs by preventing duplication of efforts, offering training in best practices, and helping mentoring programs make the most of the limited resources available to benefit the Nation's youth;

Whereas the Corporation for National and Community Service has convened—

(1) the Federal Mentoring Council, which brings together several Federal agencies to coordinate approaches to mentoring within the Federal Government; and

(2) the National Mentoring Working Group, consisting of experts in mentoring from nonprofit organizations and foundations, to share information and ideas about mentoring programs;

Whereas more than 15,000,000 young people in the United States fall into a mentoring gap and still need mentors;

Whereas coordinated national, State, regional, and local efforts need Federal support to connect more youth with the powerful benefits that result from mentoring;

Whereas designation of January 2008 as National Mentoring Month will help call attention to the critical role mentors play in helping young people realize their potential;

Whereas the month-long celebration of mentoring will encourage more organizations across the United States, including schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith institutions, foundations, and individuals to become engaged in mentoring;

Whereas National Mentoring Month will—

(1) build awareness of mentoring;

(2) encourage more people to become mentors; and

(3) help close the Nation's mentoring gap; and

Whereas the President issued a proclamation declaring January 2008 to be National Mentoring Month and calling on the people of the United States to—

(1) recognize the importance of mentoring;

(2) look for opportunities to serve as mentors in their communities; and

(3) observe the month with appropriate activities and programs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Mentoring Month;

(2) acknowledges the diligent efforts of individuals and groups who promote mentoring and who are observing the month with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of and volunteer involvement with youth mentoring;

(3) recognizes with gratitude the contributions of the millions of caring adults and students who are already volunteering as mentors; and

(4) encourages more adults and students to volunteer as mentors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield as much time as she may consume to the author of this bill, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, as a cochair of the Congressional Mentoring Caucus, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 908, supporting the goals and ideals of National Mentoring Month.

Thank you, Chairman KILDEE and Chairman MILLER, for bringing this legislation so quickly to the floor. I would also like to thank the other Chairs of the mentoring caucus, Ms. Davis of California, Mr. KELLER of Florida and Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, who are the original cosponsors of this legislation.

The term ''mentor'' is from a Greek story in mythology. Odysseus asked his friend, Mentor, to teach and watch his young son, Telemachus, as he was off to fight in the Trojan War. This special relationship between Telemachus and his mentor was centered on education, friendship and advice, something we all need from time to time. Mentoring was then, and continues to be, a special caring and supportive relationship between two people based on mutual trust and respect.

Mentoring relationships are between a mentor, an adult, and a mentee, a young adult or child, that focuses on the need of that young person. Caring adults, parents, teachers, counselors, religious leaders, they are all mentors, and they are able to influence a child's life, and they are able to do that because they provide a foundation of love, support and guidance.

Millions of individuals across this country serve as mentors to young men and women, encouraging them to develop strong characters and have healthy identities of themselves, so that as an adult they will be able to contribute back to our society.

In a review of 10 mentoring programs, there are indicators that one-on-one mentoring significantly enhances positive youth development in ways that we can measure: better school performance, better social skills, but most importantly, the ability for them to want to continue on with higher education and college. And that is according to a recent national youth conference that was held at the University of Minnesota.

In Minnesota alone, there are 335 mentoring organizations. One of them, the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, was formed in 1994 as a community initiative to promote mentoring for Minnesota's youth, particularly for those who are at risk and may not have an opportunity to have many positive role models in their life. This program has made a significant positive improvement in the lives of those children.

Another wonderful mentoring program is Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

In the St. Paul-Minneapolis region alone, there are more than 307,000 children that benefit from this mentoring program with the time, energy and commitment from more than 3,200 volunteers.

The new Youth Initiative Mentoring Academy is another successful program in Minnesota. This energetic program works with children at risk. These young children receive hands-on learning experiences about career opportunities, building confidence and self-esteem, and develop valuable leadership skills.

Mentoring is also an important part of our global competitiveness. For example, in my district, Century College offers a preengineering program that includes the Century College Robot Show. Engineering students enter their projects, the college invites practicing engineers to judge the show, and Century College also extends an invitation to high school students to come so that they are able to see the opportunities available to them if they choose to study engineering. But it also gives them a chance to hook up with students and professionals who can help them steer interests in the right direction towards a successful career.

I would also like to take time to thank all the congressional staff members, including many from my staff, who take time to mentor youth in programs such as Everyone Wins, Horton's Kids, and the Calvary Homeless Shelter.

We all have an important role to play in the lives of children around us. We all need to be part of the process in shaping young lives so that they can achieve their fullest potential. Our youth need caring adults to make the connection in order to provide guidance and emotional support, to make a positive impact on their lives so that young children can become responsible, productive citizens.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this resolution, and I look forward for opportunities to be a mentor myself again in the future as I had been in the past. But I also encourage my colleagues to look for opportunities to be mentors as well.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 908 which recognizes National Mentoring Month. National Mentoring Month celebrates mentors who are positively impacting the lives of young people and highlights the need for additional mentors to make themselves available to America's youth. I applaud Representative MCCOLLUM for sponsoring this resolution, and as a cosponsor I look forward to further bipartisan efforts to draw attention to support this very important issue.

Mentors give their time and energy to improve the lives of American young people who are increasingly spending less time with concerned adult role models. Young people with mentors are less likely to drop out of school, use illegal drugs, or engage in criminal behavior. The positive effects of mentoring include higher self-esteem, higher graduation rates, and higher academic achievement. I have personally seen the positive impacts of mentoring firsthand. As a young boy, I benefited from having a mentor from the Big Brother Big Sisters program. As I became an adult, I then became a mentor to two high school students at my alma mater, Boone High School, who were at risk of dropping out of high school, but fortunately stayed in school and graduated.

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I then became chairman of the board of the COMPACT mentoring program, which is the largest mentoring program in central Florida and it is targeted at at-risk students in high schools and middle schools who possibly may drop out of school. I am pleased to report that we were able to recruit 700 new mentors and the COMPACT program has a 95 percent success rate of kids staying in school and going on to graduate. In fact, one of the mentors for the COMPACT program itself is none other than Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, who has spent a great deal of time with the leaders of the COMPACT program and the children themselves every year.

When I was elected to Congress in 2000, one of the first things I did was join together with then-Congressman Tom Osborne, the famous coach of the Nebraska Cornhuskers, to author the Mentoring for Success Act which Coach Osborne and I were able to successfully include in No Child Left Behind to provide substantial funding for mentoring programs. As we move forward with the No Child Left Behind reauthorization, we will work again to make sure that this language is included and stays in existing law.

One of the big benefits of a mentoring program is in the area of crime prevention. Roughly eight out of 10 inmates in Florida's jails and prisons are high school dropouts. We see mentoring programs like the COMPACT program in Orlando having a 95 percent success rate of keeping kids in school. That's making a difference in these children's lives and also helping us as taxpayers because we pay $20,000 a year for people in State prisons and $25,000 a year for folks in Federal prison.

President Bush himself has praised the importance of mentoring programs. On December 19, 2007, President Bush proclaimed January 2008 as National Mentoring Month, giving public recognition to mentors who serve as role models. Specifically the President stated, ''By sharing their knowledge and experiences, mentors serve as examples for young people and help teach them the skills they need to succeed in life.''

By honoring mentors and mentoring programs, we recognize the importance of mentoring programs implemented in our local schools and communities. We also draw attention to the components of a quality program, including appropriate screening of potential mentors and careful matching of youth with adults who have a genuine interest in providing guidance and being exemplary role models.

Mentoring programs are varied and unique. They can be school-based or faith-based. They may be established through community organizations or corporate initiatives. I encourage people across the country to take time to discover what mentoring programs exist in their communities and see what they can do to help. Many volunteers are needed to meet the growing demand for mentors.

Again, I am pleased to cosponsor House Resolution 908, recognizing the important work of mentors and quality mentoring programs, and I urge Members to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, at this time I am pleased to yield such time as she may consume to my distinguished colleague from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 908. I want to thank my colleague from Minnesota for sponsoring this important resolution.

I want to share with you an inspirational story about a young man from my district in San Diego. Eduardo Corona was only in the ninth grade when he got into trouble with the law. Because of this mistake, he faced up to 6 years in a juvenile correctional facility. Instead of going to that facility, the judge met with him and spoke with him and allowed Eduardo to participate in a mentoring program called Reality Changers. I have had an opportunity to meet with the young people in that program and I can tell you, they are inspirational and very engaged in their lives and hoping to change the community someday.

Reality Changers brings at-risk youth in San Diego together with their mentors, half of which are college students from the University of California at San Diego, and for about 3 hours a week over a 4-year time, these mentees study with their peer mentors, they take weekly practice SAT tests, do homework together, listen to guest speakers and take part in leadership development seminars.

In addition to that, Reality Changers also sends its participants, all of which come from low-income families, to a summer program at UCSD where they take college level courses and prepare for higher education. With the help of his mentors in Reality Changers, Eduardo was able to turn his life around. In just 30 days, and this is kind of remarkable to me as I had a chance to work with some of the issues that he had to deal with, Eduardo doubled his

GPA to 3.8. He attended UCSD's summer program and won two awards in mechanical engineering. And although he is just a sophomore in high school, he has already earned college credit and is well on his way to becoming the first member of his family to attend college.

In fact, I need to tell you that all of Reality Changers' participants who have completed this 4-year program have gone on to a 4-year university. Not bad, considering all of these young people are the first in their families to attend college. I think Eduardo's story really tells us and proves that with the right role models and people who truly care about them, our society's most challenged youth, challenged in many different ways, can turn their lives around and become leaders in our community.

But we know that Eduardo fortunately and even programs like Reality Changers are not unique to San Diego. At this very moment, there are countless mentors across the Nation who, through their hard work and dedication, are making miracles happen every single day. And so that's why I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support this resolution that Congresswoman McCOLLUM has brought forward and join all my colleagues here, and I am pleased to see them, to support House Resolution 908.

In addition to this resolution, I ask all my colleagues to join me in support of increased funding for our Nation's mentoring programs, because we know that with that help, we can replicate Eduardo's success all around the country.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, we have no further speakers. If I can inquire if the other side has any further speakers.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Just one remaining and that would be me.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I would urge all my colleagues, then, to vote ''yes'' on H. Res. 908 and will yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I just want to mention in support of this bill that mentors are so important in helping today's children grow up to live productive and fulfilling lives. Unfortunately, there is still an acute need for more people to become involved in this rewarding venture and I hope that today's resolution convinces others to get involved as mentors.

Again, I want to express my support for the National Mentoring Month resolution and recognize all the hard work that mentors put in on a daily basis. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the designation of January 2008 as ''National Mentoring Month'' and to applaud the efforts of mentors who work tirelessly to support America's children.

I am pleased today to honor mentoring organizations across the country, including those who serve the young people of my own community, such as: Catholic Big Brothers/Big Sisters; The Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club; Girlfriends, Inc. of Long Beach; Helpline Youth Counseling, Inc.; and ELLAS, which stands for Embracing Latina Leadership Alliances.

Mentors serve as advocates for children. They make sure that children know that they matter.

Mentors actively support children's academic achievement, personal and social growth, and career development.

Helping students achieve academically is a critical part of a mentor's role. Through tutoring and encouragement, mentors can help mentees appreciate the importance of staying in school and working hard to achieve success.

Not only are young people who have been mentored less likely to fail in school and get in trouble for delinquency, they are also more likely to graduate and attend college. So mentoring doesn't just defend against unwanted outcomes, it promotes good ones.

Mentoring isn't just for one kind of kid. It can benefit boys and girls, urban and rural, white and Latino. If a young person is coping with a divorce, being pressured to join a gang, or has just moved to a new school, mentors can help. They can offer guidance while building self-esteem and a sense of purpose.

Mentoring isn't just for one kind of mentor, either. Mentors can come in all shapes and sizes. A mentor can be a lawyer, a mechanic, a religious leader, or an older brother. Anyone with a little extra time and a desire to help the next generation can become a mentor.

By exposing youth to positive life experiences, mentors help children develop new skills and interests and get used to interacting with adults.

By setting ambitious goals with their mentees, mentors can help today's children become the leaders of the future. Truly, a mentor can help a young person make her dreams a reality. Knowing all this, who wouldn't want to be a mentor?

I hope I have succeeded in encouraging my colleagues to become mentors or to help promote mentoring in their communities. Our children can't raise themselves. I salute those who have served as mentors, and those who will do so in the future.

Madam Speaker, once again I express my support for ''National Mentoring Month'' and recognize all the hard work mentors put in on a daily basis.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 908.

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize January 2008 as Mentoring Month and I am proud to offer my support to H. Res. 908, Supporting the goals and ideals of National Mentoring Month.

The history of mentorship nationwide and in my district is a rich one. In Washington State alone, there are approximately 190 organizations specifically dedicated to placing young people into formal mentoring relationships. These organizations spent approximately $30 million in 2006 to forge and maintain those relationships—much of that money coming from private citizens. Most important, all that work has amounted to approximately 29,000 young people in Washington State taking part in a positive mentoring relationship.

One organization in particular that has had a tremendous and lasting impact on many disadvantaged youth in my district is Big Brothers Big Sisters. In 2007, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound provided more than 2,500 children with mentoring matches and has a vision to provide successful mentoring relationships for all children who need and want them, contributing to better schools, brighter futures, and stronger communities for all.

Many of us know personally or have heard first-hand the heartbreaking accounts of young people who veered off the path of success or, because of a variety of circumstances, never even knew where to find that path. Mentoring can be a promising approach to enriching the lives of disadvantaged children and youth by discouraging juvenile delinquency, improving school attendance and performance, and by providing positive adult role models.

A young man from my district, Lorenzo, is a shining example of the unique way in which mentoring enriches the lives of our youth. Lorenzo moved to Washington State from West Samoa in 2006, and immediately received mentoring help from Ken—an individual who has consistently given of his time to mentor and nurture young people in my home community. Ken helped this young man through the discomfort of transitioning into a new environment, through the academic process, and into positive relationships with his new peers. Upon graduating from Kent-Meridian High School—my alma mater—Lorenzo gained admission to Central Washington University and is a wonderful example of the power of responsible and caring adult guidance.

Today, as Congress recognizes January 2008 as National Mentoring Month, I encourage all citizens, businesses, public and private agencies, religious and educational institutions to support mentoring and give young people in our community the gift of time and friendship through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound or other mentoring programs throughout Washington State and our Nation.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 908, which supports the goals and ideals of National Mentoring Month. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution that recognizes mentors across the country who dedicate their time to support and guide the next generation.

It is unfortunate that there are children in our country who do not know their worth, and because of this, many end up failing in school or falling into troubled lives. Mentors help these children get back on a path to success by imparting the most important message—that they too can succeed. Mentors have helped youth build up their self-esteem and work on their academics and social skills. Many mentors also help students reach their potential by helping them prepare for college and career development.

Madam Speaker, I hope that by recognizing January as National Mentoring Month, we can honor the positive effect that mentoring has had on the youngest members of our society. I also hope that highlighting the importance of these relationships encourages others to seek out mentoring opportunities in their communities. This not only helps our children, but our society as a whole.

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, as co-chair of the Congressional Mentoring Caucus I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 908 supporting the goals and ideals of National Mentoring Month.

Thank you Chairman KILDEE and Chairman MILLER for bringing this legislation to the floor so quickly.

I would also like to thank the other chairs of the Congressional Mentoring Caucus, Ms. DAVIS of California, Mr. KELLER of Florida, and Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, who were original cosponsors of this legislation.

The term ''mentor'' derives from a Greek mythology where Odysseus asked his friend, Mentor, to teach and watch his son, Telemachus, as he took off to fight the Trojan War.

This relationship was centered on advice, education and friendship.

Mentoring was a special, caring, and supportive relationship between two people based on mutual trust and respect.

In modern context, mentoring relationships are between the mentor (an adult) and a mentee (youth) that focuses on the needs of youth.

Caring adults—parents, teachers, counselors, mentors and religious leaders are the most important influence in every child's life because they provide the foundation of love, support, and guidance.

Millions of individuals across the country serve as mentors to young men and women—encouraging and promoting the development of strong characters and identities for youth who may not have a strong adult presence in their lives.

A review of 10 mentoring programs indicates that one-on-one mentoring significantly enhances positive youth development like better school performance—youth develop better social skills, and more likely they will go on to college or higher education—that's according to data from a recent National Youth Conference held at the University of Minnesota.

Minnesota is home to the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, which formed in 1994 as a community initiative to promote mentoring for Minnesota youth, particularly those who are at risk and may lack positive role models in their lives.

There are over 350 mentoring programs in Minnesota that connect youth with positive role models.

One valuable mentoring program is Big Brothers Big Sisters. In the St. Paul/Minneapolis region alone, more than 3,700 children benefit from this mentoring program with the time and energy of more than 3,200 volunteers.

The Youth Initiative Mentoring Academies (YIMA) is another successful program in Minnesota. YIMA utilizes a mentoring model through aviation education. Through this program, at risk youth receive hands-on learning experiences about career opportunities, build confidence and self-esteem, and develop valuable leadership skills.

Mentoring is also important to our global competitiveness. In my district, Century College offers a pre-engineering program that includes the Century College Robot Show. The college invites practicing engineers to judge the show, providing the opportunity for mentorship of the pre-engineering students. Century College also invites high schools students to attend the show so they are able to see the opportunities available through the study of engineering but also to introduce them to student and professionals who can help steer interested students in the right direction.

I would like to take this time to thank Congressional staff members, including my staff, who take time to mentor youth in programs such as Everybody Wins, Horton's Kids, and Calvary homeless shelter.

We all need to be part of the process in shaping young people's lives so that they can achieve their fullest potential.

Young people need caring adults to make the connection, to provide guidance, caring and emotional support—all these are contributing to making positive impact on their lives—so that young can become responsible and productive citizens.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this resolution and to look for opportunities to be a mentor themselves.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 908.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 932) expressing support for designation of the week of February 4 through February 8, 2008 as ''National School Counseling Week''.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 932

Whereas the American School Counselor Association has declared the week of February 4 through February 8, 2008 as ''National School Counseling Week'';

Whereas the House of Representatives has recognized the importance of school counseling through the inclusion of elementary and secondary school counseling programs in the last reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;

Whereas school counselors have long advocated that the education system of the United States must leave no child behind and must provide opportunities for all students;

Whereas school counselors have long emphasized the importance of personal and social development in academic achievement;

Whereas school counselors help develop well-rounded students by guiding them through their academic, personal, social, and career development;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in ensuring that students are aware of financial aid and college opportunities;

Whereas school counselors may encourage students to pursue challenging academic courses to prepare them for college majors and careers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields;

Whereas school counselors help students cope with the serious and common challenges of growing up, including peer pressure, mental health issues, school violence, disciplinary problems, the deployment of family members to conflicts overseas, and problems in the home;

Whereas school counselors are also instrumental in helping students, teachers, and parents deal with personal trauma and community and national tragedies;

Whereas school counselors are among the few professionals in a school building that are trained in both education and mental health;

Whereas, despite the important contributions of school counselors to student success, counseling positions are not always protected when budgets are cut;

Whereas the average student-to-counselor ratio in America's public schools, 476-to-1, is almost double the 250-to-1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association, the American Counseling Association, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and other organizations;

Whereas the celebration of ''National School Counseling Week'' would increase awareness of the important and necessary role school counselors play in the lives of students in the United States; and

Whereas the week of February 4 through February 8, 2008 would be an appropriate week to designate as ''National School Counseling Week'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives—

(1) honors and recognizes the contributions of school counselors to the success of students in our Nation's elementary and secondary schools; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe ''National School Counseling Week'' with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the crucial role school counselors play in preparing students for fulfilling lives as contributing members of society.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 932, expressing support for designation of February 4 through February 8, 2008 as ''National School Counseling Week.''

I thank Chairman GEORGE MILLER and Ranking Member BUCK MCKEON, as well as VERN EHLERS, the lead cosponsor, for their support of this important resolution and the majority and minority committee staff for doing the hard work behind the scenes to get this resolution to the floor.

This resolution is about recognizing and honoring school counselors.

I want to begin, however, with full disclosure: I was not always the biggest fan of school counselors. Unfortunately, one of my own high school counselors suggested to me that I give up on my plans to go to college because I was likely to get pregnant and drop out anyway.

Well, I've learned a few things since then. First, I learned that that particular counselor's fortune telling skills weren't so great, and, second, I've learned a lot more about the counseling profession and come to understand that one bad apple doesn't represent what counseling is all about.

In fact, good counselors do exactly what this person didn't do. They inspire us to dream big, help us get on the road to accomplish those dreams, and, when necessary, they enlist the support of our parents, teachers, mentors, and others to keep moving us down the road.

Counselors can be vital to a student's success, especially in high school. High school is a transition period into adulthood and the world of work. As students make this transition, some need additional help to keep up in class, others get distracted by family issues or bad behavior, and still others might get involved with gangs and crime.

But a good school counselor can intervene, working with parents and teachers to get students back on track. Individual attention and follow-up from a counselor can help a student accomplish amazing things. I want to recognize just two of the counselors from my district who accomplish amazing things every day they go to work.

Cheryl Redgate of Santa Fe High School and Shanna Moore-Garcia of La Serna High School are just two of the many exceptional counselors in my district who have devoted their lives to serving young people. They treat each of their students as if they were their own children by holding them to high standards and providing encouragement, guidance, and support. I understand that local parents have expressed deep appreciation for the work of these two stellar counselors and are glad to know that Cheryl and Shanna are looking out for their children's academic achievement as well as their emotional well-being.

I regret that I don't have time to name every outstanding counselor in my district or across the country. There are just so many who every day go above and beyond the job description to help students achieve academic success and plan for a bright future.

One other thing prevents me from naming more counselors who have made a difference in the lives of their students, and that's the fact that there aren't nearly enough of them. Nationwide, the average student-to-counselor ratio is 476–1, almost double the 250–1 recommended ratio. In California, unfortunately this ratio is a dismal 920–1.

While today's resolution is a great start, to truly honor the work of counselors we must do more to put school counselors where they're needed so that students have access to these professionals who have so much to offer.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 932 offered by the Representative from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ). National School Counseling Week, which is celebrated annually the first full week of February, helps focus public attention on the unique contribution of professional school counselors. School counselors are employed in school districts and public and private schools of all levels across America to help students reach their full potential. They are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests and talents as these traits relate to academic success and career awareness and development. School counselors serve as a vital resource for parents by helping them focus on ways to further the educational, personal and social growth of their children. They work with teachers and other educators to help students explore their potential and set realistic goals for themselves. They often seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and complement comprehensive school counseling programs that help students become productive members of society.

□ 1415

These comprehensive developmental school counseling programs are considered an integral part of the educational process which enables all students to achieve.

National school counseling week highlights the tremendous impact that counselors have in helping students achieve academic success and plan for their career. This year's theme, ''School Counselors: Creating Pathways to Success,'' truly sums up the effort they put forth daily to ensure that no child is left behind.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all school counselors, not only from my home State of Florida but also all across this great Nation. I also wish to thank the Representative from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) and the Representative from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) for bringing forth this resolution today.

I urge all my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague for his support of this resolution. I would urge all my colleagues to support House Resolution 932.

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H Res. 932, Honoring National School Counseling Week. First, I'd like to thank my colleague, Representative LINDA SÁNCHEZ, for introducing this important resolution.

As a social worker, I recognize the invaluable role that guidance counselors and other social services personnel play in our schools.

These dedicated men and women devote their lives to ensuring the bright futures of our Nation's children, supporting them both academically and socially, and assisting them on the great journey towards higher education and a successful career.

Guidance counselors also play a vital role in our efforts to increase high school graduation and college enrollment rates.

However, despite our reliance on these important individuals for doing the crucial work of preparing our Nation's youth for entry into college and the real world, we often fail to give school counselors the support they need to do their jobs effectively.

Many of our schools are under-staffed with guidance counselors, and these hardworking individuals are tasked with serving an overwhelming number of students with a limited amount of resources. The average counselor-to-student ratio in our Nation's public schools is 1 to 436. We must acknowledge this reality, and direct our efforts in Congress toward increasing both our support and recognition of these hardworking men and women in our schools.

For these reasons, I am a proud co-sponsor of House Resolution 932, to recognize the important work of school guidance counselors, inspiring the youth of America, and providing them with much-needed support in their journey toward high school graduation and a prosperous future.

My fellow colleagues in Congress, I urge you to support House Resolution 932, so that we may celebrate the accomplishments and diligent efforts of guidance counselors in our Nation's schools.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution expressing support for designation of the week of February 4 through February 8, 2008, as ''National School Counseling Week.'' I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this resolution, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank our school counselors for their hard work.

I am committed to ensuring that all school districts, particularly those with the greatest economic needs, have access to the necessary resources to retain talented teachers and school counselors. I have enjoyed a wonderful working relationship with school counselors in my home State of Rhode Island. I have seen firsthand the difference that the quality school counselors in our State are making in our children's lives and understand the tremendous need for the training and placement of more of these professionals in our schools.

We must make sure that our school counselors have the resources necessary to help our children, and that is why I am a strong proponent of increasing funding for the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program—one of the programs that No Child Left Behind promised to expand. Funding from this program helps to ensure that all school districts have the ability to retain talented teachers and school counselors. However, despite this promise, school counselors and other advocates have had to fight hard to

maintain this program at the elementary level, and this year marks the first time it has enough funding to reach high school students. It has been and will continue to be a priority of mine to ensure that the federal commitment to education matches what we ask of school districts.

While we designate one week to honor our school counselors, let us pledge to help them the rest of the year with the resources they need—and deserve.

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 932.

This resolution signifies Congress's appreciation for the critical work school counselors do to provide students and their families with guidance and support, both academic and emotional, toward obtaining a higher education and entrance into the workforce.

In his 2008 budget, President Bush proposed eliminating federal support for elementary and secondary school counselors. Under Democratic leadership, the President's proposal was wisely rejected and this Congress provided nearly $14 million of additional support to school counseling programs, for a total of over $48 million. I am proud of this accomplishment, but feel there is still more to be done to meet the needs of our children.

In California, eight in nine high school students attend a school with fewer counselors than the national average. This makes California the State with the highest counselor to student ratio in the Nation; over two times the School Counseling Association's suggested ratio. Students attending intensely segregated minority schools are most likely to attend schools with fewer counselors than the national average. Addressing the school counselor deficit is a critical component of closing the achievement gap that plagues our Nation.

As we reflect on the vital role counselors play in the lives of our children, we should remember that investing in our schools is an investment in our future; it is the best investment our country can make.

School counselors create pathways to success and H. Res. 932 will ensure our Nation comes together this February to recognize their vital contributions.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 932 to express support for school counselors and the designation of the week of February 4 through 8, 2008, as "National School Counseling Week."

I thank Representative LINDA SÁNCHEZ for introducing this timely resolution and for allowing me to collaborate with her on it. I also thank the many Members of Congress that decided to cosponsor this resolution, especially Chairman MILLER and Ranking Republican MCKEON.

School counselors are instrumental in helping our students face daily challenges. They help develop well-rounded students by guiding them through their academic, personal, social, and career development.

School counselors also play a vital role in ensuring that students are prepared for their future. They may encourage students to pursue challenging academic courses to prepare them for college majors and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

I certainly recognize that school counselors contribute to the success of students in our schools, and I encourage all Members to join me in supporting this resolution.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 932.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 852) raising awareness and encouraging prevention of stalking by establishing January 2008 as ''National Stalking Awareness Month,'' as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 852

Whereas an estimated 1,006,970 women and 370,990 men are stalked annually in the United States and, in the majority of such cases, the person is stalked by someone who is not a stranger;

Whereas 81 percent of women, who are stalked by an intimate partner, are also physically assaulted by that partner, and 76 percent of women, who are killed by an intimate partner, were also stalked by that intimate partner;

Whereas 74.2 percent of stalking victims reported that the stalking partner interfered with their employment, 26 percent of stalking victims lose time from work as a result of their victimization, and 7 percent never return to work;

Whereas stalking victims are forced to take drastic measures to protect themselves, such as relocating, changing their addresses, changing their identities, changing jobs, and obtaining protection orders;

Whereas stalking is a crime that cuts across race, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, and economic status;

Whereas stalking is a crime under Federal law and under the laws of all 50 States and the District of Columbia;

Whereas rapid advancements in technology have made cyber-surveillance the new frontier in stalking;

Whereas there are national organizations, local victim service organizations, prosecutors' offices, and police departments that stand ready to assist stalking victims and who are working diligently to craft competent, thorough, and innovative responses to stalking;

Whereas there is a need to enhance the criminal justice system's response to stalking and stalking victims, including aggressive investigation and prosecution; and

Whereas the House of Representatives urges the establishment of January 2008 as National Stalking Awareness Month: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(A) National Stalking Awareness Month provides an opportunity to educate the people of the United States about stalking;

(B) all Americans should applaud the efforts of the many victim service providers, police, prosecutors, national and community organizations, and private sector supporters for their efforts in promoting awareness about stalking; and

(C) policymakers, criminal justice officials, victim service and human service agencies, nonprofits, and others should recognize the need to increase awareness of stalking and the availability of services for stalking victims; and

(2) the House of Representatives urges national and community organizations, businesses in the private sector, and the media to promote awareness of the crime of stalking through National Stalking Awareness Month.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Res. 852, joining the strong bipartisan effort to raise awareness in the toll that stalking takes on our society. Every year, stalking affects approximately 1.4 million Americans of both genders, all races, ages, sexual orientation, disabilities, and economic status.

The consequences of stalking are serious. Stalking can paralyze the victim with fear, which is well founded, because stalking often leads to physical attacks from the victim. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of States, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Government not only recognize stalking as a crime, but categorize it as a felony.

Stalkers cause their victims severe emotional distress, including anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction and depression, all of which can affect all aspects on a person's life, including family, social activities and work. In fact, the emotional distress is so disabling that 11 percent of stalking victims have been forced to relocate their homes, 30 percent report seeking psychological counseling, and 74 percent report being stalked in a way that interferes with their employment.

Of course, the ultimate threat of stalking is to the victim's very life.

Over 75 percent of women murdered by an intimate partner had been stalked by that partner, and 54 percent of female murder victims had reported being stalked to police before being killed by their stalkers. With the rapid advancements in technology, stalkers

have ever-increasing access to personal information of their victims, raising their victims' vulnerability to an all-time high.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 852 and recognizing January 2008 as National Stalking Awareness Month.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I support House Resolution 852 and commend the sponsor of this legislation, my friend and Texas colleague, Representative TED POE, for his dedication and commitment to this issue.

The goal of this resolution is to raise awareness and encourage prevention of stalking by establishing January 2008 as National Stalking Awareness Month.

Stalking, conduct intended to instill fear in a victim, is a crime that occurs in every State in our Nation. Stalkers pursue and harass victims and, in some cases, use the Internet to cyberstalk victims. Cyberstalkers can systematically flood their target's e-mail inbox with obscene, hateful, or threatening messages.

Cyberstalkers may also assume the identity of their victim and post information, fictitious or not, to solicit unwanted responses from others. Although cyberstalking does not involve physical contact with the victim, it is still a serious crime. The widespread use of the Internet and the ease with which hackers can find personal information has made this form of stalking more accessible.

According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, over 1 million women and almost 400,000 men are stalked each year in the United States. In fact, most victims, 77 percent of women and 64 percent of men, know their stalkers. These statistics are a jarring reminder of the scope and seriousness of this crime.

By establishing January 2008 as National Stalking Awareness Month, Congress educates Americans about stalking, recognizes and applauds law enforcement officials and victim service providers for their efforts to combat stalking, and increases awareness of services available to stalking victims.

Madam Speaker, I urge colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I recognize my colleague and friend from Texas, the author of this resolution, Mr. POE.

Mr. POE. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

Madam Speaker, as the sponsor of the 2008 National Stalking Awareness Month resolution, I hope this resolution serves as a unifying force for community leaders, policymakers, victim service providers, and able to educate Americans on the serious dangers of stalking. It is a crime that annually affects more than 1 million women and over 400,000 men in our country.

As the cochairman and founder of the Congressional Victims Rights Caucus, and my experience as a prosecutor and a judge, I had met with countless victims and victim service providers about the dangers of stalking.

Unfortunately, stalking is not an isolated occurrence. Two-thirds of the stalkers pursue their victims at least once a week, sometimes daily. Victims often feel that there is no safe place for them to go, no safe place to hide, not even in their homes. Stalking forces victims to relocate, lose their jobs, and cycle into severe depression and anxiety. Some victims live in quiet, desperate lives of fear.

With today's advanced technology, protecting Americans from stalking is even more challenging. Stalkers have a wide range of technologies to pursue on their victims. They use cell phones. They use fax machines, computer spyware, and GPS systems all to track the victim. The Internet now serves cyberstalkers looking for a place to threaten and harass. Even pedophiles on the prowl use cyberstalking for their next victim.

Stalking rates are on the rise because of the new technologies in the Internet. Stalking has only been criminalized in our country for 28 years. California was the first State to make stalking a crime. Like domestic violence, stalking is about power, intimidation, and control over the victim.

While stalking is now a crime in every State and the District of Columbia and the Federal Government, stalking often leads to other crimes, including physical assault, sexual assault, and murder. Stalking laws are basic to the individual right to be left alone and the right of privacy.

The best way to attack the threat of stalking is through law enforcement and education.

I encourage victim service providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, and community leaders to promote awareness of stalking, and I thank them for their efforts in making life better for victims.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to my friend from California (Mr. ROYCE) who is the original author of the Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act.

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. I was the author of both the California law that first criminalized the act of stalking, first made it a felony, and then the Federal law some years later in 1996, which proceeded to do the same thing.

I thought I would share with the Members here some of the experiences of some of the victims that have gone through this particularly hellish nightmare of stalking. The case that I think carried the day in California in the State legislature was that of Kathleen Gallagher Baty, who was our witness, and she came back here and testified as well on behalf of this legislation.

Kathleen had been on the track team, I think it was UCLA at the time. She did not even know her stalker, but he became obsessed with this young woman. Throughout college, throughout her career, he managed to stalk and attempt to apprehend her. Time after time, there was nothing law enforcement could do except to really say, well, until he catches you, our hands are tied.

We had one period of time in 6 weeks when four different young women, all known to law enforcement, all believed to be in danger in Orange County, California, were all killed. In law enforcement, one of the officers told me, The worst thing for me personally that I have ever had to do with this job was to convey to her that our hands were tied until she was attacked.

He said, As a matter of fact, I was waiting to try to apprehend her stalker in the act of the attack, but, unfortunately, he killed her first, and then he killed himself when I tried to apprehend him.

Well, with Kathleen Gallagher's case, this finally ended. I had gotten a note from her father about what she had been through in her life. This finally ended on a porch in which he held her at knifepoint until she finally managed to get away. But because he hadn't drug her more than 800 feet, it was not an act of him trying to kidnap her under the law.

So looking at what had to be done, clearly, we had to take the action of stalking, define it as a crime in and of itself so that law enforcement could then intervene in these cases and tell a young man, Listen, these acts of threatening to kill your victim, telling her, if you can't have her, nobody can, threatening her in this way is now a felony.

That's what we did in California. Many other States picked this up. In 1996, I introduced the Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act here in Congress. We were able to get it through the House and the Senate, and it was signed by the President.

But what I wanted to share with the Members is that we have talked a little bit today about the 1.4 million victims every year. But this act is now law in countries, in Europe; it's now law in Japan. My office has been contacted over the years by many, many governments overseas, many legislators, parliamentarians who have said, We have this same phenomenon in our own country. If we gave law enforcement this ability to intercede in advance, we could protect the lives of many, many victims.

So I just wanted to share with the Members here a little bit of the history of the act. I would like to take this opportunity also to recognize Colleen Campbell, along with some of the other

Orange County victims' rights groups that worked over the years to get victims the rights they deserve. They worked on this particular act and also on proposition 115 out in California, the Crime Victims/Speedy Trial Initiative, which I cochaired and which was passed overwhelmingly by the voters in our State.

One of my hopes is that we can follow this up with Federal law at some point in time that does more than just put it in statute but that puts into the Constitution some of these basic rights.

But, in the meantime, the fact that we are establishing January as National Stalking Awareness Month gives us the opportunity to get the word out to young people, to those who are victims of obsessed stalkers, that there is a place they can turn to for help, and to remind law enforcement, and I wish we did more to train law enforcement in this particular area because I think there is a lot they can do to intercede, but to remind them of the ability to step in and remind those young, obsessed people who are threatening the life of someone, threatening someone with bodily harm, this is now a felony in the United States of America and you can serve 5 years in a Federal penitentiary.

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Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) who is a senior distinguished member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 852, a resolution which establishes January 2008 as National Stalking Awareness Month. And I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for his leadership on this issue. I also thank the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) for his leadership, as well as the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Last year, 2007 represented the first national effort to recognize January as National Stalking Awareness Month. I would encourage all of my colleagues to continue their support for this resolution since stalking is much more dangerous than many people believe it is.

Unlike the glamorized stalking scenes depicted in some Hollywood movies, in reality stalking is dangerous and considered a criminal act in all 50 States and in the District of Columbia and by the Federal Government. More than 1.4 million Americans are victims of stalkers in this country every year. Stalking victims are both men and women from all socioeconomic backgrounds, and they are often stalked by intimate partners.

Additional statistics released by the National Center for Victims of Crime are even more disturbing. These statistics reveal that 81 percent of female stalking victims are also physically assaulted. One out of every five stalking cases involves the use of a weapon, and one-third of stalkers are repeat offenders. They have done it before.

These statistics indicate that stalking is not as harmless as some would lead us to believe in the movies or on television shows. We must continue to bring attention to the dangers stalkers pose in our communities and the services and the resources available to respond and address this criminal activity. Passage of H. Res. 852 is an important step in accomplishing this goal.

I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for their leadership on this issue. I encourage my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their leadership on this issue and I urge the House to support this important legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 852, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MENTALLY ILL OFFENDER TREATMENT AND CRIME REDUCTION REAUTHORIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3992) to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide grants for the improved mental health treatment and services provided to offenders with mental illnesses, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3992

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2008''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings.
Sec. 3. Reauthorization of the Adult and Juvenile Collaboration Program Grants.
Sec. 4. Law enforcement response to mentally ill offenders improvement grants.
Sec. 5. Effective treatment of female offenders with mental illnesses.
Sec. 6. Grants to expand capabilities and effectiveness of correctional agency identification and treatment plans for mentally ill offenders.
Sec. 7. Statewide planning grants to improve treatment of mentally ill offenders.
Sec. 8. Improving the mental health courts grant program.
Sec. 9. Study and report on prevalence of mentally ill offenders.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Communities nationwide are struggling to respond to the high numbers of people with mental illnesses involved at all points in the criminal justice system.

(2) A 1999 study by the Department of Justice estimated that 16 percent of people incarcerated in prisons and jails in the United States, which is more than 300,000 people, suffer from mental illnesses.

(3) Rates of mental illness among women in jail are almost twice that of men.

(4) Los Angeles County Jail and New York's Rikers Island jail complex hold more people with mental illnesses than the largest psychiatric inpatient facilities in the United States.

(5) State prisoners with a mental health problem are twice as likely as those without a mental health problem to have been homeless in the year before their arrest.

(6) Reentry planning for inmates with mental illnesses is the least frequently endorsed mental health service by jail administrators.

SEC. 3. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ADULT AND JUVENILE COLLABORATION PROGRAM GRANTS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS THROUGH 2014.—Section 2991(h) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''and'';

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''for fiscal years 2006 through 2009.'' and inserting ''for each of the fiscal years 2006 through 2007; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) $75,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2014.''.

(b) ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES.—Section 2991(h) of such title is further amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) (as added by subsection (a)(3)) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), respectively;

(2) by striking ''There are authorized'' and inserting ''(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES.—For fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fiscal year, of the amounts authorized under paragraph (1) for such fiscal year, the Attorney General may obligate not more than 3 percent for the administrative expenses of the Attorney General in carrying out this section for such fiscal year.''.

(c) NO MINIMUM ALLOCATION.—Section 2991 of such title is further amended by striking subsection (g) and redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (g).

(d) ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVING PRIORITY.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(c) PRIORITY.—The Attorney General, in awarding funds under this section, shall give priority to applications that—

''(1) promote effective strategies by law enforcement to identify and to reduce risk of harm to mentally ill offenders and public safety;

''(2) promote effective strategies for identification and treatment of female mentally ill offenders; or

''(3)(A) demonstrate the strongest commitment to ensuring that such funds are used to promote both public health and public safety;

''(B) demonstrate the active participation of each co-applicant in the administration of the collaboration program;

''(C) document, in the case of an application for a grant to be used in whole or in part to fund treatment services for adults or juveniles during periods of incarceration or detention, that treatment programs will be available to provide transition and re-entry services for such individuals; and

''(D) have the support of both the Attorney General and the Secretary.''.

SEC. 4. LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part HH of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 2992. LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General is authorized to make grants to States, units of local government, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations for the following purposes:

''(1) TRAINING PROGRAMS.—To provide for programs that offer law enforcement personnel specialized and comprehensive training in procedures to identify and respond appropriately to incidents in which the unique needs of individuals with mental illnesses are involved.

''(2) RECEIVING CENTERS.—To provide for the development of specialized receiving centers to assess individuals in the custody of law enforcement personnel for mental health and substance abuse treatment needs.

''(3) IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY.—To provide for computerized information systems (or to improve existing systems) to provide timely information to law enforcement personnel and criminal justice system personnel to improve the response of such respective personnel to mentally ill offenders.

''(4) COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS.—To provide for the establishment and expansion of cooperative efforts by criminal and juvenile justice agencies and mental health agencies to promote public safety through the use of effective interventions with respect to mentally ill offenders.

''(5) CAMPUS SECURITY PERSONNEL TRAINING.—To provide for programs that offer campus security personnel training in procedures to identify and respond appropriately to incidents in which the unique needs of individuals with mental illnesses are involved.

''(b) BJA TRAINING MODELS.—For purposes of subsection (a)(1), the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance shall develop training models for training law enforcement personnel in procedures to identify and respond appropriately to incidents in which the unique needs of individuals with mental illnesses are involved.

''(c) MATCHING FUNDS.—The Federal share of funds for a program funded by a grant received under this section may not exceed 75 percent of the costs of the program unless the Attorney General waives, wholly or in part, such funding limitation. The non-Federal share of payments made for such a program may be made in cash or in-kind, fairly evaluated, including planned equipment or services.

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2014.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Such part is further amended by amending the part heading to read as follows: ''**PART HH—GRANTS TO IMPROVE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES**''.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE TREATMENT OF FEMALE OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES.

Part HH of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by section 4, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 2993. GRANTS FOR THE EFFECTIVE TREATMENT OF FEMALE OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General is authorized to make grants to States, units of local government, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to provide any of the following services, with respect to a female offender with a mental illness:

''(1) Mental health treatment.

''(2) Intensive case management services that are coordinated and designed to provide the range of services needed to address treatment or assistance needs of the offender, with respect to any criminal behavior, substance abuse, psychological abuse, physical abuse, housing, employment, and medical needs.

''(3) In the case that the offender has a child, family support services needed to ensure the maintenance of a relationship between the offender and such child.

''(4) Related mental health services for any children of the offender, as needed.

''(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice to carry out this section $5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2014.''.

SEC. 6. GRANTS TO EXPAND CAPABILITIES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CORRECTIONAL AGENCY IDENTIFICATION AND TREATMENT PLANS FOR MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS.

Part HH of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by sections 4 and 5, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 2994. GRANTS TO EXPAND CAPABILITIES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITY IDENTIFICATION AND TREATMENT PLANS FOR MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General is authorized to make grants to States, units of local government, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations in accordance with this section for any of the following purposes:

''(1) To provide correctional facilities within the respective jurisdiction with the capacity (or improved capacity), with respect to inmates of such facilities who have mental illnesses, to—

''(A) assess the clinical and social needs of such inmates and the extent to which such inmates pose any public safety risks to the community;

''(B) plan for and provide treatment and services to address the unique needs of such inmates;

''(C) identify and coordinate with community and correctional programs responsible for post-release services; and

''(D) coordinate the transition plans for such inmates to ensure the implementation of such plans and to avoid gaps in care with community-based services.

''(2) To provide for the standardization of screening and assessment practices to identify inmates with mental illnesses.

''(3) To provide for local task forces to identify essential community services for inmates with mental illnesses upon the reentry of such inmates into the community.

''(4) To coordinate planning for the transition of inmates with mental illnesses who are released from correctional facilities and reenter the community.

''(5) To provide for housing options for individuals with mental illnesses who reenter the community that provide support for the unique needs of such individuals.

''(6) To continue and improve—

''(A) mental health programs provided at correctional facilities within the respective jurisdiction; or

''(B) alternative programs to incarceration for individuals with mental illnesses.

''(7) To support the development of community crisis services that are for individuals who are at risk of arrest or incarceration and which are designed to prevent or mitigate a crisis by assessing the individual and crisis involved, providing supportive counseling to the individual, and referring the individual to appropriate community services to stabilize the individual's condition and prevent arrest or incarceration, respectively.

''(8) To support forensic assertive community treatment teams for individuals with serious mental illnesses (as defined for purposes of title V of the Public Health Service Act) who reenter prison.

''(9) To provide for integrated mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment.

''(10)(A) To designate staff to assist inmates of correctional facilities within the respective jurisdiction, in—

''(i) identifying benefits for which they may be eligible; and

''(ii) collecting necessary supporting materials (including medical records) and making applications for income support, health care, food stamps, veterans' benefits, TANF, or other benefit programs.

''(B) To contract with local community mental health entities to perform the activities described in clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A).

''(11) To work with the necessary agencies and entities for transition planning for such inmates reentering the community, including any needed applications and paperwork.

''(12) To assist such inmates to obtain, or if necessary create and prepare, photo identification documents for use upon release.

''(13) To create links with local community mental health providers for case management services for inmates prior to their release from a correctional facility in order to link them with housing, employment, and other key services and benefits.

''(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a) for a given fiscal year, an entity described in such subsection shall submit to the Attorney General an application in such form and manner and at such time as specified by the Attorney General. In addition to any other information specified by the Attorney General, such application shall contain the following information:

''(1) The number and percentage of offenders in prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities during the previous year—

''(A) who were in the custody of the jurisdiction involved;

''(B) who required mental health treatment; and

''(C) for whom the prison, jail, or juvenile facility involved provided such treatment.

''(2) A good faith estimate of the number and percentage of offenders in prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities who are predicted to meet the criteria described in each of subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1) during such year, if the entity receives such grant for such year.

''(c) ALLOCATION OF GRANT AMOUNTS BASED ON MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PERCENT DEMONSTRATED.—In allocating grant amounts under this section, the Attorney

General shall base the amount allocated to an entity for a fiscal year on the percent of offenders described in subsection (b) to whom the entity provided mental health treatment in the previous fiscal year, as demonstrated by the entity in its application under such subsection.

''(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Attorney General may provide technical assistance to any entity awarded a grant under this section to establish or expand mental health treatment services under this section if such entity does not have any (or has only a few) prisons, jails, or juvenile facilities that offer such services.

''(e) REPORTS.—An entity that receives a grant under subsection (a) during a fiscal year shall, not later than the last day of the following fiscal year, submit to the Attorney General a report that describes and assesses the uses of such grant.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2014.''.

SEC. 7. STATEWIDE PLANNING GRANTS TO IMPROVE TREATMENT OF MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS.

Part HH of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by sections 4, 5, and 6, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 2995. PLANNING GRANTS TO IMPROVE TREATMENT OF MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General is authorized to carry out a grant program under which the Attorney General makes grants to States, units of local government, territories, and Indian tribes for the following purposes, with respect to the treatment of offenders with mental illnesses:

''(1) To facilitate the coordination of treatment and services provided for such offenders by the State and other units of government located within the State (including local, territorial, and tribal).

''(2) To provide for a State administrator (or other appropriate jurisdictional administrator) to coordinate such treatment and services provided within the State (or other jurisdiction).

''(3) To develop a comprehensive plan for the provision of such treatment and services to such offenders within such State.

''(4) To establish a coordinating center, with respect to a State, to—

''(A) facilitate the sharing of information related to such treatment and services for such offenders among the jurisdictions located in such State; and

''(B) promote evidence-based practices for purposes of providing such treatment and services.

''(b) APPLICATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity described in subsection (a) shall submit to the Attorney General an application, in such form and manner and at such time as specified by the Attorney General, which shall include a proposal that describes how—

''(A) the grant will be used to fund mental health treatment and services for jail and prison populations that are identified as savings populations for such entity; and

''(B) any savings accruing to the State or other applicable jurisdiction from providing such population with such treatment and services would be used to increase the availability and accessibility of community-based mental health services.

''(2) SAVINGS POPULATION.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the term 'savings population' means a population that, if in receipt of mental health treatment and services for jail and prison populations, would potentially generate savings to the State or other applicable jurisdiction.

''(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $10,000,000 to carry out this section for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2013.''.

SEC. 8. IMPROVING THE MENTAL HEALTH COURTS GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COURTS GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 1001(a)(20) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(20)) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2001 through 2004'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2008 through 2014''.

(b) ADDITIONAL GRANT USES AUTHORIZED.—Section 2201 of such title (42 U.S.C. 3796ii) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) at the end, by striking ''and'';

(2) in paragraph (2) at the end, by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(3) pretrial services and related treatment programs for offenders with mental illnesses; and

''(4) developing, implementing, or expanding programs that are alternatives to incarceration for offenders with mental illnesses.''.

SEC. 9. STUDY AND REPORT ON PREVALENCE OF MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS.

(a) STUDY.—The Attorney General shall provide for a study of the following:

(1) The rate of occurrence of serious mental illnesses in each of the following populations:

(A) Individuals, including juveniles, on probation.

(B) Individuals, including juveniles, incarcerated in a jail.

(C) Individuals, including juveniles, incarcerated in a prison.

(D) Individuals, including juveniles, on parole.

(2) For each population described in paragraph (1), the percentage of individuals with serious mental illnesses who, at the time of the arrest, are eligible to receive supplemental security income benefits, social security disability insurance benefits, or medical assistance under a State plan for medical assistance under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

(3) For each such population, with respect to a year, the percentage of individuals with serious mental illnesses who—

(A) were homeless (as defined in section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302)) at the time of arrest; and

(B) were homeless (as so defined) during any period in the previous year.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the study under subsection (a).

(c) DEFINITION OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS.—For purposes of this section, the term ''serious mental illness'' has the meaning given such term for purposes of title V of the Public Health Service Act.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $2,000,000 for fiscal year 2009.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3992, the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2007. Since the 1960s, State mental health hospitals have increasingly reduced their populations of mentally ill individuals in response to a nationwide call for deinstitutionalization.

The move toward deinstitutionalization was based on the fact that mentally ill individuals are constitutionally entitled to refuse treatment, or at least to have it provided in the least restrictive environment. Unfortunately, neither the local governments for the States nor the Federal Government have invested the necessary resources to meet the needs for community-based mental health treatment and services created and needed by deinstitutionalization.

A 2006 report by the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics entitled ''Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates'' suggests that the criminal justice system has become, by default, the primary caregiver of the most seriously mentally ill individuals. The bureau reports that over one-half of the prison and jail population of this country is mentally ill. More specifically, 56 percent of State prisoners, 45 percent of Federal prisoners, and 64 percent of jail inmates have some degree of mental illness.

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill reports that, on any given day, there are at least 284,000 seriously mentally ill people in hospitals and jails in this country, such as people suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or serious depression. However, only 187,000 of them are in mental health facilities. This issue is of particular concern in Virginia, my home State.

In August of 2007, the Virginia General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission released a 200-page report on the state of mental health services in Virginia. The report revealed a number of disturbing facts, among them that there are more people with mental illness behind bars in Virginia than there are in mental health facilities, with hospital care accounting for only a fraction of the needs of our State's estimated 400,000 mentally ill individuals in Virginia.

Since deinstitutionalization in Virginia, the daily number of mentally ill adults in State hospitals has dropped

from 11,532 to 1,452, a drop of 87 percent. Of the 6,350 mentally ill individuals in hospitals and jails on a given day, 60 percent were actually in jails because regional mental health facilities are not providing inpatient mental health services.

Since 1991, the number of psychiatric beds available has dropped by 800, or 31 percent, and the beds that are available are concentrated in one area of the State. In fact, there are no free-standing, profitable psychiatric hospitals west of Richmond.

These findings in Virginia are similar to those across the Nation that were discussed at a hearing that we held this spring in our subcommittee which revealed that our criminal justice system is serving as the primary caregiver for our mentally ill individuals.

One piece of good news in all of this focus on mental health in the criminal justice system is that mental health courts have proven to be a helpful tool for helping mentally ill individuals in several communities that have such programs. H.R. 3992 will assist further in this regard.

First, it will reauthorize the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction grant program, increasing the current authorization from $50 million to $75 million. It will also reauthorize the mental health courts program, and will expand the permissible use of funds to include pretrial services and funding for alternatives to incarceration.

Additionally, H.R. 3992 creates four new grant programs. One will provide grants to States and other law enforcement agencies to help officers learn how to access individuals with mental health illnesses and to work with the local agencies to provide the most effective placement for a person in custody.

Another program will provide grants to help correctional agencies learn how to identify and screen mentally ill prisoners so they can get help while incarcerated, or even be placed in alternatives to incarceration. These grants will also help correctional services plan for reentry into the community.

Another program provides grants to States to coordinate and improve the treatment of mentally ill offenders, including facilitating information sharing between agencies. The grant will also encourage States to promote evidence-based practices to improve treatment and services.

Lastly, a new program will provide States and units of local government to improve the treatment of female offenders with mental illnesses and create family support services and intensive case management.

The total cost for the new programs will be $35 million for fiscal years 2008 through 2013. That amount is much less than we are currently spending on incarcerating mentally ill offenders who often have to be placed not only in isolated cells, but also in isolated areas to avoid disturbance of other inmates.

Despite common misconceptions, the majority of mentally ill people who are arrested and incarcerated are low-level, nonviolent offenders. These programs will help jurisdictions to assist mentally ill persons and help keep them from unnecessarily going to jails and prisons.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I include for the RECORD a letter from the Council of State Governments Justice Center in support of this legislation.

JUSTICE CENTER,
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS,
Bethesda, MD, October 24, 2007.

Hon. ROBERT C. SCOTT,
Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. RANDY FORBES,
Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SCOTT AND FORBES: On behalf of the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, we want to thank you for introducing the ''Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2007''. We are grateful to you for your leadership and continued support of the program.

The CSG Justice Center serves all states to promote effective data-driven practices—particularly in areas in which the criminal justice system intersects with other systems, such as mental health—to increase public safety and strengthen communities. Consistent with this mission, we have committed for some time to convening and supporting leaders in the criminal justice and mental health systems to improve the criminal justice system's response to people with mental illness.

Since the authorization of the Mentally Ill Offender Act, the program has helped states and counties design and implement collaborative efforts between the criminal justice and mental health systems. The grants can be used for a broad range of activities, including mental health courts, mental health and substance abuse treatment for incarcerated mentally ill offenders, community reentry services, and cross-training of criminal justice, law enforcement, and mental health personnel.

As you know, approximately 16 percent of the adult jail and prison population (350,000 individuals) has a serious mental illness, according to a study by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics. The DOJ also estimates that the prevalence of emotional disturbances among youth in our juvenile justice facilities is even higher. Many of these individuals have not been charged with violent crimes, but rather low level misdemeanors. Treating offenders with mental illnesses in the community can save money by avoiding the high cost-per-day of jail and prison stays and expensive psychiatric services during incarceration. The Mentally Ill Offender program provides assistance to states and communities to develop new—or expand existing—programs that can both increase public safety and help these individuals return to productive lives.

We are very grateful for your continued leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you in support of the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization Act. Its enactment is one of our top federal priorities.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL FESTA,
Executive Secretary of Elder Affairs, Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

THOMAS STICKRATH,
Director. Ohio Department of Youth Service.

SHARON KELLER,
Presiding Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals, Texas.

PAT COLLOTON,
Kansas House of Representatives.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I support H.R. 3992, the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act.

This legislation addresses the unique challenges that mentally ill offenders create for our criminal justice system.

I commend Chairman CONYERS, subcommittee Chairman SCOTT, subcommittee ranking member GOHMERT, and the many advocacy groups for their dedication and hard work to address this problem.

Madam Speaker, 16 percent of the prison or jail population, or over 1 million prisoners, have a serious mental illness. The Los Angeles County Jail and New York City's Rikers Island Jail house more people with mental illnesses than the largest psychiatric inpatient facilities in the United States. The problem is more than one-fifth of jails have no access to any mental health services at all.

Many criminal justice agencies are unprepared to address the treatment and needs of individuals with mental illness. Jails and prisons require extra staff and treatment resources for inmates with mental illness. In addition, mentally ill offenders can be affected psychologically by incarceration.

H.R. 3992 represents an innovative and new approach to the challenge of mentally ill criminal offenders. This legislation is an important step toward treating mentally ill offenders in a humane and appropriate way.

H.R. 3992 reauthorizes the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, which encourages early intervention for individuals with mental illness, reauthorizes the mental health courts program, and maximizes alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders with mental illness.

The legislation also encourages training on mental health and substance abuse issues, establishes new State and local planning grants to address the needs of mentally ill offenders, and facilitates communication, collaboration, and the delivery of support services among justice professionals, related service providers, and governmental partners.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2007. This legislation would provide grants for improved

mental health treatment and services provided to offenders with mental illness.

Over the course of the past three decades, as our country's mental health infrastructure has deteriorated, many mentally ill individuals have been forced to fend for themselves on the street. Oftentimes, these individuals end up in jail or prison for offenses related to their illness.

Unfortunately, our jails and prisons have become the sanatoriums of the 21st century. As mental institutions have closed down, jails and prisons have filled up. In fact, prisons currently hold three times more mentally ill people than do psychiatric hospitals, and prisoners have rates of mental illness that can be as high as four times the rate of the general population.

Not surprisingly, the prison system is ill-equipped to deal with the growing number of prisoners requiring psychiatric care. Jails and prisons do not have adequate resources to properly evaluate incarcerated individuals for mental health and substance abuse problems. Police and other law enforcement officials are generally not trained to handle mentally ill offenders. Mental health services may be provided, but they are often underfunded and inadequate.

H.R. 3992, the "Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2007," addresses this problem by establishing grants for programs training law enforcement officials to better identify prisoners with mental illness and respond to their needs. In addition, H.R. 3992 would authorize funding for developing receiving centers to assess individuals in law enforcement custody for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Such funding would also be used to improve technology to facilitate information sharing among law enforcement and criminal justice personnel, as well as to promote evidence-based mental health care practices in correctional facilities.

Madam Speaker, it is our moral responsibility to provide timely, appropriate and adequate health care to those in the custody of our correctional system. The treatment of mental illness should be no exception.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3992, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEATH IN CUSTODY REPORTING ACT OF 2008

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3971) to encourage States to report to the Attorney General certain information regarding the deaths of individuals in the custody of law enforcement agencies, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3971

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. INFORMATION REGARDING INDIVIDUALS WHO DIE IN THE CUSTODY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For each fiscal year after the expiration of the period specified in subsection (b)(1) in which a State receives funds for a program referred to in subsection (b)(2), the State shall report to the Attorney General, on a quarterly basis and pursuant to guidelines established by the Attorney General, information regarding the death of any person who is detained, under arrest, or is in the process of being arrested, is en route to be incarcerated, or is incarcerated at a municipal or county jail, State prison, State-run boot camp prison, boot camp prison that is contracted out by the State, any State or local contract facility, or other local or State correctional facility (including any juvenile facility) that, at a minimum, includes—

(1) the name, gender, race, ethnicity, and age of the deceased;

(2) the date, time, and location of death;

(3) the law enforcement agency that detained, arrested, or was in the process of arresting the deceased; and

(4) a brief description of the circumstances surrounding the death.

(b) COMPLIANCE AND INELIGIBILITY.—

(1) COMPLIANCE DATE.—Each State shall have not more than 30 days from the date of enactment of this Act to comply with subsection (a), except that—

(A) the Attorney General may grant an additional 30 days to a State that is making good faith efforts to comply with such subsection; and

(B) the Attorney General shall waive the requirements of subsection (a) if compliance with such subsection by a State would be unconstitutional under the constitution of such State.

(2) INELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDS.—For any fiscal year after the expiration of the period specified in paragraph (1), a State that fails to comply with subsection (a) shall not receive 10 percent of the funds that would otherwise be allocated for that fiscal year to the State under subpart 1 of part E of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3750 et seq.), whether characterized as the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Programs, the Local Government Law Enforcement Block Grants Program, the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, or otherwise.

(c) REALLOCATION.—Amounts not allocated under a program referred to in subsection (b)(2) to a State for failure to fully comply with subsection (a) shall be reallocated under that program to States that have not failed to comply with such subsection.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section the terms "boot camp prison" and "State" have the meaning given those terms, respectively, in section 901(a) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3791(a)).

SEC. 3. STUDY OF INFORMATION RELATING TO DEATHS IN CUSTODY.

(a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Attorney General shall, subject to the availability of appropriations under subsection (d), through grant or contract, provide for a study of the information reported under section 2 (regarding the death of any person who is detained, under arrest, or is in the process of being arrested, is en route to be incarcerated, or is incarcerated at a municipal or county jail, State prison, State-run boot camp prison, boot camp prison that is contracted out by the State, any State or local contract facility, or other local or State correctional facility (including any juvenile facility)) to—

(1) determine means by which such information can be used to reduce the number of such deaths; and

(2) examine the relationship, if any, between the number of such deaths and the actions of management of such jails, prisons, and other correctional facilities relating to such deaths.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall prepare and submit to Congress a report that contains the findings of the study required by subsection (a).

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $500,000 for fiscal year 2009. Funds appropriated under this subsection shall remain available until expended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3971 is entitled the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2008. It will reauthorize the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2000 which actually expired on December 31, 2006.

□ 1445

This is a bipartisan effort which I introduced with my colleague from Virginia, Representative RANDY FORBES, and who was, at that time, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Crime. Its purpose is to provide continued and improved oversight over the conduct of law enforcement officials during arrest and imprisonment of fellow citizens.

Before the enactment of the Death in Custody Act of 2000, States and localities had no uniform requirements for reporting the circumstances surrounding the deaths of persons in their custody, and some had no system for requiring such reports. The lack of uniform reporting requirements made it impossible to ascertain how many people were dying in custody and from what causes, although estimates by those concerned suggested that there were more than 1,000 deaths in custody each year, some under very suspicious circumstances.

Consequently, an environment of suspicion and concern arose surrounding

many of those deaths. Some that were ruled suicides or deaths from natural causes were suspected of being homicides committed by officers, fellow prisoners or others. Indifference to prisoner rights and the safety of those in custody made scrutiny of suspected deaths a low priority, so such questionable causes were rarely investigated.

In the mid-1980s, researchers, reporters, prison and jail accreditation organizations, prison reformers, activists, and others began to give more scrutiny to the death rate in our Nation's jails and prisons and to the fact that such deaths were not being routinely reported to anybody.

In fact, by 1986, only 25 States and the District of Columbia even had jail inspection units. Moreover, even the States that did report deaths did it on the basis of different reporting standards. The insufficient data and the lack of uniformity of the data collected made oversight of prisoner safety woefully inadequate.

However, the interest in oversight that emerged shed light on the conditions in State and local jails, which began a rising tide of wrongful death litigation. The increasing litigation forced some measure of accountability, and conditions somewhat improved. Moreover, activism and news of the litigation spurned by media interests, and that shed further light on the conditions in our present jails and prisons.

The watershed moment for bringing the death in custody rate to national attention occurred in 1995. After a 1-year investigation by journalist Mike Masterson into prison conditions and the death rate of persons in custody, the Asbury Park Press of New Jersey ran a series of award-winning editorials that brought the seriousness of the lack of reporting to the Nation's attention. The editorials went on to detail abuses, including racially motivated violence, overzealous police investigations, cover-ups and general law enforcement incompetence, which prompted Congress to take action.

Following successive introduction of bills in several Congresses by my colleagues from Arkansas, first Representative Tim Hutchinson, then later Representative Asa Hutchinson, the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2000 was passed. The law required States receiving certain Federal grants to comply with reporting requirements established by the Attorney General.

Since the enactment in 2000, the Bureau of Justice Statistics has compiled a number of statistics detailing the circumstances of prisoner deaths, the rate of deaths in prison and jails, and the rate of deaths based on the size of various facilities and so forth. But the most astounding statistic reported since the enactment of the bill before is the latest Bureau of Justice statistics report dated August 2005, which shows a 64 percent decline in suicides and a 93 percent decline in homicides in custody since 1980. Those statistics showing a significant decline in the death rate in our Nation's prisons and jails since stricter oversight has been in place suggest that the oversight measures, such as the Death in Custody Reporting Act, play an important role in ensuring the safety and security of prisoners who are in the custody of State facilities.

In considering the reauthorization of the bill, the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security examined the statistics and heard testimony from witnesses whose testimony also supported the suggestion that oversight has actually improved conditions. Convinced of the effectiveness of the Death in Custody Act, we resolved to not only reauthorize it but also improve it.

To ascertain the most effective use of the statistical data, H.R. 3971 differs from the original bill in that it authorizes $500,000 for a study to determine which policies and procedures have, in fact, led to or at least assisted the decreasing death rate among prisoners.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, Mr. FORBES, for his support of the bill. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I support H.R. 3971, the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2007, and commend Chairman CONYERS, Crime Subcommittee Chairman SCOTT, and Crime Subcommittee Ranking Member GOHMERT for their commitment to this bipartisan legislation.

The Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2000 directed the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics to collect data on deaths that occur in the process of arrest or during transfer after arrest, as well as deaths that occur in jails and prisons.

H.R. 3971 reauthorizes this data collection program and directs the Attorney General to commission a study to determine how to reduce deaths in custody and to examine the relationship between deaths in custody and the management of jail and prison facilities.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that between 2001 and 2005 there were 15,308 State prisoner deaths. The bureau also reports that there were 5,935 local prisoner deaths and 43 juvenile deaths between 2000 and 2005.

Half of all State prisoner deaths are the result of heart disease and cancer. Two-thirds involved inmates age 45 or older, and another two-thirds are the result of medical problems that were present at the time of admission.

Although illness-related deaths have slightly increased in recent years, the homicide and suicide rates in State prisons have dramatically decreased over the last 25 years. That is positive news, but we still need to collect data to monitor these trends.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlelady from Texas, a member of the Judiciary Committee, Ms. JACKSON-LEE.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished gentleman, the chairman of the subcommittee that I have the privilege of serving on, the Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism on the House Judiciary Committee.

I thank the full committee chairman, Mr. CONYERS, the ranking member on the full committee and the ranking member on the subcommittee for having two important initiatives, and I speak to the underlying bill which addresses the question of death in custody, H.R. 3971.

I, too, want to applaud the fact that the existence of this legislation is a strong statement that, in spite of individuals being incarcerated in the criminal justice system, in the penal system, in the prison system, that there is a responsibility; one for the safety and security of those who are incarcerated, particularly, as well, that younger and younger individuals are going into our criminal justice system of which we hope to address as we look to these issues in the coming year, work that has already been done in this committee. We hope to see some of that legislation come to fruition.

I do want to speak specifically, Madam Speaker, to the concerns that I see in the State of Texas. And it may be symbolic of many States, particularly large States that have a very large penal system and a criminal justice system, if you will, or incarceration rate, and say that this legislation, in addition to reporting or requiring reporting of the deaths and suggesting the ineligibility for funds, which I think is an important statement, some instances of holding the particular jurisdictional head responsible for some of, in this instance, the deaths of individuals held in their particular facilities.

For example, about 3 weeks ago, in Houston, an individual was seen being neck-choked by a custodian in the Harris County jail in Harris County in Houston, Texas, and subsequently that inmate lost their life. This has been an increasing occurrence in the Harris County jail. And certainly there have been occurrences in the whole State system, but we have a county jail system which people are either held for trial or either they are actually serving their time there, and in the last decade we've had 106 deaths, plus, in the Harris County jail. Many of them have come about through the inability to secure medicine, to secure medical care. One instance is an individual in his own pool of blood, and the, if you will, caretaker, the guard, was asked to get relief and he said, What do you expect for me to do, get a Band-Aid?

So in some instances the deaths are caused because of such horrific occurrences, such egregious occurrences that

there seems to be a necessity for additional penalties. So I would rise to support this initiative, H.R. 3971, for the good work that it has already done, look forward to working with the chairperson of the subcommittee and the full committee Chair as we move toward the Senate to ensure that this bill, in and of itself, becomes law, because I think it's an important statement, but also it's a statement that saves lives.

It is so tragic to hear from wives and mothers, fathers of those incarcerated. These individuals have families. And I know that the existence or the presence that they have in the jail system means that there have been charges. Some of them in the local jails are being held for trial, so, therefore, they have not been convicted. We owe, as a civilized Nation, the kind of incarcerated presence that allows people to live, to be tried by the judicial system, but to allow them to live unless rendered another judgment by that system. So I think it is key that we look at whether or not the actions are egregious as we proceed to report on or receive reports made by our State Attorney General and others.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3971, the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2007, introduced by my distinguished colleague from Virginia, Representative BOBBY SCOTT. This important legislation will require that any State that receives certain criminal justice assistance grants will be accountable to report the treatment of inmates to both the Attorney General and to Congress.

How a government treats its detainees is a critical test for a nation's civility and maturity. How we treat detainees, especially the most vulnerable among them—detainees with medical conditions, be it pre-existing or one developed after they have been taken into custody—is an important measure of how humane our entire justice system is.

In the mid-1980s researcher and activist scrutiny of the death rate in the Nation's jails and prisons began to emerge. The research focused on criticism of jail and prison conditions from the 1960s to the 1980s. Studies such as the "National Study of Jail Suicides: Seven Years Later," by Lindsay M. Hayes and Joseph R. Rowan in 1988, that examined the death rate in jails and prisons found very little reporting of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of prisoners. In fact by 1986, only 25 States and the District of Columbia even had jail inspection units. Moreover, even the States that did report deaths differed on basic reporting standards. For example, jurisdictions differed on the definition of "custody," which made it difficult to determine whether a prisoner had died during arrest, in a jail before trial, or post conviction.

The insufficient data and the lack of uniformity of the data collected made oversight of prisoner safety woefully inadequate. However, the study brought to light the potential that oversight had for improving conditions. The authors found that in the 1970s when there was little or no focus on deaths in custody, it had been unusual for a jail to be sued for negligence when a prisoner died in custody. But by the 1980s it was unusual for a jail not to be sued. The interest in oversight that emerged in the 1980s had shed light on conditions in state and local jails and began a rising tide of wrongful death litigation. The increasing litigation forced some measure of accountability and conditions somewhat improved. Moreover, activism and news of the litigation spurred media interest, which shed further light on conditions.

In 1995, after conducting a 1-year investigation, the Asbury Park Press of New Jersey ran a series of award-winning editorials that brought the seriousness of the lack of reporting to the Nation's attention. Among the examples the Asbury Park Press highlighted was the story of Elmer Johnson of Charleston, MO. Mr. Johnson died in a jail cell after he was arrested for "failing to obey a police officer." The coroner ruled Mr. Johnson's death a suicide but evidence to the contrary raised doubts. The editorials went on to detail abuses including racism, overzealous police interrogations, coverups and general police incompetence, which prompted congressional action.

Congress has a responsibility to investigate this issue and call for reforms in order to ensure that dignity and respect for all human beings in our immigration detention system is preserved.

Following successive bills being introduced by Representative SCOTT of Virginia and Representative Hutchinson of Arkansas in several Congresses, the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2000 was passed. The law required States receiving grants to comply with reporting requirements established by the Attorney General. Since the enactment of the act, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, BJS, has compiled a number of statistics detailing not only the circumstances of prisoner deaths but the rates of deaths in prisons vs. jails and the rates of deaths based on the sizes of the various facilities.

With the detailed statistical data, policy makers, both State and Federal, can make informed policy judgments about the treatment of prisoners, leading to great success in lowering the prisoner death rate. In fact, since the focus on deaths in custody emerged in the mid-1980s, the latest BJS report, dated August 2005, shows a 64 percent decline in suicides and a 93 percent decline in the homicide rate, which suggests that oversight measures such as the Deaths in Custody Reporting Act play an important role in ensuring the safety and security of prisoners who are in the custody of State facilities.

However, no actual study has been conducted to ascertain whether there is indeed a cause and effect between the oversight and decreasing death rate, and H.R. 2908 contained no provision to fund such a study. Therefore, to ascertain whether the cause and effect exists and how to make the most effective use of the statistical data, my good friend and colleague, Chairman SCOTT and Ranking Member FORBES have introduced H.R. 3971, the Death in Custody Act of 2007, of which I am a proud cosponsor.

This revised legislation is imperative to ensuring that there is justice within our justice system. H.R. 3971 includes all aspects of H.R. 2908 but also authorizes $500,000 for a study to determine whether the strengthened oversight has in fact led to or at least assisted the decreasing death rate among prisoners. H.R. 3971 is thus an improvement over H.R. 2908 in that with analysis accompanying the statistical data, we can make yet further informed decisions about policy and oversight.

Congress has a responsibility to investigate this issue and call for reforms in order to ensure that dignity and respect for all human beings in our immigration detention system is preserved. This legislation will hold States responsible to report to the Attorney General on a quarterly basis regarding the death of any person who is under arrest or is in the process of being arrested, en route to incarceration, or incarcerated in State or local facilities. It furthermore imposes penalties on States that fail to comply with such reporting requirements and consequently will ensure that both the Attorney General and the Congress stay informed on the deaths of any and all persons in custody.

I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in supporting the Death in Custody Act of 2007. Passage of H.R. 3971 would be the start of a long overdue process to eliminate unnecessary mistreatment of prisoners.

Might I just quickly acknowledge H.R. 3992, with the indulgence of the Speaker, to applaud the, hoping, passage of this legislation that deals with mental health. And let me just say one small point about the mental health circumstance, and that is that the crisis of mental health is seen across America. There are so many circumstances where individuals suffering from severe schizophrenia and others are caught in the criminal justice system, or unfortunately are called to the home and confront the law enforcement system as opposed to the mental health system, and that is before, of course, these individuals are incarcerated. This has to do with offenders who are suffering from mental illness, but I wanted to at least speak to the point that those who don't get to the system because they are confronted through the police system and unfortunately will lose their lives. What do elderly persons do when a son or daughter is suffering from mental illness and, unfortunately, has a breakdown in the house and reacts violently? It is to call the police.

And so in addition to this very fine bill that deals with improving mental health services for offenders so that when they come out they are ready to adjust to the society in which they return, we also want to look forward to the idea of providing resources for training of law enforcement that we've discussed extensively in our subcommittee on crime to help these people be advisedly trained to deal with this.

I cite as an example the desire by our local jurisdiction to, or the request being made by our local jurisdiction, to pay an extra incentive fee for those police officers that would take mental health training so that they could be on a team, a task force to be called out when that would occur. Unfortunately, the overall response by the city government was not enough money. I think we should have enough money to save lives and, hopefully, innovative legislation like H.R. 3992 sets the pace for those new and innovative ideas on addressing the question of mental illness among offenders who are incarcerated, but also that we address many of

the other questions that hopefully we'll have the opportunity to address.

So it is my distinct pleasure to be able to rise to support the underlying bill, H.R. 3971, and as well the previous bill, H.R. 3992. And I thank the chairman for his leadership. And I think the criminal justice system will be better for the passage of these two initiatives.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3992, the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2007, introduced by my distinguished colleague from Virginia, Representative ROBERT SCOTT. This bipartisan legislation is designed to increase public safety by enabling coordination between the criminal justice and mental health care systems to increase treatment among this segment of the population.

The enormous growth in the national prison population has intensified the problems presented by the needs of mentally ill inmates. Frequently, mentally ill defendants are inappropriately placed into criminal or juvenile corrections facilities, and the harmful impact that this has on the individual and society is reflected in increased recidivism rates, wasted administrative costs, and superfluous overcrowding of corrections facilities, among other things. Among the utmost dilemmas involved in managing the mentally ill prisoners is that correctional staffing is seldom at an adequate level to supervise and care for these prisoners, and correctional officers in many state prisons have never received training in working with the mentally ill.

The Bureau of Justice reported that in 1998 over 280,000 individuals in jail or prison and approximately 550,000 of those on probation had a mental impairment. The mentally ill are disproportionately represented in jails and prisons. Five percent of all Americans have a serious mental illness, but 16 to 20 percent of incarcerated individuals have a mental impairment. Any individual who is enrolled in a juris doctorate program is familiar with two key terms in criminal law, Actus Reas and Mens Rea. Actus Reas is associated with the guilty act, while Mens Rea is associated with the guilty mind. Both elements are required to achieve a successful conviction in our criminal law system. Mental health offenders may have committed the physical, guilty act, but they are incapable of having the mind capacity to commit the crime. The act does not make a person guilty unless the mind is also guilty.

The prevalence of the mentally ill in the criminal justice system has been the subject of many recent studies. The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics reported last July that at least 16 percent of the U.S. prison population is seriously mentally ill. The highest rate of reported serious mental illness is among white female inmates, at 29 percent. For white females age 24 or younger, this level rises to almost 40 percent. The American Jail Association estimates that 600,000 to 700,000 people suffering from serious mental illness are being booked into jail each year.

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill reports that on any given day, at least 284,000 schizophrenic and manic depressive individuals and manic depressive individuals are incarcerated, while only 187,000 seriously mentally ill individuals are in mental health facilities. Additionally, there are approximately 547,800 seriously mentally ill people who are currently on probation. These statistics seem to indicate that the mentally ill are unjustifiably burdening the criminal justice system.

There is a dire need for resources that will provide vital resolutions to the crisis, expand diversion programs, community-based treatment, re-entry services, and improved treatment during incarceration. The reauthorization of the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act of 2004 recognizes that true partnerships between the mental health and criminal and juvenile corrections systems and between the Federal and State Governments are needed to meet these challenges. Indeed, this bill requires that Federal funds authorized under this program be supplemented with contributions from the States, local governments, and tribal organizations.

Madam Speaker, Congress has an obligation to legislate to protect the community from those who become aggressive or violent because of mental illness. We also have a responsibility to see that the offender receives the proper treatment for his or her illness. Far too often, mental illness goes undiagnosed, and many in our prison system would do better in alternative settings designed to handle their particular needs.

In Texas, past treatment of mentally ill offenders illustrates the need for legislation such as H.R. 3992. Senior U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice, who is experienced in dealing with mentally ill prisoners in Texas, ruled in 1980 that the Texas prison system is unconstitutional and placed it under Federal control for 30 years. In Judge Justice's estimation, the Texas laws that apply to the mentally ill "lack compassion and emphasize vengeance." KPFT news reported him as having said,

> We have allowed the spirit of vengeance such unrivaled sway in our dealings with those who commit crime that we have ceased to consider properly whether we have taken adequate account of the role that mental impairment may play in the determination of moral responsibility. As a result, we punish those who we cannot justly blame. Such result is not, I believe worthy of a civil society.

This legislation in an important first step towards restructuring a system that has operated in a disjointed and unsympathetic manner for far too long. We must continue to make this legislation adequately effective to preserve the lives of defendants who are actually victims.

I am proud to support this legislation and I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation and calling for the appropriate treatment and recognition of mentally ill offenders.

□ 1500

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers on this side, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3971, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill to encourage States to report to the Attorney General certain information regarding the deaths of individuals in the custody of law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes.".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MARY LOUISE PLUNKETT

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honor for me to rise here today on the floor of the House of Representatives to pay tribute and to say thank you to a very close personal friend of mine, Ms. Mary Lu Plunkett, one of the most influential people in my life for the past 25 years and one of the most valued members of the community of Queens County in New York State and New York City for more than the last 50 years.

I was blessed to meet Mary Lu Plunkett in my early 20s, when I stepped into the Queens County Democratic headquarters while running errands at the time for my then-Uncle Walter Crowley. That day was the start of one of the most important friendships in my personal and political life, Madam Speaker. But long before Mary Lu became a valued part of my life, she was already a valued and well-established force in Queens County and in Queens County Democratic politics.

Mary Lu was born in Brooklyn, and she moved to Jackson Heights, Queens, in 1949 with her husband Jack. Mary Lu was quick to engage in her community and in her local church, and we were just as quick to forgive Mary Lu for her Brooklyn past.

Mary Lu's foray into politics started when she joined the Amerind Democratic Club. She went on to volunteer at Queens County Democratic Headquarters, where she became a full-time member of the staff in 1956. While working at county headquarters, Mary Lu served some of Queens County's finest political leaders, including Moses Weinstein, Jim Roe, and my predecessor Tom Manton, and her influence on them and our community was felt and has been felt by all of us since.

No political event or dinner has been held without Mary Lu and her charm. She helped to welcome such dignitaries and luminaries as John Kennedy, TED

KENNEDY, Jimmy Carter, Governor Hugh Carey, Mario Cuomo, Mayor Ed Koch, David Dinkins and President Bill and Senator HILLARY CLINTON and welcomed them into our Queens County home.

Her intelligence, her warmth and kindness have made everyone who has come into contact with her feel welcome and comfortable.

However, Mary Lu's reach went well beyond local politics. You have to keep in mind, Madam Speaker, that Queens County has 2.3 million people who live in just that county alone. When she was not at county headquarters, she was working to create a better Queens, and in particular, a better Rockaway, her hometown in Queens County. For example, every year she hosted an annual fundraiser that was a must-attend event to help the children of St. Gertrude's Parish in Far Rockaway.

On top of all she has done for others, most important to her, I think, is her role as a mother and as a grandmother. There is nothing that Mary Lu won't do or hasn't done for her two children, Steve and Jamie; and her three grandchildren, Matthew, Christopher, and Caroline; and their mom, Nancy.

I have tremendous respect for Mary Lu and all she has accomplished throughout her years, but as her friend, I'm most proud of how she has led her family life, and I have always considered myself an extended member of that family, often enjoying many personal moments in the Rockaways, getting sand in my shoes with the Plunkett family.

In the coming weeks, my fellow friends and colleagues in Queens County will gather to honor Mary Lu for her lifetime of service to our great borough and to our great city and to our great country. We will applaud her for her charity, her wit and political skill, and I want to thank her for being a mentor and a friend.

Mary Lu, we love you and we congratulate you on your lifetime of achievement.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

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

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, the current subprime housing crisis, coupled with volatile energy prices, rising costs in health care and looming tax increases, among others, have put our country on the dark path of economic slowdown. And although not yet a technical recession, it certainly feels like a recession in the communities that I represent in western Pennsylvania.

Clearly, America's hardworking families and employers are feeling the crunch from the slowing economy.

While there's a growing consensus in Washington that Congress needs to take action on a stimulus package to stave off further economic challenges, an agreement on how to proceed remains very elusive.

In addition to recently participating in a Joint Economic Committee hearing on the state of the economy, I've met with half a dozen respected economists, and I strongly believe that unless Congress acts swiftly on a stimulus package that will inject money into the American economy and incentivize job creation, middle class America will be forced to bear the brunt of our country's economic instability.

To be clear, now is not the time for politics as usual. We need to unite to enact sound stimulus legislation that, among other things, will benefit both wage earners and job creators, will encourage investment in good paying jobs, and will put more money back into the pockets of working families.

Now, how can Congress achieve these goals on a bipartisan basis? In my view, Madam Speaker, the single best way to help struggling employers in this climate, while providing a jumpstart to the economy, is to allow companies to quickly recapture the money they invest in capital.

Congress should step up to the plate today to create incentives for American employers to invest in new equipment, to revive bonus depreciation to boost employer's capital, and to work to enact common-sense policies that will curb the reach of the corporate alternative minimum tax at exactly the time when its reach is most devastating, during economic downturns.

At the same time, Congress must explore ways in which we can mitigate the impact of a sluggish economy on low and moderate income families that are now facing new and severe economic uncertainty.

By extending unemployment benefits, rolling the income tax on unemployment benefits back, and increasing the child tax credit and providing a significant tax rebate for middle-class families, Congress can ensure that every American has access to the financial resources they need to weather this pending economic storm.

While I've outlined a stimulus plan that will create an environment for job growth, reform how we tax American employers and improve UC benefits for the long-term unemployed, Congress must be vigilant in crafting a pro-growth plan that will not disturb the government's fiscal balance.

I believe frankly we need to avoid absurd PAYGO rhetoric which, coupled with a liberal budget requiring tax increases, now seems to be hobbling action on the other side of the aisle.

Over the past year, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle have insisted on a budget that would impose substantial tax increases on a struggling American economy.

These Herbert Hoover Democrats have used the labels of tax reform and revenue neutrality as a carnival mask to conceal a policy of higher taxes and higher spending, essentially placing a higher percentage of the American economy under government control, and this at a time when the economy is vulnerable, facing slower economic growth.

Instead of setting new priorities, the new majority has chosen to throw priority setting to the wind and have undermined the benefits of the very tax policies that have grown the economy and helped America's middle class.

At the time of economic hardship, when Americans are struggling to make ends meet, it would be inconceivable to place additional, unnecessary tax burdens on the backs of middle class America.

Madam Speaker, time is of the essence. Putting the economy back on a growth path must be a top priority for Washington. Congress must move on a bipartisan basis to enact a stimulus package that is swift, significant and effective.

We need to set aside sterile politics of class warfare and embrace strong pro-growth tax policies that will help benefit everyone by reinvigorating the American economy.

HONORING PRIVATE BOOKER TOWNSELL

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, Senator BILL NELSON and I introduced legislation today to amend the dark chapter of American history by providing a fair and just settlement for our African American soldiers who were wrongly convicted after an incident at Fort Lawton during World War II.

Last Saturday, I stood with the family of Booker Townsell at his gravesite in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At long last, Private Booker Townsell received a burial with full honors, in a ceremony filled with emotion and symbolism. At long last, Booker Townsell received the military honors he deserved.

I want to read into the RECORD the remarks I read last Saturday because Booker and his family deserve to have his long overdue military honors permanently etched into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

In the House, I represent Seattle in King County, Washington, home to Fort Lawton and home to author Jack Hamann. He exposed what Booker Townsell, his family and others have often lived and known for a long time, that the color of their skin determined their fate and denied them due process.

And on behalf of the people in my Seventh District, who live in a county proudly named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, let me sum up our feelings by quoting Dr. King: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

That's why I got into this fight. America cannot and must not permit

racial injustice to breathe the same air that we breathe, or to live among us as a plague upon our Nation, or to poison the sweet light of day with its grim darkness of evil.

We come here today in the name of justice, to fully and finally honor Private Booker Townsell, a soldier, a hero, an African American who served his country in a time of war, only to be deserted by his country in his time of need.

Racial injustice struck down this innocent man, and others, who were denied the opportunity to live their lives with a full measure of honor for their military service and who were denied all their rightful benefits for their military service, including the right of their family to receive an American flag when they passed.

The American flag is a powerful symbol of our Nation's strength, unity and commitment to core values like equal justice under the law and equal rights. Today our flag also represents the courage of an Army private and the dignity of his family to accept justice delayed after being denied so long, and it represents the ability of a great Nation to look inward and admit a grave injustice.

This is a proud day for Private Booker Townsell and his family. He has been promoted from Army private to American role model, and his life, service and this day teaches us a lot about ourselves and our Nation.

Dr. King said: The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Booker Townsell, and his family and others like Sam Snow who lives in Florida, stood up to the challenge and, in so doing, stood up for us all. Today, on their behalf, America renews its vow to fight racial injustice, to acknowledge the deep and tragic mistakes of the past and to restore hope in the future.

Here in Washington the work is not finished. The legislation Senator NELSON and I introduced today will, along with others, including Congresswoman MOORE from Milwaukee, direct the Army to provide the Fort Lawton survivors like Sam Snow in Florida and families like Booker Townsell with the economic benefits to which they're entitled. It's the least we can do. I also hope that we can put a memorial on the Fort Lawton site to teach future generations about the sacrifices made by Booker Townsell, Sam Snow, and others, and to remind us that we must never forget that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Today, we salute Private Booker Townsell and his loved ones on behalf of this grateful Nation. We are grateful for his military service, his courage, and his dignity, and grateful that America is strong enough to admit its mistakes and provide justice and honor at long last.

I would like to enter into the RECORD an article from the Milwaukee Sentinel dated 19 January 2008, entitled, ''Injustice Undone.''

[From the Milwaukee Sentinel, Jan. 19, 2008]

INJUSTICE UNDONE: SOLDIER HONORED MORE THAN 20 YEARS AFTER DEATH

(By Meg Kissinger)

Carol Blalock closed her eyes and smiled as the sound of gunshots rang through the bitter cold morning air on Saturday.

At long last, justice had been served.

Her father, Booker Townsell, who died in 1984, had finally been granted full military honors, a proper military burial at Graceland Cemetery on Milwaukee's northwest side. An Army contingent, including Ronald James, Assistant Secretary of the Army, traveled to Milwaukee to correct an injustice begun more than 63 years ago.

In August 1944, Townsell and 42 other African-American soldiers were blamed for the lynching death of an Italian prisoner of war at Fort Lawton, an Army base outside Seattle. Many of them, including Townsell, were convicted of rioting. Two others were convicted of manslaughter.

The story might have ended there, had it not been for curiosity of a television reporter named Jack Hamann, who, along with his wife, Leslie, spent 20 years uncovering the facts of the case. Their account, in the book ''On American Soil: How Justice Became a Casualty of World War II,'' prompted a bipartisan call for the convictions to be overturned and full military honors to be restored. In October, the Army reversed the conviction of Townsell and the others.

Hamann stood at the front of the chapel at Graceland on Saturday, fighting back tears as the Army color guard played taps.

''Reporters are trained to check out emotionally,'' he said. ''But this one is tough.''

Also standing in the crowd was Ronald Hayes, a retired master sergeant and Townsell family friend, who likewise swallowed hard when Wisconsin Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Roger Lalich presented the U.S. flag to Townsell's oldest daughter, Marion Williamson.

''This is good,'' Hayes said.

Later in the day, nearly 200 people gathered at the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center to pay tribute to Townsell and to celebrate his ultimate exoneration.

''He wouldn't have wanted this attention,'' Williamson told the crowd. ''But he deserves it. I hope my father's soul can finally rest in peace.''

Speakers included Jim McDermott, Democratic congressman from the state of Washington who pushed to have the Army reverse the convictions.

''Too often the color of skin defined fate and denied due process,'' McDermott said.

Quoting the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., McDermott talked of why this decision is so important and the need to celebrate it so urgent.

''Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,'' he said. McDermott complimented the Army for admitting a grave mistake. He recalled the images of Townsell as a dedicated family man and factory worker, who danced with his children and cheered his granddaughter at her track meet.

It would have been easy for Townsell to wallow in the bitterness of this dark chapter of his life, McDermott said. Instead, he chose to persevere. Again invoking King's words, McDermott said, ''The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.''

As far as Blalock and the other members of Townsell's family were concerned, Saturday's ceremony was no less precious because of the time it took to make things right.

''I loved my father's laugh,'' Blalock said. ''When they had that 21-gun salute and played taps, it was like I could hear him laugh again.''

□ 1515

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RIC WILLIAMSON

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

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor of the House this afternoon to remember one of the most dedicated public servants from the State of Texas we lost on December 30 of this year.

Ric Williamson was a member of the Texas Transportation Commission and served as that body's Chair that oversees statewide activities for the Texas Department of Transportation. He was appointed to that position in March of 2001 by Governor Rick Perry and in January of 2004 became the chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission.

Prior to his appointment, he served in the Texas State Legislature from 1985 to 1988. Numerous professional and legislative accomplishments are attributed to Ric Williamson, and many awards from the Texas media, including twice being recognized as one of the 10 best legislators in the Texas State Legislature in 1989 and 1991.

Ric was born in Abilene, Texas, and graduated with a B.A. degree from the University of Texas in 1974. He later founded his own natural gas production company. He made his home in Weatherford, Texas, with his wife, Mary Ann. He has three beautiful daughters, Melissa, Katherine and Sara, who spoke so eloquently on behalf of their father in the memorial service that we held this past January 3. Ric has two grandchildren. Most recently, his grandson was born at the beginning of December of this past year.

Chairman Williamson brought a sense of purpose, a sense of vision, and a sense of urgency that had not previously been present in the State of Texas when it came to issues regarding transportation. He established a strategic plan, he set real goals, and then he did everything within his power to meet those goals.

He wanted to reduce congestion. He wanted to improve safety. He wanted to expand economic opportunity, increase the value of the assets in the Texas highway system, and clean the air.

One of his greatest legacies was to empower local leaders to make local

transportation decisions. The best example of this empowerment is the State Highway 121 Project in my district of the Dallas/Fort Worth area. This brought over $3 billion in highway construction funds to north Texas. At a time when the rest of Texas and, indeed, many other areas of the Nation have money only to put towards maintenance, we have money available for new construction because of Ric's vision.

He wasn't always easy to live with, he wasn't always easy to work with, but you always knew where you stood with Ric Williamson; you were never left guessing.

He was more than just a leader for Texas; he helped make Texas a leader for the Nation. The United States Department of Transportation now looks toward Texas as a model for other States to use to employ some of those innovative solutions to their challenging problems. And that was, in whole part, due to Ric's unique vision for the State of Texas.

Shortly after Ric Williamson's death, the Federal Highway Administrator Richard Capka said, ''He helped pave the way for some of the Nation's most innovative transportation projects, and he is largely responsible for bringing highway financing for Texas and the rest of the Nation into the 21st century.'' He got Texans thinking. He got other Americans thinking on a broad and deep level about issues regarding transportation in a way that probably had never been done before.

During the memorial service for Ric Williamson, and many people got up and spoke on his behalf, it was frequently brought out how Ric Williamson regarded politics as a full contact sport. He would go at it with everything he had. And again, you always knew where you stood with Ric Williamson and he wasn't always easy to live with. But Ric Williamson believed that these discussions should take place within the light of day, not behind closed doors, not in some smoke-filled room. So, it's to his credit that he pushed these ideas in the State of Texas, but it was never done in secret; it was never done behind some veil. Everyone always knew where Ric Williamson was and what he was doing.

He will always be remembered by his friends and associates as a true champion for all things Texan. He was unafraid to challenge the status quo. He was highly regarded for bringing innovative ideas to provide safe, economic, and reliable transportation to improve the quality of daily lives of all Texans.

On a strictly personal level, Ric remained a patient mentor to me, a steadfast friend, and I will greatly miss him.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SCHIP VETO OVERRIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. GIFFORDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I am speaking out today in strong opposition of the President's veto of the KidsCare bill, also known as SCHIP here in Washington. I am profoundly disappointed that we were not able today to override the President's veto.

In the State of Arizona, there are over 264,000 children that currently do not have health insurance. That's about one out of every five kids. Across the country, it's estimated that over 1 million children do not have health insurance.

I am deeply concerned, in addition, because of the slowing of the economy, about the fact that we're going to see unemployment rates increase. And just last week, the Joint Economic Committee came out and stated that ''worsening economic conditions will likely create substantial increases in demands in States' Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs.''

The JEC specifically linked employment woes to demands for programs like KidsCare. Nationwide, they projected that between 700,000 and 1.1 million children per year will be added to the enrollment numbers for Medicaid and SCHIP due to the slowdown in the economy. That makes acting to ensure a strong SCHIP or KidsCare program in Arizona and across the country absolutely critical, but it also reveals how out of touch the President is and how willing he is not just to disregard our children, but to disregard the future of our Nation.

As the universal health care debate continues, there should be no debate about health care for kids. Kids can't work; kids can't afford to pay health insurance premiums, and that's why I'd like to thank the 259 colleagues on both sides of the aisle for voting today to reauthorize KidsCare.

Democrats and Republicans alike must stay united for the children of our country. We are their representatives; we are their voices, and we must speak out for them. That is precisely why I am speaking here today. It is why I will continue to speak out here in Washington and back home in Arizona and why I am not alone. I am joined by thousands and thousands of voices across southern Arizona in calling for Congress and the President to fully reauthorize KidsCare.

In this economic climate, we must not fail to recognize health care as one of the most costly economic challenges confronting businesses, confronting families, and confronting the children of our country.

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

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

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JASON LEMKE AND PRIVATE FIRST CLASS KEITH LLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, as of Monday, January 21, 2008, 3,929 members of the United States military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press account. Today, I want to take this opportunity to talk about just two of these soldiers, residents of the Fourth Congressional District of Wisconsin.

After these gentlemen have given so much for their country and their communities, our community, I just must pause, we must pause. We can't just allow business to go on as usual until we pay tribute here on the floor of the House to these young men and to offer my sincerest condolences to their families.

On January 5, Army Private First Class Jason Lemke, age 30, was killed in Iraq as a result of wounds suffered when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb. PFC Lemke was not just a soldier, Madam Speaker, but also a father of three young daughters, Amber, Liz and Casey.

When he was interred just a few weeks ago on January 16, a family lost a loving father, a beloved son, his mom and dad, Colleen and Greg, and brother to Jerrie and Jill Lemke.

A 1996 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee, Jason wanted to enlist in the Army right after graduation from high school, but his parents talked him out of it. Instead, he worked and raised his baby girls. In December of 2004, PFC Lemke answered the call of his heart and enlisted in the Army in Milwaukee and reported to Fort Benning, Georgia, in January of 2005 for initial entry training.

In May of 2005, he reported to Fort Lewis in Washington where he was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, and his brigade was then deployed to Iraq in April of 2007.

One talent that sticks out in my mind was his exceptional linguistic skill. He possessed this extraordinary skill, and he spoke both Spanish and Arabic, and I'm sure that that was an incredible asset to his fellow soldiers in Iraq. His language training came about because the military saw something special in this young man and selected him for intensive training in Arabic. His proficiency in it speaks well of Private First Class Lemke's own capacity and ability to pick up a difficult language in such a short time. I wish I had

had the opportunity to meet this outstanding young man. I can so relate to him, and I'm sure the rest of us can, in that he had his fair challenges in life.

Here are some of the words that have been used to describe this young man, just briefly, from his mom, Colleen.

''He's my son, my little boy, and my friend. He always made me proud and never disappointed me. His wit he shared with everyone. He always looked out for the underdog and did what he had to do. When he was with his kids and his sister's kids, the room was full of love. I'll miss his head in my lap when talking and watching TV. He was not afraid to show his love. But he's home in my heart and soul today.''

From his father, Greg: ''His grandpa was in the Marines. His uncle was a Marine. His father was in the Army, and my older brother was in the Army,'' Greg said. ''So there's a family service thing here. He wanted to make a mark.''

In a last but fitting honor, Private First Class Lemke was posthumously promoted to the rank of corporal. So today, Madam Speaker, as Corporal Lemke's family, friends, and his fellow soldiers come together at Fort Lewis to remember him in a memorial ceremony, I rise to honor this valiant soldier, loving son, and father, and to express my gratitude, condolences and that of the House to those who knew him and loved him best.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

□ 1530

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP: THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again. As you know, the 30-something Working Group comes to the floor to share issues that are before the Congress not only with many of our colleagues but also with the American people.

But at this time, Madam Speaker, I am going to yield to Congresswoman MOORE.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Thank you so much, Representative.

I rise, Madam Speaker, to memorialize another of my constituents, Private First Class Keith Lloyd, who died of wounds suffered when the vehicle he was in struck a roadside bomb in Iraq at the tender age of 26 on January 12.

He was born in Milwaukee. He went to elementary school in Milwaukee prior to his family moving to Oak Creek and then to South Milwaukee. Lloyd graduated from South Milwaukee High School in my district in 2000 and worked in a number of retail stores. He also took courses at Milwaukee Area Technical College in Oak Creek and ITT Technical Institute in Milwaukee.

According to media reports, as a teen, Private First Class Lloyd was not crazy about high school, but he never shirked the responsibility that came with it. After graduation he wasn't quite sure what career path to take, like many high school graduates, including myself.

Finally, as a young man, he decided to follow the path of his younger brother, who had just completed a tour of duty in Iraq with the United States Army. According to his sister Christine, he was looking for direction. He wanted to make something of himself and thought the Army was a good place to do that. He enlisted in March 2007, and, indeed, he made much of his life and paid the ultimate price for us, his fellow Americans.

This was a young man who did not want to sit on the bench and let life pass him by.

His sister also noted that he had a big heart and would do anything for anybody.

Private First Class Lloyd deployed to Iraq in November as a member of the 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment based in Fort Hood, Texas.

Yesterday Private First Class Lloyd was laid to rest at Good Hope Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Madam Speaker, I wish to express my deepest sympathy and condolences to the family of Private First Class Lloyd today: his sister, Christine; brother Thomas; his mom, Cynthia Allam; his dad and stepmother, Gary and Joanne Lloyd; sister Cora Lloyd; and brothers Kraig, Gary, and Joshua Lloyd.

These men certainly made the lives of those around them better day by day and exemplified the character and qualities that enrich our communities and our Nation. This is indeed a sad day for the Nation. While as the Bible says, ''each heart knows its own grief'' and I cannot possibly understand the grief their families are going through today, I offer this timely tribute today to express the gratitude of a Nation and my condolences on their loss.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Ms. MOORE. And I can tell you anytime we get a chance to come to the floor and honor our patriots is always a day that the Congress should yield and pay respect to not only that individual but also the family.

Madam Speaker, I think it's important we start to look at what the Congress is facing right now and the American people are facing right now as it relates to the economy. The news has been for the last 5 to 10 days the economy, stimulating the economy, and it is very important that we do so. And as you know, many news accounts have shown the President, also the Speaker of the House, and the Democratic leader in the Senate meeting. You have also seen meetings with the Republican leadership and Democratic leadership here in the Congress. The American people are counting on us working in a bipartisan way, and I just want to make sure that all Members know that this is nothing new for the Democratic House of Representatives, especially the majority of Democrats that are here, because we came in saying we wanted to work in a bipartisan way. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, I went back and pulled out a chart because so many times here in the 30-something Working Group it's important that we share with the Members what we have already done and what we can do. And I will use this chart all the way up to today.

Many of these acts took place in the first session of the 110th Congress, and it was the first time, with your help,

Madam Speaker, we were able to take the majority of the House:

Implementation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, H.R. 1, passed with 299 Democratic votes with 68 Republican votes. Raising the minimum wage, H.R. 2, passed 315 with 82 Republican votes. The funding for enhanced stem cell research passed 253 with 37 Republican votes. Making prescription drugs more affordable, H.R. 4, passed 255 with 24 Republican votes. And cutting student loan interest rates in half, H.R. 5, passed this House of course with Democratic votes, all the Democratic votes, 356 with 124 Republicans voting with Democrats on that bill in a bipartisan way. And also creating long-term energy initiatives, H.R. 6, which passed 264 votes with 36 of those votes being Republican votes.

That's bipartisanship. Those are major pieces of legislation, Madam Speaker. This is nothing new to the Democratic majority.

I think it's also important to point to just today here on this floor maybe about 2 hours ago, Democrats and Republicans voted to override the President's veto, and that vote was a bipartisan vote, not enough to stop the President from stopping us from doing what the American people wanted us to do. A bipartisan vote, 265, and that vote was a very important vote. We had 43 Republicans voting with us on that.

I think it's important, Madam Speaker, as we start to move forth on this whole economic stimulus discussion that we continue to work in a bipartisan way, but we're going to need more bipartisanship. Democrats are there at the line ready to do it. And I have a document here that's very easy for any Member to get a copy of that was prepared by the office of the majority leader on June 5 of 2007: ''House Democrats' bipartisanship leads to progress.'' And I also would ask all of my Republican colleagues to grab a copy of it. But I think that it's important that we reflect back on this document to really pay attention to what we have already done and what we can do. But we don't want to end up getting ourselves in a situation where we start deal breaking. When I say ''deal breaking,'' we know that the President and we know that the majority leader has met and we know that the Speaker has met at the White House just recently, just yesterday, and they have been meeting and talking on the telephone. As you know, we try to break this down as much as we can. We also know that in the House, we have had a Democratic economic forum, which was December 7, closing out last year. This whole economic stimulus discussion and effort did not start when it started hitting headlines. We were already out there on these issues. Ongoing discussion between House leaders and Secretary Paulson, who is the Secretary of the Department of Treasury, that has been going on. So many dates, too many to note here on this chart. A Democratic leadership letter to the President dated the 11th of this month. Also the Speaker has met with the Federal Reserve Chairman on January 14 and also the Democratic leadership meeting with Republican leaders on January 16. And those discussions continue to go on, some that are documented, some that are undocumented. A Democratic leadership meeting with Republican leaders again the following day. We also had a Democratic and Republican leadership meeting with the Treasury Secretary that took place on January 22, just a day ago. Also a Democratic and Republican leadership meeting with the President that I mentioned a little earlier.

We're going to continue to pay attention to this bipartisanship, and when I say ''we,'' I mean those of us in the 30-something Working Group, because I think it should be encouraged. We have always talk about it. I, being a creature of two previous Congresses, always said that bipartisanship can only be achieved when the majority allows it to happen. We have a Democratic majority now that is allowing it to happen. If we start talking and going back and forth on retail politics, the only people that are going to lose are the American people, and I'm not in the business of seeing that happen.

I think it's important also to know that there will be statements made and we have to make sure that we clear those statements up so that we don't have misunderstandings and we start going off into another direction on this whole effort of bipartisanship. I'm saying that and I came to the floor with that theme here today because it's important. If folks want to prove the differences between the two parties, find another way to do it, not necessarily on this economic stimulus package because so many Americans, Democrat, Republican, independent, those that can't even vote yet, those individuals that are dealing with the muddiness of life, that don't have what they need to make ends meet, and our economy is not in the posture for us to play games for several months to come going back and forth. So as much as we can as Members of the House, we need to meet. We need to understand one another. When we misunderstand one another, we need to meet again to make sure that we can work together, something that everyone talks about during the election season that they want to go to Washington, D.C. and work in a bipartisan way. I don't care where you are, if your district is 89 percent Republican or 89 percent Democrat or what have you, independent, Green Party, you name it. You don't want to run on the platform that I'm going to Washington, D.C. to be a partisan. You don't run on that platform. You run on the platform that you're going to bring people together, that you're going to work across the aisle to get the job done for your constituents.

□ 1545

So I think it is very, very important, Madam Speaker, to put those words into action.

And what I am seeing here and what I have seen, Madam Speaker, of the last 4 to 5 days have been what one may see in a piece of campaign literature or what one may see when someone speaks on television about how they are going to do things better if they get an opportunity to do it. You have that opportunity. Don't let that opportunity slip through your fingers when others try to derail the process.

Today, I can say that what took place was an effort, and we tried to override the President on the children's health insurance bill, we may say the State Children's Health Insurance program. I think it is important with the 42 Republicans that voted along with Democrats, 218 Democrats voted in affirmative, it wasn't enough to override the President, but it was a part of trying to take some of the burden off American families, because those families that are hurting right now, we know that health care cost is a huge issue when you start looking at how we are going to move this ball forward and how we are going to help American families.

There are a number of organizations that are in support of the State insurance plan, what we call SCHIP, that are in support of this great piece of legislation. You have the AARP. You have the American Medical Association. You have Catholic Health Association, and Families U.S.A., along with a host of other organizations that I could spend 30 minutes on the floor reading every last one of them off. But that is not going to make a difference right now for this debate or the action that we were going to take, that hopefully we wanted to take place a couple of hours ago, to be able to allow children that are in need of health care insurance. We were denied that opportunity, and I can't say that the Republicans stopped us. I can say that 42 Republicans did what they had to do to be able to stimulate this, not only this economy, putting more dollars into the pockets, very few dollars into the pockets of Americans so that they don't have to spend those dollars in providing health care to kids that happen to be born into financially challenged families, and that would have been a way to assist them. But there were a number of Republicans that voted against the legislation that denied us from having that opportunity.

But I have hope, Madam Speaker, that before this 110th Congress is out we will be able to provide that level of health care. We talked about universal health care. Starting with our children first is very, very imperative for us to be able to head in that direction.

As we start dealing with the issues, when we move to the Senate, we have rule 22, that you have to have 60 Senators to be able to bring anything to the floor in an appropriate way or to be

able to procedurally get it there. I think it is important because I am trying to look down the road because I have been down this road before. We get that warm and fuzzy feeling in our heart and start believing what we are reading and start saying, Wow, this is unbelievable. People are working together and we are actually going to move something through the process. Republicans are happy. Democrats are happy. And then we run into a handful of Senators, and the Senate may very well say, Well, we are not happy. And the reason why we are not happy is that I want to make sure that I can make some of the tax cuts that have been put out there now that are not right put into the moment, because that is what this is about.

This stimulus package is not about stimulating the economy 8 months from now. It is about stimulating the economy right now. And it's important that we get it to the target audience that is going to help us do that. And so I think that any other great ideas that may come out of, independently of the bipartisan discussion that has been going on for almost double-digit days now will be counterproductive to us moving this piece of legislation forward. We know that when we come to final rest on this legislation, we know a lot of things are on the table that are going to create right-now jobs, that are going to create right-now investment, and it is going to be able to get into the hands of Americans that are going to spend those dollars to be able to jump-start our economy, to be able to bring it out of the, quote, unquote, I don't want to use the ''R'' word, but the recession that folks are talking about and that economic indicators some feel we are in, some feel we are not. We have some individuals saying technically we may be in one.

The bottom line is the economy is not what it needs to be to be able to continue the United States of being in the position that we are in right now, well, in a better position, a position we have been in the past, of being not only the largest economy in the world as it relates to a nation but also being very strong and very vibrant.

We know that we can get in these very high altitude conversations of saying that it is important for us to be able to have trade, it is important for us to see small business start-ups, it is important for American people to be able to buy things at an affordable cost. But it is also important for us to pass this economic stimulus package within days, not weeks, not months. So I want to make sure, speaking to all of my colleagues here in the House, that we move with the spirit of saying that we are going to deal with the target audience that we are trying to reach right now, and that we are going to do it in a way that is bipartisan and that we won't have any last-minute legislative Hail Marys or amendments or procedural maneuvers that will stop us from achieving the goal of carrying out at least one major act at a time of urgency on behalf of the American people. We have done it before with other major pieces of legislation, but this economic stimulus legislation is very, very, very important.

Now, Madam Speaker, I think that as we start to look at this, because I want to make sure the Members are able to communicate not only with the 30-Something Working Group but also with me independently, or any staff or what have you that wish to do so, can be reached at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. The reason why I give that Web site out, Madam Speaker, we have to call it out when we see it. It is almost like we are in the football season right now, and there is a lot of replays, and some of the replays are called within the last 2 minutes from the officials' box in what you may call the sweet area in a football stadium. And I think it is important that if you see this kind of activity that will derail this bipartisan spirit that we have right now, we need to call it out. We need to be able to say that that is going to be counterproductive. We already know that the agenda in trying to continue the tax cuts that were brought about under President Bush, and I believe the President is in the position of saying we don't need that part of tax legislation to be a part of this stimulus package, that is for another date, that is for us to deal with, that is for us to hash through in the Ways and Means Committee, which I am proud to be a member of, that is another day's debate. It is not a debate on this economic stimulus package that we are going to hopefully bring to the floor within days. I want to be able to head that off so that we don't have to waste the American people's time to really get into this issue of another debate as it relates to the tax issue. So I think it is important as we continue to move through this process that Members communicate with Members because a lot of folks say, well, it is just a lack of communication of the reason why we are not able to be successful in pushing some of these issues forward.

I can also shed light on another issue, Madam Speaker, and that issue is the fact that we have a number of different tracks that are taking place here in the House and also in this Congress. The campaign spirit that is out there right now amongst the Presidential candidates, Democrat and Republican, and what we do here, that spirit, the spirit that we have here in the House may very well be broken based on what someone may say, and many of those individuals are Members of Congress, may say as it relates to their plans. Making those political statements here on the floor through legislation or trying to push into an economic stimulus package because someone said it on the campaign trail and for them to be able to say, well, that was just introduced, you know, in the, in this discussion, may be counterproductive if it is not within the spirit of what we are trying to do here.

I also would like to share a statement that was made a little earlier today as we start talking about that spirit, and the Republican leader said, I hope that Democrats are not looking to give nontaxpayers rebates or what have you or incentives. I want to just clear it up. I am assuming that he is not speaking of those individuals that are paying payroll taxes, because they are. So many individuals, they don't have to pay because they pay so much in payroll tax, and we do have that. And also when we talk about a targeted audience, that targeted audience is the audience that will put the money into the economy versus saying, Well, I have received this rebate check, or, I have received some sort of incentive that will change my economic attitude towards spending, so I am going to go put it over here and invest it to deal with it at another time and another day. That won't be the kind of investment that will help us move this economy forward. I think it is important for us to pay attention to that, and just because someone is what I define as financially challenged, means that they cannot participate in what we are trying to do in stimulating this economy because we need them and we need them to keep this economy moving.

I am glad to see that the spirit of the majority, of Chairman RANGEL, who put out a statement today, the economic stimulus package, must help lower and middle-income families, I don't think there is anything wrong with that statement, and I think that it is within the spirit of what we are talking about here. Mr. RANGEL goes on to say that the intent of the economic stimulus package has not yet been written, but everything remains on the table; however, I would like to respond to suggestions that various Republican leaders have made to prevent the stimulus package from reaching hardworking families. I think that it is also important that as we look at that, as we look at that statement there, again, we are looking at responding, and we are looking at working within the spirit of this legislation that we are communicating.

Many times things are said, like I mentioned here earlier, like the Republican leader mentioned that he was concerned about that it is important to put it in black and white so that everyone can understand. I know, I know my Republican colleagues want to make sure these tax cuts meet lower and middle-class families. I hope that I am not proven wrong as it relates to any vote that may happen in committee or any vote that may happen here on this floor. But it is important that we put these statements out there and for it to be able to reach these hardworking families who work from paycheck to paycheck and make contributions to Social Security and Medicare, as Mr. RANGEL goes on to say, or who may have recently lost their jobs, any argument on this issue that will be equally

met with vigorous discussion as it relates to tax incentives to businesses.

Now, here is another piece as we start to look at this very issue, dealing with businesses and dealing with individuals. The backbone of our economy are small businesses, and I guarantee you that small businesses will be a part of this economic stimulus package. But at the same time, let's not leave back in the dust those Americans that we know that will pump dollars into the economy and we know that have been paying payroll taxes and we know that have been paying into Social Security. So when we look at that, let's make sure that we work in a bipartisan way and that we understand each other.

Madam Speaker, I encourage rapid response. I encourage Members to say, Well, if this is the way I feel, I am going to say the way I feel, but at the same time, be able to receive that answer or, at the same time, continue to meet.

This chart I pulled out earlier, Madam Speaker, twice on this chart, and we will have it every time we come to the floor in the 30–Something Working Group, Democratic leadership meeting with Republican leaders, 1/16 of this month, Democratic leaders meeting with Republican leaders, 1/17. If they met in the a.m. and p.m., I would like to even put that down because I think it is important that we have that. Goodness gracious, if we were able to pull together this package in a way that American people will see that folks are actually talking daily in a meaningful talk, not just shooting shots over the bow of the ship, meaningful talk, hopefully we will be able to resolve issues like the impasse that we have had on the issue of health care, the impasse that we have had on the issue of Iraq and other various important issues that have come before this Congress.

□ 1600

This should be encouraged. I'm a Democrat. I enjoy being in the majority. And I hope that we are in the majority for as long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. I hope that happens.

But as long as we are in the majority, it doesn't mean that we can't also have that same spirit towards bipartisanship, and that's important. Because I have been in the minority before, and I know how it feels. I know how it feels when you can't get a bill agendaed in a certainty; you can't get a bill agendaed in the committee or you can't get your amendment heard on the floor. I know how that feels.

But I think it's very, very important that as we look at these very important issues that are facing our Nation, that we use that bipartisanship in a way that we haven't used it in the past. And we have passed bills in a bipartisan way, as I said a little earlier in the hour, but do it in a way that it will be a jaw drop for the American people. They'll say, wow, this is interesting how they came together and made this happen without trying to make a political stand.

I think that from what I'm reading and what I'm seeing, it seems like the President is on board. It seems like the Speaker is on board, seems like the majority leader is on board. It even seems like the minority leaders in both chambers are on board.

So as we look at rule XXII over in the Senate and we look at the 60 vote, the procedural piece that has to happen before you get to bring in any bill before the Senate, that that spirit lives within those Republican Members that will help us get to that 60.

When I say ''us,'' it's only 51 Democrats in the Senate, but let's continue to pay very close attention to it.

Mr. RYAN, I'm so glad to see you all the way from Niles, Ohio. We know the Republicans will be going to a retreat this week. So we have an opportunity to work off line and do some work and get back to the district and do some great things. But this whole issue about economic stimulus, I tell my friends, when I come to the floor, even when you're not here, I make reference to what I have seen in your district, what is happening in your district and how important this bill is for Ohio just as important as it is for Florida.

I yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I think what is happening now highlights a lot of what has already been going on in a lot of areas around the country. I think when you start to look and see people are talking about the downturn in the economy and jobs and what is happening now: Unemployment rate going up, people not having the disposable income. When you look at a lot of areas, and it is not just Niles, Ohio. It is not just Youngstown, Ohio. It is not just Akron, Ohio. It is in Des Moines, Iowa. It is in Waterloo, Iowa. It is in Detroit, Michigan. It is in all of the industrial Midwest where, quite frankly, globalization has had a negative impact on a lot of the communities there.

So this stimulus package, I think, as you have been talking about over the past 30, 35 minutes or so, it needs to be targeted to those families that are going to spend the money to stimulate the economy, those small businesses, I think, that are going to reinvest back whether it's in a machine shop in Streetsborough, Ohio, or wherever the case may be. But make that money available.

But I think it's also important for us to talk about what we've been doing since we've been in the majority to affect the long-term growth of the economy. And I think, you know, one of the past Federal chairman's said that they're just too many bubbles, you know. That was the problem that we have had here.

We had the tech bubble in the 1990s and the low interest rates and the housing bubble, and now we are looking at that bubble bursting.

Just to give you an example on how this ripples throughout the economy, we have an aluminum extrusion manufacturer in Gerard, Ohio, 300 pretty high-paying jobs that's going to close down because they supply the aluminum for the housing market, not commercial but the housing side.

So this downturn, this bubble busting has this ripple effect throughout the economy, and that's why I think you see us in the position that we are in today.

But if you look at what we are doing long term, for long-term stimulus, what we've tried to do with stem cell research here in the Congress, that opens up whole new vistas of opportunity in the health care field. That opens up opportunity for research and development in a growing field.

If you look at what we are trying to do with alternative energy, you will see that these investments that we are making into the research and development of a lot of these alternative energy technologies, those are investments that are going to yield great benefits for us, because long term, you know, someone has got to make the windmill. Someone's got to make the hydraulics for the windmill. Someone's got to make the blades. These things need to be trucked around. These components need to be assembled.

That is a direct investment once this technology is purchased or at least improved and able to produce some sufficient amount of energy, that's going to be American manufacturing. If you look at solar panels, that could be a potential opportunity for American manufacturing.

So before I kick it back to you, it's important that we recognize some of these long-term investments that we are making here. And one of the ones that we saw, if you were looking at some of the economic indicators from the summertime when the wage was passed and implemented, there was actually an increase in consumer spending. It shouldn't be much of a surprise because if you put more money in the pockets of these folks, that's what happens.

Finally, before I give it back to you, it's important to recognize for the American people that this stimulus package, what we are seeing here is going to stimulate the economy, is what we have been arguing about here since President Bush came in with his lopsided tax cuts for the top 1 percent.

Now, if you give somebody who makes millions and millions of dollars a year—and God bless you if you do. We want you to make money. We are not against you. We understand the importance of people investing in business in our country. But that person is not going to take a couple hundred thousand dollars that they get in a tax cut and go out and spend it. What are they going to spend it on? When you have that money, you have everything that you need. You are not going to go out and say, ''Well, I got a couple hundred

thousand dollar tax cut. I'm going to go out and buy a new pair of shoes now.''

You have everything that you need. So that cut does not have the economic stimulus, and if it is getting invested, let's be honest. That is getting invested in Asia. If you are looking to make money and put it in the market or you are looking to buy a particular stock, you are going into a certain area, and it would behoove you to put that money somewhere in Asia.

So, having said that, the tax philosophy that we have here that you should give middle class tax cuts to folks, if it stimulates the economy now, if it is good for the economy now, it should be a good fiscal policy.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It's still good seeing an appropriator speak in tax language, talking about tax issues. So it's good to see it. I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate you, just in general.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I thank you, even though I talk about appropriations all the time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I know you talk about appropriations all the time, especially when you are trying to get money from appropriations for very important projects and investments in your district. In Hollywood and Miami, there are a lot of needs there.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And my constituents surely appreciate the help and assistance because they pay enough taxes, and we're up here making sure that if they pay their fair share, they get their fair share back.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They should get some back. You are exactly right.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That's correct.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I know you have water projects there and education projects there. You have energy projects there.

If we are going to have the kind of development that we have, the economic development that lifts up all congressional districts, we have to make all of those investments.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You're right. You're right.

I was talking earlier before you walked in on cloture. I believe it's called cloture in the Senate, and it's an old French word for closure. You hear it all the time, but you don't necessarily know the meaning of it. It sounds like it was something as it relates to clothes, but that's what it means in English pretty much.

And I think that when we look at this issue and the fact that we always get to the point where even when we get our act together here in the House, it's either one or two Chambers. It's either the House or the Senate.

Let's look at the SCHIP override. The Senate has a veto-proof vote in the Senate: 68 Senators voting in the affirmative for SCHIP.

In the House, we fall short. I think here in the House that we may very well have the kind of bipartisanship we need to get this economic stimulus package passed. But in the Senate, I'm concerned. I'm very concerned because you have 51 Democrats and you are going to need 9 Republican Senators, and I'm hoping, just hoping, that we are able to get the nine for it to be true bipartisanship. So that means the Republican leader is just as important as the Democratic leader, and we are trying to move this process through.

And I think that we need to pay very close attention, and also pay attention to what is being said in the Senate, what's being said here in the House because this piece of legislation is too important. I don't think that Democrats can hang their hat and say, ''We passed the legislation to stimulate the economy.'' I don't think the Republicans can say it without saying Democrats, vice versa. So I think that is important that we pay attention. And I keep saying that because I know that in this building, and we are talking about the 500-plus Members of Congress and all of our great ideas that we may have, coming to the table with an amendment or making a procedural move through any one of the said committees could very well derail this spirit that we have.

We have a war that's going on in Iraq. As of today, we have 3,929 individuals that have lost their lives in Iraq, and we have had a number of them wounded in action, 15,996. And we have those families that are living in this economy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the latest report is 650,000 Iraqis who have been killed as well.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is correct. So we have a number of loss of life.

The point I'm trying to make here is that we even have numbers for Afghanistan and what is happening there, and we just had an Armed Services meeting a little earlier today, and there is discussion. One of the witnesses, a lieutenant general, said, ''Well, the Afghans are saying what, Americans, will you leave us?'' Well, this is a big question when we talk about spending, we talk about the economy.

Let me draw this picture here. You go to dinner with your friends and there's six of you, and the bill comes out to like, I don't know, 4- or $500. You have been there for a couple of hours, of course ordering several appetizers and ice tea and an entree, and it comes up to $600. Do you spend the time of divvying up the bill and collecting the money, or do you always have to get up and say, ''I have it. I'll take care of it?'' You know what I'm talking about?

That's what America has been saying to every conflict we have ever had. Afghanistan, for what needs to happen there, do we always have to be the people there who say, ''I got it?''

The euro is doing a lot better than the dollar right now, and there's a separation between NATO and EU, and they have their own account and they're making investments.

Afghanistan is the gateway to narcotics, illegal drugs into Europe. And so the fact that I know that they're playing a role already, but I'm saying that even a greater role, we are in it because of terrorism. We are in it. Madam Speaker knows exactly what I'm talking about. We are in it not only in the terrorist end, terrorism, trying to prevent terrorism not only in the world, but also domestically.

□ 1615

But I think it is important that the EU plays a greater role. There is going to be three reports released, from what we were told in committee today, and the next 10 days dealing with that variation.

I shared those two scenarios just to say that as we start looking at the bipartisanship spirit that we have, the bipartisanship spirit that we have and continue to build on, we have to do it in all economic issues, because we can talk about the war, and the two wars that are going on, it has a lot to do with economics that we are facing or the problems that we are having here in this country as it relates to our own economy because of the debt that we are spending, or that we are paying down on, and it is continuing to build.

It is continuing to build, even though we have spent several hours here on this floor talking about if you are going to spend it, you have got to pay for it. Then we find ourselves in a situation where we are pushed up in a corner of the wall where the American people have to pay for the fact that we are unable to work in a bipartisan way to get the job done in the time we should get it done before it becomes a crisis situation.

So this bipartisanship is just a lot bigger than just a word. You can just say I am bipartisan. It is bigger than that. It has a lot to do with how much we pay for something. It is almost like a plane ticket. I am breaking it down because I want to make sure, because here in Washington we have big, lofty terms and using acronyms. It is like a plane ticket. If you have to buy a plane ticket, and you buy it on the day of travel, you are going to pay more than you would have paid 30 days in advance or 2 weeks in advance or a 7-days-in-advance ticket.

Without bipartisanship, we find ourselves buying the ticket hours before the flight when it is imperative that we get on the flight, when we could have gotten on it cheaper and even probably better seating with a 30-day-in-advance or a 60-day-in-advance.

As we look at this, we have to not only clip, but we have to pay attention. I am asking all the Members to pay attention to it, because we pay more when we fight on these issues that must happen here in this country on behalf of the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The point, too, is the decisions that you make, I think, and so articulately explained here, the decisions that you make have long-

term ramifications. If you make bad decisions, as we have seen, now, regardless of where you were on the war, what your position was before it started, or when it started or how your vote was, we now have to calculate and figure out $1.3 trillion was spent on this war that we elected to go into that now has been proven time and time again that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11. Hussein did not have weapons of mass destruction.

As policymakers, we need to look back and evaluate whether or not this was a good decision; $1.3 trillion at the end of next year, or at the end of this year will have been spent on this war. We look all across our country, and has it helped reduce gas prices? No. Has it helped create stability around the world? No. Did it decrease the number of terrorists around the world? No. It actually increased the number, and every intelligence report from all over the world will tell us that.

We need to understand that as we make these decisions, whether it is on the stimulus package, whether it is on our Tax Code, whether it is on the investments that we are going to make in this country, these are big decisions, because the ramifications are pretty big when you look 5 or 6 years down the line and could be as costly when you get into an elective war as $1.3 trillion.

These are the kinds of decisions that we are making here, and I think it is very important for us to recognize, as we make them, that these have long-term ramifications. The tax cuts, you combine the war and the tax cuts. When our friends were in charge of this body for 6 years, since President Bush was in, and President Bush was President, a Republican-controlled House and Senate, $3 trillion was borrowed from the Chinese, the Japanese, to increase our debt. So our debt went up by $3 trillion. They raised the debt limit five times. So when you combine the Bush tax cuts with the war, some very immature policy decisions were made.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The bottom line is, you have your back up against the wall, you have to make a decision, you have to do it now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Now.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You can't wait. You can't throw it off to the side. You can't, say, sling-shot in the end for a win. You can't do any of that kind of stuff. You have to do it in a very responsible way.

Again, if we keep saying it, if I look at the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD tomorrow and see bipartisanship, bipartisanship, and even more bipartisanship, that is fine with me, because it is almost like McDonald's. I mean, I feel like going and getting a number 3 after a football game because I have seen it eight times. I really think I actually like certain things at McDonald's, which I do. You can just look at me and tell.

But I think it's important that we continue to talk about what's happening right now and what the President has to say when he comes and walks down this aisle next week, I believe, when he comes in here to come talk to us about what's going to happen in this economic stimulus package, what's going to happen as it relates to the two wars going on, what's going to happen as it relates to health care. This opportunity that we have now, 10 days of discussion, bipartisanship, he stepped off the plane from the Middle East and had bipartisanship stamped on his lapel saying we have got to get this going. We have to make it happen even though there was a letter that the Speaker and the majority leader wrote him on 1/11 of this month saying, What's the plan? This is what we want to do. We have to stimulate the economy. Let's do it.

We had our economic summit on 12/7 of last year, having deep discussions as Democrats on this very issue. I think it is important, the President comes down. He has to almost give the speech of his life, but guess what? Action has to follow it. This reminds me, Mr. RYAN, I think we were both State senators at this time, when the planes hit the Twin Towers, the plane hit the Pentagon and one went down in Pennsylvania, that spirit that we had then when people were willing and looking for leadership on the issue of how we are going to come back together as Americans and how we are going to pick this country back up. We have this opportunity.

The President has this opportunity to lead. This is his last year in office. We have Republicans and Democrats that have an opportunity to change the opinion of the American people on how we can work together.

So in this last half of this 110th Congress where we are talking about bipartisanship, and I am just saying talking about it, let's show them some real action. We came together on economic stimulus. We came together on this issue of Iraq. This discussion that I am hearing the President, I want to go and have this kind of bilateral discussion and sign a piece of paper and lock our hands on Iraq for years to come, is not bipartisanship. There has to be some discussion in Congress on that.

It is important that as we start looking at Afghanistan and what we are going to do there, I think it is very important that the President can use that in a bipartisan way. So if we are going to make a deal, let's make a deal on bipartisan agreements as we move from this point on. This is the talk of the year that a lot of folks have made New Year's resolutions. I don't know. Maybe the President said, I am willing to be bipartisan, and he talked about it during his original campaign. I am not a divider. I bring people together. I make sure that folks worked together, I mean, united. I mean, that was the word that he used.

I think that if we want to do that, then we are going to have to do it in a way that does an even better job than we did in the first half of the session. We can't paint a clearer picture on how important this is.

In closing, Mr. RYAN, I want to ask you if you would, we still have time, a few minutes, if you would, and our colleagues, you see these ideas, that is how they come, being drafted or being mentioned, or something outside of the bipartisan discussions that have been going on that is here on this chart, and you are not bubbling your great idea to your leadership, and your leadership is not putting it on the table, and I see your leadership, Democrat or Republican, then it is going to derail what the American people want. That is an opportunity to stimulate the economy and stimulate the family economy and to make sure that we can remain strong and prosperous.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You mentioned bipartisanship. I think, as we are closing out here and as we had the vote today on the SCHIP bill, that it's important for us to recognize how far away the President is from bipartisanship on some of these issues. Here we have the SCHIP, State Children's Health Insurance bill. This was a program that was started by Newt Gingrich and President Clinton to invest money into the health of poor and middle-class kids. The program was $35 billion over 5 years. It passed this House in a bipartisan way with many, many, many Republican votes, mostly Democratic, but many Republican.

The President vetoed this bill twice. So a bipartisan bill drafted by Newt Gingrich, signed into law by President Clinton is vetoed a couple of times by President Bush. His reason is it costs too much money. It's $35 billion over 5 years.

This is the same President that raised the debt limit five times and ran up $3 trillion in debt and turns around days later and asks for another $200 billion in Iraq, but he doesn't have and doesn't see the sense in the investment of $35 billion over 5 years for kids' health care. So when you hear ''bipartisan,'' you have got to be skeptical.

Now I want to kick it to who we very affectionately refer to as our ''mother'' here in Congress, STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, who, I know I saw her on TV at the Presidential debate the other night, Madam Speaker, and I think Mr. MEEK, and you were there too, that it seems like Mrs. JONES may have gotten more TV time than Hillary Clinton got during the Presidential debate.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I don't know whether I did or not. I wanted to come to the floor and say how proud I am of my ''sons,'' Kendrick and Tim. Actually, they are not my sons, but I call them that anyway.

But I come here and look, and I have Anna and Mary who are visiting the House floor today, and these two young women are examples of how important SCHIP could be to the children of America. I am so glad they had a chance to join me with one of my good friends, Robin. We serve on a couple of

committees together, and this is what we talk about, bipartisan action on the floor of the House.

Ladies, thank you so much for coming to visit with me. I will take this pink sweater and this red ribbon and I will look gorgeous.

But I am glad to join my colleagues here on the floor of the House as we talk about the economic stimulus, because the people of Ohio need a stimulus. They need jobs, they need health care, and they need jobs that make real money. They need to be saved from these mortgage brokers who have hurt them deeply.

I recognize my ''sons,'' of whom I am so very proud.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Mrs. JONES. Being a member of the Ways and Means Committee, we talk about the economy. I know that we will have a lot to do and say about that, and we talked about a bipartisan spirit. But we have, I think, like 2 more minutes left. But if you want to share anything as it relates to the economy that you would like to share with us, you can.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I will recognize each of you. Thank you very much.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mrs. JONES.

We want to encourage the Members and also anyone who is watching us here on the floor, the 30-Something Democrats at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov and www.speaker.gov/30something. You said something that I think is very, very important in this debate.

We are not here drinking the tea. I mean, we are not here saying, Oh, let's just all link up together and flowers falling from the ceiling and all and that we are working in a bipartisan way. What we are doing is saying that we are working like the American people would like for us to work on this very important issue. We are hoping that the President continues to do what he is doing as it relates to talking to Democratic leaders and real-time, Democratic leaders speaking with the President, Republican and Democratic leaders in the Congress continuing to work together in real-time, meeting day after day, morning and evening, so that we can put together a work product so that we can all work for it and get it out to the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think you have done a great job today, Mr. MEEK, and I just want to say how proud I am to come down here with you and make these points and listen to you break down the issues of the day where you are putting the cookie on the bottom shelf.

□ 1630

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, days like this you just have to plow through it.

With that, Madam Speaker, it has been an honor to address the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SHEA-PORTER). All Members are reminded that it is not order to refer to persons on the floor of the House as guests of the House.

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the ordering of a 5-minute Special Order in favor of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is vacated.

There was no objection.

BORDER WARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, I come to you today to discuss what is going on internationally with our country. You know, this country is at war in Iraq. We have been for a number of years. This country is at war in Afghanistan, and we have been for a number of years.

While the news from the front is encouraging, both of those wars are not over with yet. And it is interesting to me that even though we are sending our troops, our young men and women, the finest America has to offer, halfway around the globe to protect the dignity of other countries, it concerns me that we fail to protect the security of our own Nation on the southern border of the United States.

Because, Madam Speaker, there is a border war going on in the United States on our southern border. Unfortunately, too many people, especially here in Washington, DC are blissfully ignorant of what is taking place on the southern border. You see we have two international borders. We have one with Mexico and we have one with Canada. The number one duty of government is to protect the people, to protect America from all incursions, all invasions.

So we send our troops halfway around the world to protect the interest of the United States in Iraq, protect the interest of the United States in Afghanistan, and I agree with what we are doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. But we also need to be concerned about what is taking place closer to our homeland, and that is the border wars that are taking place.

Why I say that is I have been down, while I have been in Congress these 3½ years, I have been down to the Texas-Mexico border now 13 times. I have also been to the border between California and Mexico.

Madam Speaker, each time I go to the border I see more evidence that we are not winning the border war, that it is more difficult, it is harder on our troops down there, the sheriffs, the border agents. It is harder on the people who live on the border between the United States and Mexico. Many ranchers and people who live along the Rio Grande River on the American side have bars on their windows because they are afraid of people who come across from the southern part of the United States committing crimes.

Madam Speaker, I want to make it clear I am not talking about everyone that comes to the United States is here to commit a crime. I am not saying that. I am saying when we fail to enforce the rule of law, that being you don't come to America without permission, that we get everybody. We get the good, we get the bad, and we get the ugly. Right now, Madam Speaker, we are getting a lot of bad and we are getting a lot of ugly.

Let me give one example of those people who come in and flaunt the law of the United States that you don't come here without permission. I have here a night shot taken, and I am not sure that it can be seen, but I will hold it up anyway. This top photograph is a night scene of the bottom photograph. This is a photograph on the bottom of the Rio Grande River near Laredo, Texas. Across the river is Mexico. This is the nighttime version of that.

What we see here is a raft with several individuals coming to America without permission. They are all dressed in black uniforms. You notice the guy in the front has an AK–47. That is an automatic weapon made in China. You also see, Madam Speaker, that behind each of these individuals coming in the raft are duffle bags. In those duffle bags are presumably drugs, narcotics, cocaine or heroin or both.

These individuals are foreign nationals. What happened was these individuals were Guatemalan soldiers trained in the United States. Once they went back home, they started working for the drug cartels that paid them a whole lot more money than being Guatemalan soldiers. They switched sides, and now they smuggle drugs into the United States on behalf of the drug cartels. The individuals, you know, are the bad, and they are the ugly. The reason is the border is not secure. If the border was secure, these outlaws wouldn't be coming over here without permission.

That is just one example of what is taking place on the southern border of the United States.

Madam Speaker, there are three, some argue four major drug cartels in Mexico that bring that cancer into the United States and sell it. Right now those drug cartels work with the coyotes. We call those people ''coyotes'' because they, for money, smuggle people into the United States. And the drug cartels and the coyotes now work together smuggling drugs and people sometimes in the same load.

In other words, when our Border Patrol stops a vehicle sneaking into the United States, they will find not only

illegals, but they will find drugs as well because it is a highly lucrative business to do both of those things, smuggle in the name of that filthy lucre; we call it money.

I would like to talk this evening about some basic things that are taking place on the border, that silent forgotten border war that is taking place in America.

There are several places in the United States that border Mexico and border Canada that we call legal ports of entry. Those legal ports of entry are where people come to the United States the right way, the legal way, the way they are supposed to come into the United States.

Now if you are from Mexico or Canada or the Caribbean islands, you get a break in coming to the United States that other foreign nationals don't have. If you are from Brazil or Chile or Guatemala or Germany, the only way you come to the United States legally is with a passport. We have all seen passports. That is the universal, worldwide document of legal entry into another country.

But if you are from Mexico, Canada or the Caribbean island, you can come in using almost any type of document. There are now about 8,000 different documents that those people from those countries can use to get into the United States, including everything from a baptismal certificate to some type of other document like a passport.

So when these people come to the border, let's say Laredo, and they are lined up to come into the United States, the border agent that is standing on the international border letting people in sometimes doesn't even check the documents. How do you know that? Because I saw it when I was down there. They look into the car, they make sure that the people or they ask a few questions, and they let those people come into the United States. Sometimes they look at paperwork. Sometimes they don't. But they come into the United States presumably lawfully.

But the problem is, Madam Speaker, we do not record who comes into America. Assume everybody in this vehicle is coming into the United States the right way. They have legal documents. They have a visa to come in. The United States Government doesn't record who those people are. We just let them pass on through. We have been doing that for years. So the port of entry is an area where we first need to beef up security because if the person in that vehicle or a pedestrian walking across the border can convince a border agent that they can lawfully come into the country, they are waved on by in many cases; not in every case, but in many cases.

When I was in Laredo, Texas, at the lawful port of entry, the border agents there, the agents at the border, were very concerned about talking to me in private because, you see, their supervisor followed me around while I was there and they didn't want to talk to me with that person observing.

But one of those persons at the legal port of entry told me something very interesting. He told me that we have been told that we are a port of entry, not a port of denial; and when in doubt, we let them in because that is the policy we have been given. It looked to me like that was the policy.

So, Madam Speaker, the first thing we do is the basics: We secure the legal ports of entry, and not by allowing one of 8,000 documents to come into the United States, but we need to follow the 9/11 Commission that recommended that anybody entering America should have a passport. But yet here we are in 2008, almost 6½ years since 9/11, and yet we still don't use that universal document of a passport to require entry into this country.

My question is: Why not? And the reason is because of political pressure, political agendas by people here in the United States and abroad to prevent that from happening.

So let's assume that people have to use a passport and that passport that we have now has all types of electronic coding barcodes in it. And when those people come across in that vehicle, rather than just look in the car or examine a few documents that may or may not be forgeries, everybody's passport could be taken, you scan it across the scanner, the border agent at the border automatically sees on the screen whether anybody has a criminal record, gets their real name, we record who comes into the United States, and therefore we have a permanent record of those individuals. And he then returns the passport. That is the simplest, the most secure way to ensure that people are not fraudulently walking through the ports of entry and trying to get into the United States.

Madam Speaker, if I send a package somewhere in the world, let's say I send it to Russia and I send it by Federal Express, like in the movie with Tom Hanks, and it goes to Russia, well, you can actually use on the Internet, I can since I am sending the package, whether it's UPS or Federal Express, I can track where my package is going. I can see where it is going because every time it makes a stop, it is recorded. It is tracked all the way to Russia, and I can find out when it gets there.

Now if we are smart enough to devise a system like that to track packages, why don't we track people who come into the United States when they have permission to come here? I don't know. We just don't do it.

So, Madam Speaker, I recommend that we follow the 9/11 Commission and require every person who enters the United States, or leaves the United States, to have a passport. When I say leave it, when those individuals come here lawfully, we now know that 50 percent, almost 60 percent of people legally coming to the United States, they never go home. They just stay. The reason they stay is because who would want to leave America? More importantly, they know that the odds of them being tracked down, so to speak, and told to go home are almost none. I will get to that in a minute.

So you have a passport. Let's say this person is a guest worker. We hear we need more guest workers and we don't have guest workers. Madam Speaker, we bring in 1.2 million guest workers a year to work in this country. So we have guest workers. Whether we need more or not is another issue, but we do have guest workers. But when a guest worker comes in, make them have the passport and then make them have a bona fide visa that we can also stand. Right now when an individual shows up for a job the way the employer checks the legality of an individual is calling on the telephone a 1–800 number to the Social Security Administration to make sure that this guy has a Social Security number. That is ridiculous.

Social Security numbers were never meant to be an identification system. Social Security was set up so some of us, hopefully some of us, will be able some day to get some type of retirement. It has nothing to do with security and identification of people coming into the country. So we shouldn't use that system.

The employer should have the bona fide visa hard copy and able to keep it until that 6 or 8 months is over for that guest worker, and then that person needs to go back home. They have it recorded who the legal immigrant is working for. That is the fairest way, the simplest way, but we don't do that.

Now the Federal Government is talking about using another type of identification for people coming into the United States from Canada and Mexico.

□ 1645

Why do we do that? Why don't we just require everybody to have a passport? It makes no sense to me.

Madam Speaker, the second problem we have is that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Administration, good folks, but there's not enough of them. They're understaffed and they're underfunded. They enforce the law once the immigrant, legal immigrant has come into the United States past the 25-mile rule. What I'm saying is this: On the border of Canada and the United States, Mexico and the United States, Border Patrol patrols the first 25 miles trying to capture people who are coming here illegally. After that 25 miles, ICE, as it's called, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, patrols the rest of America trying to capture people that came through the net, broke through the net. And they are enforcing the immigration laws. And there's not enough of them because there's way too many immigrants that have been here for years and have never been confronted about being in the United States illegally, or legally, for that matter, if they're an overstay. So the interior enforcement needs to be restructured. We need to have more enforcement officers enforcing the rule of

law, because that is important for this country.

Madam Speaker, of course the people on the other side of the border that make money off of importation of drugs and people, they know all the rules and they know what's going on over here. So what happens is when, let's say, a person contracts with a coyote to come into the United States, they pay several hundred, several thousand dollars to this coyote and the coyote brings them in 30 miles to the United States. The contract is to get them past the Border Patrol. Once you're by the Border Patrol, we'll let you out of the vehicle, you pay us money and you're home free; nobody'll ever catch you. So the other side understands the rules and understands what's happening. So ICE, good folks, I know a lot of them, they just need more help in interior enforcement of the United States.

Madam Speaker, I want to mention a little heresy now, because, you see, the reason people come to the United States, many of them, is to work. Some of them come legally, but a lot of them come illegally to work. And it is the law, and has been for years, that if a business knowingly hires a person illegally in the country, then that business can be prosecuted. Now, we don't read about, in the papers, too much about businesses being prosecuted for hiring illegals. Of the thousands and thousands and thousands of businesses in the United States, you know there are several that are hiring illegals, and they know it. But not very often does one of them make the newspaper. We read about everything else, but we don't hear about that. Why not? Because maybe they aren't being prosecuted. So, if the business owner knowingly hires an illegal, then that business owner needs to be prosecuted. And when illegals that are working here don't have the opportunity to work, they'll go back where they came from. They will, because many of them are working here on the cash economy, which means that they are being paid plantation wages, in some cases, not all cases. They're being paid in cash. The employer's dealing in cash because, you see, then nobody pays taxes. Nobody pays the Social Security. Nobody pays to health care, including the business owner. And they're able, that way, to drive the economy down.

You know, we hear this about, Oh, they help the economy. That is a farce, and I'll talk about that in a minute.

I'll give you an example of how that works, Madam Speaker. I represent southeast Texas. I border Louisiana and northern Houston, and I have a business owner in one of my towns that legally hires legal immigrants to work in his carpet business. And he verifies, he goes through all the procedure to make sure that the dozen or so folks working in his carpet business are legally in the country as guest workers. Good for him.

But there's a guy down the street that's also in the carpet business, carpet laying business, tough work, and that person hires illegals. And he pays his illegals less money. And because he pays them less money, he can do the same job cheaper. And so what he's doing is forcing the business owner who does the right thing, hiring foreigners on a legal basis who come to the United States, he's forced him out of business. And the same is true of businesses that hire Americans, because the cheap plantation labor that is being furnished by people who are unscrupulous businessmen is driving the economy down. But they're making money out of it, and so they need to be prosecuted. I know that's heresy, but we need to go after them and prosecute them because it's been the law for a long time.

Madam Speaker, we hear about, well, we need illegals in the country to help the economy. If our economy is based upon illegal workers, then there's something wrong with our economy. But be that as it may, we hear that, well, illegals help the economy. And then we hear on the other extreme, no, they don't. They're a tremendous drain on our economy.

What is the truth? Well, a study was done by the Heritage Foundation, and they discovered that a head of household that's illegally in the country and has a household contributes in taxes approximately, or to the system, about $10,000 a year. But they also found that that head of household with illegals takes from the system, the government, the Federal Government, State government, local government, about $30,000 a year in benefits, whether it's health care, education, welfare, it takes about 30,000. So yes, they do contribute some to the tax base, but they take far more than they contribute to our economy. And so we need to understand that truism.

Madam Speaker, we also have the problem of cities in the United States that flaunt the fact that they are sanctuary cities. What a sanctuary city is is a city, whether negligently or on purpose, allows illegals to live in the city and makes sure that they're never prosecuted. Cities that are sanctuary cities, that harbor illegals, regardless of who those illegals are, whether they're overstays or anybody else, are in violation of Federal law. Those sanctuary cities, in my opinion, should lose Federal aid because the Federal Government, the taxpayers of the United States should not be funding and sending money to cities that allow illegals to stay there without the fear of being prosecuted or deported or sent back home. And it's important that the rule of law be enforced. But we won't go after sanctuary cities as a body. We haven't done that yet. We need to have the will to be able to do that. If cities want to have those sanctuary policies in their homes or in their States, then they shouldn't receive taxpayer money.

Also, we should be able to use local law enforcement agents, not to do the job of ICE, but to help ICE. And there's a program Congress established. It's called the 287(g) program. What that means is this: that there is money available for training and for funding of local law enforcement agents, that when they encounter an illegal that has committed maybe a crime and that person is arrested for drunk driving, let's say, that they can do an immigration background check and see whether that person's legally in the United States or not and then hold them for ICE to be deported later. They can work in cooperation with ICE, not go out and arrest folks at work sites, but people that come into their possession because they've committed some other crime. Because, you see, sanctuary cities in many cases won't allow the police officers to even ask the person they arrested, Where are you from? Can't even get that basic identification.

So the 287(g) program is a good program. It would allow local law enforcement agencies to help in the cause of protecting the dignity of the United States, when necessary, after they're trained and trained by ICE to, when they arrest someone, if that person's illegally in the country, they can pass that information on to ICE as well.

Madam Speaker, I've talked a lot about those people who come here legally. I mentioned a little bit about people who've come here illegally, and I think we need to separate the two and make sure that we understand that there is a difference between those who come the right way and those who come the wrong way.

I've been to those immigration ceremonies where people wanted to not just come here to work but wanted to come here to be Americans, stood there, Federal judge, gave them the oath to be a citizen of the United States, how their families were there, how they're teary eyed and proud of the fact that they are now Americans. Wonderful, wonderful events for those people who come here the right way, especially those who want to be citizens.

And we've got troops in Iraq and Afghanistan who legally came to the United States but they're not American citizens. And they've gone to Iraq and Afghanistan and are fighting those wars over there in the hope that that will help them become citizens later, and it will help them become citizens if they fight for the United States, and they're not even citizens. Wonderful, wonderful people, those citizens who have become naturalized.

But we have a problem with those folks who are not coming here the right way. And everyone that comes here illegally has always got a reason why they won't do it the right way.

But I'd like to move on, Madam Speaker, and mention a problem that we have currently with the Border Patrol. The Border Patrol, Madam Speaker, are those wonderful men and women that patrol the border, northern border, the southern border, great people. And I have met so many of them, and

they do the best that we will let them do in enforcing the border. But because Homeland Security, in my opinion, has drawn up the rules of engagement, they tie the hands of the Border Patrol on what they can do to enforce the rule of law.

Now, we've got to remember, that the bad guys that are coming into the United States, especially drug dealers, coyotes, they know what the Border Patrol policies are and they flaunt them to their benefit. And so what happens is, in many cases, our Federal Government, when the Border Patrol is down there fighting for the dignity of the United States trying to prevent, let's say, drug dealers from coming into the country, they get in a confrontation with a drug dealer, our government doesn't back them.

The best example, of course, is Ramos and Compean, two border agents who now have spent a year in Federal custody. They got 11- and 12-year sentences because they had a confrontation with a drug dealer down on the Texas-Mexico border at the town of Fabens, Texas, and had a confrontation with him. They shot him. They didn't know they'd shot him. He disappears into Mexico. They believe that he had a weapon. The United States Federal Government finds the drug dealer bringing in $750,000 worth of drugs into our country, finds him, says to him, Oh, we're going to give you immunity. We're not going to prosecute you for being a drug smuggler into the United States. All you've got to do is come back to America and testify against the two border agents on a civil rights violation because, you see, they shot at you. They actually hit you, and so we want to prosecute them, says our Federal Government. And our Federal Government spent thousands and thousands of dollars prosecuting those two border agents, and they were convicted. They were sent off to prison.

But what the jury in that trial didn't know was when this star witness, the backroom deal witness that the Federal Government made a deal with, you know, made a deal with the devil, to testify against these two border agents, while he's waiting to testify, he slips back into Mexico and brings another load of drugs into the United States, and the jury never heard about that second encounter.

Now, Madam Speaker, if you're a juror in a case, and I used to be a judge, and, you know, I never thought using these kind of witnesses helped to find the truth in a case. And this is a perfect example. If you were a juror in the case and the whole Federal Government's case is based upon the testimony of a drug dealer saying that he didn't have a weapon and that these two border agents shot at him anyway, wouldn't you want to know that while he's waiting around to testify he's bringing more drugs into the United States, flaunting the immunity agreement that our government gave him? Sure, you'd want to know and then judge his credibility.

Well, it turns out that was kept from the jury by the prosecutors. That case is on appeal. The fifth circuit heard it last year, and hopefully they'll reverse the case and order a new trial and let the next jury hear the whole truth. But you see, it's incidents like that which tells the Border Patrol agents don't get in a confrontation down there on the Texas-Mexico border, because if you do, our government won't back you; they're going to back the bad guy, the drug dealer.

Another example, David Sipe, another Border Patrol agent. Several years ago, I think it was the year 2000, almost the same situation. He gets in a fight with a coyote, human smuggler, bringing people into the United States in the Rio Grande riverbed. And he has a fight with this coyote and he wins the fight. You know, we'd think we'd want our border agents to win the fight, but yet he's prosecuted for violating the civil rights of the human smuggler, and he's tried and he's convicted. And what we learn in that case was the prosecution hid evidence in this case as well. The U.S. Attorney's Office hid evidence in that case as well about the fact of all the advantages and deals they gave to the coyote if he testified. See, the jury didn't know about all the things that he was given, about the $80,000 he was given.

Now, he bought a ranch down in Mexico with that $80,000 of U.S. money. About the cell phones, about the green cards coming back and forth. And so the Federal judge found out that the U.S. Attorney's Office hid that information from the jury, ordered a new trial. The second trial the jury heard all the truth. The jury found David Sipe not guilty. He's the second one.

□ 1700

More recently, Gilmer Hernandez, now get this one. It's almost as bizarre as the other two. Gilmer Hernandez is a deputy sheriff down in Rock Springs, Texas, not a very big place, and a vehicle is coming through at night, lights off, runs the stop sign. Gilmer Hernandez is on patrol by himself. You see, we don't have the money to have two deputies in a car.

He stops the vehicle. As he's approaching the vehicle, the driver turns the vehicle around, tries to run over Deputy Hernandez. Deputy Hernandez pulls out his pistol, perfect great shot. He starts shooting at the vehicle, the tires, just like in the movies. He's shooting at the tires, and he knocks out two of the tires as the vehicle goes by.

But what happened was, one of those bullets ricocheted on one of the people in the vehicle. There were nine illegals, plus the driver which I assume was the coyote, and they take off running. Deputy Hernandez was prosecuted for a civil rights violation because the U.S. Attorney's office said he shouldn't have fired his gun at the vehicle as it went by. He protected himself in self-defense, in my opinion. Deputy Hernandez just now got out of Federal penitentiary, and he's back home in Rock Springs, Texas.

It's cases like that which tell the border agents, be careful, don't get in a confrontation because if you do your government's not going to back you.

Now, I give you those three examples, Madam Speaker, because of the most recent example, the tragic example of Luis Aguilar. Luis Aguilar was a border patrol agent from El Paso, Texas, on duty in Tucson, Arizona, last week. Two vehicles speed across the United States border with Mexico, presumably drug dealers, come into the United States, border patrol sees them, tries to apprehend them by blocking their path, they turn around, they start heading back to Mexico.

Luis Aguilar, after getting permission with his supervisors, throws out what are called spikes, tire spikes, in front of one of the vehicles. The vehicle runs over this, tires blow out, and you're able to capture the bad guys. So he throws the spikes out in front of a Humvee, apparently stolen in the United States. You see, drug dealers are using real fancy vehicles stolen in the United States in many cases, and so he throws the spikes out but the Humvee doesn't stop. He heads for Border Patrol Agent Aguilar and, at a speed of 55 miles an hour, hits Border Agent Aguilar and killed him and then disappeared back into Mexico, that being the Humvee. He was 32, married, had two kids.

But you see if he would have done what Deputy Hernandez did and pulled out his gun and tried to shoot out the tires, you know, where would our Federal Government be? We don't know, but we do know that Border Agent Aguilar was killed in the line of duty protecting the dignity of the border, and I say that to say this, Madam Speaker.

Here's a chart. It's pretty simple. Assaults on border agents in 2005, there were 384. That's about one a day. 2006, doubled, 750, two a day. And last year in 2007, 987 assaults on border agents, three a day. That's what's happening to our border agents.

And have you read about any of this in our American press, about the assaults that are taking place against our border agents who are protecting the war zone down there on the Texas-Mexico border? You don't hear much about it, but you sure hear about it when some drug dealer gets shot by a border patrol agent. That ought not to be.

So, Madam Speaker, that's part of the problem is that we don't give the border patrol the right rules of engagement. We need to support them. We need to make the rules of engaging, especially drug dealers and coyotes different, so that they know our government supports them and act within the law to make sure they're able to stop those people who illegally come into the United States.

Madam Speaker, one of the many places I've been is Hudspeth County.

I'm sure most Americans never heard of that except folks down there in Hudspeth County. This is a drawing of it. El Paso County is to the West, and then there's Hudspeth County right here. It's a county about the size of Delaware. It has 12 deputy sheriffs patrolling this whole county the size of Delaware, and it's a great place for drug dealers to sneak into the United States and human coyotes because they're only 20 miles from Interstate 10.

There have been reports that the Mexican military has actually helped drug dealers smuggle drugs into the United States. You don't hear much about that in the national media.

But I want to tell you specifically about one incident I saw when the sheriff of Hudspeth County took me down to the Rio Grande River. We're driving down to the Rio Grande River on a dirt road. The river's to our south, and we come upon this. This is a bridge. It's a foot bridge. You don't drive back and forth across it, and it's out in the middle of no place, and there are three of these that connect Mexico to Hudspeth County, Texas, and of course, that bridge serves one purpose. It allows people to come into America without permission.

And I was just stunned to see this and the other bridges, and they've apparently been there for a long time. I don't know why we just don't tear it down, you know. Are we going to offend somebody if we tear this bridge down? At least go halfway. Half of it's ours, but it's things like this that make the work of our border patrol so difficult when we have these absurd bridges down in at least parts of Texas that border the United States and Mexico and allow people to come across.

Let me mention some other problems that we have. When Vicente Fox, and I call him Generalissimo Fox, was President of Mexico, he instigated a plan that would help illegals, not legals, come to the United States. What happened is the Mexican government produced comic book-types of pamphlets that were given to the migrants that were coming into the United States. Here are a few pages from the Guide for the Mexican Migrant. That's what it says on the outside of this pamphlet.

And here you see what to do, shows you where to cross, what to do when you're confronted by a border patrol, what to say and not to say. But anyway, it's all helping migrants come into the United States illegally, including giving them maps on where they can go and the best places to cross. So I doubt, in my opinion, if we're getting the right kind of cooperation from the Mexican government.

The Mexican economic policy seems to be go to America and send your money back to Mexico because that's what's happening. You know, people that are working in the United States from Mexico, send about $20 billion a year, that's billion with a B, back to Mexico. Other countries in Central America and South America, it's about $10 billion. It is about $30 billion a year of American economic stimulus is going to Mexico and to other countries in the Americas. So that is the apparently economic plan of Mexico.

I don't understand why Mexico, with all of its natural resources, doesn't develop those rather than expecting individuals to come to the United States and send their money back home.

You know, also speaking about Mexico, Mexico every once in a while kind of takes the position that we're being too hard on protecting our borders, but yet that's the same government that protects its southern border from other Central American countries where those illegals who want to come into Mexico, either to stay and work or come into the United States. Somewhat hypocritical to me, in my opinion.

We have gone so far that in this country if you are illegally in the country you can get what is called a Mexican matricula card. What is that? That is a document that is produced by Mexico as identification for Mexican nationals that are illegally in the United States. Now, somebody sent me one of these. Here is one. It's obviously not authentic even though it looks like it was from the consulate's office in Indianapolis. That's my photograph. Somebody took it off the Internet and just put my photograph on it and just made a Mexican matricula card.

Now that's what Mexican nationals, especially illegals, use to do banking, credit cards, to set up any type of financial transaction. They use these matricula cards. So we give illegals in this country identification cards from their home country. Doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

The next thing I'd like to mention is that in many cases when people are actually captured by the border patrol they're not immediately sent back where they came from, whether it's from Mexico or from China or wherever. Because of the overwhelming numbers, we don't have the facilities to detain individuals. So, if you are a Mexican national, you're usually sent back home. That doesn't prevent you from coming right back across the river the same way you got here. But they're sent back, and I'm talking about Mexican nationals that are illegally in the country. They have to come back and forth and be caught numerous times before our government finally says now we're going to prosecute you for criminally entering the United States. Most of the time they're just sent back home.

If you are not a Mexican national, what happens is because we don't have places to detain people that are captured by border patrol, sheriff's department, whoever, and then they are released on their word to come back to court for their deportation hearing. I probably need to repeat that again because I want to make sure that it is clear. So if you're not from Mexico but you're from some other place and you illegally come into the United States and you are captured, you're taken before an immigration judge, and on your oath and word you promise to appear in 6 months for your deportation hearing, and you are given a piece of paper, a get-out-of-jail-free card, which allows you to roam around for 6 months before you have to show back up because the courts are overwhelmed.

Did you know something, Madam Speaker? Most of those people never show back up for their deportation hearing. They just stay in the United States, and we hear from Homeland Security that that policy has ended. I'm not so sure that it is, because when I go down to the border, and I talk to the people, the boots on the ground, they say, no, we are still doing that in many places. We let them go because we don't have places to detain them.

When I was down on the Texas-Mexico border in one episode, we were driving down, middle of the night, 2 o'clock in the morning. Those Texas sheriffs are hard to keep up with. They stay up all the time, but anyway, we're driving down a road near the border and we see two people waiving at us. The sheriff stopped, found out these two people were from, I believe it was Costa Rica, and they wanted to be arrested so they could get their get-out-of-jail-free card so they could go on about their way. Interesting. They know the rules and what we don't do in this country to enforce our law in other countries. So it makes it very difficult to do what is necessary to enforce the rule of law.

Madam Speaker, we have this problem. We have individuals, legal and illegal, from foreign countries come into the United States and they commit felonies. I'm talking about serious crimes, in violation of the Federal law. They are caught. They are captured, they are tried, they are convicted, and they're sent to prison.

While they're in prison, our system works very well. ICE files deportation proceedings. They take place. An immigration judge orders the person deported as soon as they get out of the penitentiary. But what happens is when they finish their sentence, their home country won't take them back. They don't want them. They're criminals, and so because of our law, we can't indefinitely keep the person in custody. They've already served out their sentence for violating American law for a felony like robbery. So they're released within 6 months, as it should be. The Supreme Court has said that. I agree with that rule. We can't detain them, but their country won't take them back.

Now, there are nine main countries that do that, and it may not surprise us that the number one culprit is that country that makes, you know, toys with lead in it and sends it to the United States, China. China doesn't take them back. They use all kinds of diplomatic excuses why they don't take them, but the bottom line is they

don't take them back. Vietnam is another one that doesn't take them back. India. There's a total of eight countries that won't take them back.

□ 1715

Now, it would seem to me if a country won't take back their lawfully deported felons, that country shouldn't get legal visas for other citizens to legally come here. It seems like that ought to be the law: You won't take back your deported ones, your citizens can't come here legally. That's what the law ought to be. Well, Madam Speaker, that is the law. However, the State Department chooses not to do that, especially with China, and I have the letter that they sent me. They choose not to do that with China because of the ongoing trade negotiations with the Chinese Government.

Madam Speaker, if a person commits a felony in this country and they're ordered deported to go back home, they ought to go back home. If that country doesn't take them, they ought to lose the right to have legal visas in this country, and they ought to lose foreign aid if we give foreign aid to those countries; otherwise, we will have a continuing number of these felons running loose in America. How many are we talking about? My understanding is that right now it's 165,000 people lawfully deported for committing felonies and haven't been taken back home by their home country. It's amazing what we don't do in this country.

We also have the problem, of course, in the area of how much it costs. And I'm going to try to go through these as fast as I can, Madam Speaker. Before I get to the costs, I want to talk about this issue of birthright citizenship. Most Americans, if you ask them the question, if you're born in the United States, are you a citizen, 100 percent of them are going to say, sure, you're a citizen if you're born here. But is that the law? And I'll read where this comes from. And when in doubt, we probably ought to just look at the Constitution. And I know most Members of the House on both sides carry a pocket Constitution like this, as I do, in their pockets. I want to read to you the 14th amendment, just portions of it.

Section 1, 14th amendment of the United States: ''All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.'' That phrase that we don't ever talk about is ''all persons that are subject to the jurisdiction thereof.'' In other words, you've got to be subject to the jurisdiction of the United States if you're born here. And people who sneak into the country with the whole premise of having a child are not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. That would be my argument as a former prosecutor and as a judge, looking at it from a constitutional point of view.

Just because you're born here doesn't make you a citizen under the Constitution. But it's our policy in this country to allow you to be a citizen. We just accept that. But that's not what the Constitution says. So, maybe in the interest of America we ought to revisit that, especially those people and those cases that fraudulently enter the country on the premise to have a child born here. Once that child is born here, then the child, because we say that child is an American citizen, then we don't deport the child, but we let the mother stay and then we allow the whole extended family to come over here and stay into the country. And this is happening at an epidemic proportion in the United States. It seems to me that we need a case before the Supreme Court and let them decide down the street whether or not, just because you're born here, does that make you a citizen? I would argue it doesn't because they're not subject to the jurisdiction of the country when they fraudulently came in here. They're subject to the jurisdiction of the country that they came from.

Also, we have a tremendous cost in the area of education, Madam Speaker. Last year, Texas spent $4 billion educating people illegally in the United States. We talk about education costs. We've talked about it. We're going to talk about it some more. We don't hear too much talk about the people that are in the system that are here illegally in the country. Nationwide, it's about $30 billion a year. And it's unfortunate that we won't deal with the reality of it. We educate everybody in the country. All you've got to do is just show up and you're educated at somebody else's expense.

Now, I don't think other countries do that. Let's say, Madam Speaker, that I went to France, and I snuck into France and I take my four kids with me. And I get into France and I tell the Education Minister of France, Educate me. Educate my kids. Educate them in English because none of us speak French. What do you think would happen to me? Well, my kids and myself and my family, we would be sent back to Texas, and rightfully so. And most countries in the world do that, but not the United States.

Let's deal with the issue of the cost of people in the system that are illegally in the country and figure out the most humane, ethical and financially beneficial way to deal with it. But one way not to deal with it is what we're doing now is allowing people that are illegally in the country to go to our universities and pay in-state tuition. That makes no sense. And Texas, unfortunately, is one of these States. You see, if you are illegally in the country, you can go to the University of Texas and pay in-state tuition. But if you're from Oklahoma, God bless you, or you're from Germany and you want to go to the University of Texas, you pay out-of-state tuition because you ain't from around here. But if you're illegally in the country, we allow you to go to the University of Texas and pay in-state tuition.

So, we benefit people illegally in the country over American citizens and foreign nationals who are coming here the right way. It makes no sense to me. And with the high cost of education, and as a parent, and most parents who have to pay for this education, it doesn't seem fair to me that we penalize American citizens and legal foreign nationals who want to go to our universities. So, education is one of those.

Health care costs is another one. I've discussed that. I don't have time to talk about Parkland Hospital in Dallas where most of the babies that are born there every year are born to mothers that are illegally in the country. There is a whole network of individuals, pregnant mothers from south of the Texas border, and I don't just include Mexico, but there is a whole network, work your way up to Dallas, wait your turn, go to Parkland Hospital and have your baby, and your baby is now an American citizen. We have to deal with that. And of course the health care cost is being paid by somebody.

We've talked a lot about health care and expenses and how Americans can't afford it, and that's true. You know, middle-class America, people making up to $100,000, $80,000, they can't afford health care costs. They can't afford to pay for the insurance. But if you're illegally in the country, of course, all you've got to do is show up at the emergency room, the most expensive health care, and somebody else pays for it. And that's people that are paying taxes, legal immigrants and U.S. citizens. So, health care costs are being driven up by people who are here illegally.

The criminal justice system. I mentioned I was a judge down to Houston forever, 22 years. And on any given day they tell me over in the sheriff's department that about 20 percent of the people in jail waiting to be tried, waiting for their felony trials, that's what I tried was felonies, are people from other countries, most of them illegally in the United States.

The prison system, State, Federal, local, is all being driven up in cost by criminals that are over here. Not everybody is a criminal of course, but some of them do come over here and commit crime. And it's important that we have to deal with that issue and the cost as well.

Madam Speaker, the GAO did a study on our borders, and here is what they did. They got some of their people to drive back and forth across the American border with Canada and Mexico, and they wanted to see if they could get into the United States illegally. And they did. They used fake documents that they had manufactured, just like other people do. And what they were bringing in was radioactive material that went undetected when they kept crossing back and forth the border between the United States and Canada and the border with Mexico. And I give you that example because, in the big scheme of things, open borders is an invitation for terrorists who

want to do us harm. The next terrorist attack that happens in this country is not going to be because somebody lands over here at Reagan National Airport, gets off the plane and says, I wonder what damage I can do to America. It's not going to happen that way. They're going to probably just come across the border because it's easier to do that. And we should be very concerned about that issue because, you see, open borders, you get the good, you get the bad, and you get the ugly. And those terrorists are certainly bad and ugly.

So, Madam Speaker, we need the moral will, as a country, to enforce the rule of law. All those different groups that have a political agenda, or some other agenda rather than national security, have an influence over our national security issue. And maybe we need to deal with what is best for America. And we start with the basics. We secure the border and you make sure that people who come here come here the right way. We streamline the Immigration Service so people don't have to wait so long before they come here, whether they want to be a citizen or whether they want to work or whether they want to be a student. That's a whole other issue, the Immigration Service. But streamline that. Make it efficient. Make sure that we use documents, such as a passport, to come into the United States.

We protect the borders of other nations, Madam Speaker. We protect the border of Korea. We're over there protecting the border in Iraq. We protect the borders of other nations better than we protect our own border. Third World countries protect their borders greater than the greatest power that has ever existed protects its borders. Why? It's because we don't have the will to do it. We do a lot of talking about it, but we don't do much about it.

As I mentioned, I've been down to the Texas-Mexico border 13 times. Every time I go down there, it gets worse. A sheriff in one of the counties told me, I said, What's it like down here? He said, After dark it gets western. I said, What do you mean by that? He said, It gets western. It's violent. And while we were down there, we heard gunshots coming from the other side of the border. It's a serious situation, and Americans need to realize it. And I invite every Member of Congress to go down to the border and see what it's like. Because if we're going to make rules about immigration reform and border security and national security, we need to see what the war zone is like to make those decisions. And I invite them all to go down there. Go with me, because I'm going back.

So, we need to prosecute businesses that knowingly hire illegals. They shouldn't get a pass because they own the business. We go after the worker that's over here and try to deport them. That's the wrong method. The method ought to be, go after the business, because if the business owner doesn't hire illegals, that person doesn't have a place to work and they'll go home. Oklahoma has already proven that with their State law.

We need to put America first. And Madam Speaker, we cannot continue to be blissfully ignorant of the truth on the border. This is a great country, a country, as we hear, that is made up of mostly immigrants, people who came here the right way at some point in time. And we want to continue to be a Nation of immigrants. But the rule of law needs to be followed. It has to be followed. And we need to enforce the security of our Nation rather than continue to talk about it.

It reminds me of what my grandfather used to say. He said, ''When all is said and done, more is said than done.'' And that's true. We need to do whatever is necessary within the law. I, for one, believe that we ought to put the National Guard on the border; that would stop it. When the military is on the border, our military is on the Korean border, you don't cross that Korean border without the permission of the United States. Protecting somebody else's border, again.

Madam Speaker, it seems to me that open borders invites everyone to come in and invade the United States, and it's time that our country deal with this reality while we're dealing with the war in Iraq, while we're dealing with the war in Afghanistan, while we protect the borders of other nations. Let's deal with the issues of the border security of our own country, the border security on the southern border and the border security on our northern border. We will be a better country for it and a safer country for it.

And Madam Speaker, that's just the way it is.

PRESIDENT'S DEFENSE BILL VETO

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I was sitting at home over the holiday recess spending time with my family when I became aware of the fact that the President had vetoed the Defense Authorization bill that we passed in this body shortly before we adjourned. And like most of my colleagues, I was surprised by that veto and I wanted to learn more about the basis, the reasoning behind the decision of the President to withhold pay increases to our men and women in uniform who are serving us in very heavily conflicted areas around the world, and why the President would veto a bill that would increase funding for Veterans' Administration health care benefits to our Nation's aging veterans and our most recent veterans who are in serious need of those medical services. And so I got a copy of the President's veto statement and I read it, and, quite frankly, I was shocked. I was shocked, Madam Speaker, because, as I saw the President's basis for the veto, I was taken back to a time several years ago when I was watching a 60 Minutes story about tortured U.S. prisoners of war from our first Gulf War. And when I learned that the basis for the President's veto was to keep U.S. POWs who had been brutally beaten and tortured by Saddam Hussein's thugs in the first Gulf War from receiving compensation for those injuries, I was ashamed for my country.

To give you some idea of what we're talking about, these were the words that Mike Wallace uttered on 60 Minutes at the beginning of the program on November 20, 2003: During the first Gulf War against Iraq in 1991, a number of American soldiers who were captured and became prisoners of war were brutally, brutally tortured by the Iraqis. Eventually, though, the POWs came home, put the pieces of their lives back together, and largely remained out of the public eye. But today, a different battle is being fought by some of those American POWs all these years after they returned. It was back in 1991 that the POWs came home from Iraq to a hero's welcome and were greeted by the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Collin Powell and then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney.

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''Your country is opening its arms to greet you,'' said CHENEY. Many of the POWs had suffered wounds both physical and psychological. Some of them suffer to this day more than a decade after they were captured and appeared on Iraqi TV.

And, Madam Speaker, to put a human face on these tortured American POWs, I am going to put up a photograph of Commander Jeffrey Zaun, who was a tortured Gulf War POW, who had a very visible presence on TV because of the attempt by Saddam Hussein's government to use him as an example and try to convince the American people to give up the cause that was the purpose for defending the invasion of Kuwait from the aggression of the Iraqi army. Commander Jeffrey Zaun was one of those POWs who was brutally tortured by the Iraqis and was part of a group of POWs who took action to try to hold the Iraqi Government accountable and to serve as a deterrent to other nations like Iraq who would dare to use American hostages and American POWs as a way of exacting their political agenda through torture and abuse in violation of international law, in violation of international treaties.

So how did we get to this point? During the Gulf War against Iraq, these captured POWs that we've been talking about were subsequently tortured, beaten, starved, hooked up to electric shock devices, and subjected to other horrendous acts by Saddam Hussein's regime. At the time these acts occurred, the United States Department

of State had classified Iraq as a state sponsor of terrorism. Madam Speaker, during the Gulf War, this very Congress that I stand in today had passed two resolutions by unanimous consent, stating the intention of the Congress to hold Iraq accountable for the torture of American POWs. Yet when these same brave American POWs returned home after the Gulf War ended, what did our current Vice President and then Secretary of Defense DICK CHENEY tell them? ''Your country is opening its arms to greet you.''

Well, where I come from in Iowa, opening your arms to take care of tortured and wounded people means doing a lot more than ignoring their needs. And yet that is exactly what happened to these unfortunate POWs. They have suffered long-term physical, emotional, and mental damages as a result of brutal state-sponsored torture. And in 1996 Congress, responding to their concerns, raised by these international law violations, passed an amendment to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act so that torture victims like the American POWs we are talking about could seek compensation for their injuries from terrorist countries including Iraq.

On April 4 of 2002, 17 POWs and their families filed claims in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, seeking compensation for damages related to their torture and abuse by the government of Iraq. These POWs included many decorated officers in this Nation's military, people like Colonel Clifford Acree, Lieutenant Colonel Craig Berryman, Sergeant Troy Dunlap, Colonel David Eberly, Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey D. Fox, Chief Warrant Officer Guy Hunter, Sergeant David Lockett, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Robert, Lieutenant Colonel Russell Sanborn, Major Joseph Small, Staff Sergeant Daniel Stamaris, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Dale Storr, Major Robert Sweet, Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Tice, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wetzel, and, of course, Commander Jeffrey Zaun.

I am on the floor tonight with some of my colleagues in the freshmen class so that these names do not fade into history and the abuse that they were subjected to does not get lost in the politics of a Presidential veto.

In 2003, after the Government of Iraq repeatedly refused to participate in arbitration on these damage claims and after hearing evidence about how these POWs had been repeatedly tortured, a judge awarded them damages and indicated that the purpose of deterring torture of POWs should be one of the highest priorities of our government.

And, Madam Speaker, the reason why what we're talking about is so important is because the United States, like many countries, is a signatory to international treaties designed to protect the treatment of U.S. POWs and other prisoners of war and the most important treaty is the Third Geneva Convention that was entered into on August 12 of 1949.

One of the most important provisions that came out of the Third Geneva Convention is Article 131, and the reason that I am so outraged by the President's veto, Madam Speaker, is because Article 131 prohibits the very conduct that the President engaged in in vetoing this legislation because the Geneva Convention Article 131 provides no country shall be allowed to absolve itself or any other country of any liability related to prohibited treatment of prisoners of war. And there is no doubt, there is no question, that the abuse of American POWs by Saddam Hussein's regime constituted the type of torture prohibited by the Third Geneva Convention.

I am proud to welcome to this hour the president of our freshmen class, the majority makers, my good friend from the southern part of Minnesota who has been a terrific leader in our class, who has been a passionate spokesman on fighting for veterans, fighting for our men and women in uniform, and he brings a very personal perspective to that based on his longstanding service in the National Guard of this country. And without further ado, I am going to yield to my friend and colleague, Mr. WALZ from Minnesota.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I thank the gentleman from Iowa for yielding.

And, Madam Speaker, I think it's critical to point out that the gentleman from Iowa has been a passionate voice for civil liberties, has been a passionate voice of making sure this country adheres to that great tradition that so embodies each and every one of us. And I think it's important to understand that Mr. BRALEY from Iowa comes from a family that has served this Nation proudly. He's got a grandfather that fought on the sands of Iwo Jima. And in bringing this fight and understanding what needs to be done to protect our soldiers in this conflict and future conflicts, he's brought a very, very important point out about the President's disregard in vetoing the Department of Defense authorization bill. And I would have to say his voice has been somewhat lone in the wilderness on this. I don't hear the outrage that should be there. So I thank the gentleman for giving me the opportunity to stand with him tonight to bring this important issue forward.

I spent the last 9 days prior to this week traveling throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, talking to our soldiers, talking to our airmen, talking to our Marines, talking to our sailors, and getting a feel for how things were going as far as how their medical care was going and those types of things. And without fail every single one of these individuals with high morale and a pride in what they are doing for their Nation did bring up the question and asked me, Why is our raise being held up? Why can't Congress get the simplest thing done to move forward a raise? And I ask this and in talking to them and talking to other Americans, Madam Speaker, the question comes, and we hear it time and time again, why can't Congress get along? Why can't Congress get things done? And I think Mr. BRALEY from Iowa has highlighted exactly what it is and exactly what we are up against.

This President chose to hold our warriors hostage their pay raise. And the President may not think 3½ percent is much. I'm sure it's nothing to him. What I can tell you is that it's a lot to a family back home. It's a lot when the mother and father are deployed down range or in a war zone. It's a lot to have that 3½ percent given. But the President didn't concern himself with that, all the good things that Mr. BRALEY talked about that was in the Department of Defense Authorization Act, a very important one was the ability of our POWs, those that fought so bravely to make claims and make amends according to law, according to international law, to amend what had been done to them.

Now, the President tells us we'll get frivolous lawsuits out of this. We will hamper Iraq's fledgling government's ability to rebuild itself.

Now, there are several big fallacies in that statement. The first is the assumption that the fledgling government is doing anything to get itself back and rebuilding. And I offer the fact that Iraq said last year they would put in $10 billion of their own money to put into reconstruction. An audit at the end of last year indicated they spent 4.4 percent of that. Spent it. It doesn't necessarily mean that it went to reconstruction, which basically says 95.6 percent never made it out of the bureaucracy, never made it to the Iraqi people, never did any of that.

Mr. BRALEY of Minnesota. Reclaiming my time, I want to share a personal experience I had serving on the Government Oversight and Reform Committee when we investigated the very problem that you're identifying. And we saw the photograph showing fork trucks carrying $2.1 billion of cash bundled up on pallets as part of the largest 1-day transfer of cash in U.S. history that led to the missing funds you're talking about. Over $2.1 billion of cash sent in 1 day, and yet the Iraqi people who are in need of the assistance are unable to identify where that money went to. There's a similar problem with our inability to identify large amounts of weapons that are unaccounted for in Iraq. And I think it gets back to the much deeper question of whether the American taxpayers are getting their money's worth for the contributions that this country has made investing in the rebuilding of Iraq. And I just wanted to offer that and offer it up as an opportunity for you to comment.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Absolutely. And the point that the gentleman from Iowa has brought up is exactly this: When you dig into this and you start peeling back the onion of what's happening here, you start to see a pattern. And the issue here is this administration, as much as they want to talk

about the rule of law, as much as they want to talk about giving people recourse on this, they have slammed the door into 17 brave warriors, slammed the door in their face, of saying they should have the ability to recoup some of what they gave up for this Nation. And it wasn't our Nation paying for it. It was the Iraqis who were responsible for that torture, for that mistreatment.

And I think many of us ask the question, what message does this send to the people who are fighting around the world? What message does this send to them? You can torture the Americans and if you cut a good enough deal, there will be no recourse. There will be no recourse against the people who carried it out. There will be no recourse to allow for those people to receive compensation. I think it sets an incredibly poor precedent. It disrespects the service of these brave warriors, and it sets us up for failure in the future of these things starting to happen. So when we see this and when the American people ask us, why didn't anything get done? I'll have to tell you today's a pretty sad day. The President did sign the DOD authorization when this provision was taken out. And I think many of us who voted on this in the first place put together a good compromise bill. We find out that when any legislation goes up the street to Pennsylvania Avenue, the people's will in this House matters nothing, the people's will to make sure that this was righted. The 17 families that have asked for recourse on the damages that were done in the name of this Nation were wiped away with a single signature by the President, and this House is left at the horrible choice of do we continue to hold up the research funding for warriors' injuries? Do we continue to hold up the funding for weapons systems to protect them? Do we continue to hold up the pay raise to these soldiers and to their families who are fighting, or do we make the compromise to move that forward and fight another day?

And I quite honestly have to commend my colleague from Iowa. He will fight every day for what's right. This is a question of justice. This goes at the heart and soul of our rule of law and our justice system and a citizen's right to recourse, to petition, to be able to go to a court of law to hear their discussion in a public court of law, to have their peers make a decision. But as we know, this administration, given the opportunity, would shut those same doors to justice to many of us here.

We hear about clever arguments on tort reform, and I know my colleague from Iowa is very familiar with this, but it's pretty much the same thing; that if you are injured in a reckless manner, if you're injured or something is done to you, your ability to go and tell your story in front of a jury of your peers and to trust in your peers to make the right decision, they want to limit that, and they say it's all in the name of frivolous lawsuits, as if we could trust the corporate entities over our neighbors, over our fellow citizens. And in this case we told our fellow citizens, 17 of them that are warriors, well, Iraq needs to rebuild and needs to keep that money, which, by the way, as I think the gentleman noted, upwards of several billion dollars that have gone missing.

I will note that payment to Iraqi legislators has come on time every single month. The lifestyle of Iraqi legislators as they took off a month in the heat of August during some of the most fierce fighting that our soldiers were fighting and dying for as they left to their villas is something that I think Americans should take great notice of. So, once again, I think that this was a huge mistake. I think the President put a very narrow special interest ahead of the needs of our fighting soldiers and has set a precedent that I'm afraid we're going to have to deal with in a much bigger manner down the road.

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Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I think you have hit a very important point in talking about what this law was originally designed to accomplish. This law was not designed to open the floodgates for any potential claim arising from persons engaged in armed conflict around the world against the countries where that conflict occurred. In fact, this law that allowed these claims to be pursued in the first place set a very high bar before you could even begin to pursue them.

Number one, there had to be a declaration by the State Department that the nation involved in torture was a state sponsor of terrorism, which, as you know, that is an incredibly harsh accusation to make in the world community. So in order for the State Department to reach that conclusion, they would have to be presented with overwhelming evidence that a country was engaged in the state sponsor of terrorism. And when the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq invaded Kuwait, that is when the State Department acted to declare, based upon what was happening and what was outraging people all over the world, that indeed that government was a state sponsor of terror at that time. So that was the first threshold that these hostages and POWs had to meet.

The second was that they were tortured under the definitions of international law, which is much more egregious than simply being involved in a firefight and being wounded or having something that is expected to happen in the normal course of conflict, which is always an impossible arena to control. But we are talking about a deliberate decision to torture individual citizens in violation of all accepted principles of international law.

And then after you pass those two hurdles, these victims of torture also had to prove that the acts that they were being tortured for would be the type of claims that they could pursue in the courts of law of this country.

And the gentleman from Minnesota, Madam Speaker, made another excellent point, and that is this is consistent with the pattern of behavior we have seen from this administration for the past 7 years to take away the rights of individuals who have been harmed due to no fault of their own and to substitute the judgment of this body and State legislatures for what juries have been doing in this country since before it was formed. And what I like to remind my colleagues is there is something that we all take an oath to defend when we serve in this body. It is called the United States Constitution. And part of that Constitution is something we hold and cherish, which is the Bill of Rights. And it includes the freedom of speech that we all cherish every day on this floor. It includes the freedom of religion, the freedom to associate, the freedom of the press. It includes the right to bear arms. But it also includes the seventh amendment to the Constitution that guarantees that juries get to determine facts like what the issues are we are talking about here today, what is fair compensation for someone who has been subjected to torture.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that I think is most disturbing about the issues we are talking about on the floor tonight is that the President and his spokesperson don't like to talk about what happened to these POWs. It is unpleasant, and it brings to mind in the hearts of all Americans, how could we let this happen to people serving this country who have put up with so much and been through so much and then get them to the point where they can hold their offenders accountable, and who comes in and pulls the rug out from under them? Not the Iraqi Government, but the President of the United States who directed his Attorney General to intervene in these claims and see that the assets were not available to satisfy them.

Let's just take a moment, Madam Speaker, to talk about one of those victims that I mentioned earlier, Colonel Cliff Acree. Here is what he said in that 60 Minutes interview that I referred to earlier: They had broken my nose many times and I was just getting used, you just kind of get used to it.

Colonel Acree was shot down the second day of the war. The interrogations always began the same way, and these are his words: They would have these six or eight people just beat you for 10, 15, 20 minutes. Just no questions asked. Bring you into the room and beat you with fists, feet, clubs, whatever.

One of the other victims, Dale Storr, that I mentioned, who was serving in the National Guard at this time said: Hearing Cliff talk about it, we never really talk like this before in such detail. But it brings back memories. It is almost like I am back in my cell again.

Another victim, Jeff Tice, who was captured after his F–16 was hit by a

surface-to-air missile, and, Madam Speaker, he was tortured with a device called the ''talkman.'' And what they would do is they would wrap a wire around the ear of one of these prisoners, another wire underneath their chin, then wrap it around the other ear and hook it up to an electrical device. Then they would start to question him. And this is what Jeff Tice said: They would turn on the juice. And what it does is it creates a ball of lightning in your mind or in your head, drives all the muscles simultaneously together, and it drives your jaw and everything together, and of course I am chained to a chair. I can't move freely. So everything is jerking into a little ball, and your teeth are being forced together with such force, I am breaking pieces and parts off.

Jeff Tice's jaw was dislocated so many times that he was lucky, as he said, that they were able to put it back into place.

And now, I am going to yield to my colleague from Minnesota. After hearing some of these descriptions and having had the experience of having young students of yours that you taught in Minnesota join the Minnesota National Guard, which along with the 133rd of the Iowa National Guard has served the longest single deployment of any combat unit in the war in Iraq, what type of message does that send to those young men and women who you helped to train, you helped to educate, and who are going off to serve their country, knowing that if they get captured and held as a POW their Government is not going to be there for them?

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Well, anyone who listens tonight, Madam Speaker, to the gentleman's accounts is horrified. And I think to put it into context, make no mistake about it, what happened today in the signing of the Department of Defense authorization bill with these provisions taken out to allow recourse on this is, it is pretty difficult for me to see any way that a decision was made to side with the monsters who carried out this torture and not with those brave Americans who went at this country's call, did our bidding, and then came home to the so-called open arms. And as the gentleman said, having spent 24 years in the National Guard, having trained countless soldiers, many, as you said, served in my unit. I taught them in school. I coached them on the football field. One of the things that was very clear in part of our training, because, of course, it held to those core values of being an American, was the respect for the Geneva Convention.

The Geneva Convention did several very important things. As I said, it upheld those principles of, even in a conflict situation, that the humanity and the humane treatment of other individuals was absolutely paramount to keeping with the ideals of this Nation. There was also something else very, very important with the Geneva Convention that many of us as soldiers always came to rely upon is knowing that if you adhere to these things, that if other combatants, the enemy you were fighting understood that, one of the things you could do was you could convince people that it might be better to give up the fight. It might be better because you know you will be treated humanely. And there was always great comfort, because it is not the fear of injury, it is not the fear of battle which is there amongst all these soldiers, it is the fear of capture and torture and saying something that may hurt your fellow soldiers that has everyone terrified.

So the idea is that the Geneva Convention was held in the highest esteem. The principles that it was set by were there to make sure that even at the base emotions of war amongst human beings that there was a respect for basic human life. There was a respect when someone was unarmed and unable to fight, that when someone was captured, they would be treated as humanely as possible. And with that being pulled back, I have to tell you, it terrifies me.

And these forgotten warriors are forgotten because they happen to be an inconvenience now. They happen to be an inconvenience to a political ideology. They happen to be an inconvenience because this administration doesn't want to follow the Geneva Convention. This administration, I believe, and members of this administration have called it a quaint, outdated notion that is no longer there. I would argue that soldiers don't see it that way. Soldiers see it as a necessity.

And for many of us, as my colleague has pointed out, it is hard to fathom that an administration that has talked so much about our soldiers would so callously brush aside 17, in this society, 17 warriors held in the highest esteem as a prisoner of war for their Nation and to cast them aside and cut their rights off to any type of recourse. And I can't help but see a pattern here of where the administration's loyalties lie. As Americans are struggling, and we hear about it every day, the economic crisis, they are struggling to make ends meet, and they see $102 a barrel oil. But I don't know where that is able to be rectified in their mind when they see the President walking hand in hand with the Saudi Prince and knowing that every bit of that $102 is going into the pockets of the Saudi Princes, going into nations and going into, in this case, a regime that committed the grievous atrocities against our soldiers and was totally absolved down on Pennsylvania Avenue against the wishes of the 100 elected Senators, against the wishes of the 435 elected Members of this body. And yet tonight, several of us stand here. And I think the outrage and the passion that my colleague from Iowa has shown should be reassuring to the American public that there is a voice there. There is a voice in the wilderness. There is a voice that says this is wrong. This is a wrong that should not be allowed to stand. This is a wrong that I think they want to see, my colleague from Iowa, myself and our colleagues here, stand and speak for what is right.

So again, I can only come to the conclusion, and I ask my colleague if he can find another way of seeing this, what was the benefit of the administration's decision to side with the Hussein regime over U.S. POWs who were tortured? I am still trying to find where there is justification. It doesn't go back to ''we can't hamper the Iraqi from rebuilding,'' because they are not doing that as it is. It can't go back to any precedence. It is in violation of the Geneva Convention, and it flies in the face, as my colleague said, of our basic principles of our Constitution. So I am trying to figure how we would be able to sell this to the American public.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Well, Madam Speaker, I think my friend from Minnesota has hit this one on the head, because one of the things you were talking about is the administration's interpretation of what our treaty obligations are under the Geneva Convention. And maybe it all boils down to this very simple question: When is torture torture? Because you brought up the fact that our own Government, our own Justice Department, seems to have a difficult time interpreting acts such as waterboarding, that I think every American who has seen the video illustrating what that is would conclude that it constitutes torture in violation of the third Geneva Convention. And yet it is hard for us as a people and as a government to try to say, we need to stand up to other countries who are torturing our POWs if we can't get it ourselves in terms of our obligations under the Geneva Convention. I think it gets to a much more fundamental question, which is, are we going to be the type of country that stands by our word when we enter in these international treaties? These treaties are designed not just to protect American prisoners of war but to make sure that the countries that we may be in conflict with have the same respect for human rights, human dignity and human decency for captured prisoners that we would expect our men and women in uniform to be subjected to.

To give you some idea of how this plays out in the real world, I would remind my friend from Minnesota of what happened to Lieutenant Colonel Berryman, one of the people I identified as the POWs that brought this claim.

□ 1800

This really gets to the heart of many of those constitutional protections I talked about earlier.

Lieutenant Colonel Berryman was inspected after he was captured to determine whether he was circumcised and was questioned about his religion. When he answered he was a Baptist, his captors called him a lying Jew. A guard then hit his left leg below the

knee that felt like a heavy club. Lieutenant Colonel Berryman immediately collapsed in excruciating pain because the blow had broken the fibula, one of the bones in his lower left leg.

Another guard used a similar club to attack his right leg, and the two guards continued beating him as he rolled on the floor to protect his leg. As he continued to resist answering questions, which is exactly what my friend mentioned, Lieutenant Colonel Berryman was told that if he did not answer their questions, they would break his other legs. Two guards pinned him to the wall and one kicked him in the left leg causing him to collapse to the ground in pain. The others began kicking and beating him. And one guard used a steel-towed boot to kick a piece of flesh out of Lieutenant Colonel Berryman's leg exposing the bone.

Then a lit cigarette was pressed several times against his forehead and then pressed against his nose and each ear and then was crushed out in an open wound on his neck.

What American listening to that testimony would not be overwhelmed with rage and with a sense of passion and compassion for the person that was subjected to that?

That's why, in my humble opinion, Madam Speaker, when we set policy on this floor about how we are going to stand up for the people who serve this country who may become prisoners of war or who may become hostages, it's important that we keep in mind that the rule of law will only be respected if we in this country stand up for it and say that the rule of law is what we are all about in the way we are going to take care of our citizens.

And with that, I would like to yield to my colleague from the great State of New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) and ask what your reaction is to some of the things we've been talking about tonight. What do you think the good people of New Hampshire would think if they knew their President and their government had done what we have done to deny the opportunity to compensate these victims of torture?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you for asking that.

I come from a family who has served. I had my father serving in World War II. My uncle was a career Air Force officer in several wars. I had a grandfather in war and my brothers who fought, and I also had my husband who was in the military, and I was proud to be a military spouse, and now a member of the armed services; and always I believed that the Commander in Chief was going to be there to protect our troops. Always I thought it would be the Commander in Chief who would be a tough advocate for us all and he would be watching out and speak to other nations in as tough a manner as necessary to protect our troops. That's what I believed. That's why I'm here on the floor tonight.

I'm here on the floor trying to understand how the President of the United States has failed these prisoners of war, these men who went to Iraq and were seized by a hostile nation, who were tortured and then had to come back and go to court to receive just compensation. And when they won, then the President of the United States stepped in, not to make sure that they received what they had won, but to make sure they didn't receive it; and that's the part I can't understand.

The President said that Iraq needed this money, the Iraqis needed it to rebuild. We give $10 to $12 billion a month to the Iraqi government. I think that the President should take a look at how the money is being spent in Iraq and see and hear the stories that I have heard as a member of the Armed Services Committee and recognize that our money's being wasted over there. And yet he's protecting their assets and protecting them when our troops were the ones who went there.

Our troops were the ones who fought for our freedom in that first gulf war, and we had troops who suffered at the end of this government.

I can't understand it. And the President was so determined to do this that he held up the authorization bill. Now what is so important about that is there are a lot of programs in there. But one thing in particular just infuriated me.

There was a pay raise for our troops, for our troops who were in Iraq right now, who were in Afghanistan and who are all around the world and America protecting us. And the story about the pay raise is relevant, also.

The President says he supports the troops, but he only wanted a 3 percent pay raise. And so when Congress voted for a 3½ percent pay raise, the President thought that was too much. He said a 3 percent was sufficient. Obviously, the President has never had to live on military pay, but I have and so many do today. And I know that 3½ percent might not seem like a lot. It certainly isn't. But they need it, and they deserved it, and they earned it.

So now we have a problem that today's troops are suffering at the hands of the President's stubbornness here, and then we have the POWs who are suffering because they're not allowed to collect what they justly earned for their suffering.

And I can't understand it, but I do know that the people of New Hampshire are furious also that those veterans who went there in complete trust and faith in this country and in the President have to be devastated now to know that if they were injured, if they were tortured abroad, that they could not be certain that the Geneva Conventions would be upheld. They could not be certain that the Commander in Chief would be there for them. They could not be certain that all of the guarantees that were made when they signed and stepped forward to service would be honored, and I think that's the real shame here today and the real disgrace here today that we are not standing up for our soldiers.

So I would say that the people in New Hampshire are insistent that those who suffered for our country need to be justly compensated.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. One of the things I would like to ask both of my friends to comment on is how the Bush administration has known about this problem dating clear back to 2003 when the CBS 60 Minutes story aired, and what has happened since that time and what the attitude of the administration is in trying to justify it, this veto.

One of the things that we know is that a number of Members of Congress and a number of influential Members of Congress in both parties were outraged because of the fact that some of these POWs were constituents of theirs, and when the White House moved to intervene and make sure that these judgements could not be collected, took very strong action and took and used very strong language to try to convince the administration not to do this.

One of those individuals is someone we all know who is the current majority leader of the Senate, Senator HARRY REID from Nevada. And when this story aired in November of 2003, Majority Leader REID said, I hope George Bush, the President of the United States, doesn't know about this because if he knows about it, if he knows about it, it is a pox on his house, his White House. This is wrong.

Well, that was in 2003. And now we are 5 years later. There can be no doubt that this President knew what he was doing when he issued this veto, and yet when his press secretary has been questioned as to why the administration felt the need to take away the rights of victims of torture to full and fair compensation, they say the same thing over and over again which is, no amount of money could compensate these victims for their terrible injuries.

Well, when the judge who heard this case issued his decision awarding damages, he noted that, and yet that's not what this case is about. This case is about putting some measure of value on what these torture victims went through, what their families went through who were watching these shots on TV of their loved ones, who were hearing these tales of torture and fearing for the lives and safety of their loved ones. Why would our government, why would our President say that the value of the Iraqi people was greater than the value of these tortured Americans? That's what the fundamental question is we are here to talk about tonight.

And I would yield to my friend from Minnesota.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. It's interesting on the day that reports are coming out about the 900-plus misstatements leading into the war that were made by this administration that the idea that this had been known for 5 years, that it had been very clear. And I would quote former Republican Senator Allen and current Republican

Senator COLLINS when he said, Protection of American POWs is a vital national security interest, and the goal of rebuilding Iraq should not be viewed as inconsistent with that goal.

Now, what the gentleman from Iowa has so clearly pointed out and the gentlewoman from New Hampshire alluded to is in this idea of this global war on terror, the winning the hearts and minds of the rest of the world, one of the things is what those core beliefs and core values of the United States stand for.

And the gentleman mentioned and talked about on the floor of this sacred ground of democracy, Members of this body have clearly articulated in the exact words that waterboarding is a useful tool; turning someone upside down, stuffing a rag in their mouth and pouring water in their mouth under a circumstance where they believe they are going to drown is acceptable.

Now the idea of me being a history teacher coming to this body out of the classroom that I would ever stand here and speak of things seemed incredible.

But to think that I would stand here and have to define what torture is to other Members of this body is incomprehensible to me. And I tell a story about why this is so important and why we understood Geneva Convention, why we understood that by adhering to these things, it pushed our values forward.

I was teaching a ninth grade history class, and one of the assignments was to go back and interview a family member who had had some type of context in the Second World War, if they could find a grandparent or great uncle or someone. And the ninth graders came back and reported. And I remember a young man named Bill Wilbrand came forward, and he was telling an incredible story of battle, of heroism, of incredible terror and talking to his grandfather, telling him the story where he was captured by the enemy and he was taken away and he was shipped a long distance and put into a POW camp.

And the other ninth graders are like, Wow. That was your grampa? What happened? Well, it was kind of cold and the food was not great but not too bad and, you know, things were okay. And they said, Well, what happened afterwards? Well, he stayed here. He was a German and he was a prisoner of the Americans, and they brought him to Western Nebraska to a prisoner-of-war camp. And he was treated so well, he said, I will stay here and bring my family here, and his family, of course, is American.

The idea was he saw the values. He saw the dignity. He understood what those American soldiers were. They disagreed with the tyranny of the Nazi regime. They disagreed with what was happening, and they would fight and give their lives to stop that. But when an individual came under their care, they were treated with dignity.

And there was a sense of, that word swept through. That's why you had entire units say this is what is happening. The rest of the world saw America as righteous in fighting for the right causes.

Now we are in a situation where we have absolved a stated terrorist state, the regime of Saddam Hussein, and those people who took and tortured American soldiers and said, You know what? It's okay. We will just brush it under the carpet and hope it goes away.

And those 17 families, well, you know, we can't repay up. We will say thank you a lot. We'll stand in front of flags, and we'll pat them on the back. But we won't let them go through the recourse of the courts. We won't let them adhere to the basic values that the gentleman from Iowa said that predated this country, the idea of being heard by a jury of your peers, by getting recourse no matter where you stand in the hierarchy, no matter where you are economically.

But not these 17. They volunteered. They fought to defend this Nation. They served honorably. And they endured some of the most excruciating things that have been described here. And in one easy stroke today, they have been let down.

I don't know what to say when I hear the story of Colonel Berryman. And I think of his family, Madam Speaker. I don't know what words can come off this House floor to tell them the wrong that has been done to them. And it's all going to be done in the name of supporting the troops. It's all going to be done in the typical fashion that it is just us not able to get anything done.

When we made that horrible decision to fund veterans health care, to fund the vehicles that will protect them in combat and to give them a pay raise, to maybe hope that that mother sitting at home can take kids out to the movie on Saturday while Dad is in Iraq fighting for the Nation, we weren't going to hold that up so that was the choice we were given. So I can tell the Berrymans and others like him, Madam Speaker, that I'm sure not proud of that decision, but that's what we are dealing with coming down from Pennsylvania Avenue.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I want to thank you for sharing that story. It is not in my district. It is in Congressman LATHAM's district. It's the largest geographic county in Iowa, and it borders on your district.

And one of the things that's unique about the county seat of Kossuth County is that it was also a prisoner-of-war camp for German soldiers who were captured and transported to the United States during World War II. And to this day, the townspeople of Algona cherished the crèche that was built by German POWs that they used every year during their Christmas celebration as a symbol of exactly what my friend is talking about which is this: It is nothing more simple than the Golden Rule that you treat other people the way you would like to be treated.

And one of the things that has been missing from our foreign policy is an appreciation for the role that this country plays as the sole remaining superpower to set the standard, the gold standard, for how we live up to the responsibilities we willingly entered into as part of the a Nation and a community of nations that come together and enter into treaties for our mutual benefit.

□ 1815

I look forward to hearing from another friend of ours in the freshman class who will be talking to us in a few minutes who has a deep and abiding appreciation for the importance of these concepts in the real practical reality of dealing with this in a global world full of problems that need the might and the force of the U.S. military to be a pacifying presence.

I recognize my friend from New Hampshire, and I would like to ask her specifically, as someone who serves on the Armed Services Committee here on the House, and having heard through the past year the problems with our readiness standards for our men and women in uniform and the problems of torture that we have been talking about here tonight and what symbol we send to the rest of the world based upon our own conduct, what lessons have we learned as a country that you have become aware of during your service on the Armed Services Committee that have relevance to the topic we are talking about this evening.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

First, I would like to say that I mentioned that my father's brother had served, and he was in the Air Force. He flew daylight bombing missions over Germany. He talked about the fear during the day flying those bombing missions over Germany, but he never talked about fearing the U.S. Government, that the U.S. Government would not be there for him.

Then my brother served in Germany, and my brother-in-law served in Germany. And Germany treated the United States troops very, very well in the 1960s and the 1970s and the 1980s. The reason for that was because we had shown that we were not the kind of country that tortured, that when we received prisoners of war from Germany that we treated them the way we would want to treat any human being.

So it was a long distance from my uncle flying over Germany during World War II bombing missions with that great fear about what would happen to him and then the experience that my brother and my brother-in-law had in Germany, welcomed as allies, welcomed with the reputation that we have had of treating our prisoners of war with compassion and with a sense of humanity.

My worry now on the Armed Services Committee is that countries that wish to do us harm but might be held back from torturing our individual troops because they have a Geneva Convention to uphold, they will have world

opinion against them, because the world actually believes that we should not torture each other's soldiers. They only understand not only that we have to have some rules of engagement and war and conduct for our POWs, but we also understand that if you don't want anybody to torture your troops, that you have to respond the same way.

So we have to hold ourselves to a standard, a standard, by the way, that the United States has led and been proud to show the rest of the world and our own good behavior through history. The world understands that when you receive a U.S. soldier and you torture, you will pay a price; at least that's what they understood before.

Our soldiers understood that if they were harmed when they were being held by another nation they would pay that price. So the change now, Congressman, is what does this mean? If we don't have the President of the United States, the Commander in Chief, stand up for our troops, what does that mean and how will other nations view this? That's my great worry.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I thank you for those insightful comments. As our class president has stated on many occasions, we are blessed in this freshman class with incredible people who have had incredible life experiences that they bring to this body. One of my friends and mentors on the issues that we are talking about here today is my friend from Pennsylvania who has more real-world knowledge about how these international treaties impact the role of our military around the world than anyone else that I personally know.

I would like to recognize my colleague from Pennsylvania, JOE SESTAK, and ask him this question: When we are trying to teach the brave men and women who serve this country about their role in combat and about their role as potential POWs, what type of message do we send them when we have a President who has taken the action that this President has that goes against everything we believe and about the role of the rule of law and its strong force in preventing other states or nations from terrorizing and torturing our citizens?

Mr. SESTAK. I appreciate the opportunity to speak. What occurred in this defense bill by the veto of this President I honestly think is almost unprecedented. Take Vice Admiral Stockdale, the senior prisoner of war in North Vietnam. When he was asked, Did you ever think that you would return to the United States, he said, I never lost faith in the end of the story, that I would prevail, that I will win at the end and return to my home, to my home, America.

If there is anything I learned in the military, and as I went about the world those 31 years in the Navy, we are respected for the power of our military, respected for the power of our economy. We are admired for the power of our ideas.

My wife, who worked on a project for the office of Missing in Action/Prisoners of War in the office of the Secretary of Defense, she speaks Russian, and so she went to Russia to dig a bit to see about how they were going about their archives in Russia, looking for records of those that we may have lost or we are still missing, potentially, even back to World War II, Korea, the Korean War, Vietnam. The Russian general said to her, Why do you care so much in America about those you may have lost long ago?

Here we have men and women who wear the cloth of this Nation. They went to war for this Nation in the first Gulf War. They were tortured, close to giving the ultimate sacrifice, and they came home. Under the rule of law, which this Nation stands for above everything else, the rule of law and its ideals, they correctly won judgment against the Iraqi Government that is, as you said before, obligated for the prior Iraqi Government's actions. And the President vetoed a bill, not because it would have any harm on the reconstruction efforts of this government, but because they threatened this Government of Iraq to pull $25 billion out of our trillions of dollars of markets in the economy, $25 billion.

We spend close to $12 billion a month for our war in Iraq. Two months. These men and women gave something that's priceless, the opportunity that their lives might be given in support of this Nation. I wish this Congress had voted to try to override that veto. I thank you, above all else, for submitting this bill that we will have another attempt to right this wrong.

We are very fortunate that there are those who recognize that great portrait that sits across from the Secretary of Defense's office. And there is a young servicemember in this picture, that is kneeling in church with his young family next to him. It's very obvious he is about to go away for another 6 months, 8-month deployment, leaving home again.

Under it is this wonderful saying from the Book of Isaiah, where God has turned to Isaiah and says, Whom will go for us, whom shall I send? Isaiah replies, Here am I, send me. Here am I, send me.

How we treat those who somehow grow up in America to go and say, Here am I, send me, how we treat them in their adversities when they return home I honestly think will either continue those to say, Here am I, send me, or it may damage it. In this case it was wrong of this President, and I thank you so much for trying to prevail in the end with this bill.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I thank my friend so much for those eloquent words. It's amazing how much we can learn from our former enemies, the words you shared. Why do you care so much for those you lost long ago? I am just going to close with two examples from my district.

While I was home over the holiday recess, the remains were brought back from North Korea of an Iowan from Buchanan County who had been lost long before I was born, and to see the touching way that his family and his friends placed those remains in the frozen Iowa soil is a poignant reminder of exactly why this country cares and won't forget.

The other example, which is an actual positive benefit from this defense authorization bill is that when I was a college student during the Iranian hostage crisis, one of the best-known hostages was a woman who grew up in my district in Bremer County, Kathryn Koob. For people like Kathryn Koob and other Iranian hostages, there will be an opportunity to get the compensation they deserve for what they went through that no American should have to put up with.

But it's also a reflection of this administration's foreign policy that we allow those claims to be pursued against a state-sponsored terrorism act that occurred in Iran, but we have taken away the rights of U.S. prisoners of war to recover compensation from state-sponsored terror in Iraq. Maybe that makes sense to some people, but it just doesn't pass the smell test in Iowa.

With that, I would like to thank all of my colleagues, and I would also like to recognize my friend and roommate from Colorado, who I wasn't aware was with us. Mr. PERLMUTTER, we would like to have you close us out for the remaining time with your thoughts on this topic.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I thank my friend from Iowa and my friends who have shared today because you have talked about just fundamental values of what makes America great, whether they are biblical or just precepts of our Constitution.

I am going to step back and just be a little more businesslike about this. These gentlemen, these servicemen and women were tortured, harmed, beaten, bashed, broken. They brought a claim against Saddam Hussein and his regime, and they had, that regime had assets. Those assets were here in the United States of America. They have a claim against those assets.

We are not making a claim against U.S. assets. We are not making a claim, they are not making a claim against the new regime's assets, but the old regime. Now, they have a claim. They can't just turn it back. They were hurt. They were tortured. They should be compensated. That's the bottom line here.

Now, if the President has chosen to say you cannot sue the old regime, you don't have a claim against the old regime, then there should be other compensation due to these gentlemen for the torture that they have suffered.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. HARMAN (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for January 22.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today, on account of family illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. CROWLEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CROWLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PENCE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BURGESS, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 279, 110th Congress, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until Monday, January 28, 2008, at 2 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5100. A letter from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Exemption From Registration for Certain Foreign Persons (RIN: 3038-AC26) received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5101. A letter from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Rules Relating To Review of National Futures Association Decisions in Disciplinary, Membership Denial, Registration and Member Responsibility Actions (RIN: 3038-AC43) received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5102. A letter from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Termination of Associated Persons and Principals of Futures Commission Merchants, Introducing Brokers, Commodity Trading Advisors, Commodity Pool Operators and Leverage Transaction Merchants (RIN: 3038-AC45) received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5103. A letter from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Maintenance of Books, Records and Reports by Traders (RIN: 3038-AC22) received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5104. A letter from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Special Calls — received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5105. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5106. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations; Correction — received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5107. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-8005] received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5108. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5109. A letter from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Records Preservation Program and Appendices-Record Retention Guidelines; Catastrophic Act Preparedness Guidelines (RIN: 3133-AD24) received January 16, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5110. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Direct Grant Programs [Docket ID ED-2007-OCFO-0132] (RIN: 1890-AA15) received January 17, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

5111. A letter from the Director, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Direct Investment Surveys; BE-11, Annual Survey of U.S. Direct Investment Abroad [Docket No. 07 0301041-7802-03] (RIN: 0691-AA63) received January 17, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5112. A letter from the Assistant Secretary For Export Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revisions and Technical Corrections to the Export Administration Regulations and the Defense Priorities and Allocations System Regulation [Docket No. 071011588-7712-02] (RIN: 0694-AE15) received January 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5113. A letter from the Chief Acquisition Officer, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-22; Small Entity Compliance Guide [Docket FAR-2007-0002, Sequence 7] received January 4, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5114. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Publications Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — 26 CFR 601.201: Rulings and determination letters. (Rev. Proc. 2008-09) received January 16, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5115. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Life Insurance Reserves —— Proposed AG VACARVM and Life PBR [Notice 2008-18] received January 16, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5116. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Section 42.—-Low-Income Housing Credit 26 CFR 1.42-16: Eligible basis reduced by federal grants. (Rev. Rul. 2008-6) received January 16, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5117. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Cell Captive Insurance Arrangements: Insurance Company Characterization and Certain Federal Tax Elections [Notice 2008-19] received January 16, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5118. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Section 162.—-Trade or Business Expenses 26 CFR 1.162-1: Business Expenses. (Also 801, 831) (Rev. Rul. 2008-8) received January 16, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5119. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Guidance Under Section 1502; Miscellaneous Operating Rules for Successor Persons; Succession to Items of the Liquidating Corporation [TD 9376] (RIN: 1545-BD54) received January 16, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

TIME LIMITATION OF REFERRED BILL

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII the following action was taken by the Speaker:

H.R. 2830. Referral to the Committee on Energy and Commerce extended for a period ending not later than January 29, 2008.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. MANZULLO (for himself, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. HERGER, and Mr. FORTENBERRY):

H.R. 5101. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to accelerate the phasein of the deduction for domestic production activities; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CALVERT (for himself and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois):

H.R. 5102. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish and collect a fee based on the fair market value of articles imported into the United States and articles exported from the United States in commerce and to use amounts collected from the

fee to make grants to carry out certain transportation projects in the transportation trade corridors for which the fee is collected, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. WATSON, Mr. KAGEN, and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California):

H.R. 5103. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax to vehicle fleet operators for purchasing tires made from recycled rubber; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself and Mr. REYES):

H.R. 5104. A bill to extend the Protect America Act of 2007 for 30 days; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DREIER (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. KING of New York, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. ROYCE, Mrs. BONO MACK, Mr. DENT, Mr. HERGER, and Mr. BLUNT):

H.R. 5105. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce taxes by providing an alternative determination of income tax liability for individuals, repealing the estate and gift taxes, reducing corporate income tax rates, reducing the maximum tax for individuals on capital gains and dividends to 10 percent, indexing the basis of assets for purposes of determining capital gain or loss, creating tax-free accounts for retirement savings, lifetime savings, and life skills, repealing the adjusted gross income threshold in the medical care deduction for individuals under age 65 who have no employer health coverage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ABERCROMBIE:

H.R. 5106. A bill to authorize the Marine Mammal Commission to establish a national research program to fund basic and applied research on marine mammals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. BEAN:

H.R. 5107. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a 5-year carryback for certain net operating losses and to increase the dollar limitation on expensing certain depreciable assets; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FILNER:

H.R. 5108. A bill to amend section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 to provide for rental assistance payments to assist certain owners of manufactured homes who rent the lots on which their homes are located; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. AKIN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. HERGER, Mr. MACK, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PENCE, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. CANNON, Mr. CARTER, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Ms. FALLIN, Ms. FOXX, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. ISSA, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. MARCHANT, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. PITTS, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. WALBERG, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina):

H.R. 5109. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for permanent tax incentives for economic growth; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HIGGINS (for himself, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. BACA, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, and Mr. ELLISON):

H.R. 5110. A bill to amend title VII of the Social Security Act to require the President to transmit the annual budget of the Social Security Administration without revisions to Congress, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOEKSTRA:

H.R. 5111. A bill to grant to a State with an unemployment rate that is equal to or greater than 125 percent of the national unemployment rate authority to use Federal funds made available to such State for job training programs; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5112. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain master cylinder assemblies for braking systems designed for use in hybrid vehicles; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5113. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain transaxles designed for use in hybrid vehicles; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5114. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain static converters designed for use in hybrid vehicles; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5115. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain controllers for electric power assisted braking systems, designed for use in hybrid vehicles; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5116. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain nickel-metal hydride storage batteries designed for use in hybrid vehicles; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5117. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2,4-Dichloroaniline; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5118. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Aluminum tris (O-ethylphosphonate); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5119. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on 2,2-Dimethylbutanoic acid 3-(2,4-dichlorophenyl)-2-oxo-1-oxaspiro(4.5)dec-3-en-4-yl ester; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5120. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Fenamidone; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5121. A bill to extend the temporary reduction of duty on cyclopropane-1,1-dicarboxylic acid, dimethyl ester; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5122. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Pyrasulfotole; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HULSHOF:

H.R. 5123. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Pyrimethanil; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HUNTER (for himself, Mr. DREIER, Mr. POE, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. GOODE, and Mr. ROHRABACHER):

H.R. 5124. A bill to amend the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 to provide for two-layered, 14-foot reinforced fencing along the southwest border, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. ISRAEL (for himself and Mr. BISHOP of New York):

H.R. 5125. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a Medicare Advantage benchmark adjustment for certain local areas with VA medical centers and for certain contiguous areas; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KNOLLENBERG:

H.R. 5126. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce individual income taxes by creating a new 5 percent rate of tax and to increase section 179 expensing for small businesses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LATHAM (for himself, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. BOSWELL, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa):

H.R. 5127. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate the Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Birthplace and Childhood Home in Cresco, Iowa, as a National Historic Site and unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Ms. WOOLSEY, Ms. WATERS, and Mr. HINCHEY):

H.R. 5128. A bill disapproving of any formal agreement emerging from the ''Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship Between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America'' unless the agreement is approved through an Act of Congress; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LEE, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. FARR, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. SOLIS, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. WYNN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. COHEN, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. KUCINICH, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. CROWLEY):

H.R. 5129. A bill to restore, reaffirm, and reconcile legal rights and remedies under civil rights statutes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Education and Labor, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker,

in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT:

H.R. 5130. A bill to provide for the payment of interest on claims paid by the United States in connection with the correction of military records when a military corrections board sets aside a conviction by court-martial; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. POE:

H.R. 5131. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide criminal penalties for the destruction of memorials, headstones, markers, and graves commemorating persons serving in the Armed Forces on private property; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. SOLIS:

H.R. 5132. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish an Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice to provide guidance to Federal agencies on the development of criteria for identifying disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SPACE:

H.R. 5133. A bill to increase funding for the program of block grants to States for social services; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TERRY (for himself, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. PAUL, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. REHBERG, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. GILCHREST):

H.R. 5134. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exclusion for gain from the sale of farmland to encourage the continued use of the property for farming, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIAHRT (for himself, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, and Mr. MOORE of Kansas):

H.R. 5135. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 West Greenway Street in Derby, Kansas, as the ''Sergeant Jamie O. Maugans Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. TIBERI:

H.R. 5136. A bill to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to permit foreign jewelry manufacturers who purchase precious metals produced in the United States for use in the manufacture of jewelry abroad to pay import duties on the value of the imported jewelry articles less the value of all United States origin precious metals incorporated in the article; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MANZULLO (for himself, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. SHIMKUS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. KIRK, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. EMANUEL, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. WELLER, Ms. BEAN, and Mr. HARE):

H. Con. Res. 281. Concurrent resolution celebrating the birth of Abraham Lincoln and recognizing the prominence the Declaration of Independence played in the development of Abraham Lincoln's beliefs; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. HOYER:

H. Con. Res. 282. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. PAYNE:

H. Con. Res. 283. Concurrent resolution calling for a peaceful resolution to the current electoral crisis in Kenya; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. FARR):

H. Res. 935. A resolution honoring the 100th anniversary of President Theodore Roosevelt's Conference of Governors, supporting the goals and ideals of that Conference, and recognizing the need for a similar undertaking today; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. FARR):

H. Res. 936. A resolution honoring the 200th anniversary of the Gallatin Report on Roads and Canals, celebrating the national unity the Gallatin Report engendered, and recognizing the vast contributions that national planning efforts have provided to the United States; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H. Res. 937. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the emergency communications services provided by the American Red Cross are vital resources for military service members and their families; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MOLLOHAN (for himself, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. WYNN, Ms. LEE, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. STUPAK, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. OLVER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. DICKS, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. REYES, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. RAHALL):

H. Res. 938. A resolution commending the West Virginia University Mountaineer football team for exemplifying the pride, determination, and spirit of the Mountain State and overcoming adversity with skill, commitment, and teamwork to win the 2008 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. PENCE, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. GALLEGLY, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. LAMBORN):

H. Res. 939. A resolution condemning the glorification of terrorism and the continuing anti-Israel and anti-Semitic rhetoric at the United Nations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS TO PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 154: Ms. WOOLSEY.
H.R. 241: Mr. HAYES.
H.R. 303: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.
H.R. 322: Mr. MICA.
H.R. 380: Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 464: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 502: Mr. BILBRAY.
H.R. 503: Ms. TSONGAS and Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 538: Mr. HALL of Texas.
H.R. 550: Mr. SHAYS.
H.R. 882: Ms. DELAURO, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, and Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 1000: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 1223: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 1225: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 1232: Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania and Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 1237: Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, and Mr. COSTELLO.
H.R. 1246: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 1304: Mr. HASTINGS of Washington.
H.R. 1343: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 1363: Mr. BISHOP of New York and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 1386: Mr. UDALL of Colorado.
H.R. 1399: Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia and Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 1524: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.
H.R. 1540: Mr. GONZALEZ.
H.R. 1542: Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. TOWNS.
H.R. 1553: Mr. WESTMORELAND, and Mr. ADERHOLT.
H.R. 1589: Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 1621: Mr. GORDON and Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.
H.R. 1665: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 1742: Mr. WELLER, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. HERGER.
H.R. 1755: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 1884: Mr. OLVER, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. BAIRD.
H.R. 1927: Mrs. LOWEY and Mr. ETHERIDGE.
H.R. 1974: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H.R. 1975: Mr. SIRES, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 2032: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
H.R. 2054: Mr. POMEROY.
H.R. 2060: Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 2158: Mr. MCHENRY.
H.R. 2160: Mr. WYNN.
H.R. 2303: Ms. SUTTON.
H.R. 2310: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 2327: Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 2469: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 2510: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 2511: Mr. STARK, Mr. PASTOR, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 2564: Mr. HAYES.
H.R. 2695: Mr. PASTOR and Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 2708: Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. SUTTON, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SIRES, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 2894: Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, and Mr. BOOZMAN.
H.R. 2990: Mr. BOREN and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 3008: Mr. CARNEY.
H.R. 3010: Mr. WATT.
H.R. 3026: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 3029: Mr. ROTHMAN and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 3195: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 3256: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 3257: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 3286: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 3298: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 3329: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 3359: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 3406: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 3477: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.
H.R. 3480: Mr. ALEXANDER and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 3543: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 3552: Mr. MANZULLO.
H.R. 3646: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.
H.R. 3652: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 3660: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 3714: Mr. PITTS and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 3729: Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. ISSA, and Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.
H.R. 3819: Mr. ELLISON and Mr. RODRIGUEZ.
H.R. 3846: Ms. WATERS and Mr. STARK.
H.R. 3865: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 4001: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 4044: Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. FOSSELLA, and Mr.
H.R. 4102: Mr. HINCHEY.
H.R. 4126: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 4133: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. HAYES, and Mr. TIAHRT.
H.R. 4176: Mr. ALTMIRE.
H.R. 4188: Mr. LAHOOD.
H.R. 4204: Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, and Mr. HILL.
H.R. 4206: Mr. PLATTS and Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 4248: Mr. WELCH of Vermont.
H.R. 4264: Mr. SPRATT.
H.R. 4280: Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 4321: Mr. BOOZMAN.
H.R. 4454: Mr. CHANDLER.
H.R. 4464: Mr. WAMP, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BARROW, Mr. BILBRAY, and Mr. LATOURETTE.
H.R. 4544: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. BAIRD, and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.
H.R. 4577: Mr. BILBRAY and Mr. ALEXANDER.
H.R. 4611: Mr. PASTOR, Mr. WU, and Ms. SOLIS.
H.R. 4835: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. LEE, and Mr. OLVER.
H.R. 4838: Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. CAPUANO, and Mr. STARK.
H.R. 4845: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.
H.R. 4926: Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. MCNULTY.
H.R. 4934: Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 4936: Mr. COHEN and Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas.
H.R. 4987: Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. ISSA, Mr. MCINTYRE, and Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 4995: Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. ROYCE.
H.R. 5031: Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey.
H.R. 5036: Mr. THOMPSON of California and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 5056: Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 5057: Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California.
H.R. 5058: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 5087: Mr. HOLT, Mr. HILL, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. LAMPSON.
H. J. Res. 76: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H. Con. Res. 161: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.
H. Con. Res. 163: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H. Con. Res. 249: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico.
H. Con. Res. 253: Mr. SPRATT.
H. Con. Res. 255: Mr. FEENEY, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, and Mr. SOUDER.
H. Con. Res. 260: Mr. CONAWAY.
H. Con. Res. 266: Mr. BOUCHER.
H. Con. Res. 267: Mr. KINGSTON.
H. Con. Res. 278: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. MACK, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SIRES, Mr. LINDER, Mr. FORTUÑO, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. POE, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. ADERHOLT.
H. Con. Res. 280: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. WATT, and Ms. SOLIS.
H. Res. 49: Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, and Mr. EHLERS.
H. Res. 339: Mr. PASTOR.
H. Res. 373: Mr. DUNCAN and Mr. KENNEDY.
H. Res. 598: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H. Res. 753: Mr. COHEN.
H. Res. 815: Mr. KUCINICH.
H. Res. 820: Mr. SHAYS.
H. Res. 821: Mr. POE.
H. Res. 848: Mr. TOWNS.
H. Res. 886: Mr. TURNER, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. HERGER, and Mr. JORDAN.
H. Res. 888: Mr. POE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. GOODE, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SALI, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. JORDAN, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H. Res. 897: Mr. FORTUÑO.
H. Res. 911: Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. CLEAVER.
H. Res. 925: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. ROHRABACHER.
H. Res. 930: Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. ROSS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mrs. CUBIN, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. DICKS, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.