United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 154 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2008 No. 51

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Elliott L. Foss, National Chaplain, American Legion, offered the following prayer:

God, bless America. Continue to shine Your face on us, as we need Your guidance and protection now, more than ever. God, bless America, our President, our national, State, and community leaders as they seek to serve our citizens.

God, bless America. Bless these folks here today. I ask You to give them grace and peace, that as they seek Your face, impart to them Your wisdom, Your courage, and Your hope, that they will do Your will at all times.

Please, God, bless America and our citizens who seek to live in peace and harmony as ''One Nation under God.'' Encourage us to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason.

May Your love surround our military and their families each and every day and please, God, bless America and bring our troops safely home when all is done.

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.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. 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. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 980. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act to address online pharmacies.

WELCOMING REV. ELLIOTT L. FOSS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, Members of the House, it's a great honor today to introduce my friend, the Reverend Elliott Foss, to the chamber and to the folks who are our visitors today. Elliott has been a friend of mine for a number of years, almost going on two decades, in fact. Elliott was appointed the National Chaplain of the American Legion on August 30, 2007, by the National Commander, Marty Conatser. The appointment was made following the closing session of the 89th National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

He is a retired U.S. Navy Command Master Chief and Hospital Corpsman from the Submarine Division, and served during the Vietnam War and through the Gulf wars. Elliott attended Candler Seminary School of Ministry at Emory University. He also served as pastor to churches in Maine, Virginia, Connecticut, Florida, and Georgia. He is a Georgia resident and is an ordained Southern Baptist Minister and Chaplain, even though he has been the minister in four different Methodist churches in my district.

Elliott is a member of the American Legion Post 317 in coastal Georgia, where he serves as Post Commander. Reverend Foss also has served as the 8th District Vice Commander and as Post 9 Brunswick Commander. Chaplain Foss serves as the Department of Georgia Chaplain for now 7 years. He has held numerous leadership positions at the post, State and national levels during the past 11 years.

He and his wife, Arlene, reside in Kingsland, Georgia. I first got to know him when he was the chaplain of the Seaman's House and worked with people and sailors from all over the world and members of our own merchant marine. He is a great guy, a great man of the Lord, and we are very proud to have him as chaplain of the day today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain requests for up to 15 1-minute speeches on each side.

THE DREAM OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, on Friday, April 4, this Nation will observe the 40th anniversary of the tragic assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King,

Printed on recycled paper.

Jr. Dr. King was a great American who fought injustice; not just social injustice, but economic injustice. His beliefs 40 years later have not been fulfilled. His dream is still alive, but not fulfilled.

In his time, he fought a war and was against a war in Asia that this country was fighting and losing, and costing us much in terms of human sacrifice, as well as financial sacrifice. We see that same situation today, as we have the cost in Iraq taking away from our cities and our people. He fought for working people who were working hard but not moving forward. Today, we see working people in the middle-class continuing to having their power eroded and taken away from them.

I ask each person in this House and each person in America to think of Dr. King this week and to think of Dr. King every day and keep his dream alive and move this country forward with economic and social justice, for we need it more now than ever.

TAX AND SPEND HURTS ECONOMY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, right now Americans are feeling the pinch from rising gas prices, health care costs, and food prices. There has been a slowdown in the growth of our economy. In light of this, it seems downright wrong for Congress to be proposing a budget that will raise $683 billion in taxes, the largest tax increase in America's history. This will hit 116 million Americans, while spending billions more on wasteful government spending.

American taxpayers will have to foot this bill if we do not stand up and protect their wallets from the Washington tax and spend machine. I support the Republican Study Committee budget, a plan that meets the needs of the American people, balances the Federal budget by 2012, fixes the AMT, addresses the runaway entitlement crisis, and does not raise $1 of taxes on hardworking Americans. At a time when Americans pay too much at the pump, at the store, and at the hospital, it is wrong to ask them to pay more to the government.

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

DEMOCRATS WANT TO WORK WITH REPUBLICANS TO HELP AMERICAN FAMILIES

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the American public is rightfully concerned about the future of our Nation's economy. Stagnant wages were already making it difficult for families to afford rising gas, home heating, grocery, and health care bills. Now, there is the added worry of losing their homes. The housing crisis could lead to more than 2 million homeowners losing their homes in the near future.

Fortunately, we address some of the housing concerns in the bipartisan economic stimulus plan. In that package, we expanded affordable mortgage loan opportunities through the Federal Housing Administration, and expanded financial counseling for families who are at risk of losing their homes. This was a good start, but more needs to be done. As a member of the House Financial Services Committee, I look forward to working with Chairman FRANK to move through the committee his foreclosure prevention package.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks I hope that we can once again come together as Republicans and Democrats in this important legislation.

□ 1015

CONGRESS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HIGH PRICES AT THE PUMP

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, as gasoline prices rise higher at the pump, the American driver is mad and the Congress blames the oil companies. But the real culprit is Congress. Gasoline prices are rising because Congress fails to have an energy policy that encourages the development of our own resources. Instead of making it easier to obtain crude oil, Congress has decided to subsidize the special interest groups to produce unproven, unreliable, and expensive alternative fuels, like corn-based ethanol, which now may pollute the environment more than first realized. Not to mention this idea is bad for land management and increases the cost of agricultural products. So now we have high gasoline prices and higher prices for corn products worldwide, thanks to Congress.

We are the only industrial power in the world that refuses to take advantage of its own energy resources. Congress should lift the absurd restrictions on offshore drilling, allow drilling in ANWR and stop the expensive, unnecessary regulations. This will increase production, supply, and lower costs. Otherwise, we will continue to be held hostage by third world dictators, like Chavez, and the cost of crude oil will continue to grow.

And that's just the way it is.

ON FISA, THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY HAS THE TOOLS IT NEEDS TO PROTECT NATIONAL SECURITY

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, Washington Republicans are not leveling with the American people on the immediate effects of the expiration of the Protect America Act. Despite their fear-mongering, even the Bush administration admits that it still has the ability to continue all its wide-ranging surveillance for another 6 months.

Kate Martin, Director of the Center for National Security Studies, said, ''If the government learns of new individuals plotting terrorist activities, it can immediately surveil such individuals, the court can issue an order within minutes of being asked, or the government can start surveillance without a court order under the existing FISA emergency authority.''

Richard Clarke said, ''The President misconstrued the truth and manipulated the facts. It was wrong to suggest that warrants issued in compliance with FISA would suddenly evaporate with congressional inaction.''

Mr. Speaker, our intelligence community still has every tool available that it had under the President's Protect America Act. Republicans should stop their misleading fear-mongering.

PROTECTING THE AMERICAN DREAM OF OWNING A HOME

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, our mortgage market is experiencing housing finance challenges and a credit crisis. Foreclosures are hitting an all time high. My own State of South Carolina is ranked 39th in the Nation for home foreclosures. Mortgage and financial challenges are placing heavy burdens on American families, and the situation has forced thousands of families to lose their prized possession, their home. One person losing their home, Mr. Speaker, is one too many.

As Members of Congress, can we lend money or give credit to people? No. But we can put these families and homeowners in touch with the right people, who can provide them with information on how to escape the mortgage rift.

During the break, I held homeowner education seminars and invited local mortgage lenders and nonprofits to give free one-on-one counseling sessions to constituents with mortgage questions. The event had wonderfully qualified people on hand who were able to give information away.

Let's try to protect the American Dream of owning a home. I encourage other Members to do the same.

THE COST OF STAYING IN IRAQ IS MAKING AMERICA LESS SECURE

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq has now gone on for more than 5 years. Those 5 years have seriously hampered our military's readiness, and the human and financial

costs grow greater by the day. Eighty-eight percent of our current and former military officers believe this war has stretched our military dangerously thin, and 60 percent say it has left us weaker than at any time since Vietnam.

Pete Geren, the Secretary of the Army, said, ''We are consuming our readiness as fast as we build it,'' and the Army Chief of Staff, General George Casey, said, ''The last six-plus years at war have left our Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight, and unable to do the things we know we need to do to prepare for the future.'' In addition to spending hundreds of billions of dollars on this war, the cost to care for our veterans and rebuild this Army will take us decades.

While our military is standing up and facing these challenges with great dignity and professionalism, there are some here who say we need to stay the course and stay in Iraq for 100 years. This is not sustainable. This is not a plan. This is not security. We need real leadership that understands the cost of staying in Iraq and not redeploying our troops is making America less secure and not more.

CONGRATULATING TYLER HANSBROUGH OF POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI

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

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate our Southeast Missouri favorite son, Tyler Hansbrough of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, for his unanimous selection to the AP All-American First Team for collegiate basketball. Mr. Hansbrough has earned this honor through his excellence both on the basketball court and off.

If anything, his receipt of this award ought to focus us on Mr. Hansbrough's character, not on his scoring statistics. This young man recently earned rare praise from long-time coach Rick Pitino, who remarked, ''I haven't seen a guy play every possession like that in a long time. I have actually never seen it.''

Not only is Tyler a leader, he is a leader by example. His work ethic has improved players, coaches and fans of the game at every level he has played.

Mr. Hansbrough takes his obligation of leadership seriously. His coach at North Carolina, Roy Williams, has called him the most focused player he has ever coached. All of these attributes result in Mr. Hansbrough serving as a role model for his teammates and for every aspiring student-athlete in the Nation.

Undoubtedly Mr. Hansbrough will continue to succeed in basketball. I believe he will continue to succeed in life, too. As he provides a national example of dedication, teamwork, effort and leadership, I congratulate Tyler Hansbrough on his selection as a First Team All-American. I also commend him for the contributions he makes as a role model to millions of Americans who aspire to the example he has set.

THE IRAQ WAR AND THE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

(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. Mr. Speaker, despite the continued lack of political progress in Iraq, we are still fighting and funding this war at a time when the country's economic future is at stake. General David Petraeus, the top commander in Iraq, admitted last month that ''no one in the U.S. and Iraqi governments feels that there has been sufficient progress by any means in the area of national reconciliation.'' And yet we continue to spend $14 million every hour in Iraq, while more Americans are looking for work, millions of Americans are on the verge of losing their homes, and gas prices have hit an all-time high.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that when we spend $14 million an hour in Iraq, we are neglecting real needs here in the United States. But we are also hurting our economy because we aren't able to properly invest in America. This war has diverted nearly $1 trillion away from American schools, roads, research and other areas that would have stimulated the economy in the short-term and produced stronger economic growth in the long run.

It is time to stop spending our money in Iraq and start focusing on helping our families here at home.

SERIOUS ACTION ON SOCIAL SECURITY NEEDED NOW

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a recent report shows Social Security sliding into the red. We need to protect our younger generation, and I think it is up to the Congress to take serious action now.

The Trustees' Annual Report on Social Security released a couple of weeks ago paints a gloomy picture. Social Security will begin paying out more money than it takes in from payroll taxes in 2017, and by 2041 the Social Security trust fund is going to be exhausted.

These dismal dates come as no surprise to us. Each day that ebbs by we are left with fewer options on how to address this growing problem.

As ranking member on the Social Security Subcommittee, I stand ready to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find real solutions for all Americans for our future. The time is now. We cannot afford to wait.

HONORING AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, during my time in this job, I have met with many Utah families, teachers and health professionals about their struggle with autism. I have visited the special education classrooms where dedicated teachers work with youngsters who have been diagnosed as autistic, as well as met with families desperately searching out medical options for their children. I have learned from this that more data, more research and more public education are imperative in order to help these families create a future for their children.

In Utah, one in every 133 kids has autism. That is the third highest rate among 14 States, according to a 2007 CDC study. Nationally, 67 children are diagnosed with autism every single day, which costs our country $90 billion a year. I am humbled to represent the Utah family that has the highest number of cases of autism in a single-family in the entire United States, six children.

As a member of the Autism Caucus and as a cosponsor of the resolution declaring April National Autism Month, I have been a strong advocate for increased research dollars to help us provide more answers about this disorder and the hardship it inflicts on families.

Awareness is only a first step, but every step forward brings us closer I hope to improved diagnosis and treatment of autism.

SUPPORT THE U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge the Speaker of this House to bring forward for a vote in this House the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. We know Colombia not only has the most longstanding democracy in all of Latin America, but is our most trusted and dependable partner in counternarcotics and counterterrorism.

We also know that President Uribe, the democratically-elected President of Colombia, is a good friend of the United States, and someone who has brought security in his successful efforts to eliminate the FARC, a narcotrafficking terrorist organization in Colombia, and as a result today he has made tremendous progress in reducing violence in that country and bringing security throughout the entire country.

The U.S.-Colombia trade agreement is good for Illinois, my home State. My district is dependent on exports. Construction equipment that is made in my district and the 8,000 union workers

who make construction equipment suffer 15 percent tariffs when exported to Colombia. Under this trade agreement, they are eliminated on day one. The farm community will tell you the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement is the best ever when it comes to access for Illinois and U.S. farm products to the Colombian market.

The bottom line is, the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement is a win-win for the United States, it is a win-win for Colombia.

Mr. Speaker, we need to bring it to the floor. Colombia is our friend, and this deserves a vote.

THE IRAQ WAR AND THE IMPACT ON AMERICA'S ECONOMY

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, how much longer do the American people have to bear the financial burden of the war in Iraq? Between 2001 and 2008, Congress has appropriated nearly $700 billion for the Global War on Terrorism, most of that money going to fight the war in Iraq.

Investing in Iraq rather than our own country has contributed to our Nation's economic downturn. According to Columbia University Professor Joseph Stiglitz and Harvard University Professor Linda Blimes, ''The Iraq adventure has seriously weakened the U.S. economy, whose woes go far beyond loose mortgage lending. You can't spend $3 trillion, yes, $3 trillion, on a failed war abroad, and not feel the pain at home.'' And Americans are definitely feeling the pain.

Mr. Speaker, during the minute that I have been speaking, the Bush administration has spent $235,168 on the war in Iraq. It is time that we once again invest in America. Our focus now should be on helping those Americans who face foreclosure, who can't pay their gas and heating bills, and who continue to watch their finances erode, while funding for the war grows every minute.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S REFUSAL TO REGULATE BIG BUSINESS HAS HURT OUR ECONOMY AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Good morning, Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see a Coloradan in the Chair.

Mr. Speaker, for 7 years now the Bush administration has done the bidding of big corporate interests. The administration has never supported regulation of big business, and in fact they have eliminated important oversight that is necessary to protect the American consumer. In other instances, agencies have simply turned a blind eye. For a time this benefited big business, but we are now seeing how devastating the failure to enforce the law or regulations can be for both the American people and the American economy.

Last month the Bush administration bailed out Bear Stearns out of fear that if the Wall Street giant filed for bankruptcy, many more supposed giants would follow. What the administration refuses to admit is that had it enforced the law and properly regulated Bear Stearns and the other giants for the last 7 years, they never would have been in this predicament in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, the administration should be commended for finally recognizing the need to enforce the laws and regulations that are on the books. Unfortunately, it should not have taken a huge economic and housing crisis for them to recognize the importance of government oversight. That is, after all, part of their job.

□ 1030

IRAQ

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, next week the administration is poised to give us and the American people a rosy assessment of the situation in Iraq. They are going to suggest that in fact there has been no escalation in Iraq, and that everything is just fine. Well, everything isn't just fine, and there is in fact an escalation going on in the violence all over Iraq. What the President's policy is is a bait-and-switch policy.

The American troops were sent to Iraq to fight al Qaeda, to fight terrorists. Now we see American troops inserted into combat, coming under fire, dying, and being wounded for the sake of one Shia political party that is afraid that it might lose an election in October. What are the American troops doing fighting for the electoral advantage of one Shia party over another?

Recently, the Pentagon suggested that this was all a sign of success of the surge. I think we should watch those words closely; you may miss something. This administration earlier told the people that the troop surge was for the purposes of decreasing the violence and creating an environment of political reconciliation. The people who were supposed to create political reconciliation are now shooting at one another because they think they might lose an election in October, and they want us to sacrifice American lives to impose the majority that they hope to have in that election.

ALL ACROSS WISCONSIN, PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING LOWER GAS PRICES AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE—NOT MORE DEBT

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, all across America and Wisconsin, people are demanding lower gas prices and affordable health care, not more debt.

In recent weeks, our Nation has experienced a dramatic decline in home values. And when our home values decline and disappear, so does the tax revenue in every town, in every county, in every State of the Union.

Our very way of life is now at risk due to this administration's continued economic policy of borrow and spend, and last weekend the administration forced us to swallow a minnow with worms by nationalizing the debt of financial institutions, guaranteeing their debts will be paid by American taxpayers. Whose side are they on? Taxpayers invested in their own homes, not in insider Wall Street deals.

This administration is in bed with big banks, big insurance, and Big Oil, and businesses who are shipping our jobs overseas. If this administration was on the side of taxpayers, what would they do? They would cut the price of gasoline. Wisconsin wants lower gas prices, not more debt.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5501, TOM LANTOS AND HENRY J. HYDE UNITED STATES GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1065 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1065

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5501) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed two hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions of the bill are waived. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment,

and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 5501 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR). The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only. I yield myself such time as I may consume. I also ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 1065.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1065 provides for the consideration of H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, a structured rule. The rule provides for 2 hours of general debate and makes in order four amendments, each of which is debatable for 10 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, all Members of this House should be very proud of the bipartisan collaboration and careful compromises that have resulted in the underlying bill before us today, H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act. I wish to express my appreciation to the work of the gentleman from New Jersey, Congressman DONALD PAYNE, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, and Subcommittee Ranking Member CHRIS SMITH, as well as House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman HOWARD BERMAN and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. And, like all of my House colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I am grateful that the committee named this bill after the great leaders of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chairmen Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde, who guided the original 2003 act into law. May the collegial spirit of these two great champions for global health guide us all during today's debate.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5501 would authorize $50 billion over the next 5 years for U.S. global programs that address the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. It strengthens, sustains, and expands a program that is universally recognized as one of the shining accomplishments of the Bush administration.

The challenge for this reauthorization is to move our HIV/AIDS programs beyond the emergency phase first called for under the President's Emergency Program For Aids Relief, or PEPFAR, and make them sustainable over the long term. Over the past 5 years, we have literally gone from watching people die from HIV/AIDS to watching people live and return to productive lives in their communities.

The 2003 Act provided $15 billion over 5 years; H.R. 5501 provides $50 billion, a direct response to the needs identified over the past 5 years for life-saving medicines and well-trained, effective national health care systems.

The 2003 law relied upon the health care workforce and infrastructure already in place in developing countries. In a farsighted move, Mr. Speaker, today's bill invests in strengthening HIV-related health care systems and building the capacity of the health care workforce in these nations. Under this legislation, funds will be used to train some 144,000 new health care workers over the next 5 years to care for people infected with HIV.

This is just a start on easing the severe shortage of health care workers in the developing world, and it is our hope that other donor nations will follow our lead. If there is ever to be a hope that these programs can become self-sustaining, health care capacity must be significantly strengthened in countries hard hit by HIV/AIDS.

The 2003 bill focused on creating new programs to tackle the HIV/AIDS crisis. This reauthorization builds stronger linkages between our global HIV/AIDS initiatives and existing programs designed to alleviate hunger, improve health care, bolster education, and increase income security and stable livelihoods, an approach endorsed by the President's Global AIDS Coordinator in February in his annual report to Congress. These changes ensure that our HIV/AIDS programs no longer operate in isolation from our other development priorities, and that the expertise and benefits from these other programs are provided in an effective manner to HIV/AIDS affected individuals, families, and communities.

In addition, the bill increases U.S. contributions to the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, and provides benchmarks to improve the transparency and accountability of the Global Fund.

And while the majority of the funding authorized in H.R. 5501 is focused on the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS-infected people and communities, I would like to emphasize that the bill specifically authorizes $4 billion over 5 years for a comprehensive strategy to combat tuberculosis, and $5 billion for the prevention, treatment, control, and elimination of malaria. In addition, it better integrates our HIV/AIDS programs with the diagnosis, testing, counseling, treatment, prevention, care, and health care treatment needed in the fight against TB and malaria.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5501 also removes the requirement that one-third of all funds for HIV/AIDS prevention be dedicated to abstinence-only programs. Over the past 5 years, this restriction has proven to hamper the effectiveness of our health care efforts in the field, as documented by two recent independent reports produced by the Government Accountability Office, GAO, and President Bush's own Office of Personnel Management. This reauthorization now requires the Executive to promote a balanced prevention program that includes every element of abstinence, being faithful, and condoms, the ABC approach toward HIV transmission prevention.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5501 also allows U.S.-supported family planning organizations to provide HIV/AIDS testing and counseling services. This will ensure that many more women of reproductive age receive vital information related to their HIV status, as well as HIV/AIDS education.

Mr. Speaker, we all need to recall that 20 million men, women, and children have perished from HIV/AIDS; 40 million people around the world are HIV positive; and each and every day another 6,000 people are infected with HIV. It is a moral imperative that we act strongly, decisively, and continue to address this crisis in a forward-looking manner.

Five years ago, President Bush acted to meet a perceived emergency as the AIDS epidemic spread out of control. During that period, the United States has provided drug treatment to nearly 1.5 million people. We have given supportive care to another 6.6 million, including 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children. And, our programs have prevented an estimated 150,000 infant infections. During this first 5-year phase of programming, U.S. bilateral programs to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria were expanded to 114 countries. Today, the U.S. now supports programs in 136 countries, including programs funded by the United States and administered through the Global Fund.

We can all be proud of this record of accomplishment, but there is so much more left to do. Now we must work on making these initial gains sustainable, our programs even more effective, and expanding them to reach an even greater number of HIV/AIDS affected communities.

Specifically, over the next 5-year period, H.R. 5501 aims to:

Prevent 12 million new infections;

Provide anti-retroviral treatment for 3 million people, including 450,000 children;

Provide medical and other care for 12 million people, including 5 million orphans;

And, train over 140,000 health care workers in the developing world.

Mr. Speaker, addressing global HIV/AIDS is one of the moral imperatives of our time. And while history will no doubt judge our response, it is more important that each of us recognizes that we can truly make a difference in the lives of millions of people right here and right now.

H.R. 5501 represents a genuine bipartisan compromise. I urge my colleagues to adopt this rule and to support the underlying legislation, H.R. 5501.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for the time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

During his 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush outlined a bold new plan to confront and combat the scourge of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Congress followed through and passed the U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act, known as the President's Emergency Plan For Aids Relief, PEPFAR, authorizing $15 billion in assistance to combat these diseases for fiscal years 2004 through 2008. That was the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative fighting a single disease.

Since its enactment in 2003, the programs created by this landmark legislation have made admirable progress in combating those horrible diseases.

□ 1045

So far more than 1.4 million people have received life-preserving antiretroviral treatment, over 2.7 million HIV/AIDS-affected orphans have received care, and many millions more have received instruction on how to protect themselves from infection. Tens of millions of people have received malaria and tuberculosis prevention or treatment services.

Even though this program has achieved remarkable successes, there is more that we can do. Tuberculosis still kills an estimated 2 million people each year and is the leading cause of death for people with AIDS. One million people die from malaria each year. AIDS is the world's fourth leading cause of death.

The devastating consequences of these diseases are plaguing sub-Saharan Africa. Over 22.5 million people are living with HIV, and approximately 1.7 million additional sub-Saharan Africans were infected with HIV last year. Just last year this horrible AIDS epidemic claimed the lives of an estimated 1.6 million people in that region. More than 11 million children have been orphaned by AIDS. Many families are losing their income earners. Health services are overburdened. Life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa is now 47 years. Economic activity and social progress is impeded.

We must do all we can to prevent these tragedies.

The underlying legislation, justly and appropriately named the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, will dramatically augment our commitment to fight these horrible diseases with an increase of approximately $35 billion in funding for a total of $50 billion over 5 years.

Some of my constituents are immigrants from Haiti and have family and friends in their land of origin. I often hear about the disastrous effects that HIV/AIDS is having on that country. As of 2007, Haiti had an HIV rate of almost 4 percent. Thankfully, since Congress passed PEPFAR we have invested over $300 million to help Haiti combat the AIDS pandemic by building on existing clinic and community-based health resources; expanding a network of satellite connections to the Centers of Excellence to permit instant review of difficult cases; training staff members of health care facilities that provide prenatal, gynecological and maternity care in provision of prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission; and enhancing the lab network for clinical sites to support the diagnosis and treatment of HIV and other associated infections. I am pleased the legislation will also now cover several other countries that were previously not part of PEPFAR.

As I said yesterday in the Rules Committee, when we look upon our work in Congress many years from now, I can think of nothing that we or anyone else will be able to point to that is of more importance than this admirable effort by the great and generous American people, this massive effort proposed by President Bush here in the United States House of Representatives during his State of the Union Address of 2003, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

I would like to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN and Chairman PAYNE and Ranking Member SMITH for their marvelous bipartisan, very hard work on this important issue. I also wish to thank them for naming this landmark program for two ultimately respected colleagues of ours who have recently left us, Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos. This is truly a fitting tribute for two remarkable human beings and public servants.

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

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs who has had such an important role and hand in this legislation, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Florida for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise also in support of the House's consideration of the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

This is an important measure which will ensure that our efforts to save the lives of so many people afflicted with the scourge of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria continue in a rigorous, holistic way.

The continued success of the program that was brought to life 5 years ago by our late colleagues, Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos, is a matter of vital importance to us here in the United States.

As President Bush said in his recent trip to Africa: ''I want the American people to understand that when it comes to saving lives, it is in our national interest. It is in our security interest to help alleviate areas of the world from hopelessness. It is in our moral interest to save the lives of others.''

So, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what the bill before us is about. The program that we are authorizing today, commonly known as PEPFAR, is now recognized as perhaps the most successful foreign assistance program of the United States of America since the Marshall Plan.

Just as the Marshall Plan protected American lives then by helping to stabilize a continent ravaged by war, PEPFAR is protecting Americans lives today by helping to stabilize a continent ravaged by disease. PEPFAR does more than just express American compassion, it supports American security.

As an illustration of this important point, I would like to quote from a letter that I received from our former House colleague from Wisconsin, the Honorable Mark Green, who is now serving as the United States ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania. Ambassador Green said the following: ''We are approaching the 10th anniversary of the terrorist bombings of Embassy Dar es Salaam and Embassy Nairobi. And I can't help but note that General Wald, the former deputy commander of the U.S. European Command, has called HIV/AIDS the third greatest threat to U.S. national security.''

Yes, this bill is less than perfect in some aspects. All compromises are, Mr. Speaker. But it is a good bill, one that will save millions of lives around the world and help to maintain stability in a key region.

As Chairman Hyde said during the markup of the original Leadership Act in 2003: ''Congress is so equally balanced that it is very difficult on controversial matters, on expensive matters, on matters that have different blocks who have different points of view to reach an agreement. In a situation like this, compromise is the heart and soul of the process.''

He added: ''We cannot please the left and the right and the center. We can't please the libertarians and the arch-conservatives and the Republicans and the Democrats with legislation that would have done all of these magic properties, but we can do our best and we have done our best.''

In 2003, Mr. Speaker, we did do our best and created a program that demonstrated compassion to so many since its enactment.

Today, the House has an opportunity to do its best again.

Today, for the sake of the fathers, the mothers, and the children who are victims of HIV/AIDS, as well as tuberculosis and malaria, today we can follow in the steps of Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos, demonstrating that American compassion that distinguishes our Nation and our people above all others.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a balanced bill. I believe that this is a bill that will save many lives and protect American security.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 20 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to again commend the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for her incredible work on this bill. And for the RECORD, there is bipartisan appreciation for her strong and passionate commitment to ending the scourge of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY), a physician who does so much on issues of health day in and day out throughout the United States, and, as on this issue, throughout the world.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, at the risk of being labeled the skunk at the annual fragrance picnic, I do rise today in opposition to this structured rule.

I know compromises have been made to improve the underlying legislation, but I think there is plenty of room for additional improvement. Just because we have a good program, to increase the spending from $15 billion to $50 billion, I wonder if there is justification for that.

But here we are again, Mr. Speaker, considering a rule that restricts debate on another Republican-created program for which the Democratic majority is now proposing a massive expansion.

We already have more than our share of entitlement programs right here in the United States. And to me, it now appears the majority is on the verge of using taxpayer dollars to create a global entitlement program. Remember, Mr. Speaker, PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, was created back in 2003 to provide emergency relief for AIDS.

I will certainly say as a physician, that of course I am encouraged by the increased desire in the bill to also help fight against tuberculosis and malaria. However, Mr. Speaker, we should not devise a plan to treat these diseases without defining how to actually buy sufficient medications to provide the necessary care. The majority said that a treatment floor was not included in this bill as it was in the original legislation because the cost of medications have decreased. That may be true, yet while it has more than tripled the price tag for the PEPFAR expansion as I said in this bill, it has not tripled the number of people that it plans to reach with medication. So if the cost of medications have gone down, I think they have and the majority states they have, shouldn't the massive increase in the cost of this program be matched by a proportionate increase in the people that we target through the program?

Mr. Speaker, I was at the Rules Committee yesterday. I offered an amendment to just simply say keep that floor of 55 percent of the money going to treat the patient. The Rules Committee, unfortunately, did not make that in order.

Since the majority is not allowing adequate input on this legislation, particularly from the minority, I would urge my fellow Members to vote against this rule, give us a chance to go back and make some of the needed changes in an otherwise good bill.

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

□ 1100

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to yield 4½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Florida, also a physician, Dr. WELDON.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I rise in strong opposition to this rule, and very strong opposition to the underlying bill.

And let me just say from the outset that I used to take care of AIDS patients before I came to this Congress back in 1994. I was one of only two physicians in a county of 400,000 people that was seeing AIDS patients. And I have announced my retirement, my intent to leave the House of Representatives at the conclusion of this Congress, and I will most likely go back to seeing patients in January. And I may, indeed, be seeing AIDS patients again.

Let me additionally say that I'm very concerned about the situation in Africa. Indeed, I have gone to Africa twice in my term of service here in the Congress specifically to look at the issue of helping in Africa with the issues of AIDS and malaria and TB, and so I think I have credibility to be able to say I care, I'm concerned. But this underlying bill and this rule that restricts any cutting amendments, in my opinion, is just excessive.

Years ago, when the President originally came up with PEPFAR, he came to me and asked me to help him with his plan, and I did. And I actually thought his plan was very, very generous, $3 billion a year. And when he gave his State of the Union message just a few months ago indicating that he wanted to double the size of this from $3 billion to $6 billion a year, I personally thought that was excessive. When you look at all the problems we have with health care access for Americans, the problems that we have with transportation infrastructure, the problems that we have in fighting the war in Iraq, Afghanistan, the homeland security issues, I thought to take this program from $3 billion a year to $6 billion a year was excessive and over the top.

But now we have before us today an underlying bill to not increase it by 100 percent, which is what the President was asking for, but to increase it by over 200 percent. That's the underlying bill. And the Democrat leadership of the House under the Democratic Rules Committee is saying, well, no, we don't want any cutting amendments.

Now, let me tell you a little bit of why I am so passionately upset about it. Yesterday, NASA announced that, with the retirement of the space shuttle, they are going to be laying off over 6,500 people in east central Florida, my congressional district. That is a huge amount of people. It has a huge economic impact on the State of Florida. And for us to be putting our astronauts on Russian rockets, we're going to have to sign a contract with the Russians for the construction of these rockets, we're essentially going to be laying off people in Florida and hiring people in Russia with U.S. taxpayers.

Now, this Congress, under this Democratic leadership, is saying that we have no choice, we cannot afford to continue to fly the shuttle in 2011, 2012, 2013. We cannot afford to bring the new rocket system online any sooner than 2005 or 2006, we don't have the money, while we have all this money to send $50 billion to Africa for AIDS. Now, again, let me just say, I understand this is a terrible problem. I don't even mind increasing the Africa AIDS account. And what, to me, is insult on top of injury, my staff has informed me that they have $1 billion in this account unspent that they are working to try to spend. So, they can't even spend all the money that we're sending them over there, and we want to send them a 240 percent increase?

Now, I know every Member of this House can get up and give a speech like this; they have water projects in their district, they have health care clinics in their district. In my particular case, it's pretty significant. We've got over 6,000 people who are going to get a pink slip. So, for us to say we can't fly the shuttle beyond 2010 because we can't afford it, but that we can somehow find $50 billion to send to Africa, to me is just way over the top. I can't justify that back home.

I'm opposing this rule. I'm going to vote against the underlying bill. And I thank the gentleman for yielding me time. I appreciate it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind my colleagues that the

underlying debate is not about the space program, it's about whether we're going to end the terrible scourge of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis that has cost the lives of countless individuals across this planet. This is a moral imperative. And I am proud of the bipartisan work done by Democrats and Republicans working together to accomplish this bill.

At this time, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN).

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of the rule and of H.R. 5501, a bipartisan bill to reauthorize and expand the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

I want to particularly applaud the increase in funding from $15 to $50 billion over 5 years, and the inclusion of the Caribbean countries in this reauthorization.

In this regard, I want to especially thank and applaud my colleagues, Mr. Fortuno, who introduced the Caribbean amendment, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, who cosponsored it, as did I, Chairman Donald Payne, who included the increased funding and whose work with Congresswoman Barbara Lee ensured that these provisions were included, as well as Chairman RANGEL, who began the Caribbean effort 4 years ago.

The expansion to include all Caribbean nations as focus countries was greatly aided by the hard work of Caribbean Health Ministers whose collective and tireless efforts raised awareness about the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. I also want to thank the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) not only for their support of this bill, but for the important leadership role that they have and continue to take to address HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean region.

Over the past 5 years, PEPFAR has literally saved the lives of more than one million people and has had a significant positive impact on those most affected by and most at risk for HIV infection, women and girls.

Congresswoman LEE and I had the opportunity to visit several PEPFAR sites and partners in South Africa late last year and saw the great work that they are doing. It was also clearly evident, though, that more was needed.

The additional funding will help to expand the number of focused countries under PEPFAR. It will help to ensure that the innovative and effective efforts that have been launched not only continue, but help other hard-hit nations get access to the resources they desperately need to address HIV/AIDS within their borders.

While two Caribbean nations, Haiti and Guyana, are, as they should be, currently prioritized as focus countries under PEPFAR, there are 14 other nations in this region, which is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of HIV/AIDS prevalence, in need of help. In the Caribbean today, AIDS is one of the leading causes of death in the 15–44 age group.

Many Caribbean nations not currently receiving PEPFAR assistance absorb millions of dollars in debt every year. Leaders in the Caribbean maintain that high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates can overwhelm the region's health care capacity, destabilize economies, and compromise Caribbean nations' sociopolitical infrastructure. In fact, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the Honorable Albert Ramdin, stated in January of last year that ''HIV/AIDS, if not effectively and urgently tackled, poses a clear threat to the sustainable development, social stability and human security of the Caribbean.''

Making all Caribbean countries eligible is clearly the right thing to do. H.R. 5501, while it includes the region, lays the foundation to have the 14 Caribbean nations specifically listed in the bill that will be sent to the President for his signature.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the rule and to support H.R. 5501, rightly named to honor the service of Chairman Hyde and Chairman Lantos.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of H.R. 5501—a bill which will reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR. I want to thank and applaud my colleagues, Congressman FORTUÑO who introduced the Caribbean amendment, Congresswoman CLARKE who cosponsored it as did I, Chairman PAYNE and Congresswoman LEE who ushered it and many other parts of the bill through the committee.

Congresswoman LEE and I had the opportunity to travel to South Africa around World AIDS Day last year to visit PEPFAR sites and participate in and see the work they were doing first hand. There was great work being done, but the need for more was also clearly evident.

The success of PEPFAR is well documented. With the support offered through PEPFAR over the last 5 years, many of the world's hardest hit nations have been able to launch integrated HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care programs that have prevented new HIV infections, brought life-saving medications and other treatments and services to those living with HIV. As a direct result, PEPFAR has literally saved the lives of more than 1 million people and has had a noted and positive impact on those most affected by and most at risk for HIV infection: women and girls.

In fact, in the 15 focus countries, more than 6 in every 10 of the individuals with HIV currently on antiretroviral treatment as a result of direct PEPFAR support are women and girls.

Given the continued burden of HIV/AIDS in the world's most vulnerable nations, there is no doubt that this critically important bill not only should be reauthorized, but that it should be increased. We were pleased that the President indicated a willingness to increase it in his State of the Union message this year. And I want to especially recognize Chairman PAYNE for successfully increasing the fund to $50 billion over the next 5 years.

This additional funding will help to expand the number of "focus countries" which currently are prioritized under PEPFAR. Additionally, it will help ensure that the forward-thinking and effective HIV/AIDS-related efforts that have been launched not only continue, but that other nations that are hard hit by this pandemic will have access to the resources they desperately need to address HIV/AIDS within their borders.

Mr. Speaker, despite the many successes associated with PEPFAR, we know that there is an entire region—the Caribbean—which has been and remains in desperate need of assistance in battling against HIV/AIDS. While two Caribbean nations—Haiti and Guyana—are, as they should be, currently prioritized as focus countries under PEPFAR, there are 14 other nations in the region that together comprise the second-hardest hit region in the world; second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of HIV/AIDS prevalence.

Mr. Speaker, in the Caribbean today, AIDS is one of the leading causes of death among adults aged 15–44 years of age. In some countries in the region, AIDS is the leading cause of death among individuals in this age group; a disturbing reality, because AIDS is taking its ultimate toll on Caribbean residents during their most productive life years, thus compromising many Caribbean nations' economic, social and political growth and stability.

Adding to the region's challenges with HIV/AIDS is the well-documented high population mobility. We know that many Caribbean nations—whose commitment to and effectiveness in addressing HIV/AIDS is stifled not because of the absence of political will, but because of the absence of resources—offer universal access to HIV/AIDS medications, care and other services.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, many Caribbean nations, not currently receiving PEPFAR assistance, absorb millions of dollars in debt every year providing treatment and care not only to their residents with HIV, but to all individuals on their shores seeking HIV/AIDS care and treatment.

These Caribbean nations have been doing what is right not only to address HIV/AIDS head on, but to lay the groundwork to beat this pandemic. And so, I rise today to encourage all of my colleagues—on both sides of the aisle—to support this legislation, which lists these 14 Caribbean nations as "focus nations," to support these nations' efforts to prevent new HIV infections and to expand access to life-saving AIDS medications to those living with HIV infection.

Mr. Speaker, because of all of the above, I want to especially single out Congressman FORTUÑO for his leadership on this issue and shepherding this amendment through the committee process and ensuring it became a part of the final bill. I also want to recognize Chairman RANGEL who was the first to begin this process 4 years ago.

This amendment might not have been possible without the hard work of nearly a dozen Health Ministers in the Caribbean and their collective and tireless efforts to raise awareness about the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean and to include 14 Caribbean nations as "focus countries" in this bill. I also want to thank the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS, PANCAP, not only for their support of this bill, but for the important leadership role that they have and continue to take to address HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean region.

Mr. Speaker, as the only African-American physician in Congress and as the only representative from the English-speaking Caribbean, I can tell you—firsthand—that based on the surveillance data reported in the latest UNAIDS report, we know that the entire Caribbean region without adequate and targeted support from PEPFAR, is now and will continue to experience the same devastating impact from HIV/AIDS documented throughout nations in sub-Saharan Africa. Ambassador of and Health Ministers in Caribbean countries to the United States maintain that high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates can overwhelm the region's health care capacity, destabilize economies and compromise Caribbean nations' socio-political infrastructure.

In fact, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States Albert Ramdin stated in January 2007 that, "HIV/AIDS, if not effectively and urgently tackled, poses a clear threat to the sustainable development, social stability, and human security of the Caribbean."

The time to act is now; now is when we should support a bill that not only will tackle on of our most pressing international public health challenges, but that will do so in a manner that is medically, epidemiologically, regionally and fiscally responsible today. I, therefore, urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 5501 so that it may pass in the House of Representatives and so that we may lay the path necessary to ensure that during conference, the 14 Caribbean nations listed in this bill are included in the bill that is sent to the President for enactment. It not only is the right thing to do, but it is the smart and responsible thing to do.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, there is no more noble endeavor that we can engage in than to cure human diseases. All of us in Congress I think have an obligation to be sure that we are, for example, doubling the investment we make in the National Institutes of Health, in the National Science Foundation, in the research work that they're doing to identify and cure human diseases at the earlier stages.

I represent the Texas Medical Center, and I'm proud to do so. Those institutions, the greatest in the world, the Andy Anderson Cancer Center, Texas Children's Hospital, Baylor University of Texas Health Science Center is doing research today, particularly on nano research, where we have the potential, within the next 10 to 15 years, of being able to identify in a child before she's born genetic predisposition to certain diseases, for example, like Lou Gehrig's disease, or diabetes, or cystic fibrosis. These genetically-based diseases can be identified before a child is born using nanotechnology, reinjecting, for example, nano sponges with a protein fix back into the mother's amniotic fluid. The child would then take up those nano sponges. And we can cure diseases in children before they are born.

We have the potential, if we will just invest in the National Institutes of Health and their competitive peer reviewed grant process, if we will just invest the money that's needed right here in America for the National Science Foundation, we have the ability to detect cancer when it's only a few hundred cells in the body using nanotechnology and gold nano shells that will attach to the cancer cells and destroy them before they turn into a tumor.

We have not adequately invested in our own scientific and medical infrastructure in the United States, first and foremost, before you even begin to talk about curing disease globally. We have not secured our border. The southern border is essentially wide open and unprotected in areas other than Del Rio and Laredo. What are we doing to make sure that we've done all that we can do here at home first and foremost for our own folks?

But then finally, and most importantly, and the reason I'm so spun up about this, is the fact that this Democrat Thelma and Louise Congress, Obama-Hillary-Pelosi Democrat Congress, is managing this economy of the United States like Thelma and Louise, driving right off the cliff.

I urge you to go to gao.gov and look at the Fiscal Wake-Up Tour that David Walker has put up on the Web site. The Comptroller of the United States has notified us formally that we are spending money so irresponsibly, so rapidly that the Standard & Poor's and Moody's has already formally notified the Treasury that they are beginning the process of downgrading U.S. Treasury bonds.

The Comptroller has told us that by the year 2020, in 12 years, young people who are 18, if you're listening, by the time you turn 30, Medicare is bankrupt, Treasury bills will be graded as junk. Let me repeat that, Treasury bills are on a path to be graded as junk bonds if we don't stop spending money and focus on the bare essentials. Every American already owes $175,000 a person.

This bill creates a worldwide entitlement to anyone in the world that has AIDS or malaria or tuberculosis at U.S. taxpayer expense. It's unaffordable. It's unacceptable. It is utterly irresponsible at a time of record national debt, record deficits, record Federal spending that we need to reign in, otherwise America is going to become Argentina. The dollar is rapidly becoming the peso. It's time for this Thelma and Louise Democrat Congress to quit spending money on things that are not absolutely essential to this Nation's survival.

Let us focus on protecting the United States of America and quit spending my daughter's money that she does not have and driving our kids and our grandchildren deeper into debt. It is irresponsible. It is, frankly, criminal, in my opinion, to drive up the national debt and the deficit to record levels.

It is a noble, good thing to try to cure disease in Africa. Why don't we focus on clean drinking water, for example, if you really want to fix disease in Africa. Quit spending my children's money that they don't have.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members to direct their comments to the Chair.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

To be honest, Mr. Speaker, I find it stunning that a Member from the Republican Party would come up here and talk about the debt that our children have been forced to inherit. I will remind my colleagues that when Bill Clinton left office, we had a surplus. After the leadership of George Bush and the Republican Congresses, we are now in historic record debt. I now have inherited a debt tax.

I am all for investing more in medical research. I would much rather do that, quite frankly, than invest in tax cuts for Donald Trump or more subsidies to Big Oil companies or more tax giveaways to big corporations that are gouging the American taxpayer.

But what we have here, Mr. Speaker, is a bill to save lives. This is a moral imperative. It is a product of bipartisan collaboration. This is something that we can be proud of. This is something the American people, I think, support overwhelmingly.

And so, we don't need any lectures about the mess this economy is in. This President and the Republican Congresses have driven this economy into a ditch, and we're trying to get us out of that ditch.

So, I would urge my colleagues to focus on what is being debated here today, which is a bill to save lives, to end the scourge of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. This is a worthy goal. This is something that we should be committed to. And I think that the bipartisan collaboration that has produced this deserves to be praised and not ridiculed.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional minute to Mr. CULBERSON of Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. I want to thank Mr. MCGOVERN for his thoughtful response and point out that over the last 60 years, the Republicans have been in control of the Congress for I think about 14 of that. We were in control about 12 years, and then I think there were 2 or maybe 4 years under Eisenhower that the Republicans were in control. So, Democrats have controlled the Congress for the overwhelming majority of the last 60 years.

I got here in 2001. And I can tell you, Mr. MCGOVERN, and you're a thoughtful, good man, I enjoy working with you, that I personally, on behalf of my constituents, have voted against every major spending initiative that the White House has pushed on us because I recognized this problem the comptroller has put out before us. I voted

against the farm bill. I voted against the Medicare Prescription Drug bill. I voted against the No Child Left Behind Act. I voted against the AIDS in Africa bill the last time it came up because we cannot continue to spend money that our children cannot afford to pay. The money we spend today will be paid by our kids and our grandchildren. And that's the fundamental message here, Mr. MCGOVERN.

I would encourage everyone in this Congress, and I know you're a thoughtful guy, why don't we focus on providing clean drinking water. Let's convert existing foreign aid in Africa to clean drinking water, which I've lead the effort to provide $500 million. Focus on clean drinking water and research here in America.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let me just yield myself 20 seconds.

I appreciate the gentleman's response. I would just remind the gentleman again, and everybody, that this is a bill about saving lives. And this is a bill that is supported by the head of the Republican Party, the President of the United States. And so, I am proud to join in support of this bipartisan collaboration.

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

□ 1115

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Puerto Rico, who is a leader on issues of health and has so much contributed to this important legislation, Mr. FORTUÑO.

Mr. FORTUÑO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5501. This bill reauthorizes critically important legislation. PEPFAR, which is a testament to the American people's generosity of spirit, has achieved remarkable success. Because of PEPFAR, millions of sick and vulnerable people beyond our borders have received an essential education, treatment and care. There are men in Nairobi, women in Hanoi and children in Port-au-Prince who are alive today because of PEPFAR. That knowledge should give us great pride. It should also fill us with a sense of humility, born of the understanding that we have helped create something larger than ourselves.

I am gratified that the bill we consider today, appropriately named after two beloved chairmen of the Foreign Affairs Committee who devoted themselves to the cause of fighting AIDS, preserves the careful compromises that gave life to this life-giving program.

I want to highlight an aspect of H.R. 5501 that has not received much attention. In February 2007 I introduced H.R. 848, which called for the addition of 14 Caribbean nations as so-called ''focus countries'' under PEPFAR.

As the representative of nearly 4 million U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico, I am particularly aware that the people of the Caribbean have always been good friends and neighbors of our country. We share a unique and resilient bond. The sons and daughters of the Caribbean who have ventured north to our shores have enriched the life of this Nation.

H.R. 848 was cosponsored by Congresswomen DONNA CHRISTENSEN and YVETTE CLARKE, who have been tireless advocates of individuals living with HIV/AIDS, and I commend them for their work. We were heartened when the language of H.R. 848 was included in H.R. 5501.

H.R. 5501 reflects a bipartisan agreement forged through deliberations among Democrats and Republicans on the Foreign Affairs Committee, the White House, and the State Department's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator. Each of these groups recognized that the United States can do more to help the people of the Caribbean fighting the AIDS pandemic that is ravaging their communities.

Adopting a regional approach to fighting AIDS in the Caribbean, as H.R. 5501 does, is the right thing and the smart thing to do. There are currently 15 focus countries targeted for increased assistance under PEPFAR. Only two, Haiti and Guyana, are in the Caribbean. But the AIDS pandemic has produced a humanitarian crisis that affects the region as a whole.

Along with sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean is the most severely impacted region in the world. In 2007 there were 230,000 adults and children living with HIV, 17,000 new HIV infections, a 1 percent prevalence rate, and 11,000 AIDS-related deaths. Statistics like this can have a mind-numbing effect. We must remember that behind each of these numbers lies a tragic story of human suffering.

In addition, the AIDS pandemic in the Caribbean poses a significant national security threat to the United States, because the disease undermines political stability and economic development in the region that President Bush has called our ''third border.''

Current spending by the United States to combat AIDS in the Caribbean is not sufficient to address the problem. Setting aside funding to Haiti and Guyana, U.S. assistance to the Caribbean has remained stagnant and, in fact, even decreased slightly.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield the gentleman 30 additional seconds, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. FORTUÑO. In closing, I want to emphasize this point. By adding these Caribbean nations, Congress does not seek to substitute its judgment for the judgment of the experts at the State Department in determining how PEPFAR money will be allocated. These fact-intensive decisions will and should ultimately be made by OGAC. But expanding the list of so-called focus countries in this manner does send a strong and clear message from this Congress that the broader Caribbean region should be considered for a reasonable amount of additional funding. And I believe this is a message that we can all support.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I reserve my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I just came from a meeting with local doctors from my district. They told me that there is a severe shortage of funds necessary to care for America's senior citizens. We are having trouble finding the money to even take care of our returning veterans. Millions of Americans are facing foreclosure on their homes.

And now, with all of these challenges that we're facing at home, we are being asked to spend $50 billion to fight AIDS in Africa? This is as absurd and as irresponsible as it gets.

Where are we going to get the $50 billion for Africa?

Well, we can lower spending for our own people. We can raise taxes, which would likely throw us into a recession and leave us even less money for our people at home. Or of course we can borrow it. Yes, if we borrow it, it will probably come from Communist China and make ourselves even more vulnerable to their pressure.

We have exported our manufacturing base to China already, and now we want to borrow even more from these dictators so we can give that money away to others?

It is terrible that millions of Africans are suffering AIDS. But we cannot afford such totally irrational generosity. This is benevolence gone wild.

We can't afford to shortchange our own people, to raise taxes, or to borrow it. Yet, we expect the American people to absorb another $50 billion hit for someone else?

We can't take care of our own veterans when they come home from the war. We can't take care of our elderly. We have people who can't take care of their own health needs, and are at risk of losing their homes. And we are going to spend $50 billion in Africa?

Mr. Speaker, we have big hearts, but we need to use our brains. We cannot afford this type of $50 billion generosity. It's going to cost, this will cost the American people their way of life. It will cost them their health care, their education for their children. It'll cost our veterans.

Our economy is facing a catastrophic setback because of the irresponsible spending and taxing policies of the Federal Government. And now we're going to exacerbate that problem by making believe that we can still afford to save the world by funding every worthwhile cause out there.

I'm not in any way suggesting that helping people with AIDS in Africa is not a worthwhile endeavor. But the fact is, we've got to use our heads, or we will have serious negative consequences on our own people. $50 billion is way out of line, is way out of line.

It would be wonderful to help the people of Africa through this AIDS crisis by transferring tons of cash into African accounts. But I suggest to you that, as experience shows, just sending that much money will not cure AIDS in Africa, and will have serious repercussions on our standard of living and the quality of life of our own people.

I ask my colleagues to vote against this type of nonsense. Watch out for the American people.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let me yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I find it somewhat ironic to listen to the gentleman's comments who has no problem supporting a $3 trillion war in Iraq that has resulted in 4,000 American soldiers dead, tens of thousands wounded; and on top of all that, not even paying for the war, just putting it on the credit card so our kids and our grandkids have to pay for it. Many of my friends on the other side of the aisle who have supported tax cuts for the richest of the rich and decided that it wasn't important to pay for it; instead, put it on the credit card and on the backs of our kids; who have voted for budgets to cut veterans health and to cut money for health care in general. And what we have been trying to do is to make up for the indifference of so many years.

You know, the gentleman presents a false choice. What we're trying to do here is actually respond to a humanitarian crisis in a bipartisan way. I mean, I don't often stand with the President of the United States, but I do on this. He's right. We can't ignore the HIV/AIDS crisis or the crisis with regard to malaria and tuberculosis around the world.

This is a moral imperative. And I will tell you, in addition to being a moral imperative, it makes sense for the United States to take a leadership role and encourage the rest of the world to step up and to provide the resources to combat these scourges.

This is the right thing to do. I'm proud of this bipartisan collaboration of this bill. And I hope all my colleagues will support it.

I want to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida, my colleague on the Rules Committee, Mr. HASTINGS.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I thank my esteemed colleague on the Rules Committee for yielding 1 minute.

I regret very much my colleague, who is my friend from California, had to be about his business because I wanted to respond directly to him dealing specifically with his comments as if this legislation is directed only to Africa.

This legislation wisely expands to the Caribbean basin. And I urged yesterday in the Rules Committee that people understand that American tourists visit these places and, in many instances, it is in our best interest to make sure that these kinds of humanitarian concerns are taken care of.

Haiti is involved in this legislation. And I doubt seriously if there's anybody that doesn't believe that we should be about the business of trying to help Haiti.

My colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) just said that it is the right thing to do. It is the humanitarian thing to do. It is the right thing to do. And lest we ignore the extraordinary problem we have here in the Nation's Capital on HIV/AIDS, lest we ignore the need to expand the Ryan White Act, failure to do these things causes us to do so at our peril. This is de minimis by comparison to what is needed or what is required.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I would ask my friend if he has any other speakers.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I am the final speaker on our side.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I will be asking for a ''no'' vote on the previous question so that we can amend the rule and allow the House to consider a change to the rules of the House to restore accountability and enforceability to the earmark rule.

Under the current rule, so long as the chairman or the sponsor of a bill, joint resolution, conference report, or manager's amendment includes either a list of earmarks contained in a bill or a report, or a statement that there are no earmarks, no point of order lies against the bill. This is the same as the rule in the last Congress.

However, under the rule as it functioned under the Republican majority in the 109th Congress, even if the point of order was not available on the bill, it was always available on the rule as a ''question of consideration.'' Because the Democratic Rules Committee specifically exempts earmarks from the waiver of all points of order, they deprive Members of the ability to raise the question of earmarks on the rule.

This amendment will restore the accountability and enforceability of the earmark rule to where it was at the end of the 109th Congress to provide Members with an opportunity to bring the question of earmarks before the House for a vote.

Last year the distinguished new Speaker said that if she were to become Speaker of the House, she would require all earmarks to be publicly disclosed and would ''put it in writing.'' However, as we have seen, this Congress, the majority have not fulfilled their promise.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment and extraneous materials immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5501 is one of the most important foreign policy global health bills this Congress will pass this year. We have literally gone from, 5 years ago from standing helplessly by and watching people die of HIV/AIDS, to watching people live and take up productive lives in their communities. The impact is far-reaching.

For example, Mr. Speaker, let me highlight just one sector of development that has broad bipartisan support in this Congress, basic education. We all know that education is key to lifting countries out of poverty. And HIV/AIDS creates barriers to education.

Teacher deaths and absenteeism due to HIV/AIDS compound problems of quality and access in education systems that already face teacher shortages.

Children are often pulled out of school to care for a family member with HIV/AIDS or, when a parent dies, they're forced to take care of younger siblings rather than attend school.

HIV/AIDS affected children who are able to attend school often face discrimination and are sometimes segregated from other children or denied admission entirely by teachers or school administrators.

Young people with little or no education are more than twice as likely to contract HIV as those who have completed primary education.

But under this bill, and as we continue to better integrate our HIV/AIDS programs with our other development priorities, schools can become hubs of care and support for orphans and vulnerable children by providing psychological support, nutrition and basic health care and support to OVC caregivers.

In a 32-country demographic and health survey, women with post primary education were four times more likely than illiterate women to know the basic facts about HIV/AIDS, and three times more likely to know that HIV can be transmitted from mother to child.

Oxfam estimates that if all children completed primary education, 700,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS in young people could be prevented each year, totaling 7 million cases in one decade.

Mr. Speaker, for these and so many other reasons, this bipartisan bill deserves our support. I urge my colleagues to support this rule and to support the underlying bill, H.R. 5501.

The material previously referred to by Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1065 OFFERED BY MR. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART OF FLORIDA

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 3. That immediately upon the adoption of this resolution the House shall, without intervention of any point of order, consider in the House the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 263) to establish the Joint Select Committee on Earmark Reform, and for other purposes. The concurrent resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the concurrent resolution to final adoption without intervening motion or demand for

division of the question except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Rules; and (2) one motion to recommit.

(The information contained herein was provided by Democratic Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 109th Congress.)

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Democratic majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives, (VI, 308–311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

Because the vote today may look bad for the Democratic majority they will say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the definition of the previous question used in the Floor Procedures Manual published by the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress, (page 56). Here's how the Rules Committee described the rule using information from Congressional Quarterly's ''American Congressional Dictionary'': ''If the previous question is defeated, control of debate shifts to the leading opposition member (usually the minority Floor Manager) who then manages an hour of debate and may offer a germane amendment to the pending business.''

Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Democratic majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. McGOVERN. I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

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. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1130

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the grounds 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.

Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on approval of the Journal will be followed by 5-minute votes on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 1065 and adoption of H. Res. 1065.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 232, nays 177, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 153]

YEAS—232

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

NAYS—177

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Bachus
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gingrey
Goode
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Issa
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
LaHood
Lamborn
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mitchell
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
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
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Shuler
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stearns
Stupak
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Tancredo

NOT VOTING—20

Cantor
Cubin
DeLauro
Emerson
Fattah
Giffords
Gohmert
Granger
Hinchey
Jefferson
Maloney (NY)
Miller (FL)
Oberstar
Rush
Saxton
Souder
Sullivan
Tauscher
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)

□ 1154

Messrs. JORDAN of Ohio and SHAYS changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. KUCINICH changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5501, TOM LANTOS AND HENRY J. HYDE UNITED STATES GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 1065, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 215, nays 199, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 154]

YEAS—215

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Filner
Foster
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
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
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NAYS—199

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Bachmann
Bachus
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boustany
Boyda (KS)
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
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Donnelly
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Ellsworth
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gingrey
Goode
Goodlatte
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hill
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)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marshall
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
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
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—16

Andrews
Cubin
Fattah
Gohmert
Granger
Hinchey
Jefferson
Maloney (NY)
Marchant
Miller (FL)
Rush
Saxton
Souder
Tauscher
Udall (CO)
Walsh (NY)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is less than 1 minute remaining in this vote.

□ 1203

Mr. MARSHALL changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 221, nays 192, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 155]

YEAS—221

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
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
Carson
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Filner
Foster
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
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)
Markey
Marshall
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
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NAYS—192

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
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
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hill
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)
LaHood
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
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
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
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—17

Andrews
Cramer
Cubin
Ellison
Fattah
Granger
Hinchey
Jefferson
Maloney (NY)
Miller (FL)
Rangel
Rush
Saxton
Souder
Tauscher
Tiberi
Udall (CO)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is less than two minutes remaining on this vote.

□ 1211

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1983

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 1983.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1108

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 1108.

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5501.

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

There was no objection.

TOM LANTOS AND HENRY J. HYDE UNITED STATES GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1065 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 5501.

□ 1215

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 5501). To authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes, with Ms. NORTON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 1 hour.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, on the President's request 5 years ago, Congress launched a global campaign to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and to treat and care for those who are already afflicted. The United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act was a bipartisan bill from its inception. Today, the Foreign Affairs Committee again brings a bipartisan global HIV/AIDS bill to the floor, and again this important reauthorization bill enjoys strong support from the White House.

The negotiations that brought forth this compromise bill were conducted in the same bipartisan spirit that guided the 2003 act into law, a spirit made possible by close cooperation between two former chairmen of the Foreign Affairs Committee, our late colleagues Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde, and I am pleased to note that this important reauthorization bill is named for these two foreign policy titans in recognition of their contributions to battling HIV/AIDS overseas.

As a direct result of the extraordinarily successful law we passed 5 years ago, the United States has provided lifesaving drugs to nearly 1.5 million men, women and children; supported care for nearly 7 million people, including 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children; and prevented an estimated 150,000 infant infections around the world.

The 2003 legislation firmly established the United States as the leading provider in the world of HIV/AIDS assistance for prevention, treatment and care. It has reminded the global community that Americans are a compassionate and generous people, and so has helped to repair our Nation's badly-damaged image overseas. In many ways, that legislation has had great healing power.

Most importantly, with this initiative we have ensured that HIV/AIDS is no longer the certain death sentence it was just 5 short years ago. Hospital corridors that were jammed with AIDS patients waiting to die now brim with hope as lifesaving drugs are dispensed.

The reauthorization bill before the House today reaffirms our commitment to the programs and policies established 5 years ago. The 2003 legislation

worked well as an emergency intervention, but it must now be modified to reflect the constantly changing nature of the HIV/AIDS crisis. We also have 5 years of experience under our belts and we know what works and what does not.

The law we passed in 2003 was designed to deal with the emergency phase of the global HIV/AIDS crisis. The Lantos-Hyde bill will move our programs towards long-term sustainability that will keep the benefits of U.S. global HIV/AIDS programs flowing to those in need. With this reauthorization act, host governments will also gain the ability to plan, direct and manage prevention treatment and care programs that have been established with U.S. assistance.

The 2003 legislation authorized $15 billion over 5 years. In response to the desperate need for lifesaving medicine and a greater number of trained health care workers in nations hard hit by HIV/AIDS, the bill before us authorizes $50 billion over 5 years for these three pandemics.

The 2003 law relied upon the health care workforce already in place in the developing world, yet in many of the hardest hit areas of the world there are simply not enough doctors and other health care workers to meet the challenges of this pandemic. The Lantos-Hyde legislation invests new funds in training new professionals and paraprofessionals, as well as building existing capacity.

The 2003 law focused on creating new programs to tackle the HIV/AIDS crisis. The reauthorization bill increases the number of individuals receiving prevention, treatment and care services. It also builds stronger linkages between the global HIV/AIDS initiative and existing programs designed to alleviate hunger, improve health care, and bolster HIV education in schools, an approach endorsed by the President's Global AIDS Coordinator just a few short weeks ago.

The 2003 law gave inadequate attention to the needs of women and girls. The new legislation remedies this situation by strengthening prevention and treatment programs aimed at this especially vulnerable population.

The reauthorization legislation also eliminates the one-third abstinence-only earmark, but requires a balanced approach to HIV/AIDS sexual transmission prevention programs and a report regarding this approach in countries where the epidemic has become generalized.

The bill before you today is a compromise in the best sense of the word, and it is in the true spirit of the great leaders of this committee who guided the 2003 act into law, Chairmen Lantos and Hyde. This bill is the result of more than a year of preparatory work and weeks of discussions, concluding with a bipartisan agreement with the White House. President Bush has indicated his support and his intention to sign it into law as soon as Congress acts.

For all its strengths, the bill before the House today is not perfect. No compromise ever is. No one got everything they wanted in this compromise legislation. But with this agreement, we have maintained the strong, bipartisan coalition behind the global HIV/AIDS initiative which has been critical to winning rapidly increasing funding levels for this important initiative.

Madam Chairman, 20 million innocent men, women and children have perished from HIV/AIDS, and 40 million around the globe are HIV positive. Each and every day another 6,000 people become infected with HIV. We have a moral imperative to act, and to act decisively.

I will speak more lengthily about the subject, but I do want to initially extend my particular appreciation to our ranking member, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, who played a critical role in working with the majority to reach this compromise. A number of Members on her side from the committee were active. DON PAYNE, the gentleman from New Jersey, the chairman of the Africa Subcommittee, was critically involved, as was Congresswoman BARBARA LEE from California, who played such a key role in the 2003 law, as well as a number of other people, such as Congressman CARNAHAN. I can't mention everyone who was involved, but this was truly a collaborative effort that started long before I became Chair of the committee, with great work by Chairman Lantos last year and with the staff of the committee.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I thank my good friend, the new chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, HOWARD BERMAN. He has got a tough act to follow, because we all loved Tom Lantos. The gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) had a hard act to follow, but, boy, did he fill those big shoes very well. So, thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been your first trial by fire, and you came out looking so well because you accommodated the concerns and the anxieties and the worries that so many of our Members had.

I want to thank on a bipartisan level all of the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, from the most conservative to the most liberal. We were able to forge a compromise that reached a broad consensus on this vital and complex legislation. We couldn't have done it without the leadership of Chairman BERMAN, but also without his very able staff and the staff on our Republican side of the aisle as well.

The foundation of this bill, as Chairman BERMAN has pointed out, is the 2003 Leadership Act, which was the first comprehensive U.S. emergency response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and which stands as a noble legacy of our two former chairmen, Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos. They understood, as do all of us, that millions of lives around the world depend on our country's willingness to battle this pandemic together. It does honor to our country that 5 years ago we undertook this true mission of mercy. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to reaffirm that commitment by our vote here today.

Since the passage of the original Leadership Act of 2003, extensive emergency treatment and prevention programs have begun to slow the advance of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The success of these programs is well documented. I would like to cite some specifics.

According to the office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, more than 1.4 million people infected with the HIV virus are now being treated with the necessary drugs to fight this disease. PEPFAR has supported HIV testing and counseling for 30 million people, cared for million 6.7 million, and, as the chairman pointed out, including almost 3 million orphans and vulnerable children. We are on our way to achieving the 5-year goal of preventing the infection of 7 million people. PEPFAR has supplied medicines for approximately 800,000 expectant mothers, preventing an estimated 157,000 infant HIV infections. What a successful program.

The legislation before us keeps faith with the core principles of the Hyde-Lantos Act. We have modified the original blueprint by adding or adjusting a number of provisions based on 5 years of real-world experience regarding what works and what doesn't.

In addition to medicines and sophisticated methods of treatment, the 2003 act mandated that a more comprehensive approach be used that took into account local values and indigenous cultures, and the act before us does that.

With respect to this balanced approach, the wife of the President of Zambia said it best recently when she said, ''There are several ways in which we can reach the young people. One of the effective ways is abstinence. It brings back dignity and self-responsibility to young people, because they know their bodies are not supposed to be abused and they learn to say no.''

The compromise bill before us removes the specific directive in current law so that implementation, as the chairman has pointed out, can be better refined to reflect the varying circumstances in host countries. Nevertheless, the bill before us continues this comprehensive approach by requiring that the AIDS Coordinator provides a balanced approach for prevention activities for sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS and to ensure that abstinence and faithfulness programs are implemented and funded in a meaningful and equitable way.

The agreement that we have is carefully crafted and designed in the area of reproductive health and family planning to ensure that HIV funding for prevention is not misused to promote programs beyond the scope of this bill.

We can do that, if you wish, in other bills. But the bill ensures also that those working to fight these diseases are not required to choose between their conscience and receiving the assistance they need to carry out their work.

Also we worked a lot on the prostitution and the sex trafficking pledge. The bipartisan agreement maintains the existing certification requirement that any group or organization receiving PEPFAR funds explicitly oppose prostitution and sex trafficking. The U.S. Agency for International Development has implemented this prohibition by requiring that any group that receives funding sign a pledge affirming its opposition to these practices.

Let me be clear: Neither current law nor the pledge itself prevents organizations from working with prostitutes or other high risk groups, but it does mandate that that assistance to these individuals not be mistaken for approval or support of the activities that take their terrible toll on their bodies and that can only be described as destructive to human dignity.

We had issues with accountability and national security, and although this bill is absolutely motivated by the altruism of the American people, I believe that this legislation ensures that our interests are protected as well.

□ 1230

For example, U.S. contributions to the Global Fund will be subject to more stringent oversight than is currently provided by calling for the Fund to meet even higher benchmarks of transparency and accountability.

The legislation also includes a prohibition on taxation of our assistance by foreign governments to ensure that assistance intended to the afflicted not be siphoned off by unaccountable bureaucrats.

The bill also strengthens our national security. The HIV pandemic is first and foremost a health issue, but it also is one of the most significant global, economic, and security threats of our generation. General Charles Wald, the Former Deputy Commander of the US-European Command, has called HIV/AIDS the third greatest threat to our national security.

Together, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria kill millions of people during their most productive years, between the ages of 16 and 50. And in the hardest hit countries, the AIDS epidemic alone is killing a generation of parents, of teachers, of health care workers, bread winners, peacekeepers, shattering the economic and the social life of villages, communities, and, indeed, nations.

Losses on this scale have staggered the economies of the hardest hit countries. Without further prevention, without further treatment, without further care efforts, the AIDS pandemic will continue to spread its mix of death, poverty, and despondency that is further destabilizing governments and societies and undermining the security of entire regions.

Our former House colleague from Wisconsin, Mark Green, who now serves as the United States Ambassador to Tanzania, wrote to me following the committee's passage of this bill highlighting this security aspect. He said, ''In tearing apart the social fabric and leaving a generation of orphans, the scourge of HIV/AIDS could spread and create a long-term breeding ground of radicalism.''

PEPFAR programs in turn help to counter these precursor conditions. As General Wald has said, ''In addition to the obvious humanitarian efforts of PEPFAR, the program is one of our Nation's development activities that can help strengthen the social structure that keep communities and nations secure.''

The threat is not just in faraway lands, but in our own back yard. Many countries in the Caribbean have been particularly hard hit. This bill places a new emphasis on assistance to this region. It adds 14 Caribbean countries to the existing list of nations in which the Global AIDS Coordinator is given explicit statutory authority over HIV/AIDS programs.

Let me add that, although all of us share the goal of reducing the further spread of this pandemic, this is also a personal issue for me both professionally and morally. South Florida, which falls within my congressional district, ranks first in the State of Florida in the number of AIDS cases. Roughly 19 percent of the State total for those living with HIV reside in my district. So, I am all too familiar with the human cost of this disease, and hope for the day when its ravages are safely confined to the past.

Although not all Members will fully agree with every aspect of this complex compromise, it does contain the bipartisan approach that we have maintained throughout the years of work on HIV/AIDS in our committee. We have an opportunity, indeed, a responsibility, to continue the lifesaving work that began 5 years ago. This legislation is a means by which that can happen.

But the dry text of the legislation, nor the posters behind me, cannot adequately capture the human drama for which we are trying to write the exit strategy.

The poster behind me shows where PEPFAR has worldwide activities, the number of countries where it has positively had an impact. The second poster shows the number of adults and children estimated to be living with HIV just this last year. And, the third poster shows some of the faces of the children whom this legislation has saved.

Let me read, to conclude, from a Washington Post op ed authored by our chairman, Henry Hyde, 5 years ago. Mr. Hyde wrote,

''Not since the bubonic plague swept across the world in the last millennium has our world confronted such a horrible curse as we are now witnessing with the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic.

''This pandemic is more than a humanitarian crisis.

''To those who suggest that the United States has no stake in this pandemic, let me observe that the specter of failed states across the world is certainly our concern.

''The AIDS virus is a mortal challenge to our civilization.

''It is my hope that each of us will be animated by the compassion, and, yes, the vision, that has always defined what it means to be an American.''

Madam Chairman, endless numbers of children have already been orphaned and deprived of the protection and the love of their parents. We cannot make their world whole again, but there is much that we can do to comfort and care for them and to prevent others from suffering the same fate.

I ask my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill in a strong bipartisan manner, and thereby allow our country to continue our mission, our mission of mercy, for the waiting millions.

And with that, Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentlelady for her wonderful statement, and I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the chairman, and I ask for time for the purpose of the gentlelady from Missouri and I entering into a colloquy with the chairman on the importance of integrating food and nutrition programs with the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS-affected individuals, families, and communities.

Last year, I traveled to Africa and had the opportunity to see firsthand many of our programs related to food security. In Ethiopia and Kenya, I visited HIV/AIDS programs to look at how food and nutrition was included. At that time, I heard from local communities, NGO partners, and our embassy staff how restrictive guidance for global HIV/AIDS assistance often hindered their ability to design and carry out effective food and nutrition programs targeted at HIV/AIDS affected individuals, families, and communities. The lack of resources available for food and nutrition programs within the global HIV/AIDS assistance and from other sources also posed a significant barrier.

I very much appreciate and support the work of the committee in ensuring that this bill addresses these concerns throughout, and especially in the section entitled ''Food Security and Nutrition Support.'' The bill recognizes that strengthening the linkages and enhancing coordination among HIV/AIDS programs and vital development programs, like food and nutrition programs, will significantly increase our effectiveness in the fight against HIV/AIDS while we advance other essential U.S. development priorities. I remain concerned, however, that the bill is less clear on where or how such funding will be provided for these purposes. It is not clear on how much funding will

come from the Global HIV/AIDS program versus other sources of funding. I am concerned that, without adequate resources through the Global HIV/AIDS program, or necessary increases for current food and nutrition services through programs like Food for Peace, that USAID will be faced with the possibility of having to divert funding from programs that address long-term chronic hunger and food insecurity to meet the enhanced mandates of H.R. 5501.

I know the chairman will agree that we want to avoid this scenario of robbing Peter to pay Paul so that we do not end up shortchanging other communities suffering from hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity.

I want to yield to the gentlelady from Missouri in this regard.

Mrs. EMERSON. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Madam Chairman, I am also concerned that the situation will become even worse, because the cost of food, commodities, and transportation is skyrocketing. Just last month, on February 12, the USAID's Office of Food for Peace announced that the cost of wheat and other food the United States donates to poor countries jumped 41 percent, 41 percent, in the first half of fiscal year 2008. According to USAID, this means $120 million in food assistance will not be available for people who are malnourished or food insecure.

I would ask the chairman to work on strengthening the language in the bill as it moves through the legislative process and into conference negotiations to clarify how the necessary level of funding for food security and nutrition will be provided, especially in light of rising food and transportation costs, so that funds won't be diverted from U.S. programs addressing chronic hunger and emergency operations.

I yield back to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. And I yield back to the chairman to express his views.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, before I respond with my views, I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) to express his views on the subject of this colloquy.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Chairman, as you know, the provision on food and nutrition security in the bill currently under consideration is drawn directly from a bill I introduced in December, H.R. 4914, the Global HIV/AIDS Food Security and Nutrition Support Act of 2007. I introduced the bill after chairing a hearing in the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health to determine whether the Global HIV/AIDS program was adequately addressing the nutritional needs of its beneficiaries.

The hearing corroborated what I had already heard in the field on numerous visits to Africa over the past 5 years: PEPFAR is falling short in this critical area. I share the concerns of the gentleman from Massachusetts and the gentlelady from Missouri about the increasing cost of food aid. Just last week, the World Food Program had to issue an appeal for an additional $500 million to offset the increased costs of food and fuel.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. PAYNE. Without the extra $73 million, people who rely on WFP for their daily sustenance may have their rations cut. This is a truly alarming situation, and it is not my intent for the provision of this bill to exacerbate it. The language under consideration very clearly states that these activities are to be funded from amounts authorized under section 401 of this bill. I used this language deliberately, as I strongly believe that the food assistance and nutritional support we are providing under the Global AIDS program must be on top of the food aid we are already providing.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself 1½ minutes to respond to the concerns raised during this colloquy. I thank my colleagues for raising these important concerns.

H.R. 5501 provides clear and specific instructions to the USAID Administrator and the Global AIDS Coordinator to address the food and nutrition needs of individuals with HIV/AIDS and other affected individuals, including orphans and vulnerable children; and to fully integrate food and nutrition support in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs carried out under this act.

I would like to emphasize that the committee and I personally share our colleagues' concerns about the negative effect rising costs are having on our long-term and emergency food aid programs. This is a matter that has our most serious attention, because it affects a wide array of our food aid and development programs, including the effectiveness and success of this program.

I want to reassure my colleagues that I will be working over the coming weeks to strengthen and clarify in the bill that food security and nutrition programs, especially those referred to as wrap-around services, are not to be funded with monies diverted from other standing commitments to address food and security elsewhere in the world or in these countries.

I yield 30 seconds' additional time to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank the chairman for that assurance. I know that many Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle stand ready to support him in these efforts.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. Many have described the crisis: HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria. These take countless lives every day, especially on the continent of Africa. These diseases devastate families, they devastate communities, and nations. This bill is titled the ''Leadership Act,'' and it is titled that way because it honors two former Foreign Affairs Committee chairmen who indeed did show leadership in forging this legislation 5 years ago. And, with this act, the United States will continue to lead in tackling these killer diseases.

As others have said, this legislation did not come together easily; and the reason it is difficult is because many people have strong views on how best to fight these diseases. This bill is a compromise. It would have been far easier to hold onto positions, probably, but that would have gotten no bill. But, instead, those working on it did the hard work to craft a policy that most everyone could support.

□ 1245

Frankly, had it not been done, it would have been a sharp rebuke to the work Chairman Hyde and Mr. Lantos did 5 years ago. Tens of millions of people around the world would have lost, and America would have lost. That we are in this position now, to continue these two men's legacy, is due to the dedication of Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN. I particularly appreciate their inclusion of a provision I had recommended prohibiting foreign countries, foreign governments, from taxing our aid, and I thank them for that provision.

While endorsing the policy, the bill's authorization level is a great concern, as others have expressed. I have conferred with enough people working in the field and been in enough African countries to doubt the ability to productively absorb this very large funding level, which is well over the administration's request.

And while these are devastating diseases, these countries face many other public challenges, some deadly, which may be shortchanged. Our country has many public health needs, too. That leads me to believe that this would be a better bill if it conformed more closely with the level the administration, which has gotten real results, thinks it could best spend.

I believe this bill's authorization level will be addressed in our recommittal motion which will be offered for a vote before this House.

So again, I thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, and a key architect of this legislation.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, let me begin by commending Chairman BERMAN of the committee for bringing forth this tremendous, important legislation, and for the support in this bipartisan effort from Ranking Member

ROS-LEHTINEN, and for her support of this very important legislation.

I rise in strong support of the legislation currently under consideration. I am very pleased to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

This bill is appropriately named because it was under the leadership of the late Henry Hyde, then chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, that the PEPFAR legislation was originally authorized. And under the leadership of the late Tom Lantos, reauthorization began. Both of these tireless giants who have left us should be remembered by this legislation. I might also note that under the leadership of the original authorization, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE and the Congressional Black Caucus were very strong advocates to push the leadership of the House and the President to consider this very important legislation.

In the 5 years, there has certainly been a pandemic that the world is facing, and there has not been a pandemic similar to this since the plague during medieval days in Europe. So I am pleased that we are finally dealing with this pandemic in the way that it should be.

In the 5 years since Congress passed the original legislation authorizing the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, as it is well known, it has become an historic program. In my opinion, this will be remembered as the single most significant achievement of President Bush's two terms in office.

And from my recent conversations with the President, I know that he has worked very hard on this reauthorization, and it is with the support of the White House and the staff, they helped us craft this bipartisan legislation.

Prior to PEPFAR, the United States did very little in supporting AIDS treatment programs abroad. In fact, Members may recall a high-ranking USAID official said that treatment was not feasible in Africa, the most heavily AIDS-infected region of the world, because Africans cannot tell time and therefore would not be able to take the required medication properly. As we know, it was foolish to say that at the time; and as we have seen the results, it has proven once again to have been a foolish statement.

These officials advocated limiting our activities only to education and prevention, a position that would have in effect sentenced millions of HIV-infected men, women and children to die if it were only that program. And so I am very pleased we expanded it to where it is today.

Fortunately, the Congress and the President did not agree with that position. And because we were willing to find a way to provide treatment for over 800,000 people, today they are receiving antiretroviral medication to prevent AIDS in the 15 focus countries, 12 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.

We are also pleased that we are increasing the number of countries to the 14 Caribbean countries. And as cochair of the bipartisan Caribbean Caucus, and under the leadership of Representative DONNA CHRISTENSEN, at a meeting she convened in her district, we had health ministers admit that the Caribbean also needed substantial help.

Our progress, while significant, is not enough. Only 28 percent of Africans needing antiretrovirals are receiving them. Shockingly, over 85 percent of African children who need ARVs are going without them. A mere 11 percent of HIV-positive women who need drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV during child birth are getting them.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. PAYNE. In light of these troubling facts, we have taken steps in this legislation to transform PEPFAR from an emergency response to a sustainable program by expanding the program beyond a series of medical interventions. For example, the committee incorporated the provision that I discussed earlier about food security into the legislation in order to address the nutritional needs of HIV patients, their families, and communities heavily affected by the disease.

Lack of food and nutrition support has been, up to now, a major impediment to the adherence of HIV/AIDS treatment regimens.

H.R. 5501 also contains provisions to build and strengthen health systems in developing countries. The committee has given the Office of Global AIDS Coordinator the flexibility to do prevention, care and treatment programs tailored to the characteristics of the epidemic in the country in which they are operating by eliminating cumbersome earmarks that the GAO said were ineffective.

Finally, the bill authorizes significant funds, $50 billion over the next 5 years, in order to accomplish the goals of the bill. I urge the House to pass this legislation.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I am proud to yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, who has worked so long and so hard on this topic.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, an admittedly long, but appropriate title for a bill that is long on substance, meaningful intervention, tangible compassion, and relief.

Aptly named for two of the giants of this institution who helped shepherd President George W. Bush's PEPFAR initiative through the Congress in 2003, H.R. 5501 will literally mean the difference between life and death to millions, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

The bill before us today is consensus legislation, a delicate balance that if kept intact, and only if kept intact, will be signed into law. So I want to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN and other Members and staff for helping to forge today's PEPFAR consensus. I want to especially thank Sheri Rickert, Mary Noonan, Autumn Fredericks, Yleem Poblete, Peter Yeo, Pearl Alice Marsh, Dr. Bob King, Kristin Wells, and David Abramowitz for their extraordinary work in drafting this legislation.

Madam Chairman, as Members know, close to 70 percent of the estimated 33 million people with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. Of the 2.5 million children afflicted with this dreaded disease, 90 percent live in Africa as well.

When combined with opportunistic infections like tuberculosis—the number one killer of individuals with HIV—and malaria alone kills one million each year, again mostly in Africa—the HIV/AIDS pandemic compares among humanity's worst. Former Chairman Hyde frequently compared the sickness to the bubonic plague—the black death—an epidemic that claimed the lives of over 25 million people in Europe during the mid-1300s.

I know some Members are likely to wince at the cost of the bill—$50 billion over 5 years for PEPFAR, the Global Fund, Tuberculosis, and Malaria—but that sum of money will be used to prevent 12 million new HIV infections worldwide, and support treatment for 3 million people, including an estimated 450,000 children. That sum of money will provide care to 12 million individuals with HIV/AIDS, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children, and will help train and deploy at least 140,000 new health care professionals and workers for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care.

On the prevention side, the legislation requires that the Global AIDS Coordinator provide balanced funding for sexual transmission prevention including abstinence, delay of sexual debut, monogamy, fidelity, and partner reduction. If less than 50 percent of the sexual transmission prevention moneys are spent on the Abstinence and the Be Faithful parts of the ABC model, the coordinator must provide a written justification. I note that currently, the coordinator exercises waiver authority in this regard without notifying Congress so this language ensures greater transparency and accountability.

Five years, Madam Chairman, after PEPFAR first began, the efficacy and importance of promoting abstinence and be faithful initiatives have been demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt, and the evidence is compelling.

According to joint comments by the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and

HHS on PEPFAR, ''Congressional directives have helped focus U.S. Government prevention strategies to be evidence based. Because of the data, ABC is now recognized as the most effective strategy to prevent HIV in generalized epidemics.

□ 1300

The original legislation's emphasis on AB activities has been an important factor in the fundamental and needed shift in U.S. government prevention strategies from a primarily ''C'' approach prior to PEPFAR to a balanced ABC strategy. The Emergency Plan developed a more holistic and equitable strategy, one that reflects the growing body of data that validates ABC behavioral change.

The U.S. government report goes on to say that recent data from Zimbabwe and Kenya mirrors the earlier successes of Uganda's ABC approach to preventing HIV. These three countries, with what is known as ''generalized epidemics,'' have demonstrated reductions in HIV prevalence. And in each country, the data point to significant AB, abstinence, be faithful; behavioral change; and modest, but important, changes to C.

So, I want to thank Mr. PITTS for writing the original AB earmark into the original law because it has instructed and has had a tremendously positive impact.

I would note to my colleagues that this past September the Foreign Affairs Committee heard from a world renowned expert, Dr. Norman Hearst, who said that 5 years ago he had been commissioned by U.N. AIDS to conduct a technical review of how well condoms had worked for AIDS prevention in the developing world. And he said, and I quote in part, ''my associates and I collected mountains of data, and here is what we found: When we looked for evidence of public health impact for condoms in generalized epidemics, to our surprise we couldn't find anything. No generalized HIV epidemic has ever been rolled back by a prevention strategy primarily based on condoms. Instead, a few successes in turning around generalized epidemics, such as Uganda, were achieved not through condoms, but by getting people to change their sexual behavior.''

He goes on to say that these are not just our conclusions. A recent consensus statement in the Lancet was endorsed by 150 AIDS experts, including Nobel Laureates, the President of Uganda, and officials of the most prominent international AIDS organizations. And it said, ''the priority for adults should be, B, limiting one's partners. The priority for young people should be A, not starting sexual activity too soon.'' And this contrasted with other funders that often officially endorse ABC, but in practice continue to put their money in the same old strategies that have been unsuccessful in Africa for the past 15 years.

A Washington Post article by Craig Timberg noted that ''men and women in Botswana continued to contract HIV faster than almost anyone else on Earth. Researchers increasingly attribute the resilience of HIV in Botswana, and in southern Africa generally, to the high incidence of multiple sexual relationships.''

''Researchers increasingly agree,'' and please, I ask my colleagues to take note of this, ''that curbing behavior is key to slowing the spread of AIDS in Africa.'' In a July report, southern African AIDS experts said that reducing multiple and concurrent partnerships was their first priority for stopping the spread.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chair, I yield 3 additional minutes to the gentleman.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Thank you.

Madam Chairman, the legislation before us also leaves intact the anti-prostitution/sex tracking pledge, a policy designed to ensure that pimps and brothel owners don't become, via an NGO that supports such exploitation, U.S. government partners.

Last February, the U.S. Government Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld the prostitution pledge and said, in pertinent part, ''In this case, the government's objective is to eradicate HIV/AIDS. One of the means of accomplishing this objective is for the U.S. to speak out against legalizing prostitution in other countries.''

The Court of Appeals goes on to say, ''it would make little sense for the government to provide billions of dollars to encourage the reduction of HIV/AIDS behavioral risks, including prostitution and sex trafficking, and yet to engage as partners in this effort organizations that are neutral towards or even actively promote the same practices sought to be eradicated.''

Finally, we've come a long way, Madam Chairman, since 2003, when significant opposition materialized against an amendment that I had offered to ensure that faith-based providers, and others, are not excluded from participation. Worldwide, but especially in Africa, faith-based organizations are absolutely critical in the fight against AIDS. So, we welcome and are deeply grateful for their support and their work.

The conscience clause in H.R. 5501 restates, improves, and expands conscience protection in a way that ensures that organizations like the Catholic Relief Services, with its 250 plus projects in 52 countries, which has had a remarkable record on HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care, are not discriminated against or in any way precluded from receiving public funds.

Madam Chairman, this bill is carefully crafted, and again, I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the enormous amount of work that has been poured into its creation.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. And remember, this is a bill about HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. He played a major role in the tuberculosis section of the bill, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. I thank our distinguished chairman for yielding to me.

Madam Chairman, I'm proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, named after our dearly departed two great House Foreign Affairs Committee chairmen that I had the pleasure of serving under, Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose a major threat to the health of the global community, from the most severely affected regions of sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, as the chairman mentioned, I'm the chairman of the Subcommittee of the Western Hemisphere, to the emerging epidemics of eastern Europe, central Asia, south and southeast Asia, and Latin America.

I also want to take this time to pay tribute to our colleague who is in the Chamber, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), who has worked so hard in combating global AIDS, probably harder than anyone else in the Congress. I'm delighted that she's here, and her hard work has not gone unnoticed.

While most widely recognized for reviewing our commitment to global AIDS relief, H.R. 5501 reauthorizes provisions on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, all deadly diseases of poverty. The Lantos-Hyde Act is a decisive step forward for global health, particularly for our efforts to control tuberculosis.

I want to take a moment to specifically address the tuberculosis provisions included, as the chairman mentioned, as my bill H.R. 1567, the Stop TB Now Act which passed the floor earlier this year, was largely incorporated into this bill, and I'm delighted about that.

The World Health Organization reports that 1.5 million people died of tuberculosis in 2006, with another 200,000 dying from HIV-associated tuberculosis. The multi-drug resistant and extensively drug resistant TB, known as MDR and XDR, poses a grave risk to global health. A contagious airborne disease, TB knows no barriers or borders and can only be successfully controlled in the United States by controlling it overseas.

This Lantos-Hyde Act declares TB control a major objective of U.S. foreign assistance programs. In support of WHO targets, the bill prioritizes halving TB deaths and disease, cutting them in half, and achieving a 70 percent detection rate and an 85 percent cure rate by 2015.

The Lantos-Hyde Act prioritizes the Stop TB Partnership's strategy, which includes expansion of the successful treatment regimen for standard TB, treatment for individuals infected with both TB and HIV, treatment for individuals with drug-resistant TB, and enabling research and development of new tools.

Recognizing the deadly synergy between TB, an opportunistic infection, and HIV, the Lantos-Hyde Act authorizes assistance to strengthen the coordination of HIV/AIDS and TB programs. TB is the leading killer of people with HIV/AIDS.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. May I ask for an additional minute?

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. ENGEL. And the explosion of drug-resistant TB in sub-Saharan Africa threatens to halt and roll back our progress in combating both diseases.

The legislation supports key TB-HIV activities, such as providing AIDS patients with TB screening and treatment, and providing TB patients with proper counseling, testing and treatment for HIV/AIDS.

Finally, the legislation authorizes assistance for the development of new vaccines for TB. The current TB vaccine is more than 85 years old and is unreliable against pulmonary TB, which accounts for most of the worldwide disease burden. New TB vaccines have the potential to save millions of lives and would lead to substantial cost savings.

Studies modelling the 10-year economic benefits of a vaccine that is 75 percent effective have estimated worldwide savings in medical costs of $25 billion or more.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill. This is a very, very important bill.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, before yielding to my distinguished colleague from Illinois, I would like to recognize the efforts of Yleem Poblete, our staff director on the GOP side, Mark Gage, Joan Condon, Sarah Kiko of our committee staff, they have all been working so hard, and our detailee, a valuable addition to our PEPFAR team, Ben Snyder. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard.

Madam Chairman, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), an esteemed member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong support for the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act. I want to commend the current leadership of the committee, the bipartisan leadership, Mr. BERMAN and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for their leadership in moving this legislation to the floor in a bipartisan way. And it's most appropriate that it be named after Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde, two distinguished chairmen of the International and Foreign Relations Committees that changed names, but one thing that was in common between Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde was they always worked to ensure that foreign policy should be a bipartisan product and a team effort. So, it is so appropriate that they be recognized by naming this legislation after them, which reauthorizes President Bush's emergency plans for AIDS relief.

As noted by a number of my colleagues, almost 33 million citizens of this planet today suffer from the consequences of HIV/AIDS. We have a moral responsibility, and it's important that the United States exhibit and demonstrate moral leadership in addressing this crisis, which not only is a health issue, but it's a security issue for this globe.

I think we all watched the reception of President Bush when he traveled recently to Africa and the appreciation that was shown by the leadership in Africa for the President's initiative and the bipartisan support that we've seen in the effort against AIDS, and to help those who are victims of AIDS in Africa.

We often think of Africa when we talk about global AIDS, but of the 33 million, there are also many living in Latin America and the Caribbean who suffer from HIV/AIDS as well. In Latin America today there are 1,600,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, that's up from 1.3 million in 2001; and 58,000 citizens of Latin America have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS. In the Caribbean, 230,000 adults and children are currently known to be infected with HIV/AIDS. That's up from 190,000 in 2001. In the Caribbean, 11,000 citizens of the Caribbean have lost their lives.

I note we've made some progress as a result of the President's initiative for AIDS relief. In Haiti alone, a large recipient of aid as a result of this initiative, almost 4 percent of the population of Haiti is infected with HIV/AIDS. Think about that, 190,000 people. And since 2004, thanks to this initiative, the number of people receiving care and support has grown from 30,000 to 125,000, and an anticipated 150,000 people will be reached this year because of this initiative. Haiti received almost $85 million from this program in the past year to address this crisis which affects many in the Caribbean.

The point is is that PEPFAR, as we know it, has allowed us to reach almost every person in Haiti struggling with HIV/AIDS. And, for example, the continued support is necessary to make sure we reach every person struggling with HIV/AIDS in the world, and that's why this extension is so important.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. May I ask for an additional 2 minutes?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. I would also like to share a couple other examples of the success of this initiative and how this funding is helping regular people and making a difference in Latin America.

Bolivia, a large nation the size of Texas with 9 million people, thanks to the PEPFAR initiative we're using data to combat HIV/AIDS. In fact, real-time data is helping Bolivian health officials carry out more HIV/AIDS prevention education, including HIV counseling and testing services. And according to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, prevalence rates in Bolivia's general population has remained at 1–10th of 1 percent, which is remarkable success compared to some of its neighbors.

In Central America, in the Republic of Honduras, beginning in February of 2005 the United States awarded its first set of grants through USAID to 10 local nongovernmental organizations working with 43 Honduran communities most impacted by HIV/AIDS.

□ 1315

In their first 7 months of implementation, the organization has reached over 27,000 at-risk individuals with behavioral change models. As part of the HIV prevention efforts, the group began offering HIV counseling and testing, and the counseling and testing programs were the first in Honduras to be offered by those trained in accordance working with the Ministry of Health standards as part of a larger national prevention effort. And this collaboration between the government of the Honduras, USAID, indigenous organizations and the Ministry of Health has set this standard expanding access to testing in the Nation of Honduras.

The bottom line is, this program is making a difference in combating what is clearly a terrible crisis throughout the world, currently impacting 33 million citizens of this planet.

We have a moral obligation, and it's important that the United States continue to exert the leadership and demonstrate the leadership we have over the last few years to address the global AIDS crisis.

I urge bipartisan support.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I am very pleased to yield to my friend from California, someone who has been heavily invested in getting our attention on this issue and passing the legislation, putting, fashioning and passing the legislation in 2003 and again this time, our gentlelady from California, BARBARA LEE, for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5501.

And let me begin by thanking Chairman BERMAN, our ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, our subcommittee chair, Mr. PAYNE, also Chairman WAXMAN, Mr. SMITH, ranking member of the subcommittee, and all who have helped to make this legislation an amazing piece of legislation. And I know that Chairman Lantos and Chairman Hyde

want to thank us and are here with us honoring their legacy because they would want to see this move forward as it is today.

As one the five original co-authors of both the initial legislation establishing PEPFAR and of this new bill reauthorizing PEPFAR, I am pleased that we are moving forward. And again, I have to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN for making sure that this legislation is really in the spirit of the bipartisan cooperation that we have moved forward with in the past.

There's no other piece of legislation that we will consider in Congress this year that will have the greatest impact on the lives of people around the world. Like many, I have witnessed firsthand many times the dramatic and positive impact of our AIDS programs on individuals and communities throughout the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. But it wasn't always this way.

Now, 10 years ago, actually, when I first came to Congress, I think it was 10 years in April, the world really had not recognized the devastating toll that HIV and AIDS were beginning to take on families and communities throughout Africa. Since that time, however, we have worked together on a bipartisan basis on a number of very important legislative initiatives that have put the United States on the right side of history when it comes to this global pandemic.

First, in 2000, we passed and President Clinton signed into law, H.R. 3519, the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act. Now this important bill was a vision inspired by an idea by our former colleague and our friend, former Congressman, now Mayor Ron Dellums of Oakland, California to establish an AIDS Marshall plan in Africa, for Africa, funded through a World Bank AIDS Trust Fund.

With the help and leadership of our former colleague, Congressman Jim Leach of Iowa, we turned this idea into legislation which provided the founding contribution and the framework for what we know today as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

In 2001, working with both former Chairmen Hyde and Lantos, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SMITH, we drafted H.R. 2069, which was called the Global Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention, Awareness, Education and Treatment Act. This was the first bill that dared to provide large scale antiretroviral therapy to people living in the developing world.

Although we made progress in advancing this legislation through Congress in 2001 and 2002, we weren't able to reach a conference agreement with the Senate before the 107th Congress. Thankfully, however, our discussions would lay the foundation for quick action in the next Congress.

So at the end of 2002, the Congressional Black Caucus, along with practically every advocacy group in the United States, sent a letter to President Bush urging him to set up and create a presidential initiative on AIDS especially for sub-Saharan Africa.

In January of 2003, the President took up our cause, understanding the growing sense of urgency that had been building for years. His promise of $15 billion during his State of the Union address provided the impetus that we needed to pass H.R. 1298, the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act of 2003, which created PEPFAR.

In 2005, we took yet another step forward when we recognized that our foreign assistance programs did not adequately address the needs of children orphaned or made vulnerable by AIDS. So, working again with former Chairman Hyde and Chairman Lantos, we passed, and the President signed H.R. 1409, the Assistance for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act.

So, Madam Chairman, I lay out some of the history of our work on this important issue because it speaks volumes about what is possible when we come together in the spirit of bipartisan compromise as we honor the great legacy of both Chairman Lantos and Chairman Hyde through this legislation. Chairman Lantos, I know, very much wanted to reach a bipartisan compromise on this bill, as did Chairman Hyde. I'm saddened that both of them are not with us to witness this moment. But I know that they are very pleased with what we have put together today.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Ms. LEE. May I have an additional minute, please?

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentlelady an additional 2 minutes.

Ms. LEE. As a former member of the staff here on Capitol Hill for 11 years, I have to mention some of our staff members' names particularly because they did a phenomenal job in this. Dr. Pearl Alice Marsh, of course, Kristin Wells, David Abramowitz, Peter Yeo, Bob King, Yleem Poblete, Mark Gage, Joan Condon, Heather Flynn, Sheri Rickert, Naomi Seiler, Jessica Boyer, and of course Christos Tsentas of my staff. These staff members and other members, they deserved, their work deserves really to be applauded because this was not just work as a professional on the Hill. This is part of their life's work and I have to thank them again for their diligence and their competence.

This is a bipartisan compromise, so there were things that we had to give up and things that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle had to give up, but that's what compromise is all about.

Let me just mention a few of the items that were included in this bill. Of course it included language taken from my bill, H.R. 1713, the PATHWAY Act, to strike the 33 percent abstinence-until-marriage and provide a comprehensive prevention strategy to address the needs of women and children.

It also includes language taken from my bill, H.R. 3812, the African Health Capacity and Investment Act, to build health capacity by recruiting, training and retaining health professionals and strengthen health systems.

Now, of course there's still some issues I think need to be addressed which aren't in this bill. I think we should eliminate the prostitution pledge, which violates the first amendment and poses an unnecessary barrier to organizations that work with sex workers.

I think we need to recognize the public health benefits of linking our HIV and AIDS programs with family planning services by eliminating ideological restrictions imposed by the global gag rule.

I think we need to end the unjust and discriminatory travel and immigration ban on people living with HIV and AIDS who wish to enter into the United States.

So these are not impossible goals. In addition, we should fully fund the recruitment, training and retention programs for health professionals with a focus on training doctors and nurses to build health capacity and strengthen health care systems. So I hope that we can do this as we move forward.

Let me again thank the chairman for his leadership in addressing the greatest humanitarian, national security and public health crisis of our time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana, Congressman PENCE, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia, who spoke so eloquently during the committee markup on the need for this bill. 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the ranking member for yielding.

I rise in support of the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

The Bible tells us to whom much is given much is expected. And I believe the United States has a moral obligation to lead the world in confronting the pandemic of HIV/AIDS.

The dimensions of this crisis are truly staggering. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has infected more than 60 million people worldwide. It has killed more than 25 million, a number which grows grievously every day by more than 8,500. HIV/AIDS has orphaned some 14 million children. And today, 70 percent of the people in the world with HIV/AIDS reside in Africa. Within that continent, there are entire countries where more than one-third of the adult population is infected.

More startlingly, if current infection rates continue, new epicenters for the disease are likely to arise out of India,

China, Eastern Europe with numbers that could surpass Africa in a few short years.

And the threat this pandemic poses to our security is also real. Left unaddressed, this plague will continue to undermine the stability of nations throughout the two-thirds world, leaving behind collapsing economies and tragedy and desperation, a breeding ground for extremist violence. This is truly a global crisis. And because the United States can render timely assistance, I believe we must.

Originally titled the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR put the world on notice that America will not ignore despair, desperation and disease. I am proud to have supported the original passage of PEPFAR in 2003, and I'm proud to support it today.

You know, every so often, in this place, we have the opportunity to do something for humanity and serve the American people, and this is such a time.

I thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their strong leadership. I commend my colleague, CHRIS SMITH in particular for his yeoman's work on carefully preserving the delicate balance of this legislation.

And I also would like to publicly acknowledge the work of our President, George W. Bush. Mr. President, because of your moral leadership and compassion, Africa will never be the same, and history will record your work.

This Global AIDS bill seeks to address the crisis, not by providing medicine and health care to those in need, but also by providing resources for evidence based programs that have been successful in preventing infection. It's imperative, I believe, that we not only send our resources, but we also send them in a manner that is consistent with our values. We cannot send billions of dollars to Africa without sending value-based safeguards and techniques that work to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS by changing behavior.

Currently, within the Global AIDS bill, these pivotal provisions exist in the form of a requirement to ''provide balanced funding for prevention activities'' and to ensure that abstinence and faithfulness programs are ''implemented and funded in a meaningful and equitable way.''

It was essential that we preserve these prevention methods that focus on behavioral change, that we work with faith-based and nongovernmental organizations at the local level, particularly through the ABC model that has produced such undeniable results.

Also, it was absolutely critical that we administer this foreign aid under the historic pro-life guidelines that prevent our foreign aid from going in a direction that's antithetical to the values of millions of Americans. I'm pleased to say the Lantos/Hyde Global AIDS bill preserves all of these vital pro-family provisions.

As we tend to the suffering though, we always have to figure out how we're going to pay for it. The Federal budget, I believe, is packed with wasteful and bloated programs which could supply more than enough opportunities to cover the costs of the Lantos/Hyde Global AIDS bill.

□ 1330

This summer, Madam Chairman, when it comes time to fund this program during the appropriations process, I believe Congress should make the hard choices necessary to ensure that this global health crisis does not become a crisis of debt for our children and grandchildren. I believe it is possible to be responsible to our fiscal constraints while being obedient to our moral calling.

The greatest of all human rights is the right to live. America is a Nation of great wealth, wealth of resources, but more importantly, a wealth of compassion. The history of the world is filled with telling moments regarding the character of a people. Sometimes we are witness to mankind's great inhumanities; other times, we marvel at the beauty of mankind's selfless acts of compassion when we rise above politics and raise up those in dire need. Let this be such a day.

I urge my colleagues to support the Lantos/Hyde Global AIDS bill and its carefully crafted bipartisan compromise.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 liberal minute to the majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations to the chairman of the committee. He is an extraordinary individual whom I have known for four decades. He will do an excellent job. We lament the loss, however, of the two individuals for whom this bill is named.

I want to congratulate my good friend, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, as well for her leadership, and I want to associate myself generally with the remarks of the previous speaker. And I think it is emblematic of the partnership that we have, not only with the administration, but on both sides of the aisle as it relates to this moral, as well as health, issue, and I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Madam Chairman, 5 years ago, the United States made an unprecedented commitment to the people of the world who suffer from HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and other diseases. We pledged $15 billion, and with that funding, we have provided life-saving drugs to almost a million and a half people. We facilitated care for over 2 million orphans and vulnerable children and provided mother-to-child transmission prevention services during more than 6 million pregnancies.

We have played a very real role in helping to transform HIV from a death sentence to a manageable disease.

And, Madam Chairman, as I said 5 years ago when we first passed this legislation, we must recognize that our Nation and each one of us has a moral obligation and a national security interest, as has been spoken of, in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as malaria and tuberculosis.

Today, with this legislation, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act, we build on and increase our commitment to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Through this legislation, we make a $50 billion contribution to the fight to eradicate HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. In addition to expanding our prior efforts, this carefully negotiated legislation will strengthen HIV-related healthcare delivery systems and increase health workforce capacities; foster stronger relationships between HIV/AIDS initiatives and other support programs, including those that promote better nutrition and education; allow HIV/AIDS testing and counseling to be provided in the United States bilateral family planning programs, and it finances prevention and treatment programs targeting women and girls.

This bill, Madam Chairman, also eliminates an ineffective requirement: that one-third of PEPFAR prevention funds be spent on abstinence. Instead, we have directed the administration to create a balanced approach requiring behavioral change programs to receive 50 percent of the funds devoted to the prevention of sexual transmission of HIV, and in addition, we require the administration to report to Congress if programs in nations where the epidemic has become generalized do not adhere to this balanced approach. This legislation represents both commitment and compromise.

It will not make everyone happy, but it does signal to the international community that the United States recognizes and accepts our moral obligation to act.

Last year alone, 2.5 million people contracted HIV, roughly 6,800 people per day. Last year alone, 2.1 million people died of HIV. Global AIDS is a problem too large to fall prey to political sport.

My very good friend, the late Chairman Lantos, noted 5 years ago that this health care crisis ruins families, communities, and indeed, whole nations, fueling violence and bloodshed across borders. And thus, it is a global challenge that demands a global humanitarian response with the United States in the lead.

Madam Chairman, this is a very good bill. It builds on proven outcomes, and it deserves the support of the Members on both sides of the aisle.

And again, I congratulate Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN on their leadership on this effort.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for the

purpose of engaging in a colloquy with our chairman, Mr. BERMAN of California.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my good friend for yielding.

Madam Chairman, I would like to engage in a colloquy with my friend and colleague, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. BERMAN.

I would note there are two versions of the committee report for H.R. 5501 designated as part 1 and part 2. I wish to clarify that the definitive version that applies for purposes of the legislative history of this bill is part 2.

Is that the understanding of the chairman?

Mr. BERMAN. I appreciate the gentleman yielding, and the gentleman is absolutely correct. Part 2 of the report is the definitive report on the legislation being considered by the House today.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank the Chair for that clarification.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my colleague from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), the chairman of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of 5501 and to congratulate our new chairman of the International Relations Committee and to thank our chairman and to thank our Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN, and particularly congratulate the chairman of the Africa and Global Health Care Subcommittee for writing a bill that clearly reaffirms Congress' commitment to healthy communities, this time with the focus overseas.

As a member of the subcommittee, I'm especially pleased that this bill supports maternal health, orphans, and vulnerable children. Today, in Africa and throughout the world, children are losing their parents to the AIDS epidemic. These same kids will grow up too soon. They will be forced to become caregivers to their own siblings, leaving school, joining the underage workforce, praying that they are not the next in line for the graveyard.

In a world as prosperous as our own, Madam Chairman, it is absolutely unacceptable that this could be happening anywhere. But this bill actually continues our promise to rid the planet of this plague. This bill offers real hope. We invest in treatment, but most importantly, it works towards prevention.

Like many of my colleagues, I'm disappointed that conservative forces pushed to reduce the Reproductive Health Initiative, but the overall result will actually be remarkable. And most importantly, it will be life saving.

I encourage all of my colleagues to vote for H.R. 5501 to make this a better place to live in worldwide.

Mr. PAYNE. I recognize the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) for 2 minutes.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Chairman, I am proud to rise in support of H.R. 5501, properly named after our former Chairmen Lantos and Hyde, both of whom I had the honor to serve under on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

I also want to thank President Bush for reaffirming his commitment to Africa in his State of the Union but also to being open to improvements in how we deliver our support in Africa.

I want to also add my thanks to Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership in bringing this to the floor, but especially to Chairman BERMAN for his great instincts to reach out and craft an achievable and better bill in this Congress in this way.

Today, we have an opportunity to improve the way the U.S. funds and administers these HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria programs around the world. I believe that it is important to make real changes and real progress in reauthorizing this vital life-saving program.

In February, I had the opportunity to travel to Ethiopia and study and investigate the effectiveness of many of these programs. The positive effect that PEPFAR has had over the last several years is quite obvious: countless lives have been saved and numerous infections have been prevented.

I visited health clinics in rural Ethiopia, including PMTCT, family planning, and government-supported clinics. This bill makes important steps to not just increase funding but to have a more balanced approach to integrate prevention programs.

While I would have liked to have seen even greater integration in these programs with family planning and prevention programs, I'm pleased with the steps the bill does take and steps that are being taken in a bipartisan way that can help this be done sooner.

Mr. PAYNE. We will now have the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for 2 minutes, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Chairman, I rise in support of the bipartisan agreement that will reauthorize PEPFAR for an additional 5 years. I want to thank both the Chair of the committee, HOWARD BERMAN, the new and very capable chair of the committee, HOWARD BERMAN, as well as my long-time friend, the ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for their crafting of the legislation and in naming it the Tom Lantos/Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Reauthorization Act of 2008. And in so doing, I think it enhances the legacy of both of these fine gentlemen.

Let me say from the start, I support the strong program and will urge my colleagues to do the same. The first 5 years of PEPFAR have provided unprecedented prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS for millions around the world. By passing this bill we can, and we will, do more.

Through PEPFAR, the United States has spearheaded the global fight against HIV/AIDS by supporting services to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission. These services have helped women during more than 10 million pregnancies and led to the prevention of more than 150,000 infant infections. It has supported life-saving treatment for almost 1.5 million men, women, and children. In the focus countries, over 60 percent of those receiving treatment are women and girls.

It is my honor to say that I have supported this program when it was first introduced before this body, and I worked to ensure that PEPFAR was as effective and as efficient as possible. An example of this bipartisan effort was the inclusion of language, which I championed, to emphasize education on gender equality and respect for women and girls. The reauthorization act strengthens these provisions by calling for the empowerment of women and youth and by promoting changes in male behavior and attitudes that respect the human rights of women and youth and that support and foster gender equity.

□ 1345

However, let me be equally clear, this bill could do so much more and could prevent many more infections if it improved a critical partnership with these programs in the fields that have served women and their families for over four decades, and that is in the field of family planning providers.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, I yield an additional minute to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Chairman, the House version of the U.S. Global AIDS Act contains language suggesting that only family planning programs compliant with the global gag rule will be eligible to receive PEPFAR funds to provide HIV education, counseling, and testing. I believe that this would be a new restriction. No such requirement exists in current law or policy. And I believe if we are serious about preventing the most new infections, we need to put aside our political differences on the merits of the global gag rule and ensure that the very best in the field have the support of the U.S. to do what they need to do, and that is prevent the spreading of HIV/AIDS.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from the Ways and Means Committee, from the State of Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Chairman, we know what needs to be done. The PEPFAR reauthorization bill is it, and we're doing it.

This bipartisan bill not only reauthorizes PEPFAR but also dramatically strengthens the programs. H.R.

5501 elevates the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria from an emergency to sustainability. In so doing, we declare that HIV is no longer the death sentence that it was only 5 short years ago. We can hope and strive for a generation free of HIV and AIDS.

I want to thank the chairman and the subcommittee chairman for including provisions in the legislation that Representative GRANGER and I introduced, which strengthens the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. We must ensure that women and children have access to early screening and lifesaving drug therapies. We can do this by providing greater training and education on effective prevention. We also must ensure that they integrate these services with other maternal health efforts.

Every day more than 1,000 children around the world are infected with HIV. An estimated 90 percent of those infections occur in Africa. But a single dose of an antiretroviral drug given once to the mother at the onset of labor and once to the newborn during the first 3 days of life reduces transmission by 50 percent. Fewer than 10 percent of pregnant women with HIV in resource-poor countries have access to these prevention services. But I'm proud that this bill includes prevention provisions to strengthen our commitment to prevention and save lives in the process.

Perhaps the most important provisions are those that recognize the importance of expanding access to screening and treatment of women and children. H.R. 5501 also provides my provisions to establish two 5-year targets that will bring us closer to a generation free of HIV/AIDS.

The first goal is to increase the percentage of children receiving treatment under PEPFAR from 9 to 15 percent. Treatment allows the greatest hope for giving a child infected with HIV the chance to an adulthood free of the disease.

The second goal is for 80 percent of pregnant women in the most affected countries to receive HIV counseling and testing and, where necessary, antiretroviral treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

The biggest limitation on reaching these goals is the availability of trained personnel. This bill sets a goal of 140,000 people to be trained by 2015. In South Africa, where my wife is working on the ground in this epidemic, they are closing pediatric hospitals because there's no pediatrician to run them. Now, the 80 percent goal is a down payment on our hope of achieving 100 percent by the time this authorization expires.

We have a chance today to send a message that America cares enough to lead the world in fighting these deadly diseases. We should speak loud and clearly. The legislation gives more people the chance to be survivors instead of statistics.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill that strengthens our commitment to fighting the global HIV/AIDS/TB and malaria epidemic.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, it is my pleasure to yield to a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) for 2 minutes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act.

This legislation represents the best in bipartisan compromise, and it demonstrates that, despite what divides us from time to time as Republicans and Democrats, we can and do come together to tackle issues that matter most. And the global HIV/AIDS crisis matters deeply to all of us. Some 40 million people around the world are living with this disease. We have a moral imperative to act and to act decisively.

Just 5 years ago, an HIV diagnosis for a poor villager in Africa was a death sentence. Thanks to lifesaving drugs provided by the American people, this is no longer the case. The global AIDS program works, and it works because it is an initiative not of one political party or another. It is truly a compassionate statement by the American people, and I am very proud to support its reauthorization and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, I yield to the vice chairperson of the Subcommittee on Africa, a member, of course, of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) for 2 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Madam Chairman, I just returned from South Africa, and I did a single codel visiting the various clinics and hospices that are receiving PEPFAR funds. And I happily report that the small donations they do receive are stretched beyond imagination. They are finally realizing that the NGOs have really made great strides.

About 4 years ago, when we went offering them assistance and so on, most of our help was rejected. But I want you to know that one clinic, which is a hospice, gets $70,000 a year. And what they do is reach out to the NGOs in the area. There are volunteers from America there. They run an excellent facility, and you can see gradual progress.

I was told by our appointed ambassador that he was going to reduce the amount of donation by $50 million, and I cautioned him because that would be the wrong message to send for the small successes they have had and that what we can do is say to the government there that we will cap it at a certain amount and then you need to also kick in.

So I want to report to our committee and to Mr. PAYNE, the Chair, that the funds are working. They're improving our image, and they're helping to save lives in South Africa.

Thank you so much, Mr. PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, I thank Representative WATSON for her kind remarks.

Madam Chairman, at this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Africa Subcommittee (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 Chairman, there's a terminology that we use to describe joyous occasions. Sometimes it describes freedom. The Fisk Singers in Tennessee were called the Jubilee Singers, and it was because they organized around slavery and after slavery and the ability to be free with jubilation, and, therefore, they were called the Jubilee Singers.

I think today is a day of jubilation, and it certainly is a time to express the jubilation that we feel with the passage, or the intended passage, of this legislation.

Let me thank the chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. PAYNE, for persistence and determination and wisdom. Let me also acknowledge his ranking member, Mr. SMITH; and, of course, our chairman, Mr. BERMAN; and the ranking member of the full committee, Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for working with us.

But I do want to spend some time acknowledging that we have named this bill after the late former Chairman Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde. That is a jubilation. It is something to express great excitement about because these two distinct figures, in many instances with common views but many instances different views, came together around this lifesaving legislation, Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. And it is particularly important because we have added malaria and tuberculosis as an element that is not a partner but results thereof and/or stands alone, but all of them kill.

I am reminded of the first mission to Zimbabwe, to Zambia, and to South Africa, where we went on a Presidential mission, three Members of Congress, to look closely at the devastation of HIV/AIDS. It was in 1996/1997. And it was there that I saw a 4 year old taking care of a dying grandparent, the last person surviving who had tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. So this legislation is crucial, and it is particularly crucial because it recognizes the devastation of all of them.

It is likewise crucial because we have not won the war. The jubilation is that the bill is on the floor, but we have not won this war. And I might also say that we have not won the war in education, the ability to prevent all of these diseases.

So let me ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5501, The Global HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. I believe that the legislation we are considering today makes vital improvements to

what is already a groundbreaking program. I would like to thank Chairman BERMAN for his ongoing leadership on this issue, and for bringing this legislation to the floor today. I would also like to thank the Committee's Ranking Member, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, and my colleagues across the aisle, for working toward a compromise, to develop legislation of which we can all be proud. Today's legislation is a crucial step toward transforming PEPFAR from an emergency response to a sustainable program.

I would also like to thank both Chairman BERMAN and the Chairman of the Subcommittee on African and Global Health, Congressman PAYNE, for working with me to include important language in this legislation. My language, in Section 301 of this bill, addresses the necessity of making children a priority among individuals with HIV for proper food and nutritional support. Section 301, with my language included, states that it is the sense of Congress that ''for the purposes of determining which individuals infected with HIV should be provided with nutrition and food support—

(i) children with moderate or severe malnutrition, according to WHO standards, shall be given priority for such nutrition and food support; and

(ii) adults with a body mass index, BMI of 18.5 or less, or at the prevailing WHO-approved measurement for BMI, should be considered 'malnourished' and should be given priority for such nutrition and food support;''

Madam Chairman, as Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I believe that this language is crucial, and I thank the Chairman for including it in the text of the bill. HIV-infected children have been underrepresented among beneficiaries of PEPFAR-supported programs. As this legislation cites in the findings section, ''of those infected with HIV, 2.5 million are children under 15 who also account for 460,000 of the newly-infected individuals.'' And even these large numbers are deceiving, as children die much quicker from AIDS than do adults. UNICEF reports that every minute, a child dies from an AIDS-related illness, and only 1 child in 20 who needs HIV treatment receives it. I am pleased to see this language, which focuses attention on the plight of these children, and makes serving their needs a priority.

I am particularly pleased to support an amendment offered by my colleague Congressman CARSON. Representative CARSON's amendment would direct the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to expand their plan for strengthening health systems of host countries by allowing for postsecondary educational institutions, particularly in Africa, to collaborate with United States postsecondary educational institutions and specifically historically black colleges and universities. I believe that such educational exchanges would be extremely beneficial for students both in our own Nation and in developing nations. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment.

In addition, I am also pleased to support the amendment offered by my colleague Congressman BLUMENAUER. This amendment adds safe drinking water to nutrition and income security on the list of programs for which direct linkages are encouraged. People with HIV/AIDS are at increased risk for diarrheal diseases, and these illnesses leave HIV-infected patients with a reduced ability to absorb antiretroviral and other medications. The availability of safe drinking water must be part of any sustainable strategy of HIV prevention and treatment.

As this House is aware, it is estimated that HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, TB, and malaria together kill more than 6 million people each year. In January 2003, President Bush announced the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR. As its name implies, PEPFAR was envisioned as an emergency response; the bill before us today represents a crucial first step in the process of transitioning to a sustainable program to address these global epidemics.

Seventeen years after the first cases were diagnosed, AIDS remains the most relentless and indiscriminate killer of our time, with 39.5 million people worldwide now living with HIV or AIDS. Despite pouring billions and billions of private and Federal dollars into drug research and development to treat and ''manage'' infections, HIV strains persist as a global health threat by virtue of their complex life cycle and mutation rates. Of those infected, 24.7 million, or about 63 percent, live in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region with just 11 percent of the world's population. 61 percent of those infected in this region are women. Though Africa, and even more specifically African women, bears the brunt of the AIDS pandemic, Americans should be reminded that HIV/AIDS does not discriminate, with well over a million people in our own country currently living with HIV or AIDS.

Tragically, 6 percent of the 39.5 million people currently infected with HIV/AIDS are children under 15 years of age. In 2006, the virus killed 380,000 children (13 percent of all HIV/AIDS deaths), and 90 percent of all children living with HIV reside in sub-Saharan Africa. According to UNAIDS statistics from 2005, 1,500 children worldwide became newly infected with HIV every single day, due largely to inadequate access to drugs that prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child. Only 8 percent of pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries were offered services to prevent HIV transmission to their newborns.

Madam Chairman, HIV/AIDS continues to represent a serious and large-scale challenge throughout much of the world. It goes far beyond a simple health problem, and it hinders attempts to foster economic development and political stability. As we reauthorize PEPFAR, I believe it is crucial that we emphasize the long-term sustainability of our HIV efforts, and that we integrate AIDS prevention and treatment within our larger-scale development initiatives. I believe that the legislation before us today makes groundbreaking strides toward moving the Global HIV/AIDS program beyond emergency implementation and toward sustainability. It dramatically boosts HIV/AIDS programming related to women and girls, strengthens health systems in countries hardest-hit by the HIV virus, increases U.S. contributions to the Global Fund, and authorizes HIV/AIDS programs to include linkages to food, nutrition, education, and health care programs.

Though we have drugs that are effective in managing infections and reducing mortality by slowing the progression to AIDS in an individual, they do little to reduce disease prevalence and prevent new infections. For this reason, there is growing consensus among health experts that we must put greater emphasis on comprehensive prevention programs, which are perhaps the most critical aspect of any initiative to combat global HIV/AIDS. Even as increasing numbers of people have access to anti-retroviral drugs, ARVs, an estimated 5.1 million people who needed treatment did not receive it in 2006. In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of individuals needing treatment who actually received it rose substantially, from 2 percent in 2003 to 28 percent in 2006. This growth is impressive, and represents a significant step forward, but it also means that 72 percent of sub-Saharan Africans requiring treatment did not receive it.

Madam Chairman, despite our concerted efforts, we continue to face a serious and persistent health threat. I believe that it is imperative that we ensure that American taxpayer dollars are used to greatest effect, not to bolster ideology. This legislation makes important strides forward by removing elements of the original authorization that speak more to ideology than actual conditions in the field. Under the current law, one-third of all prevention funds under PEPFAR must be used on abstinence-only education, which neglects the real needs of populations both in America and abroad. These stipulations hurt the ability of PEPFAR to adapt its activities in accordance with local HIV transmission patterns, and they impair efforts to coordinate with national health plans. Though AIDS is clearly a global problem, it does not affect every nation equally or in the same manner.

Madam Chairman, I am extremely pleased that the legislation we are considering today removes these restrictive provisions, allowing PEPFAR to better address the requirements of each country, making more efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars in serving the millions affected by this disease. According to studies by both the Government Accountability Office and the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine, the abstinence-only earmark has forced a reduction in mother-to-child transmission programs, reduced prevention efforts with high-risk groups, and undermined efforts to implement Abstinence, Faithfulness, and Condoms, ABC, prevention programs.

Under the provisions of today's compromise legislation, the administration will be directed to promote a ''balanced'' prevention program in target countries. This will include all elements of the ABC approach to HIV prevention. The legislation will require that the administration report to Congress if behavioral change programs do not receive 50 percent of funds devoted to the prevention of sexual transmission of HIV in countries in which there is a generalized epidemic. I believe this language is extremely important, as it not only recognizes that HIV is transmitted in other ways, besides sexual activity, but it also acknowledges that the epidemic is not the same in every country. By requiring a report, rather than earmarking the expenditure of funds, this legislation provides guidance while still affording organizations working in the field the flexibility to respond to nuanced circumstances.

I am proud to be part of this Democratic Congress, which will produce legislation reauthorizing a Global HIV/AIDS program driven by facts, rather than ideology. The removal of the abstinence-only earmark will make this reauthorization legislation stronger than the original

2003 legislation that it will replace, and I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose any efforts that might attempt to reinstate it.

In addition, I believe it is crucial that we dedicate greater attention to strengthening local health infrastructure. Health experts have expressed concern that the high amount of spending directed toward HIV/AIDS initiatives has drawn health workers away from public health facilities and other important programs. This merely compounds a chronic shortage of qualified health workers, which, according to WHO's 2006 World Health Report, is the single most important health issue facing countries today. This need is felt particularly sharply in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Many health experts also continue to advocate greater integration between PEPFAR and other health programs, including those focused on nutrition, maternal and child heath, and other infectious diseases. These experts note that HIV is intricately linked to these other areas of concern; for example, malnutrition and lack of food may heighten exposure to HIV, raise the likelihood of engaging in risky behavior, increase susceptibility to infection, and complicate efforts to provide antiretroviral, ARV, medication. Further, an HIV epidemic will likely worsen food insecurity, by depleting the agricultural workforce. I believe it is necessary, to ensure maximum effectiveness, that we integrate PEPFAR with other aspects of our international health outreach and development programs. The legislation before us today does that.

Madam Chairman, while I recognize the importance of compromise, and I am glad we were able to reach an accord with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I am disappointed that the compromise text does not include a repeal of the language, known as the pledge requirement, requiring that all funding recipients to "have a policy explicitly opposing prostitution and sex trafficking."

Madam Chairman, the removal of the prostitution pledge was a critical facet of the bill we are considering today. The pledge currently restricts recipients' privately funded HIV prevention programs. No funds may be used to provide assistance to any group or organization that does not have a policy explicitly opposing prostitution and sex trafficking. Funding recipients must refrain from speech or conduct that is inconsistent with the Government's views on prostitution, even when they use private funds. Organizations must refrain from some effective HIV prevention strategies, for fear that the Government will view it as "pro-prostitution." A repeal of the prostitution pledge language would leave in place language ensuring that U.S. Government funds may not be used to "promote or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution and sex trafficking."

Madam Chairman, the prostitution pledge undermines prevention efforts targeting one of the populations most vulnerable to HIV transmission. Because high-risk populations such as sex workers are extremely marginalized, it is crucial that any intervention promotes a level of trust between sex workers and service providers. Failure to provide sex workers with information and services that will help them protect themselves and their partners from HIV transmission and other sexually-transmitted diseases also puts the broader community at risk. I am disappointed that this legislation does not remove this vague and counterproductive requirement.

This legislation also contains crucial provisions with regards to malaria and tuberculosis prevention and treatment. It incorporates H.R. 1567, the Stop Tuberculosis, TB, Now Act of 2007 sponsored by Congressman ENGEL, important legislation which I am proud to cosponsor. Today's legislation emphasizes the linkages between HIV/AIDS and TB, and it also creates new strategies for attacking MDR and XDR forms of drug-resistant TB. The bill also requires the President to develop a comprehensive 5-year strategy to combat malaria globally and strengthen United States leadership against this disease, and creates a new Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat Malaria Globally.

If we are to turn the tide of turmoil and tragedy that HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis cause to millions around the world, and hundreds of thousands right here in our backyard, it is imperative that we continue to fund and expand medical research and education and outreach programs. However, the only cure we currently have for HIV/AIDS is prevention. While we must continue efforts to develop advanced treatment options, it is crucial that those efforts are accompanied by dramatic increases in public health education and prevention measures. Investments in education, research and outreach programs continue to be a crucial part of tackling and eliminating this devastating disease.

As Americans, we have a strong history, through science and innovation, of detecting, conquering and defeating many illnesses. We must and we will continue to fight HIV/AIDS until the battle is won.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, at this time I am pleased to yield 1 minute to my colleague, my friend from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to sending $50 billion, $50 billion taken from the American people, to Africa to fight AIDS.

When it comes to this situation with AIDS in Africa, obviously, we have some people in crisis who are very deserving people. But where does that $50 billion come from? Are we going to be helping people overseas at the expense of the well-being of our own people?

There are only three ways of getting the money: We can take it from domestic programs, take it from those programs to help our own elderly and the health care for our own people, our own veterans; or we can raise taxes, which would knock the legs out from under our economy and make our deficit even higher; or we can borrow the money. And if we borrow the money, we end up spending hundreds of millions of dollars a year on interest. We're going to borrow $50 billion in order to help people overseas and then end up paying interest on it for the next umpteen years? This is benevolence gone wild.

Yes, we would like to help everybody in the world. But if we vote for this, it's the most irresponsible measure that I have ever seen in my term here in Congress for 20 years. We are taking directly from our veterans, from our elderly, and others to give $50 billion to Africa.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

Thus what we have to decided to is, are we going to deprive our own people, our seniors? I just came from a meeting with doctors from my district. We can't afford to provide health care for our seniors, for our veterans. We can't afford all the educational things we want to do. How can we possibly, then, take $50 billion and send it to Africa, even though it's a worthy cause?

We should not be doing this. It is not in the interests of the American people. And I would call on my colleagues to oppose this totally wasteful expenditure of money.

□ 1400

Mr. PAYNE. It is my pleasure to recognize the Speaker of the House for 1 minute, the gentlewoman from California, Speaker PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and recognize his extraordinary leadership on issues that relate to the alleviation of poverty and eradication of disease, which really are a national security interest for our country. They are about the health and well-being, the respect we command throughout the world.

I want to commend Chairman BERMAN. I think this is probably the first piece of legislation to come out of the committee under your leadership as chairman, and Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the ranking member of the committee, for their leadership in bringing a bipartisan, strong initiative to the floor. This initiative is a continuation of the work that President Bush has as a priority in the eradication of AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

For those of us who have been involved in these issues over the years, whether on the committees of authorization, and Congresswoman BARBARA LEE has been on the authorizing committee, and now on the appropriating committee; Congresswoman WATERS, in many ways in the House; and you, Madam Chairman, all of us know that for our country to be healthy, for the eradication of these diseases to take place, we must have a global approach to it. Disease knows no borders and boundaries. So, again, while it is the compassionate thing to do, it is in our self-interest to do as well.

The distinguished chair, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, and I, and others, just had the opportunity to visit a PEPFAR site in India at the Salvation Army, where they were distributing these drugs through a regimen, an organized regimen related to hygiene and the rest to people with HIV and AIDS. We can tell you from firsthand experience; I visited these

sites in south Africa, this trip was to India, that wherever we go, there is great appreciation for what our country is doing, and President Bush's leadership on this subject.

I am so pleased that the bill is named for Congressman Chairman Lantos, our friend who left us earlier this year, and Congressman Hyde before that, because they were the original authors of the first historic President's emergency plan for AIDS relief legislation in 2003. That landmark bill authorized $15 billion for 5 years. Working together with the Bush administration and Appropriations Committee, we succeeded in providing lifesaving antiretroviral treatment to almost 1.5 million people, supporting care for nearly 6.7 million people, including more than 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children; and supporting prevention of more than 150,000 infected infants. We are talking about AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Now we must take the next step in fighting AIDS in the poorest countries of the world. The legislation before us will move us from the emergency phase to the sustainability phase in fighting AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

My colleagues have presented the provisions of the bill to you, so I will just submit mine for the RECORD, Madam Chairman, and just say in closing that the leadership against HIV/AIDS is our compact with developing nations across the globe. It says that America stands with them in this fight, that our commitment will not waver, and shows them America's true face of passion.

Since the AIDS epidemic began, 20 million men, women, and children have died from the disease. Twenty million. Forty million around the globe are HIV positive. That is what we know. We don't even know of those who have not come forth to be tested. Each and every day, another 6,000 people become infected with HIV. In addition, the number of orphans, vulnerable children with sick parents and adolescents at risk with HIV continues to grow, with an estimated 19 million needing assistance by 2010.

There is a moral imperative to combat this epidemic. If we have these drugs distributed in the manner in which they are under the President's program, this PEPFAR, then people will come forward to be tested, then we will have better success with our prevention initiatives. So it's all related. Care causes people to say there is a reason to be tested, and knowing the consequences of the disease contributes to the prevention effort.

Few crises have called out for more sustained constructive American leadership. This legislation before us makes that commitment. I urge our colleagues to support it. Once again, I salute you, Mr. PAYNE, for your leadership in so many ways that relate to, again, the eradication of disease and the alleviation of poverty and the strength of America related to that and how we are viewed in the world and how that all contributes to a healthier America.

All of these, if we don't, we will have a fury of despair that springs from a lack of hope in the world that contributes to violence and, again, takes us back to the security of our country. So for that security, and out of compassion, I urge my colleagues to support this initiative, which is President's Bush's initiative, named for our colleagues, Mr. Lantos and Mr. Hyde, put forth by the chair, Mr. BERMAN, and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN in a strong bipartisan way, and we salute that, and advocated by Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

INTRODUCTION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I rise today in strong support of the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act.

I congratulate Chairman HOWARD BERMAN and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for their bipartisan efforts to fight HIV/AIDS and to help alleviate poverty and disease in the developing world.

PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AIDS

This legislation is appropriately named to honor the two authors of the first historic President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief legislation in 2003. That landmark bill authorized $15 billion over 5 years.

Working together with the Bush administration and the Appropriations Committee we succeeded in: providing lifesaving antiretroviral treatment to almost 1.5 million people; supporting care for nearly 6.7 million including more than 2.7 orphans and vulnerable children; and supporting prevention of more than 150,000 infant infections.

NEXT STEPS

Now we must take the next step in fighting AIDS in the poorest countries of the world.

The legislation before us today will move us from the emergency phase to the sustainability phase in fighting AIDS, TB and Malaria.

The legislation will: authorize $50 billion for the sustained commitment required to stop the global AIDS pandemic; dramatically strengthen health care delivery systems; encourage new and innovative ways to deliver the ABC prevention message; improve relationships with governments and NGOs; eliminate the requirement that one third of the funding be used for abstinence programs; improve services for women and girls and prevent violence against them; and build stronger linkages to health care and hunger initiatives.

CLOSE

The Leadership Against HIV/AIDS Act is our compact with developing nations across the globe. It says that America stands with them in this fight, that our commitment will not waver, and shows them America's true face of compassion.

Since the HIV/AIDS epidemic began, 20 million men, women, and children have died from the disease. Forty million around the globe are HIV-positive. Each and every day, another 6,000 people become infected with HIV.

In addition, the number of orphans, vulnerable children with sick parents, and adolescents at risk for HIV continues to grow, with an estimated 19 million needing assistance by 2010. There is a moral imperative to combat this epidemic.

Few crises have called out for more sustained, constructive America leadership. The legislation before us makes that commitment and I urge its adoption.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I would like to yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, sometimes when we are negotiating legislative text or debating the merits of an important bill, such as the one before us today, we can lose sight of the extent of the impact that our decisions here can have on the lives of so many.

I would like to quote from some of the African leaders whose people and societies have been rescued from certain death by our PEPFAR programs. The President of Tanzania has said the following, ''There would have been so many orphans to date. Had it not been for PEPFAR, the care and treatment, so many parents now who would have been infected can now live. And some of them can live as many years as possible. So can you imagine if this program is discontinued or disrupted? There would be so many people who would lose hope, and certainly there would be death. You create more orphans. So my passionate appeal is for PEPFAR to continue.''

Or listen to the words of the President of Botswana when he said, ''PEPFAR is now a critical partner in the historic and heroic battle to save lives. PEPFAR has turned despair into hope. PEPFAR has galvanized donor countries and agencies alike to act in concert in the interest of humanity. If the fund is not renewed and if it is not replenished, the momentum generated by PEPFAR thus far will no doubt be lost, and the hope rekindled by the generosity of the American people will be extinguished. I say this to you,'' said the President of Botswana, ''and that's what I said to the congressional committees recently.''

So, Madam Chairman, these and so many other statements reflect the human contribution of this critical United States program. But they also demonstrate that PEPFAR programs are helping to win hearts and minds throughout the world. They are building and strengthening the bonds between the governments and the people of these countries and the United States of America. They are building good will toward our Nation and toward the American people.

Madam Chairman, after the deplorable attacks on our Nation on that fateful day almost 7 years ago, we in this Chamber committed ourselves to using the range of U.S. foreign policy tools, including soft power, to counter the conditions that breed hatred, intolerance and radicalism; radicalism that targets the United States, our interests and our allies, and seeks to undermine our freedom and democracy everywhere. The bill before us is a vital tool in that effort.

Again, as our former colleague, our Ambassador to Tanzania has said, ''I

want you to know that PEPFAR is crucial to my current mission as Ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania. It is a tremendous public diplomacy tool that shows America at her best, a compassionate partner who is committed to helping Tanzania meet its enormous HIV/AIDS challenges.''

''I was asked to present remarks to the National Consultive Meeting of Islamic Leaders and Scholars here in Dar es Salaam,'' continues the Ambassador. ''This was a historic gathering, as it was the first time that the most esteemed Muslim leaders of Tanzania had gathered together to discuss their role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. They invited me to speak alongside the President because of their concern about HIV/AIDS and their awareness of America's historic contribution to HIV prevention, treatment and care programs.'' Why? Because of PEPFAR. ''So as we help to save lives and restore hope,'' the Ambassador ends, ''we are leaving a lasting impression on the people of this country.''

Madam Chairman, I hope that our colleagues will see the great merit of this program and that we will continue to build upon it to save many more lives.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague from California, the gentlelady, MAXINE WATERS.

MS. WATERS. Madam Chairman and Members, I am pleased and proud to be here today to commend not only Chairman BERMAN but the late Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde for their wisdom and their foresight in putting together this most important legislation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I just returned from south Africa and I am pleased to announce that while I was there, I was recognized and given the Order of the Companions of Oliver Tombo Award for my work to help dismantle apartheid in South Africa, and basically for being a friend of south Africa's. I was very proud.

But as I sat there talking with President Umbeke and others, I was reminded that in south Africa there is an estimated 5.5 million people living with HIV and AIDS. That is more than any other country in the world. Over 18 percent of the adult population of south Africa is infected by HIV. Infected persons include thousands of well-educated professionals, such as doctors, nurses, civil servants, and teachers.

In recognizing that we have done a great job in helping to promote democracy and get rid of apartheid, the enemy now is HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis. They are losing all of their professionals. They don't have the personnel to carry out the plan that they have put together to continue to move south Africa to where south Africa needs to be.

I was very proud that they had built 2.3 million new houses over the last 10 years. But, again, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS is destroying this population. This legislation will help this country and other countries. These are our friends. They love us. And they love us for having been involved in the struggle to help save them. These are countries that we will be able to count on in the world because we have come to their aid.

Let me also recognize that there were many Americans traveling in South Africa. Those Americans who were there are being served by people who live in areas where tuberculosis and HIV is rampant.

So we need this for protection and security of all peoples.

Mr. BERMAN. Might I inquire of the remaining time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California has 9 minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from Florida has 18 minutes remaining.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

We have no further requests for time. I would like to yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1415

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, we have no further requests for time. I would like to make a few closing comments, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is an accident of fate and hanging around a long time that put me in the position of managing this bill today, and it is the first bill not on the Suspension Calendar that has come out of the committee since I have become Chair. But the fact is the work on this legislation began a very long time before I became the Chair.

They have been mentioned before, but there are so many new initiatives and so much thoughtful logic underlying this legislation that I thought it would pay to once again mention a group of staff people who, working under the leadership of our staff director, Dr. Bob King, spent a huge amount of time working for Chairman Lantos, working with the minority staff, to craft what became a strong, bipartisan piece of legislation:

Peter Yeo; Pearl Alice Marsh; Kristin Wells; David Abramowitz; Macani Toungara; Heather Flynn from Chairman PAYNE's Africa Subcommittee; Christos Tsentas from Congresswoman BARBARA LEE's staff; Naomi Seiler and Jessica Boyer from the Government Oversight Committee staff, all played important roles on our side in working on this legislation. Yleem Poblette on the minority staff made major contributions.

The result is a bipartisan product where in a way we have internalized on our side the logic of efforts to change behavior and recognized the validity of abstinence programs in the context of a comprehensive approach to this problem and accepted the value of faith-based organizations, and the minority has accepted the logic that this is a fundamental, moral and humanitarian concern that we should address and be willing to put a lot of value to, because we know it works.

We know there is a direct relationship between the resources we put into this program and the lives saved, the people who can avoid and prevent it, and that it has implications beyond just the moral and humanitarian dimension, as Speaker PELOSI and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN said, in terms of security and economic welfare and economic growth in so many parts of the world, which ultimately all inure to our benefit and our national interest.

So, once again, I am very pleased to be part of this process with my partner, the ranking member.

Mr. SIRES. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. The passage of this bipartisan bill will continue Congress' commitment to the fight against HIV, T–B and malaria around the world. Currently, 95 percent of people with HIV live in the developing world, and I believe we must be leaders in combating the global AIDS crisis. H.R. 5501 would: dramatically boost HIV/AIDS programs for women and girls, strengthen health and education systems in nations hard-hit by the HIV virus, and provide funding for orphans and vulnerable children, as well as food and nutrition programs.

The World Health Organization estimates that over 38 million people are living with HIV/AIDS.

I believe H.R. 5501 provides needed funding and support to transition the very successful PEPFAR program, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill. Finally, I can think of no better way to honor our late chairman, Tom Lantos, and his predecessor, Henry Hyde, by naming this bill after them. Chairman Lantos was an inspiration to so many and spent his entire life fighting for those around the world that were less fortunate. His memory will live on through his wife, family, and the lives of those who are saved with this vital legislation.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Chairman, I want to commend the chairman and ranking member of the committee for their work in bringing such a strong reauthorization before us today.

In an op-ed that appeared in the Washington Post a few weeks ago, Michael Gerson wrote that in voting for this bill, members of Congress can participate in ''something extraordinary—a true miracle of science and conscience, and politics at its noblest.''

When the emergency plan for aids was first announced, there were approximately 50,000 people on AIDS drugs in sub-Saharan Africa. Today there are roughly 1.4 million, so I share Mr. Gerson's enthusiasm for this bill, and I am proud of the statement we will make as a Congress by passing it.

I am also extremely encouraged by provisions in the Senate bill that will play a key role in the development of safe and effective microbicides. I hope that in conference, the Committee will look at these microbicides provisions, which hold great promise to save the lives of millions of women as part of a comprehensive program to stem the spread of global AIDS.

I am so pleased to be able to lend my voice in support of this critical and imperative bill. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Chairman, I rise today to show my support for H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. This important bill will aim to address the devastating effects of AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis on our global community.

Numbers from the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS show that since AIDS was identified in 1981, about 65 million people have been infected with HIV and more than 30 million have died from AIDS. These numbers include the figures from 2005 that show more than 2 million of those living with HIV/AIDS were children and the daily infection of an estimated 1,500 children worldwide was due in large part to inadequate access to drugs that prevent the transmission from mother to child.

Additionally, programs within the Department of Health and Human Services account for 71 percent of the total amount spent, with the U.S. as the largest single contributor to the Global Fund, an independent foundation dedicated to disbursing new resources in developing countries aimed at combating AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

This bill will further these efforts that we started 5 years ago by raising the United States' contribution to $50 billion over the next 5 years. I am also encouraged that this bill will encourage the development of a TB vaccine.

The TB germ is constantly changing and drug resistant strains have been found in 28 countries on 6 continents, including right here in the United States, where it is estimated that 10 to 15 million people in the U.S. have latent TB. These drug resistant forms of TB have severe implications both internationally and domestically.

The World Health Organization recently released its new tuberculosis drug resistance surveillance report. The WHO found that the MDR and XDR strains of TB are at their highest levels ever. Both of these strains are far deadlier than normal TB, and are much more difficult and expensive to treat.

In fact, the Department of Homeland Security recently identified XDR–TB as an ''emerging threat to the homeland.'' For this reason, we need to devote resources to stopping this disease and developing a new vaccine is the first step. This is not a partisan issue.

Some of my colleagues might ask why an AIDS reauthorization bill should be the vehicle for doing this; there is a very simple reason. TB is the number one infectious killer among people living with HIV/AIDS, and accounts for up to half of HIV/AIDS deaths in some parts of Africa. If we do not address TB in a systematic way and work to develop a vaccine, then much of the progress that we have made on addressing HIV/AIDS globally will be undone.

Studies also show that the 10-year economic benefits of a TB vaccine that was only 75 percent effective could result in an estimated savings of $25 billion dollars. There is no denying that this is a significant amount. Our current TB vaccine, BCG, is more than 85 years old and is not compatible against pulmonary TB, which accounts for most TB cases.

This legislation is a good start in our critical battle against TB. Finally, I am happy to see that this bill will encourage public-private partnerships in combating these diseases. The Baylor Pediatric AIDS Initiative has been working in Africa for several years, and the government should work with this and similar programs to leverage the expertise that they can provide.

I support these strong health initiatives across the globe and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 5501, the Lantos-Hyde U.S. Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

The world has achieved more in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the past decade than it has since this deadly epidemic began nearly 30 years ago, due in no small part to the efforts of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), combined with Congressional enactment of the U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2003.

As a nation, we have provided care for more than 6 million HIV-infected individuals, including nearly 3 million orphans. We have prevented 150,000 infant infections by providing mother-to-child HIV transmission prevention services for more than 10 million pregnancies. And we have provided anti-retroviral drugs for nearly 1.5 million men, women, and children.

Yet in an era where 40 million men, women, and children are infected with HIV worldwide, and where infections continue at a rate of nearly 6,000 per day, U.S. global leadership on HIV/AIDS—as well as the associated diseases of TB and malaria—remains as important as ever.

I quote Stephen Lewis, the former United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa: ''the international community must now finally keep its word and mobilize for global AIDS treatment delivery . . . it is a moral imperative that global leaders and institutions keep their promises to scale up AIDS services with urgency and increased resources.''

I believe passage of H.R. 5501 displays our commitment to doing just that.

This legislation authorizes $50 billion over the next 5 years, including $41 billion for HIV/AIDS, $4 billion for tuberculosis, and $5 billion for malaria, and is designed to move these programs from the ''emergency'' phase, towards greater sustainability.

In particular, I am pleased to see a strengthened focus on the needs of women and girls, and prevention and treatment programs targeted towards this population—including, for the first time, the provision of HIV/AIDS testing and counseling services in family planning programs. I would note that concerns have been raised that the bill's language would block HIV testing and counseling services from being offered by family planning providers that are not compliant with the misguided ''global gag rule'' policy, and I hope that Congressional intent can be clarified that this is not the case.

I am also supportive of provisions that remove the requirement targeting one-third of prevention funding towards abstinence-only programs. Prevention programs must be evidence-based, rather than ideologically-based.

This legislation doubles, to $2 billion per year, the U.S. contribution to the multilateral Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The Global Fund, with its emphasis on stimulating a global commitment under an umbrella organization with a truly international AIDS budget, is the best chance the world has of combating this epidemic. I urge my colleagues and the President to ensure that these new authorization levels are fully funded.

Madam Chairman, I applaud the bipartisan work of the Foreign Affairs Committee, including its new Chairman, HOWARD BERMAN, and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. I also want to recognize and commemorate the leadership of our dear friend, Congressman Tom Lantos, whose commitment to the most vulnerable people worldwide continues to be felt through our work on HIV/AIDS. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5501.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairman, as one of the original cosponsors of this bill, I am proud of what it represents, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support it. This five-year reauthorization tells the world that the United States is truly committed to a sustainable global response to HIV, TB, and malaria.

The bill raises our financial commitment. It authorizes the strengthening of local health systems and the training of workers, including the doctors and nurses on whom the sustainability of this program will rely.

The bill also eliminates the onerous abstinence-only spending requirement. It replaces it with a provision directing country teams to tell Congress if they spend less than half of their funds for sexual transmission on behavior change programs. This is merely a reporting requirement, and should not be understood as a restriction on country spending.

I do want to acknowledge some concerns about the bill. Many would have liked to see stronger and more inclusive language encouraging linkages to reproductive health services. I would have liked to see such language too.

There is also concern about the current requirement that recipients sign an ''anti-prostitution pledge.'' People involved in sex work are very vulnerable to HIV infection, along with many other health and social risks. But what we hear from the field is that the pledge has had the unintended consequence of making groups shy away from effective outreach programs for sex workers. They are scared of running afoul of this broad oath requirement. I'm disappointed that we weren't able to eliminate it.

While I think we've got more work to do in certain areas, I'd like to take this opportunity to comment on several elements of the bill which I believe are vitally important.

First, despite the prostitution pledge, it is unambiguous that the intent of Congress is to direct close attention to the needs of sex workers and other marginalized groups. The bill specifically directs the provision of care, treatment, and prevention services to sex workers, injection drug users, and men who have sex with men. And it requires the development of strategies for providing evidence-based prevention services to each of these populations.

This bill also makes some important refinements to the treatment program. The expansion of antiretroviral services has been a huge success. But many people still lack needed treatment. Others require more expensive second-line therapy. And while significant progress has been made in the utilization of generic drugs, some U.S. dollars are still being used to buy brand-name drugs when lower-cost generics are available.

In light of these challenges, this bill instructs the AIDS coordinator to develop mechanisms for encouraging and facilitating the purchase of safe and effective drugs at the lowest possible price. The bill also requires the coordinator to report annually on the amounts paid for generic and branded antiretroviral drugs. And it requires that information on drug pricing be shared and updated routinely, so our partners can make purchases based on the best available information.

Finally, I'd like to note that this bill puts an important new emphasis on research. While we've learned much through this program, we haven't seen a coordinated research agenda to address questions about what works and what doesn't, especially in the area of prevention. This bill mandates a detailed strategic plan for program monitoring, operational research and impact evaluation research. It also requires a strategy for maximizing the capacity of host countries to conduct their own research.

But we should not let these developments make us complacent. The most basic, but often most pressing, health needs of the world's poor aren't being met. Children are still dying for lack of clean drinking water. Women face staggering rates of morbidity and death related to pregnancy and childbirth. And people across the world succumb to disability and death from treatable, and often preventable, illnesses.

As we pass this bill today, let's not forget these other pressing health problems. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 5501. And I hope that the lessons and successes of our global AIDS program inspire us to reinvigorate our commitment to a broader global health agenda.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong support of the critical bipartisan Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

We have a moral obligation to address the global pandemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It was 5 years ago that Congress took leadership to address this crisis. Today, because of Congress's actions, the United States has become the leading provider in the world of HIV/AIDS assistance, treatment, prevention and care.

AIDS continues to be the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa. The United Nations estimates that 33 million people are infected with HIV worldwide, with an estimated 22 million HIV-infected people in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 1.6 million deaths in sub-Saharan African resulted from AIDS in 2007. This legislation reaffirms our commitment to combating this deadly epidemic by reauthorizing the 2003 law and will give more flexibility to host governments in planning, directing, and managing prevention, treatment and care programs that have been established with our assistance.

I am pleased that the bill also includes a provision that authorizes funding for U.S. contributions to research and development of a tuberculosis vaccine. Tuberculosis is a deadly epidemic that faces our planet today. Nearly 2 million people die from it each year and approximately 9 million are diagnosed with tuberculosis annually. It is the largest killer of people with HIV/AIDS, accounting for one-third of AIDS deaths alone. The current tuberculosis vaccine is more than 85 years old and is unreliable against pulmonary tuberculosis. New tuberculosis vaccines have the potential to save millions of lives and would lead to substantial cost savings.

Madam Chairman, let us honor the spirit of the two men—Chairmen Lantos and Hyde—who guided the 2003 law through this body in bipartisan manner by passing this much needed legislation to combat these deadly diseases.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of this important bill. PEPFAR-funded programs have provided lifesaving assistance in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and I welcome any expansion of this assistance. Additionally, I am pleased that we have removed the ''hard earmark'' requiring 33% of all prevention funds be spent on abstinence-only until marriage programs. Studies by GAO and the Institutes of Medicine found that the one-third earmark undermines successful HIV prevention efforts by limiting flexibility in developing countries. However, I continue to be concerned about any funds being directed towards unproven, ineffective programs using the ''abstinence-only'' approach. I worry that the new ''balanced funding'' requirement may cause mission directors and public health officials to be anxious about doing what they think Congress wants, instead of what is needed in the field. Public health experts on the ground are the ones who can best determine the mix of prevention activities, especially since what works for one culture may be disastrous for another. Even in our own country, young people who take part in abstinence-only education are less likely to use condoms. With 15,000 new HIV infections every day, the need for additional resources is clearly tremendous, and I'm extremely supportive of the goals of this important legislation, and I continue to believe that our highest priority should be funding science-based, comprehensive efforts to prevent HIV.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chairman, I strongly support H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. This bill authorizes $50 billion over the next five years for international health programs, including $41 billion for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, $4 billion for tuberculosis programs, and $5 billion for malaria programs.

I just returned from South Africa, where I received the ''OR Tambo Award,'' from South African President Thabo Mbeki. I received this award because of my efforts to end the brutal system of apartheid in South Africa and to obtain the release of South African anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela from prison. Apartheid was dismantled and Nelson Mandela was elected President of South Africa in 1994, when South Africa held its first democratic elections.

I was very proud to receive the OR Tambo Award because I have always been and continue to be a friend to South Africa. However, in South Africa today, the enemy is HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that 5.5 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. That is more than any other country in the world. Over 18 percent of the adult population of South Africa is infected by HIV. Infected persons include thousands of well-educated professionals, such as doctors, nurses, civil servants and teachers.

Everywhere I went in South Africa, people told me about the terrible problem they have trying to fill professional positions. The shortage of educated professionals is a result of the fact that so many South African professionals have died of AIDS or are too sick to work.

The involvement of doctors, nurses, teachers, and other professionals is critical to stopping the spread of HIV and AIDS. That is why I am pleased that this bill includes provisions to strengthen the health care infrastructure in countries like South Africa and train at least 140,000 new health care professionals and workers for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. The bill also includes prevention funds to stop the spread of HIV and treatment funds to allow infected individuals to live productive lives and continue to serve their communities.

It is impossible to address HIV without also addressing tuberculosis. Almost 9 million people develop tuberculosis every year. At least 2.4 million are killed by the disease. According to the World Health Organization, HIV and tuberculosis form a lethal combination, each speeding the progress of the other. In the past 15 years, tuberculosis rates have doubled in Africa overall and tripled in areas with high HIV concentrations. In some areas of Africa, up to 80 percent of tuberculosis patients also test positive for HIV. This makes tuberculosis clinics an ideal location for HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill and help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in South Africa and around the world.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, H.R. 5501.

This important legislation reauthorizes and expands the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). I have long supported this bold initiative that has made the U.S. a leader in this critical health and moral issue of our time. PEPFAR has shown to the world our nation's vision and compassion in addressing this healthcare crisis.

Five years ago, an estimated 31 million people were living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, antiretroviral drug treatments were expensive, and approximately 8,200 people were infected with HIV/AIDS every day.

I have heard from a number of my constituents about their support for continued U.S. efforts to combat AIDS and the spread of HIV around the globe. It is obvious that Americans care. In the absence of a cure for AIDS, this worldwide epidemic continues to spread at an alarming rate.

That is why I am pleased that H.R. 5501 makes an important transition from emergency relief to the establishment of long-term and sustainable AIDS relief programs. The legislation also works to better integrate the tuberculosis and malaria programs with the HIV/AIDS programs. This is essential because in sub-Saharan Africa tuberculosis is the leading killer of individuals with HIV/AIDS.

Since the creation of this program, the United States has invested more than $19 billion to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. The results have been striking. By the end of 2007, the United States had helped provide anti-retroviral drug treatments to approximately 1.5 million people with AIDS, supported care for 6.6 million—including 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children—and

helped to prevent more than 157,000 infant infections.

H.R. 5501 greatly expands our efforts abroad by authorizing a total of $50 billion over five years. This total includes $41 billion for HIV/AIDS programs, $5 billion for malaria programs, and $4 billion for tuberculosis programs. This dramatic increase in funding will help partner countries continue to identify and meet targets for treatment and prevention. Additionally, the funding will help build and strengthen the existing health systems in host countries.

While I support the underlying bill, I do have some concern about one specific issue. I have long been concerned by the restrictions placed on how PEPFAR funds can be spent. I have opposed the requirement that one-third of the funds be spent on abstinence-only education because it has not proven to be a successful way to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. A report by the Government Accountability Office found that this restriction tied the local hands of public health workers.

I believe that PEPFAR funds should be spent on the most effective HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention strategies available. That is why I am pleased that H.R. 5501 removes the requirement that one-third of the funds be spent on abstinence education. As this bill works through the legislative process, I hope that any language in the bill that might be interpreted to limit funding to programs that are compliant with the global gag rule be removed.

Madam Chairman, our country has done more to end the spread of HIV/AIDS in the last five years than any nation in the history of the world. We must continue. This bill represents a reasonable expansion of our efforts and makes the important transition to permanent HIV/AIDS relief. I urge my colleagues to support this investment in the health of our global community and in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered read for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5501

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings.
Sec. 3. Definitions.
Sec. 4. Purpose.

TITLE I—POLICY PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Sec. 101. Development of a comprehensive, five-year, global strategy.
Sec. 102. HIV/AIDS Response Coordinator.

TITLE II—SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL FUNDS, PROGRAMS, AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Sec. 201. Sense of Congress on public-private partnerships.
Sec. 202. Participation in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
Sec. 203. Voluntary contributions to international vaccine funds.
Sec. 204. Program to facilitate availability of microbicides to prevent transmission of HIV and other diseases.
Sec. 205. Plan to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria by strengthening health policies and health systems of host countries.

TITLE III—BILATERAL EFFORTS

Subtitle A—General Assistance and Programs

Sec. 301. Assistance to combat HIV/AIDS.
Sec. 302. Assistance to combat tuberculosis.
Sec. 303. Assistance to combat malaria.
Sec. 304. Health care partnerships to combat HIV/AIDS.

Subtitle B—Assistance for Women, Children, and Families

Sec. 311. Policy and requirements.
Sec. 312. Annual reports on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the HIV infection.
Sec. 313. Strategy to prevent HIV infections among women and youth.
Sec. 314. Clerical amendment.

TITLE IV—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 401. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 402. Sense of Congress.
Sec. 403. Allocation of funds.
Sec. 404. Prohibition on taxation by foreign governments.

TITLE V—SUSTAINABILITY AND STRENGTHENING OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

Sec. 501. Sustainability and strengthening of health care systems.
Sec. 502. Clerical amendment.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Section 2 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(29) The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose a major threat to the health of the global community, from the most severely-affected regions of sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, to the emerging epidemics of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America.

''(30) According to UNAIDS' 2007 global estimates, there are 33.2 million individuals with HIV/AIDS worldwide, including 2.5 million people newly-infected with HIV. Of those infected with HIV, 2.5 million are children under 15 who also account for 460,000 of the newly-infected individuals.

''(31) Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. More than 68 percent of adults and nearly 90 percent of children with HIV/AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa, and more than 76 percent of AIDS deaths in 2007 occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

''(32) Although sub-Saharan Africa carries the heaviest disease burden of HIV/AIDS, the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to affect virtually every world region. While prevalence rates are relatively low in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America, without effective prevention strategies, HIV prevalence rates could rise quickly in these regions.

''(33) By world region, according to UNAIDS' 2007 global estimates—

''(A) in sub-Saharan Africa, there were 22.5 million adults and children infected with HIV, up from 20.9 million in 2001, with 1.7 million new HIV infections, a 5 percent prevalence rate, and 1.6 million deaths;

''(B) in South and Southeast Asia, there were 4 million adults and children infected with HIV, up from 3.5 million in 2001, with 340,000 new HIV infections, a 0.3 percent prevalence rate, and 270,000 deaths;

''(C) in East Asia, there were 800,000 adults and children infected with HIV, up from 420,000 in 2001, with 92,000 new HIV infections, a 0.1 percent prevalence rate, and 32,000 deaths;

''(D) in Eastern and Central Europe, there were 1.6 million adults and children infected with HIV, up from 630,000 in 2001, with 150,000 new HIV infections, a 0.9 percent prevalence rate, and 55,000 deaths; and

''(E) in the Caribbean, there were 230,000 adults and children infected with HIV, up from 190,000 in 2001, with 17,000 new HIV infections, a 1 percent prevalence rate, and 11,000 deaths.

''(34) Tuberculosis is the number one killer of individuals with HIV/AIDS and is responsible for up to one-half of HIV/AIDS deaths in Africa.

''(35) The wide extent of drug resistant tuberculosis, including both multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR–TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR–TB), driven by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa, has hampered both HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis treatment services. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the prevalence of tuberculosis to be at emergency levels in sub-Saharan Africa.

''(36) Forty percent of the world's population, mostly poor, live in malarial zones, and malaria, which is highly preventable, kills more than 1 million individuals worldwide each year. Ninety percent of malaria's victims are in sub-Saharan Africa and 70 percent of malaria's victims are children under the age of 5. Additionally, hunger and malnutrition kill another 6 million individuals worldwide each year.

''(37) Assistance to combat HIV/AIDS must address the nutritional factors associated with the disease in order to be effective and sustainable. The World Food Program estimates that 6.4 million individuals affected by HIV will need nutritional support by 2008.

''(38) Women and girls continue to be vulnerable to HIV, in large part, due to gender-based cultural norms that leave many women and girls powerless to negotiate social relationships.

''(39) Women make up 50 percent of individuals infected with HIV worldwide. In sub-Saharan Africa, where the HIV/AIDS epidemic is most severe, women make up 57 percent of individuals infected with HIV, and 75 percent of young people infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are young women ages 15 to 24.

''(40) Women and girls are biologically, socially, and economically more vulnerable to HIV infection. Gender disparities in the rate of HIV infection are the result of a number of factors, including the following:

''(A) Cross-generational sex with older men who are more likely to be infected with HIV, and a lack of choice regarding when and whom to marry, leading to early marriages and high rates of child marriages with older men. About one-half of all adolescent females in sub-Saharan Africa and two-thirds of adolescent females in Asia are married by age 18.

''(B) Studies show that married women and married and unmarried girls often are unable or find it difficult to negotiate the frequency and timing of sexual intercourse, ensure their partner's faithfulness, or insist on condom use. Under these circumstances, women often run the risk of being infected by husbands or male partners in societies where men in relationships have more than one partner. Behavior change is particularly important in societies in which this is a common practice.

''(C) Because young married women and girls are more likely to have unprotected sex and have more frequent sex than their unmarried peers, and women and girls who are faithful to their spouses can be placed at risk of HIV/AIDS through a husband's infidelity or prior infection, marriage is not always a guarantee against HIV infection, although it is a protective factor overall.

''(D) Social and economic inequalities based largely on gender limit access for women and girls to education and employment opportunities and prevent them from asserting their inheritance and property rights. For many women, a lack of independent economic means combines with socio-cultural practices to sustain and exacerbate their fear of abandonment, eviction, or ostracism from their homes and communities and can leave many more women trapped within relationships where they are vulnerable to HIV infection.

''(E) A lack of educational opportunities for women and girls is linked to younger sexual debut, earlier childhood marriage, earlier childbearing, decreased child survival, worsening nutrition, and increased risk of HIV infection.

''(F) High rates of gender-based violence, rape, and sexual coercion within and outside marriage contribute to high rates of HIV infection. According to the World Health Organization, between one-sixth and three-quarters of women in various countries and settings have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence since the age of 15 within or outside of marriage. Women who are unable to protect themselves from such violence are often unable to protect themselves from being infected with HIV through forced sexual contact.

''(G) Fear of domestic violence and the continuing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS prevent many women from accessing information about HIV/AIDS, getting tested, disclosing their HIV status, accessing services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, or receiving treatment and counseling even when they already know they have been infected with HIV.

''(H) According to UNAIDS, the vulnerability of individuals involved in commercial sex acts to HIV infection is heightened by stigmatization and marginalization, limited economic options, limited access to health, social, and legal services, limited access to information and prevention means, gender-related differences and inequalities, sexual exploitation and trafficking, harmful or non-protective laws and policies, and exposure to risks associated with commercial sex acts, such as violence, substance abuse, and increased mobility.

''(I) Lack of access to basic HIV prevention information and education and lack of coordination with existing primary health care to reduce stigma and maximize coverage.

''(J) Lack of access to currently available female-controlled HIV prevention methods, such as the female condom, and lack of training on proper use of either male or female condoms.

''(K) High rates of other sexually transmitted infections and complications during pregnancies and childbirth.

''(L) An absence of functioning legal frameworks to protect women and girls and, where such frameworks exist, the lack of accountable and effective enforcement of such frameworks.

''(41) In addition to vulnerabilities to HIV infection, women in sub-Saharan Africa face a 1-in-13 chance of dying in childbirth compared to a 1-in-16 chance in least-developed countries worldwide, a 1-in-60 chance in developing countries, and a 1-in-4,100 chance in developed countries.

''(42) Due to these high maternal mortality rates and high HIV prevalence rates in certain countries, special attention is needed in these countries to help HIV-positive women safely deliver healthy babies and save women's lives.

''(43) Unprotected sex within or outside of marriage is the single greatest factor in the transmission of HIV worldwide and is responsible for 80 percent of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa.

''(44) Multiple randomized controlled trials have established that male circumcision reduces a man's risk of contracting HIV by 60 percent or more. Twelve acceptability studies have found that in regions of sub-Saharan Africa where circumcision is not traditionally practiced, a majority of men want the procedure. Broader availability of male circumcision services could prevent millions of HIV infections not only in men but also in their female partners.

''(45)(A) Youth also face particular challenges in receiving services for HIV/AIDS.

''(B) Nearly one-half of all orphans who have lost one parent and two-thirds of those who have lost both parents are ages 12 to 17. These orphans are in particular need of services to protect themselves against sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV.

''(C) Research indicates that many youth benefit from full disclosure of medically accurate, age-appropriate information about abstinence, partner reduction, and condoms. Providing comprehensive information about HIV, including delay of sexual debut and the ABC model: 'Abstain, Be faithful, use Condoms', and linking such information to health care can help improve awareness of safe sex practices and address the fact that only 1 in 3 young men and 1 in 5 young women ages 15 to 24 can correctly identify ways to prevent HIV infection.

''(D) Surveys indicate that no country has succeeded in fully educating more than one-half of its youth about the prevention and transmission of HIV.

''(46) According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), HIV/AIDS prevalence rates among refugees are generally lower than the HIV/AIDS prevalence rates for their host communities, though perceptions run counter to this fact. However, peacekeeping operations that no longer deploy HIV/AIDS-positive troops still face vulnerabilities to sexual transmission of HIV with HIV-positive individuals in refugee camps. Host countries generally do not provide HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care services for refugees.

''(47) Continuing progress to reach the millions of impoverished individuals who need voluntary testing, counseling, treatment, and care for HIV/AIDS requires increased efforts to strengthen health care delivery systems and infrastructure, rebuild and expand the health care workforce, and strengthen allied and support services in countries receiving United States global HIV/AIDS assistance.

''(48) While HIV/AIDS poses the greatest health threat of modern times, it also poses the greatest development challenge for developing countries with fragile economies and weak public financial management systems that are ill equipped to shoulder the burden of this disease. International donors will have to play a critical role in providing resources for HIV/AIDS programs far into the future.

''(49) The emerging partnerships between countries most affected by HIV/AIDS and the United States must include stronger coordination between HIV/AIDS programs and other United States foreign assistance programs, and stronger collaboration with other donors in the areas of economic development and growth strategies.

''(50) The future control of HIV/AIDS demands coordination between international organizations such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNAIDS, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the international donor community, national governments, and private sector organizations, including community and faith-based organizations.

''(51) The future control of HIV/AIDS further requires effective and transparent public finance management systems in developing countries to advance the ability of such countries to manage public revenues and donor funds aimed at combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

''(52) The HIV/AIDS pandemic contributes to the shortage of health care personnel through loss of life and illness, unsafe working conditions, increased workloads for diminished staff, and resulting stress and burnout, while the shortage of health care personnel undermines efforts to prevent and provide care and treatment for individuals with HIV/AIDS.

''(53) The shortage of health care personnel, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, counselors, laboratory staff, paraprofessionals, trained lay workers, and researchers is one of the leading obstacles to combating HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

''(54) Since 2003, important progress has been made in combating HIV/AIDS, yet there is more to be done. The number of new HIV infections is still increasing at an alarming rate. According to the United States National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, globally, for every 1 individual put on antiretroviral therapy, 6 individuals are newly infected with HIV.

''(55) The United States Government continues to be the world's leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS and the unsurpassed partner with developing countries in their efforts to control this disease.

''(56) By September 2007, the United States, through the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 et seq.), had provided services to prevent mother-to-child-transmission of HIV to women during 10 million pregnancies; provided antiretroviral prophylaxis for women during over 827,300 pregnancies; prevented an estimated 157,240 HIV infections in infants; cared for over 6.6 million individuals, including over 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children; supported lifesaving antiretroviral therapies for approximately 1.4 million men, women, and children in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Carribean; and provided counseling and testing to over 33.7 million men, women, and children in developing countries.

''(57) These numbers were achieved because of the commitment of substantial resources and support of the United States Government to our partners on the front lines—the dedicated and committed women and men, communities, and nations who are taking control of the HIV/AIDS epidemics in their own countries.''.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

Section 3(2) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7602(2)) is amended by striking ''Committee on International Relations'' and inserting ''Committee on Foreign Affairs''.

SEC. 4. PURPOSE.

Section 4 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7603) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 4. PURPOSE.

''The purpose of this Act is to strengthen and enhance United States global leadership

and the effectiveness of the United States response to the HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria pandemics and other related and preventable infectious diseases in developing countries by—

''(1) establishing a comprehensive, integrated five-year, global strategy to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria that encompasses a plan for continued expansion and coordination of critical programs and improved coordination among relevant executive branch agencies and between the United States and foreign governments and international organizations;

''(2) providing increased resources for United States bilateral efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, particularly for prevention, treatment, and care (including nutritional support), technical assistance and training, the strengthening of health care systems, health care workforce development, monitoring and evaluations systems, and operations research;

''(3) providing increased resources for multilateral efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria;

''(4) encouraging the expansion of private sector efforts and expanding public-private sector partnerships to combat HIV/AIDS; and

''(5) intensifying efforts to support the development of vaccines, microbicides, and other prevention technologies and improved diagnostics treatment for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.''.

TITLE I—POLICY PLANNING AND COORDINATION

SEC. 101. DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE, FIVE-YEAR, GLOBAL STRATEGY.

(a) STRATEGY.—Subsection (a) of section 101 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7611) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence of the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''to combat'' and inserting ''to develop efforts further to combat'';

(2) by amending paragraph (4) to read as follows:

''(4) provide that the reduction of HIV/AIDS behavioral risks shall be a priority of all prevention efforts in terms of funding, scientifically-accurate educational services, and activities by—

''(A) designing prevention strategies and programs based on sound epidemiological evidence, tailored to the unique needs of each country and community, and reaching those populations found to be most at risk for acquiring HIV infection;

''(B) promoting abstinence from sexual activity and substance abuse;

''(C) encouraging delay of sexual debut, monogamy, fidelity, and partner reduction;

''(D) promoting the effective use of male and female condoms;

''(E) promoting the use of measures to reduce the risk of HIV transmission for discordant couples (where one individual has HIV/AIDS and the other individual does not have HIV/AIDS or whose status is unknown);

''(F) educating men and boys about the risks of procuring sex commercially and about the need to end violent behavior toward women and girls;

''(G) promoting the rapid expansion of safe and voluntary male circumcision services;

''(H) promoting life skills training and development for children and youth;

''(I) supporting advocacy for child and youth community-based protective social services;

''(J) eradicating trafficking in persons and creating alternatives to prostitution;

''(K) promoting cooperation with law enforcement to prosecute offenders of trafficking, rape, and sexual assault crimes with the goal of eliminating such crimes;

''(L) promoting services demonstrated to be effective in reducing the transmission of HIV infection among injection drug users without increasing illicit drug use;

''(M) promoting policies and programs to end the sexual exploitation of and violence against women and children; and

''(N) promoting prevention and treatment services for men who have sex with men;'';

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (10) as paragraphs (6) through (11), respectively;

(4) by inserting after paragraph (4) (as amended by paragraph (2) of this subsection) the following:

''(5) include specific plans for linkage to, and referral systems for nongovernmental organizations that implement multisectoral approaches, including faith-based and community-based organizations, for—

''(A) nutrition and food support for individuals with HIV/AIDS and affected communities;

''(B) child health services and development programs;

''(C) HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services for injection drug users;

''(D) access to HIV/AIDS education and testing in family planning and maternal health programs supported by the United States Government; and

''(E) medical, social, and legal services for victims of violence;'';

(5) by redesignating paragraphs (10) and (11) (as redesignated by paragraph (3) of this subsection) as paragraphs (11) and (12), respectively; and

(6) by inserting after paragraph (9) (as redesignated by paragraph (3) of this subsection) the following:

''(10) maximize host country capacities in training and research, particularly operations research;''.

(b) REPORT.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''this Act'' and inserting ''the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

''(C) A description of the manner in which the strategy will address the following:

''(i) The fundamental elements of prevention and education, care and treatment, including increasing access to pharmaceuticals, vaccines, and microbicides, as they become available, screening, prophylaxis, and treatment of major opportunistic infections, including tuberculosis, and increasing access to nutrition and food for individuals on antiretroviral therapies.

''(ii) The promotion of delay of sexual debut, abstinence, monogamy, fidelity, and partner reduction.

''(iii) The promotion of correct and consistent use of male and female condoms and other strategies and skills development to reduce the risk of HIV transmission.

''(iv) Increasing voluntary access to safe male circumcision services.

''(v) Life-skills training.

''(vi) The provision of information and services to encourage young people to delay sexual debut and ensure access to HIV/AIDS prevention information and services.

''(vii) Prevention of sexual violence leading to transmission of HIV and assistance for victims of violence who are at risk of HIV transmission.

''(viii) HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment services for injection drug users.

''(ix) Research, including incentives for HIV vaccine development and new protocols.

''(x) Advocacy for community-based child and youth protective services.

''(xi) Training of health care workers.

''(xii) The development of health care infrastructure and delivery systems.

''(xiii) Prevention efforts for substance abusers.

''(xiv) Prevention, treatment, care, and outreach efforts for men who have sex with men.'';

(B) in subparagraph (D), by adding at the end before the period the following: '', including through faith-based and other nongovernmental organizations'';

(C) in subparagraph (E), by inserting ''access to HIV/AIDS education and testing in family planning and maternal and child health programs supported by the United States Government and'' after ''the unique needs of women, including'';

(D) in subparagraph (F), by inserting ''(including by accessing voluntary clinical circumcision services)'' after ''in their sexual behavior'';

(E) in subparagraph (G), by inserting ''and men's'' after ''women's'';

(F) by redesignating subparagraphs (M) through (W) as subparagraphs (N) through (X);

(G) by inserting after subparagraph (L) the following:

''(M) A description of efforts to be undertaken to strengthen the public finance management systems of selected host countries to ensure transparent, efficient, and effective management of national and donor financial investments in health.'';

(H) in subparagraph (O) (as redesignated by subparagraph (F) of this paragraph), by striking ''evaluating programs,'' and inserting ''evaluating programs to ensure medical accuracy, operations research,'';

(I) in subparagraph (Q) (as redesignated by subparagraph (F) of this paragraph), by inserting '', strengthen national health care delivery systems, and increase national health workforce capacities,'' after ''HIV/AIDS pandemic'';

(J) in subparagraph (R) (as redesignated by subparagraph (F) of this paragraph), by inserting at the end before the period the following: '', including strategies relating to agricultural development, trade and economic growth, and education'';

(K) in subparagraph (T) (as redesignated by subparagraph (F) of this paragraph), by inserting ''efforts of intergenerational caregivers and'' after '', including'';

(L) by redesignating subparagraphs (V) through (X) (as redesignated by subparagraph (F) of this paragraph), as subparagraphs (W) through (Y), respectively;

(M) by inserting after subparagraph (U) (as redesignated by subparagraph (F) of this paragraph) the following:

''(V) A plan to strengthen and implement health care workforce strategies to enable countries to increase the supply and retention of all cadres of trained professional and paraprofessional health care workers by numbers that move toward global health program needs and toward targets established by the World Health Organization, while enabling health systems to expand coverage consistent with national and international targets and goals.''; and

(N) by striking subparagraph (Y) (as redesignated by subparagraphs (F) and (L) of this paragraph) and inserting the following:

''(Y) A description of the specific strategies, developed in coordination with existing health programs, to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, including the extent to which HIV-positive women and men in treatment, care, and support programs and HIV-negative women and men are counseled

about methods of preventing HIV transmission and the extent to which HIV prevention methods are provided on-site or by referral in treatment, care, and support programs.

''(Z) A description of the specific strategies developed to maximize the capacity of health care providers, including faith-based and other nongovernmental organizations, and family planning providers supported by the United States Government to ensure access to necessary and comprehensive information about reducing sexual transmission of HIV among women, men, and young people, including strategies to ensure HIV/AIDS prevention training for such providers.

''(AA) A strategy to work with international and host country partners toward universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs.''.

(c) STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PROGRAM MONITORING, OPERATIONS RESEARCH, AND IMPACT EVALUATION RESEARCH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally shall develop a 5-year strategic plan for program monitoring, operations research, and impact evaluation research of United States HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria programs.

(2) ELEMENTS OF PLAN.—The strategic plan developed under this subsection shall include—

(A) the amount of funding provided for program monitoring, operations research, and impact evaluation research under sections 104A, 104B, and 104C of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151b–2, 2151b–3, and 2151b–4) and the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 et seq.) available through fiscal year 2009;

(B) strategies to—

(i) improve the efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and accessibility of services provided under the provisions of law described in subparagraph (A);

(ii) establish the cost-effectiveness of program models;

(iii) ensure the transparency and accountability of services provided under the provisions of law described in subparagraph (A);

(iv) disseminate and promote the utilization of evaluation findings, lessons, and best practices in services provided under the provisions of law described in subparagraph (A); and

(v) encourage and evaluate innovative service models and strategies to optimize the delivery of care, treatment, and prevention programs financed by the United States Government;

(C) priorities for program monitoring, operations research, and impact evaluation research and a time line for completion of activities associated with such priorities; and

(D) other information that the Coordinator determines to be necessary.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In developing the strategic plan under this subsection and implementing, disseminating, and promoting the use of program monitoring, operations research, and impact evaluation research, the Coordinator shall consult with representatives of relevant executive branch agencies, other appropriate executive branch agencies, multilateral institutions involved in providing HIV/AIDS assistance, nongovernmental organizations involved in implementing HIV/AIDS programs, and the governments of host countries.

(4) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

(A) the terms ''program monitoring'', ''operations research'', and ''impact evaluation research'', have the meanings given such terms in section 104A(d)(4)(B) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by section 301(a)(4)(C) of this Act); and

(B) the term ''relevant executive branch agencies'' has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7602).

SEC. 102. HIV/AIDS RESPONSE COORDINATOR.

Section 1(f)(2) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2651a(f)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting '', host country finance, health, and other relevant ministries'' after ''community-based organizations)''; and

(B) in clause (iii), by inserting ''and host country finance, health, and other relevant ministries'' after ''community-based organizations)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)(ii)—

(A) by striking subclauses (IV) and (V) and inserting the following:

''(IV) Establishing an interagency working group on HIV/AIDS that is comprised of, but not limited to, representatives from the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Health and Human Services (including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and the Health Resources and Services Administration), the Department of Labor, the Department of Agriculture, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Department of Defense, and the Office of the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat Malaria Globally, for the purposes of coordination of activities relating to HIV/AIDS. The interagency working group shall—

''(aa) meet regularly to review progress in host countries toward HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care objectives;

''(bb) participate in the process of identifying countries in need of increased assistance based on the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in those countries; and

''(cc) review policies that may be obstacles to reaching objectives set forth for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care.

''(V) Coordinating overall United States HIV/AIDS policy and programs with efforts led by host countries and with the assistance provided by other relevant bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and other donor institutions to achieve complementarity with other programs aimed at improving child and maternal health, and food security, promoting education, and strengthening health care systems.'';

(B) by redesignating subclauses (VII) and (VIII) as subclauses (IX) and (X), respectively;

(C) by inserting after subclause (VI) the following:

''(VII) Holding annual consultations with host country nongovernmental organizations providing services to improve health, and advocating on behalf of the individuals with HIV/AIDS and those at particular risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

''(VIII) Ensuring, through interagency and international coordination, that United States HIV/AIDS programs are coordinated with and complementary to the delivery of related global health, food security, and education services, including—

''(aa) maternal and child health care;

''(bb) services for other neglected and easily preventable and treatable infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis;

''(cc) treatment and care services for injection drug users; and

''(dd) programs and services to improve legal, social, and economic status of women and girls.'';

(D) in subclause (IX) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B) of this paragraph)—

(i) by inserting ''Vietnam, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic'' after ''Zambia,'';

(ii) by adding at the end before the period the following: ''and other countries in which the United States is implementing HIV/AIDS programs''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following: ''In designating countries under this subclause, the President shall give priority to those countries in which there is a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and countries with large populations that have a concentrated HIV/AIDS epidemic.'';

(E) by redesignating subclause (X) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B) of this paragraph) as subclause (XII);

(F) by inserting after subclause (IX) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B) and amended by subparagraph (D) of this paragraph) the following:

''(X) Working, in partnership with host countries in which the HIV/AIDS epidemic is prevalent among injection drug users, to establish, as a national priority, national HIV/AIDS prevention programs, including education, and services demonstrated to be effective in reducing the transmission of HIV infection among injection drug users without increasing drug use.

''(XI) Working, in partnership with host countries in which the HIV/AIDS epidemic is prevalent among individuals involved in commercial sex acts, to establish, as a national priority, national prevention programs, including education, voluntary testing, and counseling, and referral systems that link HIV/AIDS programs with programs to eradicate trafficking in persons and create alternatives to prostitution.'';

(G) in subclause (XII) (as redesignated by subparagraphs (B) and (E) of this paragraph), by striking ''funds section'' and inserting ''funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under section 401 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 for HIV/AIDS assistance''; and

(H) by adding at the end the following:

''(XIII) Publicizing updated drug pricing data to inform pharmaceutical procurement partners' purchasing decisions.

''(XIV) Working in partnership with host countries in which the HIV/AIDS epidemic is prevalent among men who have sex with men, to establish, as a national priority, national HIV/AIDS prevention programs, including education and services demonstrated to be effective in reducing the transmission of HIV among men who have sex with men.''.

TITLE II—SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL FUNDS, PROGRAMS, AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

SEC. 201. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

Section 201(a) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7621(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''infectious diseases'' and inserting ''easily preventable and treatable infectious diseases''; and

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking ''infectious diseases'' and inserting ''easily preventable and treatable infectious diseases''.

SEC. 202. PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA.

(a) FINDINGS.—Subsection (a) of section 202 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7622) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as paragraphs (7) through (9), respectively; and

(2) by inserting before paragraph (7) (as redesignated by paragraph (1) of this subsection) the following:

''(1) The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is the multilateral component of this Act, extending United States efforts to a total of 136 countries around the world.

''(2) Created in 2002, the Global Fund has played a leading role in the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria around the world and has grown into an organization that currently provides nearly a quarter of all international financing to combat HIV/AIDS and two-thirds of all international financing to combat tuberculosis and malaria.

''(3) By 2010, it is estimated that the demand for funding by the Global Fund will grow in size to between $6 and $8 billion annually, requiring significant contributions from donors around the world, including at least $2 billion annually from the United States.

''(4) The Global Fund is an innovative financing mechanism to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and has made progress in many areas.

''(5) The United States Government is the largest supporter of the Global Fund, both in terms of resources and technical support.

''(6) The United States made the initial contribution to the Global Fund and is fully committed to its success.''.

(b) UNITED STATES FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION.—

(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subsection (d)(1) of such section is amended—

(A) by striking ''$1,000,000,000'' and inserting ''$2,000,000,000'';

(B) by striking ''for the period of fiscal year 2004 beginning on January 1, 2004,'' and inserting ''for each of the fiscal years 2009 and 2010,''; and

(C) by striking ''the fiscal years 2005–2008'' and inserting ''each of the fiscal years 2011 through 2013''.

(2) LIMITATION.—Subsection (d)(4) of such section is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013'';

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''; and

(iii) in clause (vi)—

(I) by striking ''for the purposes'' and inserting ''For the purposes'';

(II) by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''; and

(III) by striking ''fiscal year 2004'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2009'';

(B) in subparagraph (B)(iv)—

(i) by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''; and

(ii) by adding at the end before the period the following: '', unless such amount is made available for more than one fiscal year, in which case such amount is authorized to be made available for such purposes after December 31 of the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which such funds first became available.''; and

(C) in subparagraph (C)(ii) by striking ''Committee on International Relations'' and inserting ''Committee on Foreign Affairs''.

(3) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—The following shall be the policy of the United States:

(A) Support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria should be based upon achievement of the following benchmarks related to transparency and accountability:

(i) As recommended by the Government Accountability Office, the Fund Secretariat has established standardized expectations for the performance of Local Fund Agents (LFAs), is undertaking a systematic assessment of the performance of LFAs, and is making available for public review, according to the Fund Board's policies and practices on disclosure of information, a regular collection and analysis of performance data of Fund grants, which shall cover both Principal Recipients and sub-recipients.

(ii) A well-staffed, independent Office of the Inspector General reports directly to the Board and is responsible for regular, publicly published audits of both financial and programmatic and reporting aspects of the Fund, its grantees, and LFAs.

(iii) The Fund Secretariat has established and is reporting publicly on standard indicators for all program areas.

(iv) The Fund Secretariat has established a database that tracks all subrecipients and the amounts of funds disbursed to each, as well as the distribution of resources, by grant and Principal Recipient, for prevention, care, treatment, the purchases of drugs and commodities, and other purposes.

(v) The Fund Board has established a penalty to offset tariffs imposed by national governments on all goods and services provided by the Fund.

(vi) The Fund Board has successfully terminated its Administrative Services Agreement with the World Health Organization and completed the Fund Secretariat's transition to a fully independent status under the Headquarters Agreement the Fund has established with the Government of Switzerland.

(B) Support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria should be based upon achievement of the following benchmarks related to the founding principles of the Fund:

(i) The Fund must maintain its status as a financing institution.

(ii) The Fund must remain focused on programs directly related to HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

(iii) The Fund must maintain its Comprehensive Funding Policy, which requires confirmed pledges to cover the full amount of new grants before the Board approves them.

(iv) The Fund must maintain and make progress on sustaining its multisectoral approach, through Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs) and in the implementation of grants, as reflected in percent and resources allocated to different sectors, including governments, civil society, and faith- and community-based organizations.

(4) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Congress—

(A) notes that section 625 of Public Law 110–161 establishes a requirement to withhold 20 percent of funds appropriated for the Global Fund if the Global Fund fails to meet certain benchmarks; and

(B) will continue to review the implementation of the benchmarks to ensure accountability and transparency of the Global Fund.

SEC. 203. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL VACCINE FUNDS.

(a) VACCINE FUND.—Subsection (k) of section 302 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2222) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

(b) INTERNATIONAL AIDS VACCINE INITIATIVE.—Subsection (l) of such section is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

(c) MALARIA VACCINE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.—Subsection (m) of such section is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

(d) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A TUBERCULOSIS VACCINE.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(n) In addition to amounts otherwise available under this section, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to be available for United States contributions to research and development of a tuberculosis vaccine.''.

SEC. 204. PROGRAM TO FACILITATE AVAILABILITY OF MICROBICIDES TO PREVENT TRANSMISSION OF HIV AND OTHER DISEASES.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—Congress recognizes the need and urgency to expand the range of interventions for preventing the transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), including nonvaccine prevention methods that can be controlled by women.

(b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally, shall develop and implement a program to facilitate wide-scale availability of microbicides that prevent the transmission of HIV after such microbicides are proven safe and effective.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 401 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7671) for HIV/AIDS assistance, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out this section.

SEC. 205. PLAN TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA BY STRENGTHENING HEALTH POLICIES AND HEALTH SYSTEMS OF HOST COUNTRIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title II of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7621 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 204. PLAN TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA BY STRENGTHENING HEALTH POLICIES AND HEALTH SYSTEMS OF HOST COUNTRIES.

''(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

''(1) One of the most significant barriers to achieving universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention in developing countries is the lack of health infrastructure, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

''(2) In addition to HIV/AIDS programs, other treatable and preventable infectious diseases could be treated concurrently and easily if health care delivery systems in developing countries were significantly improved.

''(3) More public investment in basic primary health care should be a priority in public spending in developing countries.

''(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States Government—

''(1) to invest appropriate resources authorized under this Act and the amendments made by this Act to carry out activities to strengthen HIV/AIDS health policies and health systems and provide workforce training and capacity-building consistent with the goals and objectives of this Act and the amendments made by this Act; and

''(2) to support the development of a sound policy environment in host countries to increase the ability of such countries to maximize utilization of health care resources

from donor countries, deliver services to the people of such host countries in an effective and efficient manner, and reduce barriers that prevent recipients of services from achieving maximum benefit from such services.

''(c) PLAN REQUIRED.—The Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally, in collaboration with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall develop and implement a plan to combat HIV/AIDS by strengthening health policies and health systems of host countries as part of the United States Agency for International Development's 'Health Systems 2020' project.

''(d) ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury, acting through the head of the Office of Technical Assistance, is authorized to provide assistance for advisors and host country finance, health, and other relevant ministries to improve the effectiveness of public finance management systems in host countries to enable such countries to receive funding to carry out programs to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria and to manage such programs.

''(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 401 for HIV/AIDS assistance, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Treasury such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out this subsection.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 note) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 203 the following:

''Sec. 204. Plan to combat HIV/AIDS by strengthening health policies and health systems of host countries.''.

TITLE III—BILATERAL EFFORTS

Subtitle A—General Assistance and Programs

SEC. 301. ASSISTANCE TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961.—

(1) FINDING.—Subsection (a) of section 104A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151b–2) is amended by inserting '', South and Southeast Asia, Central and Eastern Europe'' after ''the Caribbean''.

(2) POLICY.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended—

(A) in the first sentence—

(i) by striking ''It is a major'' and inserting the following:

''(1) GENERAL POLICY.—It is a major'';

(ii) by striking ''control'' and inserting ''care''; and

(iii) by adding at the end before the period the following: ''and to fulfill United States commitments to move toward the goal of universal access to prevention, treatment, and care of HIV/AIDS'';

(B) by adding at the end the following: ''The United States and other developed countries should provide assistance for the prevention, treatment, and care of HIV/AIDS to countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, South and Southeast Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, addressing both generalized epidemics and epidemics concentrated among populations at high risk of infection.''; and

(C) by further adding at the end the following:

''(2) SPECIFIC POLICY.—It is therefore the policy of the United States, by 2013, to—

''(A) prevent 12,000,000 new HIV infections worldwide;

''(B) support treatment of at least 3,000,000 individuals with HIV/AIDS with the goal of treating 450,000 children;

''(C) provide care for 12,000,000 individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, including 5,000,000 orphans and vulnerable children in communities affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans with HIV/AIDS; and

''(D) train at least 140,000 new health care professionals and workers for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care.''.

(3) AUTHORIZATION.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting '', South and Southeast Asia, Central and Eastern Europe'' after ''the Caribbean''; and

(ii) by adding at the end before the period the following: '', and particularly with respect to refugee populations in such countries and areas'';

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting '', South and Southeast Asia, Central and Eastern Europe'' after ''the Caribbean''; and

(ii) by adding at the end before the period the following: '', and particularly with respect to refugee populations in such countries and areas'';

(C) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4);

(D) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) ROLE OF PUBLIC HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEMS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

''(A) the President should provide an appropriate level of assistance under paragraph (1) to help strengthen public health care delivery systems financed by host countries; and

''(B) the President, acting through the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally, should support the development of a policy framework in such host countries for the long-term sustainability of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs, and for strengthening health care delivery systems and increasing health workforces through recruitment, training, and policies that allows the devolution of clinical responsibilities to increase the work force able to deliver prevention, treatment, and care services, as necessary, with clearly identified objectives and reporting strategies for such services.'';

(E) in paragraph (4) (as redesignated by subparagraph (C) of this paragraph), by striking ''foreign countries'' and inserting ''host countries and donor countries''; and

(F) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of Congress that the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally and the heads of relevant executive branch agencies (as such term is defined in section 3 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003) should operate in a manner consistent with the 'Three Ones' goals of UNAIDS.

''(B) 'THREE ONES' GOALS OF UNAIDS DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term '' 'Three Ones'' goals of UNAIDS' means—

''(i) the goal of one agreed HIV/AIDS action framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners in host countries;

''(ii) the goal of one national HIV/AIDS coordinating authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate; and

''(iii) the goal of one agreed country-level data-collection, monitoring, and evaluation system.''.

(4) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—

(A) PREVENTION.—Subsection (d)(1) of such section is amended—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by inserting ''efforts by faith-based and other nongovernmental organizations and'' after ''infection, including'';

(II) by inserting '', including access to such programs and efforts in family planning programs supported by the United States Government,'' after ''health programs''; and

(III) by inserting ''male and female'' before ''condoms'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) by inserting ''relevant and'' after ''culturally'';

(II) by inserting ''and programs'' after ''those organizations''; and

(III) by inserting '', level of scientific and fact-based knowledge'' after ''experience'';

(iii) in subparagraph (D), by inserting ''and nonjudgmental approaches'' after ''protections'';

(iv) by amending subparagraph (E) to read as follows:

''(E) assistance to achieve the target of reaching 80 percent of pregnant women for prevention and treatment of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in countries in which the United States is implementing HIV/AIDS programs by 2013, as described in section 312(b)(1) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003, and to promote infant feeding options that meet the criteria described in the World Health Organization's Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding;'';

(v) in subparagraph (G)—

(I) by adding at the end before the semicolon the following: '', including education and services demonstrated to be effective in reducing the transmission of HIV infection without increasing illicit drug use''; and

(II) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(vi) in subparagraph (H), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(vii) by adding at the end the following:

''(I)(i) assistance for counseling, testing, treatment, care, and support programs for prevention of re-infection of individuals with HIV/AIDS;

''(ii) counseling to prevent sexual transmission of HIV, including skill development for practicing abstinence, reducing the number of sexual partners, and providing information on correct and consistent use of male and female condoms;

''(iii) assistance to provide male and female condoms;

''(iv) diagnosis and treatment of other sexually-transmitted infections;

''(v) strategies to address the stigma and discrimination that impede HIV/AIDS prevention efforts; and

''(vi) assistance to facilitate widespread access to microbicides for HIV prevention, as safe and effective products become available, including financial and technical support for culturally appropriate introductory programs, procurement, distribution, logistics management, program delivery, acceptability studies, provider training, demand generation, and post-introduction monitoring; and

''(J) assistance for HIV/AIDS education targeted to reach and prevent the spread of HIV among men who have sex with men.''.

(B) TREATMENT.—Subsection (d)(2) of such section is amended—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''; and'' at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) assistance specifically to address barriers that might limit the start of and adherence to treatment services, especially in

rural areas, through such measures as mobile and decentralized distribution of treatment services, and where feasible and necessary, direct linkages with nutrition and income security programs, referrals to services for victims of violence, support groups for individuals with HIV/AIDS, and efforts to combat stigma and discrimination against all such individuals;

''(E) assistance to support comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment (including free prophylaxis and treatment for common HIV/AIDS-related opportunistic infections) for at least one-third of individuals with HIV/AIDS in the poorest countries worldwide who are in clinical need of antiretroviral treatment; and

''(F) assistance to improve access to psychosocial support systems and other necessary services for youth who are infected with HIV to ensure the start of and adherence to treatment services.''.

(C) MONITORING.—Subsection (d)(4) of such section is amended—

(i) by striking ''The monitoring'' and inserting the following:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The monitoring'';

(ii) by inserting ''and paragraph (8)'' after ''paragraphs (1) through (3)'';

(iii) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (D) as clauses (i) through (iv), respectively;

(iv) in clause (iii) (as redesignated by clause (iii) of this subparagraph), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(v) in clause (iv) (as redesignated by clause (iii) of this subparagraph), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'';

(vi) by adding at the end the following:

''(v) carrying out and expanding program monitoring, impact evaluation research, and operations research (including research and evaluations of gender-responsive interventions, disaggregated by age and sex, in order to identify and replicate effective models, develop gender indicators to measure both outcomes and impacts of interventions, especially interventions designed to reduce gender inequalities, and collect lessons learned for dissemination among different countries) in order to—

''(I) improve the coverage, efficiency, effectiveness, quality and accessibility of services provided under this section;

''(II) establish the cost-effectiveness of program models;

''(III) assess the population-level impact of programs, projects, and activities implemented;

''(IV) ensure the transparency and accountability of services provided under this section;

''(V) disseminate and promote the utilization of evaluation findings, lessons, and best practices in the implementation of programs, projects, and activities supported under this section; and

''(VI) encourage and evaluate innovative service models and strategies to optimize functionality of programs, projects, and activities.''; and

(vii) by further adding at the end the following:

''(B) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(v)—

''(i) the term 'impact evaluation research' means the application of research methods and statistical analysis to measure the extent to which a change in a population-based outcome can be attributed to a program, project, or activity as opposed to other factors in the environment;

''(ii) the term 'program monitoring' means the collection, analysis, and use of routine data with respect to a program, project, or activity to determine how well the program, project, or activity is carried out and at what cost; and

''(iii) the term 'operations research' means the application of social science research methods and statistical analysis to judge, compare, and improve policy outcomes and outcomes of a program, project, or activity, from the earliest stages of defining and designing the program, project, or activity through the development and implementation of the program, project, or activity.''.

(D) PHARMACEUTICALS.—Subsection (d)(5) of such section is amended—

(i) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) MECHANISMS TO ENSURE COST-EFFECTIVE DRUG PURCHASING.—Mechanisms to ensure that pharmaceuticals, including antiretrovirals and medicines to treat opportunistic infections, are purchased at the lowest possible price at which such pharmaceuticals may be obtained in sufficient quantity on the world market.''.

(E) REFERRAL SYSTEMS AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—

(i) FINDING.—The effectiveness of all HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs and the survival of individuals with HIV/AIDS would be enhanced by ensuring that such individuals are referred to appropriate support programs, including education, income generation, HIV/AIDS support group and food and nutrition programs, and by providing assistance directly to such programs to the extent such programs would further the purposes of expanding access to and the success of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care.

(ii) AMENDMENT.—Subsection (d) of such section is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(8) REFERRAL SYSTEMS AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—

''(A) REFERRAL SYSTEMS.—Assistance to ensure that a continuum of care is available to individuals participating in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs through the development of referral systems for such individuals to community-based programs that, where practicable, are co-located with such HIV/AIDS programs, and that provide support activities for such individuals, including HIV/AIDS treatment adherence, HIV/AIDS support groups, food and nutrition support, maternal health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment services, income-generation programs, legal services, and other program support.

''(B) COORDINATION WITH OTHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—

''(i)(I) Assistance to integrate HIV/AIDS testing with testing for other easily detectable and treatable infectious diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis, and respiratory infections, and to provide treatment if possible or referral to appropriate treatment programs.

''(II) Assistance to provide, whenever possible, as a component of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care services, and co-treatment of curable diseases, such as other sexually transmitted diseases.

''(III) Assistance and other activities to ensure, through interagency and international coordination, that United States global HIV/AIDS programs are integrated and complementary to delivering related health services.

''(ii) Assistance to support schools and related programs for children and youth that increase the effectiveness of programs described in this subsection by providing the infrastructure, teachers, and other support to such programs.

''(iii) Assistance and other activities to provide access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs in family planning and maternal and child health programs supported by the United States Government.

''(iv) Assistance to United States and host country nonprofit development organizations that directly support livelihood initiatives in HIV/AIDS-affected countries that provide opportunities for direct lending to microentrepreneurs by United States citizens or opportunities for United States citizens to purchase livestock and plants for families to provide nutrition and generate income for individual households and communities.

''(v) Assistance to coordinate and provide linkages between HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs with efforts to improve the economic and legal status of women and girls.

''(vi) Technical assistance coordinated across implementing agencies, offered on a regular basis, and made available upon request, for faith-based and community-based organizations, especially indigenous organizations and new partners who do not have extensive experience managing United States foreign assistance programs, including for training and logistical support to establish financial mechanisms to track program receipts and expenditures and data management systems to ensure data quality and strengthen reporting.

''(vii) In accordance with the World Health Organization's Interim Policy on TB/HIV Activities (2004), assistance to individuals with or symptomatic of tuberculosis, and assistance to implement the following:

''(I) Provide opt-out HIV/AIDS counseling and testing and appropriate referral for treatment and care to individuals with or symptomatic of tuberculosis, and work with host countries to ensure that such individuals in host countries are provided such services.

''(II) Ensure, in coordination with host countries, that individuals with HIV/AIDS receive tuberculosis screening and other appropriate treatment.

''(III) Provide increased funding for HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis activities, by increasing total resources for such activities, including lab strengthening and infection control.

''(IV) Improve the management and dissemination of knowledge gained from HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis activities to increase the replication of best practices.''.

(5) ANNUAL REPORT.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''Committee on International Relations'' and inserting ''Committee on Foreign Affairs'';

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in subparagraph (C)—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''including'' and inserting ''including—'';

(II) by striking clauses (i) and (ii) and inserting the following:

''(i)(I) the effectiveness of such programs in reducing the transmission of HIV, particularly in women and girls, in reducing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, including through drug treatment and therapies, either directly or by referral, and in reducing mortality rates from HIV/AIDS, including through drug treatment, and addiction therapies;

''(II) a description of strategies, goals, programs, and interventions to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of young women and young men; the progress toward expanding access among young women and young men to evidence-based, comprehensive

HIV/AIDS health care services and HIV prevention and sexuality and abstinence education programs at the individual, community, and national levels; and clear targets for integrating adolescents who are orphans, including adolescents who are infected with HIV, into programs for orphans and vulnerable children; and

''(III) the amount of United States funding provided under the authorities of this Act to procure drugs for HIV/AIDS programs in countries described in section 1(f)(2)(B)(IX) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2651a(f)(2)(B)(VIII)), including a detailed description of antiretroviral drugs procured, including—

''(aa) the total amount expended for each generic and name brand drug;

''(bb) the price paid per unit of each drug; and

''(cc) the vendor from which each drug was purchased; and

''(ii) the progress made toward improving health care delivery systems (including the training of adequate numbers of health care professionals) and infrastructure to ensure increased access to care and treatment, including a description of progress toward—

''(I)(aa) the training and retention of adequate numbers of health care professionals in order to meet a nationally-determined ratio of doctors, nurses, and midwives to patients, based on the target of the 2.3 per-thousand ratio established by the World Health Organization (WHO);

''(bb) increases in the number of other health care professions, such as pharmacists and lab technicians, as necessary; and

''(cc) the improvement of infrastructure needed to ensure universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care by 2015;

''(II) national health care workforce strategy benchmarks, as required by section 202(d)(5)(B) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003, United States contributions to developing and implementing the benchmarks, and main challenges to implementing the benchmarks;

''(III) ensuring, to the extent practicable, that health care workers providing services under this Act have safe working conditions and are receiving health care services, including services relating to HIV/AIDS;

''(IV) activities to strengthen health care systems in order to overcome obstacles and barriers to the provision of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria services;

''(V) improving integration and coordination of HIV/AIDS programs with related health care services and supporting the capacity of health care programs to refer individuals to community-based services; and

''(VI) strengthening procurement and supply chain management systems of host countries;'';

(III) in clause (iii), by adding at the end before the semicolon the following: '', including the percentage of such United States foreign assistance provided for diagnosis and treatment of individuals with tuberculosis in countries with the highest burden of tuberculosis, as determined by the World Health Organization (WHO)''; and

(IV) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) a description of efforts to integrate HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis prevention, treatment, and care programs, including—

''(i) the number and percentage of HIV-infected individuals receiving HIV/AIDS treatment or care services who are also receiving screening and subsequent treatment for tuberculosis;

''(ii) the number and percentage of individuals with tuberculosis who are receiving HIV/AIDS counseling and testing, and appropriate referral to HIV/AIDS services;

''(iii) the number and location of laboratories with the capacity to perform tuberculosis culture tests and tuberculosis drug susceptibility tests;

''(iv) the number and location of laboratories with the capacity to perform appropriate tests for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR–TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR–TB); and

''(v) the number of HIV-infected individuals suspected of having tuberculosis who are provided tuberculosis culture diagnosis or tuberculosis drug susceptibility testing;

''(E) a description of coordination efforts with relevant executive branch agencies (as such term is defined in section 3 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003) and at the global level in the effort to link HIV/AIDS services with non-HIV/AIDS services;

''(F) a description of programs serving women and girls, including—

''(i) a description of HIV/AIDS prevention programs that address the vulnerabilities of girls and women to HIV/AIDS; and

''(ii) information on the number of individuals served by programs aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities of women and girls to HIV/AIDS;

''(G) a description of the specific strategies funded to ensure the reduction of HIV infection among injection drug users, and the number of injection drug users, by country, reached by such strategies, including medication-assisted drug treatment for individuals with HIV or at risk of HIV, and HIV prevention programs demonstrated to be effective in reducing HIV transmission without increasing drug use; and

''(H) a detailed description of monitoring, impact evaluation research, and operations research of programs, projects, and activities carried out pursuant to subsection (d)(4)(A)(v).''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally shall make publicly available on the Internet website of the Office of the Coordinator the information contained in paragraph (2)(H) of each report and, in addition, the individual evaluations and other reports that were the basis of such information, including lessons learned and collected in such evaluations and reports.''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subsection (b) of section 301 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7631) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

(c) FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SUPPORT.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(c) FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SUPPORT.—

''(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

''(A) The United States provides more than 60 percent of all food assistance worldwide.

''(B) According to the United Nations World Food Program and other United Nations agencies, food insecurity of individuals with HIV/AIDS is a major problem in countries with large populations of such individuals, particularly in sub-Saharan African countries.

''(C) Individuals infected with HIV have higher nutritional requirements than individuals who are not infected with HIV, particularly with respect to the need for protein. Also, there is evidence to suggest that the full benefit of therapy to treat HIV/AIDS may not be achieved in individuals who are malnourished, particularly in pregnant and lactating women.

''(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

''(A) malnutrition, especially for individuals with HIV/AIDS, is a clinical health issue with wider nutrition, health, and social implications for such individuals, their families, and their communities that must be addressed by United States HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs;

''(B) food security and nutrition directly impact an individual's vulnerability to HIV infection, the progression of HIV to AIDS, an individual's ability to begin an antiretroviral medication treatment regimen, the efficacy of an antiretroviral medication treatment regimen once an individual begins such a regimen, and the ability of communities to effectively cope with the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its impacts;

''(C) international guidelines established by the World Health Organization (WHO) should serve as the reference standard for HIV/AIDS food and nutrition activities supported by this Act and the amendments made by this Act;

''(D) the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development should make it a priority to work together and with other United States Government agencies, donors, and multilateral institutions to increase the integration of food and nutrition support and livelihood activities into HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care activities funded by the United States and other governments and organizations;

''(E) for purposes of determining which individuals infected with HIV should be provided with nutrition and food support—

''(i) children with moderate or severe malnutrition, according to WHO standards, shall be given priority for such nutrition and food support; and

''(ii) adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5 or less, or at the prevailing WHO-approved measurement for BMI, should be considered 'malnourished' and should be given priority for such nutrition and food support;

''(F) programs funded by the United States should include therapeutic and supplementary feeding, food, and nutrition support and should include strong links to development programs that provide support for livelihoods; and

''(G) the inability of individuals with HIV/AIDS to access food for themselves or their families should not be allowed to impair or erode the therapeutic status of such individuals with respect to HIV/AIDS or related comorbidities.

''(3) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States to—

''(A) address the food and nutrition needs of individuals with HIV/AIDS and affected individuals, including orphans and vulnerable children;

''(B) fully integrate food and nutrition support into HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care programs carried out under this Act and the amendments made by this Act;

''(C) ensure, to the extent practicable, that—

''(i) HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care providers and health care workers are adequately trained so that such providers and workers can provide accurate and informed information regarding food and nutrition support to individuals enrolled in treatment and care programs and individuals affected by HIV/AIDS; and

''(ii) individuals with HIV/AIDS who, with their households, are identified as food insecure are provided with adequate food and nutrition support; and

''(D) effectively link food and nutrition support provided under this Act and the amendments made by this Act to individuals with HIV/AIDS, their households, and their communities, to other food security and livelihood programs funded by the United States and other donors and multilateral agencies.

''(4) INTEGRATION OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ACTIVITIES INTO HIV/AIDS PREVENTION, TREATMENT, AND CARE ACTIVITIES.—

''(A) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO GLOBAL AIDS COORDINATOR.—Consistent with the statement of policy described in paragraph (3), the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally shall—

''(i) ensure, to the extent practicable, that—

''(I) an assessment, using validated criteria, of the food security and nutritional status of each individual enrolled in antiretroviral medication treatment programs supported with funds authorized under this Act or any amendment made by this Act is carried out; and

''(II) appropriate nutritional counseling is provided to each individual described in subclause (I);

''(ii) coordinate with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the heads of other relevant executive branch agencies to—

''(I) ensure, to the extent practicable, that, in communities in which a significant proportion of individuals with HIV/AIDS are in need of food and nutrition support, a status and needs assessment for such support employing validated criteria is conducted and a plan to provide such support is developed and implemented;

''(II) improve and enhance coordination between food security and livelihood programs for individuals infected with HIV in host countries and food security and livelihood programs that may already exist in such countries;

''(III) establish effective linkages between the health and agricultural development and livelihoods sectors in order to enhance food security; and

''(IV) ensure, by providing increased resources if necessary, effective coordination between activities authorized under this Act and the amendments made by this Act and activities carried out under other provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 when establishing new HIV/AIDS treatment sites;

''(iii) develop effective, validated indicators that measure outcomes of nutrition and food security interventions carried out under this section and use such indicators to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of such interventions; and

''(iv) evaluate the role of and, to the extent appropriate, support and expand partnerships and linkages between United States postsecondary educational institutions with postsecondary educational institutions in host countries in order to provide training and build indigenous human and institutional capacity and expertise to respond to HIV/AIDS, and to improve capacity to address nutrition, food security, and livelihood needs of HIV/AIDS-affected and impoverished communities.

''(B) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO USAID ADMINISTRATOR.—Consistent with the statement of policy described in paragraph (3), the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally and the Secretary of Agriculture, shall provide, to the extent practicable, as an essential component of antiretroviral medication treatment programs supported with funds authorized under this Act and the amendments made by this Act, food and nutrition support to each individual with HIV/AIDS who is determined to need such support by the assessing health professional, based on a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5 or less, or at the prevailing WHO-approved measurement for BMI, and the individual's household, for a period of not less than 180 days, either directly or through referral to an assistance program or organization with demonstrable ability to provide such support.

''(C) REPORT.—Not later than October 31, 2010, and annually thereafter, the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the implementation of this subsection for the prior fiscal year. The report shall include a description of—

''(i) the effectiveness of interventions carried out to improve the nutritional status of individuals with HIV/AIDS;

''(ii) the amount of funds provided for food and nutrition support for individuals with HIV/AIDS and affected individuals in the prior fiscal year and the projected amount of funds to be provided for such purpose for next fiscal year; and

''(iii) a strategy for improving the linkage between assistance provided with funds authorized under this subsection and food security and livelihood programs under other provisions of law as well as activities funded by other donors and multilateral organizations.

''(D) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 401 for HIV/AIDS assistance, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out this subsection.''.

(d) ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANCE.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(d) ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANCE.—An organization, including a faith-based organization, that is otherwise eligible to receive assistance under section 104A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by subsection (a)) or under any other provision of this Act (or any amendment made by this Act or the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008) to prevent, treat, or monitor HIV/AIDS—

''(1) shall not be required, as a condition of receiving the assistance, to endorse or utilize a multisectoral approach to combating HIV/AIDS, or to endorse, utilize, make a referral to, become integrated with or otherwise participate in any program or activity to which the organization has a religious or moral objection; and

''(2) shall not be discriminated against in the solicitation or issuance of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements under such provisions of law for refusing to do so.''.

(e) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Such section is further amended by striking subsection (g).

(f) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report identifying a target for the number of additional health professionals and workers needed in host countries to provide HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care and the training needs of such health professionals and workers. The target should reflect available data and should identify the need for United States Government contributions to meet the target.

(2) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7602).

SEC. 302. ASSISTANCE TO COMBAT TUBERCULOSIS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Subsection (a) of section 104B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151b–3) is amended by striking paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting the following:

''(1) Tuberculosis is one of the greatest infectious causes of death of adults worldwide, killing 1.6 million individuals per year—one person every 20 seconds.

''(2) Tuberculosis is the leading infectious cause of death among individuals who are infected with HIV due to their weakened immune systems, and it is estimated that one-third of such individuals have tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is also a leading killer of women of reproductive age.

''(3) Driven by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, incidence rates of tuberculosis in sub-Saharan Africa have more than doubled on average since 1990. The problem is so pervasive that in August 2005, African health ministers and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared tuberculosis to be an emergency in sub-Saharan Africa.

''(4)(A) The wide extent of drug resistance, including both multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR–TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR–TB), represents both a critical challenge to the global control of tuberculosis and a serious worldwide public health threat.

''(B) XDR–TB, which is a form of MDR–TB with additional resistance to multiple second-line anti-tuberculosis drugs, is associated with worst treatment outcomes of any form of tuberculosis.

''(C) XDR–TB is converging with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, undermining gains in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs and requires urgent interventions.

''(D) Drug resistance surveillance reports have confirmed the serious scale and spread of tuberculosis, with XDR–TB strains confirmed on six continents.

''(E) Demonstrating the lethality of XDR–TB, an initial outbreak in Tugela Ferry, South Africa, in 2006 killed 52 of 53 patients with hundreds more cases reported since that time.

''(F) Of the world's regions, sub-Saharan Africa, faces the greatest gap in capacity to prevent, treat, and care for individuals with XDR–TB.''.

(2) POLICY.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(b) POLICY.—It is a major objective of the foreign assistance program of the United States to control tuberculosis. In all countries in which the Government of the United States has established development programs, particularly in countries with the highest burden of tuberculosis and other countries with high rates of tuberculosis, the United States Government should prioritize the achievement of the following goals by not later than December 31, 2015:

''(1) Reduce by one-half the tuberculosis death and disease burden from the 1990 baseline.

''(2) Sustain or exceed the detection of at least 70 percent of sputum smear-positive

cases of tuberculosis and the cure of at least 85 percent of such cases detected.''.

(3) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Such section is further amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (d) through (f) as subsections (e) through (g); and

(B) by inserting after subsection (c) the following:

''(d) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Assistance provided under subsection (c) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be used to carry out the following activities:

''(1) Provide diagnostic counseling and testing to individuals with HIV/AIDS for tuberculosis (including a culture diagnosis to rule out multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR–TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR–TB) and provide HIV/AIDS voluntary counseling and testing to individuals with any form of tuberculosis.

''(2) Provide tuberculosis treatment to individuals receiving treatment and care for HIV/AIDS who have active tuberculosis and provide prophylactic treatment to individuals with HIV/AIDS who also have a latent tuberculosis infection.

''(3) Link individuals with both HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis to HIV/AIDS treatment and care services, including antiretroviral therapy and cotrimoxazole therapy.

''(4) Ensure that health care workers trained to diagnose, treat, and provide care for HIV/AIDS are also trained to diagnose, treat, and provide care for individuals with both HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

''(5) Ensure that individuals with active pulmonary tuberculosis are provided a culture diagnosis, including drug susceptibility testing to rule out multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR–TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR–TB) in areas with high prevalence of tuberculosis drug resistance.''.

(4) PRIORITY TO STOP TB STRATEGY.—Subsection (f) of such section (as redesignated by paragraph (3) of this subsection) is amended—

(A) by amending the heading to read as follows: ''PRIORITY TO STOP TB STRATEGY'';

(B) in the first sentence, by striking ''In furnishing'' and all that follows through '', including funding'' and inserting the following:

''(1) PRIORITY.—In furnishing assistance under subsection (c), the President shall give priority to—

''(A) activities described in the Stop TB Strategy, including expansion and enhancement of Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) coverage, treatment for individuals infected with both tuberculosis and HIV and treatment for individuals with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR–TB), strengthening of health systems, use of the International Standards for Tuberculosis Care by all care providers, empowering individuals with tuberculosis, and enabling and promoting research to develop new diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines, and program-based operational research relating to tuberculosis; and

''(B) funding''; and

(C) in the second sentence—

(i) by striking ''In order to'' and all that follows through ''not less than'' and inserting the following:

''(2) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—In order to meet the requirements of paragraph (1), the President—

''(A) shall ensure that not less than'';

(ii) by striking ''for Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) coverage and treatment of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis using DOTS–Plus,'' and inserting ''to implement the Stop TB Strategy; and''; and

(iii) by striking ''including'' and all that follows and inserting the following:

''(B) should ensure that not less than $15,000,000 of the amount made available to carry out this section for a fiscal year is used to make a contribution to the Global Tuberculosis Drug Facility.''.

(5) ASSISTANCE FOR WHO AND THE STOP TUBERCULOSIS PARTNERSHIP.—Such section is further amended—

(A) by redesignating subsection (g) (as redesignated by paragraph (3) of this subsection) as subsection (h); and

(B) by inserting after subsection (f) (as redesignated by paragraph (4) and amended by paragraph (5) of this subsection) the following new subsection:

''(g) ASSISTANCE FOR WHO AND THE STOP TUBERCULOSIS PARTNERSHIP.—In carrying out this section, the President, acting through the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, is authorized to provide increased resources to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Stop Tuberculosis Partnership to improve the capacity of countries with high rates of tuberculosis and other affected countries to implement the Stop TB Strategy and specific strategies related to addressing extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR–TB).''.

(6) DEFINITIONS.—Subsection (h) of such section (as redesignated by paragraph (5)(A) of this subsection) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end before the period the following: '', including low cost and effective diagnosis and evaluation of treatment regimes, vaccines, and monitoring of tuberculosis, as well as a reliable drug supply, and a management strategy for public health systems, with health system strengthening, promotion of the use of the International Standards for Tuberculosis Care by all care providers, bacteriology under an external quality assessment framework, short-course chemotherapy, and sound reporting and recording systems''; and

(B) by adding after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph:

''(6) STOP TB STRATEGY.—The term 'Stop TB Strategy' means the six-point strategy to reduce tuberculosis developed by the World Health Organization. The strategy is described in the Global Plan to Stop TB 2007–2016: Actions for Life, a comprehensive plan developed by the Stop Tuberculosis Partnership that sets out the actions necessary to achieve the millennium development goal of cutting tuberculosis deaths and disease burden in half by 2016.''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 302(b) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7632(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''$4,000,000,000 for fiscal years 2009 through 2013''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

SEC. 303. ASSISTANCE TO COMBAT MALARIA.

(a) AMENDMENT TO THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961.—Section 104C(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 21516–4(b)) is amended by striking ''control, and cure'' and inserting ''treatment, and care''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 303(b) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7633(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''$5,000,000,000 for fiscal years 2009 through 2013''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

(c) DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY.—Section 303 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7633) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY.—The President shall establish a comprehensive, five-year strategy to combat global malaria that strengthens the capacity of the United States to be an effective leader of international efforts to reduce the global malaria disease burden. Such strategy shall maintain sufficient flexibility and remain responsive to the ever-changing nature of the global malaria challenge and shall—

''(1) include specific objectives, multisectoral approaches and strategies to treat and provide care to individuals infected with malaria, to prevent the further spread of malaria;

''(2) describe how this strategy would contribute to the United States' overall global health and development goals;

''(3) clearly explain how proposed activities to combat malaria will be coordinated with other United States global health activities, including the five-year global HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis strategies developed pursuant to section 101 of this Act;

''(4) expand public-private partnerships and leveraging of resources to combat malaria, including private sector resources;

''(5) coordinate among relevant executive branch agencies providing assistance to combat malaria in order to maximize human and financial resources and reduce unnecessary duplication among such agencies and other donors;

''(6) maximize United States capabilities in the areas of technical assistance, training, and research, including vaccine research, to combat malaria; and

''(7) establish priorities and selection criteria for the distribution of resources to combat malaria based on factors such as the size and demographics of the population with malaria, the needs of that population, the host countries' existing infrastructure, and the host countries' ability to complement United States efforts with strategies outlined in national malaria control plans.

''(e) MALARIA RESPONSE COORDINATOR.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—There should be established within the United States Agency for International Development a Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat Malaria Globally, who should be appointed by the President.

''(2) AUTHORITIES.—The Coordinator, acting through such nongovernmental organizations and relevant executive branch agencies as may be necessary and appropriate to effect the purposes of section 104C of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151b–4), is authorized—

''(A) to operate internationally to carry out prevention, treatment, care, support, capacity development of health systems, and other activities for combating malaria;

''(B) to transfer and allocate funds to relevant executive branch agencies;

''(C) to provide grants to, and enter into contracts with, nongovernmental organizations to carry out the purposes of such section 104C;

''(D) to enter into contracts and transfer and allocate funds to international organizations to carry out the purposes of such section 104C; and

''(E) to coordinate with a public-private partnership to discover and develop effective new antimalarial drugs, including drugs for

multi-drug resistant malaria and malaria in pregnant women.

''(3) DUTIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Coordinator shall have primary responsibility for the oversight and coordination of all resources and global United States government activities to combat malaria.

''(B) SPECIFIC DUTIES.—The Coordinator shall—

''(i) facilitate program and policy coordination among relevant executive branch agencies and nongovernmental organizations, including auditing, monitoring and evaluation of such programs;

''(ii) ensure that each relevant executive branch agency has sufficient resources to execute programs in areas in which the agency has the greatest expertise, technical capability, and potential for success;

''(iii) coordinate with the Office of the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally and equivalent managers of other relevant executive branch agencies that are implementing global health programs to develop and implement program plans, country-level interactions, and recipient administrative requirements in countries in which more than one program operates;

''(iv) coordinate relevant executive branch agency activities in the field, including coordination of planning, implementation, and evaluation of malaria programs with HIV/AIDS programs in countries in which both programs are being carried out;

''(v) pursue coordinate program implementation with host governments, other donors, and the private sector; and

''(vi) establish due diligence criteria for all recipients of funds appropriated pursuant to the authorizations of appropriations under section 401 for malaria assistance.

''(f) ASSISTANCE TO WHO.—In carrying out this section, the President is authorized to make a United States contribution to the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and the World Health Organization (WHO) to improve the capacity of countries with high rates of malaria and other affected countries to implement comprehensive malaria control programs.

''(g) ANNUAL REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, and annually thereafter, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on United States assistance for the prevention, treatment, control, and elimination of malaria.

''(2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include a description of—

''(A) the countries and activities to which malaria assistance has been allocated;

''(B) the number of people reached through malaria assistance programs;

''(C) the percentage and number of children and mothers reached through malaria assistance programs;

''(D) research efforts to develop new tools to combat malaria, including drugs and vaccines;

''(E) collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, other donor governments, and relevant executive branch agencies to combat malaria;

''(F) quantified impact of United States assistance on childhood morbidity and mortality;

''(G) the number of children who received immunizations through malaria assistance programs; and

''(H) the number of women receiving antenatal care through malaria assistance programs.''.

SEC. 304. HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIPS TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7631 et seq.) is amended by striking section 304 and inserting the following:

''SEC. 304. HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIPS TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS.

''(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the use of health care partnerships that link United States and host country health care institutions create opportunities for sharing of knowledge and expertise among individuals with significant experience in health-related fields and build local capacity to combat HIV/AIDS and increase scientific understanding of the progression of HIV/AIDS and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

''(b) AUTHORITY TO FACILITATE HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIPS TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS.—The President, acting through the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally, shall facilitate the development of health care partnerships described in subsection (a) by–

''(1) supporting short- and long-term institutional partnerships, including partnerships that build capacity in ministries of health, central- and district-level health agencies, medical facilities, health education and training institutions, academic centers, and faith- and community-based organizations involved in prevention, treatment, and care of HIV/AIDS;

''(2) supporting the development of consultation services using appropriate technologies, including online courses, DVDs, telecommunications services, and other technologies to eliminate the barriers that prevent host country professionals from accessing high quality health care services information, particularly providers located in rural areas;

''(3) supporting the placements of highly qualified individuals to strengthen human and organizational capacity through the use of health care professionals to facilitate skills transfer, building local capacity, and to expand rapidly the pool of providers, managers, and other health care staff delivering HIV/AID services in host countries; and

''(4) meeting individual country needs and, where possible, insisting on the implementation of a national strategic plan, by providing training and mentoring to strengthen human and organizational capacity among local health care service organizations.

''(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 401 for HIV/AIDS assistance, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 note) is amended by striking the item relating to section 304 and inserting the following new item:

''Sec. 304. Health care partnerships to combat HIV/AIDS.''.

Subtitle B—Assistance for Women, Children, and Families

SEC. 311. POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS.

(a) POLICY.—Subsection (a) of section 312 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7652) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by striking ''The United States Government's'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The United States''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) COLLABORATION.—The United States should work in collaboration with governments, donors, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and other key stakeholders to carry out the policy described in paragraph (1).''.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The 5-year United States strategy required by section 101 of this Act shall—

''(1) establish a target for prevention and treatment of mother-to-child transmission of HIV that by 2013 will reach at least 80 percent of pregnant women in those countries most affected by HIV/AIDS;

''(2) establish a target requiring that by 2013 up to 15 percent of individuals receiving care and up to 15 percent of individuals receiving treatment under this Act and the amendments made by this Act are children;

''(3) integrate care and treatment with prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programs in order to improve outcomes for HIV-affected women and families as soon as is feasible, consistent with the national government policies of countries in which programs under this Act are administered, and including support for strategies to ensure successful follow-up and continuity of care;

''(4) expand programs designed to care for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS;

''(5) develop a timeline for expanding access to more effective regimes to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, consistent with the national government policies of countries in which programs under this Act are administered and the goal of achieving universal use of such regimens as soon as possible;

''(6) ensure that women receiving voluntary contraceptive counseling, services, or commodities in programs supported by the United States Government have access to the full range of HIV/AIDS services; and

''(7) ensure that women in prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programs are provided with appropriate maternal and child services, either directly or by referral.''.

SEC. 312. ANNUAL REPORTS ON PREVENTION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF THE HIV INFECTION.

Section 313(a) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7653(a)) is amended by striking ''5 years'' and inserting ''10 years''.

SEC. 313. STRATEGY TO PREVENT HIV INFECTIONS AMONG WOMEN AND YOUTH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7631 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 316. STRATEGY TO PREVENT HIV INFECTIONS AMONG WOMEN AND YOUTH.

''(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—In order to meet the United States Government's goal of preventing 12,000,000 new HIV infections worldwide, it shall be the policy of the United States to pursue a global HIV/AIDS prevention strategy that emphasizes the immediate and ongoing needs of women and youth and addresses the factors that lead to gender disparities in the rate of HIV infection.

''(b) STRATEGY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall formulate a comprehensive, integrated, and culturally-appropriate global HIV/AIDS prevention strategy that, to the extent epidemiologically appropriate, addresses the vulnerabilities of women and youth to HIV

infection and seeks to reduce the factors that lead to gender disparities in the rate of HIV infection.

''(2) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under paragraph (1) shall include specific goals and targets under the 5-year strategy outlined in section 101 and shall include comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention education at the individual and national level including the ABC ('Abstain, Be faithful, use Condoms') model as a means to reduce HIV infections and shall include the following:

''(A) Specific goals under the five-year strategy outlined in section 101.

''(B) Empowering women and youth to avoid cross-generational sex and to decide when and whom to marry in order to reduce the incidence of early or child marriage.

''(C) Dramatically increasing access to currently available female-controlled prevention methods and including investments in training to increase the effective and consistent use of both male and female condoms.

''(D) Accelerating the de-stigmatization of HIV/AIDS among women and youth as a major risk factor for the transmission of HIV.

''(E) Addressing and preventing post-traumatic and psycho-social consequences and providing post-exposure prophylaxis to victims of gender-based violence and rape against women and youth through appropriate medical, social, educational, and legal assistance and through prosecutions and legal penalties to address such violence.

''(F) Promoting changes in male attitudes and behavior that respect the human rights of women and youth and that support and foster gender equality.

''(G) Supporting the development of micro-enterprise initiatives, job training programs, and other such efforts to assist women in developing and retaining independent economic means.

''(H) Supporting universal basic education and expanded educational opportunities for women and youth.

''(I) Protecting the property and inheritance rights of women.

''(J) Coordinating inclusion of HIV/AIDS prevention information and education services and programs for individuals with HIV/AIDS with existing health care services targeted to women and youth, such as ensuring access to HIV/AIDS education and testing in family planning programs supported by the United States Government and programs to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and expanding the reach of such HIV/AIDS health services.

''(K) Promoting gender equality by supporting the development of nongovernmental organizations, including faith-based and community-based organizations, that support the needs of women and utilizing such organizations that are already empowering women and youth at the community level.

''(L) Encouraging the creation and effective enforcement of legal frameworks that guarantee women equal rights and equal protection under the law.

''(M) Encouraging the participation and involvement of women in drafting, coordinating, and implementing the national HIV/AIDS strategic plans of their countries.

''(N) Responding to other economic and social factors that increase the vulnerability of women and youth to HIV infection.

''(3) TRANSMISSION TO CONGRESS AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees and make available to the public the strategy required under paragraph (1).

''(c) COORDINATION.—In formulating and implementing the strategy required under subsection (b), the President shall ensure that the United States coordinates its overall HIV/AIDS policy and programs with the national governments of the countries for which the United States provides assistance to combat HIV/AIDS and, to the extent practicable, with international organizations, other donor countries, and indigenous organizations, including faith-based and community-based organizations specifically for the purposes of ensuring gender equality and promoting respect of the human rights of women that impact their susceptibility to HIV/AIDS, improving women's health, and expanding education for women and youth, and organizations, including faith-based and other nonprofit organizations, providing services to and advocating on behalf of individuals with HIV/AIDS and individuals affected by HIV/AIDS.

''(d) GUIDANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall provide clear guidance to field missions of the United States Government in countries for which the United States provides assistance to combat HIV/AIDS, based on the strategy required under subsection (b).

''(2) TRANSMISSION TO CONGRESS AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees and make available to the public a description of the guidance required under paragraph (1).

''(e) REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, and annually thereafter as part of the annual report required under section 104A(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151b–2(e)), the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees and make available to the public a report on the implementation of this section for the prior fiscal year.

''(2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

''(A) A description of the prevention programs designed to address the vulnerabilities of women and youth to HIV/AIDS.

''(B) A list of nongovernmental organizations in each country that receive assistance from the United States to carry out HIV prevention activities, including the amount and the source of funding received.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 note) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 315 the following:

''Sec. 316. Strategy to prevent HIV infections among women and youth.''.

SEC. 314. CLERICAL AMENDMENT.

The table of contents for the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 note) is amended by striking the item relating to subtitle B of title III and inserting the following:

''Subtitle B—Assistance for Women, Children, and Families''.

TITLE IV—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 401. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 401(a) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7671(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$3,000,000,000'' and inserting ''$10,000,000,000''; and

(2) by striking ''fiscal years 2004 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

SEC. 402. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Section 402(b) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7672) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1);

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (4) as paragraphs (1) through (3), respectively; and

(3) in paragraph (2) (as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this section), by striking '', of which'' and all that follows through ''programs''.

SEC. 403. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.

(a) HIV/AIDS PREVENTION ACTIVITIES.—Subsection (a) of section 403 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7673) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) HIV/AIDS PREVENTION ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013, not less than 20 percent of the amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under section 401 for HIV/AIDS assistance for each such fiscal year shall be expended for HIV/AIDS prevention activities consistent with section 104A(d) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

''(2) BALANCED FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—(A) The Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally shall provide balanced funding for prevention activities for sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS and shall ensure that behavioral change programs, including abstinence, delay of sexual debut, monogamy, fidelity and partner reduction, are implemented and funded in a meaningful and equitable way in the strategy for each host country based on objective epidemiological evidence as to the source of infections and in consultation with the government of each host county involved in HIV/AIDS prevention activities.

''(B) In fulfilling the requirement under subparagraph (A), the Coordinator shall establish a HIV sexual transmission prevention strategy governing the expenditure of funds authorized by the Act used to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV in any host country with a generalized epidemic. In each such host country, if this strategy provides less than 50 percent of such funds for behavioral change programs, including abstinence, delay of sexual debut, monogamy, fidelity, and partner reduction, the Coordinator shall, within 30 days of the issuance of this strategy, report to the appropriate congressional committees on the justification for this decision.

''(C) Programs and activities that implement or purchase new prevention technologies or modalities such as medical male circumcision, pre-exposure prophylaxis, or microbicides and programs and activities that provide counseling and testing for HIV or prevent mother-to-child prevention of HIV shall not be included in determining compliance with this paragraph.

''(3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, and annually thereafter as part of the annual report required under section 104A(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151b–2(e)), the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees and make available to the public a report on the implementation of paragraph (2) for the prior fiscal year.''.

(b) ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended by

striking ''fiscal years 2006 through 2008'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2013''.

SEC. 404. PROHIBITION ON TAXATION BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS.

(a) PROHIBITION ON TAXATION.—None of the funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under section 401 of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7671) may be made available to provide assistance for a foreign country under a new bilateral agreement governing the terms and conditions under which such assistance is to be provided unless such agreement includes a provision stating that assistance provided by the United States shall be exempt from taxation, or reimbursed, by the foreign government, and the Secretary of State shall expeditiously seek to negotiate amendments to existing bilateral agreements, as necessary, to conform with this requirement.

(b) DE MINIMUS EXCEPTION.—Foreign taxes of a de minimus nature shall not be subject to the provisions of subsection (a).

(c) REPROGRAMMING OF FUNDS.—Funds withheld from obligation for each country or entity pursuant to subsection (a) shall be reprogrammed for assistance to countries which do not assess taxes on United States assistance or which have an effective arrangement that is providing substantial reimbursement of such taxes.

(d) DETERMINATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The provisions of this section shall not apply to any country or entity the Secretary of State determines—

(A) does not assess taxes on United States assistance or which has an effective arrangement that is providing substantial reimbursement of such taxes; or

(B) the foreign policy interests of the United States outweigh the policy of this section to ensure that United States assistance is not subject to taxation.

(2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of State shall consult with the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations at least 15 days prior to exercising the authority of this subsection with regard to any country or entity.

(e) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of State shall issue rules, regulations, or policy guidance, as appropriate, to implement the prohibition against the taxation of assistance contained in this section.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

(1) the terms ''taxes'' and ''taxation'' refer to value added taxes and customs duties imposed on commodities financed with United States assistance for programs for which funds are authorized by this Act; and

(2) the term ''bilateral agreement'' refers to a framework bilateral agreement between the Government of the United States and the government of the country receiving assistance that describes the privileges and immunities applicable to United States foreign assistance for such country generally, or an individual agreement between the Government of the United States and such government that describes, among other things, the treatment for tax purposes that will be accorded the United States assistance provided under that agreement.

TITLE V—SUSTAINABILITY AND STRENGTHENING OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

SEC. 501. SUSTAINABILITY AND STRENGTHENING OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS.

The United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VI—SUSTAINABILITY AND STRENGTHENING OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

''SEC. 601. FINDINGS.

''Congress makes the following findings:

''(1) The shortage of health personnel, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, counselors, laboratory staff, and paraprofessionals, is one of the leading obstacles to fighting HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

''(2) The HIV/AIDS pandemic aggravates the shortage of health workers through loss of life and illness among medical staff, unsafe working conditions for medical personnel, and increased workloads for diminished staff, while the shortage of health personnel undermines efforts to prevent and provide care and treatment for individuals with HIV/AIDS.

''(3) Failure to address the shortage of health care professionals and paraprofessionals, and the factors forcing such individuals to leave sub-Saharan Africa, will undermine the objectives of United States development policy and will subvert opportunities to achieve internationally-recognized goals for the prevention, treatment, and care of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, the reduction of child and maternal mortality, and for economic growth and development in sub-Saharan Africa.

''SEC. 602. NATIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STRATEGIES AND OTHER POLICIES.

''(a) NATIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STRATEGIES.—

''(1) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States Government to support countries receiving United States assistance to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and other health programs in developing, strengthening, and implementing 5-year health workforce strategies.

''(2) TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally, is authorized to provide technical and financial assistance to countries described in paragraph (1) to enable such countries, in conjunction with other funding sources, to develop, strengthen, and implement health workforce strategies.

''(3) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Assistance provided under paragraph (2) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be used to carry out the following:

''(A) Activities to promote an inclusive process that includes nongovernmental organizations and individuals with HIV/AIDS in developing health workforce strategies.

''(B) Activities to achieve and sustain a health workforce sufficient in numbers, skill, and capacity to meet United States and host-country international health commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals and universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care. In particular, such health workforce strategies should include plans for progress toward achieving the minimum ratio of health professionals required to achieve these goals by 2015, estimated by the World Health Organization to require at least 2.3 doctors, nurses, and midwives per 1,000 population, and additional health workers such as pharmacists and lab technicians.

''(C) Activities to ensure that health workforce strategies are aimed at creating appropriate distribution of health workers and prioritizing activities required to ensure rural, marginalized, and other underserved populations are able to access skilled and equipped health workers.

''(D) Activities to expand the capacity of public and private medical, nursing, pharmaceutical, and other health training institutions.

''(b) POSITIVE BROADER HEALTH IMPACT.—It shall be the policy of the United States to ensure to expand the capacity of the health workforce engaged in HIV/AIDS programming in ways that contribute to, and do not detract from, the capacity of countries to meet other health needs, particularly child survival and maternal health.

''(c) SAFETY FOR HEALTH WORKERS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should ensure that all health workers participating in programs that receive assistance under this Act and the amendments made by this Act have the proper training to create safe and sanitary working conditions in accordance with universal precautions and other forms of infection prevention and control.

''(d) HEALTH CARE FOR HEALTH WORKERS.—The Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally shall ensure that comprehensive and confidential health services shall be provided to all health workers participating in programs that receive assistance under this Act and the amendments made by this Act, including—

''(1) testing and counseling for all such employees;

''(2) providing HIV/AIDS treatment to HIV-positive employees; and

''(3) taking measures to reduce HIV-related stigma in the workplace.

''(e) TRAINING AND COMPENSATION FINANCE.—Where the Coordinator determines such financial support is essential to fulfill the purposes of this Act, the Coordinator shall finance training and provide compensation or other benefits for health workers in order to enhance recruitment and retention of such workers.

''SEC. 603. EXEMPTION OF INVESTMENTS IN HEALTH FROM LIMITS SOUGHT BY INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

''(a) COORDINATION WITHIN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.—The Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally shall work with the Secretary of the Treasury to reform International Monetary Fund macroeconomic and fiscal policies that result in limitations on national and donor investments in health.

''(b) POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES AT THE IMF.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall instruct the United States Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to oppose any loan, project, agreement, memorandum, instrument, plan, or other program of the International Monetary Fund that does not exempt increased government spending on health care from national budget caps or restraints, hiring or wage bill ceilings, or other limits sought by any international financial institution.

''SEC. 604. PUBLIC-SECTOR PROCUREMENT, DRUG REGISTRATION, AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat AIDS Globally shall work with the Partnership for Supply Chain Management Systems, host countries, and nongovernmental organizations to develop effective, reliable host country-owned and operated public-sector procurement and supply chain management systems, including regional distribution, with ongoing technical assistance and sustained support to ensure the function of such systems, as well as the function of existing non-public sector supply chains, including those operated by faith-based and other humanitarian organizations that procure and distribute medical supplies.

''(b) AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES.—The public-sector procurement and supply chain management systems developed pursuant to subsection (a) should ensure that adequate laboratory equipment and supplies commonly needed to fight HIV/AIDS, including diagnostic tests for CD4 and viral load counts, x-ray machines, mobile and facility-based rapid HIV test kits and other necessary assays, reagents and basic supplies such as sterile syringes and gloves, are available and distributed in a manner that is accessible to urban and rural populations.

''(c) DRUG REGISTRATION.—The Coordinator shall work with host country partners and development partners to support efficient and effective drug approval and registration systems that allow expeditious access to safe and effective drugs, including antiretroviral drugs.

''(d) REPORT.—The Coordinator shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an annual report on the implementation of this section, including progress toward specific benchmarks established by the Partnership for Supply Chain Management Systems, and the projection of when host countries can fully sustain their own procurement and supply chain management and distribution systems at a scale necessary for national primary health needs.

''SEC. 605. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 401 for HIV/AIDS assistance, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out this title.

''(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) are authorized to remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 502. CLERICAL AMENDMENT.

The table of contents for the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 note) is amended by inserting after the items relating to title V the following:

''TITLE VI—SUSTAINABILITY AND STRENGTHENING OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

''Sec. 601. Findings.

''Sec. 602. National health workforce strategies and other policies.

''Sec. 603. Exemption of investments in health from limits sought by international financial institutions.

''Sec. 604. Public-sector procurement, drug registration, and supply chain management systems.

''Sec. 605. Authorization of appropriations.''.

The CHAIRMAN. No amendment to the bill is in order except those printed in House Report 110–562. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent of the amendment, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 110–562.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment made in order under the rule.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 1 offered by Mr. BLUMENAUER:

Page 59, line 7, insert '', safe drinking water,'' after ''nutrition''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1065, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, it is a pleasure for me to rise dealing with the underlying legislation that contains an important section to address barriers that might limit the start of and adherence to treatment services. This section also encourages direct linkages between the efforts to treat HIV/AIDS, nutrition and income security programs.

I applaud the chairman and ranking member for the work that they have done bringing this together, and the recognition that dealing with HIV-AIDS must be done in a holistic fashion that treats the entire person and their environment, not just the disease.

I have a very personal connection to this legislation now that was not present when I first started working on issues of water for the poor now that I have a daughter working in Mozambique in the Peace Corps who is dealing with these problems on a day-to-day basis.

This direct amendment would add safe drinking water to nutrition and income security on the list of programs for which direct linkages are encouraged. This is an important tribute to our late colleagues, Chairman Lantos and Chairman Hyde, who were so instrumental in the enactment of our Water for the Poor Act, and their insights that are bringing safe drinking is an important component of developmental sectors from health to the environment. To include safe drinking water in legislation through which we honor their memories is a small testament to their lasting legacies.

Including safe drinking water is critical because we cannot treat HIV/AIDS without safe drinking water. USAID has recognized in its guidance for missions carrying out these programs that people with HIV/AIDS are at increased risk for diarrheal diseases and far more likely to suffer severe and chronic complications if infected.

There is terrible irony in providing patients with advanced antiretroviral agents, and then asking them to use the water in a glass that may infect them with a life-threatening illness to wash down the life-saving pills.

To add irony, one of the complications of diarrheal illnesses is HIV-infected patients have a reduced ability to absorb antiretroviral and other medications from the gut. This poor absorption can contribute to the development of HIV strains that are resistant. In addition to the negative impact on life expectancy and quality of life, they also add significantly to the burdens on caregivers in clinics and at home and put them and other family members at risk for infection.

We are all a part of this in the global community. This legislation is important to tie these challenges together, not deal with it piecemeal, and to help with advancing the overall objective of this legislation.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment for purposes of debate.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I support Mr. BLUMENAUER's amendment, which would add safe drinking water to nutrition and income security on the list of programs for which direct linkages are encouraged. For patients whose immune systems have been compromised by AIDS, the availability of safe, clean drinking water is vitally important. This is especially true for HIV positive women with young infants who use infant formula to avoid transmitting the virus to their babies during feeding. If the water used in the formula is not clean, their babies are at high risk for waterborne diseases. Therefore, this amendment would allow PEPFAR to link with existing safe drinking water programs in order to provide clean water to these treatment patients.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I appreciate the gentlewoman yielding, and I rise to join you in supporting the gentleman's amendment. What was interesting to me was to learn, and there are many things I learned in this bill that I didn't know, but one was that about 1.2 billion people globally lack safe water to consume in the least-developed countries, and up to 90 percent of AIDS patients, 90 percent, suffer and frequently die from the chronic diarrheal diseases that the gentleman discussed. These diseases are caused by the use of unsafe water.

This is a compelling amendment. I join the gentlewoman in supporting it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I would also like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, I rise in support of Mr. BLUMENAUER's amendment to ensure that safe drinking water is a component of our HIV/AIDS strategy. Congressman

BLUMENAUER, the lead sponsor of the Water for the Poor Act of 2005, has been a strong advocate on this issue for years, and he was kind enough to testify about the challenge of clean water in Africa at a hearing of the Subcommittee on Global Health I chaired in May of 2007.

During the course of that hearing, it became clear that in Africa, the region hardest hit by the AIDS pandemic, the problem of safe water is particularly acute. The total number of people without access to potable water in the region has actually increased by 60 million in the past half decade. That is why Mr. BLUMENAUER and I, along with other Members of Congress, successfully secured $300 million for safe drinking water and sanitation projects for fiscal year 2008.

We all know that HIV compromises the immune system. Those infected with the disease are far more likely to succumb to the illness caused by unsafe drinking water, especially if they are children, and there is no way that people can take ARVs if they do not have access to clean drinking water.

I strongly support Mr. BLUMENAUER's amendment, and thank him for his cosponsorship of H. Res. 318, supporting the goals of the United Nations International Year of Sanitation. His resolution encourages international communities to achieve the target of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. I encourage my colleagues to support the Blumenauer amendment.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Chairman PAYNE. I appreciate the ranking member yielding time to him. I was prepared to do so, but she was able to give him more time, and that is important.

Congressman PAYNE, your laser-like focus on this with the subcommittee, your long-term advocacy, your work on the continent, is something that I find inspirational. I look forward to working with you and partnering on these issues as we move forward.

To the Chair and ranking member, your willingness to include this is important, and our work together to be able to focus on the whole person and to be able to deal with waterborne disease, the number one preventible cause of death and disease around the world. Half the people who are sick today anywhere in the world are sick needlessly from water-borne disease. Adding this critical amendment to your important legislation is an important step forward. I hope it is just one step that we can work on together to bring people around the world to support this critical priority.

As I say, I can think of no more fitting tribute to your previous predecessors as Chair of the committee, Congressman Hyde and Congressman Lantos, who worked so hard to advance this cause. I urge adoption of this amendment.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. FORTENBERRY

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 110–562.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 2 offered by Mr. FORTENBERRY:

Page 43, line 4, insert before the period at the end the following: '', including both Principal Recipients and sub-recipients''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1065, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, I have been involved extensively in the issues before us today. I really do appreciate the bipartisan cooperation that has guided this process, particularly by Chairman BERMAN and our ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. This bill is appropriately named for two giants of this institution, Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde.

My amendment addresses the issue of transparency and accountability in the Global Fund. The Global Fund is a unique, non-governmental multilateral organization headquartered in Switzerland and focused on combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria throughout the developing world.

□ 1430

The U.S. Government is the single largest provider of resources and technical assistance to the Global Fund, and since 2001 Congress has appropriated nearly $4 billion to the Fund. The Lantos-Hyde bill before us today authorizes additional funds that will total in the billions.

The bill currently and appropriately calls for systematic assessments of performance data of principal recipients and subrecipients of funds, as recommended by the Government Accountability Office, the GAO. This technical amendment simply clarifies that audits by the Fund's Inspector General should also encompass principal recipients and subrecipients, the entities that actually receive programmatic funding.

Madam Chairman, I believe that this amendment strengthens the spirit of accountability that is present in the underlying bill. According to a June 2005 report by the GAO, the Global Fund possessed a limited ability to monitor and evaluate grants. Concerns have also been raised that the volume of funding provided through the Global Fund may exceed the capacity of the recipients in the field to actually utilize it.

Since we are considering an additional contribution that may total in the billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars to the Global Fund over the life of this reauthorization, I believe that it would be beneficial for ourselves, as well as for the Fund, as well as for other donors, to have additional clarity on how these funds are being used in the field for those most in need of our assistance.

Madam Chairman, I intend to support the overall bill, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, while I do not oppose the amendment, I ask unanimous consent to take the time in opposition.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, the gentleman's amendment, and I have spoken to him about it, encourages the Global Fund Inspector General to not only audit its grantees, but also the subgrantees and subrecipients who receive Global Fund money.

Obviously, I share the gentleman's concern that transparency and accountability in the use of HIV/AIDS assistance provided through the Global Fund is critically important for all the reasons that he stated. The Global Fund, in all fairness, I do want to point out, has shown, I believe, its commitment to that transparency and accountability. It has a new inspector general, and has instituted an enhanced accounting system that focuses on improving accountability among subrecipients. But the principle of this amendment makes sense. While there are some technical issues I will want to talk to him about as we move through the legislative process, I look forward to working with him on it and I certainly urge the adoption of the amendment.

I yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from Florida, the ranking member.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I also support Mr. FORTENBERRY's amendment which would ensure that audits by the Global Fund Inspector General include information on subcontractors.

The U.S. government is the largest contributor to the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Since the fund was created, the U.S.

has appropriated and pledged $3.5 billion for contributions to the Global Fund, representing nearly one-third of the total budget of the Global Fund. It is an important component to the world's response to these three diseases, and has made progress on issues of transparency and accountability in recent years.

As the bill makes clear, continued support to the Global Fund should be based on the Fund's ability to meet certain transparency and accountability benchmarks.

This amendment builds on and clarifies the underlying text in order to ensure that the audits conducted by the Global Fund's Office of Inspector General cover both primary recipients of grant funding and subrecipients who perform smaller pieces of the grants. These audits are important. I thank the gentleman for the time, and I support the Fortenberry amendment on Inspector General audits at the Global Fund.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the chairman of the Africa Subcommittee, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, I rise to speak on the amendment offered by Mr. FORTENBERRY. We appreciate the work that he does on the subcommittee and he contributes greatly.

We feel that the Inspector General has been doing an adequate job; however, we do not oppose this amendment. The Office has approved over $10 billion for programs in 136 countries around the world so far, which amounts to 21 percent of all donor HIV/AIDS spending, and two-thirds of all the donor spending on malaria and tuberculosis. Through the Global Fund, 1.4 million people have been treated with life-saving antivirals, 3.3 million cases of TB have been treated; and, in a new area, 46 million bed nets have been distributed to protect children against malaria. And I am pleased to say that Ray Chambers from New Jersey and my congressional district has been appointed ambassador for the U.N. to combat malaria.

So, we do not oppose this amendment, and we look forward to the bill's passage.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Chairman, I want to thank the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee for his support of this. I understand the concerns he addressed and understand his comments, as well as the chairman's of the subcommittee. I look forward to continuing to work with him, but do appreciate his support of the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. MC COLLUM OF MINNESOTA

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 110–562.

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment made in order under the rule.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 3 offered by Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota:

Page 35, line 13, insert '', Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho'' after ''Republic''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1065, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Chairman, the amendment offered by Mr. JACKSON of Illinois and myself would add three Southern African countries, Malawi, Swaziland, and Lesotho, to the lists of countries that will be a part of the focus countries in the reauthorization of this Global HIV/AIDS legislation.

In 2003, the original PEPFAR legislation designated 14 focus countries. These countries were prioritized for intensive investment of resources and technical expertise as provided through PEPFAR. The bill on the floor today adds focus countries by designating Vietnam and 14 Caribbean basic countries with PEPFAR focus status. Unfortunately, these three countries in Southern Africa, each confronting devastation as a result of HIV/AIDS, have not been granted priority status in PEPFAR. The crisis of HIV/AIDS confronting Malawi, Swaziland, and Lesotho is real and in some cases worse than the existing focus countries.

Malawi is a country of 13 million people, with 900,000 children orphaned by AIDS and nearly 1 million of its adults living with HIV, a 14 percent infection rate. Swaziland, with a population of only 1.1 million people, has over 200,000 adults living with HIV, one in three adults, or a 33 percent adult infection rate. Lesotho has a population of 2 million people, and an HIV infection rate among its adults of 23 percent.

These three countries are not only confronting HIV and AIDS, but they are also among the poorest countries on the planet, which makes their challenge so much greater. Malawi, for example, is 164th out of 177 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index. Also, each country is geographically surrounded by countries that were designated focus countries in the original PEPFAR legislation, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, which are presently receiving massive investments to confront their epidemics.

Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho are working bilaterally with the United States; but by not being granted PEPFAR's focus country status, the gap that they face between the needs and available resources means that too many people will continue to be infected, too many people will continue to die needlessly, and too many orphans will be left to fend for themselves.

This amendment has the support of the governments of Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho.

I submit for the RECORD a letter of support from the three governments.

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI,
Washington, DC, March 28, 2008.

Hon. BETTY MCCOLLUM,
House of Representatives,
Washington DC.

DEAR HONOURABLE MCCOLLUM, we are writing to follow up on our recent meeting during which we discussed, among other things, the re-authorization of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

We are deeply concerned that the three countries that have been heavily impacted by the HIV/AIDS virus in Southern Africa, and whose prevalence rates are above 14% have been left out from the new list of focus countries as reflected in H.R. 5501. Our countries have become islands amidst countries that are receiving tremendous resources from PEPFAR within the region.

The AIDS epidemic in our countries has brought additional pressure to bear on the health sector. We are failing to train adequate number of health workers to provide services to those living with HIV and suffering from AIDS. The few that we have trained have died from the virus while others have left the continent for greener pastures in the western countries. Although the recent increase in the provision of ARV has brought hope to many, it has also put increased strain on the remaining healthcare workers. In addition, there are many more people living with the HIV virus who are not receiving treatment due to lack of resources to purchase drugs and to train personnel to administer treatment.

The presence of AIDS has also affected many households. Many children have lost one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS. At the same time, we have a large number of children who were born with the virus because the risk of mother-to-child transmission remains very high. Although we have put in place orphan care programs, the need for more resources to provide comprehensive care cannot be overemphasized. The pandemic has also added strain to the food insecurity in many areas because agricultural work has been neglected or abandoned due to household illness. The labor force, in general, has also been affected by HIV/AIDS, setting back economic and social progress.

Our leadership is highly committed to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Our governments have provided enough domestic resources within their means and are receiving external funding for HIV/AIDS programs. However, there is a wide funding gap between planned programs and resources required for implementation. It is for this reason that we humbly request you to introduce an amendment to H.R. 5501, to include Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland as focus countries.

Your assistance on this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

HAWA OLGA NDILOWE,
Ambassador of Malawi to the U.S.

EPHRAIM MANDLENKOSI M. HOPE,
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Swaziland to the U.S.

MABASIA NTSOAKI MOHOBANE,
Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the U.S.

These countries believe, as I do, that the severity of the epidemic in their countries should make their fight against AIDS a priority for this Congress and for the American people.

Finally, I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for their commitment for fighting HIV/AIDS, and for their hard work in bringing H.R. 5501 to the floor.

I also had the honor of serving on the International Relations Committee under the leadership of Mr. Hyde and Mr. Lantos when we passed the original PEPFAR legislation. They were both extraordinary men and wonderful mentors to me. They were compassionate leaders in this House, and it is fitting that we pay tribute to their lives and their contributions to this country by passing a bill that will save lives and improve life all around the world. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment to be included in the bill, and also to support passage of this important bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment for purposes of debate.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I actually support the McCollum-Jackson amendment, which would add Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho to the list of countries in which the Global AIDS Coordinator is given explicit statutory authority.

Malawi, Swaziland, and Lesotho all face major HIV/AIDS epidemics and have received significant resources through PEPFAR in the first 5 years of implementation. By giving the Global AIDS Coordinator explicit authority over the U.S. Government's HIV/AIDS programs in these countries, the Congress is signaling that it believes the U.S. Government should continue to come alongside these nations' governments and their citizens to support them in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and I commend Ms. MCCOLLUM and Mr. JACKSON for offering it.

I would like to yield the remaining time, Madam Chairman, to our chairman, Chairman BERMAN of California, as well as Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey, with Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey first.

Mr. PAYNE. I thank the gentlelady for yielding. I rise in strong support of the amendment offered by the gentlelady from Wisconsin.

Southern Africa has the highest rate of HIV and AIDS in the entire world. In Lesotho, we have heard, a country with an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 38 percent among pregnant women, only 19 percent of those in need of treatment for the disease have access for it. Even more troubling is the fact that only 5 percent of HIV-positive mothers get drugs to prevent the transmission of the virus to their children during childbirth. Life expectancy for women is 44 years, and for men a mere 39.

In Malawi, the situation is a little better; men are expected to live 41 years, women 42. The health care worker shortage in the country remains a major obstacle.

Circumstances in Swaziland are equally grim: 26 percent of adults are HIV positive. In a country of just over 1 million, there are 70,000 AIDS orphans. Clearly, HIV and AIDS pose a dire threat in these countries and must be urgently addressed. Therefore, I commend the gentlewoman, Ms. MCCOLLUM, for her amendment to make Swaziland, Lesotho, and Malawi focus countries, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, if I could yield now to Chairman BERMAN, the gentleman from California.

Mr. BERMAN. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

I support this amendment. I congratulate Representatives MCCOLLUM and JACKSON for their leadership in adding these hard-hit nations to the focus country list.

All three of these Southern African countries suffer from both high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates and high poverty rates, with devastating effects. The statistics in all three countries regarding AIDS have been put on the record by both the gentlelady from Minnesota and the gentleman from New Jersey, so I will just add my words of support for the amendment.

□ 1445

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Chairman, I would like to thank the chairman, the ranking member, and the distinguished Chair of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health for their kind words, and urge all of my colleagues to support the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. CARSON OF INDIANA

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in House Report 110–562.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment made in order under the rule.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 4 offered by Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

Page 49, line 10, insert before the period at the end the following: ''Recognizing that human and institutional capacity form the core of any health care system that can sustain the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, the plan shall include a strategy to encourage postsecondary educational institutions in host countries, particularly in Africa, in collaboration with United States postsecondary educational institutions, historically black colleges and universities, to develop such human and institutional capacity and in the process further build their capacity to sustain the fight against these diseases.''.

Page 104, line 21, before ''capacity'' insert ''human and institutional''.

Page 105, line 5, insert ''partnerships,'' after ''telecommunications services,''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1065, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008 and to offer my amendment which I believe will enhance the base bill. I want to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their hard work in bringing this legislation to the floor.

I find it of coincidence the timing of our consideration of this legislation for it is juxtaposed between two pivotal historical moments in time: The deaths of the renowned African American medical doctor, Dr. Charles Drew on April 1, 1950, and the celebrated human rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968.

Both Dr. Drew and Dr. King were products of the American educational system and particularly of historically black colleges and universities. Madam Chairman, I cannot think of any better way to explain the importance of this amendment and its use. The effort to address HIV/AIDS requires the best of human rights and of medical science.

My amendment is a simple amendment that would make changes to section 204 of H.R. 5501. The amendment directs the coordinator of the United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally and the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to expand their plan for strengthening health systems of host countries by allowing for African post secondary educational institutions to collaborate with United States post secondary educational institutions and specifically historically black colleges and universities to develop such human and institutional capacity.

The goal of my amendment is to allow our Nation's finest post secondary educational institutions to be directly involved in the training of health care workers that will enhance the effectiveness and efficacy of the efforts put forth in H.R. 5501.

Madam Chairman, I can think of no better way for the citizens of Indiana, the great Hoosier State, to contribute

in the fight against this pandemic than to train the best and brightest, and to commit to countries whose health care systems suffer woefully from the lack of trained health professionals. After all, who are we to block the opportunity to these children to be successful.

Madam Chairman, before I close, I want to acknowledge and salute the two men this piece of legislation is named after, Congressmen Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde. I didn't get a chance to work with them in this body, but I cannot think of a better way to honor their service in this great institution.

Finally, I want to thank the wonderful staff of the Foreign Relations Committee and the Rules Committee for helping me craft this amendment. Madam Chairman, I ask for support of my amendment.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment for purposes of debate.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank Mr. CARSON for his well-reasoned and important amendment. We all had the honor of serving with his grandmother, Julia Carson, for many years in this body, and I know that Congresswoman Carson is looking down at her grandson and saying she is mighty proud. So thank you so much for your amendment, and thank you for carrying on in her great legacy by presenting wonderful topics and themes for us to discuss on the floor.

I fully support the Carson amendment because it focuses on building human and institutional capacity in PEPFAR host countries. It directs the global AIDS coordinator and the USAID administrator to expand their plan by strengthening health systems of host countries by encouraging post secondary educational institutions, particularly those in the African continent, to collaborate with the post secondary educational institutions here in the United States, including historically black colleges and universities in training health care workers.

As other provisions of this bill made clear, an important component of the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, is the strengthening of the educational capacity in host countries to train health care workers. The Carson amendment does exactly that. I congratulate him for it. He is a welcome addition to our Chamber.

I would like to yield to Ms. LEE of California who has been working on this issue for a long time, Madam Chairman.

Ms. LEE. I want to thank the gentlelady for yielding.

I rise today to support this amendment and to commend the gentleman from Indiana. I understand this is his first amendment, and it shows that he has hit the ground running. Today, I am reminded of our former colleague, his grandmother, our beloved Congresswoman Julia Carson. I know she is smiling today and is very proud of your efforts; thank you.

Historically black colleges and universities have trained some of our finest dedicated doctors, nurses and health care workers. These colleges and universities go way beyond the call of duty. They have a deep cultural and historical understanding and connection to the continent of Africa. They are attacking HIV/AIDS here on the homefront where HIV and AIDS is disproportionately affecting the African-American community. So by developing human and institutional capacity in Africa and in the Caribbean, we are bringing to bear, in a comprehensive manner, mechanisms to maximize our effectiveness in combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

So I want to salute and thank the gentleman from Indiana once again for his leadership and for helping to strengthen this bill.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Chairman, I appreciate the gentlelady, the ranking member, yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of the Carson amendment relating to the building of human capacity to fight HIV/AIDS through collaborations between U.S. colleges and universities and those in the developing world.

I, too, am very pleased to see this piece of legislation by Mr. CARSON. We all knew Julia Carson. She came to my district to deal with health disparities in my district in New Jersey, and traveled to Africa with me on a trip dealing with this problem. So this is very appropriate, and let me commend you again.

In May of 2007, Doctors Without Borders released a report that found that in southern Africa, a shortage of trained health care workers was the main barrier to increasing access to antiretroviral treatment.

The report found that in Mozambique, people had to wait up to 2 months to start ARVs because there were not enough doctors and nurses to manage it. In one health district in Lesotho, nearly half of the nursing posts were vacant. Malawi has only two doctors per 100,000 people. The minimum standard according to the WHO is 20 doctors per 100,000 people.

I am pleased to say that the bill under consideration seeks to address those problems. It calls on the United States to train 140,000 new health care workers and professionals so people can start on life-saving therapy.

University partnerships are a logical and effective means through which to support this goal. So I once again commend Mr. CARSON for his amendment, and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

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

I rise in strong support of the amendment offered by Mr. CARSON. Congressman CARSON's amendment rightfully recognizes that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is proliferating at an alarming rate around the globe, particularly in Africa.

This amendment establishes a cooperative framework in which AIDS researchers in Africa can collaborate with American medical experts, including researchers at historically black colleges and universities, on the best ways to treat and prevent the spread of this devastating infectious disease.

I commend and thank the gentleman from Indiana for offering this worthwhile amendment. I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment and the underlying bill.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. I want to thank the Members for listening and considering this amendment. I think it is a great opportunity for us.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 415, noes 10, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 156]

AYES—415

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Bordallo
Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Christensen
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake

Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fortuño
Fossella
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Norton
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Wexler
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOES—10

Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Garrett (NJ)
Goode
Hensarling
Jordan
Neugebauer
Poe
Sessions
Westmoreland

NOT VOTING—10

Bishop (UT)
Boswell
Cubin
Faleomavaega
Granger
Jefferson
Miller (FL)
Rush
Souder
Tauscher

□ 1521

Mr. WESTMORELAND changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. ADERHOLT and Mrs. BACHMANN changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The CHAIRMAN. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROSS) having assumed the chair, Ms. NORTON, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5501) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes, pursuant to House Resolution 1065, she reported the bill back to the House with sundry amendments adopted by the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. RYAN OF WISCONSIN

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I am in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Ryan of Wisconsin moves to recommit the bill H.R. 5501 to the Committee on Foreign Affairs with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendments:

Page 96, line 10, strike ''$4,000,000,000'' and insert ''such sums as may be necessary''.

Page 97, line 1, strike ''$5,000,000,000'' and insert ''such sums as may be necessary''.

Page 116, line 8, strike ''$10,000,000,000'' and insert ''6,000,000,000''.

Page 122, after line 2, insert the following:

SEC. 405. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) According to Congressional Budget Office estimates, $50 billion to carry out the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 would not be spent during the five-year authorization period, but instead would take 10 years or until 2018 to spend.

(2) Recent funding disbursement trends for the current program suggest that the current funding levels are outpacing the capacity of the countries and nongovernmental organizations to efficiently implement the program. Over the 2005–2006 funding period, assistance commitments grew $1.3 billion from $4.3 billion to $5.6 billion, while the actual disbursements of funds grew at a much slower rate of $400 million from $3.5 billion to $3.9 billion. As such, the current commitment exceeds disbursement by $1.7 billion, or 30 percent of the current commitment.

(3) Reports from recipient countries indicate the absorptive capacity for HIV/AIDS programs has become a constraint on actual expenditure of funds. For instance, a 2005 survey of World Bank Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP) country directors in Africa found that nearly 40 percent of those countries believed that absorptive capacity ''remains limited and is the real issue; new financial resources will exacerbate this problem''.

(4) Additionally, a 2007 Center for Global Development report on HIV/AIDS programs in Mozambique, Uganda, and Zambia found that overburdened government staff at all levels, along with the limited absorptive capacity of sub-grantees, created major bottlenecks for funding disbursement.

(5) Advocates of increased HIV/AIDS funding appear to have based their recommendations for such funding at least in part on UNAIDS' estimates of a global price tag for addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Such international estimates are flawed, however, because the primary source for such projections—the UNAIDS' ''Resource Needs Model'', or RNM—overestimates the resources needed, relies on a higher estimate of people living with HIV/AIDS, and includes support for countries that are also Global Fund donors. Specifically:

(A) The UNAIDS report titled ''Critical Review of Costing Models to Estimate Resource Needs to Address Global HIV and AIDS'' found that ''the [RNM] has a number of limitations'', each of which contributes to an overestimate of the resources needed to mount a successful response.

(B) Newer projections such as the 2007 ''Epidemic Update'' lowered the estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide from 39.5 million to 33.2 million—a 16 percent reduction—yet UNAIDS has not publicly released a revised lower projection of resource needs.

(C) Projections in the RNM report include significant financing for middle-income countries such as China, Russia, and Brazil that are actually Global Fund donors themselves and should not require international assistance.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—In light of the findings contained in subsection (a), which indicate that even current levels of funding for HIV/AIDS programs cannot be disbursed in an efficient and effective manner, Congress should ensure that the amount of funding authorized by this Act to carry out the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 is consistent with the demonstrated absorptive capacity to carry out such programs around the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the reading). Without objection, the reading is dispensed with.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by complimenting the chairman of the committee and the ranking member of the committee, along with all the other members of the Foreign Affairs Committee for working in a bipartisan way to put together this compromise.

We heard a very good fulfilling debate about the merits of PEPFAR. I, too, agree that the PEPFAR program is a very worthwhile program. So we agree that this is the right thing to do.

The question is, should we more than double the authorization of this program? Now, the President's budget called for doing just that. And I think you can make a very good and compelling case that this program is so successful that it ought to be doubled. That's not what the underlying bill does. This underlying bill more than triples this program.

I have three concerns about this tripling of this program. Number 1, the spending levels set out in this authorization bill are higher than the recipient countries can even accept. They can't absorb all of this money. We know this from the studies in the field. So even if we hit these authorization levels, we know that the recipient countries cannot even accept all of this money. They can't spend it that fast.

Point Number 2, the Congressional Budget Office has told us that we couldn't even spend this money this fast. So why are we having this kind of an authorization level when our own Congressional Budget Office is telling us that it would take at least 10 years to spend down a $50 billion authorization?

And that brings me to my third point, and that is the budget resolution that passed the floor just 2½ weeks ago. The Democratic budget resolution itself assumes the $30 billion level. The Democratic budget resolution assumes we're funding this at the President's request of $30 billion. In fact, the Democratic budget resolution has a lower level of funding for section 150, the Foreign Affairs program, than even the President's budget does. We don't know what cut they're talking about, but more to the point, why don't we defend the budget resolution that passed this very house 2½ weeks ago?

Mr. Speaker, we support this program. I support this program. It's a good program. It has proven to work. By any metric, by any definition, it's impossible to deny the success of PEPFAR.

The question is, should we be tripling a program when we know full well it breaks the budget resolution, it purports to spend money faster than we can even spend, and those who are receiving this money can't receive it nearly as fast as we're proposing.

□ 1530

This recommit is not intended to kill this bill. This is a forthwith recommit. This recommit is very simple. It says, rather than funding it at $50 billion, let's fund it at $30 billion. That's the level called for on the Democratic budget resolution. That's the level called for in the President's budget. That's the level that independent experts have said can be justified. So this says go from 50 to 30 forthwith, that's all.

I want to compliment the gentleman, the chairman of the committee, the ranking member of the committee, all of those who worked in a bipartisan basis for this very worthwhile program, but this is a time when we have fiscal problems in America. We have a deficit. We have a looming debt. We need to show discipline in Congress. We should not be tripling funding for programs that we know the recipients themselves cannot receive at this pace and we know from our own independent budget experts that we simply can't spend at this pace.

Let's bring it back down to earth. Let's double it and keep it within reason. That is why we should pass this motion to recommit.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First, I appreciate the compliments of my friend from Wisconsin. I prefer that the compliments be withheld and the motion to slash this bill by 40 percent be rejected, although I do appreciate the implication of his comments that a recommittal motion that is forthwith is not intended to kill the bill and that, therefore, the recommittal motions that are not forthwith are intended to kill the bills they are made to.

But getting to the merits of this. The purpose of my comments is directly to the other side. I know the easy vote, even for those who support this bill, is to vote both to cut some money and to support the minority on their motion to recommit.

But I would like to suggest that in this particular case, given what has transpired in terms of putting together this bipartisan bill, both on the merits of the motion to recommit and on the message it sends about how we can work on a bipartisan basis in the future, this motion is wrong and that Members on the other side should oppose it along with the Members on our side.

First, on the facts. The administration supports this bill and supports our number on this bill. To the extent they have concerns about what the level of appropriations may be in this year, their statement of administration position directly says, talk about the level of appropriation; don't cut the authorization.

Secondly, the U.N. HIV/AIDS commission, which I'm not a fan of a lot of different agencies that start with ''U.N.,'' but this one is the preeminent authority, talks about the incredible remaining need. And in the issue of absorptive capacity, this was the same argument made in 2003 against a $15 billion authorization for which the Republican Congress appropriated far more than the authorization because we were able to see an absorptive capacity, and we saved well over a million lives.

But here we are dealing with a situation where there are 35 million people worldwide that are still living with HIV/AIDS. This is a program that works. The combination of changing behavior, prevention, and treatment is saving lives. I don't like to throw the words ''moral imperative'' around. It's usually used for anything people feel passionately about. But talk about pro-life, I can't think of any single program that I have been involved with where we are going to be more pro-life than in pushing this with programs that work, with the capacity that can be absorbed. No one is saying we are going to spend $50 billion in the next 5 years. We are going to obligate, based on the appropriation moneys, and those moneys will be spent probably over the course of 8 to 10 years. That's the way this appropriation process works, as everyone knows.

My final point is the ranking member and I, the White House directly, the President and his chief of staff were directly involved, the Republican leadership in this body, we put together a bipartisan bill. Part of the key negotiation was about the number. In return for that, a number of issues of importance to the minority were preserved in this bill: the preservation of the concept of behavior change through abstinence and faithfulness; the understanding that approved family planning programs would be the ones that were funded. A variety of different aspects. The belief in the use of faith-based institutions.

How are we, in the future, going to come together on bipartisan programs where the deal is made and then all of a sudden a key part of the quid pro quo, the other side says ''no'' to?

I would suggest, sure there are issues about what is our fiscal condition and what can we do, and the appropriations could be weighing these very carefully. But this was a fundamental agreement to maintain a bipartisan tradition on this legislation named after Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos, both of whom worked in that capacity.

I think this motion to recommit massively undercuts that whole bipartisan approach, and I would urge my colleagues to defeat it.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I do rise in opposition to this motion to recommit with great respect to my friend from Wisconsin.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of passage.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 175, nays 248, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 157]

YEAS—175

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Bachmann
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
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
Davis (KY)
Davis, Tom
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Ehlers
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Flake
Forbes
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hoekstra
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Keller
King (IA)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
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
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Taylor
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—248

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Duncan
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Filner
Fortenberry
Foster
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
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
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—7

Cubin
Culberson
Granger
Jefferson
Miller (FL)
Rush
Tauscher

□ 1555

Messrs. GILCHREST, DUNCAN, MACK, Mrs. CAPPS, Messrs. MANZULLO, MARSHALL, KANJORSKI, Ms. HARMAN, and Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. ALTMIRE changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 308, noes 116, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 158]

AYES—308

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Dreier
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Ferguson
Filner
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foster
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (NY)
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)

Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pickering
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weller
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOES—116

Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bilbray
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Coble
Conaway
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, David
Deal (GA)
Doolittle
Drake
Duncan
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Flake
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hoekstra
Hunter
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
Kingston
Lamborn
LaTourette
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCrery
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Paul
Pearce
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pitts
Poe
Price (GA)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Terry
Tiberi
Upton
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Whitfield (KY)
Wittman (VA)

NOT VOTING—7

Cubin
Granger
Jefferson
Miller (FL)
Renzi
Rush
Tauscher

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Less than 2 minutes remain.

□ 1603

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 5501, TOM LANTOS AND HENRY J. HYDE UNITED STATES GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 5501, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section numbering and cross-referencing, and in the insertion of appropriate headings.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 865

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor of H. Res. 865.

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

There was no objection.

FIX FISA IMMEDIATELY

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express to the House the fear and uncertainty felt by the American people. For over a month, America has been vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Not only has the majority refused to call a vote on bipartisan legislation that would reauthorize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, they will not even let us debate this very crucial matter.

I have heard from hundreds of constituents regarding this matter, and they want the Senate bill. They are fearful and angry that Congress cannot accomplish one of its principal tasks, and that is protecting the security of this great Nation.

Just recently, there were reports that the majority said we were too busy to add FISA to the schedule of bills. Is Congress too busy to protect the citizens of this country? We are too busy to monitor the activity of terrorists who have launched attacks on innocent civilians, and are likely to do it again? There are few things more important than protecting our Nation from terrorist activity.

MARINE PATRICK DOWDELL OF BREEZY POINT

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

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, it is easy in the era where we look at the big numbers and the headlines in the newspaper to forget about the great acts of heroism that are going on right this very moment in Iraq and elsewhere in our world. I rise to bring to the attention of this body the heroism of Lieutenant Patrick Dowdell. He is serving with the 4th Infantry in Iraq as we speak. That is a division that has lost, unfortunately, over 135 heroic men and women. He is not the only hero in the family. His younger brother, James, recently began service in Ladder Company 174 in East Flatbush. I hope you will join with me and all of his neighbors in Breezy Point in expressing tribute to this family.

This family has one other chapter of heroism in its book. Lieutenant Kevin Dowdell, the father of both Patrick and James, was lost on September 11, a firefighter, in the World Trade Center. We join with this entire body and all of this country in commending Rose Ellen, their mother, and the acts of heroism that they are paying both here and in generations in the past. May God bless them, and God bless the United States of America.

TRIBUTE TO CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and pay tribute to the Concord High School girls basketball team for winning the North Carolina State Championship this year. Lady Spiders ended a 31 win and 2 loss season by defeating Beddingfield 77–62 on March 15, the first girls championship in the school history and the fourth State championship for the school in the last 5 years.

Concord's Nyshia Hammond was named Most Valuable Player, and T.T. Belcher won the Most Outstanding Player Award for the Spiders. Concord's coach and school Athletic Director, Angela Morton, was also named the 2008 Associated Press women's basketball Coach of the Year for North Carolina. Morton has coached the team for five seasons, during which she led them from a 0–24 season, to a State championship title.

The athletic program at Concord High is one of the great traditions that dates back even further than my years. The nickname, Spiders, came from the athletic field at the old high school, named after Principal and School Superintendent A.S. Webb. Concord's first title was won in 1929.

I am extremely proud of the hard work and dedication of these young women from my hometown. Congratulations, Coach of the Year, Angela Morton; Assistant Coaches, JarMark Parker and Samantha Bedford, and the Lady Spiders on your successful season and State championship victory.

REAUTHORIZE THE NATIONAL POISON CONTROL INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. TOWNS. Yesterday, I introduced legislation with LEE TERRY from Nebraska to provide for the reauthorization of the Poison Control Center. Since being codified into law in 2000, the Poison Control Centers must undergo reauthorization every 3 years. These centers provide immediate value to the public, providing free medical facilities that are staffed by toxicologists, nurses, and other professionals.

Each year, poisoning results in 285,000 hospitalizations, 1,200 days of acute hospital care, and 1,300 fatalities. H.R. 5669 will reauthorize these critical Poison Control Centers to keep our national public health infrastructure in tact. I would like to thank Congressman TERRY for this support.

The 24-hour emergency and information hotline services that are provided for this legislation are given by the National Poison Center Toll-Free Telephone number. By providing direct patient care services to residential callers, health care professionals and institutions, Poison Control Centers save lives and help avoid costly hospitalizations. Let us keep that in mind as we move forward and reauthorize the Poison Control Centers.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COHEN). 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.

□ 1615

AMERICAN DEATH TOLL IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, when the American death toll in Iraq hit 4,000 on March 23, there was a great deal of coverage about it in the media. But the media only seems to care about the death toll when it reaches a special milestone. But now that the number of dead has reached 4,012, they have packed up their cameras, they have gone back to ignoring Iraq. Once again, our brave soldiers are dying in virtual anonymity, surely paying the highest price.

Here at home, the administration's occupation policies are harming American people in other ways. I am talking about the millions of Americans who are suffering because we are spending our Nation's treasure in Iraq rather than on vitally-needed social and economic programs here at home. We're spending about $4,600 every second on the occupation, or about $12 billion a month.

Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize winning economist, has calculated that the occupation will ultimately cost $3 trillion, and that, Mr. Speaker, is a conservative estimate. And it will certainly cost a whole lot more if the administration gets its way and we establish permanent bases in Iraq or the others get their way and we remain involved in Iraq for 50 to 100 years.

This enormous drain on our resources has buried us so deeply in debt that we cannot make investments in the programs that would really move our Nation forward. Just think of what we could do with all of those trillions of dollars.

We could invest in the education of the 48 million children in our public schools. We could prepare them to compete and win in the global economy.

We could invest in early childhood education and the childcare that millions of poor and middle-class families so desperately need.

We could invest in the medical research needed to cure disease and to save millions of Americans from needless suffering and from premature death.

We could invest in our infrastructure and new green technologies which could produce millions of jobs around our Nation.

We could produce an economic stimulus package to fulfill remaining unmet needs.

We could help States and cities to provide their first responders with the equipment they need to save lives in the event of terrorism or natural disasters.

We could build more affordable housing and assist those who have been caught up in the mortgage meltdown.

We could provide health care to our citizens, starting with SCHIP for our children.

We could move to ensure the solvency of Social Security.

We could invest in global health. As a member of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, I can tell you that every single dollar spent on global health is a dollar spent to make our world more peaceful and stable.

These are just a few examples, Mr. Speaker. We couldn't do them all, but if we did just a few, we would go much further toward safeguarding our national security than we are currently doing in Iraq.

I hope my colleagues will remember this when General Petraeus arrives next week with his bar charts and statistics. Let us remember that the turmoil in the Middle East is helping to spike gas prices at the pump. It is leading us deeper and deeper into the effects of the Iraq recession.

The responsible redeployment of our troops out of Iraq is the one policy that makes sense, and the one policy that the great majority of the American people support. It is high time for us to do what the American people expect us to do, and they expect us to end our occupation of Iraq.

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.)

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.)

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF IRAQ ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF AMERICA IS NEEDED

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

Mr. SESTAK. Shortly, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will come before the House and the Senate to provide an update on the military and the political situation in Iraq. That is my grave concern, that once again we will have placed a man who is responsible for the security, the military security only, of Iraq, in the position, in the singular position, of determining the national security policy of the United States and the public's perception of it, when what is needed, what is direly needed, is a comprehensive assessment of the national security of America and the impact of the strategy we have in Iraq upon it. So in fact it is the questions that General Petraeus cannot or should not answer that are the most important ones.

For example, the Joint Chiefs of Staff should be asked directly, what is the impact of Iraq upon the military's readiness to deploy and meet the required timelines of its various war plans, when in fact today it cannot deploy its forces, its army, in order to protect the 28,000 men and women who wear the cloth of our Nation in South Korea from an attack on the timelines required by North Korea against the South?

And while before Iraq we actually trained on multiple areas of warfare, for the past 3 years your army has only been training in counterinsurgency. The Joint Chiefs of Staff must address the impact of 3 years of its army training only in one warfare area and being unable to meet any timeline of any war plan by its army in America's arsenal of war plans.

Then, in the long term, the impact of 42 percent of our men and women who we are recruiting today being less capable than ever of being able to operate

and maintain the systems of our weaponry in the future as they can in the past 3 years.

Second, it is not the general or the ambassador who should come here to speak about Iraq's security, but rather our intelligence agencies that must address the question about whether the Iraq strategy has improved our overall efforts in the global war on terror, with Afghanistan once again prey to terrorists, and the Taliban having gone back into the ungoverned regions to protect them, and General Hayden, head of the CIA, having said that al Qaeda now has a safe haven in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. What is the impact of a strategy in that unstable region that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has described as ''in Iraq what we do what we must, but in Afghanistan, we do what we can.''

Officials from the State Department likewise must address the impact upon our allies of this war in Iraq and our relationships with them and the efforts to achieve other diplomatic goals, remembering that when we went into Bosnia, 50 percent of the coalition troops were non-U.S., and when we went into Iraq 5 years ago, less than 7 percent of the troops that entered that country were non-U.S.

And then the Treasury, how can they explain the impact of what all economists agree are now almost $2 trillion to $3 trillion as the cost of this war in Iraq? When Iraq is awash in oil revenues, why are we using taxpayers' dollars?

Therefore, the questions that General Petraeus can and should not answer comes down to, he should not be the one to tell us how long and at what cost before we change our strategy. It is only if Congress changes the forum for this general to come before us to say and hold up a national mirror, this is the impact of Iraq upon our overall national security strategy, and if it is not working and if it is negatively impacting it, we must therefore change the strategy.

I believe it is against the spirit, as a man who has served in the military 31 years until I entered Congress, to have a military man placed in the position to determine singularly, when he is only responsible for the security of Iraq, to then determine without everyone else there the right strategy and course for America's national security.

We must have that debate. Is the strategy working? Is it harming our overall national security? If it is, change the strategy.

PRESIDENT BUSH INSULTS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WITH HIS SELECTIVE PARDONS AND COMMUTATIONS

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

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, on March 25, President Bush pardoned 15 people and granted one commutation to crimes that ranged from falsifying records, conspiracy, bank embezzlement, dealing in firearms, distributing marijuana, conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud, heroin importation, selling migratory bird parts in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, aiding and abetting the escape of a prisoner, distributing more than 50 grams of crack cocaine, and a variety of other crimes.

This brings to about 157 the number of pardons and/or commutations that President Bush has distributed in his administration in his term in office. And although that number is fewer than other presidents, it in fact is reflective of something that I consider to be a serious problem, and that is this, that although the President has been compassionate or for whatever reason chosen to commute or pardon 157 people up to this point in time, he leaves two Border Patrol agents in jail today because I believe of the misbehavior of the U.S. Attorney in that particular district. And this is unconscionable.

This House actually voted last session unanimously to in fact deny funding to the Department of Justice to continue to hold Border Patrol agents Ramos and Compean in the Federal prison where they have been incarcerated now for well over a year. And their terms are for 11 and 12 years. This is because they have been sentenced because of the testimony of a known drug smuggler by the name of Osvaldo Aldrete-Davila, who was given immunity from prosecution by U.S. Attorney Sutton.

The SUV that Aldrete was driving was found to contain 743 pounds of marijuana. The jury in the Ramos-Compean trial was never told of Aldrete's criminal background. They were led to believe that Aldrete was a one-time smuggler trying to make money to help a sick relative. In fact, he was a professional drug smuggler, and his history was known to the DEA and to Johnny Sutton, who was the prosecuting attorney, at the time of the trial, but this history was kept from the jury.

It has been revealed in documents since the trial that U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton deliberately delayed the arrest of Aldrete for a subsequent drug smuggling incident that occurred while Aldrete was under the grant of immunity but before the trial date. All of this information, of course, was withheld because it would have revealed Aldrete as a professional smuggler, not an innocent victim of the Border Patrol agents. This is a flagrant abuse of prosecutorial discretion.

These mistakes were compounded by asking for a mandatory 10-year sentence for Ramos and Compean for the use of a firearm in the commission of a ''crime.'' The law was never intended to apply to law officers who use their weapons in the performance of their jobs.

The key question at the trial was whether the drug smuggler Aldrete had a weapon and had pointed it at one of the Border Patrol agents. Mr. Aldrete denied having such a weapon. It was his word against the testimony of the Border Patrol agents, so the credibility of each witness was critical to the jury's evaluation of the incident, yet the jury was kept in the dark about Aldrete's other arrests and his history as a drug smuggler.

The mistakes made by Ramos and Compean in trying to apprehend Mr. Aldrete should have been handled as a violation of agency rules, the failure to write and file a report of an incident involving Aldrete, and punished by a 5-day suspension, not by criminal prosecution. For that reason alone, this conduct rises to the level of reprehensible, the conduct I believe of the U.S. Attorney in this case and of the President of the United States.

To compound the injustice in this case, it is widely known that the U.S. Attorney is a friend of the President, going back to his days as Governor. But Bush's refusal to issue a pardon or a commutation amounts to a coverup I believe of this misconduct in this trial.

Ramos and Compean have appealed their conviction to the U.S. Circuit Court and a decision on that appeal is due shortly. At the very least they deserve a new trial. President Bush has it within his power to end this injustice now by issuing a pardon or a commutation. I sincerely hope that he takes that responsibility seriously and offers this to Mr. Ramos and Mr. Compean, who are languishing in prison for literally no good reason.

COMMEMORATING THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., BY SERVICE FOR PEACE

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the 40th anniversary of the week Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was killed to commemorate his legacy as continued by Service for Peace.

During his short life, Dr. King marched in my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, on his way to touching millions of American lives throughout this Nation and inspiring the masses with his message of freedom and of peace. Today, I am proud to say that, in no small part thanks to the efforts of Reverend Peter Hayes, our local Service for Peace, and programs like 40 Days of Peace, the MLK Season of Service, and the King Memorial Walk and Peace Fest, the spirit of Dr. King is alive and well in our hometown.

Each year, Service for Peace reminds us that though King was taken from us far too early, the gifts he gave to us, his lessons, his passion, his legacy, remain and continue to inspire within us a deep sense of justice.

Nationwide, half a million volunteers took part in this year's MLK Day of

Peace, contributed to their communities and committed themselves to peace and justice.

□ 1630

This Saturday for the second year in a row I will join with members of the Louisville community for the King Memorial Walk and Peace Fest. We will gather at the Muhammad Ali Center to share stories of yesterday's struggles and a vision for tomorrow's successes, before walking as one to the north side of the Ohio River. Crossing that boundary once was a journey between slavery and salvation, Jim Crow and justice, oppression and opportunity for far too many Americans. But this weekend, when we return to Louisville, we will enter a community proud of its diversity, alive with the spirit of peace, and working toward a more just future for all.

While it is true that we cannot bring Martin Luther King, Jr., back, by promoting his teachings, Service for Peace ensures that we will never really lose him, either. The activism of Service for Peace is so much more than a tribute to a great American hero; it is a practical and proven strategy to reduce drug use, crime, violence, and murder in my community and others throughout our great Nation.

I know my colleagues will join me in honoring Service for Peace, just as Service for Peace honors the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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.)

WIN-WIN FOR U.S. AND COLOMBIA

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, and I urge the Speaker of the House to bring this important measure before the House for an up-or-down vote, and submit for the RECORD two articles, one a column recently published in the New York Times by Edward Schumacher-Matos, a former foreign correspondent for the Times and a visiting professor of Latin American studies at Harvard, as well as an editorial in this week's Washington Post in support of the trade agreement.

KILLING A TRADE PACT

(By Edward Schumacher-Matos)

President Bush has been urging Congress to approve a pending trade agreement with Colombia, an ally that recently almost went to war with Venezuela and Hugo Chávez. Even though the agreement includes the labor and environmental conditions that Congress wanted, many Democrats, including Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, now say that Colombia must first punish whomever has been assassinating the members of the nation's trade unions before the agreement can pass.

An examination of the Democrats' claims, however, finds that their faith in the assertions of human-rights groups is more righteous than right. Union members have been assassinated, but the reported number is highly exaggerated. Even one murder for union organizing is atrocious, but isolated killings do not justify holding up the trade agreement.

All sides agree that trade-union murders in Colombia, like all violence, have declined drastically in recent years. The Colombian unions' own research center says killings dropped to 39 last year from a high of 275 in 1996.

Yet in a report being released next week, the research center says the killings remain ''systematic'' and should be treated by the courts as ''genocide'' designed to ''exterminate'' unionism in Colombia. Most human-rights groups cite the union numbers and conclude, as Human Rights Watch did this year, that ''Colombia has the highest rate of violence against trade unionists in the world.''

Even if that is true, it was far safer to be in a union than to be an ordinary citizen in Colombia last year. The unions report that they have 1 million members. Thirty-nine killings in 2007 is a murder rate of 4 unionists per 100,000. There were 15,400 homicides in Colombia last year, not counting combat deaths, according to the national police. That is a murder rate of 34 citizens per 100,000.

Many in Congress, moreover, assume that ''assassinations'' means murders that are carried out for union activity. But the union research center says that in 79 percent of the cases going back to 1986, it has no suspect or motive. The government doesn't either.

When the Inter American Press Association several years ago investigated its list of murdered Colombian journalists, it found that more than 40 percent were killed for nonjournalistic reasons. The unions have never done a similar investigation.

There are, however, a growing number of convictions for union murders in Colombia. There were exactly zero convictions for them in the 1990s, Colombia's bloodiest decade, when right-wing paramilitaries and leftist guerrillas were at the height of their strength. Each assassinated the suspected supporters of the others across society, including in unions.

With help from the United States, in 2000 the Colombian military and the judicial system began to reassert themselves. Prosecuting cases referred by the unions themselves, the attorney general's office won its first conviction for the murder of a trade unionist in 2001. Last year, the office won nearly 40.

Of the 87 convictions won in union cases since 2001, almost all for murder, the ruling judges found that union activity was the motive in only 17. Even if you add the 16 cases in which motive was not established, the number doesn't reach half of the cases. The judges found that 15 of the murders were related to common crime, 10 to crimes of passion and 13 to membership in a guerrilla organization.

The unions don't dispute the numbers. Instead, they say the prosecutors and the courts are wasting time and being anti-union by seeking to establish motive—a novel position in legal jurisprudence.

The two main guerrilla groups have an avowed strategy of infiltrating unions, which attracts violence. About a third of the identified murderers of union members are leftist guerrillas. Most of the rest are members of paramilitary groups—presumed to be behind two of the four trade unionist murders this month. The demobilization of most paramilitary groups, along with the prosecutions and government protection of union leaders, has contributed to the great drop in union murders.

President Álvaro Uribe, who has thin skin, can be unwisely provocative when responding to complaints from unions and human rights groups. Still, the level of unionization in Colombia is roughly equal to that in the United States and slightly below the level in the rest of Latin America. The government registered more than 120 new unions in 2006, the last year for which numbers are available. The International Labor Organization says union legal rights in Colombia meet its highest standards. Union leaders have been cabinet members, a governor and the mayor of Bogotá.

Delaying the approval of the trade agreement would be convenient for Democrats in Washington. American labor unions and human-rights groups have made common cause to oppose it this election year. The unions oppose the trade agreement for traditional protectionist reasons. Less understandable are the rights groups.

Human Rights Watch says that it has no position on trade but that it is using the withholding of approval to gain political leverage over the Colombian government. Perversely, they are harming Colombian workers in the process. The trade agreement would stimulate economic growth and help all Colombians.

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 31, 2008]

FREE COLOMBIA—A TRADE PACT EVERYONE CAN LOVE

Sometime after Congress returns from Easter recess this week, President Bush is likely to present the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement for the approval of the House and Senate. As we have said, the proposed pact is good policy for both Colombia and the United States. Colombia has long enjoyed periodically renewable tariff-free access to the U.S. market; the agreement would make that permanent. In exchange, U.S. producers would, for the first time, get the same tariff-free deal when they export to Colombia. Meanwhile, the agreement contains labor and environmental protections much like those that Congress has already approved in a U.S.-Peru trade pact. A vote for the Colombia deal would show Latin America that a staunch U.S. ally will be rewarded for improving its human rights record and resisting the anti-American populism of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez.

Sending the agreement to the House of Representatives without the prior approval of Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) would be risky for the president; usually, the executive and legislative branches tee up such votes cooperatively. But months of Democratic resistance to the Colombia deal may have left Mr. Bush no choice. The agreement is being held hostage by members of the House (and Senate) who argue that Colombia—despite a dramatic drop in its overall murder toll under the leadership of President Álvaro Uribe—hasn't done enough to protect trade union activists or to punish past murders of labor leaders. Its a spurious complaint: Actually, in 2006, union members were slightly less likely than the average Colombian to be murdered. But the human rights issue has served as cover for many Democrats whose true objections are to free trade itself.

Once the agreement arrives on the Hill, Congress will have 90 legislative days to vote yes or no—no amendments and no filibusters

allowed, because special ''fast track'' rules apply. The Bush administration is betting that enough Democrats would support the pact to ensure its passage in the House, if it ever comes up for a vote. Of course, Ms. Pelosi could make an issue of the president's failure to get her approval to submit the pact and then could have her caucus shoot down the deal. But she could also engage the White House in serious negotiations. The president has signaled a willingness to consider reauthorizing aid for workers displaced by trade, legislation that is dear to the Democrats' labor constituency and that he has heretofore resisted.

Ms. Pelosi recently said that no Colombia deal could pass without trade adjustment assistance—without also mentioning the bogus trade unionists issue. Perhaps she is realizing that talking to Mr. Bush about swapping a Colombia vote for trade adjustment assistance might actually lead to a tangible accomplishment. At least we have to hope so.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. I urge the Speaker to schedule a vote soon on this important agreement. Why? It is good for Illinois.

I represent an export dependent district. I have 8,000 union workers who make construction equipment; and, because of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, the 15 percent tariffs, taxes, the 15 percent on that construction equipment exported to Colombia are eliminated on day one. When you talk to agriculture, our farmers, those who raise corn and soybeans and livestock and specialty crops, they will tell you the U.S.-Colombia agreement is the best ever for agriculture. Clearly, States like Illinois win under the U.S.-Colombia Trade Agreement.

I would note that, overall, 80 percent of U.S. exports currently taxed will see those taxes waived and eliminated immediately upon implementation of the U.S.-Colombia Agreement. And facts have shown, if we have a trade agreement with a nation, exports grow 50 percent faster. So, it is good for Illinois and good for America.

Ladies and gentlemen, who is Colombia? Let me tell you, Colombia is America's best friend in Latin America. It is the oldest democracy in Latin America. It is America's most reliable partner in counterterrorism and in counternarcotics in this entire hemisphere. And today, President Uribe, who was democratically elected overwhelmingly with a mandate to bring security to the country, has been successful in driving the leftist narcotic-trafficking terrorist group, the FARC, to the fringes of Colombia and brought security to his country. As a result, he is the most popular elected president anywhere in the hemisphere, with an 80 percent approval rating.

I would note that 71 percent of Colombians in a recent opinion poll say that they believe that Colombia is more secure because of President Uribe, and 73 percent of Colombians say that President Uribe respects human rights. Homicides are down 40 percent, kidnappings are down 76 percent. And I would note, the murder rate in Colombia today is lower than Washington, DC. It is safer to walk the streets of Colombia than it is our own Nation's capital. President Uribe has made tremendous progress in the last few years in reducing violence.

Now there are those who oppose the U.S.-Colombia Trade Agreement, and they say that President Uribe hasn't done enough. He hasn't done enough, particularly when it comes to violence against labor leaders. Let's look at the facts regarding President Uribe and the democratically-elected government of Colombia as it comes to violence against labor leaders as well as against other Colombian citizens.

President Uribe has increased by 75 percent in the last 2 years funding for the prosecution of those who commit violent acts. He has added over 2,100 new posts overall in the Prosecutor General's Office, adding 418 new prosecutors and 545 new investigators. He has made major changes. Colombia should be recognized and rewarded for the progress they have made. And, I would note that Carlos Rodriguez, president of the United Workers Confederation, has said about this effort: ''Never in the history of Colombia have we achieved something so important.''

When it comes specifically to labor leaders and labor activists, almost $39 million was spent by the government of Colombia last year to provide body guards and protection for labor activists and labor leaders; 1,500 individuals, labor activists and labor leaders, participated and they are protected. And, I would note, that it has been successful. No labor leader has suffered a violent act or lost his life under this protection. Again, as the Washington Post noted this week, the murder rate for labor activists is actually lower than the national average. So he has made tremendous progress.

I would note, the International Labor Organization has removed Colombia from its labor watch list, even while Colombia has agreed to permanent ILO representation in Colombia. Most telling is 1,400 major labor union leaders have endorsed the Trade Agreement. The bottom line is, those who oppose this trade agreement always say they never do enough, but they never say what more can they do. Colombia deserves to be rewarded.

The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement is good for America, it is good for Illinois, it is good for Colombia. They deserve a vote. Let's bring this agreement to the floor for an up-or-down vote soon.

TEACH YOUR CHILD—GO TO JAIL

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, homeschooling is an ever growing choice for parents in America. Parents teach their children at home for various reasons: They are concerned about the quality of education, or the lack of it, in government schools; they don't approve of the public school curriculum; they want their kids to have a religious-based education, which is of course strictly forbidden in public schools; parents are concerned about school safety, especially in big urban schools; or, parents have special needs children that are not adequately served in public schools. Whatever the reason, many parents choose to homeschool.

Homeschooling is successful. Recent statistics show that homeschooled kids get higher test scores on ACT tests than non-homeschoolers. In the last 10 years, homeschooled children have scored higher every year on the ACT test than non-homeschoolers. I just recently appointed a homeschooler to the United States Air Force Academy, and his homeschooled education was superb.

But now, an appellate State court in California has ruled that, ''Parents not only don't have a constitutional right to homeschool; parents that homeschool their children can face fines and go to jail,'' sayeth the all-powerful Judge Walter Croskey.

Where does the California court get such nonsense? Education has been the responsibility of parents since the beginning of time. Public education really is a relatively new concept. And now we have judges saying that parents are criminals unless their children are taught in government schools. This reminds me of my visit to the school system in the Soviet Union, which mandated all students should be indoctrinated with propaganda in the communist school system. This is Big Brother and government control at its worst. Can you imagine? A crime to teach your own children.

I have nothing against public schools or teachers. My mother was a public school teacher. All my daughters are teachers. I even taught in the State university. But no government has the right to tell parents how to educate their children, not even the government in California.

Parents and students need all education options. They need private school options, public school, religious school, or even home school. The real issue is not quality of education, but education freedom of choice by parents.

The judge says it is unconstitutional to homeschool your children. Well, Justice Croskey must not have ever read the U.S. Constitution. There is nothing written in the United States Constitution about giving government or judges the authority to control education. In fact, the word ''education'' is not even mentioned in the Constitution as a responsibility of government. The California court's ruling, in my opinion, is unconstitutional.

Education has generally been deemed a matter for local communities and parents. We have always believed that in this country. In fact, the Constitution in the Tenth Amendment states,

''The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the states are reserved to the states respectfully or to the people.''

And, I submit, ''the people'' in that phrase are parents that have the power, under our Constitution, to decide how to educate their children. It is their responsibility, their right, and their authority. After all, our children do not belong to the government and are not government possessions to be molded as the government or government judges deem fit.

The U.S. Constitution gives liberty to Americans, not enslavement to government. It is a parent's responsibility and right, not the government's, to raise our children. That includes how best to educate our children.

Living in a Nation that was founded on the inalienable right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, means that parents have the right to raise and teach their children in a manner that is consistent with their beliefs and their principles, whether the California appellate judges like it or not.

And that's just the way it is.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4847, UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Ms. SUTTON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–563) on the resolution (H. Res. 1071) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

HONORING FORMER REPRESENTATIVE BILL DICKINSON OF ALABAMA

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to rise and talk a little bit about a great former member who just passed away, Bill Dickinson of Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, when I came in in 1981 and campaigned with Ronald Reagan in that great year in which we brought back a policy of peace through strength to the United States Government with respect to foreign policy, I was lucky enough to be placed on the Armed Services Committee and Bill Dickinson was the new ranking Republican member.

In those days, we had 1,000 petty officers a month leaving the U.S. Navy because they couldn't afford to take care of their families on the pay they were making; we had 50 percent of our aircraft or more which were not combat mission capable; we had what was called a hollow Army, that is, an Army within which skilled people were leaving at an enormous rate. And, under Ronald Reagan's leadership and Bill Dickinson's hard work as the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, along with lots of right-thinking Republicans and Democrats, we reversed that trend. We rebuilt national security.

I will always remember Bill working the budgets that Ronald Reagan brought in his early years, that 12.6 percent pay raise that we brought in early to start moving military families up to scale, the new equipment budgets that we brought in. The decision that we were going to stand up to the Soviet Union, and those decisions that the President made like the one that he made to move ground launch cruise missiles and Pershing 2s into Europe as the Russians were then ringing our allies with SS–20 missiles, and the fact that that helped to bring them to the table, helped to bring them to the point where they picked up the phone and said, ''We want to talk.''

I can remember Bill Dickinson standing tall and supporting the President very strongly when, in Central America, we saw the FMLN in El Salvador, the Communist group that was taking arms and materiel from the Soviet Union and trying to establish a Communist beachhead in El Salvador.

□ 1645

I remember the United States moving in to provide a shield around that fragile new government that was standing up, a democratically elected government. I remember Bill Dickinson, as a ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, spearheading support in Congress for that very important initiative.

Time after time, Bill Dickinson moved to the fore to make sure that we rebuilt America's forces, that we operated under a policy of peace through strength. And he was, indeed, Ronald Reagan's strongest ally with respect to national security in the House of Representatives.

Bill was a wonderful guy, a great guy with a sense of humor, a guy who was elected in a district in Alabama that until 1964 had not been Republican for 100 years. But he kept that district with a good sense of humor, a good sense of touch with the people, being approachable, and having a very strong, conservative peace-through-strength philosophy that resonated not only with his constituents but with the American people.

To Barbara and the children, we express our greatest condolences. We have lost a great former representative, and I have lost a great friend.

ENACT U.S-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping this Nation's economy strong by enacting policies which keep U.S. companies competitive in the global marketplace, to also support job growth at home, and ensure that the Federal Government operates effectively and efficiently.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the 9,000 U.S. companies who export industrial and consumer goods to our fourth largest trading partner in Latin America face tariffs of up to 35 percent in their exports while most Colombian products imported to the U.S. enter tariff free, tax free.

On February 27, just 5 weeks ago, the House agreed unanimously to extend existing unilateral trade preferences to Colombia and other Andean countries. In May 2007, House leadership publicly committed to passing a full bilateral trade agreement with Colombia, thereby allowing equal access to U.S. businesses in Colombia.

The Colombian government supports lowering these tariffs on U.S. goods, and many Members of Congress have shown time and time again that they support lowering barriers to trade with free nations. Yet the answer so far has been total inaction by the leadership. Inaction on the part of this Congress has levied an unnecessary burden and an uncalled for tax upon American companies, including 8,000 small- and medium-sized businesses, many of which operate in southern Florida.

Furthermore, it has been reported in the press that files recovered from a computer belonging to Raul Reyes, a leader within the terrorist rebel Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, FARC, link the terrorist organization to the Venezuelan leadership in Caracas. In light of this news, Mr. Speaker, recent threats also made by the reckless and irresponsible leader, Hugo Chavez, and the ongoing attacks by the FARC, the United States needs to be supportive of the Colombian government, which stands up to anti-democratic and anti-American forces in the region.

It is time for the House leadership to follow through on their promises. Enactment of the U.S.-Colombia trade promotion agreement would show our strong support for this democracy while strengthening our own economy by creating greatest access for U.S. companies and creating more jobs in our communities here in the United States.

It would be negligent, irresponsible and unthinkable for this House to not immediately pass a free trade agreement with our closest ally in an otherwise volatile region.

Passage of this agreement will benefit businesses in our communities, create jobs for our constituents, and help strengthen our alliance with that democratically elected government and the people of Colombia. I call upon the House leadership to bring this agreement to the floor for a vote so we can

show the world community that the United States stands with its allies.

COLOMBIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by associating myself with the very eloquent remarks of my colleague from Miami, Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

Mr. Speaker, you never get a second chance to make a first impression, so the old saying goes that we've all heard. Once first impressions are made, it can be difficult to reinvent oneself. Circumstances may change, but assumptions and perceptions are very stubborn things. Just ask any Colombian.

People became familiar with the country of Colombia in the 1980s and the 1990s as the drug wars exploded. We didn't know much about the place, but we were familiar with the highlights: Bloody drug wars fought in jungles and on the streets of cities like Medellin, Bogota and Cali. And although we probably couldn't name many of the elected officials in Colombia, everyone knew the name of Pablo Escobar, the drug lord.

But over the course of this decade, a dramatic transformation has taken place in Colombia. The rule of gang lords has been replaced by the rule of law. The streets have become safe again. Armed terrorist organizations no longer operate in huge swaths of the country with impunity, and paramilitary groups have been dismantled with their leaders having gone to jail.

Funding for the Colombian Justice Department has nearly doubled, to ensure that criminal cases, old and new, are dealt with professionally and expeditiously, sending a clear signal that the days of impunity are long gone. Poverty has been cut dramatically, while social spending has increased. The Colombia of today is unrecognizable to those who knew it just a decade ago.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of being there on several occasions and have been amazed by what I have seen. Nowhere is the transformation starker than in the city of Medellin. This city was ground zero for the Escobar drug cartel. Its murder rate rivaled the most dangerous places on the face of the Earth. Terror and violence ruled everyday life.

Today, the city tells an utterly different story. Violence has plummeted. New public transportation projects and schools have given hope to previously blighted neighborhoods. New jobs and development, especially in the apparel industry, have provided a path to that first rung of the economic ladder, and greater upward mobility which was totally unheard of just a few years ago.

Mr. Speaker, fair trade and specialty coffee industries have also provided new opportunities for well-paying jobs in the area. This thriving community is a shining example of the stunning turnaround that it has made since 2002.

And yet much of the world has failed to take notice. While hostages and explosions make for front-page headlines, the slow and steady work of rebuilding a country is far less flashy. But the very difficult and remarkable work that has been done deserves recognizing. Many of us in Congress are working hard to solidify the gains that have been made through the implication of a free trade agreement. This agreement is strongly supported by the private sector unions of Colombia because they welcome the jobs and opportunity that the agreement will bring.

I hope very much that the free trade agreement will be considered soon for a vote. But as this debate does go forward, I believe it must proceed based on facts, not assumptions, inaccurate perceptions, and outdated figures. When we talk about Colombia in the year 2008, we are not talking about the Colombia of Pablo Escobar. We are talking about a country transformed and on the mend. After the long, difficult struggle of the Colombian people, we owe them a little credit and recognition for the remarkable things that they have accomplished.

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 California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California 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 Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS 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 Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WESTMORELAND 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 New York (Mr. WEINER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

BUDGET SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition and I appreciate the opportunity to come and talk about a subject that is near and dear to the heart of every single taxpayer in this Nation. That subject is the Federal budget. It is something that as we debate issues here, we say it affects 10 percent or 20 percent or 50 percent of the population. Our Federal budget, it affects everyone, Mr. Speaker, and I think we should start this second session of budget school with a little bit of perspective.

I have got a copy of the Constitution of the United States, and there is also included in this a Declaration of Independence. Now this copy is small enough to fit into my pocket. I could put it in my jacket pocket and carry it with me all day long.

What is a little bit frightening, Mr. Speaker, is here is the phone book for the news media that covers Washington, D.C. We are one of the most covered places on the face of the Earth, and here is the phone book that covers that.

Well, I also have the Federal budget. As you can see, it is an enormous document. It is much larger. By the time you have the tables and the justifications and the analytical information and go through the appendix and find what you need, it is a huge document. It is much larger in size than the simple documents on which this great Nation was founded.

What we are going to do today is talk a little bit about this budget and talk about what our response should be on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the time. I am coming to the floor as a

member of the Republican Study Committee. This group of conservatives within the Republican conference have developed this project called ''Budget School'' because we think that it is imperative that the American people know what is in this budget and know where to find this budget and are fully aware of how their money is being spent because we realize it is not the Federal Government's money that is being spent, Mr. Speaker, it is the money of the taxpayers of this great Nation.

This evening to open our session as we begin this period of time called special orders which comes at the end of our workday, and Congress has finished its regular business for the day, and it is 5 minutes of 5 in the afternoon here in Washington, and we are moving into the period of time called special orders. It is the period of time when we can come to the floor and talk a little bit more at length about the issues that are very important to us.

This evening we have several of our colleagues from the Republican Study Committee that will join me to talk about the budget and their concerns with the increase in spending, the concerns with the increase in taxation and their concerns about the long term fiscal health of this great Nation.

I would like to begin our conversation this evening by yielding to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) to hear his comments on the budget.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for yielding, and there are a couple of points I want to make. One is just now a lesson that we have simply learned or seen, I guess, witnessed, if you will. The Democrats passed a budget the week before we adjourned for a 2-week work recess, so it would have been 3 weeks ago. So 3 weeks the Democrat budget is passed, and it had in it $30 billion for AIDS money for Africa.

As we know, the President has been very passionate about getting AIDS support for the continent of Africa. Indeed, Africa has suffered a lot because of the AIDS problem. But the President called for a $30 billion expenditure.

□ 1700

Now, the Democrats called for a $30 billion expenditure as well in the budget 3 weeks ago, but something may have happened in their districts over the last 2 weeks. I suspect person after person who's paying $3.25 a gallon and who's concerned about the war and concerned about health care ignored that and said to their Democrat Member, you have got to spend more than the President has promised for AIDS in Africa; and don't just spend $30 billion, spend $50 billion. So, when we get back to Washington, the first thing the Democrats do is ignore the President's request, ignore their own budget, and go $20 billion on one vote on one line item expenditure.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. KINGSTON. Absolutely.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The budget that was presented is over a $3 trillion budget, and it calls for a $683 billion tax increase. And discretionary spending is increased in this budget by $280 billion. So, what I'm hearing the gentleman say, that's not enough. We've already, day two coming back from our Easter district work period, day two we have seen them move forward and increase $20 billion more.

And I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. KINGSTON. That's correct. So, here we are, the first day back basically voting on anything of substance, we've already spent $20 billion over a budget that's only 3 weeks old.

Now, you had mentioned discretionary spending, and I want to make sure folks understand. Discretionary spending means Congress has agreed that year by year that level of spending can fluctuate. Now, that's opposed to what we call mandatory spending. And I use the term ''mandatory'' loosely because nothing is mandatory if you're the legislative branch that set laws. But we call things like Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security mandatory spending, meaning, not just that we're going to spend a certain amount every year depending on a formula, but it also means, and I don't know if my friend from Tennessee or the other gentleman from Texas or Tennessee know this, but we don't have hearings on mandatory spending traditionally.

I'm a member of the Appropriations Committee. We spend a huge amount of money on Social Security and Medicaid, but we've never had a hearing on it. Every year we wrestle on some of the mandatory spending and some of the discretionary spending, but the biggest portion of the budget we don't do hearings on. And I think that it's time that we start talking about some of the mandatory spending if we're ever going to be serious about balancing the budget.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield.

There are a couple of things that I would point out. I'm sure people are sitting there going, I'm not believing this. I have worked all day long, I work all year, I haven't even finished paying my obligations for my property taxes, my state taxes, my Federal income taxes this year because you have to work until around the first of June to meet your obligations on taxes before you're working for money to take home.

So, what I'm hearing him say is, all that increasing, they want you to work further into the year to pay them. Somebody sitting at their desk right now, they're thinking, I can't believe this. If they want to pull down a copy of the budget, here are some Web sites and some resources we would encourage them to use. To get a copy of the President's budget, they can go to whitehouse.gov/omb. To get the Republican response, which our Republican Study Committee was involved in, budget.house.gov/republicans. And to get some of our budget school resources, they can go to house.gov/blackburn. They can also go to YouTube and Face Book and pull some of this information.

Mr. KINGSTON. Let me ask, before the gentlewoman takes that down, do those budgets balance, by the way; or when do they balance out, when do they balance? And do they have to be passed by the Senate and the House?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding. We're going to work through explaining that process this evening because the budget has come through the House and it is going to the Senate, it will come back to conference committee. And we set all of those different, the template, if you will, and then it will go through the appropriations process this year.

And I wanted to show this second poster. You were just mentioning about Medicare and Social Security and some of the different functions that are entitlements. And then we also have the areas that are seen as being discretionary. And you were mentioning discretionary spending. And those who want to follow the budget discussion with us can follow these different functions in the budget documents that we had mentioned earlier.

And I yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. KINGSTON. Well, I think, though, that when you're talking about spending, you have to look at everything. And when you have such a large portion on mandatory spending, and I think of it in terms of automatic spending, and I understand that Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare are sacred cows, that if you touch them politically somebody's going to twist your words around and say that you're trying to do something nefarious, but the reality is if you're ever going to balance the budget, you have to look at everything. And there are areas I know that we can do a better job on.

Now I'm on the AG Committee on Appropriations. Many people don't know this, and they always complain about how big the USDA is. Sixty-three percent of the agriculture budget is in welfare. Food stamps, the WIC programs, school nutrition programs, these are supplemental assistance programs to the poor. Now, I was here in 1996 when we reformed welfare, and it went from 14 million people who were on welfare down to 5 million people. That was a step in the right direction because you want to help those who truly need it, but you don't want to create a system where able-bodied people are able to game it and not work.

But what we're doing in AG appropriations is year after year making it a little bit easier to qualify for food stamps. We lighten up on the work requirements. We extend it to this group or the other. The WIC program is a child nursing supplement program. And Dr. BURGESS knows well, it's a supplemental program for nursing mothers,

but you're eligible for age 6. Now, I'm a father of four. I know you're a mama, you weren't breast-feeding your children at age 6, I assume.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. And I'm about to be a grandmother. And I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia's comments about the historical data that is involved in that. And as we look at the budget, and how did this budget get to be so big? That is just so very important. And if you look at the budget, which is what I have right here on the podium in front of me, and you can see it, you can hardly hold it up it's so big, but it comes in sections. This much is just the overview. And I said, that pales in comparison when you look at the small size of our Constitution and our Declaration of Independence.

Here's the appendix. And you would get inside this and look for the program that you're talking about with the Department of Agriculture. Then you would come in here to the Analytical Perspectives. This volume is where you would go to look at the analysis that you were just speaking of. And then, here are the historical tables.

And Mr. Speaker, this is where our colleagues go to look at where a program was when it started, to trace back through why this program was put in place and go back and see if that program is still aimed toward meeting what it was put in place for, meeting that original mission, how has it changed? And as you're pointing out, so many programs get changed on a regular ongoing basis. You go into the analysis and look at if you think this is worthy, if those are certainly the type data and the type premises on which you want to be operating to fund that budget. You look at this appendix to see how much they decided that they ought to be putting into that budget.

So, the gentleman is quite right in explaining how these programs grow, and did they begin to move away from their original mission? That is why some of our colleagues that are joining us this evening have been busy working on fighting waste, fraud and abuse, fighting increased spending, fighting wasteful earmarks, and working for the past few years to raise this issue.

And I know the gentleman from Georgia has constituents, and we have the gentleman from Iowa, Ms. BACHMANN, who is from Minnesota, Mr. DAVIS from Tennessee, who are joining us on the floor this evening to talk about this issue and to talk about where we are seeing the movement in this budget.

At this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) who has worked tirelessly. He was in my freshman class as we made waste, fraud and abuse our freshman class project, and as we have worked to reduce what the Federal Government spends and begin to try to tame this budget and to bring it back in so that it is a friendlier budget for the American taxpayer.

And I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentlelady from Tennessee for organizing this Special Order and for the privilege to address you, Mr. Speaker.

This budget issue that rolls out in front of us, I'd like to take us back to anchor it a little bit on what's really going on. And we haven't gone very far into all the news and the indicators we have on this economy, but this budget is the largest tax increase in the history of America; it amounts to $683 billion in tax increases over the next 5 years. That's almost triple the largest tax increase in history that took place in 1993. We remember that year, 1993, that was a $240.6 billion tax increase, about a third of what this one amounts to in '93. We will look back and remember what happened in 1994, Republicans took over the majority in the House of Representatives partly because of overspending.

But as we followed this economy a little over a year ago, I remember the swearing-in ceremony here on the floor of Congress when Speaker PELOSI took the gavel for the first time. I watched what went on when all new committee chairs for the first time in 12 years picked up the gavel and began to manage their committees. And I watched as the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee went on the talk circuit all around the country, media stop after media stop after media stop, and he was constantly asked, are you, Chairman RANGEL, going to make the Bush tax cuts permanent? Are you going to preserve any part of the Bush tax cuts? And he demurred on a straight answer time after time. But by a process of elimination it became clear to the American investor that those Bush tax cuts were not going to be made permanent, that every one of them was going to be designed to end, expire and fail at some point.

Now, these tax cuts, the big ones, the ones that matter, was on May 28, 2007. That was when we had the real tax cuts that inspired this economy. And we have been on a growth pattern ever since that time and today we're still on that growth pattern in spite of what they say about our economy if you just track the DOW. But when the public understood and the investment community understood that the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee was going to continue down this path of spending, that he didn't see a tax cut he liked and he didn't see a tax increase that he didn't like, they stopped investing in industrial investment.

The reduction in industrial investment that took place January, February, March, April and onwards of 2007 was the lead indicator for this economic inactivity that we're seeing today. That was item number one, the understanding that there would be tax increases, this understanding that we know, according to Adam Smith and Wealth of Nations from 1776 when he said ''the cost of any goods is the cost of the labor that it takes to produce it and the capital required to support the labor.'' And the cost of capital went up because of the tax increases that were around the corner, the tax increases that were implicit in this budget. When the cost of capital went up, capital is always reactive and smart, and capital investments declined. That led us into the subprime, and we know about the subprime, but that's only really about $150 billion in real losses. There might be a greater reaction on that in this Congress, but about $150 billion. That's equivalent to a dollar a gallon on gasoline. By the way, there's no energy policy either.

But what this matters to us in this country is, we want to slow this growth in spending. We want to balance this budget. We want to bring a budget that gets us down to a responsible budget. And we want to get into the entitlements, fix Medicaid, fix Medicare, fix Social Security. And if we go down this path and we see the tax increases that were part of this, we put in it in one term that's relevant, what's relevant to us, how does this affect the family of four, mom, dad and two kids that are making $50,000 a year? The result of this budget and the tax increases that are part of it to a family of four making $50,000 a year, it will cost them annually $2,100 in additional taxes.

And additionally, we're paying more for gas. We have no plan for a balanced budget coming out of the majority side. This economy has been driven down into the drink because of lack of confidence, lack of an energy policy, because of the tax increases that reduce the capital investment, especially in industrial investment, and because of the subprime.

Things that you do in a bad economy are not increase taxes, not increase government spending. You don't take a larger share out of your gross domestic product and roll that into government, that's the nonproductive sector of the economy. That's one I'm not feeling charitable; I call that the parasitic sector of the economy. We need to have more dollars in the productive sector and the private sector of the economy; that means less taxes, less government, more personal responsibility, more fiscal discipline on the part of this Congress and this House where we start the spending here.

So, I applaud the gentlelady for leading this Special Order. I look forward to many more. I look forward to the day when I can say, I stood on the floor of this Congress and voted for a balanced budget that made it through the Senate to the President's desk, and fiscal responsibility, and letting people keep the money that they earn.

Thank you for yielding. I appreciate it.

I yield back to the gentlelady from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding back.

And he is exactly right. In 1993, the $240.6 billion tax increase that came

about in 1993 is something that people in this Nation stood up and said we are not going to stand for this.

□ 1715

And I appreciate also that the gentleman mentioned Wealth of Nations and made reference to that wonderful work.

I think another one that we could add to the reading list of those who are fiscal conservatives is Road to Serfdom, which is a book, and I would commend that, Mr. Speaker, to all of our colleagues, to go back and read that work by a wonderful economist, Friedrich Hayek. And it talks about how, when you tax more and government spends more, and you take more from your people in a Nation, that you're walking on that Road to Serfdom.

As the gentleman was saying, we look at the rate of taxations based on our GDP, where we are right now in 2007, and many of us feel like this is too high. We are under 20 percent.

This is the CBO long-term outlook for taxation. You can see by looking at the bars, the red one is net interest. Social Security is the purple area. Medicare and Medicaid is the orange area, and then you have all other spending, which is in green.

Look at this chart, and look at what happens from 2007 to 2015, where we move above that 20 percent. Look what happens by 2030, when meeting the cost of your entitlements and your interest are going to take all revenue coming in on our current percentage of taxation. And then 2040, look at what happens, when you're spending about 35 percent of your GDP on taxes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Will the gentlelady yield?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I will yield.

Mr. KING of Iowa. As I look at your chart, it occurs to me that that's Federal spending. And I'm going to speculate here, though, that if we would add to that the State and the political subdivision spending on to that, because that also is a share of the GDP, we have a significantly higher percentage. And I would think that that percentage today may well go to 37 percent.

I've seen some studies by some very well-respected and highly credentialed economists that make the argument that there's a right size to government, and that right size to government, when you add all the taxation across the spectrum, from Federal to State to local, that right size of government taxing a percentage of GDP, they believe, falls somewhere between 17 and 23 percent. So I'd just argue that we've passed that already, and we've got to go down in those numbers. I'd like to see those bar charts go down.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. And the gentleman is exactly right. And we would all like to see, and that is the reason that we are here. And my hope is that as we work with our colleagues on this budget issue, that we will see these charts level off and then head downward, because Federal spending is far too high. And then you're exactly right; when you add your political subdivisions and the State taxation and spending to that, you do see a different picture.

At this point, to talk a little bit more about what we see happening with this budget, I want to yield to the gentlelady from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) who has joined us this year and has jumped right into the discussion of budget and taxation, and does a wonderful job representing our conservative perspective.

Mrs. BACHMANN. I want to thank the gentlelady from Tennessee and applaud her and thank her for her efforts as she is leading this wonderful budget school for the people of the United States, and I would consider her the dean of our budget school, and she's doing a wonderful job as dean. And I think that Representative STEVE KING may be considered a tenured professor in the budget school that the gentlelady from Tennessee is quite brilliantly hosting for the benefit of the American people.

It's so important that we're taking up this topic and devoting this time, because what all Americans share in common is that we, generally speaking, all are working for a living. And the one thing that we're finding is that more and more of our time is being spent working on behalf of political subdivisions. Whether it's the Federal Government, whether it's State government, whether it's local government, quite often our taxes are taking up perhaps as much time as from when we get up on January 1 and go to work, or if it's January 2, until perhaps in May or June, almost everything that we make during that time period is going to government.

I know that's hard to believe. But when you add up all the money that we're paying in taxes, about that much of our time is going to earn money that will, in turn, be handed over to government to spend our money. That's what's happening, and that's what we're yielding in terms of our sovereignty, is the amount of time that we are spending working to provide for our families; that much time is being spent going to government, because someone is going to spend the money that we earn.

The question is, will we have the power over being able to make those choices over spending, or will political subdivisions, whether it is the Federal, State or local, have the ability to make those choices?

I want to show you now a chart that we have up here. This talks about how much the budget that has just been passed, which the majority, the Democrat majority has the largest spending increases in American history for the budget and the largest tax increases in American history.

Take a look at the numbers. On every State, from Alabama to Wyoming, there's an increase in taxes for every American across the board, on average, from Alabama to Wyoming. And these aren't small increases. This is over and above what the average American is already paying.

But take a look at these increases. If you're in the State of Alabama, it's over a $2,500 increase in taxes beyond what you're paying now. If you're in the State of Wyoming, it's over a $3,100 tax increase.

I represent great people, great people from the State of Minnesota in the Sixth Congressional District. In Minnesota, the average taxpayer in Minnesota will pay over $3,000 more in taxes than what they're paying now.

Well, take a look at what your grocery bill has been doing. It's been going sky high lately.

And take a look at what we're paying at the gas pump. I was in St. Cloud, Minnesota last week. The price of diesel gasoline was $3.81. The price of regular gasoline was $3.14. When I took office and was sworn in for the first time as a brand new freshman Member of Congress, I thought gasoline was too high then, and it was about $2.25 a gallon.

Well, what has this Congress yielded, the 110th Congress?

So far this Congress has gone for the largest tax increase in American history, the largest spending increase in American history.

And as the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), and as Representative STEVE KING has said, from Iowa, and also the gentleman from Georgia, Representative KINGSTON has said, this Congress has failed to do anything to reform Social Security and Medicare. Every American should take pause right now and realize how sobering that is, because the United States Government has made a promise to the senior citizens of this country, has made a promise. I'm worried that this Congress will have difficulty keeping that promise with our senior citizens if we don't reform these important programs. We can't do that if we are raising the average American's taxes.

And I will yield back to the gentlewoman from Tennessee after I make this important point, and it's this: In the Budget Committee markup of Fiscal Year 2009 there was a unanimous vote to increase the marginal tax rates.

What does this mean?

Whether you are a low-income American, a middle-income American, or a high-income American, guess what? Your taxes are going up. That will impact you in an already weak economy.

Unanimously, unfortunately, the Democrats voted to cut the $1,000 child tax credit in half. That really hurts. My husband and I have five kids. We raised 23 foster kids. Do you know how important a $1,000 child tax credit is to the average family? That's really important. Well, they voted unanimously, unfortunately, the Democrats, to cut the $1,000 child tax credit in half. That will impact average Americans.

They also voted to eliminate the marriage penalty tax relief. Why would we do that? Why would we want to take away tax credits for people who are married? Married people are raising the next generation of Americans. We want to help them, not hurt them.

They also voted to eliminate the capital gains and dividends relief. This was the big driver. From 2000 until 2008, this has driven our economy forward. This has been a good thing.

And also, unfortunately, to bring back the death tax.

This is not the direction we want to go. The direction we want to go is one, a budget that the Republicans have put forward, and that's a growth budget, a budget to cut your taxes, cut wasteful spending, and put in place the mechanisms that will provide growth for this economy so that you can keep more of your income and start working for you, rather than working for the government.

And that's why I commend the gentlelady from Tennessee. As the dean of our budget school, she has been letting the American people know, in the plainest possible language, that we are here because we want to work for you. We hear you. We hear the difficulties that you're laboring under.

And I yield back to the gentlelady now to go on and continue to explain forthwith to the American people how important this ongoing discussion is.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentlelady from Minnesota. And as she said, we do have a response to this budget. You can go to budget.house.gov/republicans and pull that budget up, because it is a budget that is there to encourage growth, reduce taxes, and be certain that our constituents have the money left in their pockets.

At this time I yield to David Davis, the gentleman from Tennessee who joined us in this House this year. He was in the State Legislature in Tennessee. He knows firsthand how important a low rate of taxation, low and reasonable regulation is to having small businesses grow and develop jobs. And as we all know, there is no economic stimulus as good as a job. And I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. I'd like to thank my colleague from Tennessee. Thank you for your leadership, Ms. Blackburn. You're doing a wonderful job. I had the opportunity to serve with you in the State Legislature, and we fought off a State income tax together back in our home State. And it worked well in Tennessee and it would work well here to keep our taxes low.

As you well know, mothers and fathers all across Tennessee, I'm more concerned about East Tennessee, to be honest with you, but mothers and fathers all across East Tennessee and across America sit around their kitchen tables putting budgets together. They have to make decisions on how am I going to fill up my pickup truck or my car and it costs over $50 a tank? How am I going to put food on my table? How am I going to pay my housing payment? How am I going to pay for my health care? Those are some of the things that real Americans, real mothers and fathers have to make decisions about.

And if you look at the gasoline prices and you look at the energy bill that actually came out of this House back in December, I voted against the legislation. It had new taxes. It had new regulations. The only thing it didn't have was any new energy. And I think the American people are starting to feel that today, and because of that, they're starting to see increases in things such as their food bill going up.

I know my wife comes home every week and says, I can't believe how much our grocery bill's gone up this month. So people all across East Tennessee are struggling to make ends meet.

The Democrat budget resolution fails the test of fiscal responsibility miserably. Instead of exercising fiscal restraint and lowering taxes, the Democrat budget raises taxes, as you well know, by $683 billion over the next 5 years. You heard me correctly. $683 billion over the next 5 years.

And as it's been pointed out, that is the largest tax increase in America's history. Not only America's history. It's the largest tax increase in America's history, but it's also the largest tax increase of any country in the world. That's pretty amazing.

I don't go home every weekend and hear people say, if you could just raise my taxes, my family will do better. I hear just the opposite. Keep taxes low. Keep regulations low. Lower gasoline prices, and let me succeed.

This budget actually blows away the previous record tax increase back in 1993. That was $443 billion.

These are real tax hikes being imposed on real people. Here are some of the staggering statistics for families in Tennessee's First District. According to the Heritage Institute, because of the Democrat budget, the average taxpayer in my district will be forced to pay an increase of $1,596, and it will result in almost 2,000 jobs being lost, and a loss of $188 million in the First District's economy.

□ 1730

That's not what I hear when I go home every weekend to east Tennessee: If you could just raise my taxes, increase regulations, then it's going to be good for my family. That's not what I hear. I hear, Keep taxes low, keep regulations low, lower gas prices and get government out of my way and we will be able to do better.

And by reimposing the marriage tax, you know, I hear comments here in Washington that, well, if we could only tax the wealthy. Well, when I go home to east Tennessee every weekend, there's a lot of married folk that are not wealthy. That's just common sense. And by bringing back the marriage tax, roughly 23 million taxpayers will see their taxes increase by $466 by the year 2011 simply because they're married. I don't know if that's the policy that we need to be bringing forth in this Congress. That's not what I hear when I go home to east Tennessee every weekend.

We have a choice between bigger economy or bigger government. Taxing and spending is not a road we need to head down. Ronald Reagan once said, ''We don't have a trillion-dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough; we have a trillion-dollar debt because we spend too much.''

I think we, as Members of Congress, need to be more concerned about the budgets of mothers and fathers who have to put a budget together around their kitchen tables back in East Tennessee and across America rather than growing a Federal budget that supports out-of-control spending that relies on taking money from the very mothers and fathers who are struggling to make ends meet back in northeast Tennessee and across America.

I would like to thank my colleague, Congresswoman BLACKBURN, for her leadership in putting on this budget school; and if we could just get back to using some common sense, we will go forward in America. It's worked well for over 200 years; we just need to get back to that common sense.

Thank you for your leadership.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee, and as he said, the loss to the economy is something we hear a lot about.

Look at this chart. You can see what happened with Federal revenues in 2001, 2002. Look at what happened when we reduced taxes in 2001 and then again in 2003, and look what happened, how we took off with a growth in Federal revenues. It just shows you what happened when you reduce taxes, when the government takes less and allows individuals to make those decisions, what to do with that money. When government doesn't take first right of refusal on so much of that paycheck and allows our constituents to make those choices, you can see there are four straight years of increases there.

To talk a little bit about the impact of the economic policy that's before us on his constituents from Ohio, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. JORDAN.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I thank the gentlelady for yielding and for her leadership on this special order hour and her leadership in Congress and her work with the RSC along with our chairman.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government spends a lot of money. The American people understand that instinctively. In fact, let me give some context to it.

The United States' economy is a $14 trillion annual economy. The second largest economy in the world is Japan, approximately $4 trillion annual economy. The third largest economy, if you define it this way, would be the Federal Government. So 1 year of spending by the Federal Government would be the third largest economy in the world. $3 trillion, the largest budget in history, is what passed on this floor 4 weeks ago.

Again, to provide a little context to that. $3 trillion budget. That's the Federal Government spending your tax dollars, the American families' taxpayer money for families in Ohio and across this country spending at $100,000 a second, $6 million a minute, $350 million an hour. I mean, even by politicians' standards, that is spending money like crazy.

The Federal Government spends, again, just to provide some context, and I appreciate the work that everyone has done and what the previous figures have said. The Federal Government spends $25,000 per year per family. Instead of spending $25,000 per family, if we would just spend $20,000 we could balance the budget in 1 year. Just spending $20,000 per family, we could do it.

The previous speakers have talked about the tax burden that was also contained in this budget, $600 billion in taxes. You always hear about tax-and-spend politicians. I actually argue that it's just the opposite. In fact, the gentleman from Tennessee just talked about this. It's spending tax. Spending always drives the equation.

So to make sure that this $3 trillion could be spent, this budget contains the largest tax increase in the history of our country. At a time when families are already dealing with tough economic situations in their family and in their communities, the last thing we need is higher taxes.

You can compound all of this situation by what we heard last week. And I just want to read from the trustees' report, the 2008 Social Security and Medicare trustees' report, because I think it's poignant to this, a discussion about where we are at this point in our Nation's history. The trustees said, We are increasingly concerned about the inaction on the financial challenges facing the Social Security and Medicare programs. The longer action is delayed, the greater will be the required adjustments, the larger the burden on future generations, and the more severe the detrimental economic impact on our Nation.

The longer we wait to do anything, the tougher it is going to be to address it and fix the problem.

In fact, outgoing Comptroller General David Walker has said this: We run the risk, for the first time in American history, turning over a worse financial picture to the next generation. It's never happened before in the history of the United States.

One of the reasons we are the greatest countries in history is because parents make sacrifices for their children so they can have a better economic situation, a better life, a better standard of living than what we have. We run the risk of beginning to turn that. We have got to begin to address that.

I just want to bring up two simple concepts that were proposed in the Budget Committee by Members of the Republican party and the RSC. We offered two simple ideas. One was, it's time for a second Grace Commission. If you remember, President Reagan put together the Grace Commission. He had outside business people come in and look at the Federal Government, look at the government, say, Where is the waste? Where is the fraud? Where is the redundancy? Where is the ridiculousness? Let's get rid of it and save taxpayer money and better spend taxpayer money.

Back in the 1980s, they identified $400 billion in waste, fraud, and redundancy. Certainly we can find some savings by doing that. The Grace Commission, unfortunately, was defeated in committee.

We also offered an amendment that said let's hold the line on spending. Outside of the military, let's just hold the line, and let's keep the baseline lower, which saves us a lot of money in the outyears. And we made the argument in committee that this won't solve the problem, but this will better position our Congress, better position our government to deal with what we know is coming, to deal with what the trustees reported last week is coming relative to Social Security and Medicare. Two simple ideas that we couldn't even get passed in committee because the majority party wouldn't go for it. Things that we need to do to long-term begin to address the situation.

As the previous speaker said, and I will close with this and turn it back over, he's confident that we will get this right. I am, too. Not because the politicians in Washington get it but because the American people do. The old adage is often true: Most politicians don't see the light; they feel the heat. And they feel the heat from their constituents because their constituents have the common sense of the folks, like in East Tennessee and back in western Ohio as well, and they understand the situation is real, they understand it's time for politicians and elected officials to step forward and say, Enough is enough. Let's fix this because it's about our kids and about our grandkids.

That's why I applaud the leadership of the gentlewoman from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, we have had some absolutely wonderful freshmen to join us this year, and the gentleman from Ohio is one of them; and we are just so grateful to his constituents who have sent him here to join in on seeking fiscal responsibility for this great Nation of ours. We appreciate his leadership, as Mr. DAVIS and Ms. BACHMANN, and the work that they have done.

And now someone who came to this Congress and has been a leader serving on the Budget Committee working toward fiscal responsibility.

I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. And I thank the gentlelady from Tennessee for all of your work on this matter and others as well, shining the light of day on the budget process here in the House under Democrat control of this legislature.

That last point, under Democrat control, here we find ourselves 15 months into the 110th Congress under a new Democrat majority in this House, and we have to ask that basic question, What has that Democrat control of 15 months brought? Well, in outside groups in the media, it has been reported this has been one of the most inefficient and ineffective Congresses in passing legislation out of the House and making it to the President's desk and getting it signed, in most people's memory. And that is a bad thing when it comes to trying to solve the problems that are addressing America's families and America's pocketbook as well.

I would like to spend my couple of minutes personalizing this budget process from the great State of New Jersey and other residents of my State as well and how it impacts upon them.

New Jerseyans are already overtaxed. Just recently, the legislature in Trenton, the State capital, raised taxes. They raised the sales tax, they raised corporate taxes, they raised user fees and what have you. And now there is talk about, in our State, maybe doubling or tripling the tolls on the road, and not to speak, of course, about property taxes which are going through the roof in our State. So New Jersey families are already taxed.

What do we see here in the Congress under Democrat control with the budget that they have passed through this House? Well, for New Jerseyans it would amount to around $3,700 increase, a $3,700 increase in taxes on the American family or the New Jersey family. More of their hard-earned money being taken from them and sent to Washington.

And what else? Well, another independent analysis, this one done by the Heritage Foundation, shows that folks in my district, the Fifth District in New Jersey, which my district represents, they would lose upwards to 2,000 jobs. So mind you, the budget that the Democrats have passed would do two things: raise our taxes in my State by around $3,700 for the average family, and we would lose 2,000 jobs. All a bad thing now under the Democrat's Congress.

So while it may have been one of the most ineffective and inefficient Congresses under the Democrat leadership, they are doing some things all bad.

Let me take a moment, if I may, to address three points that went through the budgetary process when the bills came through the committee.

If you hadn't been turned on C–SPAN from 10:30 in the morning when the bills came through with the Budget Committee initially until around 1 o'clock the next morning when the bill finally came out, you may have missed exactly what the Budget Committee did under the leadership of the Democrat Conference.

Let me touch upon three of them. Democrats proposed their budget. Republicans tried to take a bad bill and tried to make it better with a number of amendments, and I will go through very quickly, if I may, three of those amendments. In each instance, when we took our amendments and said, Here is an idea that maybe would make your bill a little bit better, they voted

unanimously, and it shows the bipartisanship is not there in that committee, unanimously against our ideas.

First idea. AMT, alternative minimum tax. We suggested that this very harsh tax should be repealed. Remember, it was the AMT started under 1969 under a Democrat Congress, in the 1990s under a Democrat President, Bill Clinton. We Republicans tried to repeal it. He said no. Now we said we have to get rid of this unfair tax that in just a couple of years from now, around 34 million American families would see their taxes go up incredibly. They said ''no'' to our amendment.

Secondly, again, Democrats unanimously voted against another amendment that we suggested to their bill with regard to earmarks. We all have problems with earmarks. It made the news heavily in the last months, what have you. We see the waste, fraud, and abuse there. We suggested we could save a billion dollars in earmarks and let's appropriate it over to veterans and for their good causes. That was our amendment. They voted unanimously to oppose it.

And finally in the area of Social Security. You would think here is one area that there would be bipartisanship, that they would reach across the aisle and try to get something done. Again, no go. Earmarks, again, was the basis of our areas that we thought we could save some money. There was so much waste, fraud, and abuse with their earmarks. We said, Let's save some of the money there. Let's make sure that Social Security is here for seniors today and for the next generation and next generation. Let's stop robbing from the Social Security trust fund. We put in an amendment to do that. What do the Democrats do once again? Unanimously they voted against that amendment as well.

The amendments all went down. The bill passed as the Democrats initially proposed it, in essence, and that bill, of course, is bad for my constituents, bad for New Jerseyans as we will be losing jobs, seeing our taxes go up.

So, again, I close where I began, commending the lady for bringing this information to the American public as we work together to make it a better situation.

Thank you.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, and I do thank him, Mr. Speaker, for his continued leadership. As I mentioned, we were freshman classmates in the 108th Congress and have worked each session of these past three sessions of Congress to bring to light the needed changes that are there for our government budget processes, the way we go about building this budget, and the way we handle the taxpayers' money.

Another of our 108th freshmen who worked making waste, fraud, and abuse our class project as we developed to the wasteful Washington spending and the Washington waste watchers and started shining some light on earmarks and the need to change that practice on wasteful spending, on increased taxation, on programs that may be have outlived their usefulness, and that is the chairman of our Republican Study Committee, JEB HENSARLING of Texas.

And as I mentioned, we are all Members of the Republican Study Committee, and I want to yield to our chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) for his comments and remarks on the budget process and welcome him to this session of budget school.

□ 1745

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for yielding, and I certainly thank her for her leadership and ingenuity in putting together this budget school for the American people. It is their money. Too often people come to this floor and they think it's their money. It's not. It's the people's money, and they need to know what the U.S. House is doing about it.

The gentlewoman had so many great speakers from our Conservative Caucus, the Republican Study Committee, and I think I just want to sum up really what is probably a tale of two budgets: the Republican budget and the Democrat budget. And, unfortunately, for the American people, it was the Democrat budget that was passed into law.

Number one, the Democrat budget included the single highest tax increase in American history on American families at a time when we know the economy is struggling, American families are struggling. I have two small children. I know what's happened to the price of milk. I know what's happened to the cost of a loaf of bread and to all the various and sundry cereals that they see advertised on Saturday morning that my wife and I are compelled to buy. Groceries have gone up. Gasoline has gone up. Ever since the Democrats took control of the economic policy of America 15 months ago, all we have seen is that American families have to struggle.

But what are the Democrats doing on top of this as American families are struggling? They are imposing a tax increase of almost $3,000 per American family over the course of the next 3 years. I mean, Mr. Speaker, this is just simply unconscionable. In my district in East Texas, the average family will see their taxes increase $2,734. Small businesses, as we struggle to make sure that we keep our jobs, that we expand our jobs, small businesses, their taxes are going to go up by as much as 13 percent. Taxes on capital gains will go up 33 percent; dividends, 164 percent. Mr. Speaker, you can't have capitalism without capital. You can't have the job engine if you take that away. And so at a time when people are concerned about their paychecks, the Democrats are going to take even a bigger bite out of their paychecks and the people who create those paychecks in the first place: the small business. I mean, Mr. Speaker, this is just unconscionable.

The death tax is going to go from zero percent up to 55 percent. People work their whole life to put together a farm, a ranch, a small business; and all of a sudden Uncle Sam can come in and take over half of it, and there's just not enough left to go around. The child tax credit is going to be cut in half. The lowest tax bracket is going to be increased by 50 percent. The marriage penalty will return. This is the Democrat plan for economic growth? This is the Democrat plan to help struggling American families?

A tale of two budgets. The Republican budget has no tax increase, Mr. Speaker. I repeat, no tax increase.

Another incredibly distinguishing aspect of the tale of two budgets is that the Republican budget says enough is enough on these earmarks. No more bridges to nowhere. It's your money. So the Republican budget included an earmark moratorium. They said you know what? The system's broken. The system's wasteful. We're going to stop it. We are going to ensure that there's a select committee to see if there's a better way to spend the people's money. And, instead, the Democrat budget rejects that. And, instead, what do they have? They have almost $15 billion for congressional earmarks that all too often represent the victory of seniority over merit, special interest over the general interest, and secrecy over transparency.

In the Democrat budget, in the last budget, they financed $2 million so that one of their committee chairmen could build a museum to himself; $100,000 is sent to the Los Angeles Fashion District for landscaping at the same time they are increasing taxes on American families. They earmark $300,000 to train people to work on Hollywood movie sets while they're taxing hardworking American families. And the list goes on and on. They are the party of congressional earmarks. Business as usual.

Some say it's not a whole lot of money. Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope I'm never in Congress so long that I conclude that $16 billion of the people's money is not a lot of money. It's a lot of money to the people in the Fifth Congressional District of Texas. And at the time when they are trying to keep a roof over their head, send their kids to college, pay for a gallon of gasoline, pay for a gallon of milk, to sit there and be building museums to sitting Members of Congress, to be sending money to the L.A. Fashion District is simply unconscionable.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, when you look at two budgets, it's not just about numbers; it's about visions. At a time when we need more jobs and more growth and we need to secure the family paycheck, all the Democrats offer are more earmarks, and they offer tax increases on the American family as much as $3,000 per year.

The Republican budget has no tax increase. It will help the family paycheck. It will help create small businesses. It has spending control and will lead to a brighter future for our children and future generations and provide them with greater freedom and greater opportunity. That is the tale of two budgets and how the American people's money is spent.

So I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for this wonderful program on the budget. I thank her for her leadership within the Republican Study Committee, the Conservative Caucus in Congress.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Texas for the leadership that he provides every day on these issues.

And at this point, Mr. Speaker, I want to yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT), who has such a wonderful understanding of the budget.

And as I mentioned earlier, we have our Constitution and our Declaration of Independence, a little tiny document. Then we've talked about the appendix of the budget, this big volume right here. And what you're going to find there with some of the line items, as our colleague from Georgia was talking about, is the ag program. That's where you find that information. Then there is analytical and historical data that we look at and what we actually find with our trust fund and with our debt.

And to provide some insight into this, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland for his insight into the budget and the budget structure.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I thought it might be instructive for the last couple of minutes of this hour to kind of put what we've been talking about in perspective.

When you say ''budget, ''you have to know which budget we're talking about because we have two budgets in Washington. We have the one we talk about publicly, and then we have the official budget that we have to deal with, and they're different. You will understand in a couple of moments why they're different.

When we generally talk about public, you'll hear what we call the unified budget. Now, the unified budget is all the money that comes into Washington and all the money that we spend. But about 10 percent of the money that comes into Washington shouldn't be Washington's money to spend because it's moneys that they've taken from you, like Social Security, Medicare, railroad retirement, and about 50 others, presumably to be put in trust for you. But they do not put those moneys in trust for you. What they do with them in Washington is immediately convert them to a nonnegotiable U.S. security and spend them.

When we talk about debt, there's the national debt and the public debt, and I will bet you, Mr. Speaker, that not one person in fifty out there knows the difference between the national debt and the public debt.

Our time's going to run out in just a couple of minutes, and I would like to come back to the floor to talk again. But there never was a moment in time during those years during the Clinton presidency when we said we were paying down the debt that, in fact, the national debt went down. Because what we were doing with the lockbox money, which was surplus money from Social Security and Medicare, we were taking that money and paying down the public debt. The public debt did go down, but for every dollar the public debt went down, the trust fund debt went up another dollar. So there was no change in the total debt, or the national debt. But there were some trust fund moneys that were not lockbox moneys. In fact, only two of them were lockbox, Social Security and Medicare; so we happily took that additional money and spent that, and so the national debt did go up. As a matter of fact, there was not a moment in time during those years when we said we had a budget surplus when, in fact, the national debt went down.

There's a lot of duplicity in Washington. It probably shouldn't surprise you to learn that you shouldn't believe everything that comes out of Washington. I have the numbers here for that debt, and a half hour ago when I came to the floor, the public debt was over $5.3 trillion. They call this the intergovernmental holdings debt, which was just a little over $4 trillion. I have $4 trillion here, $5 trillion here, and the total national debt was $9.446 trillion.

I would very much appreciate coming back to the floor at another time to expand on this because I think it's very instructive for people to know, as your budget school says up there, who have the right to know how Washington spends your money.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think individuals can see how instructive and how exciting our next session will be because we're going to talk a little bit about this budget, and I thank the gentleman for his insight.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to come before the House once again.

As you know, in the 30-Something Working Group, we work very hard to put forth the agenda of the American people. We have been consistent over a number of years in doing this. And I think that it's important for the forward progress of not only the House of Representatives but also for the American people.

The good thing about coming to the floor and sharing what's happening here in the Capitol Dome, or what's not happening, is its importance in strengthening our democracy and also strengthening our economy and strengthening the faith in government by the American people. And I think that some of the information, especially as it comes in a bipartisan fashion, that it allows our friends on the Republican side of the aisle to be able to take part in legislation that the American people support wholeheartedly.

Case in point: increasing the minimum wage, adopting all the 9/11 recommendations, and also looking at the issue of the greening of America, putting forth incentives of saving our Earth as we move forth, fighting for community police officers for local law enforcement agencies, State law enforcement agencies, and also the Federal outlook of being able to deter crime in this country; also assisting children and getting a level of health care that they deserve in a universal sense as it relates to S–CHIP, or what we call CHAMP here on the floor; and to also have hearings, to open up this government to the American people, of transparency.

As we started talking about Member projects, Mr. Speaker, in the appropriations process, we brought about the transparency that the American people have been looking for, disclosure, to make sure that these projects are worthy projects, and also having what we call reform, and we have shown that.

□ 1800

I want to just talk about a few things, Mr. Speaker, if I can, before the rest of the 30-Something Group is recognized, of what is happening now, not only in America, but overseas. We know that a number of officials from the Bush administration have been asked to come to Capitol Hill to testify before various committees, be they House or Senate. Today's news is the economy. When we start looking at testimony that took place here today, where it was first mentioned, not that we were trying to make history, a Bush administration official saying that the country is in a small recession and that recovery will be soon, and very soon, well, it reminds me of the debate when we talked about what was going on in Darfur, in Africa, if we want to call it genocide or not. We already knew it was genocide so we didn't necessarily have to wait for the President or the Bush administration to say it was genocide. But it did help when they said that it was.

Well, since now the Bush administration has come around to find out that their policies of tax breaks for billionaires and millionaires did not help the economy, and now has testified that we are in a recession, or a small recession, using the R word, maybe we can start

dealing with the solution as a unified government.

One example of how we have worked together in unity has been what was shown when we passed the small stimulus bill that was passed, and I know that the Speaker and Democratic leaders are looking, and also hopefully Republican leaders, are working towards a stimulus package that will create jobs, U.S. jobs here, and would allow those from the GED education to the post-graduate education, doctoral, those that have gone beyond in their education to be able to take part in new job creation here in the United States. So we have these forward leaning initiatives that we are ready and willing to work on.

The second point, I think it's also important as we look at the housing crisis that we are in right now. Mr. Speaker, I am actually in the next couple of weeks holding a ''save your home'' or recovery effort in my district. I am asking my constituents to come forth, those that are trying to make their mortgages, and bringing lenders together, along with credit counselors, to be able to assist them to save the only thing that they have, and that is their home.

I think it's so very, very important that we continue to work very hard. I know that Chairman FRANK, the Financial Services Committee, will be having a hearing in response to what has been happening in the housing crisis. I know that the Senate is working very hard to have some product come before this House soon, and very soon, to deal with this.

I think it's important that those of us in Congress not only support the public efforts that are going on, but also encourage the banking community and the lending community to step forward and try to assist as much as they can in saving the piece of the pie of the American dream. With so many Americans, that dream is now turning into a nightmare. It's our job to be able to stand up for those individuals.

I think that it's also important to know the chair of the Federal Reserve is continuing to warn us of a possible recession. I think that it's important for us to look at it as a reality where it is now.

Now for individuals that have substance abuse problems, or whatever the case may be, first you have to admit that you have a problem for us to get to the recovery, or to recover from that problem, to be able to receive the kind of treatment that is needed. As it relates to the decision makers in Washington and in the lending community, admitting that there is a problem is important. Many of us have, but we still have some holdouts for the sake of holding out. I think that as we move on, that we press on in a bipartisan way to make that happen. There will be efforts to make that happen. I ask my Republican friends on the other side of the aisle to be a part of the solution and not just the argument.

I think that when we also, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to share some of these thoughts because we have had 2 weeks off and I have had an opportunity to focus on some of the things that I wanted to share with the House of not only the observations, my personal observations, but what I have read of what others have written of their concerns about the lack of leadership on recovering or bringing about the kind of recovery we need on this economy. That there are certain things that have to be in place.

I know the first stimulus package we did gives some relief to homeowners through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and FHA loans and raising that ceiling so they can be able to assist individuals to save their homes. But we have got to go further than that. We have to be able to create the jobs that individuals need to be able to save their homes.

The second point I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker, that I think is vital, General Petraeus is going to be here on the Hill within a week. We know that we are starting to see violence again in Iraq. We know that we have put a large investment on the ground in Iraq, not only in our men and women that are over 140,000, that are there, but also we put a major cash investment on the streets of Iraq in hiring a number of Iraqis with U.S. dollars, cash dollars that they are paid in to help keep the peace in certain neighborhoods that have been a part of the uprising and the insurgency.

If I had the dollars that we have on the ground in Iraq in my district, there would be no crime. We would be able to hire those individuals that some may say are unemployable, that are out doing things that we don't necessarily agree with. Some justify their actions on the lack of being able to be employed, some justify their acts on the fact that they are not able to, even if they are employable, there are no jobs for them to get to be a productive member of society. Of course, there is a lack of job training dollars in our States and in our communities. There is a lack of bridge dollars to be able to introduce these individuals back into society, especially those that have made youthful indiscretions.

But as we start looking at General Petraeus' testimony when we come back before Congress, we have to look at it from the standpoint of where are we going from this point. I think that the American people are ready for the Iraq experience to be over as it relates to street-to-street, neighborhood-to-neighborhood protection of the Iraqi people. I think that it's time for our government to be able at the highest levels, and I know many Members of the House, including myself, have personal editorials on this issue. But we are looking forward to General Petraeus' report. We are also looking forward to Ambassador Crocker's report.

We are also looking forward to hearing not only from other experts that are in the area of Iraq, and I know the Armed Services Committee is going to be dealing with that, but I ask the Members in a bipartisan way to look at it not with a partisan eye, but look at it from a standpoint of what is best for the United States of America. So when we deal with the economy and we deal with Iraq, I mean there are two major issues that are going on in the country. For those that write books and for those that are historians, they are paying very, very close attention to what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be joined by my colleagues. I am just going to do it in order of seniority and order of people that are next to me. Even though I am going to recognize Mr. ALTMIRE, since he made it here first, we have Mr. RYAN from the great State of Ohio, and represents Niles, Ohio, Youngstown, and has been doing great work here when we first started the 30-Something Working Group. We do have what I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, Mr. Speaker, is what we look for is consistency and accuracy on what we share with the Members and also the American people.

I have my good friend Ms. CLARKE, YVETTE CLARKE from the great State of New York, and representing Brooklyn in a very proud way. I have been to her district and seen her work, and she has worked on the local government level and brings a flavor to this body that all Members should appreciate, and I know that will continue to be a force here in Congress. And Mr. JASON ALTMIRE, he and Mr. RYAN speak of very fondly, in the same television market, media market. Mr. RYAN actually participated in Mr. ALTMIRE's election. I am glad that Mr. ALTMIRE is here. He is a great voice here in Congress and has passed bills on this floor that are substantial to the very fiber of our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, with that, just these opening comments that I have made, I know that with us being off 2 weeks, many of these Members have a lot to share. But as we look at the next couple of weeks and beyond, there is going to be a lot going on here in the Capitol dome, and the American people are going to be paying very careful attention to it, and we need bipartisan support in making that happen.

Mr. Altmire.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman from Florida, and I look forward to continuing the discussion tonight on all these issues the gentleman has brought up.

The gentleman closed with Iraq. We are going to have General Petraeus and we are going to have Ambassador Crocker come before Congress again next week and give their status report on what they see on the ground in Iraq. As the gentleman from Florida knows, he and I traveled to Iraq together last year. One of the things that you would see over there is that the military situation, without question, our brave men and women are doing incredible work

over there. It's amazing to see firsthand the men and women in action and seeing the great things that they have been able to do with the situation that they have been presented with in Iraq.

But I cannot say the same thing about the politicians in Baghdad, the Iraqi politicians. We have had for several months now, if not more than a year, a situation in Baghdad where the politicians have just refused to step up and make the necessary political accommodations to administer their own government and run their own affairs. This situation in Iraq can only be resolved by the Iraqis themselves. It is their country. Our brave men and women in the military have provided a bubble of security around Baghdad to give the decisionmakers, the Iraqis in Baghdad the opportunity to make the tough political accommodations that are necessary, and they have refused to do it.

What we have seen in recent weeks, unfortunately, is the situation in Iraq regress. We will hold judgment on that until I hear from General Petraeus next week and Ambassador Crocker and hear what they have to say. But it does not appear that the situation in Iraq over the past several weeks has gotten any more stable. I hope that General Petraeus has good news.

But nobody can argue that our brave men and women in the military, the best and brightest this country has to offer, have done everything they can possibly do to give the Iraqis the opportunity to take the reins of power and control their own affairs and manage their own destiny. Unfortunately, it appears that they have refused to do so, the politicians in Baghdad. So we will certainly talk more about that.

I also wanted to touch on the economic downturn that we are in. There's a lot of debate on what you call it; is it a recession, are we in a recession, or are we not. I really don't care what we call it, what I know about is when I go back to my district in western Pennsylvania and I talk with people who are struggling in this economy, I can see firsthand what has happened and what the impact of this economic downturn has had on my constituents in southwestern Pennsylvania. We hear stories from all around the country of families going through the same trouble and turmoil as my constituents are in western Pennsylvania.

One of the things I hear over and over again is, well, these are just people who bought too much house. They got in over their heads and they bought more house than they can afford. You know what, they are getting what is coming to them.

That is not what happened. What we have had is people all across this country that have a mortgage, but they also have health care costs.

□ 1815

They have kids in school, where they are paying college tuition that is going up three and four and five times the rate of inflation. They have perhaps businesses to run. They have costs with fuel and gas prices and everything that that affects, with food prices going up.

Perhaps they took out a second mortgage, and maybe then they got overextended because they couldn't afford their daily household expenses because of everything else happening in the economy. This wave came on, and we had over 1 million foreclosures last year. We are on schedule this year to perhaps double that in 2008.

And I don't think anyone can argue that the economy is certainly in trouble right now. It is in a downward spiral, and we are hoping to prevent a recession, if we are not in one already. But I think to have an argument, as we have had on this floor many times with people on the other side who want to deny that this is a recession or not, that is missing the boat. I don't care what you call it. What I want to do is get out there and make a difference for the American people in a way that is going to make their life better and help them pay their daily household expenses and avoid bankruptcy and avoid defaulting on their mortgage. And that helps everybody.

Perhaps you do say, well, these are people who bought too much house and they got what they deserve. Even that is not the case. If those people live in your neighborhood and they default on their mortgage and their house is foreclosed, guess what? That is going to hurt your property values. That is going to have a direct impact on you, and maybe at that point you might take a second look at it. I don't want it to get to that point. I want to take proactive action.

The President this week, when he talked about what his economic plan was he was moving forward, it sounded a lot like Herbert Hoover and what his plan was in the 1930s. And if you sit on your hands and you do nothing, I can promise you, this is not going to correct itself. This problem is going to continue to get worse.

So I am grateful that we have come here tonight to talk about these important issues and to take action on these issues as a Congress, because working together we can take a giant step in solving these problems for the American people, hopefully avoiding a recession, if we are not in one, but in the long term making policy decisions that are going to directly improve the lives of our constituents all across the country.

With that, I would now yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE).

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. ALTMIRE, and to my colleague the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and to my colleague the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), it is great to be here with you once again. I just wanted to come and have a conversation with you folks out there and, of course, my colleagues here.

I was in my office when I heard the wrap-up of the last Republican hour, and I thought I heard one of my colleagues state that we are in this economic crisis currently due to the last 13 months of Democratic control. I couldn't believe what I heard, because I thought to myself, what a joke. Who does he think he is fooling with this type of baseless rhetoric?

Americans know exactly who and what caused this economic downturn. Pointing the finger right now does not help us to put milk in the refrigerators of our neighbors and our constituents, and it certainly doesn't fill the gas tank, and it certainly does not enable people to stop fretting about whether they can make next month's mortgage payment.

One of the things that we can all be grateful for is that this Democratic-controlled Congress saw fit to rise to the occasion to forecast what we see as a real economic downturn by putting forth in a bipartisan way an economic stimulus package that we hope will bring at least a moment of respite, a moment where folks can catch their breath and catch their bearings as we present to them the opportunities to refinance their homes and the opportunities to just sort of take a look at the landscape and be able to catch up.

Right now, everyone is sort of running after themselves and trying to catch up with the mounting costs of just living today. And it is really just not a time for us to be pointing fingers. It is a time for us to put our shoulders to the wheel with real solutions for all Americans.

Certainly this ''New Direction'' Congress has enacted an economic stimulus package that brings relief to our families and provides recovery rebates starting next month, that raises loan limits for mortgages backed by the FHA, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and allows our families to get mortgages with better terms. That is the type of language that Americans want to hear today. That is what the families of my district need to know is coming from us today.

When you think about the fact that we are going to be putting hundreds of dollars in the hands of more than 130 million American families who will spend it immediately to invigorate the economy, then you know that we are concerned, that we are not just saying that you got yourself into this, now get yourself out.

I noticed that no one said to Bear Stearns, you got yourself into this, now get yourself out. We decided as a nation that we had to make sure that the underpinning of our economic society was not withdrawn from under us. We need to do that for every single family here in America. We need to get that done.

Listening to our caucus and the conversations we are having as Democrats around phase two of our economic stimulus is quite heartening; knowing that we are examining what is needed to really get this economy going, which means really innovation, which

means bringing to the table the idea that we cannot continue to buy oil which is not an unlimited source, but that we have to look at renewable energies and the type of industry that will be developed in the years to come through that industry and looking at our infrastructure that has not been addressed, at least in my lifetime, that we know that we are going to need to get this done over the next decade or so.

So all of these things are on the table. These are things we are discussing as Democrats in terms of phase two, because we know that this stimulus is just the beginning of a multi-pronged strategy that we must take to ensure the future economic growth and strengthening of America.

So I want to just thank my colleagues for their continued focus, and not being distracted by those who would rhetorically joke about what is really a major concern to so many Americans right now as they sit at their kitchen tables, at their dining room tables, and they look at the energy bills that have come in from a very harsh winter and a very rough climate in many parts of the country, as they look at the fact that the cost of milk per gallon is now the same cost as gasoline per gallon, as they look at what it takes to travel from one part of this Nation to another, the cost, or from their homes to where they work each day, the cost. All of this is what we need to be focused on, and I am really excited that we are on our way.

We talked about the war in Iraq, and there is a direct correlation between what is happening with us economically and what we are able to do economically when we have got so much invested in a war in Iraq.

Just this last week, we have looked at 5 long years of war. I can't ever recall in my lifetime, and that is just to give you a sense, of us ever being at war this long. It says something to those who have given their lives and who are veterans of the wars of years gone by and those who would give their lives as our soldiers in the future that we can't be reckless about the call to arms in this country.

Some would say that what we have done with the war in Iraq has not been the best moment in our history. So as we look at the fact that over 29,000 Americans have been injured and more than 31,300 have been treated for non-combat injury and illness, I hope that we will also focus on the redeployment that will ultimately have to take place once the Iraqi government stands up. It is in the capacity to do so, and we are hoping that these things will happen simultaneously, quite frankly. But that we also pay attention to these families in our communities, of the walking-wounded warriors who will need our support and will need our help as they readjust to coming back to an America that has a faltering economy, that is struggling to keep its own people in their homes.

We need to pay very close attention to what is happening with our veterans, and this Democratic Caucus, this Democratic Congress, has been in the forefront of veterans' rights, of veterans' benefits, in a way that no other part of this government has paid attention to it.

So when I hear my colleagues in the last Republican hour focus on trying to cast aspersions at what the Democratic Congress has done, I really hope that they will join us in the bipartisan effort to focus on what is real. What is real are the veterans that are coming home to our communities and the struggles of their families and the duress that their families have been under in just trying to make ends meet on veterans' salaries. It is the struggle that everyone in our communities is facing, whether it is personally or it is a neighbor, in seeing those for-sale signs going up throughout the neighborhood. These are the issues that we are concerned about.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If the gentlewoman will yield for a second, I want to share something with the Members and also with those of us here on the floor.

During the break, I took the privilege of going out to Camp Pendleton in California. As you go through the gate off of I–5, there is a billboard that is there, like you would see out in front of a drugstore or something, but it is an electronic billboard and it talks about if you need counseling. They have folks coming back every 4 months or so, some folks who have gone on their third and fourth tour.

Think about it. You have families that live on that base. You have individuals the age of 18 or 19 years old, just single, that are living there.

I had an opportunity to go through a simulator there at Camp Pendleton like you are in an Iraqi village or in a city, in Baghdad, in Fallujah. I have walked the streets of Fallujah. Mr. ALTMIRE and I have done it. Mr. RYAN and I have been to Iraq on another trip. The ground, the structure, the folks dressed as though you are in Baghdad, it is a true simulation, and they have gunfire and IEDs and all of these things kind of going off in this simulator.

Just walking through that was an experience for me, and that was just an enactment of what could happen or what should happen and giving our troops, our Marines, units going through there, a real flavor of what is going on.

I can imagine being in the situation. I knew that I could walk out, the sun will be shining, it will be California weather. But when you are in that kind of situation, some folks feel that this is just some sort of made-for-television kind of thing.

I love the troops. Mr. RYAN and I, we have been hearing this since we have been in Congress, because when we first got here, the war just started. We weren't here for the vote to go or not to go, but we got here right as soon as the war actually started. Some of the statements that are littered throughout the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD are, you know, ''our troops, we'll show 'em,'' and carrying on.

We do have the best and the greatest and the most able military on the face of the Earth, by far. But when you start dealing with the real human issues of our men and women that are in combat, they go through a lot and their families go through a lot.

What you said, Ms. CLARKE, about we should take under consideration what happens to those individuals, it's not a game.

□ 1830

Mr. RYAN OF Ohio. Just to share a little bit, Mr. Speaker. We were up at Walter Reed on Monday. And you want to talk about the issue of war smacking you right in the face, when you see someone just a few years younger than we are without legs, traumatic brain injury. You hear stories from parents who say, ''I got a call from Iraq, and my son or daughter, all they told me was he had a brain injury, and hung up the phone,'' and they don't hear back for 4 days.

I mean, when you put all these stories together, that one particular mom waiting there 4 days not knowing, the unknown of whether or not your kid is going to live or die; or you hear the stories about the soldier we had in Batavia, Ohio, where you didn't know; the body was missing, you couldn't find it, and then you find it.

When you add all of this stress up and you put it into our families and you put it into the soldiers that are there, and you talk about the long-term health care costs of this war, not to mention what is happening there day-to-day there now, but the long-term effects when at some point this is all settled hopefully, one way or the other, at least our portion of it is and our troops are back home for the most part, the effects are still going to be left with us. And I don't know if any of you have had the opportunity to see, Phil Donahue has this new documentary out called Body of War, and it is all about the actual physical injuries that these families are going through. And I think it is important for us to remember that. And when you hear and read in the paper that 10 or 15 civilians or four troops, those are real people. And those kind of situations, when you have all these civilian deaths in Iraq, from a very practical standpoint, one is they are civilians and that is a whole other issue, but from a very practical standpoint it makes it very difficult for us to solve the political problems over there when everyone who is a part of the government are losing brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles who are getting killed by these bombs that are going off over in Iraq. It makes it very difficult.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman from Ohio. I wanted to think

about this in the terms of what this Congress has done to resolve some of the issues that we are talking about right now for our brave service men and women and their families. Because anyone listening to this debate would say, well, that is great that you are talking about what the problems are; but what have you done to solve the problems? And I want to tell anyone who is willing to listen that we have a tremendous record of accomplishment in supporting our troops. Not just saying the words, but supporting the troops with our actions, not just our words. And we are in the sixth year of the war in Iraq right now, and here are some things that this new Congress has done, bills that have been signed into law to address the issues that we are talking about.

The gentleman from Ohio talks about traumatic brain injury and the incredible impact that has had. TBI is the signature injury of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, because people who would have been killed in previous wars, thanks to better medical technology and better armor and equipment, thankfully they survive; but, unfortunately, in many cases they are horrifically injured, the type of injuries the gentleman witnessed at Walter Reed. I took a trip to Walter Reed, myself, and I saw the same types of injuries, the lost limbs, the spinal cord injuries and the traumatic brain injuries.

But what happens is, when these men and women come back and they are still in the Defense health care system, they are treated for the apparent physical injuries that you can see in front of you. And because they are moving so quickly, they don't think to screen them for TBI if it is not a severe case of TBI. They move them over to the VA. The VA has no record of them having had a head injury, so it doesn't become part of their medical record and we have symptoms that go undiagnosed the rest of the time they are in the VA health care facility.

So what this Congress did is said that every VA facility in this country has to have somebody on staff who is equipped and trained to treat traumatic brain injury, and we created a national data base for all of those cases where we establish treatment protocols to make sure that those brave men and women who suffered from TBI get the highest quality care anywhere in the country. That is something that is going to directly impact people's lives.

Because of that law that we passed in this House and that has been signed into law, every veteran who enters a VA health care facility is going to be screened for traumatic brain injury, so never again will it go undiagnosed.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I was also watching our friends who were here before, and they were saying things like: We have been so unproductive in this Congress. We haven't really done anything; and the things we have done, they are all bad. And I wrote the quote down. They are all bad.

Is this bad? Is this piece of legislation that we passed to make sure that our soldiers get at least looked at for traumatic brain injury, is that bad? We can give the gentleman an opportunity to come back here and maybe correct his statement, because I am sure he didn't mean it.

But to inject the kind of politics that some folks have on this floor over the course of the past few years into this debate has really poisoned it; and these are things that have been successful.

The largest increase in veterans spending in the history of the VA. Was that bad? Increasing the minimum wage. Was that bad? The education funding, more funding and more expansive, and the most investment this country has made since the GI bill and the education. Was that bad? Cutting student loans. Was that bad? I don't think so.

So we are trying to have these debates here very civilized in a bipartisan way and talk about how we can improve the situation for our soldiers.

I didn't mean to interrupt.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman for that clarification, because that is instructive when we do hear from the other side, the unproductivity alleged of this Congress.

How about this. The gentleman from Florida talked about the tremendous strain, as did the gentlewoman from New York, the tremendous strain our families of our men and women who are in the Guard and Reserve that are being deployed not once, not twice, but multiple redeployments, four, even five times now as we head into the sixth year of the war in Iraq, and we have been in Afghanistan since before that. So these families are left behind, and they have to struggle just to make ends meet.

What has this Congress done about it? We are being told on the other side we haven't done anything, we don't have any record. Well, let me tell you what this Congress has done about it. This has been signed into law.

We expanded the Family and Medical Leave Act for the first time to cover the families of our military Guard and Reserve, people who are putting their lives on the line for us with multiple redeployment overseas. And now, because of the action in this Congress, you can use Family and Medical Leave Act time to care for a wounded service man or woman when they come back, to use time to reassimilate as a family, to get to know your kids again and get to know your spouse again after being away for 15 months. And while they are gone, the spouse can use that time to attend these deployment briefings that happen often during the workday and they can't get time off of work, they can use it for child care, they can use it to get their economic house in order and deal with the household finances, things that weren't covered before.

That is a law that is going to directly impact people's lives. It is going to make it a little bit easier for the families of our military Guard and Reserve, and that is something that we did in this Congress after the previous Congresses had done nothing to address the issue.

So, I do take offense to the comment that the gentleman from Ohio relayed that had been made about how we had done nothing.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. ALTMIRE, I can tell you, it is a breath of fresh air. I want to differ with you all just for a minute.

I don't mind our colleagues on the Republican side giving misinformation. I don't mind it, because American people have a lack of trust in what they say and very little understanding of what they do.

We speak here in the 30-Something Working Group, Ms. CLARKE, about fact, not fiction. We spend a lot of time working with the Speaker's staff, working with our personal staffs to make sure we are accurate when we come to the floor, because it does mean something when you come to this floor and share with your colleagues about what we should be doing, how we should be doing it, and what we have done. And I am glad you focused on what we have done.

When I was in the State legislature, there was a gentleman by the name of Alzo Reddick that represented Orlando, Florida; I represented Miami, Florida. And I will never forget, I was like in my second year of public service or something and all of this debate is going on in the legislature; it was a great melting pot of opinions.

We were going back and forth, and folks were spending a lot of time describing the problem. And he got up and he said, ''I just want to remind the members that we were not only elected to describe the problem, but mainly to do something about it. Okay? And now we are trying to do something about it with this bill.'' And he went on from there.

And it was very profound, because I have a lot of folks in my district who spend a lot of time describing problems, and a lot of them I run into when I am at the grocery store or what have you, and there are a lot of folks who are on the sideline who don't want to get in the game. This is a contact sport in many ways in this legislative body. And when we were in the minority, we talked about what we would do if we had the opportunity. Remember that, Mr. RYAN? And I know that you all remember it because you were watching and a part of it and running for office at the time. So you were out there echoing ''what I would do once I get there.'' And I am glad you talk about that, because there was a laundry list. And, Mr. Speaker, you know prior in this hour we talked and I talked about some of the accomplishments we have made. And we have done it, Ms. CLARKE, in a bipartisan way.

We don't stand up here and dance in the end zone and say where are Democrats only passed this piece of legislation. There has been some legislation

that Republicans have not seen eye to eye and it has become law. And we don't want to dance in the end zone on that, because the American people want to win.

So I say all of that to say this. I very seldom make reference to what my colleagues say on the other side, because as far as I am concerned, I don't want to echo inaccurate information. But we do need to clarify it so that folks don't get concerned and start saying, ''Oh, my gosh. Do you mean to tell me that's true? Is it really true?'' So we're trying to build faith, because right now Congress is not where it should be as it relates in the minds of the American people that they feel good and warm and fuzzy. Polls have shown that they do feel more comfortable with Democratic leadership in Congress than Republican leadership in Congress. But as an institution and as a government, I guarantee you that Suzy whoever and Johnny whoever would like to see a government that works in a cohesive way toward the common good.

The gentlewoman, YVETTE CLARKE, came to the floor with a purpose today. She came to the floor with the purpose of talking about the realities of life. And you know that we have Members here thinking that our commitment and our loyalty to the military comes in the form of smart bombs, guns, and some sort of grenade. But, guess what, it also comes in the form of thinking about their families.

We just can't use and abuse and just say, well, we don't want to deal with that part that is after the fact; that is dealing after. Because when I was at Camp Pendleton, I stayed on base, as I do when I went to MacDill Air Force Base, as I do when I go to any location. I have been down to Norfolk, Virginia and big Navy. I stay on base so we can hear the stories from these families of what they are going through. And they say, well, we understood a Member of Congress is on base, and you bump into them: Sir, I just want to let you know how I feel as an individual. And that is important. And we have taken that, because we have had hearings in the Armed Services Committee, we have taken that into consideration in the Appropriations Committee. Mr. MURTHA has done an excellent job by making sure that we pump dollars in on the family side and doing some of the things in our MILCON appropriations trying to do things to help those kids deal with the shock and the trauma of dad or mom coming home screaming in the middle of the night and they don't understand what is going on.

So when we look at these issues, I am glad that we are addressing those issues, but we have to look at retooling this whole Iraq debate and how we got into this in the first place, because we are going to have Ambassador Crocker here, we are going to have General Petraeus that we have met with, we have met with all of these individuals before in the past. We want the real deal from them. But, as Members of Congress, we have got to stand up on behalf of the American people, be they Democrat, Republican, or Independent.

Ms. CLARKE. The gentleman from Florida really has emphasized what we know is a challenge for America right now. And we are making the marriage here in our conversation, the marriage between the fact that we have to disengage from Iraq, that we realize that our policies have failed there, that it is now a diplomatic mission more so than anything else. And, yes, there will be a cost to redeployment, but the cost to American families has been extensive. And as our brave men and women come back to the United States of America, come back to our respective communities and they face the economic challenges that we have all been facing over the past couple of months, couple of years in some communities, that just compounds the whole reintegration process that is going to be required, the health care, the ongoing health care that is going to be required. And I think that we have positioned ourselves as a Congress to really meet those issues. We know what the challenges are. We have heard firsthand.

And when you look at our first economic stimulus package that will provide child tax credits as a rebate to these families, when you look at that expansion of financing opportunities for those who may be in mortgage crisis; and, believe me that we can't separate the wounded warrior from the home they own in the community and the cost of gasoline to get back and forth to the VA hospital and the milk that they have to buy for their child.

□ 1845

This economic stimulus is going to be of support to those families as well. But they are going to face what we are facing as civilians in a very special way. And I know that the work we are doing here, Mr. ALTMIRE and Mr. RYAN, is making a difference in their lives. That is why it was important for me to talk about the baseless rhetoric that I heard coming from across the aisle because I don't want Americans to overlook the fact that we have raised the bar and set the standard for how we are going to treat one another as Americans, how we face our challenges head-on, and come up with the solutions that are most important.

Right now there is a crisis in health care. There is a crisis in affordable housing and mortgage financing, and there is a crisis called Iraq. There is a direct correlation if you put the equation together, the type of money that we have been spending on this war in Iraq, and let's not forget our soldiers who are also fighting in Afghanistan, but the primary cost, the overwhelming cost is going into the war.

And our hope is that we will down surge, redeploy, have a surge in diplomacy and get our economic house in order in the United States of America and treat our veterans and their families as they ought to be treated, treat all Americans as they ought to be treated, and help them through this time of extreme pressure and extreme challenge.

I am proud to be a member of this Democratic caucus that has looked at the landscape in its entirety, that is dealing with it in a holistic way. We are not compartmentalizing these issues because one has a direct bearing on the other.

I see Mr. RYAN standing here in rare form, and I know he wants to chime in.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You were mentioning the troops and how complicated things have gotten.

One of the things you mentioned was what was happening in Iraq, and Mr. MEEK mentioned how we got in. I think it is important to recognize, and there was a great article today in the Washington Post, what is happening with our troop strength, where we are getting to the point, we have all of these troops who go for 15 months and come back for a year. We are hearing from psychologists and psychiatrists at Walter Reed that they are not getting enough downtime. It is intense, urban warfare. They are not getting enough downtime, and that is contributing to a lot of the psychiatric problems that our troops are coming back with that need to be addressed.

What people are saying now in the military is that it has to be a year on or 15 months on, and 2 years off. Can you imagine if that is the recommendation. The recommendation is 15 months and then 2 years. Or it may even be 1 year. No, they are asking for 1 year on, 2 years off; and then if they have to go back, send them back. Can you imagine, that is the recommendation.

For them to now say you wonder what the issues are going to be when it is 15 months on, 1 year off and back again, the psychological effect on our soldiers and the cost long term to our VA health care. I think that is important.

I wanted to highlight this. This is General Richard Cody, Army's vice chief of staff who was testifying yesterday, and was talking about basically troop strength. Mr. MEEK, you sit on the Armed Services Committee. You know how critical this is to where our country needs to be in case there is another conflict somewhere in the world that we have to react to.

Right now what the military leaders are saying is that we do not have the capability to react to that. Now can you imagine putting this country in that position, that we can't handle two separate fights going on at the same time when that has been the golden rule from the military for years. And what Cody said was that ''I've never seen our lack of strategic depth be where it is today. The Nation needs an airborne brigade, a heavy brigade, and a striker brigade ready for 'full spectrum operations' and we don't have that today.''

Now if anybody wants to make a judgment, it is not the Democrats

making a judgment against President Bush, this is the Army vice chief of staff who happens to be retiring in the next couple of months and maybe feels a little freer to say the kinds of things that need to be said, but if we don't recognize what position we are in, and then to have some folks saying we need to be there another hundred years, how are we going to possibly sustain this?

Ms. CLARKE. That's real, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That's the real deal.

Another quote, ''There has been little, if any, change of the stress or tempo of our forces,'' calling the current pace of operations ''unsustainable.'' That's where we are.

To quote Cody again, ''Where we need to be with this force is no more than 12 months on the ground and 24 months back.''

It is critical that these soldiers get the kind of rest that they need. When you look at the cost now, saying the projection, when you factor in the health care, and we are close to a trillion dollars for this war, and the projections, when you factor in the health care costs over time, this war is going to cost us $3 trillion.

And we have Members of this body who stand up and want to slash out an earmark for $250,000 to help a local community that doesn't have any money put in an EPA-mandated sewer and ignore the 800-pound gorilla sitting in the middle of the room. It is a shame. It is a shame that the debate has gotten that messy.

If we stay focused on what we have been trying to accomplished in the past few years, focus on the veterans, focus on making sure that there is an assessment for their mental health, making sure that they have their money, which we put up, the highest investment in veterans' health care in the history of the VA, those are the kinds of things that we need to focus on as a country in a time of war.

I would just urge all of our colleagues to have this debate be civilized and not taken to the lowest recesses of political dialogue, which is sometimes I think where we end up.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. RYAN, you've put your finger on the pulse of what we are trying to accomplish here. It is our responsibility to redirect those who would take the debate to its lowest common denominator and distract the American people from the realities of where we are today.

Where we are is a Democratic Congress that has risen to the occasion, that has filled in the gaps and is holding the line while others would seek to continue failed policies that are costing us more and more and more with each day. Basically mortgaging, you know, the lives of our children and our grandchildren in order to pay for it, while at the same time neglecting all that needs to be done to make sure that we can live a decent standard of living here in this country.

So we have fought this and we are still fighting. I yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think it is important for us to recognize as we have this debate in Congress, we recognize where we are at right now. And our friends are talking about their alternative budget, and I know my friend from Florida doesn't like me using quotes from the other side, and I understand that.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You can do whatever you want to do. It's a free country.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is a free country, and I am an American so I am going to say what I want.

Our friends on the other side, this alternative budget, alternative this, alternative that, I think it is important for us to recognize if you want to know what the conservative, neoconservative, right-wing government looks like, all you have to do is open your eyes, read the paper, go to the gas station, pay your health care bill, pay your tuition bill, and you will know that philosophy implemented is the reality we are living in today. They deregulated the financial markets, deregulated the energy sector, gave billionaires tax cuts. You see this every day. Increased tuition, energy costs going up double the rate of inflation, milk going up 26 percent, eggs going up 40 percent. And $3 trillion in war over the course. And you put all of this together and you say that's the alternative? That's what you want us to go back to?

We spent the whole year just trying to get back to ground zero, raising minimum wage, cutting student loan interest rates in half, investing in alternative energy, implementing the 9/11 report, making sure that our veterans are taken care of. We are still digging out of a hole. Can you imagine, these folks raised the debt limit five times to the tune of $3 trillion, borrowing it from China, Japan, and OPEC.

And the mortgage crisis, the anxiety people feel, that is the conservative Republican agenda implemented. We don't have to look anywhere; we are living it now. Now. So we don't have to look too far.

The other day the President said if the Democrats repeal the $18 billion in corporate welfare for the oil companies, I will veto any bill that has that in it. Now can you imagine how screwed up the situation is. Consumer protection, toys, pet food, food coming over, medicine coming over from China without the proper folks checking the stuff out, mine safety has gone down so we have mining accidents because there wasn't the proper oversight. We know what happened with Hurricane Katrina and FEMA because we put political hacks in jobs. All of this happened under the conservative Republican agenda.

So I just would like to say we are working very hard to balance the budget, make investments in education and our vets, take care of the environment, and make these investments in alternative energy so we can have green collar jobs replacing the blue collar jobs we have been losing.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RYAN and Ms. CLARKE. I am glad you both are in Congress.

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about Iraq tonight in the context in which historical incidents have created this most pressing and urgent situation, Iraq and the Middle East, to give the American people, Mr. Speaker, a frame of reference upon which to judge the way forward in this conflict. Are there solutions to this conflict? Is there something in our history or the history of the relationship of the international community that can resolve the present crisis that we are now experiencing?

So what I would like to do is during this next hour that I have is to break this topic down into a number of different areas, take a look at the United States and the Cold War, especially through the 1950s and the 1960s, take a look at what was happening in the Middle East during that same period of time during the Cold War, what was going on in the Middle East, and then look at the present crisis that we are now experiencing in Iraq and Afghanistan with a focus on Iraq. And then what are the solutions? Is there a way forward? Can we judge from past precedents, past crises, what we can do now to resolve this conflict. And I think there is a way forward.

□ 1900

So, to frame this discussion tonight, I would like to start off with a quote by a man named Norman Cousins, who was the editor of the Saturday Evening Post and wrote an extraordinary book, I believe it was about 1980, called ''Human Options.'' Whenever there is a crisis, there are always options. There are always things that we, as human beings, with initiative, ingenuity, intellect and courage can figure out. Here are the two quotes: ''Knowledge is the solvent for danger.'' ''Knowledge is the solvent for danger.'' If you're faced with a crisis, the more information you have, the more likely it is that you will make competent decisions.

The second quote is, ''History is a vast early warning system.'' There have been a number of crises in America's past where people said you have to wait 20 years to figure out what went wrong. People will always say, well, 20 years later we have hindsight that we didn't have during the incident or the crisis or the conflict or the war. Well, with this quote, knowing history, knowing where we were 10 years ago, 20 years ago, who lit the fuse that slowly

burned over decades to cause the present crisis, ''history is a vast early warning system.'' And the more we understand history, the better we will be able to deal with situations that we are presented with today.

I want to give another quote from a man, a British writer, Rudyard Kipling, whose son fought in World War I, died in northern France in that battle, and the distraught father said this, ''Why did young men die? Because old men lied.'' Let me paraphrase that today in the 21st century, nearly 100 years later. ''Old men should talk before they send young men to die.''

Let's take a look at the 1950s and 1960s, the Cold War, our successes and failures, just briefly. We know that the Soviet Union and the United States were Cold War adversaries. The Cold War brought about a nuclear arms race. The Cold War brought about a number of conflicts around the world. They separated the world into two camps, pro-Soviet, pro-U.S.A. We faced down the Soviet Union, they faced down us. Thousands upon thousands of nuclear weapons. There were crises and discussions and situations where we came close to a nuclear holocaust. It was a time when Khrushchev pounded his shoe in a podium at the United Nations and pointed his finger at the western diplomats and said, ''We will bury you.'' That was not the only time he said that.

But what was Eisenhower's view of the Soviet Union during the Cold War? He knew we needed a strong military; he knew we needed the best intelligence services to be objectively analyzed in the world; but he also had an understanding of consensus and dialogue. So, what did he do with his most fearsome adversary on a number of occasions? Invite him to the United States to tour our farms, our schools, our cities. Consensus and dialogue was one of the ways in which we resolved these most difficult times.

What did President Kennedy do when Castro and the Soviet Union actually had deployable nuclear weapons? Did we attack? Did we shut them off from the dialogue or discussion? Did we have preconditions before we talked to them face to face? No. We had an ongoing dialogue which resolved the crisis and prevented a nuclear holocaust, prevented a war.

What did we do with communist China during the period of time when we were bitter enemies, when Mao Tse-tung said it would be worth it if half the population of China died if we could destroy the imperialists in the United States. What did we do? We worked for years to figure out how we could go to China and resolve these conflicts through dialogue. Those were our successes during the Cold War period.

And I will always wonder, maybe with a little more research I could figure this out, why the United States did not have a dialogue with Ho Chi Minh. We talked to Khrushchev many times, we talked to many Soviet leaders. We talked to Mao Tse-tung, with no human rights etiquette, human rights violations that came close to some of the worst despots in the history of the world. We talked to them, we had a dialogue, but we didn't have a dialogue with Ho Chi Minh, and 58,000 Americans died, and their names are on a wall here in Washington, D.C. Thousands were wounded, and more than one million Vietnamese were killed.

What did he learn from that? Well, we learned that Ho Chi Minh wanted sovereignty from British colonial rule. He first approached the United States in 1918, and he relentlessly pursued the United States to be his ally to gain the kind of sovereignty, self-determination that the whole world fought for in World War II.

Let's take a look at the Middle East during the Cold War. The Middle East, throughout the Ottoman empire, throughout World War I, certainly after World War I, during World War II, but during the Cold War the Middle East continued to be a tangled web of complexity and intrigue, a difficult place to understand, tribal groups, religious groups, fundamentalists, moderates, secular leaders. 1953, the United States set a slow fuse that would erupt decades later.

In 1953, for a lot of reasons, John Foster Dulles said the Iranians may be toying with becoming communists with the Soviet Union. A number of other reasons. But the United States, along with the aid of Britain, pursued a very violent coup which overthrew an elected prime minister, a secular Muslim, Mohammed Mosaddeq, and installed Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah. We took away their officially, independently elected prime minister and put in the Shah, who was a dictator, and that lit a slow fuse that burned. And it exploded in 1979, when the Iranians took over our embassy in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution that put in power the Ayatollah, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. That was a slow fuse. That was a mistake that we made early in 1953 because of our fear of communism. We didn't pursue a dialogue with Mohammed Mosaddeq to talk about what his intentions were. We made a mistake, in a similar fashion that we did with Ho Chi Minh.

What was it like for the Soviet Union in the Middle East during the same period of time, the fifties, the sixties, the seventies? The Soviet Union was sometimes allied with the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Iraqis, and sometimes they weren't. This complexity, this intrigue ran in cycles. And Russia was almost never trusted. And sometimes they bought arms from the Russians, different Arab countries, and sometimes they chose to be allies with the United States.

Where was Israel during this period of time, and, let's say, the country of Iran, which is now considered a bitter enemy of Israel? From 1948 nearly to 1991, Israel, during the Cold War, was a quiet ally of the Iranians. Israel, during the Cold War in the Middle East, were quiet allies, the Israelis and the Iranians. Why? They were both enemies of the Soviet Union. They were both enemies of many of the Arab countries. They needed some form of economic viability in a very hostile region of the world. Israel needed oil, and Iran needed technology. And so, there was a constant trade between those two commodities for decades.

Now, Ruhollah Reza Pahlavi, the Shah, certainly seemed to condemn Israel at every point. That was the geopolitical way to survive in this region of the world. We know from 1980 to 1989, Russia was involved in a bitter war with Afghanistan which began to set the stage for more bitterness with presumed allies of the Soviet Union in the Arab world because of conflict with the Muslim world.

From 1980 to 1988, there was a terrible war between Iran and Iraq, as many as 2 million casualties between both countries. This is when Iraq began to use weapons of mass destruction. Given consideration you had two big oil-producing states at war with each other, where did the superpowers and where did European countries, where did the rest of the world ally themselves? They weren't going to stay out of this conflict, they were going to become a part of who was going to win this war, who was going to lose this war. Most of the big countries of the world, like Russia, the Soviet Union, European countries, including Japan and China, to a certain extent aided both of these countries. And as a result of that, the conflict went on for 8 years, and there were many, many, many problems, many casualties, and much bitterness that remains to this day.

1979 was a presumed bright spot when President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin of Israel got together and Egypt recognized the State of Israel. What happened with this in 1979, it pulled Egypt away from the Soviet sphere of influence. It brought more objectivity to how to deal with the country of Israel in a sea of hostile allies.

The Persian Gulf War in 1991, pretty much the end of the Cold War, was a conflict that the international community decided that they needed to get involved with, that is, if you recall, when Saddam Hussein decided that he wanted to invade Kuwait and take much of their oil and much of their land. But the international community, with the United States at the helm of leadership, saw the conflict, had very clear, defined objectives, created an international coalition, and some countries contributed troops, some countries contributed financial assets, and the conflict was resolved. But it was an international conflict that the countries made clear their objectives before they went in, they knew what the end result was going to be, and it was a success.

Now, that complex, brief history brings us to the present crisis in Iraq and the Middle East. This conflict started in 2003, it is now 2008. It has been going on for about 5 years. And what does it look like today? What does the conflict in Iraq look like?

It is a place where the three great religions of the world were spawned, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is a place in the world where faith is a very important part of an individual's life. If you're a Jew, if you're a Christian, if you're a Muslim, you adhere strongly to your faith. It is a place where oil exports are extremely vital for economic viability. And every one of those countries knows it, whether it's Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Oman, Qatar, you name it, oil exports is a vital part of economic viability.

Right now, however, as that economic process continues, the Middle East, as far as the balance of power is concerned, is fractured. And nobody in the Middle East, as a result of this conflict, knows which direction that balance of power is going to lead to.

Now, the Middle East became an extreme focus for the United States as a result of 9/11. America responded; we sent troops to Afghanistan. The conflict there is still hotly contested. NATO forces are contributing troops, financial assistance. A number of allies outside of NATO are trying to work to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan. But Iraq became a focus because there was some question of whether or not Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, whether or not Saddam Hussein was connected with al Qaeda, whether or not Saddam Hussein was actually going to deploy these weapons of mass destruction, was there a danger that the United States security was in jeopardy? And so, it was recommended in the beginning that America send between 300,000 and 500,000 troops into Iraq because this was going to be a very difficult conflict. And so, with 300,000 to 500,000 troops, you could resolve the problems of convoys, you could resolve the problems that would inevitably come as far as looting was concerned, chaos was going to be dealt with, ammo dumps that proliferated the countryside would be a problem, border security was going to be a problem. A whole range of issues would be resolved if you could send in 300,000 to 500,000 troops. Not to mention the fact that, I would recommend a book called ''Fiasco'' by Thomas Ricks, that many of the military planners in the Pentagon did not want to go into Iraq in the first place. They saw the same kind of issues that they dealt with back in 1991, when many of the military people did not want to go to Baghdad after the first Persian Gulf War ended. They simply didn't want to go. That discussion was ended and military was asked to come up with a plan. They came up with a plan of 300,000 to 500,000 troops, but that was reduced to 180,000 troops. The 180,000 troops were not sufficient to deal with the looting, with the convoys, with guarding prisoners, with border security, with eliminating the ammo ducts, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

And so, the U.S. has been fighting a protracted war in Iraq for the last 5 years. What are the specific defined objectives?

□ 1915

Where is the international coalition that can deal with this conflict in a much more cogent fashion?

Who are we fighting? Are we fighting al Qaeda? Are we fighting a criminal element? Are we fighting the different factions within the Shiite groups? Are we fighting the Sunnis? Where do the Kurds enter into this picture? What is the defined end to this conflict? These are all questions that are really not resolved yet. It's a very difficult place.

Let's take a look at Iraq's neighbors. We have a tendency to look at Islam or the Muslim world as being all the same. And yet there are very, very distinct differences between the different factions in the Shiite world, in the Sunni world, in the Allawi world, in the Wahabi world. There's many, many different sects within Islam. Some are moderate, some are secular, and some are more fundamentalists, and some are terrorists like al Qaeda. Some are brutal like the Taliban.

If we look at Saudi Arabia, they're a fundamentalist country. If we look at Iran, which is a Persian country, not an Arab country, but a Muslim country, Iran, if you are a woman, you can drive a car. But if you're a woman in Saudi Arabia, you cannot. If you're a woman in Iran, you can run for political office. You can own property. You can be educated. You can be a doctor or a lawyer or a schoolteacher, or a member of their parliament. That's our enemy. In Saudi Arabia you cannot do those things.

Syria, it's a secular country. Syria, women can be educated. They can drive cars. In Saudi Arabia, our ally, that's a completely different situation.

In Qatar, the U.S. has a massive military base there, provides security. It's a good arrangement with the small country of Qatar. Oil is an important commodity for them. The U.S. has a base there; it's convenient for us and our relationship with Afghanistan and Iraq, and it's a mutually agreeable situation.

But what's interesting about Qatar is that they own al Jazeera. Most of us have heard of al Jazeera, the news media outlet which predominates the Middle East, and which pokes their finger in the eye of the United States just about every single day. It's a pretty strange relationship. It's the conflict without a resolution.

Is there a resolution for the conflict in Iraq? Is there a way forward?

U.S. troops are stunningly competent at what they do in Iraq; stunningly competent, whether it's in Mosul, Anbar province, the ancient city of Babylon, Kirkuk, Baghdad, you name it, U.S. troops are stunningly competent. And what they deserve and need and must have from us, the Government, the Congress, the people that make the policy, which, to a large extent has been flawed in the past, they need for us to be knowledgeable in order to be competent to create a policy that is also worthy of those soldiers that have put their lives on the line and continue to do so every single day.

So where are we in Iraq? Is there a way forward? Let's take a look at the present crisis, the present situation. And what do we see?

We know that in Iraq right now, the U.S. military is the skeletal structure upon which the entire Iraqi society depends. Would it be a good idea to withdraw our troops precipitously? Absolutely not. We have a responsibility to the Iraqi people and to our soldiers.

Iraq. What is Iraq's position within the region? What is Iraq's position within the region as far as its relationship with its neighbors is concerned? Does Iraq have any security alliances with any of its neighbors?

Remember, after World War II we created NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We created the Organization of American States in Latin America. We created Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in Southeast Asia. The United States reached out for regional security. The United States reached out to integrate our security needs with friends and allies.

What is the European Union doing right now? Besides NATO, the European Union is creating a region in the world that provides security through an integrated economic system.

Now, I'm not saying that the Middle Eastern countries should or may form a North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But I'm saying it's important for Iraq to begin looking with, certainly our help, at security arrangements within the region of the Middle East.

The United States is the skeletal structure upon which all of Iraqi society rests. We're integrated with Iraqi society, with their economy, with their culture, with their educational institutions, with their military, with their political institutions. So for us to begin to break away from that, slowly leave, we must do it in a very responsible fashion.

And we can't just focus on Iraq, because the region is one region, and it's interconnected in a very complex web. So let's take a look at the region in the context of the present crisis.

The United States needs to be an objective arbitrator, and I mean objective, in the Palestinian-Israeli question. And the Middle Eastern countries and the rest of the world need to see that the U.S. is an objective arbitrator in that particular conflict. And when we are seen that way, the reduction of al Qaeda recruits will drop like a stone.

Our discussions with Saudi Arabia have to be as far as a regional resolution to this conflict in Iraq is concerned. And Saudi Arabia has some

fear of Iraq being an Iranian satellite. That's a real fear.

The geopolitical balance of power in the Middle East right now is fractured, and no one knows in which direction it's going to go, who's going to have more influence, where the military power will be, where the economic power will be, and so Saudi Arabia needs to have a discussion with the United States, where they see the United States having some integrity and objectivity in that part of the world.

Syria needs to be brought into the loop of conversations about what's happening with the Palestinian-Israeli problem, what's going on in Lebanon, what are our objectives in Iraq. The Syrians can be a positive element in our conversations. The Syrians can be a positive element. If they would sign a non-aggressive pact with Israel and have all the parties sign it, they could get the Golan Heights back.

The Iranian historic fears. Iran has a fear of Iraq. They lost about a million people in that 8-year conflict. So Iran has a natural fear that if certain elements in Iraq come back to power, they could have security concerns. So we need to have conversations and dialogue with the Iranians, a conversation and a dialogue with no preconditions, we just sit down and talk.

Did we have preconditions when we talked to Mao Tse-Tung? We didn't. They were established after the conversation started.

Did we have preconditions when we talked to Khrushchev or Brezhnev or Kosygin? No, it was an ongoing dialogue. The conditions were set after the conversation started.

So it's important for the Iranians, I think, in this region to begin resolving some of these conflicts, to begin talking, especially to the Syrians and the Iranians.

No one in the Middle East wants Russia to have a sphere of influence there. No one in the Middle East wants the Chinese to have an economic sphere of influence there. The objective history of the United States in this region is one that still is respected.

Eisenhower, during his administration, said we need a strong military. We need a strong intelligence service with their analysis being objectively viewed. But we need consensus and dialogue.

What is in America's arsenal? We have a strong military. We have the best intelligence services in the world. But as Eisenhower and Nixon and Ford and Kennedy and past presidents saw, it was more than just a strong military, more than just good intelligence, it was diplomacy, it was trade. It was exchanges of education, science, technology, social and cultural exchanges. These are the things that brought countries together. These are the things that integrated nations.

The way forward in Iraq is to begin setting up a string, a series of dialogue with all of Iraq's neighbors, including Syria and Iran, with no preconditions. The conditions can come as soon as the best diplomats in the world begin those conversations, and that's American diplomats.

And Iran was an enemy of the Soviet Union for years. They were enemies of many countries in the Middle East, many Arab countries. They had a strong, quiet, but strong relationship with Israel. It's a country that can be a part of the solution in this troubled part of the world.

Knowledge is the solvent for danger, so said Norman Cousins. And knowledge, in this instance, can help us resolve the danger in the Middle East.

History is a vast early warning system. What is the history of all these countries? Whether it's Israel or Egypt or Lebanon or Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and so on, if we understand how they view the world, and we understand our place in that region, we can go a long way to resolving the conflict.

Sam Rayburn, famous congressman, the building that I work in is named after him, said an interesting thing while he was a Member of Congress, this great institution. Any mule can kick a barn door down; but it takes a carpenter to build one. And we need carpenters now. We need the best carpenters, the best diplomats, the best people with an understanding of the history of this region to begin, in a political, diplomatic fashion, taking the burden off the 1 percent of Americans who are now, almost alone, fighting the problems in the conflict there in Iraq.

Remember Rudyard Kipling. Why did young men die? Because old men lied nearly 100 years ago in Northern France. To paraphrase Rudyard Kipling today, old people should talk before they send young people to die. That's a pretty urgent message.

In the landscape of human tragedy, in the history of the human race, who has been our enemy almost all the time, almost exclusively? Who is the enemy on the landscape of human history? Ignorance, arrogance and dogma.

□ 1930

Ignorance, arrogance, and dogma inevitably leads to monstrous certainty. And monstrous certainty from any source leads to conflict, leads to war.

And so how do we resolve the enemy on the landscape of human tragedy? How do we resolve that?

We replace ignorance with knowledge. We replace arrogance with humility. And we replace dogma with tolerance. It takes courage to do that, but those young men and women fighting in Iraq deserve nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time.

I yield back the balance of my time.

THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. HODES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to be here tonight. I will soon be joined by a number of my colleagues in the historic class of 2006, the Majority Makers. And we are here tonight to talk about the economy.

There certainly is a lot to talk about. We've come back recently from 2 weeks at home in our districts where we've all made observations and talked to our constituents, talked to the people we represent. We've gotten out and visited people in their homes. We've been out shopping, we've been to the malls, we've been all over and hearing the way the sorry state of the economy is having an effect on middle-class families and working-class families, and things are not right.

Hard times are here, and unfortunately, those hard times may be with us for a while. Some have been seeing this coming, and I would like to say that certainly my Democratic colleagues, including people I serve with on the Financial Services Committee, have been seeing this coming for quite a while. We have been working on it, talking about it, passing legislation to deal with these issues.

Others have come a little bit late to the table and are just beginning to see that middle-class families in this country are facing rising costs, difficult times. We've had a feed-the-rich policy and a squeeze-the-middle class, and it's time that we did something about it.

I recall that about a year ago, maybe a little more than a year ago, when I had just joined the Financial Services Committee, I had the opportunity to talk to the Federal Reserve Chairman, Ben Bernanke. He came before our committee and testified about the state of the economy. Now this was before we'd seen the mortgage crisis and the credit crunch and the bailout for Bear Stearns and all of the other things that are now making headlines in what are fairly arcane policy matters but now take up the front pages of our newspapers.

And we asked Mr. Bernanke about the state of the economy and what he saw then, and it was very interesting. At the time, he was reporting that corporate profits were in good shape, that corporate productivity was in good shape. In other words, that corporate productivity was on the rise. Corporate profits seemed to be okay. It meant that people who were working were working a lot harder and helping the corporations earn profits, and their productivity was good.

But we saw troubling signs. Back then, we saw that real wages in income for middle-class families were stagnant or had been slipping backwards in real dollar terms. We saw that we had had a record trade deficit, $758 billion. We've seen tax cuts for 7 years under this administration which mostly benefited the very wealthy. In fact, last year, the 500 top wage earners in this country

earned about $18.8 billion and paid about 17 percent of their income in wages. That's not what they were supposed to pay, apparently, according to the tax rates, but that's what they've ended up paying. They're doing pretty well.

So while middle-class families were experiencing slippage in their real wages and income going backwards and facing ever-increasing costs, we had gasoline prices rising, home heating oil was about to start zooming up that winter, costs for education were going up. We asked Mr. Bernanke whether or not the increase in corporate profits and the higher rates of corporate productivity necessarily were the best indicators of the health of the economy. Because we also pointed out at the time there was a troubling issue on the horizon, and the issue was that there had been many loans made to people over the past few years, let's call them subprime loans, which meant loans that were given to people with rates that started out being very good but then kind of rose precipitously and that we saw a problem with these subprime mortgages which may not have been given with the right kinds of appraisals which had been given to people who couldn't pay them back, whose incomes weren't sufficient to own homes, whose assets weren't sufficient, for whom there were no requirements to put money down like there used to be in the old days.

We took all of this in, and many of us had just come to Congress. We asked Mr. Bernanke whether or not that was a true measure of the health of our economy. And I do have to report that Mr. Bernanke is an expert economist and a very smart man who runs the Federal Reserve. He's the chairman, and his job, along with the other members of the Federal Reserve board, is to help control the money supply, among other things, in this country. It's like turning on the spigot for money that flows into the economy and helps make more credit available and deals with interest rates, and they deal with whether or not to cut interest rates or raise interest rates which then affect consumers who want to borrow money for mortgages on their houses or second equity lines, as many people have, also, on their houses or credit cards or to buy a car. So that credit and the flow of money, in large part, is controlled by the Federal Reserve.

His answer was he thought things were in pretty good shape.

Well, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, today, the chickens have come home to roost on 8 years of this administration's fiscal policies. I just pulled this off of the AOL service before I came down here to speak about these matters, and today, for the first time, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke acknowledged that the U.S. could reel into a recession from the powerful punches of housing, credit, and financial crises. Yet, he didn't have much to say at this time about what the Federal Reserve is going to do next.

I have to tell you, after a couple of weeks at home, Mr. Bernanke doesn't have to tell us that we are in a financial crisis. There are neighborhoods in some of the cities in New Hampshire where you go on a street and we are seeing four and five houses foreclosed. We are seeing the ''bank owned'' signs. And what that means is there is nothing worse to a family than losing a home. And what happens when a family loses its home is not only are they in peril, are they in distress, but whole neighborhoods are in distress. Because when homes are foreclosed in a neighborhood, it puts pressure on the housing prices in the neighborhood, it puts pressure on the other financial indicators in the whole community. So there is a huge ripple effect from what has turned into a housing problem.

At home in New Hampshire we are seeing it. In fact, by the end of 2009, Mr. Speaker, we anticipate seeing more than 4,900 foreclosures in the small State of New Hampshire alone. That's a huge rise. In some places we are seeing a hundred percent foreclosures. We've seen mill closings up north. We are seeing the job market beginning to soften in New Hampshire and around the country. Things are getting tough.

Rising costs, credit problems, home mortgage foreclosure crises, the war in Iraq goes on at the rate of $12 billion a month. Nobody has to tell the middle-class families of this country who have been squeezed by 8 years of this administration's policies that we are having hard times.

So tonight we are going to talk about what those hard times are, how we got there, and what we are doing in Congress, what my colleagues are doing, what we are trying to do here, especially on the Democratic side, to deal with these crises, and how we got here; and we are going to hear about what is going on in some of the other parts of the country as well.

I'm joined tonight by my other colleagues, as I said, from the Majority Makers, the class of 2006, Mr. Speaker, of which you are a part, which we are very proud of.

And I would like to introduce now and turn it over to my distinguished colleague from the State of Florida, the Sunshine State, where things are, frankly, much warmer than they are back home for me in New Hampshire where there is still snow on the ground and people are still digging out from a record snowfall.

So I will turn it over now to my distinguished colleague from Florida (Mr. KLEIN).

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Thank you very much, Mr. HODES, the distinguished gentleman from New Hampshire, who really has been a great leader in our class. He was the first president of our class this year. And I am also joined by JOHN YARMUTH from Kentucky, who is our current class President. That's an honor that's bestowed, elected by the members of our freshman class on both of you. So I'm glad to be here with both of you tonight. We are going to be joined by a few other people.

Yes, I do come from the Sunshine State, and the sun does come out every day, and it's a wonderful place to live. My wife and I have lived there for many years, and a lot of people in your districts come down and eventually retire there. Maybe you will be part of my constituency some day. Although the sunshine is out and it is warm there and beautiful, we have also had our trials and tribulations as of late with the economy.

We in Florida have actually been blessed for a number of years, 15 years straight, until just recently with growth and appreciation of home values, expanding businesses, a lot of international trade and agriculture production and things like that. Yet, we now are facing the same problems that most other States in the United States are, and that is our real estate industry has just stopped. People are having a great deal of difficulty selling their homes. If they're trying to downsize, they're retired and want to move to something smaller, or if they're a family growing and want to get into something a little bigger. There is nothing that is selling right now. Despite the great efforts of our realtors and people who are in the development business, they're having a difficult time.

And as a result of the real estate industry, which is a big part of Florida's economy, as a result of that having stopped, retail, and all of the service businesses and all of the businesses that relate to an economy which is growing and people are moving, coming and going, they have also stopped.

So we are now facing a very, very difficult time in Florida, and our Florida legislature is meeting, as we speak, and deciding how they're going to take $3 billion-plus out of a State budget that funds education, health care, and all of the other things that our States do.

So we obviously understand that up here in Washington because all of us live at home. We live in our districts. We go to church and synagogue with people and go to our local supermarkets, and neighbors and friends are telling us what they're dealing with right now. And what they're dealing with is what people all over the United States are dealing with.

In Florida right now, gas prices are averaging about $3.40 a gallon despite the fact that we live very close to a port. As a matter of fact, I have Port Everglades right in my district. That's a fuel farm where large tankers come in, bring the fuel right there, and it's $3.40 on average per gallon of gas.

Food prices. Anybody who has been in the supermarket lately, and I know all of us have and our families have and people on the floor here have all been to the supermarket, a dozen eggs is $3.50. A dozen eggs. Milk prices. And it goes on and on and on. Things that are manufactured in your States, the cost

of transporting things, the oil prices. These things add to the cost of living in all of our communities and I know in Florida.

I find it very interesting, and Mr. HODES and I serve on the Financial Services Committee, which is a committee that deals with the economy, that deals with the Federal Reserve. It deals with banks and credit and insurance and housing. All of these things are part of this committee.

So we have been hearing from Mr. Bernanke and Mr. Paulson, the Treasury Secretary and others. It's very interesting. When the information is presented to us and you hear this debate, is there a recession or is there not a recession; people back in my district are saying, What are you talking about? Who cares if there's a defined recession or not? We know what's going on. My job is not as secure as it was a year ago. I know what my food prices are, my energy costs, my insurance costs, my taxes. All of these things are weighing very heavily on me, and things are not good.

People have lost that confidence, that swagger that Americans have. And, of course, we know we can get it back, but it is a question of what we can do about it.

□ 1945

Well, in the discussion with Financial Services, when they present the inflationary numbers to us and say, well, inflation is in check, that maybe it's moving a little and we have to watch it but it's in check, guess what the inflationary factors do not consider: energy and food prices. And they say that the reason they're not considered is because they fluctuate wildly and they are really not a determining factor of whether there's an inflation. Well, you know something? They certainly are a big factor on my budget and my neighbor's budget and my parents' budget and everyone else who lives in the United States because those two factors are things that affect us. Every time you go to the gas station and you spend $50, $60, $70 for a tank of gas, that's a lot of money. And whether you can afford it or not, you feel like something's wrong here. We're sending money overseas to countries that are not our friends and are supporting our enemies or these oil companies are creating the largest profit in American company history. And nobody's out there criticizing the entrepreneurial system, but let's have a little fairness here, a little investing in renewable energy, which is what this Democratic Congress has been focusing on, which is a good thing. And food prices, our farmers and people who produce, this is a big factor to American families when they go to the supermarket. When all of a sudden it costs $175 for your weekly bill instead of $130, that adds up. People that are on fixed incomes, we have a lot of seniors that have retired to my community that are on fixed incomes. These are real issues that I think we are concerned about.

And the good news is there are some things coming out of this Congress that are going to begin to help deal with everything from energy prices, both short and long term; food prices, of course. And nobody's looking to control the economy, but we are saying we need to work together to help reduce the costs of the materials that make up these products. And, of course, the mortgage crisis and the credit crisis, and I know we're going to talk about that as we get into our discussion tonight. Fortunately, we have some great people. Congressman BARNEY FRANK, chairman of Financial Services, probably one of the smartest people, he's working every day with Mr. Bernanke and Mr. Paulson to try to find things that we can do to help people stay in their homes. We're not talking about land speculators. We're not talking about people who have five homes. We are talking about the families that got in a little bit over their heads here, and they need some help and those communities need some help so you don't have this cascading of foreclosures in any one area.

So I'm looking forward to being with our colleagues here tonight to talk about some of these things. And with that if I can yield to the gentleman from Kentucky, I will do that.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank my good friend for yielding.

And you raised a very important point, and that is that while much of the headlines today talk about a recession and the debate over whether we are technically in a rescission, those of us who campaigned in 2006 and were talking to our constituents at that point knew that this was on the way. We saw the gathering storm, if you will. We saw the ripples in the ocean that became the tsunami. We talked to our constituents. We knew that they were hurting. We knew that their standard of living was not increasing even though they were working harder and harder. We knew they were scared about their retirement and scared about their ability to afford health care. That's what I heard throughout my campaign in 2006.

Yes, people were concerned about the war in Iraq. But, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't really what they were talking about on a day-to-day basis. It was, ''I'm really having a hard time.'' And while the President wasn't talking about it at that time and the majority leaders and the majority party in the Congress weren't talking about it, they were talking about it. They were saying, My friend, his company just went out of business or his plant was moved overseas and he had a pension that had accumulated $150,000 and now it was down to $30,000 because his company hadn't adequately funded it; so now what's he going to do? So we heard these problems day after day after day.

And I'm proud to say that when we came to the Congress in January, 2007, we didn't wait for somebody to declare that there was a recession. We started immediately. We said the middle class is hurting. We have people at the very lowest ends of the income scale who are working very hard, who are working at or near minimum wage, and we haven't raised the minimum wage in 10 years in this Congress. That's an outrage. And within the first few days of this 110th Congress, we raised the minimum wage. We put it on track to get to the point where, hopefully, there will be a living wage for everyone who works in this country.

And we set about looking at college costs. We said that college costs have been inflating at a very, very dramatically high rate, in my State 8 or 9 percent each year for the last 4 or 5 years. People trying to put their kids through college or people trying to put themselves through college are having a harder and harder time. No increase in the amount of financial aid that was available. No increase in the Pell grants. We passed the College Cost Reduction Act, $21 billion in additional aid to help college students get their degrees. So we understood the problem. We were dealing with it early on.

It has not been an easy fight. It has not been an easy fight because we have an administration that has this theory that the marketplace is sacrosanct, that it's infallible, that nothing ever goes wrong, that everything will even out, and that we just need to get out of the way. We just need to get out of the way and let these big corporations do whatever they want to do because the marketplace will force them into doing the right thing. And we now, of course, know that's not the case. We now, of course, know that, as we looked at, in kind of the aftermath of the Bear Stearns situation, an astounding fact coming from Wall Street that one-third of all the income in New York City was on Wall Street. One-third. The average wage, including all of the clerical help and all of the support staff on Wall Street, was $380,000 a year. Those are enormous salaries. And when something goes bad to deflate that bubble, it doesn't just hurt those people, as we have seen; it ripples through the entire economy.

So, yes, we have some problems that have just hit us now because, again, the bubble has burst. But it wasn't that we were asleep at the switch because, again, we heard these complaints, we sensed these signals 2 years ago when we were out in the campaign trail. I certainly did in my community, a wonderful community that never quite experiences all the booms but never has the busts. We have two Ford plants making vehicles that consume a lot of gas. There's a lot of stress on those because sales are down for those vehicles. We knew that then. We knew that they were negotiating constantly, the company with the union, trying to drive those wages down. People who were making $25, $30 an hour negotiated down so that they were making $15 an hour because they said that they're having hard times, that the company is

suffering. Well, yes, we know the company is suffering. But, meanwhile, the same people doing the same hard work day after day with the same expenses, the same obligations in their life, and now their income has been cut by 10, 20, 30 percent.

So we have been at this battle for now 15 months, since we have been in Congress, and we are going to stay in this battle because this is a battle for the very essence of American society. And I'm very proud to be part of a Congress that is committed to making sure that this economy works for every American and not just for the very elite Americans. And that's why I came to Congress. That's why my colleagues came to Congress. And I think over time, given the commitment that we have, we are going to make a difference for the American people.

Mr. HODES. Thank you, Mr. YARMUTH. I really appreciate hearing from both of you about your perspectives about what's going on.

And the discussion we've had brings to mind a quote that I read by Abraham Lincoln, who was a good Republican. Today he might not be a Republican. Today he might be a Democrat. And it really addressed some of the fundamental underpinnings of the debates that we are having about how to fix things. What Abraham Lincoln said was that ''the purpose of government is to do what the free markets cannot or will not do so well for themselves.'' And today in Congress and around Washington and around the country, we are beginning a debate at one level about what kind of changes we need to make and what kind of help we need to offer to struggling middle-class families. And those are two separate questions really.

One of the questions is, what kind of changes do we need to make to the regulation of our financial systems? That integrated big financial system that, as Mr. KLEIN pointed out, deals with banks. It deals with stocks. It deals with housing. It deals with real estate. It deals with insurance. It's a complex system that is now regulated in Washington. It's regulated at the State levels because there are regulators in the States who regulate all these industries. And Washington, what we are now seeing is that we've had Depression-era regulatory systems that really took their eye off the ball over the past 8 years certainly. While things for the middle class were squeezing tighter and tighter and tighter and those at the very top were doing okay, the regulators didn't seem to notice. And a lot of people are asking questions: Well, why not?

The interesting thing here is to hear how the tunes of some people in this Chamber have changed. It used to be that some of our colleagues across the aisle who were saying don't regulate, deregulate, and that was a huge push for this administration and many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and, in fact, many have said just let the free markets take care of it. Well, what we are seeing in this boom-bust cycle is that the free markets need some control from government. It's got to be balanced, of course, because you don't want to go too far with the free market. But what we have seen, for instance, just in the housing crisis is this: When I go home to talk to my community bankers in New Hampshire, what they tell me is that their foreclosure rates aren't really any different than they were before we got into the crisis we are in. They're not seeing a huge spike in foreclosures. They are regulated very closely. They have to follow strict standards. And they have been making loans the way they always have. They've been requiring down payments. They've been asking people what are their incomes? They've been verifying those incomes. They have been appraising properties accurately. They have been making sure that the loans they make in their communities are the kinds of loans that a lot of people are familiar with. Unfortunately, there were a lot of lenders who weren't regulated in the same way and they were making loans to people who probably shouldn't have loans, maybe people who were speculating. And then what was happening was those loans were being packaged. And they were going to Wall Street where they were being packaged into huge kinds of packages of loans and sliced and diced into securities with very odd names and securities that many of us don't even understand: ''Credit Default Swap Exchange Opportunities,'' not listed on any stock exchange, traded sort of desk to desk on Wall Street, essentially where people were taking air and risky loans and slicing them up and selling them around the globe because we're in a global economy. There are global markets, especially on the financial side. So I read articles where pension funds from municipal employees in towns in Norway were going underwater because of the mortgage crisis here.

And so one of the fundamental questions that we have got to ask is how are we going to fix this regulatory scheme? Because really if you think about it, over the past 8 years, we have had the Bush tax cuts, which advantaged the very rich; and as you said, Mr. YARMUTH, pay for CEOs has gone through the roof, 350, 400 times what the average person is making. So while we had tax cuts that were advantaging the very rich and the middle class was being squeezed, we were spending $800 billion on the war in Iraq. And while that was going on, the Federal Reserve was keeping interest rates very low. And mortgages were being handled in a different way, packaged, sliced and diced into stocks, and sold by unregulated lenders. So with very low interest rates, what people were lulled into thinking was that the prices of their houses would just keep going up and up and up and up, and people began to treat their houses like it was a revolving ATM machine.

I know that I got calls from people offering to rewrite my loan. I have a 30-year fixed loan. I'm very glad about it now. They were offering to rewrite my loan. They gave me all kinds of incredible deals. They were so incredible that I couldn't understand them, and I figured if I can't understand them, thank you very much but I'm going to stick with something simple. They were talking about a rate here and then in 3 years the rate would go there, and don't worry, when the rate goes up and if it goes up, you won't have to worry. Don't worry because your house will be worth more, and when your house is worth more, you will be able to refinance it again. So for the past 8 years we have seen that spiral. What happened was when the housing market crested and began to come down, everything began to unravel down the line, not only housing prices but then the credit crunch. It meant that people couldn't borrow for their businesses. They can't borrow to get out of their problems with their housing prices. We have seen at the same time a huge rise in energy prices. Jobs are now under real pressure in terms of people losing their jobs. And this has exploded into a crisis that we now have to deal with in Congress.

□ 2000

But we haven't been silent about it. Some of the things we have done, I am just going to talk really briefly, then hand it over to you, Mr. KLEIN, we took action. One of the things we did was we expanded affordable mortgage loan opportunities through the Federal Housing Administration for families who are in danger of losing their home by increasing the loan limits that the Federal Housing Authority administration could make to help with the fact that house prices have gone up. It's a very important part of the economic stimulus package which this Democratic Congress passed to put money into the hands of consumers through rebates that will come when people file their tax returns this year. Instant money. We address the housing piece, and we also helped small businesses in lots of significant ways.

So we haven't been sitting around. We are working on helping people. That was just a one-time shot, a shot in the arm for the economy. We are going to do other things because this is really once in a lifetime, in some way, kind of a problem.

People are using words like recession and other words like that. But as Mr. KLEIN said, let's just say that hard times are here. They are hard times that we haven't really had to face in this country in this way in a long, long, long time. And we are going to take action to make sure that we are helping squeezed middle-class families and hurting working families to get on their feet. We are going to offer a hand up. It's not going to be a handout, but it's going to be a hand up of the kind that the American people expect.

The last thing I will say before I turn it over to you, Mr. KLEIN, is that so far, the administration at the other end of the mall on Pennsylvania Avenue has set up an 800 number for homeowners. But so far, I am not sure that the administration really understands and is really feeling the depth and breadth of what our folks are facing back at home. I would say Mr. Bush ought to get out a little more and maybe he would see that some steps are necessary to help the middle-class families and working families. Because we are going to have to soften the hard landing that's coming.

With that, I will turn it back over to Mr. KLEIN.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Thank you for laying out as you did. It's very easy to understand the way you just explain it. I will just mention another item that we did pass last year as we saw this coming on. The question is what is Congress doing. What are we doing to help our neighbors and friends. This is a community issue. Sure, it's a national issue. But it boils down to what is happening in my community in Delray Beach and Boynton Beach and Lauderdale by the Sea and places that are close-knit communities and close-knit families that have lived together for a long time and they are seeing house after house after house with a sign that says Foreclosure, that notice on the door. It's not very troubling. It's not just that homeowner him or herself, it's the community that gets affected. It has a downward pressure on home values, which is what we want to avoid.

Another thing that is very important that this Congress, the two gentlemen here and others supported, and we are all very proud to do this, it was a bill called the Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Act. It did something which is very important. It prevents homeowners from facing a tax bill at the same time they are losing their homes. Here's how it works. This is a problem with the current Internal Revenue Code. Basically, it says if you have a debt, a mortgage, and somebody releases you from that debt, they cancel the debt, or they reduce the amount, that is considered income to you. You actually have to pay tax on that, which is pretty ridiculous. But that is the way the current tax law is set up. It's not just for homes, it's for other things as well. It's called ''phantom income.'' It's the worst kind of income you can have because there is no cash in your pocket to pay for it.

So this Congress under the leadership of NANCY PELOSI and others, in a bipartisan way, it was the right thing to do, we passed a law that said no, that is not going to be the case. If you're foreclosed on or there is a problem and there is a release of this debt, that is not going to be income to you, and you don't have to pay tax on it. It's bad enough your losing your home, but you certainly shouldn't have to add insult to injury by paying income on that as well.

We also passed a bill which expanded financial counseling for families in danger of losing their homes. A lot of it is information. If you're getting this notice and you can't afford that mortgage payment, what can you do? As Mr. HODES correctly said, this isn't the old days when you went to your local banker, in many cases, and it was a man or woman you knew, it was someone in the community, and they took down your application, they knew where you worked and what your income was and everything else, and that bank was going to hold that mortgage.

Today, that is not the way it works. Many banks, not all banks, but many banks, they take that mortgage and it's sold within 30 days in the package that Mr. HODES mentioned. Packaged and sold again and again, and most people don't even know who's holding their paper. They send a mortgage payment to some P.O. box somewhere. They won't even know who to call if they were late on their payments.

One of the things this Congress said is let's help people, get them information, and this counseling process is one which you bring people together and say listen, maybe I can't afford this, but I can afford this. It's not in the bank's best interest to foreclose on a piece of property. They lose all the way around. It's certainly not in the best interest of the homeowner. So we are very proud that that was the right thing to do. But there's so much more to do.

This past week, the Treasury Secretary, Mr. Paulson, released a series of proposals. He called them short, intermediate, and long-term views on the financial markets. Unfortunately, the short-term really wasn't much of anything. The way I read it, it was sort of we are going to reinstate this commission, put some new people on it, and study it.

Well, time for study is over. People are in real need right now. We are not into bailouts. We are not into bailouts of banks or investment groups that made bad investments, and we are not into bailouts of land speculators. But there is a narrow group of people that are homeowners, family owners. It's their primary home, their only home. It's where they live. They are raising their kids, or they are senior citizens. This is the group of people that may have got caught short. This is the group of people that I think there are some strategies being discussed right now in Congress just to give them some relief to encourage the lenders to work with them and create some ways that the financing can be stabilized.

So I think that is a very good thing. But, again, it's not in the President's proposal. I am not saying that he is not prepared to work with us, but I think the ideas are going to come out of this Congress.

The second thing I will mention quickly and turn it over to my colleague from Kentucky is the notion that these organizations at the Federal level, SEC, Securities Exchange Commission; CFTC, another group that regulates commodities, and the groups go on and on in evaluating and regulating banks. They call it the alphabet soup of regulators.

It's pretty clear that these organizations have failed or not had the legal authority to do what they need to do. I think what this means to all of us, and the President and through the Treasury Secretary has said let's merge some of these together. That may be a good idea for efficiency purposes and it may be a good idea in term of creating a better form of regulation. But it's like reorganizing the chairs on the Titanic, or even creating the Department of Homeland Security by putting Immigration and FEMA in there. It isn't always necessarily a better idea to just merge everything together.

I am all for efficiency, I am all for saving money, I am all for the better regulatory side without, as Mr. HODES, said over regulating. But I think there has to be a mission clarification here to understand that a whole lot of things that were being sold on Wall Street are not understandable, not only to the average investor, like any American that buys stocks or investment vehicles, but even to the most sophisticated people.

There are a lot of things being traded that nobody real understood what they were trading, and the result of that is no transparency and a whole lot of businesses and a lot of people have lost a lot of money. Again, I think I am mostly concerned about the average investor and our markets being creative and innovative. That is all a good thing. But at the same time, we want to make sure that there's a regulatory scheme that doesn't stifle innovation, but it's that side of capitalism, that capitalism unregulated results in the Depression, as we had in 1929, and certainly there have been pitfalls along the way. This is obviously a pitfall, and we need to fix it and learn from the mistakes of what got us here in the first place.

So I am hopeful that this Congress in a bipartisan way with the leadership of Chairman BARNEY FRANK will be able to come up with some good ideas, work with Federal Reserve Chair, work with the Treasury Secretary, work with the Bush administration. America is depending on us. Our families are depending on us, our neighbors are depending on us. We are all optimists. That is why we are here. As Americans, we are optimists. Let's not repeat these mistakes again.

With that, Mr. HODES, if it's okay, I will turn it back to you.

Mr. HODES. It's very interesting to think about. One of the great things about the Financial Services Committee under Mr. FRANK is that very often we are able to work in a bipartisan way in the kind of spirit that the people of this country really are hoping that we will take to deal with these complex financial matters. Because

while we are dealing with try to fix the regulatory scheme and figure out exactly what measures, which we will talk about, are the kind of measures are going to help people on the ground who are losing their homes, it's really important that we are able to come together.

So there may be different philosophical approaches. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle on the Republican side, Mr. Bush in the White House may say, no, no, no. They may say to keep hands off. Let the free markets do everything.

But now people I think are beginning to come along and see that this is exactly the kind of situation where some appropriate government intervention to fix fundamental problems in the financial schemes and help with this mortgage crisis are going to be necessary. I am hoping that the President is going to come along. I am hoping that he is going to come on out of the Rose Garden. I am hoping that he is going to see that we need more than a 1–800 number, 1–88 I AM IN TROUBLE.

I am hoping that Secretary Paulson will continue to have what I think has been a pretty good dialog with the White House about what we have to do and that we are going to see the cooperation between the regulators, Mr. Paulson, the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the President to move things forward.

Mr. YARMUTH. Will the gentleman yield? We have been joined by another colleague. But I just have to follow up on something that Mr. KLEIN said because I almost thought he was telepathic there when he talked about the Great Depression.

None of us wants to be alarmist here. But when I was in college, I did my senior thesis on speculation in the 1920s. In fact, there is some remarkable parallels between the situation today with the housing crisis and what happened in the 1920s that led to the Great Depression.

The similarity is that back in the 1920s, if you wanted to buy stock, you only had to put up 10 percent of the price of the stock. You could borrow the rest of the money. The theory there, because the stock market was going higher and higher and higher, and everybody thought it was going to continue to get higher, happy days are here again, before they disappeared, and that was the psychology. So nobody ever thought about regulating that. Everybody thought that was an endless gravy train. So people would keep buying stock, paying 10 percent down, 10 percent down.

When the stock dropped 10 percent, their equity was gone. This happened time after time after time. The same thing has happened now with the housing market when people are lured into markets with low interest rates and then they borrowed against the equity and then when the value started to slip a little bit, they were in a negative equity situation, and that is what precipitated this crash.

I am hoping, and I don't believe that the situation in terms of the overall economy is as threatening as that situation was. The parallels are the same. After that situation in the 1920s, we created the SEC, we went to an environment, because the pendulum had swung over to the side of absolutely no regulation, and we saw the problems with that.

I listened to Senator OBAMA today on the campaign trail, and he made I think a very profound statement, and that was: Things go wrong when nobody is looking. That is what we have had over last 8 years, maybe more than that. We decided we didn't need to look at all that stuff. We found out now we need to pay attention. We need to hold all these institutions accountable. We need to set up certain rules.

We don't want to swing the pendulum to the other side, as my good friend Mr. HODES said, but there is a happy medium. In order to avoid the pitfalls that we have experienced in the past, this is the time. I think this Congress is committed to that.

I yield back.

Mr. HODES. Thank you for that really important point. I know my mother and others who lived through the Great Depression and its aftermath would be very interested to hear the analysis and the parallels, because they are not lost. Our job is going to be to try to deal with the 21st century realities and make the landing softer than it was then.

I would now like to turn it over to a distinguished colleague and an extraordinary leader, Mr. ELLISON, from Minnesota, who serves on both the Judiciary Committee and serves with us on the Financial Services Committee, someone who has been a leader in his commitment to protecting consumers, dealing with the problems that people are facing every day in their lives, who understands that hard times demand from the Congress imaginative action, and has a way of addressing things in a head-on way that has been a great example for all of us here in Congress.

With that, I am very happy to yield to the distinguished gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

□ 2015

Mr. ELLISON. Let me thank my friends from New Hampshire, Kentucky and Florida.

My dad likes to say, ''people respect what others inspect. If you don't inspect, you are not going to get any respect.'' So it is important that we have oversight. It is important that we have a regulatory system.

The market and the public sector should work in a balanced way, should compliment each other. That has not happened, and, as a result of the lack of regulation, as a result of deregulation, Gramm-Leach-Bliley in 1999, and I would like to talk about that in a moment, we have got ourselves into quite a situation.

Let me share with you what the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities issued recently. You probably would not be surprised to know that between 2005 and 2006, the average income of the top 1 percent of households increased by $73,000, after adjusting for inflation, while the average income of the bottom 90 percent, that is us based on our pay here, increased by $20. I am talking about a twenty-spot. You know, bam, that is your pay increase between 2005 and 2006 if you are in the bottom 90 percent of the income distribution.

Now, you might be thinking, gee, that is not good. But let me just tell you, what this means is that the share of the Nation's income flowing to the top 1 percent has increased sharply, as a matter of fact rising from 15.8 percent in 2002 to 20.3 percent in 2006. That means that people in the top 1 percent of our income distribution make one-fifth of the money. That is not good.

Now, you might be thinking, that is kind of bad there. But the fact is that it hasn't been this bad since.

Mr. YARMUTH, when was the last time the top 1 percent were making this much of the money in America? It did happen before, Mr. YARMUTH. I want to ask you if you know?

Mr. YARMUTH. I will defer.

Mr. ELLISON. I know you have an idea, because you were already talking about the era.

Mr. YARMUTH. Obviously in the Robber Baron Era of the 1920s.

Mr. ELLISON. The 1920s. It starts with ''Great.'' In fact, Mr. HODES, your mother was born and lived during this era. When was the last time the top 1 percent made 20 percent of the money in America?

Mr. HODES. 1929.

Mr. ELLISON. The Great Depression. I am telling you, the signs are not good. We need bold, decisive action which puts the public sector and the private sector in a partnership to look out for the American consumer. This is what we have to do.

You know, Mr. YARMUTH, let me talk to you a little bit about some things you inspired me to think about.

When we had Chairman FRANK out to Minnesota, we had a hearing on the foreclosure crisis. One of the pieces of testimony that came out is that a lot of folks actually could not find rent at the amount that they could buy into a subprime mortgage. In other words, they could get into a 228 or a 327, which means you have a low rate for 2 or 3 years and then it jumps way up. The teaser rate was lower than the market rent they could find. Since nobody was checking income, they got into that. Then when the 2 or 3 years expired, they were in a mess. The mortgage jumped up, there was not enough equity in the house even to refinance it, and they were foreclosed upon.

Now, that speaks to another thing we have done in this 110th Congress, and that is invested in a National Housing Trust Fund so we could truly invest in affordable housing, which is part of the equation here.

In America, we need an overhaul of our economic system. We need real progressivity in our Tax Code. We need

real regulation in the financial housing markets, we need to have a real aggressive attempt to support affordable housing, and we need to make sure that people have livable wages to live on. We need a new vision for an economy which puts economic prosperity at the very center dot of what we do around here.

So I yield back at this time.

Mr. HODES. Thank you very much for that perspective.

Before I introduce another colleague from the class of 2006, The Majority Makers, I do want to point out that we have not been quiet about what we think is necessary. Some of the things that we have done here in the House of Representatives, back in November we saw what was coming. We have been ahead of the curve.

We saw what was coming on this mortgage crisis and we passed the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act to strengthen consumer protections against risky loans. We wanted to make sure that going forward, the kind of lending practices that we have seen causing this mortgage and housing crisis would not be repeated.

That bill is sitting now somewhere across Statuary Hall, across the Rotunda on the other side of this building in the United States Senate, hopefully going to be passed by the United States Senate. But it is being held up there, like much legislation that we have passed here in the House to help middle-class families, to help working families, which has been held up in the Senate.

So I am hoping our colleagues are going to see the wisdom of making sure that we have loan standards in this country that really help to ensure that people who shouldn't get loans aren't getting the loans, that lenders who are taking advantage of people aren't taking advantage of them when they make the loans.

It goes along with what we have done to expand affordable mortgage loan opportunities for families in danger of losing their homes through the FHA reform. That is also being held up over in the Senate by Senator SHELBY, who apparently is upset about the economic stimulus package and has taken it out by refusing to deal with that loan.

We have strengthened Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to increase their loan limit size. We are hoping that that goes through. And we have increased the supply of affordable rental housing to address the current shortage with the bill you talked about, the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which we have to get through the Senate, across the way. It has to go up the Mall to the President. We have got to pass these kinds of measures.

We have done our job here in the House on those kinds of measures to help middle-class families and working families and people who are being struck. There are some other things that are coming from Mr. FRANK and the Financial Services Committee in a couple of days as we hold hearings and pass things through.

But now what I would like to do in about the last 10 minutes that we have got is to introduce another colleague and turn it over to my esteemed, distinguished colleague from New York, a gentleman who understands small business, a gentleman who has been working hard for veterans, a gentleman who understands the problems that he is seeing in his community in Upstate New York, the distinguished gentleman from New York, JOHN HALL.

Mr. HALL of New York. I thank my colleague.

Madam Speaker, the last few months has certainly seen severe damage done to our economy and have left many Americans battered. As a parent, I wonder how many other people have had the experience that I have had of watching my daughter when she was in high school getting credit card offers from banks, or when she was in college, with me and my wife paying for her expenses, getting credit card offers from banks, and wondering how many college students or young adults are taking those offers and not realizing the interest rates that come with them?

Signs of economic turmoil are multiplying, and I don't think anyone doubts that we are either in or headed for a recession. Some academic economists may quibble over the technical terms, but the bottom line is that our economy is headed in the wrong direction, and for many Americans, tough times are either here or lie ahead.

Stock markets around the world have behaved as if they are a roller coaster, alternating huge increases and dramatic declines. Wall Street traders don't seem to know what to make of each contradictory economic indicator. As a musician and songwriter, and now a Member of Congress, I have had hedge fund traders and stock market advisers and financial experts come to me and say, what do you think is going to happen, and that is a sign I think of the confusion and the general uncertainty that we see in the market.

While the cost of everyday expenses like food and fuel continue to rise, most people have seen their wages stagnate. People in my district make little more than they did a decade ago, yet their costs continue to rise dramatically.

People I represent in the Hudson Valley have been particularly hard hit. Oil has long passed the $100 a barrel mark, making it more expensive than ever for people to heat their homes and drive their cars. In suburban communities in the Northeast, like the area I represent, home heating bills increased more than 30 percent just between last winter and this winter.

While personal debt has skyrocketed to a record level, investment for the future has become all but nonexistent. As a result, families struggle to pay their everyday costs, more people have made incalculable personal sacrifices, lost their homes, and went hungry. As necessities become outrageously expensive and more and more employers are moving overseas to take advantage of the cheap labor and complacent regulations in places like India and China, as always, it is the American families who pay the price.

Ultimately I believe these troubles are a direct result of President Bush's disastrous economic policies. After years of the President and his enablers in the previous Republican Congress mismanaging the economy, more Americans are looking for work than ever before, the housing crisis has caused millions of Americans to risk losing their homes, and the price of gas has hit an all-time high. Clearly it is up to this Congress to act soon and act decisively. If we do not, it may well take years for the country to recover from the last 7 years.

I am proud that this Congress has already begun to take steps to do what we need to do. First we enacted the 2008 Economic Stimulus Package, which provided tax rebates for most Americans to go out and spend, and raised the loan limits for mortgages backed by FHA, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, to make it easier to get a mortgage with better terms. Both of these measures have already begun to help.

But I hope none of us are naive enough to think that that alone will be enough. We still have a lot more work to be done, specifically targeting working and middle-class families, the true lifeblood of our Nation's success. Relief for these people will only come from a clear commitment to increasing assistance for unemployment insurance, food stamps, Federal Medical Assistance Percentage payments and Federal housing programs.

I am proud of the steps we have taken here in the House, but I know we have much farther to go. As you say, my friend, Congressman HODES, we need to not only pass these progressive and family oriented middle-class steps in the House, we need to persuade our friends in the Senate to approve them as well and then persuade the President to sign them. I hope together we can do that.

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentleman for his cogent and eloquent remarks.

I am going to turn it over to the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky for some closing thoughts.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank the gentleman. It is good to see our colleague Mr. HALL here as well, and I thank him for his comments.

You know, it becomes almost a cliche, and actually an overly used one these days since we have a big presidential campaign, to talk about the contrasts between Wall Street and Main Street. But it has never been more apt, and particularly with the situation we have seen on Wall Street very recently.

We have a very serious orientation problem in this country. For many

years, going back probably three decades now, we have taken the position in this country that we are going to let companies get as big as they can get because they say ''we need to get big so we can function in the global economy.'' But the ramifications of letting them get so big with no regulation has been that if they make a mistake, then it doesn't just affect their stockholders and their employees, it affects the rest of the country. Now we have seen that. As you said early on in the opening remarks, the chickens have come home to roost. That is where we are.

This Congress, this government, has to start standing up for Main Street, not for Wall Street, understanding that Wall Street provides great benefits for this country at times. But we have to make sure that ultimately we protect the average American working family. That is what this Congress I think has been committed to doing since day one, and we will continue to be committed to that as we move forward.

I yield back, and thank you for your leadership, Mr. HODES.

Mr. HODES. Thank you, Mr. YARMUTH.

I appreciate the time we had, Madam Speaker, to talk about the economy. In the coming days, the Financial Services Committee will be presenting two very important proposals to help more on the mortgage crisis. One, we will provide some loan-ability and guarantee-ability through the Federal Housing Administration to lenders who are willing to write down loans and help people who are facing foreclosure and who may be in distress on their homes in order to make more money available to prevent foreclosures, and to help those, say at least 1 million, perhaps up to 2 million people who have been in foreclosures.

The second thing is we expect to propose a program of loans and grants to help States and cities acquire properties that have been foreclosed and facilitate returning them to the rolls as owner-occupied or rental units.

Taken together, these initiatives are going to be very important. They are going to allow millions of families to avoid disasters, they are going to help hard-pressed jurisdictions avoid the cascade of deteriorating neighborhoods and abandoned houses that follow the kind of crises we have seen, and they are going to help stem the steep and destabilizing decline in house prices that led to and is intensifying the financial crisis, because we cannot allow this crisis to continue unabated.

This Congress is ready to act. We are going to help middle-class and working families out of this hole.

I thank my colleagues for joining me tonight, and I thank Madam Speaker for her indulgence in allowing us to go over a short amount of time.

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 Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. YARMUTH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WEINER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SESTAK, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. TANCREDO) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. TANCREDO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, April 3.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, April 9.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 9.

Mr. WESTMORELAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HUNTER, for 5 minutes, today and April 3.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah, for 5 minutes, April 8.

(The following Member (at his request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 980. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act to address online pharmacies; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, April 3, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5807. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Community Facilities Grant Program (RIN: 0575-AC75) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5808. A letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, transmitting the Corporation's annual report on the provision of services to minority and diverse audiences by public broadcasting entities and public telecommunications entities, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. 396(m)(2); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5809. A letter from the Attorney, Office of Assistant General Counsel for Legislation and Regulatory Law, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Alternative Fuel Transportation Program; Private and Local Government Fleet Determination (RIN: 1904-AB69) received March 17, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5810. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's report outlining the status of Exxon and Stripper Well Oil Overcharge Funds as of September 30, 2006, satisfying the request set forth in the Conference Report accompanying the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1988, Pub. L. 100-202; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5811. A letter from the Administrator, Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, transmitting a copy of a report entitled ''Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the United States 2006,'' pursuant to Public Law 102-486 section 1605(a); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5812. A letter from the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's status of the report entitled, ''Report on Uncosted Balances,'' pursuant to Public Law 102-486; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5813. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting a letter expressing the Department's opposition to efforts to legislatively impose temporary or long-term suspensions on the acquisition of petroleum for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5814. A letter from the Comptroller General, Government Accountability Office, transmitting the Office's report concerning GAO employees who were assigned to congressional committees during fiscal year 2007, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 719(b)(1)(C); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5815. A letter from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting a copy of the annual report for Calendar Year 2007, in compliance with the Government in the Sunshine Act, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(j); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5816. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Park System Units in Alaska (RIN: 1024-AD38) received March 13, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

5817. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fisheries; 2008 Scup Specifications; Correction [Docket No. 071030625-8130-02] (RIN: 0648-XC84) received March 13, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

5818. A letter from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts,

transmitting the third annual report to Congress on victims' rights, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 3771; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5819. A letter from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, transmitting the Office's fiscal year 2008 update to the Long Range Plan for Information Technology in the Federal Judiciary and the Judiciary Information Technology Fund Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2007, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 612(h); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5820. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition on behalf of a class of workers from the Mound Plant near Dayton, Ohio to be added to the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), pursuant to the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOICPA); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5821. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition on behalf of a class of workers from the Combustion Engineering facility in Windsor, Connecticut to be added to the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), pursuant to the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOICPA); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5822. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's determination on a petition on behalf of a class of workers from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory to be added to the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), pursuant to the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOICPA); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5823. A letter from the Director, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Annual Report of the Citizenship and Immigration Services for Fiscal Year 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5824. A letter from the Ombudsman, Department of Labor, transmitting the Third Annual Report of the Ombudsman of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5825. A letter from the Assistant Secretary Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's final rule — Visas: Documentation of immigrants under the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended. [Public Notice:] received March 10, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5826. A letter from the Executive Vice President/COO, National Security Council, transmitting the Council's 2007 Financial Report, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 463 Public Law 83-259; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5827. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-24; Small Entity Compliance Guide [Docket FAR-2007-0002, Sequence 11] received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5828. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2007-004, Common Security Configurations [FAC 2005-24; FAR Case 2007-004; Item VI; Docket 2008-0001; Sequence 5] (RIN: 9000-AK88) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5829. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2005-027, FAR Part 30-CAS Administration [FAC 2005-24; FAR Case 2005-027; Item V; Docket 2006-0020; Sequence 9] (RIN: 9000-AK60) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5830. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2006-028, New Designated Countries-Dominican Republic, Bulgaria, and Romania [FAC 2005-24; FAR Case 2006-028; Item IV; Docket 2008-0001; Sequence 4] (RIN: 9000-AK77) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5831. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2007-016, Trade Agreements — New Thresholds [FAC 2005-24; FAR Case 2007-016; Item III; Docket 2008-0001; Sequence 3] (RIN: 9000-AK89) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5832. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2006-016, Numbered Notes for Synopses [FAC 2005-24; FAR Case 2006-016; Item II; Docket 2008-0001; Sequence 2] (RIN: 9000-AK70) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5833. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2005-011, Contractor Personnel in a Designated Operational Area or Supporting a Diplomatic or Consular Mission [FAC 2005-24; FAR Case 2005-011; Item I; Docket 2008-0001; Sequence 1] (RIN: 9000-AK42) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5834. A letter from the Acting Chief Acquisition Officer & Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-24; Introduction [Docket FAR-2007-0002, Sequence 10] received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science and Technology.

5835. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Expansion of the Alexander Valley Viticultural Area (2005R-501P) [T.D. TTB-65; Re: Notice No. 61] (RIN: 1513-AB23) received March 14, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5836. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Section 61.-Gross Income Defined 26 CFR 1.61-21: Taxation of fringe benefits. (Rev. Rul. 2008-14) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5837. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Issuance of Opinion and Advisory Letters and Opening of the EGTRRA Determination Letter Program for Pre-Approved Defined Contribution Plans [Announcement 2008-23] received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5838. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Abandonment of Stock or Other Securities [TD 9386] (RIN: 1545-BE80) received March 13, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5839. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — 26 CFR 601.204: Changes in accounting periods and in methods of accounting. (Also, Part 1, 446, 461, 481; 1.446-1, 1.461-1, 1.461-4, 1.461-5, 1.481-1) (Rev. Proc. 2008-25) received March 13, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5840. A letter from the Acting Regulations Officer of Social Security, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Revised Medical Criteria for Evaluating Immune System Disorders [Docket No. SSA 2006-0070] (RIN: 0960-AF33) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Ms. SUTTON: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1071. A resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–563). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. AKIN (for himself and Mr. WOLF):

H.R. 5677. A bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to prohibit the importation into the United States of plastinated human remains; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5678. A bill to provide economic stimulus through emergency community development block grant assistance for the redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed homes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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 Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5679. A bill to amend the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to require mortgagees for mortgages in default to engage in reasonable loss mitigation activities; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GRIJALVA:

H.R. 5680. A bill to amend certain laws relating to Native Americans, and for others purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 5681. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives to improve America's research competitiveness, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ALLEN:

H.R. 5682. A bill to improve access to broadband service in rural and underserved areas of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Agriculture, 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. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. WAXMAN, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 5683. A bill to make certain reforms with respect to the Government Accountability Office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN (for herself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

H.R. 5684. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the basic educational assistance program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Labor, 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 Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself and Mr. MELANCON):

H.R. 5685. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to reauthorize the temporary mortgage and rental payments program; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PERLMUTTER (for himself, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. LOWEY, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. ROSS, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. TERRY):

H.R. 5686. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a survey to determine the level of compliance with national consensus standards and any barriers to achieving compliance with such standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science and Technology.

By Mr. GILCHREST (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. REYES, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Ms. KAPTUR, and Ms. BALDWIN):

H. Con. Res. 321. Concurrent resolution expressing the need for a more comprehensive diplomatic initiative led by the United States, Iraq, and the international community; 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 Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas (for herself and Mr. MOORE of Kansas):

H. Res. 1072. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require that Members post on their websites all earmark requests made to the Committee on Appropriations; to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

By Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mr. MARCHANT):

H. Res. 1073. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 5 through 11, 2008; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN:

H. Res. 1074. A resolution honoring the 60th anniversary of the commencement of the carving of the Crazy Horse Memorial; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 303: Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.

H.R. 402: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 406: Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. BERRY, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. WEINER, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. RAHALL, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. SKELTON, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. RENZI, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, and Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.

H.R. 552: Mr. PETRI, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. REYES, and Mr. TANCREDO.

H.R. 621: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia and Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.

H.R. 715: Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 728: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. BOSWELL, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. DOOLITTLE, and Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 772: Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 989: Mr. DUNCAN.

H.R. 1050: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.

H.R. 1105: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 1110: Ms. WATSON and Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.

H.R. 1157: Mr. DEAL of Georgia.

H.R. 1222: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 1223: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 1264: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 1343: Mr. CULBERSON and Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.

H.R. 1363: Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, and Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 1474: Mr. HALL of Texas.

H.R. 1497: Mr. KAGEN and Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 1524: Mr. FARR, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. TOWNS, and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1527: Mr. DOOLITTLE and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 1535: Mr. CARSON.

H.R. 1553: Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.

H.R. 1589: Mr. RAHALL.

H.R. 1609: Mr. MITCHELL.

H.R. 1619: Mr. HOLDEN.

H.R. 1665: Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. MANZULLO, and Mr. KUHL of New York.

H.R. 1738: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H.R. 1742: Mr. BISHOP of New York and Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 1888: Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey.

H.R. 1919: Mr. BOSWELL and Mr. FERGUSON.

H.R. 1938: Mr. CHANDLER.

H.R. 1984: Mr. WU.

H.R. 1992: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.

H.R. 2052: Ms. SUTTON and Mr. HARE.

H.R. 2054: Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin and Mr. KAGEN.

H.R. 2063: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 2092: Mr. FARR.

H.R. 2106: Mr. KELLER.

H.R. 2123: Mr. SESTAK.

H.R. 2232: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 2267: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.

H.R. 2514: Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 2585: Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 2634: Mrs. BIGGERT and Mr. BACA.

H.R. 2686: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. SPACE, and Mr. CARDOZA.

H.R. 2694: Mr. WELCH of Vermont.

H.R. 2702: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 2790: Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 2820: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 2885: Mrs. BACHMANN.

H.R. 2897: Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. ALTMIRE.

H.R. 2933: Mr. WALZ of Minnesota.

H.R. 3089: Mr. POE, Mr. ADERHOLT, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 3175: Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 3229: Ms. KILPATRICK, Ms. LEE, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WATSON, Mr. WATT, Mr. WYNN, Mr. CARSON, and Ms. RICHARDSON.

H.R. 3232: Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. MCDERMOTT, and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 3298: Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 3404: Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 3513: Mr. TOWNS.

H.R. 3533: Mr. BERRY.

H.R. 3543: Ms. WATERS, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, and Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 3658: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H.R. 3660: Mr. RAHALL and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.

H.R. 3797: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 3829: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H.R. 3846: Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H.R. 3852: Mr. DOOLITTLE.

H.R. 3934: Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 3979: Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 3980: Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 4000: Mr. SNYDER.

H.R. 4044: Mr. MCINTYRE.

H.R. 4061: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. WAMP, and Mr. CANNON.

H.R. 4088: Mr. BACHUS and Mr. HULSHOF.

H.R. 4093: Mr. ELLISON and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 4105: Mr. DOOLITTLE and Mr. ALTMIRE.

H.R. 4107: Mr. MARSHALL.

H.R. 4138: Mr. BOSWELL and Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 4139: Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 4157: Mr. PICKERING and Mrs. SCHMIDT.

H.R. 4337: Mr. FILNER and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 4355: Mr. BERRY, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. FARR, and Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 4464: Mr. COBLE, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mrs. CUBIN, Mrs. BACHMANN, and Mr. MCHUGH.

H.R. 4544: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 4651: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 4900: Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. DENT, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. GOODLATTE, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. UPTON, and Mr. HERGER.

H.R. 4930: Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, and Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia.

H.R. 5087: Mr. SALI.

H.R. 5131: Mr. MARSHALL and Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 5143: Mr. MCNERNEY and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 5157: Mr. MEEKS of New York.

H.R. 5176: Mr. COSTELLO.

H.R. 5179: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 5235: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 5266: Mr. MARKEY and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 5267: Mr. MEEKS of New York and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 5443: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. BOOZMAN.

H.R. 5445: Mr. BUYER, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, and Mr. SALI.

H.R. 5464: Mr. MEEKS of New York.

H.R. 5465: Mr. EMANUEL.

H.R. 5467: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. DONNELLY.

H.R. 5481: Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. PUTNAM, and Mr. GORDON.

H.R. 5488: Mr. FILNER and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

H.R. 5490: Mr. JORDAN, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. Fortuño, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. AKIN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. GINGREY, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, and Mrs. BACHMANN.

H.R. 5507: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5515: Mr. BONNER and Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H.R. 5519: Mr. WALSH of New York.

H.R. 5532: Mr. WOLF.

H.R. 5534: Mr. KILDEE, Mr. FILNER, Mr. GALLEGLY, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 5546: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 5552: Mr. KLEIN of Florida.

H.R. 5610: Mr. TOWNS.

H.R. 5613: Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. CARDOZA, and Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 5618: Mr. INSLEE and Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 5635: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 5640: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 5641: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 5668: Ms. FOXX.

H. J. Res. 12: Mr. HELLER.

H. J. Res. 53: Mr. PAYNE and Mr. CARNAHAN.

H. Con. Res. 33: Mr. ELLISON.

H. Con. Res. 70: Mr. KAGEN and Mr. MCDERMOTT.

H. Con. Res. 244: Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mrs. BIGGERT, and Mr. DOOLITTLE.

H. Con. Res. 249: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. WAXMAN.

H. Con. Res. 294: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. GORDON, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. BOSWELL, and Mr. MARCHANT.

H. Con. Res. 295: Mr. CARTER.

H. Con. Res. 305: Mr. GILCHREST, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.

H. Con. Res. 318: Mr. TOWNS, Ms. BORDALLO, and Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H. Con. Res. 320: Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. CARTER, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. MARCHANT.

H. Res. 76: Ms. RICHARDSON.

H. Res. 259: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H. Res. 711: Mr. WALZ of Minnesota.

H. Res. 758: Mr. KNOLLENBERG.

H. Res. 820: Mr. KLEIN of Florida.

H. Res. 838: Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. FILNER, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. TIBERI, and Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.

H. Res. 896: Mr. WYNN and Mr. WATT.

H. Res. 977: Mr. ISRAEL.

H. Res. 981: Mr. BERMAN, Mr. WAMP, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H. Res. 984: Mr. LAMPSON and Mr. UDALL of Colorado.

H. Res. 987: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. FILNER, Mr. CHANDLER, and Mr. BARROW.

H. Res. 1002: Mr. EHLERS, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. NADLER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. HODES, and Mr. WALZ of Minnesota.

H. Res. 1008: Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. SALI, and Mr. SHIMKUS.

H. Res. 1011: Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. LEE, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Mr. MCINTYRE.

H. Res. 1026: Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. ROSS, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. BARROW, Ms. BEAN, Mr. BERRY, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. COOPER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. HILL, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. SPACE, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. WATSON, Ms. RICHARDSON, and Mr. CARSON.

H. Res. 1028: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H. Res. 1037: Mr. BILBRAY.

H. Res. 1044: Mr. HINCHEY.

H. Res. 1063: Mr. KING of New York and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H. Res. 1064: Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. CONYERS.

H. Res. 1070: Mr. GILCHREST and Ms. BORDALLO.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 1108: Mr. PITTS.

H.R. 1983: Mrs. EMERSON.

H. Res. 865: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 154 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2008 No. 51

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Holy God, who sustains us with Your love, keep our Nation with Your powerful protection and incline the hearts of its citizens to do Your will.

Use our lawmakers as instruments of Your providence. Heighten their gratitude for the blessings You have bestowed upon them, as You deepen their humility. Broaden their sense of justice to include the deprived and forgotten of our world. Lengthen the outreach of their compassion to include all who suffer, the homeless and the hungry, the persecuted, and the oppressed. Make them advocates of the voiceless, the weak, the poor, the elderly, and the neglected. Lord, sensitize them to the hurt of all people at home and abroad. We pray in Your matchless Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 2, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221, the legislative vehicle for the housing bill, postcloture. The Republican leader and I will visit in just a few minutes. The staffs and Senators DODD and SHELBY worked through most of the night, and I think a lot of progress was made this morning. I am hopeful and confident we can get to this legislation quickly.

Mr. President, I have another topic about which I feel inclined to say a few words.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL MICHAEL P. BARBERO

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the U.S. Army will soon say farewell to one of its most honorable officers, COL Michael P. Barbero. The colonel will retire after 26 years of service to the Army and to the Nation. For the last 5 years, I have come to know him as Chief of the Army's Senate Liaison Office.

Throughout his career, Colonel Barbero has always put the well-being of our soldiers and our country first. Of primary concern to him and his team at the Liaison Office has been helping soldiers, Guard and Reserve, navigate the bureaucracy to solve the problems that can be common to a soldier's life.

Sometimes this has meant guiding them through the bureaucracy to access Government benefits for their families. Sometimes it has meant dealing with a family emergency during deployment. Sometimes it has meant helping whistleblowers who report fraud or abuse that needs further investigation.

No matter what the challenge, Colonel Barbero always treated our citizen soldiers who seek help from Congress with care, fairness, and the respect they deserve.

As Senate minority and majority leader, I had the privilege to ask the Army to support my foreign travel. For the last several years, Colonel Barbero was a central part of these efforts. He handled high-profile and sensitive congressional delegation visits that I led to Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Georgia, Ukraine, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Colombia, Mexico, and Guatemala. These missions were successful because of the careful planning of Colonel Barbero and his excellent team.

On these long trips, I also came to know Mike Barbero as a person, not as a soldier. He is a gourmet chef. He remembers birthdays and makes sure there is a cake—even when it means the cake is packed on dry ice and stored for 6 days on an airplane.

I also learned he is a loving father and husband. In sacrifice for his service to our country, his wife Vicki and his daughter Mary and son Michael have not seen as much of him as probably they wanted.

Our loss with his retirement will be his family's gain, and, hopefully, they will soon get their father back for all the ball games and school events that his duties here have required him to miss.

We in the Senate honor the service and contributions of COL Michael Barbero.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Printed on recycled paper.

Always thinking of his soldiers and the interests of the Army and the Nation he loves, Colonel Barbero is an example for generations of officers to come.

So on behalf of all my colleagues who know this good man, I thank him for his outstanding service and wish him well in the next chapter of his life.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL MICHAEL P. BARBERO

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I associate myself with the remarks of my counterpart, the majority leader, and congratulate the colonel on his career and thank him so very much for all of his assistance to us over the years.

HOUSING LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I want to say, as the majority leader has, that we appreciate the efforts of Chairman DODD and Ranking Member SHELBY. They are working hard and worked well into the night to come up with a bipartisan start for the housing bill on which we hope to begin debate and amendment later today.

I am optimistic they will be able to come together. I think it is an example of the Senate functioning the way it ought to, functioning at its best, and we look forward to making progress on that bill sometime in the afternoon.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

NEW DIRECTION FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT AND THE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION TAX ACT OF 2007—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A motion to proceed to the bill (H.R. 3221) moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 minutes as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL MICHAEL P. BARBERO

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I add my commendation to the leaders' commendation of COL Michael Barbero.

Colonel Barbero is an extraordinary soldier, a family man, someone who has dedicated his whole life to the service of this Nation in the uniform of the U.S. Army. He has done it with distinction. He has done it with fidelity to the basic ideals of this country. He has demonstrated not only great competence but extraordinary character in doing that.

Mike graduated from West Point in 1982. I was teaching his class. Fortunately for Mike, he avoided my class and therefore prospered as a soldier and as a scholar. He later himself went on to the Georgia Institute of Technology to receive a master's degree. He returned to West Point and taught as a professor in the Department of Systems Engineering.

His military career began as an armor officer. He qualified as a U.S. Army Ranger. He served in a succession of demanding responsibilities as an armor officer, a troop commander, a battalion staff officer, with serious contributions as an armor officer in the U.S. Army.

His career represents a continued commitment to excellence as a professional and someone who has maintained the highest standards of a military officer.

I first got to know Mike when he assisted me on several trips overseas. Not only was he extraordinarily competent and well organized, he was a decent, cheerful, innovative, and enthusiastic colleague on these trips. He made them all work. They were in very difficult circumstances in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in every moment—sometimes in duress, sometimes in great difficulty—he was unflappably cheerful and ingenious and extraordinarily helpful to me.

We all stop and note his service. We also thank him and commend him and his family: his lovely wife Vicki, his two children Mary and Michael. They are the example of what Americans should be in their dedication to country.

The motto of West Point is: Duty, Honor, Country—and no one has lived it more significantly than Mike Barbero. I thank him for his service and wish him well as he retires.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for a few minutes as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning to say thank you to COL Michael Barbero. I have been in the Senate now for only a little over 3 years. During that time, I have had the great honor and privilege of traveling to Iraq and to the Middle East with Colonel Barbero on two separate occasions. He is, first of all, a great soldier. He is someone who makes us all proud for his long service to the U.S. Army.

Part of his career in the U.S. Army has been to serve at Fort Carson, the home of the Mountain Division in the State of Colorado. As we traveled to the Middle East, we often would talk about Fort Carson and his experience there and the beauty of my State and the beauty of our mountains.

Colonel Barbero has been a great example of service. He has always put the interests and concerns of others ahead of himself. I think in that fashion he exemplifies the selflessness that comes from the very best of the best we have in the U.S. Armed Forces.

He has been a great example in the Senate as he has worked with all of us, with many of our colleagues, demonstrating the excellence and the commitment of the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces today.

I also want to voice my appreciation for the great sacrifices he has made because, as he has worked not only in the Senate for the last several years, but beyond that, his family has also sacrificed a great deal to our Nation. I think about his wife Vicki and his children Mary and Michael. Mary and Michael are still young people at home. I am sure often they missed their father when he would be gone on journeys into troubled areas of the world, sometimes for more than a week at a time.

So I come to the floor this morning simply to salute Colonel Barbero and to tell him thank you on behalf of the Senate for the great contribution he has made to our country and to the relationship between our legislative branch of Government—this Chamber, the Senate—and the U.S. Army.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the majority leader to be recognized at 12:30 today be modified for the majority leader to be recognized at 2 p.m. today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to call on the Senate to take action on a bipartisan housing opportunity bill. I know that as we speak,

Senator DODD and Senator SHELBY are working hard on a compromise bill. It is about time that our national leadership went to bat for struggling working families instead of just looking out for the fat cats.

I also commend the leadership of Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL for agreeing to allow Senator DODD and Senator SHELBY to roll up their sleeves and work together to address some of the problems that now exist in our Nation's housing market. Since I first joined the Senate last year, I have noticed that far too often the people's business falls victim to partisan politics. So I appreciate the spirit of cooperation that has resulted in the agreement to move to debate on an issue on the forefront of so many Americans' minds.

We need to debate these issues and shine a spotlight on the actions of the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department in recent weeks. What we have seen recently breaks new ground and sets precedents that will be followed for years to come. We need to look closely at the details and make sure this is the right track we are taking.

Folks throughout Montana are talking about these issues because they feel the impact in their daily lives. Working families struggle to afford quality housing and pay for gas that is $3-plus a gallon and diesel that is $4 a gallon and struggle to pay for medical costs, whether in the form of excessive insurance premiums or the cost of sickness due to no insurance or too high deductibles. Folks paying $4 for a box of cereal know all too well that the Government is not there to bail them out when times get tough.

Just the other day, I spoke to a packed room in Kalispell, MT, at a forum on financial investments. This was the day after the announcement of JPMorgan Chase's acquisition of Bear Stearns. The very first question asked was from a local man who wanted to know why the Government felt it necessary to risk nearly $30 billion to aid one of Wall Street's largest banks but families or farmers or small businesses in the same situation were simply out of luck. His point hit home with me, and it pointed out the fact that we, the Government, need to address the problems that plague the housing market. I am very pleased that Chairman DODD is holding a hearing on this deal tomorrow to address the bailout of Bear Stearns, a hearing I called for when I was talking to those Montanans in Kalispell.

Concerns about this issue are growing and getting louder in my State of Montana, which many local economists have noted is resistant to the immediate effects of many national economic trends. We are all very aware of the housing crisis that is rippling across this country, affecting homeowners and the economy as a whole. To date, we have been lucky. Montana has not fared as poorly as many of the other States which have seen whole communities torn apart by foreclosure after foreclosure, hurting families and lowering property values.

But we are still concerned. I am concerned for the families in Bozeman, MT, who work hard and play by the rules, yet can't find a decent place to live that they can afford. I am concerned for the workers in Bonner, MT, who lost their jobs at the Stimson lumber mill because the collapse of the housing market has depressed the demand for lumber. I am concerned for communities throughout rural America where opportunity is slipping away because of the failure of our national leadership to invest in basic infrastructure that connects us to one another.

The current housing market is widely considered to be the worst since the Great Depression. It has spread from home prices to student loans, to municipal bonds, to commodities, and to virtually every sector of the economy. Unfortunately, the administration has put a larger priority in taking care of Wall Street's big bankers than the millions of folks who are struggling to pay the bills, make their mortgages, save for their children's college tuition, or invest some money for a secure retirement, and that needs to change. We must take action to strengthen the economy for all Americans and prevent this crisis from spreading.

The administration needs to quickly nominate a new Secretary for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, one who is responsive to the needs of average Americans, not another who is tainted by corruption and cronyism. The American people deserve honorable public servants tending to the public business to help navigate the economy out of this murky situation.

We need to help borrowers who were steered into abusive loans but not bail out speculators who were looking for a quick buck and got burned by the changing marketplace. I do not believe in a government bailout of the undeserving, but I do believe in aiding those families who face unfair foreclosures through no fault of their own. This Congress must pass legislation that can make that distinction and help families and communities that have been adversely affected by this slowing economy.

I am very pleased that at least we are working on a bipartisan agreement for this housing bill. I look forward to working with Chairman DODD and Ranking Member SHELBY to pass a good bill that will do right by working families in Montana and throughout America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at this moment in the Senate, we are awaiting a bill that is being written by Senator CHRIS DODD of Connecticut, the chairman of the Banking Committee, and Senator RICHARD SHELBY of Alabama, who is the ranking Republican on that committee. It is an attempt to come up with a bipartisan bill to deal with the housing crisis in America. We hope this is going to be successful. We are anxious for this bill to come to the floor. It is needed—desperately needed. We felt at least this effort to work together on a bipartisan basis was a move in the right direction.

A few feet away from here in front of what we call the Ohio Clock out in the corridor, Senator HARRY REID, the Democratic majority leader, and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky, who represents the Republican Members, had a joint press outing yesterday and announced this effort in the hopes that we can come up with a bill. This is overdue, and it reflects the fact we observed, over the 2 weeks of our Easter recess, that there has been a lot of activity in this country at the executive level when it comes to our economy and the housing crisis.

We all recall that the head of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, came forward and opened what they call the discount window for nondepository banks. To try to put that in common words, banks across the United States, which are regulated and are facing oversight by the Federal Government, have a way of borrowing money from the Federal Government so they are solvent and can continue to do their business.

A few years back, there was a change in what is known as the Glass-Steagall law, which gave nondepository banks—in other words, banks that are basically investment houses—lending opportunities, credit opportunities. There has been a dramatic increase in this activity. Much of that activity from nondepository banks has created credit across America but also has fueled the fires of this subprime mortgage crisis.

One of the major institutions, Bear Stearns, got into trouble a couple weeks ago and faced what appeared to be failure or bankruptcy. The Federal Government stepped in at that point and put a $30 billion guarantee so Bear Stearns would not fail. It allowed JPMorgan Chase to step forward in that circumstance and to back up Bear Stearns.

At the time, Bear Stearns, an investment house, was leveraged dramatically, which means that for virtually every dollar of assets they had, they had $30 in debt. So there was a fear

that if they failed, the stock market and the American economy would suffer.

I give this by way of background because this all occurred while we were out of session. When we returned, the Democratic leadership said: We have to get into this housing issue from a much more local and a much more personal level. If we are going to stand as a Nation to back up investment banks, if we are going to put the full faith and credit of America to the tune of $30 billion and more behind major institutions so they do not face the pain and dislocation that might come from their bad decisions, the obvious question is: What are we going to do for 2 million Americans who are about to lose their homes?

If America is going to ride to the rescue of investment banks on Wall Street, will it at least provide some shelter, some rescue to those who are about to lose their homes on Main Street? I think it should because it is not just a matter of those poor, unfortunate people facing foreclosure. A mortgage foreclosure is not an isolated, single-family event. It is not just a matter of a family losing their home. That lost home foreclosed upon, sold in your neighborhood, brings down the value of your home.

So 2 million Americans facing foreclosures has a ripple effect. It means 44 million homeowners who are making their mortgage payments every single month will see the value of their homes decline. As I said on the floor yesterday, what is the value of my home in Springfield, IL? If I ask an appraiser, they will say: I will look around your neighborhood; let's see what similar houses are selling for. If the comparable values are going down because there is a foreclosure, a distress sale involved, the value of my home has diminished. That will happen to 44 million homeowners across America because of 2 million mortgage foreclosures. So this has a negative impact on a lot of innocent people and innocent families.

It is not a matter of crossing our arms and saying: Well, those folks made a bad decision; they are going to lose their homes, and isn't it a darn shame; maybe they will be more careful next time. It has an impact on the community, neighbors, and neighborhoods, and it has an impact on consumer confidence. Over 70 percent of Americans today say they will not buy a home, not because they cannot find financing, but because they don't think it is a good investment. They don't want to stretch themselves, as many of us have in our lives to get into a home, for fear that investment of $500,000 today may be worth only $450,000 a year from now.

As a result, our housing industry is flat on its back. It is not just developers. It is not just realtors. It is homebuilders, it is skilled craftsmen, it is the suppliers of carpeting, furniture, and all the items that make a new home. They are all hurting because of the housing industry.

We returned to Washington and said: What can we do to stimulate the housing industry that will be positive? And we came up with a package to present.

First, we provide counselors who are available to those facing foreclosure to tell them what their options might be, to find a way out of this situation.

Second, we found tax provisions to help these homebuilders who are facing hard times get through it.

Third, we want to change the way people buy homes in America so there is more disclosure and transparency.

I had been a lawyer for a number of years before I came to Congress. I used to sit through these real estate closings. I would watch as the bank would bring out that stack of papers, plop them on the table in front of the new homeowners and say: Start signing. We will turn the pages, you sign. They would stop once in a while and say to the lawyers: What is this? Just another Federal form, a disclosure form; it is Form 237. At the end of the day, few, if any, homeowners knew what they were signing.

JACK REED of Rhode Island, my colleague, has a simple provision that we would have a disclosure statement on the top of that stack written in English so people could understand what is the interest rate; how much am I borrowing; what will the monthly payment be; can this interest rate go up; can my monthly payment go up; can I prepay without a penalty? Some basics. I hope we adopt that proposal.

There is another provision that I think is critically important and has become very controversial. I don't understand why it is controversial. I cannot understand why, if someone facing bankruptcy wants to go into court under what we call Chapter 13 and take a look at all their debts and all their income and restructure their debt so they can pay back in a reasonable way, I do not understand why you cannot put your mortgage on your home in that court proceeding for modification. You cannot now. You are prohibited by law, under Chapter 13, from the court modifying the terms of the mortgage on your home. But the court can rewrite the terms of a mortgage on your vacation condo. The court can rewrite the terms of your mortgage on your farm. The court can rewrite the terms of your mortgage on a ranch. The court can rewrite the security instrument you used to buy that boat that is out in the harbor. All of those things can be modified, but not your home. I have asked why. Why in God's name would you prohibit the modification of a mortgage on a home? There is no explanation. And so the provision I put in the bill said that the court would have that authority. They wouldn't be required to, but they would have that authority.

Now, what is the protection here? The lenders want to know if they will be protected. Will they end up with a mortgage being rewritten in terms they do not like? So here is what we put in as protection:

First, you have to qualify to go to bankruptcy court. It isn't easy. We rewrote the rules for that a few years ago, and I don't change them at all. In order to get into court, it is a question of what your income is, what your debts are, and whether you have a chance of working it out. That is step No. 1.

Step No. 2, the real estate we are talking about has to be your home and primary residence. I am not interested in helping real estate speculators. Frankly, they may have some advocates here, but I am not one of them. I want to be sure we are dealing with home ownership.

Third, it only applies to mortgages which are in existence at the time this bill is enacted into law. So it doesn't project into the future, it is a specific group right now.

Fourth, this court—this bankruptcy court—cannot lower the principal on your mortgage in modifying it lower than the current fair market value of the home. There is a protection for the lender. You know that the principal can't be pushed down below fair market value.

Let me add as a footnote that many of these lenders facing foreclosure would be darned lucky to get fair market value on the property. If you have ever seen how these homes in foreclosure are sold, if they are sold, it takes a long time and sometimes results in an auction. We are finding in my State of Illinois that people are not even bidding for fair market value. So fair market value is the low-end protection of the lender.

Next, the interest rate the bankruptcy court can put on the modification cannot be lower than the prime rate on interest plus a premium for risk.

Next, the mortgage itself can't be for a term longer than 30 years.

Next, if in the 5 years after the modification in court the value of the home appreciates or goes up, that increase in value goes to the lender—not to the home owner, to the lender.

How many more protections can we build into this? We have narrowed the people who would qualify, and we have tried to do it in a way that is sensible and protects lenders in the process. So who would oppose a bill that is that narrow in changing the Bankruptcy Code? I will tell you: The mortgage bankers oppose it. The same people who brought us the subprime mortgage crisis are now telling the Members of the Senate: We find this unacceptable; we don't want the bankruptcy court to have this new authority. And what is their argument? The sanctity of the contract. Sanctity. When I grew up, sanctity connoted holiness, a sacred quality. Have you taken a look at some of these subprime mortgages, the ones we are talking about? I have. I have sat down with some of the borrowers in Illinois to see what they went through

and what they ended up signing up for. Time and again, these were elderly people, the ones I have met, who ended up signing up for mortgages which made no sense at all—misled, deceived into signing on to a mortgage they could not sustain personally.

The elderly lady who had retired in Chicago saw a number on a television ad, called the number, and in 24 hours there is a fellow at the door saying: You bet, we are going to consolidate your debt. This poor lady goes into a closing—she had limited education, she had retired, and she was trying to save her home—she signed all the papers, and in a matter of a year the monthly payment doubled on her home. Here she is living on Social Security and about to lose her home. The sanctity of the contract. The holiness of the contract. The sacred document the mortgage bankers want us to honor, bow to. Obeisance.

Another case. This poor lady, her husband had a serious illness. He could no longer climb the stairs in their home to get upstairs to the bedroom. He was sleeping on the couch in the living room. His wife was beside herself. They were both retired. She sees a nice little one-story bungalow, a smaller home but one story, with the bedroom on the first floor for her husband. She goes to buy it, and a so-called business adviser says to her: Oh, this is your chance to consolidate all your debt in this new mortgage. Do you know what this charlatan did? He took a zero-percent loan this lady had from the city of Peoria to put insulation in her home and consolidated it into the new mortgage, so she is now paying interest on the zero-percent loan. The sanctity of the contract. The holiness of the contract. This sacred document.

The mortgage bankers say we can't touch these things. My goodness, they have to be protected. Where were these mortgage bankers 3 years ago when we rewrote the Bankruptcy Code, when we said all existing contracts in America that are taken into the bankruptcy court will be treated differently? I didn't hear one word about the sanctity of the contract. No. Why? Because the changes in the Bankruptcy Code were to their advantage. So now, on the chance that they may have to keep a family in a home facing foreclosure, they are opposing it, opposing this change.

What a real test of the Senate this will be if we end up letting the mortgage bankers—the people who brought us this subprime mortgage mess—dictate to the Senate about changing the Bankruptcy Code. Shame on us. Why in the world, if we can stand up for saving an investment bank on Wall Street, can we not stand up to save the homes of millions of people who are about to lose them across America? A lot of them will never qualify for this assistance in this bill. I know it. But for some, a limited group, it is the only way they can keep their homes. That is what this debate is all about.

I read in the paper this morning that many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle said this is a poison pill; changing the Bankruptcy Code, invading the sanctity of these contracts is a poison pill; we can't consider it. I don't want to be unreasonable about this. I want an up-or-down vote. I want people on the record. I want Senators to stand up and say whether they believe families facing this kind of foreclosure, with communities facing the impact of these foreclosures, will have a fighting chance.

This isn't just my theory, incidentally, on what we need to do. Recently, Newsweek magazine, in its March 31 issue, asked a lot of prominent people in different walks of life what we should do about the economy and particularly the housing crisis. I wish to quote a few for the record.

First, Bob Rubin, chief of the executive committee of Citigroup and former Treasury Secretary, maybe one of the most successful Treasury Secretaries in the history of this Nation. This is what Bob Rubin said:

> We should consider higher capital requirements for banks and investment banks, plus higher margin requirements for other investors. Putting up more of their own money would make people focus on risk.

That is a balanced and sensible statement. What he is saying is when we get into this whole question about the future of our economy, let's understand that there is risk on both sides and let's demand responsibility on both sides.

Carly Fiorina. Now, she is an adviser of Senator MCCAIN's campaign, chairperson of the Republican Victory '08 committee, and former CEO of Hewlett-Packard. Listen to what she says:

> I think the mortgage companies and the banks should step to the plate and say, ''We have put products out there that have harmed our customers, either because we didn't explain them well or because we pushed them into homes or mortgages that they couldn't afford.'' And those lenders need to sit down with their creditworthy but cash-strapped customers and say, ''How do we help you?''

She is the adviser to Senator MCCAIN's campaign. She is a person with a background in business. Her suggestion is consistent with my change in the Bankruptcy Code. It is exactly what I am saying.

Some of the others. Gene Sperling, an adviser to Senator CLINTON's campaign:

> How can you have a housing-led recession and have no housing-based remedies?

He gets to the heart of it. The housing-led recession was the catalyst for our economic problems. Ignore it, and I am afraid our economy won't get well very soon.

Joseph Stiglitz, university professor from Columbia, former chief economist of the World Bank, and economic adviser to Bill Clinton. Here is what he says:

> There needs to be an immediate write-down of mortgages—perhaps encouraged through a homeowners' Chapter 11, which would allow them to discharge a part of their debt and still stay in their homes.

That is exactly what this amendment does.

He goes on:

> Of course, there is something peculiar about what has been going on. While the administration has been vetoing any suggestion of a bailout for poor homeowners who have been taken advantage of by predatory lenders, there has been a bailout for investment banks. The Fed has lent money to facilitate JPMorgan's takeover of Bear Stearns, and has evidently underwritten the risk. It has accepted risky mortgages as collateral—again putting taxpayers' money at risk. These bailouts for those responsible for the mess have been done in a totally non-transparent way. We really don't know much about the values assigned to the collateral and what the risks are. It seems fairer to help poorer American households, rather than putting taxpayers' money at risk without even charging appropriate insurance premiums for bearing this risk.

Mr. Stiglitz has hit the nail on the head. We are ready, with few questions asked, to put $30 billion in taxpayers' money behind a failing investment bank, but when I come to the floor and suggest we ought to try to stand behind a few homeowners across America who stand to lose their homes, oh no, the mortgage bankers won't hear of it; some of these people may not be worthy borrowers in the future. Was Bear Stearns a worthy borrower? I don't even know if the question was asked, and neither does Mr. Stiglitz.

Robert Shiller, Yale professor of economics and founder of Macromarkets LLC. Among the things he says, he quotes a woman I respect very much, Elizabeth Warren, a Harvard law professor, who has proposed that the Government create a Financial Product Safety Commission which would work like the Consumer Product Safety Commission but would monitor lending and financial practices.

How in the world can this Senate stop and say we give tacit approval to the decisions of the Federal Reserve Board and the Treasury Department to put the credit of the United States behind investment banks that we literally don't know their circumstances and then turn around and say we would not let a bankruptcy court even consider changing the terms of a mortgage for someone facing foreclosure? If it is a vacation condo, fine; if it is a farm, fine; if it is a ranch, fine; if it is a big boat, fine, but not your home. You have to lose your home. That is what the law says today. Is that reasonable? Is that what we are all about? Is that what the Senate is all about? Are we here to follow the agenda of the Mortgage Bankers Association that created this mess, or are we here to serve the needs of families across this country struggling to keep a roof over their heads? I hope that answer will be obvious to my colleagues, and I hope that when we get this bipartisan bill that is

being worked on very soon that it includes this provision so that we can have an up-or-down vote.

This provision is limited. It will not impact future borrowers in any way. The Georgetown Law study said it will have little or no impact on interest rates to come. I think it is fair for us to consider it. It is supported by a substantial group: the AARP, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the NAACP, the National Council on La Raza, Consumer Federation of America, Center for Responsible Lending, SEIU, AFL–CIO, and many others. It has the diverse support of Jack Kemp, former conservative Republican Congressman and candidate for Vice President, and Larry Summers, who was Secretary of the Treasury in the Clinton administration and who wrote op-eds in support. It has the support of the Credit Union National Association and the National Association of Federal Credit Unions.

Who opposes it? The big banks that created this mess in the first place. I am sorry, they have had their day. They have had their chance. Most of them have made plenty of money, and their CEOs are going to escape unscathed from this terrible economy. But for the rest of America that is paying the price for their bad lending practices, all I am asking is a chance, a chance that in court the bankruptcy judge will allow these people to stay in their homes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Illinois for his statements and leadership on this issue. I serve on the Judiciary Committee with him. I thank him for bringing forward this proposal. I think it is critically important to a large number of homeowners who find themselves in bankruptcy that they get the help the bankruptcy courts were designed to create. It was to take a look at the financial ability of the person going into bankruptcy, to take a look at their assets and to make a fair arrangement for the creditor and the debtor. But the bankruptcy courts today cannot do that in regard to your primary residence. As my colleague points out, if it is your boat and you have a chattel mortgage on it, they can work that out. If it is your vacation home, they can make accommodations. But for your principal residence, they cannot do that. That makes no sense at all, and I thank my colleague for bringing this forward. I think it is a critical part of the legislation before us, and I look forward to supporting the effort to make sure that stays in the legislation.

Mr. President, 2 weeks ago I visited a Baltimore neighborhood, Ednor Gardens. That is near the Memorial Stadium, the old stadium where the Baltimore Orioles and Baltimore Colts played, and it is in the neighborhood where I went to high school, Baltimore City High School. It is a middle-class neighborhood, but today there are vacant homes and a lot of ''for sale'' signs. The entire neighborhood is affected by our current housing crisis. Some are in danger of losing their homes. Obviously, that is the most dramatic impact all of us hear and we want to do something about. We do not want to see people lose their homes.

It was James Truslow Adams who first coined the term ''the American dream'' in his book ''The Epic of America'' in 1931. He talked about the American dream as the opportunity to achieve in this great Nation, that every family should have that opportunity. The most visible sign of achievement is owning your own home. It is devastating if you lose your home.

Many Americans are in danger of losing their homes today because of the housing crisis. It not only affects individual homeowners who could lose a home through foreclosure or the inability to pay the mortgage and they just walk away from their home, but it affects every home in that neighborhood. There is a Chicago study that shows a single foreclosure, just one foreclosure in your neighborhood, will have the immediate impact of reducing your property value by about 1.5 percent or about $3,000, on average. The U.S. Conference of Mayors pointed out that the current decline in home values across the Nation reflects a loss of value of over $1.2 trillion, having a major impact on property tax revenues of local governments. The whole community is affected by the housing crisis, not just the individual homeowner who may lose his or her home.

If you happen to live in a home that you need to sell—you move, there is a change of life and you need to deal with putting your house on the market; maybe you have a contract to buy another house and you plan to sell your house—I tell you, the housing market is not good today; you are affected by the housing crisis. It is hard to find people who are willing to buy a home. They are concerned about declining values. Everyone is affected by this housing crisis.

Home ownership is critically important to the safety of our neighborhoods. Study after study shows that where you have a large percentage of home ownership, you have better schools and you have less crime. That was actually documented in that Chicago study I referred to earlier, where they showed there was a direct relationship between foreclosures in a neighborhood and the increase of violent crime in a neighborhood.

I have heard many people say: Isn't this the problem of people who entered into mortgages they should not have entered into or bought homes they should not have bought or couldn't afford? In some cases, that is true. In many cases, it is not. But the declining economy and the housing crisis affects all of us. We have a responsibility to help and to do something that is positive for our economy and the housing crisis.

This is not an isolated situation, what was happening in this Baltimore neighborhood. In Maryland, the foreclosures have increased—since June, where Maryland ranked 40th in the Nation, doing fairly well competitively, to now 18th in the Nation in the number of foreclosures. There was a 39-percent increase in foreclosures in the last quarter in the State of Maryland.

The Mortgage Bankers Association tells us that nationally the third quarter of 2007 was not only a record for the number of foreclosures, it was the highest ever recorded in the number of foreclosures in this country. Nationally, it is estimated that 2.2 million subprime mortgages, entered into between 1998 and 2006, are in jeopardy of foreclosure during the next 2 to 3 years, representing $160 billion of potential loss of wealth. The National Realtors Association has told us that home sales have dropped for the sixth consecutive month. Home prices are down, and they quantitated it, between February 2008 and February 2007, a decline of 8 percent. Our economy is hurting. It is not just the homeowner.

Let me just give one example. Housing starts are down. New housing starts are clearly down. It is difficult to see investors moving forward building new residential homes when we have a glut on the market of existing homes. What does that mean? I was talking to some people who work at the light truck transmission facility located in White Marsh, MD—General Motors. They are in danger of losing jobs because the people who work in the building sector, building of homes, use light trucks, and they are not buying as many light trucks because business is down. This is affecting jobs in Maryland and jobs in each one of our States.

The bottom line is that Congress needs to act. We need to act quickly. The Fed acted quickly to protect Wall Street. We have to act quickly to protect Main Street. There is a lot of question as to whether the Fed did the right thing for Bear Stearns. They acted quickly. We have middle-class communities, middle-class families who are in danger of losing their homes if Congress does not act quickly. We need to act quickly to help middle-class families who are caught in this economic downturn.

I am proud to have cosponsored provisions included in this underlying bill we are talking about. It is a very important bill. It includes provisions that I believe will really help the people in our States.

First, it provides counseling services—$200 million. We can help another half a million families get counseling.

One of the figures I find shocking is that for about half of the vacant homes we have today, people have just walked away from their mortgages, walked away from their homes. They have not even tried to work out their financial

problems. They have not sought counseling. They have not talked to the mortgage company. They have not made any effort to try to save their home. They think there is no possibility. In reality, there may be possibilities. We should be providing the wherewithal so that people who are in a distressed situation can get the counseling help they need.

When I had my gathering in the Baltimore neighborhood, there were representatives from the different counseling services that are available to the people of Baltimore—Healthy Neighborhoods, St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center. These are people who have found the number of people seeking help doubling and tripling since the middle of last year. They are being overwhelmed today by people seeking help. They need a Federal partner. They asked me specifically whether this part of the legislation can be enacted quickly. They need the help to keep the centers open and expand the centers.

Remember, I said half the people are not seeking counseling. If the number of people who could use counseling actually stepped forward, there would not be the counselors available to handle this. That is why it is very important for the Federal Government to be a partner in providing adequate counseling, independent information to homeowners as to what their options may be.

The second provision of this bill allows for the refinancing of subprime mortgages by giving our local revenue authorities additional revenue bond help from the Federal Government—$150 billion—so that they can be more actively involved. We know we have a credit crunch. Everybody knows that. You can't find mortgages today. You can't find ways of financing. This will help, by using revenue bonding authority with very little cost to taxpayers. I say that because in many cases the local revenue bonding authority, operating under the State, will be able to go in and purchase a distressed mortgage at market value. Market value is less than its full value. The person who made the loan is going to get a fair value for their investment. It is going to be a lower value than they want, but it is a fair value.

We are not bailing out the investor. What we are doing, then, is giving the homeowner an opportunity to have that mortgage refinanced through the State revenue bond authority at a fair amount, at a fair return, allowing that homeowner to stay in his or her home, protecting the home for the family—not protecting the investor, not protecting the person who made the loan, but protecting the homeowner. That is what we should be doing. That certainly is a tool I hope all of us will support, and we need to get that done quickly because of the credit crunch.

There is a lot of talk about whether individuals went into this with full knowledge of the problems. Let me tell you, there have been a lot of people who have been victimized by the practices that are out there. There are many people who could have gone into traditional mortgages who went into subprime mortgages. It is particularly true in minority communities. Between 2005 and 2006, 50 percent of all the mortgages sold in the African-American community were subprime—50 percent to African Americans; 40 percent to Latinos. My point is this: There were neighborhoods that were targeted for subprime mortgages that could have qualified for traditional mortgages. These individuals have been victimized. I think allowing our revenue bonding authorities, our local housing authorities, to be able to do more to restructure those mortgages is the right thing for Congress to do.

I hope we will provide block grant authority, to give block grants to communities that have been impacted by foreclosures. As I said earlier, if you have a foreclosure in a community, the entire community is impacted by it. We need to do something to help it.

I was very impressed when I talked to people at St. Ambrose when they explained to me that when you have a foreclosed property, the house deteriorates and the neighborhood needs help. A Federal block grant to the community will allow it to get the housing in the condition it needs in order to put new home buyers into these houses. That is another very positive thing we can do to help communities.

The legislation provides the relief from bankruptcy that my friend, Senator DURBIN, talked about, a provision I strongly support. I don't need to go through all the provisions he went through, but it is targeted to residential mortgages that are in bankruptcy, it is targeted to mortgages that are currently in existence, targeted to those who can financially afford a refinancing structure. It is targeted in that if there is a resale and money that comes in that would have the lender held harmless, the money goes first to the lender.

All this is targeted relief to provide some degree of equity in a mortgage proceeding between mortgages that are taken out for our vacation homes and our large boats and those that are for residential mortgages. As Senator DURBIN pointed out, a bankruptcy judge can adjust the mortgages for your vacation home and your chattel mortgage on your boat but cannot, today, on your residential mortgage. That makes no sense at all, and we should certainly include that provision.

There are provisions in this bill that will provide disclosure so, moving forward, homeowners have much more information before they enter into a mortgage.

I wish to refer to another provision I intend to offer as an amendment to the underlying legislation when we get an opportunity, and that is to provide a tax credit for first-time home buyers. I think we need to do something to stimulate the housing market from the point of view of more people willing to come out to a buy a home. Senator DURBIN pointed out that today there are people reluctant to buy a home, who want to buy a home, but they are worried that the value may decline. If we give a tax credit, put money on the table, I think it is much more likely that individuals will want to take advantage of that. You do that and you help stimulate the economy with the exact sector that triggered the economic downturn, the housing market. Let's get the housing market reenergized. Let's put a tax credit out that helps home buyers buy a home in these distressed times.

Now, the legislation that I am going to propose is going to be targeted; it is going to be for principal residences only. I think that is what we should do. It will be middle class. We will have an income cap so it goes to those who need the help.

It will be first-time home buyers. Today, it is estimated that 40 percent of our market is first-time home buyers. In Baltimore City, we know about two-thirds are first-time home buyers. So it is to go to that part of the market that needs the help, that we need to get back into the market. It is temporary. It will expire in 2008 because we want people moving now, going back into the market now.

This is not a new concept. It has been used in the Nation's capital. We provided a tax credit that has helped 3,000 to 4,000 home buyers a year. I think it was a good policy for the Nation's capital. I think it is a good policy now for our country on a temporary basis.

I do acknowledge there are several of my colleagues who are interested in this legislation who have a slightly different approach. I hope we can come together, as Senator STABENOW has been interested in a housing credit for many years. Senator ISAKSON has come forward with his proposals.

I hope we all will be able to work together to bring forward a tax credit proposal that can help stimulate our economy. We need to act now. Two months ago, in a bipartisan action in this body, we passed the economic stimulus package. We did it quickly. That is what we needed to do. Well, we need to show the same commitment on the housing crisis. We need to work in a bipartisan manner to help middle-class families save their homes and to help our economy.

I urge my colleagues to take up quickly this legislation. Let's consider the amendments. Let's move forward. There are too many homeowners in our States who are depending upon us to act quickly for us to delay.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PHARMA PAYMENTS TO DOCTORS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have had the opportunity in the last several years that I have been in the Senate to look into how drug companies may be improperly influencing

medical care. It is no secret that drug and device companies have substantial financial relationships with the health industry and specifically with physicians.

In addition to multimillion dollar royalty payments and lucrative consulting contracts, I found that drug and device companies often provide perks to doctors. These would include things such as expensive trips, lavish speaking fees, and other benefits that are too numerous to mention at this point.

These relationships, as you might expect, can motivate doctors to modify their treatment practices. It can motivate doctors to do practices that may not be in the best interests of the patient.

Because these financial relationships are so common, I have had the help of Senator KOHL of Wisconsin in the introduction of a bipartisan bill called the Physicians Payment Sunshine Act. We introduced that in the latter half of last year.

Now, this bill is not aimed at stopping money flowing to the doctors, the results of which I have spoken about. But it ought to throw a little sunshine on this issue. And that sunshine on this issue will go a long way toward curbing bad behavior.

I am proud to report the bill is gaining support from industry and from many physicians. In fact, medical device maker Zimmer recently announced their support. I expect even more companies to come onboard very soon.

You might say that these companies coming on board must like this, that it is not going to do any good. Well, it will do a lot of good. I think companies coming on board at this point are recognizing that if they are in a public debate on this issue where there is evidence that their payments to doctors may influence practice, that is not going to stand up in the theater of public debate, and so they ought to help their public relations and get behind this legislation. They know it is the right thing to do. I hope my colleagues in the Senate will look at this bill and see it as the right thing to do as well.

Since last summer, I have been investigating dozens of physicians to see if they are reporting their outside income to universities they are affiliated with. These physicians are at public as well as private universities and are working at institutions of higher learning across the United States today.

I am going to report on the action of one physician. I do this to explain how industry payments to medical experts can affect medical practice. Last summer, the New York Times ran an article about several drugs called atypical antipsychotics. These drugs are very powerful. The New York Times reported they are widely prescribed for children.

In the case of Seroquel, this drug became widely prescribed to treat children for bipolar disorder in the year 2005. It is important to examine this drug because we have paid billions of taxpayers dollars for Seroquel in the last years under various programs that the Federal Government has that provide help for people who cannot otherwise afford it.

Now, this happened after a group of experts decided that drugs such as Seroquel worked in kids and then published new guidelines in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

But this panel based its guidelines on a single inconclusive study that was done in the year 2002, paid for by AstraZeneca. The study concluded kids did well on Seroquel, even though half of them dropped out of the study because of bad side effects.

The lead author of this study was Dr. Melissa DelBello, a professor at the University of Cincinnati. After reading about this story, I sent a letter to the University of Cincinnati and asked to see Dr. DelBello's reports on outside income.

I found out Dr. DelBello received over $100,000 from AstraZeneca in 2003, the year after she did this study. The following year, the company paid her over $80,000. These payments were for things such as lectures, consulting fees, services on advisory boards, and reimbursement for travel-related costs.

After the university sent me these records, I then asked AstraZeneca to account for money the company had sent to Dr. DelBello. The numbers after they all came in simply did not add up.

Between 2005 and 2007, Dr. DelBello reported about $100,000 in outside income to her university. But I found out AstraZeneca had paid her over $238,000, and obviously $138,000 of reported income is a big difference. Of course, I am finding out the money keeps trickling in. Last week, AstraZeneca reported to me they had discovered an additional $1,800 in payment to Dr. DelBello, and who knows if we will ever know the full accounting of this money paid between AstraZeneca and the professor.

So her own university, her very own university which is supposed to be monitoring her conflicts of interest, did not even know about these additional payments. It seems to me they did what many universities around the country do: They trusted their faculty to provide accurate information.

Even worse, I found out Dr. DelBello received grant money from the National Institutes of Health. According to Federal regulations, universities are supposed to monitor conflicts of interest when their researchers receive National Institutes of Health grants. Obviously, the university has engaged in the practice of trust but did not verify, where the rule is: Trust but verify.

Another interesting thing happened while I was looking into Dr. DelBello. According to the letter I received from the University of Cincinnati, Dr. DelBello failed to report other money she also received from big drug companies.

So it turns out Dr. DelBello has a company which she established for ''personal financial purposes.'' AstraZeneca was involved here. Let me remind you that AstraZeneca is the maker of Seroquel. They paid MSZ Associates, Inc., an Ohio corporation, over $60,000.

Where do you think the address of MSZ Associates is? Well, you probably have figured it out, the Department of Psychiatry, University of Cincinnati.

This situation is unfortunate on so many levels. It is unfortunate for the University of Cincinnati relying on the representations of its faculty, it is unfortunate for patients who once believed their doctors were not for sale, and it is unfortunate we are in a day and an age where a bill promoting transparency for millions and millions of dollars going from big drug companies to American doctors is necessary.

In other words, I am saying to my colleagues in the Senate: The bill Senator KOHL and I put in last year that is picking up steam, even from companies in the medical business, should not have had to be introduced. The checks and balances that are out there between universities, between the NIH and universities that get their grants ought to be enough to make sure the ethics are properly followed.

This information is available, and, most importantly, the information is public, because this is the public's business. The public has a right to know whether people who doctor them might have a financial interest in the treatment that is prescribed for them.

Now, I have given you one example of a doctor who has been receiving large amounts of money from drug companies. In this area, as in many others, I hope a little bit of sunshine will go a long way. That is what the Kohl-Grassley legislation is all about. The fact that a physician can promote a drug to other doctors and receive NIH funding, while hiding a very clear conflict of interest, ought to be very disturbing to all of us.

That is why this bill is very needed. Because nobody is watching this money, and it is having a bad effect on medical practice as evidenced by this drug made by AstraZeneca.

Before closing, I wish to give this compliment to the University of Cincinnati. This university has and continues to be very cooperative in this investigation. I very much appreciate this. Thank you to the University of Cincinnati.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

IRAQ

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise to speak on behalf of S. Res. 494, which is a sense-of-the-Senate resolution I introduced yesterday calling upon the international community to fulfill previous pledges to provide reconstruction assistance to Iraq. I am joined in introducing this resolution by my colleague,

Senator CORKER, from the great State of Tennessee. I am honored to have his support.

Our message is simple. It is long past time for other nations, especially Iraq's neighbors, to carry through on past promises and deliver the type of assistance that can help stabilize Iraq and allow for an orderly redeployment of U.S. combat troops from Iraq. Over the course of the next 2 weeks, the Senate will once again return to the Iraq war and the debate over future U.S. military presence in that country. It is no secret there is a sharp divide in the Congress over the next steps in Iraq. We have some fundamental differences, and it is essential that we debate these differences in an open manner. However, there is some common ground that all of us can find when it comes to Iraq. We can agree that America has already sacrificed too many of our finest and bravest young men and women in this conflict. We recently marked the grim toll of 4,000 Americans killed in combat there, including 183 natives of my home State of Pennsylvania. But the United States is also bearing the majority of the burden when it comes to financial assistance to the Iraqi Government for reconstruction activities. We bear this burden even though other nations and multilateral organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have pledged but failed to implement significant sums toward Iraq's reconstruction. The United States bears this burden even as we spend millions of dollars every day on our military presence in Iraq. That is not right, and it cannot continue.

Our resolution calls upon other nations to carry through on previous pledges of reconstruction assistance to the Iraqi people who have been largely ignored. The resolution has been inspired by two recent reports, a December 2007 report from the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, and a January 2008 report from the inspector general for Iraqi reconstruction. The two reports document the following facts—just two, but they are alarming and disturbing—the United States has already spent roughly $29 billion on reconstruction assistance to Iraq, with another $16.5 billion in the pipeline having been authorized by Congress. That is fact No. 1, $29 billion spent, $16.5 billion on the way. As of last October, international donors have pledged a combined total of approximately $16 billion to support Iraq's reconstruction, but only $7 billion of the $16 billion has actually been disbursed to Iraqi governmental entities. This is a less than 50-percent return when it comes to carrying out previous pledges, many of which date back to the year 2003.

There are some plausible explanations for why reconstruction funding has not flowed as quickly as we would like. Certainly corruption in the Iraqi Government remains a serious problem. The hazardous conditions in many parts of Iraq have impeded reconstruction projects. But these same constraints apply to the U.S. Government and our construction funding. There is no reason the United States has spent more than four times what the rest of the world combined has spent when it comes to reconstruction assistance to the Iraqi Government. I don't need to remind anyone in this Chamber or in the country of our economic challenges at home. The war in Iraq is exacting a significant toll on our Nation's Treasury. The United States cannot afford to continue to subsidize reconstruction assistance to Iraq while other nations remain on the sidelines.

The lack of participation by other international donors, especially Iraq's neighbors, incurs diplomatic and political costs as well. When the United States is seen as the principal source of reconstruction funding in Iraq, and when those reconstruction activities falter, it is America that is unfairly blamed in the eyes of the Iraqi people. Five years after we invaded Iraq, much of the nation continues to experience power shortages and rolling blackouts. The Iraqi people view this state of affairs as America's responsibility. That is why the Iraq Study Group, more than a year ago, recommended multilateral support for Iraqi reconstruction, including ''greater involvement by and with international partners who should do more than just contribute money. They should actively participate in the design and construction of projects.'' So said the Iraq Study Group more than a year ago.

It is all too rare for a Democrat and a Republican to find some shared ground today on the issue of Iraq. The fact that two Members of the Senate, both members of the Foreign Relations Committee from different parties, have found common cause on one aspect of our presence there should tell us something. There is no reason the United States, already having borne a massive cost in terms of military resources expended and precious lives of our bravest men and women lost, should continue to be on the hook for the majority of reconstruction funding in Iraq. Reconstruction funding for Iraq is important, and it is time Iraq's neighbors, major international organizations, and other nations step to the plate.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I understand we are in morning business; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No. We are under cloture on the motion to proceed.

Mr. KENNEDY. Fine. I will use such time as I might use that I am entitled under that procedure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, a few minutes ago, I was over at the Joint Economic Committee, where we had Mr. Bernanke, who is the head of the Federal Reserve, talking about the economic challenges we are facing in this country and what the administration, and Federal Reserve are going to do about it. I must say, we were long in analysis in terms of how we got here but very short in terms of giving a great deal of hope to the American people as to the next steps that are going to be taken by the administration to help resolve this problem. That is, I find, enormously distressing.

I think American families ought to be certainly encouraged by the efforts that are being made in this body to try to develop a housing program, led by Senator DODD and also by Senator SHELBY and a number of others. I understand the leaders are going to have some announcements later on in the day about the progress that is being made, which is, I think, a very important and significant effort. Hopefully, it will result in providing some help and assistance to families so they can remain in their homes and, hopefully, permit some of those who have been foreclosed on to regain the opportunity to return to their homes.

We have seen in recent weeks a widespread breakdown in the financial markets. The crisis has had far-reaching effects on the rest of the economy, leaving 7.4 million Americans unemployed and 2 million families at risk of foreclosure. Approximately 7,000 families a day are facing that. It is true in my State of Massachusetts. It is true throughout New England and other parts of the country.

We need to act quickly now to keep families in their homes. We are looking forward to our committees making a recommendation on legislation that will permit us to do so.

It is time to restore confidence in our credit markets. That means cracking down on abusive practices in the mortgage industry and shining more light on the operations of investment companies such as Bear Stearns.

The Federal Government stepped in with nearly $30 billion to bail out Bear Stearns. That is a lot of corporate welfare coming before any relief for the millions of families on the brink of losing their homes. Hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidized loans are being given out freely to banks and investment houses, but the administration is telling millions of Americans struggling to find work that it is too soon to give them additional unemployment benefits. That is unacceptable, and Congress needs to act.

I reviewed at the meeting earlier today the general economic circumstance we find ourselves in as a result of these costs over these last

years. Since the President took office, the dollar has lost a third of its value. The Federal debt has skyrocketed by nearly $4 trillion. Our debt to foreign investors has increased by $1 trillion. The stock market on average has grown by only 2.5 percent each year since 2001, far lower than the 7.5-percent annual returns it averaged since 1968, and it lost $2.7 trillion in value since last May—$2.7 trillion in value since last May. Finally, this crisis has wiped out $2.7 trillion in home values in the past year alone. Some economists believe we could lose as much as $8 trillion before the crisis is over.

So I reminded Mr. Bernanke of what I hear from my constituents in Massachusetts who see their hard-earned savings being wiped out. Now we are reading in the papers that older workers are being forced to put off their retirement because of losses in the values of their home and retirement savings. So we ought to know what we can do to help respond to the staggering loss of the Nation's wealth and how working families can cope with their lost savings and wealth. That is a fair question, and I must say I didn't feel we got much of an answer during the course of the hearing this morning.

Some have said we have a devalued dollar and this will increase our exports. But it is true that after the dollar has been weakening for 6 years, the value of our imports is still roughly twice that of our exports, and we are still running a huge trade deficit. Some have said the Fed is taking appropriate steps by lowering interest rates and offering discount loans, but it is true that even after an extended period of lowering interest rates, the economy is still floundering.

One of the very important and significant consequences of this whole economic dilemma is its impact upon the States. States are finding enormous challenges in dealing with their economic situation, and they have two alternatives. They have two alternatives and both of them are bad and will have very adverse impacts on middle-class and working families. First, they can raise their taxes which, at a time when families are hard-pressed to make ends meet, is the wrong policy. Secondly, they can reduce or cut back on services such as Medicaid and other programs that reach out to the neediest in the community. That, obviously, has enormously adverse impacts.

There are ways of helping the States. We have done it in the past. When I asked Mr. Bernanke whether he would favor this administration providing some help and assistance to the States so they don't have to reduce services for their neediest people, he said that is a decision for Congress to make. Well, I asked him. He is the head of the Federal Reserve. Where is the administration? What is their position? I know the power of the Congress on fiscal policy, but where is the administration? We want to work with the administration to try and restore our economy. When Mr. Bernanke says: Well, we are trying to develop a policy of economic growth and price stability, we are all for that. We have seen that. We saw it in the early 1960s with President Kennedy and we have seen it at other times, including in the 1990s. That is a desired goal. But just stating that as being the desire for the administration at a time when we are facing these serious economic challenges remains, I think, an inadequate answer. The idea that the Chairman of the Federal Reserve would state to the Congress that he effectively has no position and the administration has no position on fiscal policy, on providing help and assistance to the States, is mind-boggling to me—mind-boggling—a complete failure to understand the economic challenges people are facing.

I asked the Chairman whether he thought we ought to have a system to effectively regulate the safety of financial products at a time when the financial community has been involved in products that are risky for consumers. We have a regulatory agency—the FDA—that tries and does a pretty good job of addressing the increasing challenge in terms of food safety. We have an FDA to try to deal with and make sure our prescription drugs are going to be safe and efficacious. It does a pretty good job. We are working to try to strengthen those agencies. We have a regulatory agency, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, to try to keep toys that are dangerous to children away from children. So we have a tradition of establishing regulations and regulatory agencies to help protect the consumer. Given the abuses we have seen with financial products in recent times, should we not have a similar agency to help protect consumers from unsafe financial products? Consumers are hard working. They spend a good deal of their time working all day and the rest of the time trying to look after their children. They spend some time with their children helping them to read and with their education, and they don't have a lot of time to go through the various complex financial statements that have become the common rather than the rare. Generally, we had what I consider to be kind of a wishy-washy answer on this one: That the Federal Reserve has some powers—it is useful to have some power—but no precision with regard to what can be done in order to protect average working families from the existing abuses that are out there.

I was discouraged by these responses at a time when we have a serious economic challenge. Families in my State are working and trying to keep their homes, trying, even at this time of the year, to get sufficient resources for home heating oil. Families who may experience the joy that many have in the last week when they receive the notices from colleges in my part of the country that have accepted their children to go on to higher education and then are sobered up by the extraordinary costs and wondering whether they can afford it. Frequently, they use their house as collateral, and now they wonder whether they can afford it. They see the ever-increasing cost of gasoline, and they are struggling and wondering if they can hold onto their jobs, let alone their health insurance.

Serious economic times demand leadership at the executive level and demands leadership in the Congress and demands a bipartisan response to these challenges. We do not have that at this time.

I will review briefly for the Senate about where we are in terms of our economic challenges.

I was asked yesterday morning—or 2 mornings ago, Monday morning—in Boston whether we were in an economic recession. I answered yes. When asked how one would describe it, Americans surveyed think the economy now is in recession; 76 percent say there is good reason why they should believe so. We have seen the response to these economic challenges. We have seen some $260 billion in subsidized loans to banks by the Federal Reserve. We don't know how the public taxpayer is being protected with these loans. We don't understand how the public interest is being protected. We have seen public loans at other times, and the most dramatic one was the automobile industry when the Congress actually was repaid for the loans. It was a successful negotiation, without which we would have seen the complete collapse of the automobile industry in this country and the loss of millions of jobs. It was carefully worked out and the public interest was protected. We don't know what those $260 billion in subsidized loans now will mean. Yet when we asked: Could we get the administration to help and assist us with the extension of the unemployment benefits, the answer was no. No. No to $10 billion to help individuals who work and who want to work, who have a history of working and are losing their jobs because of the economic downturn and need to have that help and assistance in the interim before they get the next job. Would the administration help them? The answer was no. Yet there is $260 billion in loans to the banks. This isn't right. This isn't fairness. This isn't being responsive to the needs of families and working people in this country.

This chart gives an idea about what is happening. While wages have been stagnating, consumers have been facing increasing costs, including the 84-percent increase in gasoline. We have seen health insurance costs continue to rise by 44 percent, college tuition by 47 percent, and wages effectively stagnant over this period, putting enormous pressure on these families.

This chart shows that millions of American families face losing their homes. The number of foreclosures were in the thousands in January of 2006, 100,000 in 2007, and 150,000 in January of 2008; it is up 124 percent from 2006. These are families who are losing

their homes. This is a reflection of the loss of homes by hard-working people in this country.

We have now seen the growth of a tent city, something that I think none of us ever thought would again take place in this country. All of us are mindful of the extraordinary pressures that still exist on families as a result of Hurricane Katrina and the hardships those people are facing. But by and large, we don't generally think that because people are going to lose their houses to foreclosure, they are going to be pushed outside. The growth of this tent city has been a new phenomenon in the landscape of America.

This shows that home prices in major cities have fallen now by 11 percent in the last year alone. This chart shows what has been happening in different parts of the country, and it has generally been going down across the country. Some areas are suffering a great deal more than others. The losses in California, Las Vegas, and some of the States in the South have gone down a good deal more than others, but nonetheless it has been across the board, and it has been serious.

This chart demonstrates that the economy is shedding more and more jobs. In January of 2008, 22,000 jobs were lost. In February of 2008, 63,000 jobs, meaning 85,000 jobs were cut in just the past 2 months. We are going to get more jobs numbers on Friday of this week, and most believe we will see this continued trend of individuals losing their jobs. How many more indicators do we need? When you find out you are losing your home, you are unable to keep your job, the costs of all kinds of essentials which you need to have any quality of life are going through the roof—not to recognize we have some important responsibilities to our fellow citizens.

This chart shows 7.4 million Americans are competing for 4 million jobs. These are the numbers of Americans who are unemployed. These are the job openings that are out there at the present time. So we have many more unemployed than there are job openings. If that is the case—and these people want to work, they are glad to work, we want to give them an opportunity to work. Historically, we have said to those people: We are going to give you some unemployment compensation to carry you for a while until we get this number of job openings up, a restoration of our economy, and then you will be able to get the job. But these same people who have worked hard to try to provide for their family, they need to be eligible for some unemployment compensation. The trust fund itself is in surplus at this time. Workers have paid into the fund—and if they haven't paid in, they are unable to gain resources, generally speaking.

So this is the reason we have been struggling to get some help and assistance in unemployment. This is a rather ominous chart because this says economists predict unemployment will skyrocket next year. This says in 2007 the unemployment rate was 4.5 percent, 4.8 percent in 2008, and in 2009 it will be 6.5 percent. The lag time, historically, has reflected itself in the increasing numbers of unemployed. In 2009, we are going to see increasing unemployment across this country. That is the phenomenon.

If we know unemployment will continue to increase—and that was the testimony before the Joint Economic Committee—why aren't we preparing ourselves to reach out and make sure this kind of pressure that is on these families is reduced or at least accommodated to some extent? We know what is going to happen.

This administration missed the boat, so to speak, in understanding where we are going in terms of the economy. They should have known, but they didn't know. For some of us who look at the record of the administration, whether it is on Katrina or Iraq, we can understand how they have missed the boat on a number of different issues. We are finding out they certainly missed the economic boat.

Millions of Americans could lose their health insurance in a recession. We are seeing job losses and workers' declining bargaining power and benefit cuts. In a mild or moderate recession, 4.2 million Americans will lose their health insurance. We know when that happens, when they lose it, effectively the waiting room becomes the emergency room; that becomes their primary care. The average cost is $423 for a visit to the emergency room. When families lose health insurance, they go to the emergency room. And who picks up the tab if they don't have the money? It is the taxpayers who pay for it one way or the other. This will mean additional pressure on local taxpayers who are going to be increasingly pressured themselves because they will lose benefits and they are going to have to pay more in taxes, and the spiral continues.

Yet we have very little willingness from the administration to assist States and local communities to help permit these families to retain their health insurance, which they could do, and which we have done at other times.

This chart is a sad indicator. This says food stamp use nears record levels as the crisis squeezes workers. We have 28 million Americans who are projected to receive food stamps in 2009—record numbers in the history of this country, with families needing to use food stamps because they are desperate. This program was meant to be an emergency program, and it is. But we are finding more and more Americans dependent upon it. Just visit the food banks as I have. We have such superb food banks in Boston and in Massachusetts which have been enormously effective. They are well run, and they involve the community. We are finding out about the difficulty they have in getting good food and also the kind of pressures they are seeing every single day at the food banks.

This is what is happening. This puts millions more into poverty by 2011. The number of people in poverty has grown during this administration by nearly 5 million people, and over 1 million children have gone into poverty. This is going to get even worse in a recession. These numbers are growing.

I listened this morning with a good deal of interest about the increasing number of school dropouts. Colin Powell was on most of the morning programs talking about it. It is directly attributable to the increased poverty. When you get increased poverty in communities, you are going to have increasing numbers of children who will drop out, increasing amounts of gangs, and increasing amounts of violence, make no mistake. We have seen the complete insensitivity of the administration to providing assistance to local communities, whether it was in the COPS community policing program which was such a success or the Byrne grant programs that assist local law enforcement. The administration says: no, no, we have to cut those programs back. We are seeing increasing poverty, with all of its dangerous aspects.

These are very interesting charts. This one shows 22 percent more workers are exhausting Federal unemployment benefits today than at the start of the 2001 recession. Since 1991, we have extended unemployment compensation by 13 weeks some seven times. That's seven times. In the last 20 years—listen to me now—we have not had as high of a rate of long-term unemployment at any time Congress has first extended benefits as we have at the present time. This is an extraordinary phenomenon. These are fellow citizens who have worked hard, want to work, are continuing to look for jobs. They haven't even dropped out of the job market. Yet they are being cut loose here and being denied the unemployment compensation. So what we are demonstrating is increasing insensitivity to these families.

I will just take a few more moments. There are things that can be done. If we were able to get Mr. Bernanke to indicate that he believed some economic stimulus program could be put into place, we are looking for those that have been tried, tested, and demonstrated to have been effective.

You can see on this chart that for every dollar invested in food stamps, it had $1.73 of impact in boosting the economy. For unemployment, it was $1.64 of growth that you were buying for every dollar invested. For infrastructure, it is $1.59. The tax cuts the administration favors do not have as positive an impact. That is what we need. We need to have programs that will provide help and assistance for them.

This chart illustrates how the costs are rising faster than the rate of inflation. So I think we know what needs to be done. We need an economic stimulus

program that is targeted to middle-class and working families and will benefit them. We heard today in the Joint Economic Committee about what we have been doing for the large investment firms which get hundreds of billions of dollars, but still there is not the will or desire to try to help real families who are having a most difficult time of it. That is wrong. I don't think the American people will tolerate that. They should not. They should be assured that there are many of us who will not tolerate it and will work effectively until we develop the kind of economic program that is really going to reach out to these families and say to our fellow citizens that help is on the way.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, we are on the mortgage foreclosure bill, S. 2636. It is my hope, my understanding that the two sides are now negotiating as to whether they can come out with a bipartisan package.

I rise to speak to the bill before us that has come out of committee. I support it. I am a cosponsor. It is self-evident why I support the bill, because our people are hurting.

There is no doubt that the housing market in Florida is in shambles. Florida home sales last month were down 28 percent compared to this time last year. The median home price in Florida was down 14 percent. At the same time, foreclosures are skyrocketing. January's foreclosure rate ranked Florida third highest in the country. We had the second highest rate of total foreclosures nationwide, a 158-percent increase from last year. One area of Florida, Lee County, which includes Fort Myers, Cape Coral, an area that has been booming with growth, has the highest foreclosure rate in the Nation, sadly, with 1 of every 86 homes entering foreclosure. In one estimate, nearly 200,000 homes in Florida will be lost in this year and next year due to foreclosure. We have seen these horror stories on TV where the sheriff is knocking on the door and forces the family, with the children, out. If they are not home, he has to go in and take all of the furniture out of the home and put it on the front lawn.

This crisis is not limited to subprime mortgages or risky borrowers. It is destroying entire communities. The ripple effect translates into big losses for each State's economy—in Florida's case, a $36 billion decrease in home value and tax base.

The bill before us provides some commonsense relief. It is designed to help struggling families keep their homes and help communities that have been harmed by foreclosures. It is going to help people keep their homes by letting them refinance out of the subprime loans. It is going to fund housing counselors to help those at risk of foreclosure. A lot of people who face the risk of losing their home are overwhelmed because they don't know what to do. By providing some housing counselors to help them work their way out of this foreclosure problem, and, to a certain degree, prime homeowners, homeowners where the residence is their prime residence, it is going to be able to help them modify their mortgages in bankruptcy court. It is going to give a new power to the bankruptcy judge to modify that mortgage so the person doesn't lose the home from underneath them.

This bill is going to take our community development block grant funds to help a community provide for the neediest, and through the CDBG funds, it will help a city or a county to purchase foreclosed properties and then turn around and rent them or resell them so we can get them back on the market as fast as possible.

Additionally, it is going to increase funds for foreclosure prevention counseling. That is not the counselor I spoke of a while ago, after and in the midst of the foreclosure crisis. This is to help somebody work out of the problem before it ever occurs. It also makes more clear disclosures on mortgage documents when the homeowner is signing a mortgage in the first place, in order that they know what is coming, know what their obligations are under the mortgage.

I am sure most of the Senators here are going to support this legislation. It is a question of being able to see if we can get some agreement. The majority leader is working hard to do that. It is time we extended this relief to homeowners, not just those on Wall Street; in other words, those on Main Street as well. That is what this bill does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I appreciate my distinguished friend allowing me to speak for a minute.

I just completed a meeting with the Republican leader, Chairman DODD, and Ranking Member SHELBY. We have an agreement in principle as to what we are going to move forward on. The two managers of this most important legislation are now in the process of drafting the principles into legislative language. The staffs worked most of the night to get where we are today. I am not going to go into any detail as to what has been accomplished, but it is a robust package addressing the issues, some of which were just addressed by my friend from Florida. We will come back at 5 o'clock. They think they can have the language drafted by that time. It would be a substitute for the House-passed bill that we are working off of. At that time, we would hope that there would be some discussion of the substitute, that that would be agreed to, and then we would start amending that. Either people want to take things out of it or add legislative measures to it. I think we are moving forward. This is good news for the American people, and I am confident we can process it fairly rapidly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. COLEMAN. What is the status we are in right now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are presently on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221.

Mr. COLEMAN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I congratulate the majority and minority leaders, the chairman of the Banking Committee, Senator DODD, and Senator SHELBY. We have done something today the American people should be very proud of. I understand there is an agreement to move forward on a bipartisan agreement that would allow us to address certainly one of the major concerns impacting the American public today; that is, the collapse of the housing industry, collapse of home values. I believe this ties directly into the difficulties we are having with our economy. The fact is, there is less value in homes and the ability to refinance. Folks are not fixing up their homes, doing renovations. In my State, folks who cut down the timber, log it, truck it, process it through sawmills, ultimately the contractors, the construction workers who build, all have been impacted.

When one person loses a house and a series of homes are lost through foreclosures due to refixing of mortgages, adjustable rate mortgages which people do not have the capacity to repay, that impacts the value of every home in a neighborhood. So we are seeing a significant decline in many of our neighborhoods, not just urban but throughout the State and the country.

I congratulate the leadership of my colleagues who have come together with an opportunity to move forward in an area of great importance and one that I, as a former mayor and with the privilege now to serve in the Senate, understand and am deeply concerned about.

I believe we have to move forward. We now have an opportunity. The fact is, in my State of Minnesota, communities are grasping for solutions to stem the tide of our housing crisis. Local leaders and concerned citizens are working to prevent erosion of the building blocks of their communities, which are neighborhoods. Despite their best efforts, neighbors can't fight the growing number of empty houses this rush of foreclosures is bringing. Local governments can't fend off plunging property tax revenues that make balancing the books nearly impossible. Individual businesses don't have a choice

when fewer people are coming through the door and they are faced with difficult decisions about which employees they can keep on board.

As homes become abandoned, it starts a vicious cycle. Abandoned and vacant homes create blight, reduce the value of houses around them, and the opportunity for criminal activity increases as those interested in lawbreaking seize upon the opportunity to take advantage of other people's mistakes.

When I was mayor, I believed in the broken window theory. If a violent crime happened in a neighborhood, some would say: Why did it happen? You would go back and say: Well, you had a window that was broken, and it wasn't fixed. And then another window was broken, and it wasn't fixed. Then the graffiti got on the walls, and the gangs and the drug dealers and prostitutes hang out. All of a sudden, somebody gets killed. We are seeing folks abandoning homes, blighted neighborhoods. This is spreading with very dangerous and negative effects. Beyond the loss of a home, the lives of those around those homes are also impacted. It is creating a downward spiral that is difficult to stop.

I think we have a chance today in this body to move forward in a way to at least slow the downward spiral, not stop it. This is a problem none of us can solve on our own. There are some problems that are too big for one party to solve. This is one of them. Republicans and Democrats need to come together to lift our neighborhoods out of their crisis.

As a former mayor, I know the foundation of our communities is based on home ownership. Housing is the foundation for strong neighborhoods. Housing creates good jobs, creates stable places for workers to live. Housing has created wealth. When there is trouble in housing, the economy suffers, workers suffer, families suffer. From my travels and townhall forums during the past several months back home in Minnesota, I have seen and heard firsthand how this crisis is hurting my State. Like every American, this crisis is attacking the place I call home. It has taken away from the folks I live around, whom I worked hard to help as mayor. There are communities and neighborhoods that were struggling in the 1990s when I got elected. We built them up. Now many of them are starting to fray and come apart. It is a very personal issue for all of us. It is not just an urban problem. In my State, it is a rural problem as well.

I understand there are statistics which show that Minnesota ranks second in the Nation in subprime mortgages and foreclosure. According to the nonprofit Minnesota Housing Link, if current trends continue, the number of foreclosures will increase by nearly 48 percent this year to 37,854. By contrast, in 2005, there were 6,466 foreclosures. Meanwhile, the housing downturn has taken a toll on construction jobs in Minnesota. In the past 2 years alone, 15,000 of these jobs have been lost. But behind these troubling statistics is the human face that reflects the terrible crisis.

This is about folks such as Joanne Ness, whom I met at a forum earlier this year in St. Cloud, MN. Joanne spoke of a struggle to keep her house as her adjustable rate mortgage payment soared from $1,300 to almost $1,900 per month. Hers is a typical story I hear time and again when I talk to families around the State.

Similar to when my son would throw a rock in one of Minnesota's many lakes—and you would see the ripple impact—the impact of these foreclosures is rippling throughout my State's economy.

I mentioned the folks in the timber industry. I was going to have a cup of coffee with, I thought, a small group of folks up in Aitkin, MN. It is in the northeastern part of the State. It is timber country up there. They talked about how their businesses are hurt by depressed softwood lumber prices.

Ron Enter and his wife stopped by my office the other day to share how the housing crisis has hurt their small building materials business. According to the Enters, their business sales have dropped roughly by half, and they have had to reduce their workforce from 25 employees to 15 employees. These are more than numbers. These are moms and dads who have family obligations who are out of work. If you are out of work, you lose your health care. It has all sorts of impacts. It is not just about numbers. If the housing market does not improve, they warn they may have to cut back to as little as six workers, employees, in order to keep their business going. These are moms and dads, brothers and sisters, folks who are now out of work.

We are acting not a moment too soon. The time to act is now. It was yesterday, but we are going to move forward today, and I think that is tremendous. Folks such as the Nesses and the Enters are looking for us to work together on solutions to the housing crisis.

To that end, I joined Senators BOND and ISAKSON and other colleagues of mine in introducing, last month, consensus-based housing legislation called the Security Against Foreclosure and Education Act or SAFE Act. There are a number of provisions in this act which I believe are now contained in the compromise bill we will have a chance to vote on.

Senator ISAKSON had a provision to address the oversupply of homes that is not only depressing home values but the construction industry as well. He originally had, I think, a $15,000 tax credit proposal for the purchase of new or foreclosed homes. I think we did something similar in the 1970s, and it had an impact in getting rid of some of the excess inventory in the market. If you get rid of excess inventory in the market, it brings up the value of everyone's home. I understand the Isakson provision in a modified form will be contained in the bill we address. The numbers may be somewhat different. It may be $3,500 for 2 years. But it is a step forward.

Another provision that I joined with Senator SMITH in introducing last year would allow State and local governments to use mortgage revenue bonds to refinance subprime loans which have fueled the surge in foreclosures. Again, while this proposal, on its own, will not solve the crisis, it can nonetheless make a real difference for Minnesotans, such as Joanne Ness, who are looking to get safer and sounder mortgages so they can keep their homes. I understand this concept would also be included in the bipartisan bill.

The bottom line is there are folks who are hurting. We have a chance to help them.

I have also looked at a provision that would give returning veterans and servicemembers additional protections from foreclosure. These brave men and women who have made such incredible sacrifices on behalf of our country should not be penalized by the threat of losing their home because of the difficulties they face in their service abroad.

As we work on this bill, I hope we also look to provide, as I have proposed with Senator MARTINEZ, temporary tax relief for homeowners who are increasingly using their retirement savings to keep their homes. This helps folks such as Terri Ross, a nurse whom I met at a St. Cloud forum.

She had a situation in which she was looking—she had an old house. She moved into it. It needed to be updated. She spoke to a mortgage broker who said: No problem. She could not afford to do it herself. They said: Listen, we can get you to refinance. We will get you additional money. You can put it into the house to fix it up. She did that. She was, I think, at the time paying about $700 a month. She did the fixing up of the house, but with the collapse in the value of the homes, by the time it was done, her house was worth less than what it would have been worth with the addition of the money she put in it.

She found herself also facing a rise in mortgage payments to the point where her mortgage had doubled. Now it is $1,300 a month. She originally had two jobs, and she told the mortgage company she was going to get rid of one to go to school. ''No problem.'' They were not being very honest with her. She had a problem. She started taking in renters, working additional shifts—a lot of problems.

In the end, one of the things she had to do was to tap into—because she had a good job; she had been working—her retirement income. The problem is, when you use your retirement savings, you get hit hard with a 10-percent early withdrawal tax penalty in addition to ordinary taxes.

Last month, USA Today ran a piece entitled: ''401(K)s Tapped to Save

Homes.'' This article talks about how Americans are ''getting slammed with taxes and penalties'' as they try to keep their homes.

So I hope my colleagues will work with me on this concept based on my HOME Act that would allow homeowners who have fallen behind on their mortgages penalty-free access to their retirement savings as well as tax-free savings so long as the withdrawals are paid back within 3 years.

So you can put the money back, but you avoid the very significant penalty. This is not a silver bullet that solves all the problems, but there are a lot of folks who have worked hard over the years who have found themselves, similar to Ms. Ross, in deep trouble, who are forced to tap into retirement savings and then are penalized on top of that. That does not make sense. We should not penalize people for trying to keep a roof over their heads and wanting to remain part of the community they have called home.

I am optimistic we will make the most of this opportunity before us to stabilize the housing market and prevent further damage to our economy and our communities. People such as Terri Ross and the Enters are counting on us to work together to do so.

In the end, I believe our recently passed economic stimulus package and our current efforts to pass bipartisan housing legislation will help to bring brighter and better times.

These are difficult times. Folks are hurting out there. They are worried about the price of gas at the pump. They fill their car up paying with a credit card, and they wonder which will get filled up first, their tank or their credit limit. They are worried about the rising cost of fuel. Many of them got into these adjustable rate mortgages. Some of them have what we call NINJA mortgages—no income, no jobs or assets. Now the interest rate goes up, the mortgage payment goes up, and they are left in a home with less value, and they are out of a home.

We have a lot of work to do. I am pleased to be here today, after listening to the majority leader reflect that a consensus has been arrived at, that there has been agreement between the chairman and ranking member of the Banking Committee to bring forth a proposal to this body that will allow us to move forward on addressing one of the major concerns facing the people of this country, and that is the terrible housing crisis that is undermining our economy and, more importantly, is hurting people—individual moms and dads and others. We have an obligation to step forward in the right way, in a responsible way, and I am looking forward to being a part of that discussion this afternoon.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HARKIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about what is happening in the housing crisis, which I know we are all extremely concerned about, and to talk about what is happening to families across the country. We are in a crisis in America.

Few States are being hurt as much as my State of Michigan, which currently rates sixth in the Nation in mortgage foreclosures. Families are seeing their life's dream—their home—being lost as a result of the crisis. Last year, over 87,000 households were in foreclosure—87,000 families faced with the loss of their piece of the American dream.

Every day we delay passing legislation, thousands more families lose their homes and are stripped of their American dream, their home. I thank Senator REID, our leader, and Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, for coming together for the leadership of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to forge an agreement, because it is absolutely critical that we come together and take action as soon as possible.

I know that right now we are seeing the final stages of putting together a substitute amendment. I know it is our majority leader's position to move this legislation as quickly as possible.

This year alone, over 20,000 households, 20,000 families, are in foreclosure in Michigan. This crisis is only going to get worse, which is why we have to act now. We are hearing about the broader ramifications—first starting with subprime loans, and then to larger home loans, and now to the larger financial markets, where there is no certainty, and capital is drying up so that entrepreneurs who want to start a small business may not be able to do so.

The young person getting ready to go to college who is looking to get a student loan might not be able to do so. There are broad implications because the way the financial markets are intertwined right now has created a situation where it is imperative we act. We have to go to the heart, to the central piece that has started all of this, which is to address what is happening as it relates to home ownership and financing.

It has become clear, unfortunately, because of many hearings that have been held and criminal investigations that have been launched on the issue of subprime lending that we have seen manipulative practices and tactics as a part of this problem—not the whole problem but certainly a very important part of it.

It has become clear a considerable number of mortgage brokers targeted subprime loan products to minority borrowers, folks who are out doing a sales job, making something sound a whole lot better than it is, such a good deal, when maybe you have a senior who needs a home repair, a roof done, a new furnace, or a young family trying to get into that first home and they were told things that were not true and, in some cases, were sold a bill of goods.

On top of that, many of these borrowers, many of these families, would have qualified for a prime mortgage with better terms.

We are only beginning to see the effects of this crisis and the results of this kind of targeting. Foreclosures have already led to the loss of property values throughout entire communities in Michigan. It may be that only one home in a neighborhood has a foreclosure sign in front of it, but what happens to the values of the houses on either side, the house across the street, the house in the next block? This is impacting whole communities. The result is a credit crisis that is making safe, affordable mortgages less available for aspiring homeowners, putting the American dream further at risk.

Families across Michigan are struggling. Families across the Nation are struggling. We know that for most people, it is getting that home. It is going from a renter to a homeowner, to tucking away that equity in the home that brings someone the opportunity to be a part of middle-class America. We know that home equity has paid for young people to be able to go to college and for future dreams of those families. That equity, that value of that home, in too many cases is slipping away.

That is why I am proud to be part of a majority in Congress that has already acted on a couple of key points. Last December, we acted to pass my legislation that would make sure at least, as people are filling out their taxes before April 15 of this year, they would not be penalized with additional taxes if they lost their home or had to lose money on a refinancing. We passed together—and I am very appreciative of the fact that we were able to do this—and President Bush signed the bill that would basically indicate, as an example, if you have a $100,000 mortgage and you are in a situation where you have to sell for $80,000 or there is a foreclosure and a resale of $80,000, that you do not pay taxes on that $20,000 difference that is forgiven by the bank, for instance. That does not count as income toward you. What we have done is eliminate the added insult to injury. You lose your home and then you get another tax bill. We acted last December to make sure that would not happen, and I am very pleased to have led that effort.

We also passed provisions in the economic stimulus package, as well as increasing FHA's ability to help families facing foreclosure. We know we are in the very final steps of having a conference committee report done, and this is a very important part of what needs to happen.

We also know that is not enough. There is much more to be done, not only to directly help families and communities, but to create certainty within the marketplace so that lenders who are operating under the rules are regulated, so our traditional lenders feel confident to once again lend to others, to each other, to be able to continue our economy moving forward. That is why I am very proud of, again, Senator REID, our leadership, Senator DODD, Senator BAUCUS, and others who put together the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 to help over 1 million people stay in their homes and accomplish three important goals that I hope will be included as we come to a larger agreement with colleagues across the aisle so we have an approach that can pass with strong bipartisan support.

We have brought to the floor of the Senate and have asked for action—we asked 3 weeks ago for action and we are now back hopefully to the point where we can get action on issues such as keeping families in their homes by increasing the preforeclosure counseling funds so people can get help figuring out the maze. Because of the financial structuring, you can get a mortgage and you can go back and those folks don't own the mortgage. In fact, they are packaged together, securitized, sold in the marketplace, maybe even divided up. Maybe you don't have one entity that owns your mortgage but maybe two or three. It is an extremely complicated question. So being able to help people get through that situation with preforeclosure counseling is very important.

Allowing State housing agencies to issue $10 billion more in refinancing bonds has been a part of our package and I hope will be in the final package; also, allowing homeowners in bankruptcy to modify their mortgages. We also include in our plan the ability to help communities harmed by foreclosures by allowing them to use community development block grant funds, very important funds to support local communities to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed properties therefore, enabling struggling communities to focus on their properties.

We also have focused on businesses—homebuilders and others—that at this point need assistance through the Tax Code to apply excess net operating losses to prior years that were profitable to allow them to manage the excess in inventory and be able to move forward and be profitable.

Our plan also includes help for families to avoid foreclosures in the future by requiring mortgage documents be simplified.

These are important steps that will help millions of hard-working Americans and address the most important issue causing our economic problems, which is the issue related to housing and financing.

I urge colleagues to come together to act as quickly as possible as final plans for a bipartisan bill are being put forward.

I would be remiss if I did not also speak to one other piece of this, particularly for a State such as Michigan. For us, it has not been the high values on homes or even the financial mechanism of adjustable rate mortgage arms and so on. For us in Michigan, our main cause of this problem relates to the fact that people are losing their jobs. It is unemployment, people losing their jobs or finding themselves in a situation where their income is cut in half from $28 an hour now at $14 an hour. The mortgage has not changed. The cost of food has not changed. In fact, it has gone up. Gasoline costs have gone up. Everything is going up, but wages are going down if they exist at all.

In Michigan, these are not families who were flipping their houses or speculating on real estate. These are hard-working men and women who played by the rules all their life, patriotic Americans who have been devastated by the current economic downturn, devastated by policies that have allowed us to export jobs rather than products, which is what we need to be doing.

In Michigan, we have been in recession for quite some time now. Middle-class families are losing everything in terms of jobs, homes, so on. Although I have to say, we are tough in Michigan and resilient and working hard to bring new opportunities and new industries to Michigan, but it has been very challenging for us at a time when since 2001, since this administration came into power, we have lost over 3 million manufacturing jobs in this country. It is hard to believe. These are the jobs that created middle-class America, good wage, good health care, good pensions, good way of life, good standard of living. We have been at the forefront, unfortunately, in a global economy where we are not enforcing our trade laws adequately, where we are not addressing health care costs in a way that makes sure everyone is covered but does not cause us to have health care costs going through the roof.

By not addressing those issues—even though I have to say I am very proud to be part of a caucus that has tried at every effort, tried in every form we can to address those issues, but despite that, we have not seen what needs to be done in this country to create a level playing field, to create a race to the top so other countries are coming to us. Instead, we see pressure for a race to the bottom.

In Michigan, families are seeing, unfortunately, their American dream turn into an American nightmare because of lack of action on those issues that relate to fighting for middle-class America in this country and to keep middle-class America in this country.

I do not want to lose sight of these families. The housing bills in front of us are very important to help families, but I hope that in the not too distant future we will do something else that is incredibly important to help these families keep making the mortgage payments, and that is to extend unemployment benefits. In every other time of economic downturn, a recession, this Congress has responded, whether it be a Democratic President or Republican President, to extend the benefits to those hard-working Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own so they can continue to put food on the table, to pay the mortgage, keep a roof over their head while they work very hard to find another job.

No one gets rich on unemployment compensation. People are getting on average 40 cents on every dollar earned. Nobody is operating without an extreme struggle even on unemployment compensation. But we know it is the right thing to do, the moral thing to do for families.

We have been told that one of the two things that have the most economic stimulus is extending unemployment compensation. Why? Because if you are unemployed, you are not deciding: Gosh, do I save that money coming in or do I spend it? You have to spend it. You have to spend it to keep a flow for your family. So we know it has a tremendous economic stimulus effect.

The other point that is so critical—and I want to give tremendous credit to our Presiding Officer, the great Senator from Iowa, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, for his incredible commitment to extending and strengthening the food programs in this country—food stamps, nutrition, school nutrition. But as he has said so eloquently on so many occasions, increasing the dollars for food stamps immediately goes into economic stimulus because when you receive that help, you are going right to the grocery store and you are buying the food your family needs. There is something wrong in this country when the best we can do at the moment is $1 per person per meal. I thank the Presiding Officer for his efforts. This is one of the key things we can do to help families.

In Michigan right now, we not only have an unemployment rate that is the highest in the Nation, 7.2 percent, but we also have one out of eight people on food stamps. These are folks who never thought in their life they would need help, never dreamed they would need help and now find themselves in a situation.

We have heard a lot over the last months from the administration that things are not as bad as we think, that the underlying economics are fine, although that has changed in the last 3 weeks. But we keep hearing that there is not enough evidence to show that we need to increase unemployment compensation or help people put food on their tables. But we also know that every economic indicator says exactly the opposite. And we are now hearing from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Goldman Sachs that by the beginning of next year, which is coming faster than we would like, in January of

next year, the national unemployment average will be 6½ percent.

Families expect us to act and do something when this kind of evidence is available in terms of the economy. We took action in 2002 across the aisle in extending unemployment benefits, and yet I don't understand why that is not at the top of the list right now. Over 41,000 people in Michigan lost their unemployment insurance benefits in the first 3 months of this year, and millions more across the country will lose that help for their family by the end of the year. Something has to be done.

We are talking about people who were working, the middle class of this country who have lost their jobs, probably related in some way to this economy and what is happening. The job may have gone overseas, it may not, but they are in a situation where they are losing their jobs. We can not turn our backs on them.

The housing package in front of us is a critically important step, and I want to congratulate again everyone involved in coming to this point. I hope we have something we will be able to move quickly on, with a very strong bipartisan vote. Then I hope we are going to move just as quickly to those areas we know are desperately needed for families and that will have an immediate economic stimulus effect; to be able to do those things that will support the dignity of work.

The majority of Americans are not looking for a handout from anybody. They are looking for an opportunity to care for their own family and to work hard and to be able to have the American dream. They are looking to us to understand what is going on not only in Michigan but across the country and to act to support them.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise today to help initiate an important discussion, an important discussion about health care, the enormous need for fundamental health care reform, and an important debate about what principles we should follow, what model we should use in furthering this vital and necessary health care reform. This is a class project, if you will, and I am joined by many Members of my Republican class here in the Senate, specifically Senators BURR, COBURN, DEMINT, MARTINEZ, THUNE, CORKER, and ISAKSON. All of us will be coming to the Senate floor and coming to other forums over the next 8 weeks to talk about this vitally important issue.

I think on some points there is near unanimous agreement among Americans, points like our health care delivery system and finance system truly are broken. Health care is not available or affordable to far too many Americans. The uninsured problem in this country is extremely worrisome, and just as worrisome, quite frankly, are the challenges some insured folks face in terms of keeping their insurance in the face of dramatically rising costs.

On these points, as I say, I think there is near unanimous agreement, and that leads us to a conclusion that virtually every American has reached: We need to act. This is a very real concern of every American family, and those of us in Congress need to come together in a spirit of bipartisanship, with open minds, and act on this crucial issue. As we do so, though, I think it is very important to lay out our choices in models—what the alternatives are. As I said, that is what I am doing with my fellow Republican classmates, laying out a particular vision of what that reform can look like, what it should look like, and what principles it should embody.

Again, I recognize and thank Senators BURR, COBURN, DEMINT, MARTINEZ, THUNE, CORKER, and ISAKSON for joining me in this effort. They will join me tomorrow at the Heritage Foundation to do a similar kickoff, to talk about this important debate, to talk about the principles we should follow and the choices we face. As I said, we will lay out, over the next 8 weeks, what we think that vision for a sounder, healthier future should be.

We are going to start that discussion by talking about guiding principles. Before you get to the specifics, before you get to proposals, before you get to bills, you need to have a sense of what you think the guiding principles for reform and positive change should be. Let me just start the discussion off by suggesting some of those core guiding principles that I share with my Republican classmates who are coming together on this issue. We believe a number of significant things.

First, we believe individuals and families should be in control. Individuals and families should own and control their own health insurance, rather than have the Government mandate something. That is perhaps the first and most basic and fundamental guiding principle.

In concert with that, we believe individuals are capable of and better at choosing their own health insurance plan than Government bureaucrats or insurance bureaucrats. That goes hand in hand with empowering the individual and empowering families.

We believe the current cost of health care regulation makes access to health care unnecessarily expensive for everyone and lowers quality. Everyone acknowledges the current high cost of health care. We believe a huge part of that is the cost of health care regulation. We believe existing Government programs can be improved and modernized and made more efficient, and that should happen. But we also believe part of that should not be dramatically expanding those programs to cover far more classes of individuals and more income levels than were originally proposed.

We believe encouraging competition in the marketplace is the key to lowering health care costs. That, again, goes hand in hand with empowering individuals and empowering families—giving them choice, not dramatically expanding the Government sector.

We believe and recognize that seniors have increasingly turned to Medicare Advantage Plans because in so many cases they offer a better value and a higher quality of care for traditional fee-for-service Medicare, so we strongly support that option—not making it mandatory but that option in terms of the future of Medicare.

Finally, we believe taxes should be as low as possible and the Tax Code should be changed to actually give more power to individuals, give more power to families in choosing and buying and owning their own health care.

That is a fundamental principle on which we outline our vision. As I said, once you acknowledge the enormity of the issue, the need for fundamental change which almost all of us do, once you lay out guiding principles, fundamental core principles which should help chart our future, then you can more fully get to the choices there are in the debate that we need to have in the Congress—in the Senate and the House—and much more broadly in the country.

Over these next 8 weeks we are going to be highlighting those choices and those differences. I think this is very important to do, particularly in a major election year, because as we lead up to the fall elections, these choices, in fact, are going to be a big part of our choices for candidates for President, for candidates for the House and for the Senate.

So over these next 8 weeks my colleagues and I will be talking about not only our guiding principles, what vision that sets out, but also the fundamental choices from which we have to choose those guiding principles, that vision, and that model, or to choose a very different Government-dominated model.

So we will be talking about some of those choices: No. 1, running health care by the Federal Government or empowering individuals through private-owned insurance, the fundamental choice that is at the center of this debate; No. 2, forcing certain types of enrollment in large national or Government programs versus expanding opportunities for individual choice; No. 3, mandating requirements which are often expensive mandates that add to

the cost of health care through health care regulation versus creating more choices and alternatives and flexibility which can both empower the individuals and lower cost; No. 4, how we deal with seniors, whether we take away their choices in Medicare Advantage and in drug plans or we keep and even expand their choices in these and other areas; finally, No. 5, raising taxes to support a Government-dominated model versus tax fairness, lowering taxes or creating tax deductions or credits which empower individuals to choose and buy and own good coverage.

Again, that is a quick preview of the next 8 weeks of our discussion and of some of the clear and quite stark, in some cases, choices we face as we have this debate.

In closing, let me say I think this is exactly the sort of discussion and debate we should have in the Senate. We should be responding to the American people's appropriate concern with the crisis we face in American health care. We do have a broken system in terms of getting health care to all Americans. Far too many Americans are uninsured. Far too many other Americans face real worries about being able to afford health care in the future.

We do not have the accessibility and the affordability we need. So we need to respond. Again, I think it is appropriate we start with guiding principles, what should be the fundamental guiding principles we use as we come up with specific proposals, specific plans, specific legislation. Then that, in turn, leads to a necessary and healthy discussion of what the real alternatives are, whether we want a system where we empower the individual and the family to choose and buy and own good coverage or whether we want a system where the role of the Government increases even further, and by definition it narrows individual and family choice.

I look forward to this debate as we lay out our ideas. This group of Senators, we are going to expand on these ideas somewhat tomorrow at the Heritage Foundation. We will be back on the Senate floor over the next 8 weeks talking about these guiding principles and these choices. We will be in many other venues in our States, in the Nation's Capital, all around the country, to promote this extremely important debate as we acknowledge we must fundamentally, dramatically reform our health care system to give all Americans accessible, affordable, high-quality health care.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have often over the years reminded my colleagues of a verse of a song of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys from the 1930s. The verse in the song from the 1930s by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys was:

> The little guy picks the cotton, but the big guy gets the money. The little bee sucks the blossom, and the big bee gets the honey.

Never is that more evident in almost every decade than it is evident today, at this point, in this decade, with what is happening in Washington, DC.

Some big economic interests get a headache, the Federal Reserve and the Government rush with a pillow and aspirin to see if they can put them to bed, help them out, give them some comfort. Sure enough, we are now told for the stability of the financial system, a big investment bank has to be bailed out. We will assume $29 billion worth of risk for the American taxpayer, and another investment bank will be able to buy the investment bank that is failing for about $1.2 billion. So J.P. Morgan will buy Bear Stearns, it will cost them $1.2 billion, and the American taxpayers will offer $29 billion as a backstop to at least what is in some cases bad commercial paper by the investment bank that was failing.

I do not come to the floor suggesting we should do nothing, and I do not even know whether what the Fed has done is the right thing. All I know is if ''too big to fail'' really means too big to fail, not just for banks but for investment banks that are unregulated, or for hedge funds that are unregulated, if they are then ''too big to fail'' how about having some regulators look over their shoulder to see what they are doing.

If the American taxpayer is going to have to bail out their mistakes, how about let's have some regulators take a look at what is going on in some of these organizations.

Now, I want to give a little history before I talk about the bill on the Senate floor, which I support. I want to talk about a little history of where we are. I am not going to talk about the excessive speculation of the price of oil that now has the price of oil $20 or $30 a barrel over where it ought to be—that is, hedge funds and investment banks, an orgy of speculation in the oil futures market. I am not going to talk about that. I am not going to talk about our trade deficit that is $2 billion a day, every single day, $800 billion a year at this point. I am not going to talk about how much we have to borrow in budget policy. That is $800 billion in the coming year—combined, by the way, that $800 billion. That is $1.6 trillion on a $14 trillion economy in a single year. It does not take a genius to take a look at this country and see that this administration's fiscal policy and trade policy is way off track and dangerous to this country.

But I am going to talk about the subprime loan scandal and about the decision that we are not going to regulate anything. Now I know regulation is a four-letter word to some. But let me describe what the new head of the Securities and Exchange Commission said in 2001 when he came in. He announced that it was going to be a new day at this Federal agency, at the SEC. It was going to be ''a business-friendly place.''

So we have regulatory agencies that are supposed to be wearing striped shirts. They are the referees. They announce: Look, it is a different day. It is going to be business friendly around here.

Well, it sure was business friendly. And look at what is going to happen to the American taxpayer as a result of what was going on. I want to recite a few things of what has happened. We are talking about legislation that results from the subprime loan scandal.

Most people would not know a subprime loan from any other term. I mean, that sounds like foreign language, subprime loan. All of a sudden now it is in our lexicon. We understand it is a scandal.

Let me describe part of what it is. Home ownership is part of the American dream. I mean it is what people aspire to become, homeowners. And we understand, and we have also understood, people cannot lay out the cash for the home they want to buy. As a result, we have had a home mortgage system in this country. It has worked pretty well.

It used to be kind of a sleepy industry, kind of quiet. It was an industry where when you needed to buy a home, you needed to borrow money because you did not have the cash for it, so you went to a savings and loan, a lending institution. You sat across from someone who was wearing a gray suit and a nice white shirt and maybe a red tie. They were very understated. They knew their stuff.

They said: Look, let's figure out whether you can afford this home. Tell us what your income is. We will go through all of the numbers and see if you can afford this home. They were very careful on both sides to determine is this a home you should buy. Then they got the mortgage and put them in the home. They made monthly payments and realized the American dream.

The reason the housing industry and home ownership is so important, is that it is a barometer of this country's economic health. It is about employment, it is about putting people to work, not just building the homes but building the refrigerators and the heaters and the carpet and all the things that go into those homes as well.

Now, for many decades the home mortgage industry had a lot of good people working in it. Still does. There are a lot of good people out there today who are going to sit across the desk from somebody who wants to own a home and are going to give them a home mortgage, and they are going to abide by all of the rules. They are going to make sure the person can afford that home. There are some good people working in this industry. No question about it.

Then there are some real shysters, some real carnival barkers. I want to talk a little bit about them. Now, this industry has spawned a new breed of people in addition to the good ones I

have talked about. This was a sleepy, time-honored activity to write mortgages. All of a sudden it is like a Roman candle. Someone put some powder in it, and, boy, it has been a go-go industry.

The problem is, as I described the regulator in 2001 who took office and said: It is going to be more business friendly around here, the problem is it was too business friendly. No one was watching.

Oh, we all watched in the morning when we brushed our teeth. If you had a little television set in the bathroom as you were brushing your teeth you would see the commercial come on the television.

It would say this—this is a real one, by the way. Zoom Credit—I do not know this company, but here is what they said: Credit approval is just seconds away. Get on the fast track at Zoom Credit. At the speed of light, Zoom Credit will preapprove you for a car loan, a home loan, a credit card. Even if your credit is in the tank, Zoom Credit is like money in the bank. Zoom Credit specializes in credit repair and debt consolidation too. Bankruptcy, slow credit, no credit—who cares. Come to Zoom Credit.

What an unbelievable business plan. Well, this would have to work in a business-friendly administration because if anybody was watching, they would say: What are you thinking about? What are you doing? That is not a business plan. That sounds like the front end of a sideshow in a carnival.

Well, Millenia Mortgage, here is what they said as you are brushing your teeth watching a little television in the morning. Here is the advertisement: 12 months, no mortgage payment. That's right. We will give you the money to make your first 12 months' payments if you call in the next 7 days. We pay it for you. Our loan program may reduce your current monthly payments by 50 percent and allow you no payments for the first 12 months.

Now, what they did not tell those folks is what you do not pay goes on the back end of the loan. It is going to cost you much more later. By the way, this reduction of 50 percent, that is a front-end teaser rate. When it resets in 3 years, you are not going to be able to pay your mortgage. I am sorry, you are not going to be able to pay it. They did not say that.

Then the largest mortgage broker in the country, Countrywide, Countrywide Financial—by the way, they went broke. Bank of America is buying Countrywide. And now some Countrywide executives are starting a new business, a new corporation, just announced in the Wall Street Journal last week, to buy distressed mortgages and resell them for a profit.

From the executives of this company, Countrywide, the largest mortgage broker said: Do you have less than perfect credit? Do you have late mortgage payments? Have you been denied by other lenders? Call us.

That is unbelievable. Now, let me tell you a little bit about Countrywide Mortgage. I do not really know them either except I have read the newspapers and read the reports.

Mr. Mozilo was the CEO of Countrywide. And in 2005, a couple of years ago, Countrywide Financial was named to Fortune magazine's prestigious Company of the Year Honor Roll. Company of the Year Honor Roll.

Mr. Mozilo, the CEO, received the Horatio Alger Award, and Barron's magazine named him as one of the world's 30 most respected chief executives. In 2006, Mr. Mozilo earned $142 million and was celebrated as the growth executive taking this high-flying mortgage lender into new heights.

Even as he was touting his company's success, he was selling $138 billion worth of his company's stock from August 2006 to 2007. He sold $248 million in stock, according to the Associated Press.

Most people don't know what this kind of carnival atmosphere was about. It gets to something I wished to talk about with respect to the legislation. Some people say: If you had a mortgage and couldn't pay for it, that is your fault. That is the victim's fault.

I understand. I believe those who have been victimized have some responsibility. But I wish to tell you about what happened. We had a new breed of mortgage brokers cold calling people who lived in their homes and had a mortgage, predatory lending with high-pressure tactics, calling them on the phone and saying: I have a better mortgage for you. You can cut your monthly house payment in half.

What they didn't tell them was this new teaser rate was going to reset at an unbelievably higher rate later, and they would have prepayment penalties in this mortgage so they couldn't get out of them. They didn't disclose that. They didn't disclose there were also going to be escrow payments on top of that. So a lot of people got duped by these carnival barkers portraying themselves as brokers to put them in a new mortgage they couldn't possibly afford. It is called subprime.

We now understand, from statistics I have seen, that 60 percent of the people who got subprime mortgages actually would have qualified for regular mortgages at much better and more desirable rates. But they were stuck in subprime. Do you think they are not victims? Let me say again, 60 percent of the people put in subprime loans shouldn't have been there. They should have gotten regular mortgages. But if you put somebody in a million dollar mortgage in subprime with a prepayment penalty and a teaser rate, a broker could get up to $25 or $30,000 in a front-end bonus for writing that mortgage. That is what was happening.

The techniques were almost unbelievable. The mortgages were not like the old days where you just go get a mortgage. Here is what Countrywide and others did. Through financial engineering, they sliced and diced a lot of new things. They said: We are going to offer something new. These are called affordability loans, adjustable rate mortgages, interest rate only loans, reduced documentation or no-doc loans. Interest-only loans, with those loans the borrower was told: You don't have to pay any principal at all. You just pay the interest. The principal, of course, goes back on the back side at a much higher rate. Then they were told there is a pay option, the adjustable rate mortgage, which allowed the borrower to pay only a portion of the interest and none of the principal. So you could pay only a portion of the interest, not even the full interest, none of the principal. Then, if you decided you would select the no doc, you had an option of not documenting all your income. You didn't have to have full documentation of the ability to pay. For that you paid a little higher rate, but you actually get a mortgage that said: You don't have to pay all your interest; you don't have to pay any principal; and you can decide that you want to get a no-documentation loan.

Does this sound like good business? It doesn't to me. Why were they offered that? High rates, high yields? Because if you package this up, if you can convince somebody through a cold call to dump their current mortgage, take a new mortgage with a teaser rate, and then you put these all together in a big old basket, mix them up like you mix sausage with hamburger, this is akin to putting sawdust in sausage, as they used to do in the old days as a filler, you put sawdust in sausage, what these financial engineers did and the mortgage banks and the hedge funds, they securitized it all. As they put these subprimes in with the other mortgages, then they would slice them up and dice them and resell them. They had a pretty decent rate on them. So this is all about profit and greed. If you have one of these securities that is backed by these new mortgages, it paid a higher rate.

That is a good thing; right? Hedge funds are buying it. Investment banks are buying it. They are all up to their necks wallowing in the corncrib similar to a bunch of hogs making a lot of money. I described yesterday how much money the executives at Bear Stearns made in bonuses in 5 years leading up to last year; hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars for the top three guys. They have the money, JPMorgan and their investment bank, and the American taxpayer is on the hook for $29 billion worth of risk.

I don't wish to come and talk about the bill on the floor without understanding how we got here. It goes back to Harvey Pitt and what he said when this administration made him the head of the SEC. He said: This is going to be a more business-friendly place. I guess it was. I sure guess it was. Now, 7 years later, we have a Secretary of the Treasury prancing around town saying this is not a regulatory problem. This is not about a lack of regulation.

That is exactly what it is about. If you don't understand that, I am sorry, you need glasses. That is exactly what this is about.

Who sat around on their hands and allowed predatory lending to take place? Who sat around and watched these brokers make massive amounts of money? Watched Countrywide run up these mortgages where you don't have to pay all the interest, don't have to pay any of the principal? Who sat by and watched that happen? Does anybody think there are not victims out there? Of course, there are. But does anybody think there aren't a lot of winners? You bet your life there are a lot of winners. They made a massive amount of money, and now the American taxpayer is being told: You are going to have to provide the backstop because these companies are too big to fail.

If investment banks and hedge funds and others that were wallowing in this corncrib grunting and shoving, if they were too big to fail, then, in my judgment, they have a responsibility to accept regulatory standards by those in the Federal Government who are responsible to make sure the American taxpayer is protected.

I have been on this floor now for 4 years or so talking about the need to regulate hedge funds. Hedge funds are only about a $1.2 to $1.5 trillion value. But they are responsible for one-half of all the trades on the New York Stock Exchange every day. Think about that. Think of the impact they have. We are now securitizing everything. All these financial engineers are creating all this dark money that is not transparent to anybody, moving back and forth. They are all making money. Mr. Mozilo, head of Countrywide, made a massive amount of money, hundreds of millions of dollars, was feted as a genius. I noticed the other day he and the No. 2 person at Countrywide, as a result of this acquisition, the two of them get $19 million as a part of the acquisition by Bank of America.

So is it a case where the good bee sucks the blossom and the big bee gets the honey? It looks that way to me. The good little guy picks the cotton; the big guy gets the money. The question is, What do we do?

This administration, for 7 years now, has said: We don't need to regulate. We don't need to look over anybody's shoulder.

You would have thought we would have learned that with Enron. I chaired the hearings where Ken Lay came to the Senate and took the fifth amendment in front of the Commerce Committee. I chaired those hearings. I would have thought perhaps we would have learned something, that the administration would have learned something about the need for effective regulation. With Enron, the top folks got rich as well. They made a lot of money. Guess what. All the rest of the families who invested in that stock at the advice of the chairman who was dumping his at the same time, all those families ended up with nothing. You would have thought we would have learned something.

Let's learn something from this. The legislation on the floor today is a piece of legislation I strongly support. It is not all that we have to do, but at least it is a step we have to take now. I commend Senator REID and others, Senator DODD, many others who have worked on this legislation. It will not wave a wand and fix everything, but at least it begins to answer the question: If we are willing, if the Congress and the Federal Reserve Board and the administration are so anxious to promote financial stability by saying those that have been unregulated are still going to be too big to fail and the American taxpayer must ante up the money for the risk, if we are going to do that, why would we turn a blind eye to so many victims who now are losing their homes? It is estimated, in the next couple years, we will have 5 million people who will be moved out of their homes. I am talking about 5 million. All those families are going to come home someday and find out: We can't live here anymore because we are being evicted. The question is, Can we help some of them?

One of my concerns has been, I don't want the American taxpayer to be required to help somebody who saw this big old housing bubble begin to develop and decided, I am going to ride the top of that bubble. I want to invest in some things and flip it every 6 months, make a bunch of money. It is not in my interest to say the American taxpayer should finance that speculation. If they made those judgments and were wrong, I am sorry, that is a penalty they have to pay. But those folks who live in their residence and were victims of predatory lending, those folks who got bad mortgages, whose terms were not disclosed—and we have had testimony before the Commerce Committee about this, that the materials given to some of the homeowners never even disclosed what the reset interest would be, at least in language that could be understood by the average homeowner, did not even disclose there was going to be an escrow payment on top so, when the reset occurs in 3 years, you go from a mortgage payment you can easily handle to a mortgage payment there isn't anyway you could make, that family then is out of luck. I think for purposes of stability and for purposes of fairness we ought to reach out and provide some assistance. That is what this piece of legislation does. As I indicated, the legislation applies only to owner-occupied primary residents. They are the only ones who would be eligible. It has five principles and those five principles are sound. Long-term affordability, we are trying to create some new equity for troubled homeowners. The new loans will be based on the family's ability to repay. That will provide some stability for sustainable home ownership. This is not an investor or lender bailout. We are not bailing out investors or lenders. What we are doing is helping those who are in the home, only owner-occupied homes. There is no windfall for borrowers. The borrowers will share their new equity and future growth appreciation equally with the FHA. It will, I think, do something to provide some stability and some confidence and some liquidity and some transparency in the credit markets, which is very important.

I have spoken longer than I intended, but I did wish to give some background to why we find ourselves in this position. We should not be here. I don't know anybody here who thinks it is smart for a company that decides it is going to advertise, if you have bad credit, if you have been bankrupt, you can't make your payment, come to us, we want to loan you money. That is a business plan? Not where I come from. Yet that is what has been going on. It has been akin to a carnival.

Now all this inept business practice comes crashing down, and guess who gets hurt. The American taxpayer and the homeowners. The question is, What can Congress do? We know what the Federal Reserve Board has done. The Federal Reserve Board has responded with cuts in their interest rates. They have a couple different interest rates that they apply, and they have been cutting those interest rates.

One of my major concerns is the Federal Reserve Board and the Secretary of the Treasury misunderstand a portion of what has caused this critical area that we are in. Yes, the subprime loan scandal was the fuse. When that fuse was lit, the explosion occurred. Yes, that is the case. But it is also the case that the electronic herd in this world, the currency traders, those who take a look at what are the fundamentals, what is the foundation of the economy of a country, they look at this country, and they see an economy that is desperately off track. They see an administration that decided long ago we are going to fight a war, and we will not pay for it. We intend to fight a war, and we will send the soldiers overseas. They can strap on ceramic body armor in the morning and be shot at in the afternoon. But we will not ask the American people to pay a penny for it. Two-thirds of a trillion have been added on top of the debt by this President, all of it requested as emergency funding. Two-thirds of a trillion, and we are told as of yesterday he is going to ask for another $100 billion. We are going to have to borrow in budget policy $800 billion in this coming year.

On top of that, we have the highest trade deficit in the history of the country. I have written a book about that issue. It is the highest trade deficit; $2 billion a day we import more than we export. Currency traders look at that. They look at the budget problem. They look at the trade problem, and they say: That doesn't add up. That can't be sustained.

Warren Buffett has always said: Every bubble is always destined to burst; the question is when. The housing bubble burst. Probably not surprising. But he has also said this fiscal policy and this trade policy is not sustainable. I use him as a quote because I have a lot of respect for Warren Buffett. He analyzes pretty well what is going on. We have a responsibility to do what is right. On fiscal policy, if we are going to spend money, we have to pay for it. If that is difficult, if it is tough to ask the American people to do that, maybe then we shouldn't spend it. If it is important to spend it, then maybe we have a responsibility to say to the American people: Here is why. Here is why it is important for the future of this country.

My hope is we will pass the HOPE for Homeowners Act of 2008 as a first step—just as a first step. I think there is a lot to commend it. But there is so much more to do.

The book that McCullough wrote about John Adams was a fascinating book, going all the way back to the start of this country.

John Adams, as they were trying to put this new country together, traveled a lot. He traveled to Europe and elsewhere, representing this new set of colonies trying to put a nation together. He would write home to his wife Abigail. As McCullough has chronicled, in the letters to Abigail Adams, John Adams would lament. He would say: Where will the leadership come from to start this new country? Where will we find the leadership? Who will be the leaders? And then he would lament: There is only us—Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison, me. Well, in the rearview mirror of history, the ''only us'' represented some of the greatest human talent gathered on this planet.

But I think every generation of Americans has a right to ask and an incentive to ask the same question: Where is the leadership? Who will be the leaders to steer this country and put this country on track for the future? That is an important question now.

We answer a question with a piece of legislation today. I hope we will move to this and move rather quickly to pass this legislation. But it is just a portion of the question the American people have a right to ask: Where will the leadership come from? Who will be the leaders to put this country back on track?

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor this afternoon to talk about the housing market crisis. I am grateful for the bipartisan work of Majority Leader REID, Republican Leader MCCONNELL, and Senators DODD and SHELBY. I am hopeful that we can finally pass legislation that gives our neighborhoods and middle-class families solutions to address the subprime and foreclosure crisis that has already been affecting the economy not only in my State but across the country.

For the past year and a half, we have been hearing all about this subprime mortgage crisis. I think many people not facing foreclosure—and that is most of us—have had this view: It doesn't affect me. I pay my mortgage. I don't have a subprime or adjustable rate mortgage, and I am dealing with a responsible mortgage lender.

The truth is that none of us can escape the impact any longer. The housing crisis is now affecting every homeowner in the country and every would-be homeowner. It is dragging down our entire overall economy. It is not just in the urban areas. In our State, the foreclosure rate has doubled in the rural areas and, in fact, the two counties with the highest foreclosure rates are suburban counties bordering a rural area.

I am a member of the Joint Economic Committee, and just this morning Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke testified before our committee about the state of the economy, the state of housing, about our financial markets, and about what happened with Bear Stearns. He testified this morning that the housing market is at the root of our housing crisis, and until Congress addresses this crisis, our economy will not be on sure footing.

In January, with record speed, Congress enacted an immediate and temporary fiscal stimulus package. Americans will start getting their checks in just a few weeks. We have to have solutions in this country to our economic troubles that go far beyond the day that these rebate checks are sent. I believe we have to have a long-term energy plan, and we need to put into place a health care plan that makes health care more affordable and more fiscally responsible.

Since then, it has become very clear that this stimulus package will not be enough to address the deep-seated problems that have been developing over several years in our housing and financial markets.

Home ownership has always been considered a basic part of the American dream. But in the last few years, the ''dream'' has changed in ways that our parents would not even recognize.

A decade ago, just 5 percent of mortgage loan originations were subprime—meaning that they were made to borrowers who would not qualify for regular mortgages. By 2005, it was 20 percent of the mortgages that were subprime. This opened the dream of home ownership to millions of people but also greatly increased the risk to our system. In Minnesota, in 2000, there were 8,347 subprime mortgages issued. By 2005, it had increased more than fivefold to more than 47,000 subprime mortgages.

In addition, adjustable rate mortgages now make up a much larger share of the market than they did 10 years ago. Many people took out these loans during a period of low interest rates. But when interest rates went up, their mortgage payments adjusted upward and they found they were unable to make their monthly payments. We met some of these people in Minnesota, people who had looked for a mortgage and, because home values were so high, got a subprime mortgage, understood that the rate would go up but were under the misimpression that, in fact, there was a cap or that it would go up a few hundred dollars, and they saw, in fact, in some cases a doubling of their mortgage payments. As a result, we have had a wave of home foreclosures that started in 2006 and continues today. During 2007, nearly 1.3 million homes became subject to foreclosure—a huge increase from 2005.

What started as a foreclosure crisis is now having ripple effects—or more like a tsunami wave—across the entire economy. It is no longer just a foreclosure crisis. It is a housing market crisis, it is a credit crisis, and it is an economic crisis. It affects everyone who wants to borrow money, whether it is for a house, a car, a college education, or a small business. It affects you even if you make your mortgage payment on time every month and even if you have already paid off your mortgage.

The rise in delinquencies and foreclosures—coupled with the credit squeeze that has made it harder for many buyers to obtain a mortgage—has resulted in an excess of houses on the market, and that has, in turn, depressed home prices. Just last week, a report showed that home prices in the Twin Cities of Minnesota have fallen by nearly 11 percent in the last year—one of the sharpest drops in the country.

Last fall, the Joint Economic Committee issued a report on the housing crisis and its impact on the broader economy. The findings are troubling. The report estimates that, by 2009, 2 million foreclosures will occur; $71 billion in housing wealth will be directly destroyed because a foreclosure reduces the value of the house and the value of the homes around it; another $32 billion in housing wealth for other homeowners will be destroyed because each foreclosure brings down the price of houses generally. The most poignant example of this would be a year or so ago in some of our urban neighborhoods where you started seeing foreclosures, and you would see a sign and people may not want to move into those neighborhoods. Now we are seeing it statewide, and we are seeing the effect it has on reducing home values in general. State and local governments will lose more than $917 billion

in property tax revenue because of lower home values.

By one estimate, 10 percent of all homeowners—or 8.8 million people—have a mortgage that is at least as much or more than their home is currently worth; that is, 10 percent of all homeowners have a mortgage that is worth at least as much or more than their home is currently worth. If home values were to fall 20 percent from their peak, even more—13.3 million—would be living in homes worth less than their mortgages. For the first time since the Federal Reserve started tracking the data in 1945, the amount of debt tied up in American homes now exceeds the equity that homeowners have built up—with home equity slipping below 48 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007.

But you don't have a read a congressional report or go to our hearing and sit through the testimony to see how this ripple effect is touching everyday consumers. Last Tuesday, the Conference Board, a business research group, reported that consumer confidence fell to the lowest level in 5 years—just before the Iraq invasion. In the past couple of weeks, many Minnesotans just got their annual county property tax statements, and they were shocked to see that even the county values their homes at thousands of dollars less than last year.

You might think all of this would be good for first-time home buyers, that they would be a beneficiary because the amount of money and the values are going down. But many of these first-time home buyers, who may not have much credit themselves or much money in the bank, find that just as some bargains are coming on the market, the banks are raising rates and tightening their lending standards, making it harder and harder for ordinary families to qualify for a loan.

We don't have to sit on the sidelines and watch as this housing crisis eats away at our finances and paralyzes our economy. We need to take steps to help homeowners and home buyers, and we can. I hope this is done on a bipartisan basis.

I had a reporter run after me, saying: Majority Leader REID just said we are going to work together on this—Democrats and Republicans.

I said: It is true. We want to get it done.

He said: OK. Thank you.

I think people are surprised that when we have an enormous crisis like this, Congress must work together to get things done.

What do we need to do? First, we need to give first-time home buyers a fighting chance to get into the housing market—and create some demand.

I have cosponsored the First-Time Homebuyers' Tax Credit Act. Other cosponsors are DEBBIE STABENOW, JOE LIEBERMAN, and GORDON SMITH. I thank Senator STABENOW for her great leadership on this bill and this issue. In fact, before I was even in the Senate, I called her to get some good ideas for first-time home buyers because I was hearing all over our State that because of the value of homes, it was getting harder for first-time home buyers to get a tax credit.

We have a State fair, as the Presiding Officer has in Missouri, and our booth was a home. We designed it like a house and talked about how important it was for Senator STABENOW's idea—for a first-time home buyers' tax credit.

This bipartisan legislation would create a tax credit of $3,000 for individuals and $6,000 for married couples, if they have qualifying incomes, to help make a downpayment on a first house. We estimate that this credit would help more than 15 million people close the deal on their first home over the next 7 years.

Second, we need to expand financing opportunities for homeowners caught in the credit squeeze.

I am hoping the Senate is able to finally pass legislation that gives State and local housing finance agencies the ability to issue bonds to raise money to refinance subprime mortgages that are in trouble and to expand the ability of the Federal Housing Administration to help homeowners rework their mortgages—rework that many lenders are unwilling or unable to do because of the broader economic crisis.

Third, we need to make sure the foreclosure wave doesn't catch even more consumers who got into mortgages they didn't understand and should not have signed.

I was thinking today at our hearing, when Senator KENNEDY was speaking, that we have seen broken Government across this economy because of, in fact, the decision by this administration and others not to watch what was going on, not to put the resources into things—whether it is toxic toys or tainted dog food. Well, these faulty and false and fraudulent financial offerings are a piece of this as well. By really being off the job and not watching over things and not seeing this crisis, we got to the point where we are.

Now we know where we are. We know we have to work with the financial industry, but we also have to look, as we talked about today, at changes in our regulatory agencies for more oversight, particularly changes for these financial offerings. We need to provide the resources for preforeclosure counseling so that homeowners do not get into a financial crisis in the first place.

We need to improve and simplify disclosure in mortgage documents. Anyone who signs a mortgage remembers how thick they are. Luckily, when I signed my first mortgage at home before I got married—I still remember sitting at that table trying to figure it out—I went through a good mortgage loan person and someone I trusted, and I got a regular mortgage. So many people do not understand what they are signing. They know they have a teaser rate, but they think it will only go up a little. So why can we not have a 1- or 2-page summary that at least explains how high it can go, what the cap is, what they will be facing in their monthly payments if certain changes are made.

We also have to have some skin in the game for these lenders. They should be held to the same fiduciary duty as banks. The banks have long been advocating for this so we can make sure the homeowners are able to pay the mortgage, not just the first year but in the years down the road.

The truth is these lending documents have gotten so complicated with new gimmicks and provisions that no one can understand them and certainly not a young family just coming on the market.

We must work together if we are going to turn around the housing market and our economy. Together, we can bring some stability to our market. We can make the market work more effectively for homeowners and home buyers and put a more solid foundation under our shaky economy. This is going to take more than just looking at this housing crisis. It obviously is going to take more fiscal responsibility with Government, something I know the Presiding Officer has focused on very much, and I have. It is going to take talking about how we pay for things. It is going to take better regulation of these financial markets.

As Chairman Bernanke said today, in fact, this subprime crisis is at the root of the problem, and that is what we need to focus on this week. Home ownership is at the center of the American dream.

In the last couple of years, it has become a nightmare, or at least a troubled dream for way too many middle-class families. We cannot sit idly by or, worse, become paralyzed by the size of the problem. It is now time to act.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GRADUATION RATES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, there is much talk about change. I know one opportunity for real change that would affect nearly 7,000 young Americans every schoolday—5 students every minute. Gang violence? Drugs? No, neither of those. This is less flashy, but as serious. It is the persistently high number of high school dropouts.

Twenty-five years ago, the landmark Federal report ''A Nation at Risk'' said:

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.

In response the Nation's Governors and President George H.W. Bush set national goals, one of which was that the graduation rate would rise to at least 90 percent by the year 2000. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the national graduation rate was only 68 percent in 2006.

There has been plenty of effort and some gains. Fourth graders nationwide recently scored higher than ever in reading, while both fourth and eighth grade students achieved record high math scores. Yet in 2006, among minority students, only 58 percent of Hispanic and 53 percent of African-American students graduate with a regular diploma, compared to 76 percent of White students and 80 percent of Asian Americans.

When students drop out they lose, employers lose, society loses, and democracy suffers. These students are more likely to go to prison, to rely on public programs and to go without health insurance. The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that dropouts from the class of 2006–2007 alone will cost our Nation more than $329 billion in lost wages, taxes, and productivity over their lifetimes.

A recent landmark report by the National Academies of Science and Engineering called ''Rising Above the Gathering Storm,'' warns that Americans may be losing the brainpower advantage that has permitted us year in and year out to produce about 30 percent of the world's wealth for just 5 percent of the world's people, those of us who live in the United States of America. China, India, and other countries know that better schools, better colleges, and research mean better jobs and are determined to catch up.

In response, Congress enacted the America COMPETES Act of 2007 to increase funding for science agencies, training for more math and science teachers and supporting more research. States are remodeling high schools, such as North Carolina's work with the Gates Foundation to create an academically rigorous curriculum. Mayors, like Nashville's Karl Dean, are holding dropout prevention summits.

Also pitching in is America's Promise—the movement founded by Alma and Colin Powell and supported by four U.S. Presidents. Instead of relying on Washington wisdom, America's Promise will organize 100 community summits to find ways to change low graduation rates.

After 30 years of fighting for and watching education reform, I wave one yellow flag of caution: Let's hope the talk at these summits will not be stuck in the same old educational ruts, but instead will be open to real change—such as offering high school juniors and seniors more options to enroll in college courses, giving low income students more of the same choices of so-called good schools that wealthy kids already have; giving all students more choices so they fit their school; measuring good teaching and finding fair ways to pay the best teachers a lot more; turning high schools as we now know them inside out so that they actually attract students; finding more ways to connect work and school so young people know the real world; and pushing standards higher so American graduates can compete in the world marketplace—and, yes, putting money behind real changes when they earn it.

These are the real, hard changes that will help more of our youngsters realize America's promise.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHUMER). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. President.

CHINA HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Mr. President, in a little more than 4 months, the world will witness one of its great quadrennial events: the Summer Olympic Games.

The games have been billed as a way for China to reintroduce itself to the international community. China has done everything, virtually, to prepare. It has pulled out all the stops: $38 billion in infrastructure improvements, including a brand new 91,000-seat stadium, 300 miles of new roads, and an entirely new terminal at Beijing's international airport—all done for the Olympic Games.

What China will not be highlighting is its human rights record. That is because its human rights record is abysmal. Last year, Amnesty International, the nonpartisan, nonaligned, highly respected international group that monitors human rights, said of China that:

An increased number of journalists . . . were harassed, detained, and jailed. Thousands of people who pursued their faith outside officially sanctioned churches were subjected to harassment and many to detention and imprisonment. Thousands of people were sentenced to death or executed. Migrants from rural areas were deprived of basic rights.

The report went on to say:

Severe repression of the Uyghur people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region continued, and freedom of expression and religion continued to be severely restricted in Tibet and among Tibetans everywhere.

Acts of repression include indiscriminate use of the death penalty, torture, kangaroo courts, arbitrary detention, and the policy of cultural, religious, and linguistic eradication.

Beijing will continue to attempt to paint its repressive regime in the best light possible, as we have seen them try to do in the last month with the unnerving tragic events in Tibet.

Our Nation must not implicitly condone human rights abuses by ignoring them. Our Nation must not implicitly condone religious persecution by minimizing it. Our Nation must not implicitly condone economic exploitation by perpetuating it.

The repression in Tibet is, unfortunately, nothing new. For close to 60 years, Tibetans have survived under Beijing repression. The Uyghur people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region have been subjected to the same grueling conditions.

We must not allow the pomp and circumstance—as it comes over the broadcast networks in our country—we must not allow the pomp and circumstance of these Olympics to obscure the real China, the China that too often represses its people, the China that too often manipulates its currency—as the senior Senator from New York, the Presiding Officer, has worked on—the China that makes a mockery of its trading partners.

Communities across America feel the reverberations of this policy. We have lost more than 3 million manufacturing jobs in the United States. My State of Ohio has lost 200,000 in the last half dozen years.

Our trade deficit with China was only about $12 billion when I first ran for the House of Representatives in 1992. Now it exceeds $250 billion, and it hits new records almost every month.

Massive Government subsidies, slave wages, and lax worker safety and environmental laws—if they ever actually enforce them—enable Chinese manufacturers to undercut U.S. companies.

We are certainly not innocent, as U.S. companies outsource jobs, devastating American communities, with the damage they have done to places such as Tiffin and Bryan and Toledo and Lima and Marion and Mansfield. The American companies go to China and subcontract with Chinese subcontractors who do not observe any kind of wage, environmental, or worker safety laws.

By minimizing the importance of these anticompetitive tactics, our Nation is walking down a dangerous road, and by dismissing the importance of human rights violations, we are treating our own values as negotiable and arbitrary. Americans are far more resolute in our beliefs than that, and as their elected officials we should be too.

The Olympic Charter states that the goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind. The Olympic Charter makes clear the goal of an Olympic spirit which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play.

The charter is a good blueprint for the way leaders should treat their people and countries should treat one another. That is the underlying and fundamental purpose of the Olympics. Instead of giving China a pass during the Olympic games, we should use the games as an impetus to hold that country accountable on fair trade, on religious freedoms, on human rights.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER [Mr. PRYOR]. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SALAZAR. I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for such time as I may consume as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FARM BILL

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor of the Senate today to talk about the farm bill for the United States of America. As the Presiding Officer knows full well, this has been a major undertaking of this Congress for the last year. Under the leadership of Senator HARKIN, this has been a major effort which actually preceded even this Congress, through the work of the last Congress, and for many of us over the last 3 years.

Our efforts to put together the best farm bill in the history of the United States came to a conclusion here on December 14, 2007, where, at about 3 o'clock that afternoon, in a vote in this Chamber, there were 79 Senators, 79 Senators who cast a ''yes'' vote on this farm bill. Now, not all Senators voted that day because there were seven Senators who were absent, some of them who were on the Presidential trail. When we talked to those Senators who were on the Presidential trail and those who were not here to vote on that day, we know there were 84 Senators who would have voted yes for that farm bill. That was on December 14, 2007.

December has passed, January has passed, February has passed, March has passed, April. Where are we? We are not, in my view, making the kind of progress to get us across the finish line that we have to make. So I come here today to remind us all that it is important that we finish the work on the farm bill. And, yes, I have made telephone calls to colleagues on the House side, asking them and urging them to move forward with the kind of urgency that many of us in this Chamber feel about this legislation.

I want to go back and reflect a little bit with my colleagues here on the importance of this bill. When I came to the Senate in January 2005, I gave my maiden speech on the floor of the Senate, and in that speech I spoke about the forgotten America. It was about those wide dispatches of land which have had troubling economic times, that even in those days of the 1990s when the economy was doing so well all across this country, there were those places in our Nation that somehow continued to wither on the vine.

In my own State of Colorado, a huge State with 64 counties, there are about 12 counties that I would say have done very well through the 1980s and the 1990s. Indeed, our population from 1980 to today has grown by some 2 million people so that we now have about 5 million people. But there are wide spaces in the State of Colorado, in approximately 50 of those 64 counties, where the population has been in decline, where Main Streets have been boarded up, where the economic struggle of people is particularly painful, whether it is the area of health care or in the area of education or in any of those facets of life that affect us all.

So our opportunity to shine the spotlight on rural America really comes about once every 5 years when we get to renew the farm bill and reset the policy of the Nation with respect to agriculture and rural America. This has been our time. This has been our time to do something to address this issue of what I have called the forgotten America.

When you look at this nonmetro population change by county from 2000 to 2005, you will see the great swaths of America that are outlined here in red where you see county after county, mostly in rural America, that continues to lose population. So I show this map here because I think it is important for us, to remind us that as we work here today on the housing bill, which is an important and urgent piece of legislation for the United States and for the people of America who are feeling the pain today because of the housing crisis, it is also important to remind people that there is another pain being felt across America, and that is a pain in rural America.

This next poster is a typical poster of a Main Street in the State of Colorado. This is a poster from Mariano, CO, a picture of Mariano, CO, which shows what is happening in many of our communities. I am sure that in the Presiding Officer's State of Pennsylvania, in the rural parts of Pennsylvania, we can probably find communities that look very much like this on Main Street. Perhaps even in the great State of Rhode Island there may be some towns that actually look like this. We have half of Main Street essentially boarded up. You have a few pickup trucks. That is kind of how it looks.

This is another example of much of what is happening. This is from Brush, CO, again out on the eastern plains, ''for sale'' signs, Main Street for sale. Rural America—rural America has a whole bunch of problems.

So when we look at the 2007—now 2008—farm bill, which will set the policy of the United States of America with respect to our farming policy for the next 5 years, I think it is important to see it as a great opportunity for us to come together, to create new opportunities for the United States of America, to move us forward with energy independence and fuel security for our country and also to make sure we have food security for America.

There are many opportunities that are set forth in this farm bill which we ought not to forget. One of those opportunities is set forth in title IX of the farm bill where, for the first time, for the first time we have included in there a robust package that will help us grow our way to energy independence. We are going to do that through harnessing the power of the wind, the power of the Sun. We are going to do it through harnessing the power of biomass, where we can create a new biofuels industry that will enhance our national security, get rid of our dependance on foreign oil, and make sure we start addressing the environmental security concerns of the people of America. That is an important provision of this legislation.

This is a picture of one of the wind farms in my State of Colorado, where wind has become a significant part of our renewable energy portfolio for our State. I am sometimes in awe of what my State of Colorado has done in a very few short years.

In 2004, there was virtually no wind generation within the State of Colorado. We were not producing any electricity or very little electricity for the consumption of the people of my State and surrounding States.

In 2004, we started this renewable energy initiative. In a very short 3 years, we now have accomplished 1,000 megawatts of power being generated by the wind farms throughout the State of Colorado—1,000 megawatts of power. That is an incredible amount of power when you consider it. That is about the equivalent of what we would be generating from three coal-fired powerplants. We have begun to do that in my State. We are starting it, actually, in other States all across this great Nation where the wind blows, whether it is in North Dakota or New Mexico or Texas.

We have a huge initiative going forward now with respect to grasping the reality of renewable energy to harness the power of the wind. It is not only major wind farms owned by companies or by utilities. In the farm bill, we said: We take the power of the wind and we ought to be able to make it available to homeowners, to farmers, and small businesses by including in title IX a small tax credit of $4,000 for small wind turbines that produce less than 50 kW. That is a very important part of the farm bill.

In addition to harnessing the power of the wind, what we do in the farm bill is also to harness the power of our biomasses. Yes, we have done that in the past. In the 2005 Energy Policy Act, we

moved forward with quintupling the renewable fuels standard. In the 2007 Energy bill, which we passed out of the Senate, we pushed that agenda significantly higher in the 2007 farm bill.

This is an ethanol plant in my State of Colorado. Three years ago, there were no ethanol plants in my State. Biofuels had bypassed the State of Colorado. Because of the work of this Chamber, today there are four ethanol plants which are up and functioning, producing hundreds of millions of gallons of ethanol within my State. Ground has been broken on two additional ones. But even more importantly, what we have done in the Congress is we recognized that we will move beyond these ethanol plants into a whole new future of cellulosic ethanol that is required under the renewable fuels standard of the Energy Policy Act. In the farm bill, in title IX, which we have included in the farm bill itself, we have said that this next step on cellulosic ethanol has to be taken. We include major incentives for a cellulosic ethanol future for the country.

Let me say it is more than about rural America and rural development and energy, it also is about conservation of our lands across this great country. It has been said many times that farmers and ranchers are the best stewards of our land. Perhaps they are the best environmentalists we know. That comes from the reason that at the end of the day, if you do not take care of your land and you do not take care of your water, you are not going to have the wherewithal to be able to provide for yourself and your family a living in the following years. So farmers and ranchers are conservationists, and that is why in the farm bill its conservation title has a very robust movement forward in a number of our conservation programs which are so important for our country.

Here is a picture, again taken at the foothills of the great Rocky Mountains in the State of Colorado, of a project which has been founded through the Wetlands Reserve Program. Those kinds of programs are a very fundamental component of this farm bill.

But it goes beyond conservation. We also, in this farm bill, need to constantly keep reminding people that 67.7, almost 68 percent of all of the money this Senate directed to be spent on the farm bill—almost 68 percent, more than two-thirds—is supposed to be going and will go to the nutrition programs. It will provide money for food stamps, it will provide money for the kinds of fruits and vegetables programs we want in our schools. It is a very important part of the farm bill. Sometimes people say: Well, the farm bill is all about rural America, the forgotten America that I was talking about. That is not true because most of the nutritional dollars that are spent under the farm bill actually go to benefit the urban cousins we have throughout this country. So let's not forget the importance of food stamps, the importance of the nutritional programs that are included in the schools.

Finally, from time to time there is a disaster that strikes rural America. This is the disaster which struck the eastern part of my State and the western part of Kansas just last year, with a snow blizzard that ended up killing tens of thousands of cattle out on the eastern plains.

We have not had a disaster program that has been an effective disaster program for rural America. We were able to come up with a good disaster program that was included in the farm bill here in the Senate. I am hopeful that disaster program is something we can come around on in a bipartisan fashion to support and get across the finish line.

Let me conclude by saying to my colleagues we cannot afford to wait. Not passing a 2007 farm bill as a Congress is not an option. We cannot fail at this. For my time as attorney general of my State and a Member of the Senate, I have always had in my office a sign that says: No farms, no food. It is important for the people of this country to understand we have the least expensive, most secure food supply of anyone in the world today. If my friend, KENT CONRAD, were here and had one of his great charts, one of the things he would point to is we pay a lot less for food today than we did during the days of the Great Depression in the 1940s and 1950s. Only about 10 percent of our disposable income actually is spent on the food we consume as opposed to 20 and 30 and 50 percent in other countries. So it is important for us to maintain that food security for the American people.

I hope the House of Representatives and those in the House of Representatives who care about the food and energy security of our country will help us to get to conclusion on this very important legislation.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the matter that we have to lay down as a substitute is done. The staff is reading it over. They found a couple mistakes. It happens on a bill this big, an amendment this big. So rather than have more time spent tonight treading water, we are going to lay this amendment down in the morning. We are going to come in at 9:30. Senators DODD and SHELBY have a very important banking hearing. It has been scheduled for quite some time. But Senator DURBIN has agreed to manage the bill for Senator DODD, and the Republicans will have someone here also. It is my understanding, after initial statements are made on the bill, we are going to go back and forth on amendments. Senator DURBIN will lay down an amendment. That will be our first one—not a lot of time on that. Our second amendment would be with Senators SCHUMER and MURRAY. The third amendment will be Senator FEINSTEIN. It is a bipartisan amendment. I believe it is Senator MARTINEZ.

As I indicated to staff, of course, following the first Democratic amendment, there will be a Republican amendment, if there is one. Following the second Democratic amendment, there will be a Republican amendment. We will try to move through this as expeditiously and as well intentioned as we can. The progress that has been made in the last 24 hours is very significant. We have a piece of legislation that now has very important FHA modernization in it. It is not what everyone wants, but it is a good piece of legislation.

Senators DODD and SHELBY have agreed the limit would be $550,000. There would be a 3.5 percent downpayment. There are other things in it that banking minds can describe better than I.

There is the CDBG funds to assist communities devastated by foreclosures. That would be $4 billion. We would provide preforeclosure counseling for families in need. In the underlying bill, the so-called Reid amendment, we had $200 million. That has been reduced to $100 million. There will be efforts made to increase that. As I understand, that is what Senators SCHUMER and MURRAY intend to do. We have a combination of pieces of legislation that have been put together in one amendment. It is bipartisan. It started with the Jack Reed disclosure transparency legislation, and others had ideas on how to improve that. That is what Senators DODD and SHELBY have done.

It lengthens the time a lender must wait before starting foreclosure on a servicemember by some 3 months, which is important during this time of Iraq and Afghanistan. It raises the loan guarantee amount for VA-backed loans in high-cost areas. There is a standard property tax deduction; of course, what the President called for in his State of the Union Address, the mortgage revenue bonds to purchase used or foreclosed-upon homes; the extension of net operating loss carryback, extremely important to homebuilders. There is a tax credit for the purchase of homes in foreclosure. This is the Isakson amendment that has been talked about for several weeks now. The two managers of the legislation have modified the original Isakson proposal to have $3,500 for 2 years in succession, a total of $7,000. It will be for buyers of foreclosed homes.

This is the package. It would be great if the Presiding Officer and I and Senator SALAZAR could just say: OK, this is done. This is great, because it is bipartisan. Let's go home tonight, having done this. We can't do that. That is

the way the legislation is. But I think it is a tremendously important bipartisan package that we have. I commend and applaud the work to this point of Senator DODD and Senator SHELBY. They have done very good work. Their staffs worked most all night. And, of course, they have worked all day. Senators SHELBY and DODD were on the telephone last night at midnight trying to work things out. So I appreciate their good, hard work. They have been long-time legislators. As I mentioned, when Senator MCCONNELL and I suggested they come up with a bipartisan package, they are experienced legislators. They both had extensive service in the House of Representatives before coming here. I feel we are in a good spot to be able to deliver a package that will go toward helping Main Street. We helped Wall Street.

We are all glad Bear Stearns was taken care of. But now it is our opportunity to take care of people on Main Street. They deserve that. I am convinced it would be the right thing to do.

As I indicated, we are going to come in at 9:30 tomorrow. I hope this gives everyone an outline of the legislation. I apologize, as I have to do often, that we were not doing more proactive stuff on the floor, but every minute that we were on the floor in the quorum calls or people giving speeches on what they thought should be done with housing or other issues, the staffs and Senators DODD and SHELBY were working very hard to get us to the point where we are tonight.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for a period of up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REPRESSION IN TIBET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to speak about the situation in Tibet, which has captured the world's attention in recent days and weeks.

For those of us who have visited Tibet, as I did in 1988, and for millions of people here and abroad, the press reports of Chinese police officers arresting and beating Tibetan protesters, and of Tibetans destroying the property of Han Chinese, are deplorable.

Estimates of the number of protesters killed have ranged from 13 to 140, and more than 1,000 arrested. Knowing the way Tibetans have been tortured and mistreated in Chinese prisons, we should be very concerned with the welfare of those in custody.

More than a dozen Han Chinese were reportedly killed and their businesses ransacked and burned. Violent attacks against civilians and their property cannot be justified, even when they may be prompted by longstanding, legitimate grievances.

For many years, the Chinese Government has been systematically implementing a strategy to destroy Tibetan culture and solidify its control of Tibet.

A flood of Han Chinese into Tibet has fueled an economic boom, but this has also exacerbated tensions between Chinese business owners and the Tibetans who have become increasingly marginalized and discriminated against in their own homeland.

When first asked about the recent violence, Chinese authorities in Beijing and Lhasa insisted that only a handful of agitators were involved and there was no cause for concern.

Then, as photographs were posted on the internet of Tibetans being chased and beaten bloody by baton-wielding, helmeted riot police, the Chinese Government blocked access for journalists and blamed the Dalai Lama for instigating the violence to sabotage the Beijing Olympics.

Many of us have had the privilege of meeting the Dalai Lama. I consider him a friend, and last week I spoke by telephone with one of his advisors, Lodi Ghari, who was in India at the time. It is outrageous to suggest that the Dalai Lama has encouraged violence in Tibet.

For decades, the Dalai Lama has shown remarkable tolerance and patience as he has sought a peaceful resolution of the conflict over Tibet's political status. He has repeatedly extended a hand of friendship to the Chinese Government, which has consistently responded by denigrating and misrepresenting the Dalai Lama's views.

I would like to hope that this latest outbreak of violence will cause the Chinese Government to recognize that a strategy of repression in Tibet will only provoke further tensions and violence. Brute force is not a solution. Ethnic cleansing is not a solution.

Several things should be done immediately.

The Chinese Government should distinguish between peaceful protestors and rioters, and reaffirm that it will uphold the Chinese Constitution's protections of free speech and association.

It should end its lockdown on Tibetan areas, including allowing full access by the media, and account for those who are missing and dead from the protests.

There should be a full accounting of each Tibetan who has been arrested or charged with a crime, including names, charges if any, and the location where they are being detained. The International Red Cross should have access to monitor their treatment.

The only way to resolve this conflict is through dialogue conducted in good faith. It is long past time for Chinese authorities to recognize that it has nothing to fear from the Tibetan people if they respect the Tibetans' cultural identity.

There has been much talk and speculation about what these events could mean for the Beijing Olympics.

I am not among those who believe the Olympic Games should be a political issue. The Olympics should be about the athletes, not about governments.

If some countries boycott these Olympics for one reason, other countries will feel justified in boycotting other Olympics for different reasons. The future of the Olympic Games would be in jeopardy.

That said, the Chinese Government obviously sees the Olympics as an opportunity to showcase China as a modern, harmonious country. The Chinese Government's actions in Tibet, and its continuing crackdown on dissidents who call for more political freedom, starkly contradict this image.

Apparently, neither the Olympic Committee nor the White House impressed upon the Chinese authorities that if the Olympics were to be a success, there needs to be a marked improvement in China's respect for human rights. That message should be conveyed clearly, vigorously, and immediately. It is not acceptable for President Bush to simply say he plans to attend the Olympics as a ''sports fan.''

I have long criticized the Chinese Government's violations of human rights.

Its detention and trial on trumped up charges of dissidents who dare to criticize official corruption and repression.

Its use of excessive force in Tibet.

Its support for the Government of Sudan, even while that government was committing genocide in Darfur.

Its torture of prisoners and summary executions after unfair trials.

I, with former Senator Jeffords, and then Representative SANDERS, worked for 6 years to secure the release from a Chinese prison of Ngawang Choepel, a young Tibetan whose only crime was to use a video camera to record Tibetan music and dance. He posed no threat to China's security. His arrest, his trial, and his imprisonment were a travesty.

Just last week, China convicted a human rights activist named Hu Jia of ''inciting subversion'' through his writings on the internet. His crime was to advocate for better protection for people with AIDS, for more religious freedom, and for increased autonomy for Tibet.

His case is another reminder that when it comes to human rights, little has changed in China. The Chinese Government insists that China is a country of laws and that his case was dealt with according to the law. That is reminiscent of those who once defended slavery because it was lawful at the time. As long as the Chinese Government criminalizes speech, it will face the criticism of the international community.

Criticizing the Chinese Government is not the same as isolating China, which I have never believed is an option. I have visited China several times and have always favored more engagement with China. We should be encouraging closer relations.

I have worked to increase funding for professional, educational, and cultural exchanges, and for programs focusing on environmental protection and the rule of law. I have seen the benefits to American and Chinese students who participate in these programs, including from the Vermont Law School.

China has an extraordinary history and culture. Its people have suffered many hardships, including devastating wars and famines. Many still toil from dawn until dusk to survive, but China has made extraordinary progress in the 30 years since my first trip there.

The Chinese people want the best for their families and their country, as Americans do. They also want a government that is less corrupt and more open and accountable.

China wants to be treated like a great power, but the Chinese Government cannot expect to be respected as a world leader just because of China's large population and its economic and military prowess. Not as long as it crushes peaceful dissent and, in Tibet, destroys the culture of a unique people who are admired throughout the world.

Other governments of countries where Tibetans have rallied peacefully in support of those back home should also stop the arrests and detentions and use of excessive force.

This is particularly so in Nepal, where not long ago tens of thousands of Nepalese people took to the streets in demonstrations which led to the restoration of multi-party government. Those who are in power in Nepal today, because of the people's brave defiance of a corrupt, abusive king, should be respecting the Tibetans' rights of assembly, of association and expression.

Speaker PELOSI, who visited the Dalai Lama recently, said it well when she called the crisis in Tibet a matter of conscience for the world.

But just as I believe our collective conscience must be steadfast in support of the Tibetan people and their spiritual leader, so should we reaffirm that we recognize this is a conflict the Chinese and Tibetans must solve themselves.

I believe a solution is possible that meets the needs and aspirations of both peoples. But after 6 years of talks that have achieved nothing, it is clear that a new approach is needed. Repression is not the answer. Confrontation is not the answer.

There are creative, visionary people on both sides who can learn from these events and pursue a new way forward. Those of us half a world away who care about Tibet and China should encourage that.

Unfortunately, rather than reach out directly to the Dalai Lama, the Chinese authorities are already tightening their control of Tibet. Apparently they have concluded that the lesson of this latest uprising is to increase the repression and claim that everything is back to normal.

Their idea of what is ''normal'' in Tibet is not the answer. If that is the path they take, it is only a matter of time before the next eruption of violence. And in the meantime, China will further jeopardize the Olympics and do more damage to its international reputation.

Nobody wants that. We want closer, cooperative relations with China.

Mr. President, let us hope that years from now, the 29th Summer Olympic Games will be remembered not for the violent images of recent weeks, and not for a hardening of positions, but as the catalyst for a new political dialogue that brought about a lasting agreement on Tibet's future.

IRAQI REFUGEES RESETTLE IN VERMONT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, at a time when we are all concerned with the fate of Iraqi refugees and the need to help as many of them as possible resettle in safe havens, I ask unanimous consent that a March 24, 2008, article in the Brattleboro Reformer entitled ''Difficult Choices: Son's Birth Deepens Couple's Concern Over Future,'' be printed in the RECORD.

This article illustrates what Vermonters are doing to help two Iraqi refugees, Revan Hedo and Aseel Pola, who recently gave birth to Brattleboro, Vermont's first Iraqi-American citizen, Matthew. As Vermonters and other Americans open their hearts, their homes, and their wallets to try to alleviate the suffering of Iraqis who have been forced to flee their homeland to escape the violence, it is an important reminder that no matter how one may feel about this war, there is a humanitarian dimension that requires everyone's attention. I am proud that Vermonters are doing their part.

We all hope that some day Iraq will be safe enough for those who want to return home to do so. But there are some 2 million Iraqi refugees stranded in Jordan, Syria, and other countries, and millions more displaced inside Iraq. Only a tiny fraction of those who need and deserve our help have received U.S. visas. This is unconscionable. I urge the White House to expedite the processing for resettlement of Iraqis whose lives are threatened because they had the courage to serve as translators, drivers, and provide other services to the United States. These people risked their lives for us, and they have every reason to expect that we will not abandon them.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Reformer, Mar. 24, 2008.]

DIFFICULT CHOICES—SON'S BIRTH DEEPENS COUPLE'S CONCERN OVER FUTURE

(By Bob Audette)

BRATTLEBORO.—One year ago today, Iraqi natives Revan Hedo and Aseel Pola were married in their home country.

Ten days ago, Aseel gave birth to a baby boy, Matthew, the first Iraqi-American born in Brattleboro. His birth heralded a new chapter in the lives of Hedo and Pola, a Catholic couple with family in Iraq but no safe home to return to.

While Matthew is guaranteed a life in the United States by right of his birth, his parents may one day have to return to the Middle East—with or without their son—when their visas expire.

''My son is a U.S. citizen,'' said Hedo, proudly.

Hedo, now 29, first came to the United States in 2004 on a Fulbright scholarship with which he earned a master's degree in comparative literature and simultaneous translation from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He returned to Iraq in 2006 and married Pola. In August 2007, he and his new wife returned to the states, so he could earn a master's in the Art of Education at the School for International Training Graduate Institute.

As an Iraqi, he served as an interpreter for U.S. forces, translating for high-ranking officials such as L. Paul Bremer, Gen. John Abizaid and England Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. One reason for renewing his visa was because living in Iraq had become too dangerous for him and his new wife.

''My life was in jeopardy,'' he said. ''Everyone knew I had been to the United States and had been working for U.S. military forces.''

Francis Bailey, an associate professor at UMass, who befriended Hedo during his two years in Amherst, offered the couple a place to live rent free. Bailey was teaching at SIT and offered to sponsor the couple's stay in the United States.

''I was frustrated with the decision to invade Iraq,'' said Bailey. Giving Hedo and Pola a place to live was ''an opportunity to make an individual difference,'' said Bailey. ''This was my choice.''

Because of the danger to him, his wife and their new son, returning to Iraq is out of the question, but barring some miracle, they can't legally remain in the United States after their visas expire. Even having a son with American citizenship doesn't guarantee the couple can stay here.

Financially, things have also been difficult for the couple.

Pola, a microbiologist, doesn't work, and Hedo's visa only allows him to work 10 hours a week in SIT's library, not nearly enough money to pay for the daily necessities, never mind the bill at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital for the birth of their son. While Hedo has insurance through SIT, Pola has no coverage.

The congregation at St. Michael's Catholic Church on Walnut Street has been essential in helping the couple keep their heads above water as has the international community on the campus of SIT.

''Our friends at SIT showed us the spirit of diversity, the respect of other cultures and hospitality,'' said Hedo, adding, ''The neighbors are wonderful. They've really supported us, especially emotionally.''

''The town is very nice and beautiful,'' said Pola. ''People are really friendly.''

Her biggest hope for her son is that he grows up in a family with both a mother and a father. Pola's father spent several years as a prisoner of war during the Iraq-Iran War of the 1980s. In 2001, when she was 19, he was shot dead on his front steps by minions of Saddam Hussein.

One day, they hope to return to Iraq, but right now they consider their trip to the United States ''a one-way ticket,'' said Hedo. ''We can't go back.''

''We want to be able to live in peace (in Iraq),'' he said, ''To be respected no matter what our beliefs are. We would love to live in an environment with a lot of tolerance, just like Brattleboro.''

Pola has two simple wishes.

''I want to hear that my family is living in peace, not in war, worried all the time, and to have the hope of seeing them.''

Hedo and Pola have also received support from their friends, Noah and Natalie Baker Merrill.

''It's very important in these times for Americans to get to know Iraqis and see them as their neighbors,'' said Noah Baker Merrill, a founder of Direct Aid International, which helps Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan.

Baker Merrill and his wife met Hedo and Pola through SIT, where Natalie is a student advocate.

The United States has done a disgraceful job in helping the refugees, said Baker Merrill, accepting only 1,800 of the 2 to 2.5 million who have fled Iraq.

Nearly 100,000 Iraqis have been allowed to settle in Sweden, but the majority live in refugee camps in Jordan and Syria. Resettlement in a different country is not the answer, said Baker Merrill. Making Iraq a safe country that Iraqis can return to is the answer.

''The overwhelming majority just desperately want to be able to go home.''

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to add my voice of support for the first-ever World Autism Awareness Day, a day that is sorely needed. In 2006 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, estimated that 1 in 166 children were diagnosed with autism. Today the CDC estimates that number to be 1 in 150. In fact, 67 children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder per day; a new case is diagnosed almost every 20 minutes.

Like many of my colleagues, I have had the opportunity to spend time with children with autism and their families, from Connecticut and around the Nation. Autism is a complex neurological disorder, which manifests itself differently in each individual but occurs in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. It is a lifelong condition that affects not only the individual with the disability, but impacts the entire family, often requiring intensive levels of support and intervention.

There are so many unanswered questions about autism. The first step in answering them is for us to come together as a society and recognize the many challenges autism presents in the U.S. and throughout the world. It is my hope that today everyone will take a moment to consider autism and the millions of individuals and families struggling with this developmental disability.

We should also make note of the great work and sacrifice of families affected by autism and the tireless advocates for autism research and treatment who have worked to make this day a reality. Among them I want to particularly note my friends Bob and Suzanne Wright who have worked with me for years to address the needs of those dealing with autism. But there is still more to be done.

At a time when the number of children and families living with autism has grown exponentially, it is important that we recognize the need to expand our federal commitment to combating this disease. Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States, yet we are not committing enough of our federal resources to developing the type of scientific breakthroughs in autism that are needed. It is time to redouble our efforts and help the thousands of families who are raising children with autism.

Among the first major steps in the Federal response to autism was in 2006 when Congress unanimously passed the Combating Autism Act, which my former colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator Rick Santorum and I authored along with the strong support of many of our colleagues including Senators KENNEDY and ENZI. This initiative represents the largest federal expansion of funding and programs for children and families with autism spectrum disorder.

We took another major step recently on the Senate floor with the unanimous passage of an amendment Senator SUSAN COLLINS and I offered to the fiscal year 2009 budget resolution that would double funding for programs dealing with autism at the CDC, the National Institutes of Health, and other health agencies. It is my hope that my colleagues will keep this momentum going by making sure this funding finds its way into the final budget resolution conference report and then through the appropriations process. The research these funds would support will help us understand more about the causes of and appropriate treatments and services for autism.

We should close no doors on promising avenues of research into the causes of autism. The Combating Autism Act and my recent amendment to the budget resolution allow all biomedical research opportunities on autism to be pursued. In fact, just today a new study of toddlers finds that there may be a link between babies born very prematurely and autism. As the author of the PREEMIE Act, along with my colleague Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, I find this news particularly interesting. I look forward to the upcoming Surgeon General's Conference in June which was called for under the PREEMIE Act as an opportunity to further pursue this possible link between extreme prematurity and autism.

As we look to the future, we also need to find new and innovative ways to help parents and loved ones care for family members suffering from autism. That is why I have introduced S. 2741, The Disability Savings Act of 2008. This bill will encourage individuals with disabilities and their families to save money for their unique needs in tax-advantaged disability savings accounts. This money could then be drawn out as needed, to pay for services and care that are needed.

Today, on World Autism Awareness Day, I hope we in the Senate can make finding a cure for autism a top priority of the Congress and the Nation. Together, we can make life a little better for those with autism and their loved ones.

IN HONOR OF BOB VALEU

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, on May 1, 2008, Bob Valeu ends his service to the U.S. Senate.

For 16 years, Bob Valeu has done an outstanding job as the director of my North Dakota Senate offices. His passion for public policy, his dedication to our State and country, and his commitment to excellence have been a hallmark of his service these past years.

Those of us who serve as Senators get attention for the work we do. But we understand that very often that attention and our accomplishments are a result of some very talented and dedicated staff who work with us to advance the interests of our State and our country. That is certainly the case with Bob Valeu's service to me and to the Senate.

Whenever an event ended, the lights were turned down, the microphone was turned off, and I had moved on to another event, Bob Valeu was usually still there solving problems and working with people to address their needs. He was that kind of State director—the type every Senator aspires to have.

Bob and I have traveled tens of thousands of miles together to every nook and cranny of our State. We have been to every kind of event imaginable: high school convocations, Main Street tours, ribbon cuttings, university commencements, lutefisk dinners, State fairs, karaoke competitions, and chili cookoffs. But beyond all of that—and even more importantly—Bob Valeu had provided wise counsel and advice over the years. And I know that even as he leaves my official staff, he will continue to be a valuable advisor and a good friend.

So I want to use this opportunity to publicly thank my friend and a very dedicated American with whom I have been privileged to serve these past 16 years.

To Bob and his wife Marge and their entire family, on behalf of the Senate, I tell you that our country is a better place because of your service. And this Senator is deeply appreciative of the many years of excellence you dedicated to the best interests of our great Nation.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF DITH PRAN

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the extraordinary life of Dith Pran, who risked his life to expose the terrors of the Khmer Rouge regime in his native Cambodia, and who later became the subject of the Oscar award-winning film, ''The Killing Fields.'' Mr. Dith died March 30, 2008, in New Jersey, surrounded by relatives and friends. He

was a defender of human rights, a journalist, a teacher, and a hero.

As many fled Cambodia during the fall of Phnom Penh to the Khmer Rouge in 1975, Mr. Dith sent his wife and children to safety abroad but stayed behind with investigative journalist Sydney H. Schanberg to help ensure that news of the events there reached the outside world. He believed his country and people could only be saved from the Khmer Rouge if individuals in other countries understood the tragedy gathering in his homeland.

Amidst the crisis spreading throughout Southeast Asia in the years following the Vietnam war—a crisis my father, Charles Whitehouse, also saw firsthand through his work as U.S. Ambassador to Laos and Thailand in the 1970s—Dith Pran was a witness to, and a fierce critic of, the greatest atrocities men have inflicted upon their fellow men.

Against all odds, Mr. Dith survived the Cambodian genocide in which 2 million Cambodians, one-third of the population, were killed. Most of his extended family were also killed. He suffered through 4 years of hard labor, living on just one teaspoon of rice a day and whatever animals and insects he could find. Mr. Dith finally escaped from a commune and travelled 40 miles to the Thai border through what he coined ''the killing fields,'' past the bodies of those killed by the Khmer Rouge, before reaching safety.

After reaching the United States, Mr. Dith became a photojournalist for the New York Times. He founded the Dith Pran Holocaust Awareness Project to educate individuals around the world of the horrors he survived in order to prevent future genocides. He was appointed a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1985.

For his efforts to educate the world, Mr. Dith was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 1998. He also received the Award of Excellence from the International Center in New York.

Dith Pran said: ''Part of my life is saving life. I don't consider myself a politician or a hero. I'm a messenger. If Cambodia is to survive, she needs many voices.'' Dith Pran has been a powerful and compelling voice for his countrymen and the land he loved. His willingness to share his story brought light to dark places and hope to millions.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THURMAN ADAMS, JR.

• Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the Honorable Thurman G. Adams, Jr., Delaware's longest serving State Senator.

Senator Adams was first elected to Delaware's 19th senatorial district in Sussex County in 1972. He served as senate majority leader from 1999 to 2003, when he was elected President Pro Tempore of the senate by his colleagues.

When I was Governor of Delaware, I worked closely with Thurman on many issues. He serves as chairman of the Senate Executive Committee, which considers gubernatorial and judicial appointments. Thurman has a keen understanding of the important role Delaware plays as a worldwide corporate center and has been a consistent champion of Delaware's judiciary. Thurman has also been a strong advocate of public safety issues, sponsoring legislation to establish Delaware's ''Enhanced 911'' emergency telephone system. As owner and president of his own feed and grain agribusiness, T.G. Adams, and Son, Inc., Thurman has worked for the interests of Delaware's farming and business communities. He is a leader in such issues as highway and local roadway improvements, education accountability, and the growth of Delaware Technical and Community College's Owens Campus in Georgetown.

Thurman has a long history of civic and community service. Prior to being elected to public office, he served as chairman of the Governor's Highway Safety Committee and a member of the Delaware State Highway Commission. Active in his community, he has held such positions as director of Milford Memorial Hospital and the Medical Center of Delaware, director of the Baltimore Trust Company for 27 years, president of Harrington Raceway, chairman of the Union United Methodist Church Administrative Board, and president of the Eastern Shore Grain Dealers Association.

The recipient of awards too numerous to list, Thurman was most recently awarded the Liberty Bell Award, presented by the Delaware State Bar Association in recognition of significant contributions to the community by a nonattorney, and the Silver Good Citizenship Award of the Delaware Chapter of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. He also received the University of Delaware's Medal of Fame Distinction and the ''Wall of Fame'' Award.

As his record shows, Senator Adams has a strong commitment to the State of Delaware. Born and raised in Bridgeville, he attended Bridgeville High and later graduated from the University of Delaware. He returned to Bridgeville where he built a successful business and raised his family. Thurman was a devoted husband to his wife Hilda, to whom he was married to for nearly 50 years. Senator and Mrs. Adams raised three wonderful children whom any parent would be proud to call their own. No stranger to tragedy, Thurman lost his beloved wife to cancer in 2002 several years after the death of their son Brent. Despite these heartbreaks, Senator Adams remains devoted to his children, seven grandsons and three great-grandchildren.

I have known Thurman Adams for many years. On a personal note, I remember fondly stopping by their summer home for lunch following the annual Fourth of July parade in Bethany Beach and enjoying immensely food and fellowship with him and his family. I can also attest to his expert egg-tossing skill, having been at the receiving end of his smoothly delivered toss at the Delaware State Fair Governor's Day celebration. We have enjoyed many times together both personally and professionally, and we have shared times of deep sorrow, as well.

I am proud to congratulate my longtime friend and colleague on reaching this impressive milestone. The people of Delaware, and especially residents of the 19th District, are certainly well-served and fortunate to have been represented by such a man as Thurman Adams. Delaware is a far better place in which to live and work because of his stewardship and his leadership.•

HONORING ALBERT W. BELL

• Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, today I honor Albert Bell, who is retiring from the Durango Police Department following a lifelong career in law enforcement.

Since moving to Colorado from Kansas nearly 27 years ago, Al has dedicated himself and his talents to protecting the communities of southwest Colorado—first as a sergeant and then as Undersheriff for the La Plata County Sherriff's Department, and, for the past 14 years, as chief of police for the Durango Police Department. He also served with me on the Police Officers Standards and Training Board and the Anti-Bullying in Schools Task Force during my tenure as attorney general of Colorado.

I am honored and privileged to have worked with Al personally over the years, both as attorney general and now as a U.S. Senator. Throughout his career and our work together, Al has demonstrated strong leadership, integrity, and an unyielding commitment to public safety. These attributes have made him one of the most well-regarded law enforcement officials in our State.

Al's contributions to southwest Colorado extend beyond law enforcement. He currently serves as president of the Southwest Colorado Mental Health Board of Directors, and is a member of both the La Plata Health Care Project Steering Committee and the Regional Juvenile Center Task Force. Al's involvement in these and other community organizations speaks to his generosity, selflessness, and his love for the southwest Colorado community.

In short, southwest Colorado has benefitted tremendously because Al Bell chose a path of public service. He has set an example for all Americans to live by. While I am sorry to see him go, I know that he has very much earned a healthy and happy retirement.

On behalf of the people of Colorado, I thank Al for his service, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.•

RECOGNIZING JOHNNY'S SELECTED SEEDS

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I recognize an extraordinary business from my home State of Maine, Johnny's Selected Seeds. A mail-order seed producer and seller from Kennebec County, Johnny's Selected Seeds recently garnered the U.S. Small Business Administration's Entrepreneurial Success Award. But what is most gratifying about the recognition for Johnny's is that the company won the award on the district, regional, and national levels.

Chairman Rob Johnston, Jr. founded Johnny's Selected Seeds in 1973 at the age of 22. With only $500 in his savings account, but with a deep appreciation for and knowledge of agriculture, Mr. Johnston began his venture in the attic of a farmhouse before finally settling in Albion, ME, in 1975. As Johnny's grew, so did demand for its product, largely due to the firm's easy-to-use and straightforward catalog with detailed descriptions of available seeds and handy growing information, as well as the company's production of various vintage heirloom seeds. Johnny's moved its headquarters to Winslow, ME in 2002 and later opened a catalog store in the same town. The employee-owned company continues to maintain its property in Albion as a working farm and research facility while offering seed enthusiasts and curious visitors self-guided farm tours throughout the summer months.

Johnny's employees take seriously their pledge to provide their customers with tools, seeds, plants, and supplies of the utmost quality. The company's minimum germination standards are well above those required by law, and Johnny's goes to great lengths to ensure that commercial varieties are free of certain viruses and diseases. Johnny's also offers various organic seeds, and since 1999, has adhered to the principles of the Safe Seed Pledge, signaling that the company does not ''. . . knowingly buy or sell genetically engineered seeds or plants.'' Additionally, in an effort to stay on the cutting edge, Johnny's takes great pride in the research it does to maintain its innovative reputation. In particular, the firm focuses on developing new seed varieties, as well as leading the way in quality control.

Johnny's Selected Seeds has truly made a name for itself through its outstanding achievements and reliable service. But the company has also maintained a loyal customer base because of the basics. Johnny's vends a wide array of seeds, tools, and supplies to both home gardeners and small commercial growers. Offering a vast selection of vegetable seeds, from artichokes to watermelons, Johnny's also sells fruit seeds, herb seeds, and an impressive collection of flower seeds. Continually updating its stock, Johnny's adds new seeds to its list each year, and 2008 is no exception. Some of the dozens of new products available range from colorful spring flowers to different corns, cantaloupes, and greens. And for convenience, home growers can order a small packet of 25 seeds, and larger growers can often request up to 10,000 or 25,000 seeds, depending on the product.

A truly entrepreneurial business, Johnny's Selected Seeds constantly seeks new ways to grow, improve, and impress. It has, without a doubt, earned its latest accolades handily. To succeed as superlatively as Johnny's does speaks volumes about the resolve and passion of Mr. Johnston, but it is also a testament to the hard work and dedication of the company's over 80 full-time and 50 seasonal employees. I congratulate Johnny's Selected Seeds for earning the U.S. Small Business Administration's Entrepreneurial Success Award at all levels and for the example it sets for small businesses everywhere.•

TRIBUTE TO DR. SHEA PENLAND

• Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge Dr. Shea Penland, one of the leading experts on coastal restoration, for his dedicated service to Louisiana. I would like to take some time to make a few remarks on his accomplishments.

Dr. Penland passed away suddenly at the age of 54 on Tuesday, March 25, 2008. He was a respected professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of New Orleans and the director of the Pontchartrain Institute of Environmental Science. His investigations included the coastal regions of the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, the Great Lakes, the U.S. Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and the North Sea. Dr. Penland had been an advocate for coastal protection and restoration in Louisiana and spoke passionately about how coastal wetlands and barrier islands functioned as natural storm surge barriers during hurricanes and tropical storms.

Several years ago I sponsored and passed a bill to bring together a number of individuals and entities to coordinate efforts to clean up Lake Pontchartrain and promote the restoration of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. Dr. Penland took a leadership role in this effort by helping to bring the university community together to prioritize and coordinate their research activities. The program has been very successful over the last several years, and Dr. Penland deserves a great deal of credit for helping to achieve that success.

Dr. Penland's passing is a great loss to the State of Louisiana, and Wendy and I send our thoughts and prayers out to his family, friends, and coworkers. I am positive that Dr. Penland's work will continue to benefit Louisiana and coastal regions throughout the United States for years to come.

Thus, today, I am proud to honor a fellow Louisianan, Dr. Shea Penland, and thank him for his dedicated and tireless service to our State and country.•

RETIREMENT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBERT CREAR

• Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge the retirement of BG Robert Crear from his distinguished career in the Army Corps of Engineers. I would like to take some time to make a few remarks on his accomplishments and contributions to Louisiana and the United States.

In 1975 he graduated from Jackson State University, where he received a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a Regular Army commission as a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. He holds a master's degree in national resource strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and has held various other command and staff positions in the United States and overseas, including Commander for the Corps' Southwest Division and Chief of Staff for the U.S. Corps' Headquarters here in Washington, DC. During Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, General Crear served as commander, Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil, which safely and effectively helped to ensure the economic recovery of Iraq.

In June of 2004, General Crear assumed command of the Mississippi Valley Division. As MVD commander, he is responsible for a $1 billion civil works program. He also played a vital role in managing the Corps' water resources program in the Mississippi River Valley. As a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Mississippi River Commission, I helped approve General Crear's nomination as President and Commissioner of MRC. After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, General Crear created Task Force Hope, a program dedicated to the restoration and rebuilding efforts in New Orleans and southeast Louisiana. It is among the largest disaster recovery operations in the history of the Corps of Engineers.

I am honored to have worked closely with General Crear. His devotion to the rebuilding and recovery efforts of the gulf coast region is a testament to his leadership and commitment. Louisiana and the gulf coast are forever grateful for his dedication and tireless effort.

Again, I would like to congratulate him on his retirement and exemplary service to our state and the country. I hope he enjoys his well deserved retirement and wish him well in all his future endeavors.•

BRINGING TEAM USA SUCCESS

• Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge Tara Bounds and Phyllis Mitchell, a mother-daughter team that fought adversity and brought home a Gold and Bronze Medal from the 2007 World Games Special Olympics in Shanghai, China. I would like to take a few moments to discuss their tireless efforts to bring Team USA success.

Tara Bounds, a 25-year-old Ball, LA, resident, was diagnosed with Down's syndrome at birth. She began competing in the Special Olympics at age 8. However, it is only by miracle that Tara could even compete athletically. She also has a congenital heart defect and needed two surgeries before the age of 5 in order to live. Phyllis Mitchell coached Bounds along to help her win the Gold Medal in the softball throw and the Bronze Medal in the 50-meter run.

The World Games were held from October 2 to October 11, 2007, with over 7,000 athletes participating from 110 countries. Tara persevered past three competitions: the area competition, the State competition in Hammond, LA, and the national competition in Iowa. In order to continue, you must win at least one Gold Medal in the State and national competition. However, Tara almost did not make it due to monetary reasons, but she held fundraisers, and the people of Louisiana chipped in to send her to the World Olympics.

In order to practice, Tara ran at two local high schools, Pineville and Tioga. She also set up a target in her back yard to prepare for the softball toss. Tara ended up with a distance of 16.94 meters to win gold in the softball toss and ran the 50-meter run in 11.68 seconds to win bronze.

Tara continues to strive for excellence and hopes to participate in the 2011 Special Olympics in Athens, Greece. We should all aspire to follow her example. Today, I congratulate Tara Bounds and Phyllis Mitchell for their victory, and I wish them continued success.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations, which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

2008 NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY—PM 42

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit the 2008 National Drug Control Strategy, consistent with the provisions of section 201 of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006.

My Administration published its first National Drug Control Strategy in 2002, inspired by a great moral imperative: we must reduce illegal drug use because, over time, drugs rob men, women, and children of their dignity and of their character. Thanks to bipartisan support in the Congress; the work of Federal, State, local, and tribal officials; and the efforts of ordinary citizens, 6 years later fewer Americans know the sorrow of addiction.

We have learned much about the nature of drug use and drug markets, and have demonstrated what can be achieved with a balanced strategy that puts resources where they are needed most. Prevention programs are reaching Americans in their communities, schools, workplaces, and through the media, contributing to a 24 percent decline in youth drug use since 2001. Today, approximately 860,000 fewer young people are using drugs than in 2001. We have expanded access to treatment in public health settings, the criminal justice system, and in sectors of society where resources are limited. The Access to Recovery program alone has extended treatment services to an additional 190,000 Americans, exceeding its 3-year goal by over 50 percent. We have seized unprecedented amounts of illegal drugs and have denied drug traffickers and terrorists the profits they need to conduct their deadly work. During the first three quarters of 2007 we saw significant disruptions in the cocaine and methamphetamine markets, with prices rising by 44 percent and 73 percent, and purities falling by 15 percent and 31 percent, respectively.

These results do not mean that our work is done. Rather, they provide a charter for future efforts. By pursuing a balanced strategy that addresses the epidemiology of drug use and the economics of drug availability, we can further reduce drug use in America.

I thank the Congress for its support and ask that it continue this noble work on behalf of the American people.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 3, 2008*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:20 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 550. An act to preserve existing judgeships on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1312. An act to expedite adjudication of employer petitions for aliens of extraordinary artistic ability.

H.R. 2040. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the semicentennial of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

H.R. 5168. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 19101 Cortez Boulevard in Brooksville, Florida, as the ''Cody Grater Post Office Building''.

H.R. 5551. An act to amend title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, to implement the increase provided under the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2008, in the amount of funds made available for the compensation of attorneys representing indigent defendants in the District of Columbia courts, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 154. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the fatal radiation poisoning of Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko raises significant concerns about the potential involvement of elements of the Russian Government in Mr. Litvinenko's death and about the security and proliferation of radioactive materials.

H. Con. Res. 310. Concurrent resolution expressing support for a national day of remembrance for Harriet Ross Tubman.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1312. An act to expedite adjudication of employer petitions for aliens of extraordinary artistic ability; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2040. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the semicentennial of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 5168. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 19101 Cortez Boulevard in Brooksville, Florida, as the ''Cody Grater Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5551. An act to amend title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, to implement the increase provided under the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2008, in the amount of funds made available for the compensation of attorneys representing indigent defendants in the District of Columbia courts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The following concurrent resolutions were read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 154. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the fatal radiation poisoning of Russian dissident and writer Alexander Litvinenko raises significant concerns about the potential involvement of elements of the Russian Government in Mr. Litvinenko's death and about the security and proliferation of radioactive materials; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H. Con. Res. 310. Concurrent resolution expressing support for a national day of remembrance for Harriet Ross Tubman; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

S. 2807. A bill to protect the liberty and property of all Americans.

S. 2808. A bill to require that citizens within a National Heritage Area are informed of the designation and that government officials must receive permission to enter private property.

S. 2809. A bill to ensure that there are no adverse effects of a National Heritage Area designation to local communities and home owners.

S. 2810. A bill to require an annual report detailing the amount of property the Federal government owns and the cost of government land ownership to taxpayers.

S. 2811. A bill to require citizens' approval of Federal government land grabs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–5554. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Addition of Armenia to the List of Regions Where African Swine Fever Exists'' (Docket No. APHIS–2007–0142) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5555. A communication from the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to select chemical agents and toxins; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5556. A communication from the Under Secretary of Agriculture (Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children: Implementation of Nondiscretionary WIC Certification and General Administrative Provisions'' (RIN0584–AD73) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5557. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act by personnel of the Army Corps of Engineers; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–5558. A communication from the Principal Deputy, Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5559. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral John G. Morgan, Jr., United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5560. A communication from the Principal Deputy, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's intent to convert the commissary and exchange store at Homestead Air Reserve Base to an independent Army and Air Force Exchange Service; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5561. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the administration of Federal grants and cooperative agreements; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5562. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Cooperative Threat Reduction Programs; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5563. A communication from the Secretary of the Army, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to funding for the High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5564. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of President of the Government National Mortgage Association, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5565. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5566. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5567. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5568. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of President of the Government National Mortgage Association, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5569. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747–200B, 747–300, and 747–400 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2007–NM–201)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5570. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777–200, –200LR, –300, and –300ER Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2007–NM–109)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5571. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737–100, –200, –200C, –300, –400, and –500 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2007–NM–093)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5572. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 757–200, –200CB, and –300 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2007–NM–033)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5573. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Corporation AE 3007A and AE 3007C Series Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 99–NE–01)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5574. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model SA332C, L, L1, and L2 Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2007–SW–40)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5575. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; DG Flugzeugbau GmbH Model DG–500MB Gliders'' ((RIN2120–AA64)(Docket No. 2007–CE–065)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5576. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter Deutschland Model EC135 Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–SW–58)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5577. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Civil Penalties'' ((RIN2127–AK07) (Docket No. NHTSA–2007–28445)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5578. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747–400 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–161)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5579. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model SA–365 N1, AS–365N2, AS–365N3, SA–366G1, EC 155B, and EC155B1 Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2006–SE–24)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5580. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited Model 206A and 206B Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2006–SW–21)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5581. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing

Model 747–400 and 747–400D Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–069)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5582. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. Model AB139 and AW139 Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–SW–15)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5583. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Model F27 Mark 050 Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–129)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5584. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A330 Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–158)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5585. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD–11, MD–11F, DC–10–30 and DC–10–30F, DC–10–40, DC–10–40F, and MD–10–30F Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–074)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5586. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Aircraft Industries, a.s. Model L–13 Blanik Gliders'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–CE–071)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5587. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–10–10, DC–10–10F, DC–10–15, DC–10–30, and DC–10–30F Airplanes; Model DC–10–40 and DC–10–40F Airplanes; and Model MD–11 and MD–11F Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2003–NM–45)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5588. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747–100, 747–100B, 747–100B SUD, 747–200B, 747–200C, 747–200F, 747–300, 747SR, and 747SP Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–090)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5589. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–9–81 and DC–9–82 Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2006–NM–256)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5590. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 767–300F Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–011)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5591. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A318, A319, A320, and A321 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–112)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5592. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Model F.28 Mark 0070 and 0100 Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–137)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5593. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Model Mystere-Falcon 50, Mystere-Falcon 900, Falcon 900EX, Falcon 2000, and Falcon 2000EX Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–134)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5594. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A310 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–114)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5595. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 Series Airplanes, Model A300–600 Series Airplanes, and Model A310 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–009)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5596. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737–600, –700, –700C, –800, and –900 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–130)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5597. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A310 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2006–NM–217)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5598. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 Series Airplanes and Model A300–600 Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2006–NM–131)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5599. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747–200B, 747–300, 747–400, 747–400D, and 747–400F Series Airplanes Equipped with General Electric CF6–80C2 Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–NM–037)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5600. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Hartzell Propeller Inc. Compact Series Propellers'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2000–NE–08)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5601. A communication from the Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Thrust Aircraft, Inc. Model S2R Series Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. 2007–CE–051)) received on March 31, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5602. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Administrator, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5603. A communication from the Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the apportionment of membership on the Regional Fishery Management Councils; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5604. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a biennial report relative to the implementation of the Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5605. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment 15 to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan'' (RIN0648–AU69) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5606. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; Final 2008 and 2009 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish'' (RIN0648–XD69) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5607. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Non-American Fisheries Act Crab Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Offshore Component in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XF94) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5608. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Non-American

Fisheries Act Crab Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Offshore Component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XF93) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5609. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Inshore Component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XF90) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5610. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Inshore Component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XF74) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5611. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XF82) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5612. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of the Exxon and Stripper Well oil overcharge funds as of September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5613. A communication from the Director, Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Crow Tribe'' (Docket No. CR–1–FOR) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5614. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Reporting Amendments'' (RIN1010–AD20) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5615. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''Department of Energy FY 2006–FY 2007 Methane Hydrate Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5616. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Reissuance Standards for State and Local Bonds'' (Notice 2008–41) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5617. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''United States–Jordan Free Trade Agreement'' (RIN1505–AB75) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5618. A communication from the Program Manager, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare and State Health Care Programs; Fraud and Abuse; Issuance of Advisory Opinions by OIG'' (42 CFR Part 1008) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5619. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed manufacturing license agreement for the transfer of defense services to the United Kingdom relative to the sale of radar altimeters and accelerometers; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5620. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a biennial report relative to the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5621. A communication from the White House Liaison, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy, designation of an acting officer and discontinuation of service in the acting role of Inspector General, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5622. A communication from the White House Liaison, Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5623. A communication from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the new mileage reimbursement rate for Federal employees who use privately owned automobiles while on official travel; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5624. A communication from the Administrator, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the Federal Employee Anti-Discrimination and Retaliation Act; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5625. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''Fiscal Year 2007 Annual Report on Advisory Neighborhood Commissions''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5626. A communication from the Chairman, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the acquisitions made by the Commission during fiscal year 2007 from entities that manufacture articles outside of the United States; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5627. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Data Mining Activity within the Department; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5628. A communication from the Acting Chief, Regulatory Management Division, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Petitions Filed on Behalf of the H–1B Temporary Workers Subject to or Exempt from the Numerical Limitation'' (RIN1615–AB68) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5629. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Regulations and Rulings Division, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Expansion of the Alexander Valley Viticultural Area'' (RIN1513–AB23) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5630. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Regulations and Rulings Division, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of the LeHigh Valley Viticultural Area'' (RIN1513–AB19) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5631. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Regulations and Rulings Division, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Expansion of the San Francisco Bay Viticultural Area'' (RIN1513–AB21) received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5632. A communication from the Director, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to crime victims' rights; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5633. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Ohio, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5634. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of U.S. Attorney, District of South Carolina, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5635. A communication from the White House Liaison, Office of the Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Deputy Attorney General, received on March 28, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5636. A communication from the Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Commission's recent appointment of members to the Texas Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5637. A communication from the Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Commission's recent appointment of members to the Ohio Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. 2795. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a nationwide health insurance purchasing pool for small businesses and the self-employed that would offer a choice of private health plans and make health coverage more affordable, predictable, and accessible; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 2796. A bill to require a pilot program on the use of community-based organizations to ensure that veterans receive the care and benefits they need, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 2797. A bill to authorize major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2009, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. COLEMAN:

S. 2798. A bill to establish a health and education grant program related to autism

spectrum disorders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2799. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand and improve health care services available to women veterans, especially those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SPECTER:

S. 2800. A bill to increase the incentives for employers to hire qualified ex-felons by enhancing the effectiveness of the work opportunity tax credit, to reduce the backlog of applications pending certification under the work opportunity tax credit program, to enhance the effectiveness of the Federal bonding program, to enhance the effectiveness of the Federal bonding program, and to authorize a pilot program for employment-focused re-entry projects; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REID (for Mrs. CLINTON):

S. 2801. A bill to help families avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes by encouraging reasonable and responsible modifications for unworkable and impractical mortgage loans, and to help preserve the rights of investors by reaffirming the basic obligations of their investment agents to achieve the most beneficial outcomes for their clients and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. LANDRIEU:

S. 2802. A bill to establish a commission to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida:

S. 2803. A bill to amend the Act entitled ''An Act authorizing associations of producers of aquatic products'' to include persons engaged in the fishery industry as charter boats or recreational fishermen, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. MARTINEZ):

S. 2804. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Everglades National Park, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BINGAMAN:

S. 2805. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, to assess the irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos in the State of New Mexico and provide grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements with, the Rio Grande Pueblos to repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct existing infrastructure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. SNOWE):

S. 2806. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider the decision of the Administrator to deny the request of the State of California to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new motor vehicles, and to complete further proceedings in accordance with the decision of the Supreme Court in Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. COBURN:

S. 2807. A bill to protect the liberty and property of all Americans; read the first time.

By Mr. COBURN:

S. 2808. A bill to require that citizens within a National Heritage Area are informed of the designation and that government officials must receive permission to enter private property; read the first time.

By Mr. COBURN:

S. 2809. A bill to ensure that there are no adverse effects of a National Heritage Area designation to local communities and homeowners; read the first time.

By Mr. COBURN:

S. 2810. A bill to require an annual report detailing the amount of property the Federal government owns and the cost of government land ownership to taxpayers; read the first time.

By Mr. COBURN:

S. 2811. A bill to require citizens' approval of Federal government land grabs; read the first time.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. Res. 496. A resolution honoring the 60th anniversary of the commencement of the carving of the Crazy Horse Memorial; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WARNER, Mr. OBAMA, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. Res. 497. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 5 through 11, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. REID:

S. Res. 498. A resolution designating April 8, 2008, as ''National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 367

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 367, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to prohibit the import, export, and sale of goods made with sweatshop labor, and for other purposes.

S. 380

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 380, a bill to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, and for other purposes.

S. 431

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 431, a bill to require convicted sex offenders to register online identifiers, and for other purposes.

S. 519

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 519, a bill to modernize and expand the reporting requirements relating to child pornography, to expand cooperation in combating child pornography, and for other purposes.

S. 689

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 689, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend and expand the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory.

S. 941

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 941, a bill to increase Federal support for Community Health Centers and the National Health Service Corps in order to ensure access to health care for millions of Americans living in medically-underserved areas.

S. 960

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 960, a bill to establish the United States Public Service Academy.

S. 969

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 969, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to modify the definition of supervisor.

S. 989

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 989, a bill to amend title XVI of the Social Security Act to clarify that the value of certain funeral and burial arrangements are not to be considered available resources under the supplemental security income program.

S. 1175

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1175, a bill to end the use of child soldiers in hostilities around the world, and for other purposes.

S. 1223

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1223, a bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to support efforts by local or regional television or radio broadcasters to provide essential public information programming in the event of a major disaster, and for other purposes.

S. 1605

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1605, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect and preserve access of Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas to health care providers under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1646

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) and the Senator from

Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1646, a bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make cost-share and incentive payments for innovative fuels management conservation practices, including prescribed grazing management on private grazing land and practices that complement commensurate public land, to prevent the occurrence and spread of, and damages caused by, wildfires fueled by invasive species.

S. 1795

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1795, a bill to improve access to workers' compensation programs for injured Federal employees.

S. 1843

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1843, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 to clarify that an unlawful practice occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, and for other purposes.

S. 1846

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1846, a bill to improve defense cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the United States.

S. 1921

At the request of Mr. WEBB, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1921, a bill to amend the American Battlefield Protection Act of 1996 to extend the authorization for that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1954

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1954, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to pharmacies under part D.

S. 1998

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1998, a bill to reduce child marriage, and for other purposes.

S. 2056

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2056, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to restore financial stability to Medicare anesthesiology teaching programs for resident physicians.

S. 2058

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2058, a bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to close the Enron loophole, prevent price manipulation and excessive speculation in the trading of energy commodities, and for other purposes.

S. 2069

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2069, a bill to increase the United States financial and programmatic contributions to promote economic opportunities for women in developing countries.

S. 2141

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2141, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and extend the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention and services program, and for other purposes.

S. 2166

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2166, a bill to provide for greater responsibility in lending and expanded cancellation of debts owed to the United States and the international financial institutions by low-income countries, and for other purposes.

S. 2347

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2347, a bill to restore and protect access to discount drug prices for university-based and safety-net clinics.

S. 2352

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2352, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare beneficiaries greater choice with regard to accessing hearing health services and benefits.

S. 2376

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2376, a bill to establish a demonstration project to provide for patient-centered medical homes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in providing medical assistance under the Medicaid program and child health assistance under the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

S. 2453

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2453, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to clarify requirements relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of national origin.

S. 2510

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2510, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide revised standards for quality assurance in screening and evaluation of gynecologic cytology preparations, and for other purposes.

S. 2523

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2523, a bill to establish the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the Treasury of the United States to provide for the construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low-income families.

S. 2579

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2579, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition and celebration of the establishment of the United States Army in 1775, to honor the American soldier of both today and yesterday, in wartime and in peace, and to commemorate the traditions, history, and heritage of the United States Army and its role in American society, from the colonial period to today.

S. 2602

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2602, a bill to amend the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008, to terminate the authority of the Secretary of the Treasury to deduct amounts from certain States.

S. 2608

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2608, a bill to make improvements to the Small Business Act.

S. 2618

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2618, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for research with respect to various forms of muscular dystrophy, including Becker, congenital, distal, Duchenne, Emery-Dreifuss Facioscapulohumeral, limb-girdle, myotonic, and oculopharyngeal muscular dystrophies.

S. 2652

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2652, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Defense to make a grant to the National World War II Museum Foundation for facilities and programs of America's National World War II Museum.

S. 2705

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2705, a bill to authorize programs to increase the number of nurses within the Armed Forces through assistance for service as nurse faculty or education as nurses, and for other purposes.

S. 2717

At the request of Mr. CHAMBLISS, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2717, a bill to provide for enhanced Federal enforcement of, and State and local assistance in the enforcement of, the immigration laws of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2723

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2723, a bill to expand the dental workforce and improve dental access, prevention, and data reporting, and for other purposes.

S. 2746

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2746, a bill to amend section 552(b)(3) of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Freedom of Information Act) to provide that statutory exemptions to the disclosure requirements of that Act shall specifically cite to the provision of that Act authorizing such exemptions, to ensure an open and deliberative process in Congress by providing for related legislative proposals to explicitly state such required citations, and for other purposes.

S. 2766

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2766, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to address certain discharges incidental to the normal operation of a recreational vessel.

S. 2769

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2769, a bill to authorize appropriate use of information in the Firearms Trace Database, and for other purposes.

S. 2771

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2771, a bill to require the president to call a White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010.

S. 2785

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2785, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Security Act to preserve access to physicians' services under the Medicare program.

S. 2794

At the request of Mr. VITTER, his name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 2794, a bill to protect older Americans from misleading and fraudulent marketing practices, with the goal of increasing retirement security.

S.J. RES. 28

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 28, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission with respect to broadcast media ownership.

S. RES. 456

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 456, a resolution directing the United States to undertake bilateral discussions with Canada to negotiate an agreement to conserve populations of large whales at risk of extinction that migrate along the Atlantic seaboard of North America.

S. RES. 481

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 481, a resolution designating April 2008 as ''National Autism Awareness Month'' and supporting efforts to increase funding for research into the causes and treatment of autism and to improve training and support for individuals with autism and those who care for individuals with autism.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. 2795. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a nationwide health insurance purchasing pool for small businesses and the self employed that would offer a choice of private health plans and make health coverage more affordable, predictable, and accessible; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2795

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 ''Small Business Health Options Program Act of 2008'' or the ''SHOP Act''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ACT.

The Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 201 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE XXX—SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH OPTIONS PROGRAM

''SEC. 3001. DEFINITIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In this title:

''(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Administrator appointed under section 3002(a).

''(2) SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH BOARD.—The term 'Small Business Health Board' means the Board established under section 3002(d).

''(3) EMPLOYEE.—The term 'employee' has the meaning given such term under section 3(6) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1002(6)). Such term shall not include an employee of the Federal Government.

''(4) EMPLOYER.—The term 'employer' has the meaning given such term under section 3(5) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1002(5)), except that such term shall include employers who employed an average of at least 1 but not more than 100 employees (who worked an average of at least 35 hours per week) on business days during the year preceding the date of application, and shall include self-employed individuals with either not less than $5,000 in net earnings or not less than $15,000 in gross earnings from self-employment in the preceding taxable year. Such term shall not include the Federal Government.

''(5) HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE.—The term 'health insurance coverage' has the meaning given such term in section 2791.

''(6) HEALTH INSURANCE ISSUER.—The term 'health insurance issuer' has the meaning given such term in section 2791.

''(7) HEALTH STATUS-RELATED FACTOR.—The term 'health status-related factor' has the meaning given such term in section 2791(d)(9).

''(8) PARTICIPATING EMPLOYER.—The term 'participating employer' means an employer that—

''(A) elects to provide health insurance coverage under this title to its employees; and

''(B) is not offering other comprehensive health insurance coverage to such employees.

''(b) APPLICATION OF CERTAIN RULES IN DETERMINATION OF EMPLOYER SIZE.—For purposes of subsection (a)(3):

''(1) APPLICATION OF AGGREGATION RULE FOR EMPLOYERS.—All persons treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be treated as 1 employer.

''(2) EMPLOYERS NOT IN EXISTENCE IN PRECEDING YEAR.—In the case of an employer which was not in existence for the full year prior to the date on which the employer applies to participate, the determination of whether such employer meets the requirements of subsection (a)(4) shall be based on the average number of employees that it is reasonably expected such employer will employ on business days in the employer's first full year.

''(3) PREDECESSORS.—Any reference in this subsection to an employer shall include a reference to any predecessor of such employer.

''(c) WAIVER AND CONTINUATION OF PARTICIPATION.—

''(1) WAIVER.—The Administrator may waive the limitations relating to the size of an employer which may participate in the health insurance program established under this title on a case by case basis if the Administrator determines that such employer makes a compelling case for such a waiver.

In making determinations under this paragraph, the Administrator may consider the effects of the employment of temporary and seasonal workers and other factors.

''(2) CONTINUATION OF PARTICIPATION.—An employer participating in the program under this title that experiences an increase in the number of employees so that such employer has in excess of 100 employees, may not be excluded from participation solely as a result of such increase in employees.

''(d) TREATMENT OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AS GROUP HEALTH PLAN.—Health insurance coverage offered under this title shall be treated as a group health plan for purposes of applying the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) except to the extent that a provision of this title expressly provides otherwise.

''(e) APPLICATION OF HIPAA RULES.—Notwithstanding any provision of State law, the provisions of subparts 1, 3, and 4 of part A of title XXVII shall apply to health insurance coverage offered under this title. A State may modify State law as appropriate to provide for the enforcement of such provisions for health insurance coverage offered in the State under this title.

''SEC. 3002. ADMINISTRATION OF SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH INSURANCE POOL.

''(a) OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATOR.—The Secretary shall designate an office within the Department of Health and Human Services to administer the program under this title. Such office shall be headed by an Administrator to be appointed by the Secretary.

''(b) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the individual appointed to serve as the Administrator under subsection (a) has an appropriate background with experience in health insurance, business, or health policy.

''(c) DUTIES.—The Administrator shall—

''(1) enter into contracts with health insurance issuers to provide health insurance coverage to individuals and employees who enroll in health insurance coverage in accordance with this title;

''(2) maintain the contracts for health insurance policies when an employee elects which health plan offered under this title to enroll in as permitted under section 3007(d)(7);

''(3) ensure that health insurance issuers comply with the requirements of this title;

''(4) ensure that employers meet eligibility requirements for participation in the health insurance pool established under this title;

''(5) enter into agreements with entities to serve as navigators, as defined in section 3003;

''(6) collect premiums from employers and employees and make payments for health insurance coverage;

''(7) collect other information needed to administer the program under this title;

''(8) compile, produce, and distribute information (which shall not be subject to review or modification by the States) to employers and employees (directly and through navigators) concerning the open enrollment process, the health insurance coverage available through the pool, and standardized comparative information concerning such coverage, which shall be available through an interactive Internet website, including a description of the coverage plans available in each State and comparative information, about premiums, index rates, benefits, quality, and consumer satisfaction under such plans;

''(9) provide information to health insurance issuers, including, at the discretion of the Administrator, notification when proposed rates are not in a competitive range;

''(10) conduct public education activities (directly and through navigators) to raise the awareness of the public of the program under this title and the associated tax credit under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

''(11) develop methods to facilitate enrollment in health insurance coverage under this title, including through the use of the Internet;

''(12) if appropriate, enter into contracts for the performance of administrative functions under this title as permitted under section 3009;

''(13) carefully consider benefit recommendations that are endorsed by at least two-thirds of the members of the Small Business Health Board;

''(14) establish and administer a contingency fund for risk corridors as provided for in section 3008; and

''(15) carry out any other activities necessary to administer this title.

''(d) LIMITATIONS.—The Administrator shall not—

''(1) negotiate premiums with participating health insurance issuers; or

''(2) exclude health insurance issuers from participating in the program under this title except for violating contracts or the requirements of this title.

''(e) SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH BOARD.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—There shall be established a Small Business Health Board to monitor the implementation of the program under this title and to make recommendations to the Administrator concerning improvements in the program.

''(2) APPOINTMENT.—The Comptroller General shall appoint 13 individuals who have expertise in health care benefits, financing, economics, actuarial science or other related fields, to serve as members of the Small Business Health Board. In appointing members under the preceding sentence, the Comptroller General shall ensure that such members include—

''(A) a mix of different types of professionals;

''(B) a broad geographic representation;

''(C) not less than 3 individuals with an employee perspective;

''(D) not less than 3 individuals with a small business perspective, at least 1 of whom shall have a self-employed perspective; and

''(E) not less than 1 individual with a background in insurance regulation.

''(3) TERMS.—Members of the Small Business Health Board shall serve for a term of 3 years, such terms to end on March 15 of the applicable year, except as provided in paragraph (4). The Comptroller General shall stagger the terms for members first appointed. A member may be reappointed after the expiration of a term. A member may serve after expiration of a term until a successor has been appointed.

''(4) SMALL BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES.—Beginning on March 16, 2012, 3 of the individuals the Comptroller General appoints to the Small Business Health Board shall be representatives of the 3 navigators through which the largest number of individuals have enrolled for health insurance coverage over the previous 2-year period. Such appointees shall serve for 1 year. The Comptroller General shall consider for appointment in years prior to the date specified in this paragraph, individuals who are representatives of entities that may serve as navigators.

''(5) CHAIRPERSON; VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The Comptroller General shall designate a member of the Small Business Health Board, at the time of appointment of such member, to serve as Chairperson and a member to serve as Vice Chairperson for the term of the appointment, except that in the case of a vacancy of either such position, the Comptroller General may designate another member to serve in such position for the remainder of such member's term.

''(6) COMPENSATION.—While serving on the business of the Small Business Health Board (including travel time), a member of the Small Business Health Board shall be entitled to compensation at the per diem equivalent of the rate provided for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, and while so serving away from home and the member's regular place of business, a member may be allowed travel expenses, as authorized by the Chairperson of the Small Business Health Board.

''(7) DISCLOSURE.—The Comptroller General shall establish a system for the public disclosure, by members of the Small Business Health Board, of financial and other potential conflicts of interest.

''(8) MEETINGS.—The Small Business Health Board shall meet at the call of the Chairperson. Each such meeting shall be open to the public.

''(9) DUTIES.—The Small Business Health Board shall—

''(A) provide general oversight of the program under this title and make recommendations to the Administrator;

''(B) monitor and make recommendations to the Administrator on the benefit requirements for national plans in this title;

''(C) make recommendations concerning information that the Administrator, health plans, and navigators should distribute to employers and employees participating in the program under this title; and

''(D) monitor and make recommendations to the Administrator on adverse selection within the program under this title and between the coverage provided under the program and the State-regulated health insurance market.

''(10) APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—A recommendation shall require approval by not less than two-thirds of the members of the Board.

''(11) PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT ON RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Administrator shall—

''(A) publish recommendations by the Small Business Health Board in the Federal Register;

''(B) solicit written comments concerning such recommendations; and

''(C) provide an opportunity for the presentation of oral comments concerning such recommendations at a public meeting.

''SEC. 3003. NAVIGATORS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall enter into agreements with private and public entities, beginning a reasonable period prior to the beginning of the first calendar year in which health insurance coverage is offered under this title, under which such entities will serve as navigators.

''(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to enter into an agreement under subsection (a), an entity shall demonstrate to the Administrator that the entity has existing relationships with, or could readily establish relationships with, employers and employees, and self-employed individuals, likely to be eligible to participate in the program under this title. Such entities may include trade, industry and professional associations, chambers of commerce, unions, small business development centers, and other entities that the Administrator determines to be capable of carrying out the duties described in subsection (c).

''(c) DUTIES.—An entity that serves as a navigator under an agreement under subsection (a) shall—

''(1) coordinate with the Administrator on public education activities to raise awareness of the program under this title;

''(2) distribute information developed by the Administrator on the open enrollment process, private health plans available

through the program under this title, and standardized comparative information about the health insurance coverage under the program;

''(3) distribute information about the availability of the tax credit under section 36 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as added by the Small Business Health Options Program Act of 2008;

''(4) assist employers and employees in enrolling in the program under this title; and

''(5) respond to questions about the program under this title and participating plans.

''(d) SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS.—In addition to information developed by the Administrator under subsection (c)(2), a navigator may develop and distribute other information that is related to the health insurance program established under this title, subject to review and approval by the Administrator and filing in each State in which the navigator operates.

''(e) STANDARDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall establish standards for navigators under this section, including provisions to avoid conflicts of interest. Under such standards, a navigator may not—

''(A) be a health insurance issuer; or

''(B) receive any consideration directly or indirectly from any health insurance issuer in connection with the participation of any employer in the program under this title or the enrollment of any eligible employee in health insurance coverage under this title.

''(2) FAIR AND IMPARTIAL INFORMATION AND SERVICES.—The Administrator shall consult with the Small Business Health Board concerning the standards necessary to ensure that a navigator will provide fair and impartial information and services. An agreement between the Administrator and a navigator may include specific provisions with respect to such navigator to ensure that such navigator will provide fair and impartial information and services. If a navigator, or entity seeking to become a navigator, is a party to any arrangement with any health insurance issuer to receive compensation related to other health care programs not covered under this title, the entity shall disclose the terms of such compensation arrangements to the Administrator, and the Administrator shall take such information into account in determining the appropriate standards and agreement terms for such navigator.

''SEC. 3004. CONTRACTS WITH HEALTH INSURANCE ISSUERS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may enter into contracts with qualified health insurance issuers, without regard to section 5 of title 41, United States Code, or other statutes requiring competitive bidding, to provide health benefits plans to employees of participating employers and self-employed individuals under this title. Each contract shall be for a uniform term of at least 1 year, but may be made automatically renewable from term to term in the absence of notice of termination by either party. In entering into such contracts, the Administrator shall ensure that health benefits coverage is provided for an individual only, two adults in a household, one adult and one or more children, and a family.

''(b) ELIGIBILITY.—A health insurance issuer shall be eligible to enter into a contract under subsection (a) if such issuer—

''(1) is licensed to offer health benefits plan coverage in each State in which the plan is offered; and

''(2) meets such other reasonable requirements as determined appropriate by the Administrator, after an opportunity for public comment and publication in the Federal Register.

''(c) COST-SHARING AND NETWORKS.—The Administrator shall ensure that health benefits plans with a range of cost-sharing and network arrangements are available under this title.

''(d) REVOCATION.—Approval of a health benefits plan participating in the program under this title may be withdrawn or revoked by the Administrator only after notice to the health insurance issuer involved and an opportunity for a hearing without regard to subchapter II of chapter 5 and chapter 7 of title 5, United States Code.

''(e) CONVERSION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a contract may not be made or a plan approved under this section if the health insurance issuer under such contract or plan does not provide to each enrollee whose coverage under the plan is terminated, including a termination due to discontinuance of the contract or plan, the option to have issued to that individual a nongroup policy without evidence of insurability. A health insurance issuer shall provide a notice of such option to individuals who enroll in the plan. An enrollee who exercises such conversion option shall pay the full periodic charges for the nongroup policy.

''(2) EXCEPTIONS.—A health insurance issuer shall not be required to offer a nongroup policy under paragraph (1) if the termination under the plan occurred because—

''(A) the enrollee failed to pay any required monthly premiums under the plan;

''(B) the enrollee performed an act or practice that constitutes fraud in connection with the coverage under the plan;

''(C) the enrollee made an intentional misrepresentation of a material fact under the terms of coverage of the plan; or

''(D) the terminated coverage under the plan was replaced by similar coverage within 31 days after the date of termination.

''(f) PAYMENT OF PREMIUMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Employers shall collect premium payments from their employees through payroll deductions and shall forward such payments and the contribution of the employer (if any) to the Administrator. The Administrator shall develop procedures through which such payments shall be received and forwarded to the health insurance issuer involved.

''(2) FAILURE TO PAY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Failure to pay premiums shall be treated as a debt owed to the United States in the same manner as the failure to repay a loan made to an individual under the Higher Education Act of 1965 is treated as such a debt.

''(B) PROCEDURES.—The Administrator shall establish procedures—

''(i) for the termination of employers that fail, for a two consecutive month period (or such other time period as determined appropriate by the Administrator), to make premium payments in a timely manner; and

''(ii) for recovering the cost of unpaid and uncollected premiums through an adjustment in the rates charged for the subsequent year in accordance with section 3007(b)(1)(C).

''SEC. 3005. EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION.

''(a) PARTICIPATION PROCEDURE.—The Administrator shall develop a procedure for employers and self-employed individuals to participate in the program under this title, including procedures relating to the offering of health benefits plans to employees and the payment of premiums for health insurance coverage under this title. For the purpose of premium payments, a self-employed individual shall be considered an employer that is making a 100 percent contribution toward the premium amount.

''(b) ENROLLMENT AND OFFERING OF OTHER COVERAGE.—

''(1) ENROLLMENT.—A participating employer shall ensure that each eligible employee has an opportunity to enroll in a plan of the employer's choice or a plan of the employee's choice in accordance with section 3007(d)(7).

''(2) PROHIBITION ON OFFERING OTHER COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH BENEFIT COVERAGE.—A participating employer may not offer a health insurance plan providing comprehensive health benefit coverage to employees other than a health benefits plan offered under this title.

''(3) PROHIBITION ON COERCION.—An employer shall not pressure, coerce, or offer inducements to an employee to elect not to enroll in coverage under the program under this title or to select a particular health benefits plan.

''(4) OFFER OF SUPPLEMENTAL COVERAGE OPTIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A participating employer may offer supplementary coverage options to employees.

''(B) DEFINITION.—In subparagraph (A), the term 'supplementary coverage' means benefits described as 'excepted benefits' under section 2791(c).

''(c) REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY.—In developing the procedure under subsection (a), the Administrator shall comply with the requirements specified under the Regulatory Flexibility Act under chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code, consider the economic impacts that the regulation will have on small businesses, and consider regulatory alternatives that would mitigate such impact. The Administrator shall publish and publicly disseminate a small business compliance guide, pursuant to section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, that explains the compliance requirements for employer participation. Such compliance guide shall be published not later than the date of the publication of the final rule under this title, or the effective date of such rules, whichever is later.

''(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Except as provided in section 3004(f), nothing in this title shall be construed to require that an employer make premium contributions on behalf of employees.

''SEC. 3006. ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—An individual shall be eligible to enroll in health insurance coverage under this title for coverage beginning in 2011 if such individual is an employee of a participating employer described in section 3001(a)(4) or is a self-employed individual as defined in section 401(c)(1)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and meets the definition of a participating employer in section 3001(a)(8). An employer may allow employees who average fewer than 35 hours per week to enroll.

''(b) LIMITATION.—A health insurance issuer may not refuse to provide coverage to any eligible individual under subsection (a) who selects a health benefits plan offered by such issuer under this title.

''(c) TYPE OF ENROLLMENT.—An eligible individual may enroll as an individual or as an adult with one or more children regardless of whether another adult is present in the enrollee's household or family.

''(d) OPEN ENROLLMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall establish an annual open enrollment period during which an employer may elect to become a participating employer and an employee may enroll in a health benefits plan under this title for the following calendar year.

''(2) OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD.—For purposes of this title, the term 'open enrollment period' means, with respect to calendar year 2011 and each succeeding calendar year, the

period beginning on October 1, 2010, and ending December 1, 2010, and each succeeding period beginning October 1 and ending December 1. Coverage in a health benefits plan selected during such an open enrollment period shall begin on January 1 of the calendar year following the selection.

''(3) NEWLY ELIGIBLE EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.—Notwithstanding the open enrollment period provided for under paragraph (2), the Administrator shall establish an enrollment process to enable a newly eligible employer or an employer with an existing health benefits policy whose term is ending to become a participating employer and for an employee of such employer, or a new employee of a participating employer, to enroll in a health benefits plan under this title outside of an open enrollment period. The Administrator may establish a process for setting the renewal date for the participation of an employer that initially becomes a participating employer outside of the open enrollment period to coincide with a subsequent open enrollment period.

''(4) LIMITATION OF CHANGING ENROLLMENT.—An employer or employee (as the case may be) may elect to change the health benefits plan that the employee is enrolled in only during an open enrollment period.

''(5) EFFECTIVENESS OF ELECTION AND CHANGE OF ELECTION.—An election to change a health benefits plan that is made during the open enrollment period under paragraph (2) shall take effect as of the first day of the following calendar year.

''(6) CONTINUATION OF ENROLLMENT.—An employee who has enrolled in a health benefits plan under this title is considered to have been continuously enrolled in that health benefits plan until such time as—

''(A) the employer or employee (as the case may be) elects to change health benefits plans; or

''(B) the health benefits plan is terminated.

''(e) PROVIDING INFORMATION TO PROMOTE INFORMED CHOICE.—The Administrator shall compile, produce, and disseminate information to employers, employees, and navigators under section 3002(c)(8) to promote informed choice that shall be made available at least 30 days prior to the beginning of each open enrollment period.

''(f) TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT.—An employee may remain enrolled in a health plan under this title for the remainder of the calendar year following the termination or separation of the employee from employment or termination of the employer, if the employee pays 100 percent of the monthly premium for the remainder of the year involved.

''(g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this title shall be construed to prohibit a health insurance issuer providing coverage through the program under this title from using the services of a licensed agent or broker.

''SEC. 3007. HEALTH COVERAGE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE SMALL BUSINESS POOL.

''(a) PREEXISTING CONDITION EXCLUSIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each contract under this title may include a preexisting condition exclusion as defined under section 9801(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(2) EXCLUSION PERIOD.—A preexisting condition exclusion under this subsection shall provide for coverage of a preexisting condition to begin not later than 6 months after the date on which the coverage of the individual under a health benefits plan commences, reduced by the aggregate of 1 day for each day that the individual was covered under creditable health insurance coverage (as defined for purposes of section 2701(c)) immediately preceding the date the individual submitted an application for coverage under this title. This provision shall be applied notwithstanding the applicable provision for the reduction of the exclusion period provided for in section 701(a)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1181(a)(3)).

''(b) RATES AND PREMIUMS; STATE LAWS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Rates charged and premiums paid for a health benefits plan under this title—

''(A) shall be determined in accordance with subsection (d);

''(B) may be annually adjusted; and

''(C) shall be adjusted to cover the administrative costs of the Administrator under this title and the office established under section 3002.

''(2) BENEFIT MANDATE LAWS.—With respect to a contract entered into under this title under which a health insurance issuer will offer health benefits plan coverage, State mandated benefit laws in effect in the State in which the plan is offered shall continue to apply, except in the case of a nationwide plan.

''(3) LIMITATION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to preempt any State or local law (including any State grievance, claims, and appeals procedure laws, State provider mandate laws, and State network adequacy laws) except those laws and regulations described in subsection (b)(2), (d)(2)(B), and (d)(5).

''(c) TERMINATION AND REENROLLMENT.—If an individual who is enrolled in a health benefits plan under this title voluntarily terminates the enrollment, except in the case of an individual who has lost or changes employment or whose employer is terminated for failure to pay premiums, the individual shall not be eligible for reenrollment until the first open enrollment period following the expiration of 6 months after the date of such termination.

''(d) RATING RULES AND TRANSITIONAL APPLICATION OF STATE LAW.—

''(1) YEARS 2011 AND 2012.—With respect to calendar years 2011 and 2012 (open enrollment period beginning October 1, 2010, and October 1, 2011), the following shall apply:

''(A) In the case of an employer that elects to participate in the program under this title, the State rating requirements applicable to employers purchasing health insurance coverage in the small group market in the State in which the employer is located shall apply with respect to such coverage, except that premium rates for such coverage shall not vary based on health-status related factors.

''(B) State rating requirements shall apply to health insurance coverage purchased in the small group market in the State, except that a State shall be prohibited from allowing premium rates to vary based on health-status related factors.

''(2) SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—

''(A) NAIC RECOMMENDATIONS.—

''(i) STUDY.—Beginning in 2009, the Administrator shall contract with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to conduct a study of the rating requirements utilized in the program under this title and the rating requirements that apply to health insurance purchased in the small group markets in the States, and to develop recommendations concerning rating requirements. Such recommendations shall be submitted to the appropriate committees of Congress during calendar year 2011.

''(ii) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study under clause (i), the National Association of Insurance Commissioners shall consult with key stakeholders (including small businesses, self-employed individuals, employees of small businesses, health insurance issuers, health care providers, and patient advocates).

''(iii) RECOMMENDATIONS.—During calendar year 2011, the recommendations of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners shall be submitted to Congress (in the form of a legislative proposal), and shall concern—

''(I) rating requirements for health insurance coverage under this title for calendar year 2013 and subsequent calendar years; and

''(II) a maximum permissible variance between State rating requirements and the rating requirements for coverage under this title that will allow State flexibility without causing significant adverse selection for health insurance coverage under this title.

''(B) APPLICATION OF REQUIREMENTS.—If, pursuant to this subsection, an Act is enacted to implement rating requirements pursuant to the recommendations submitted under subparagraph (A), or alternative rating requirements developed by Congress, such rating requirements shall apply to the program under this title beginning in calendar year 2013 (open enrollment periods beginning October 1, 2012, and thereafter).

''(3) FAILURE TO ENACT LEGISLATION.—If an Act is not enacted as provided for in paragraph (2)(B), the fallback rating rules under paragraph (5) shall apply beginning in calendar year 2013 (open enrollment periods beginning October 1, 2012, and thereafter).

''(4) EXPEDITED CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION.—

''(A) INTRODUCTION AND COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION.—

''(i) INTRODUCTION.—A legislative proposal submitted to Congress pursuant to paragraph (2) shall be introduced in the House of Representatives by the Speaker, and in the Senate by the Majority Leader, immediately upon receipt of the language and shall be referred to the appropriate committees of Congress. If the proposal is not introduced in accordance with the preceding sentence, legislation may be introduced in either House of Congress by any member thereof.

''(ii) COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION.—Legislation introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate under clause (i) shall be referred to the appropriate committees of jurisdiction of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Not later than 45 calendar days after the introduction of the legislation or February 15th, 2012, whichever is later, the committee of Congress to which the legislation was referred shall report the legislation or a committee amendment thereto. If the committee has not reported such legislation (or identical legislation) at the end of 45 calendar days after its introduction, or February 15th, 2012, whichever is later, such committee shall be deemed to be discharged from further consideration of such legislation and such legislation shall be placed on the appropriate calendar of the House involved.

''(B) EXPEDITED PROCEDURE.—

''(i) CONSIDERATION.—Not later than 15 calendar days after the date on which a committee has been or could have been discharged from consideration of legislation under this paragraph, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or the Speaker's designee, or the Majority Leader of the Senate, or the Leader's designee, shall move to proceed to the consideration of the committee amendment to the legislation, and if there is no such amendment, to the legislation. It shall also be in order for any member of the House of Representatives or the Senate, respectively, to move to proceed to the consideration of the legislation at any time after the conclusion of such 15-day period. All points of order against the legislation (and against consideration of the legislation) with the exception of points of order under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 are waived. A motion to proceed to the consideration of the legislation is highly privileged

in the House of Representatives and is privileged in the Senate and is not debatable. The motion is not subject to amendment, to a motion to postpone consideration of the legislation, or to a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion to proceed is agreed to or not agreed to shall not be in order. If the motion to proceed is agreed to, the House of Representatives or the Senate, as the case may be, shall immediately proceed to consideration of the legislation in accordance with the Standing Rules of the House of Representatives or the Senate, as the case may be, without intervening motion, order, or other business, and the resolution shall remain the unfinished business of the House of Representatives or the Senate, as the case may be, until disposed of, except as provided in clause (iii).

''(ii) CONSIDERATION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If, before the passage by one House of the legislation that was introduced in such House, such House receives from the other House legislation as passed by such other House—

''(I) the legislation of the other House shall not be referred to a committee and shall immediately displace the legislation that was introduced in the House in receipt of the legislation of the other House; and

''(II) the legislation of the other House shall immediately be considered by the receiving House under the same procedures applicable to legislation reported by or discharged from a committee under this paragraph.

''Upon disposition of legislation that is received by one House from the other House, it shall no longer be in order to consider the legislation that was introduced in the receiving House.

''(iii) SENATE VOTE REQUIREMENT.—Legislation under this paragraph shall only be approved in the Senate if affirmed by the votes of 3/5 of the Senators duly chosen and sworn. If legislation in the Senate has not reached final passage within 10 days after the motion to proceed is agreed to (excluding periods in which the Senate is in recess) it shall be in order for the Majority Leader to file a cloture petition on the legislation or amendments thereto, in accordance with rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate. If such a cloture motion on the legislation fails, is shall be in order for the Majority Leader to proceed to other business and the legislation shall be returned to or placed on the Senate calendar.

''(iv) CONSIDERATION IN CONFERENCE.—Immediately upon a final passage of the legislation that results in a disagreement between the two Houses of Congress with respect to the legislation, conferees shall be appointed and a conference convened. Not later than 15 days after the date on which conferees are appointed (excluding periods in which one or both Houses are in recess), the conferees shall file a report with the House of Representatives and the Senate resolving the differences between the Houses on the legislation. Notwithstanding any other rule of the House of Representatives or the Senate, it shall be in order to immediately consider a report of a committee of conference on the legislation filed in accordance with this subclause. Debate in the House of Representatives and the Senate on the conference report shall be limited to 10 hours, equally divided and controlled by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives or their designees and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate or their designees. A vote on final passage of the conference report shall occur immediately at the conclusion or yielding back of all time for debate on the conference report. The conference report shall be approved in the Senate only if affirmed by the votes of 3/5 of the Senators duly chosen and sworn.

''(C) RULES OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—This paragraph is enacted by Congress—

''(i) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively, and is deemed to be part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of legislation under this paragraph, and it supersedes other rules only to the extent that it is inconsistent with such rules; and

''(ii) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as they relate to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

''(5) FALLBACK RATING RULES.—For purposes of paragraph (3), the fallback rating rules are as follows:

''(A) PROGRAM.—

''(i) RATING RULES.—A health insurance issuer that enters into a contract under the program under this title shall determine the amount of premiums to assess for coverage under a health benefits plan based on a community rate that may be annually adjusted only—

''(I) based on the age of covered individuals (subject to clause (iii));

''(II) based on the geographic area involved if the adjustment is based on geographical divisions that are not smaller than a metropolitan statistical area and the issuer provides evidence of geographic variation in cost of services;

''(III) based on industry (subject to clause (iv))

''(IV) based on tobacco use; and

''(V) based on whether such coverage is for an individual, 2 adults in a household, 1 adult and 1 or more children, or a family.

''(ii) LIMITATION.—Premium rates charged for coverage under the program under this title shall not vary based on health-status related factors, gender, class of business, or claims experience or any other factor not described in clause (i).

''(iii) AGE ADJUSTMENTS.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—With respect to clause (i)(I), in making adjustments based on age, the Administrator shall establish not more than 5 age brackets to be used by a health insurance issuer in establishing rates for individuals under the age of 65. The rates for any age bracket shall not exceed 300 percent of the rate for the lowest age bracket. Age-related premiums may not vary within age brackets.

''(II) AGES 65 AND OLDER.—With respect to clause (i)(I), a health insurance issuer may develop separate rates for covered individuals who are 65 years of age or older for whom the primary payor for health benefits coverage is the medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act, for the coverage of health benefits that are not otherwise covered under medicare.

''(iv) INDUSTRY ADJUSTMENT.—With respect to clause (i)(III), in making adjustments based on industry, the rates for any industry shall not exceed 115 percent of the rate for the lowest industry and shall be based on evidence of industry variation in cost of services.

''(B) STATE RATING RULES.—State rating requirements shall apply to health insurance coverage purchased in the small group market, except that a State shall not permit premium rates to vary based on health-status related factors.

''(6) STATE WITH LESS PREMIUM VARIATION.—Effective beginning in calendar year 2013, in the case of a State that provides a rating variance with respect to age that is less than the Federal limit established under paragraph (2)(B) or (3) or that provides for some form of community rating, or that provides a rating variance with respect to industry that is less than the Federal limit established under paragraph (2)(B) or (3), or that provides a rating variance with respect to the geographic area involved that is less than the Federal limit established in paragraph (2)(B) or (3), premium rates charged for health insurance coverage under this title in such State with respect to such factor shall reflect the rating requirements of such State.

''(7) EMPLOYEE CHOICE.—

''(A) CALENDAR YEARS 2011 AND 2012.—With respect to calendar years 2011 and 2012 (open enrollment periods beginning October 1, 2010, and October 1, 2011), in the case of a State that applies community rating or adjusted community rating where any age bracket does not exceed 300 percent of the lowest age bracket, employees of an employer located in that State may elect to enroll in any health plan offered under this title.

''(B) SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—Beginning in calendar year 2013 (open enrollment periods beginning October 1, 2012, and thereafter), employees of an employer that participates in the program under this title may elect to enroll in any health plan offered under this title.

''(C) EXCEPTION.—In any State or year in which an employee is not able to select a health plan as provided for in subparagraph (A) or (B), the employer shall select the health plan or plans that shall be made available to the employees of such employer.

''(8) STATE APPROVAL OF RATES.—State laws requiring the approval of rates with respect to health insurance shall continue to apply to health insurance coverage under this title in such State unless the State fails to enforce the application of rates that would otherwise apply to health insurance issuers under the program under this title.

''(e) BENEFITS.—

''(1) STATEMENT OF BENEFITS.—Each contract under this title shall contain a detailed statement of benefits offered and shall include information concerning such maximums, limitations, exclusions, and other definitions of benefits as the Administrator considers necessary or reasonable.

''(2) NATIONWIDE PLANS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of contracts with health insurance issuers that offer a health benefit plan on a nationwide basis, in the first year after the date of enactment of this title, the benefit package shall include benefits established by the Administrator.

''(B) PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING BENEFITS FOR NATIONWIDE PLANS.—The benefits provide for under subparagraph (A) shall be determined as follows:

''(i) Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this title, the Secretary shall enter into a contract with the Institute of Medicine to develop a minimum set of benefits to be offered by nationwide plans.

''(ii) In developing such minimum set of benefits, the Institute of Medicine shall convene public forums to allow input from key stakeholders (including small businesses, self-employed individuals, employees of small businesses, health insurance issuers, insurance regulators, health care providers, and patient advocates) and shall consult with the Small Business Health Board.

''(iii) The Institute of Medicine shall consider—

''(I) the clinical appropriateness and effectiveness of the benefits covered;

''(II) the affordability of the benefits covered;

''(III) the financial protection of enrollees against high health care expenses;

''(IV) access to necessary health care services; and

''(V) benefits similar to those available in the small group market on the date of enactment of this title.

''(iv) The benefits package shall not be discriminatory or be likely to promote or induce adverse selection.

''(v) The Administrator shall publish the benefits recommended by the Institute of Medicine for public comment.

''(vi) Based on the comments received, the Administrator may make changes only to the extent that the recommendation from the Institute of Medicine is not consistent with the criteria contained in clause (iii) or there is a compelling need for the changes to ensure the effective functioning of the program.

''(C) CHANGES TO BENEFITS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—By a vote of a two-thirds majority, the Small Business Health Board may recommend to the Administrator changes to the benefit package for nationwide plans under this paragraph for years subsequent to the first year in which such benefits are in effect.

''(ii) REDUCTION IN BENEFITS.—The Administrator may reduce benefits that were previously covered under this paragraph only if—

''(I) two-thirds of the Small Business Health Board recommend such change; or

''(II) there is a compelling need for the change to prevent a substantial reduction in participation in the program under this title.

''(f) ADDITIONAL PREMIUM FOR DELAYED ENROLLMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A self-employed individual who is eligible to participate in the program under this title, who does not reside in a State where a self-employed individual is eligible for coverage in the small group market, and who does not elect to enroll in coverage under such program in the first year in which the self-employed individual is eligible to so enroll, shall be subject to an additional premium for delayed enrollment.

''(2) AMOUNT.—The Administrator shall establish the amount of the additional premium under paragraph (1), which shall be the amount determined by the Administrator to be actuarially appropriate, to encourage enrollment, and to reduce adverse selection. The amount of the additional premium shall be calculated by the Administrator based on the number of years specified in paragraph (4).

''(3) PAYMENT.—A self-employed individual shall pay the additional premium under this subsection, if any, for a period of time equal to the number of years specified in paragraph (4). After the expiration of such period the additional premium for delayed enrollment shall be terminated.

''(4) YEARS.—The number of years specified in this paragraph is the number of years that the self-employed individual involved was eligible to participate in the program under this title but did not enroll in coverage under such program and did not otherwise have creditable coverage (as defined for purposes of section 2701(c)).

''(g) STATE ENFORCEMENT.—

''(1) STATE AUTHORITY.—With respect to the enforcement of provisions in this title that supersede State law (as described in paragraph (2)), a State may require that health insurance issuers that issue, sell, renew, or offer health insurance coverage in the State in the small group market or through the program under this title, comply with the requirements of this title with respect to such issuers.

''(2) PROVISIONS DESCRIBED.—The provisions described in this paragraph shall include the following:

''(A) Prohibitions on varying premium rates based on health-status related factors (subsections (d)(1)(A) and (B) of section 3007).

''(B) The implementation of rating requirements that shall apply to the program under this title beginning in calendar year 2013 (subsections (d)(2)(B) and (d)(3) of section 3007).

''(C) Benefit requirements for nationwide plans available in the program under this title (subsection (e)).

''(3) FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT OR ENFORCE PROVISIONS.—In the case of a determination by the Secretary that a State has failed to substantially enforce a provision (or provisions) described in paragraph (2) with respect to health insurance issuers in the State, the Secretary shall enforce such provision (or provisions).

''(4) SECRETARIAL ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary shall have the same authority in relation to the enforcement of the provisions of this title with respect to issuers of health insurance coverage in a State as the Secretary has under section 2722(b)(2) in relation to the enforcement of the provisions of part A of title XXVII with respect to issuers of health insurance coverage in the small group market in the State.

''(h) STATE OPT OUT.—A State may prohibit small employers and self-employed individuals in the State from participating in the program under this title if the State—

''(1) defines its small group market to include groups of one (so that self-employed individuals are eligible for coverage in such market);

''(2) prohibits the use of health-status related factors and other factors described in subsection (d)(5)(A);

''(3) has in effect rating rules that—

''(A) in calendar years 2011 and 2012, comply with subsection (d)(5)(A); and

''(B) in calendar year 2013 and thereafter, comply with subsection (d)(2)(B) or (d)(3), whichever is in effect for such calendar year; except that such rules may impose limits on rating variation in addition to those provided for in such subsection;

''(4) maintains a State-wide purchasing pool that provides purchasers in the small group market a choice of health benefit plans, with comparative information provided concerning such plans and the premiums charged for such plans made available through the Internet; and

''(5) enacts a law to request an opt out under this subsection.

''SEC. 3008. ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION BY HEALTH INSURANCE ISSUERS THROUGH ADJUSTMENTS FOR RISK.

''(a) APPLICATION OF RISK CORRIDORS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—This section shall only apply to health insurance issuers with respect to health benefits plans offered under this Act during any of calendar years 2011 through 2013.

''(2) NOTIFICATION OF COSTS UNDER THE PLAN.—In the case of a health insurance issuer that offers a health benefits plan under this title in any of calendar years 2011 through 2013, the issuer shall notify the Administrator, before such date in the succeeding year as the Administrator specifies, of the total amount of costs incurred in providing benefits under the health benefits plan for the year involved and the portion of such costs that is attributable to administrative expenses.

''(3) ALLOWABLE COSTS DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, the term 'allowable costs' means, with respect to a health benefits plan offered by a health insurance issuer under this title, for a year, the total amount of costs described in paragraph (2) for the plan and year, reduced by the portion of such costs attributable to administrative expenses incurred in providing the benefits described in such paragraph.

''(b) ADJUSTMENT OF PAYMENT.—

''(1) NO ADJUSTMENT IF ALLOWABLE COSTS WITHIN 3 PERCENT OF TARGET AMOUNT.—If the allowable costs for the health insurance issuer with respect to the health benefits plan involved for a calendar year are at least 97 percent, but do not exceed 103 percent, of the target amount for the plan and year involved, there shall be no payment adjustment under this section for the plan and year.

''(2) INCREASE IN PAYMENT IF ALLOWABLE COSTS ABOVE 103 PERCENT OF TARGET AMOUNT.—

''(A) COSTS BETWEEN 103 AND 108 PERCENT OF TARGET AMOUNT.—If the allowable costs for the health insurance issuer with respect to the health benefits plan involved for the year are greater than 103 percent, but not greater than 108 percent, of the target amount for the plan and year, the Administrator shall reimburse the issuer for such excess costs through payment to the issuer of an amount equal to 75 percent of the difference between such allowable costs and 103 percent of such target amount.

''(B) COSTS ABOVE 108 PERCENT OF TARGET AMOUNT.—If the allowable costs for the health insurance issuer with respect to the health benefits plan involved for the year are greater than 108 percent of the target amount for the plan and year, the Administrator shall reimburse the issuer for such excess costs through payment to the issuer in an amount equal to the sum of—

''(i) 3.75 percent of such target amount; and

''(ii) 90 percent of the difference between such allowable costs and 108 percent of such target amount.

''(3) REDUCTION IN PAYMENT IF ALLOWABLE COSTS BELOW 97 PERCENT OF TARGET AMOUNT.—

''(A) COSTS BETWEEN 92 AND 97 PERCENT OF TARGET AMOUNT.—If the allowable costs for the health insurance issuer with respect to the health benefits plan involved for the year are less than 97 percent, but greater than or equal to 92 percent, of the target amount for the plan and year, the issuer shall be required to pay into a contingency reserve fund established and maintained by the Administrator, an amount equal to 75 percent of the difference between 97 percent of the target amount and such allowable costs.

''(B) COSTS BELOW 92 PERCENT OF TARGET AMOUNT.—If the allowable costs for the health insurance issuer with respect to the health benefits plan involved for the year are less than 92 percent of the target amount for the plan and year, the issuer shall be required to pay into the contingency fund established under subparagraph (A), an amount equal to the sum of—

''(i) 3.75 percent of such target amount; and

''(ii) 90 percent of the difference between 92 percent of such target amount and such allowable costs.

''(4) TARGET AMOUNT DESCRIBED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'target amount' means, with respect to a health benefits plan offered by an issuer under this title in any of calendar years 2011 through 2013, an amount equal to—

''(i) the total of the monthly premiums estimated by the health insurance issuer and accepted by the Administrator to be paid for enrollees in the plan under this title for the calendar year involved; reduced by

''(ii) the amount of administrative expenses that the issuer estimates, and the Administrator accepts, will be incurred by the issuer with respect to the plan for such calendar year.

''(B) SUBMISSION OF TARGET AMOUNT.—Not later than December 31, 2010, and each December 31 thereafter through calendar year

2012, an issuer shall submit to the Administrator a description of the target amount for such issuer with respect to health benefits plans provided by the issuer under this title.

''(c) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each contract under this title shall provide—

''(A) that a health insurance issuer offering a health benefits plan under this title shall provide the Administrator with such information as the Administrator determines is necessary to carry out this subsection including the notification of costs under subsection (a)(2) and the target amount under subsection (b)(4)(B); and

''(B) that the Administrator has the right to inspect and audit any books and records of the issuer that pertain to the information regarding costs provided to the Administrator under such subsections.

''(2) RESTRICTION ON USE OF INFORMATION.—Information disclosed or obtained pursuant to the provisions of this subsection may be used by the office designated under section 3002(a) and its employees and contractors only for the purposes of, and to the extent necessary in, carrying out this section.

''SEC. 3009. ADMINISTRATION THROUGH REGIONAL OR OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITIES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In order to provide for the administration of the benefits under this title with maximum efficiency and convenience for participating employers and health care providers and other individuals and entities providing services to such employers, the Administrator—

''(1) shall enter into contracts with eligible entities, to the extent appropriate, to perform, on a regional or other basis, activities to receive, disburse, and account for payments of premiums to participating employers by individuals, and for payments by participating employers and employees to health insurance issuers; and

''(2) may enter into contracts with eligible entities, to the extent appropriate, to perform, on a regional or other basis, one or more of the following:

''(A) Collect and maintain all information relating to individuals, families, and employers participating in the program under this title.

''(B) Serve as a channel of communication between health insurance issuers, participating employers, and individuals relating to the administration of this title.

''(C) Otherwise carry out such activities for the administration of this title, in such manner, as may be provided for in the contract entered into under this section.

''(b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a contract under subsection (a), an entity shall prepare and submit to the Administrator an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Administration may require.

''(c) PROCESS.—

''(1) COMPETITIVE BIDDING.—All contracts under this section shall be awarded through a competitive bidding process on a bi-annual basis.

''(2) REQUIREMENT.—No contract shall be entered into with any entity under this section unless the Administrator finds that such entity will perform its obligations under the contract efficiently and effectively and will meet such requirements as to financial responsibility, legal authority, and other matters as the Administrator finds pertinent.

''(3) PUBLICATION OF STANDARDS AND CRITERIA.—If the Administrator enters into contracts under subsection (a), the Administrator shall publish in the Federal Register standards and criteria for the efficient and effective performance of contract obligations under this section, and opportunity shall be provided for public comment prior to implementation. In establishing such standards and criteria, the Administrator shall provide for a system to measure an entity's performance of responsibilities.

''(4) TERM.—Each contract under this section shall be for a term of at least 2 years, and may be made automatically renewable from term to term in the absence of notice by either party of intention to terminate at the end of the current term, except that the Administrator may terminate any such contract at any time (after such reasonable notice and opportunity for hearing to the entity involved as the Administrator may provide in regulations) if the Administrator finds that the entity has failed substantially to carry out the contract or is carrying out the contract in a manner inconsistent with the efficient and effective administration of the program established by this title.

''(d) TERMS OF CONTRACT.—A contract entered into under this section shall include—

''(1) a description of the duties of the contracting entity;

''(2) an assurance that the entity will furnish to the Administrator such timely information and reports as the Administrator determines appropriate;

''(3) an assurance that the entity will maintain such records and afford such access thereto as the Administrator finds necessary to assure the correctness and verification of the information and reports under paragraph (2) and otherwise to carry out the purposes of this title;

''(4) an assurance that the entity shall comply with such confidentiality and privacy protection guidelines and procedures as the Administrator may require;

''(5) an assurance that the entity does not have, and will continue to avoid, any conflicts of interest relative to any functions it will perform; and

''(6) such other terms and conditions not inconsistent with this section as the Administrator may find necessary or appropriate.

''SEC. 3010. PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN AND REPORT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this title, the Administrator shall develop and implement an educational campaign with interagency participation (including at a minimum the Small Business Administration, the Department of Labor, and employees of the office established under section 3002 who oversee the provision of information through navigators) to provide information to employers and the general public concerning the health insurance program developed under this title, including the contact information relating to an individual or individuals who will be available to resolve various types of problems with health insurance coverage provided under this title.

''(b) PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2010.

''(c) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year and 2 years after the implementation of the campaign under subsection (a), the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that describes the activities of the Administrator under subsection (a), including a determination by the Administrator of the percentage of employers with knowledge of the health benefits program under this title.

''SEC. 3011. APPROPRIATIONS.

''There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator such sums as may be necessary in each fiscal year for the development and administration of the program under this title.

''SEC. 3012. EFFECTIVE DATE.

''This title shall take effect on the date of enactment of this title.''.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENT TO ERISA.

Section 514(b)(2) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1144(b)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), the provisions of subsections (d)(1)(B) and (g)(2)(A) of section 3007 of the Public Health Service Act (relating to the prohibition on health-status related rating and the Federal enforcement of such provisions) shall supercede any State law that conflicts with such provisions.''.

SEC. 4. CREDIT FOR SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE EXPENSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart D of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to credits) is amended by inserting after section 45N the following new section:

''SEC. 45O. SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE CREDIT.

''(a) DETERMINATION OF CREDIT.—In the case of a qualified small employer, there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this chapter for the taxable year an amount equal to the credit amount described in subsection (b).

''(b) GENERAL CREDIT AMOUNT.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The credit amount described in this subsection is the product of—

''(A) the amount specified in paragraph (2),

''(B) the employer size factor specified in paragraph (3), and

''(C) the percentage of year factor specified in paragraph (4).

''(2) APPLICABLE AMOUNT.—For purposes of paragraph (1)—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The applicable amount is equal to—

''(i) $1,000 for each employee of the employer who receives self-only health insurance coverage through the employer,

''(ii) $2,000 for each employee of the employer who receives family health insurance coverage through the employer, and

''(iii) $1,500 for each employee of the employer who receives health insurance coverage for two adults or one adult and one or more children through the employer.

''(B) BONUS FOR PAYMENT OF GREATER PERCENTAGE OF PREMIUMS.—The applicable amount otherwise specified in subparagraph (A) shall be increased by $200 in the case of subparagraph (A)(i), $400 in the case of subparagraph (A)(ii), and $300 in the case of subparagraph (A)(iii), for each additional 10 percent of the qualified employee health insurance expenses exceeding 60 percent which are paid by the qualified small employer.

''(3) EMPLOYER SIZE FACTOR.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the employer size factor is the percentage determined in accordance with the following table:

''If the employer size is:	The percentage is:
10 or fewer full-time employees	100%
More than 10 but not more than 20 full-time employees	80%
More than 20 but not more than 30 full-time employees	60%

''If the employer size is:	The percentage is:
More than 30 but not more than 40 full-time employees	40%
More than 40 but not more than 50 full-time employees	20%
More than 50 full-time employees	0%

''(4) PERCENTAGE OF YEAR FACTOR.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the percentage of year factor is equal to the ratio of—

''(A) the number of months during the taxable year for which the employer paid or incurred qualified employee health insurance expenses, and

''(B) 12.

''(c) DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) QUALIFIED SMALL EMPLOYER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified small employer' means any employer (as defined in section 3001(a)(4) of the Public Health Service Act) which—

''(i) either—

''(I) purchases health insurance coverage for its employees in a small group market in a State which meets the requirements under subparagraph (B), or

''(II) with respect to any taxable year beginning after 2010, is a participating employer (as defined in section 3001(a)(8) of such Act) in the program under title XXX of such Act,

''(ii) pays or incurs at least 60 percent of the qualified employee health insurance expenses of such employer or is self-employed, and

''(iii) employed an average of 50 or fewer full-time employees during the preceding taxable year or was a self-employed individual with either not less than $5,000 in net earnings or not less than $15,000 in gross earnings from self-employment in the preceding taxable year.

''(B) STATE SMALL GROUP MARKET REQUIREMENTS.—A State meets the requirements of this subparagraph if—

''(i) during calendar years 2009 and 2010, the State—

''(I) defines its small group market to include groups of one (so that self-employed individuals are eligible for coverage in such market),

''(II) prohibits the use of health-status related factors and other factors described in section 3007(d)(5)(A) of such Act, and

''(III) has in effect rating rules that comply with section 3007(d)(5)(A) of such Act (except that such rules may impose limits on rating variation in addition to those provided for in such section),

''(ii) during calendar years 2011 and 2012, the State—

''(I) meets the requirements under clause (i), and

''(II) maintains a State-wide purchasing pool that provides purchasers in the small group market a choice of health benefit plans, with comparative information provided concerning such plans and the premiums charged for such plans made available through the Internet, and

''(iii) for calendar years after 2012, the State—

''(I) meets the requirements under clauses (i)(I), (i)(II), and (ii)(II), and

''(II) has in effect rating rules that comply with paragraph (2)(B) or (3) of section 3007(d) of such Act, whichever is in effect for such calendar year (except that such rules may impose limits on rating variation in addition to those provided for in such section).

''(2) QUALIFIED EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE EXPENSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified employee health insurance expenses' means any amount paid by an employer or an employee of such employer for health insurance coverage under such Act to the extent such amount is attributable to coverage—

''(i) provided to any employee (as defined in subsection 3001(a)(3) of such Act), or

''(ii) for the employer, in the case of a self-employed individual.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR AMOUNTS PAID UNDER SALARY REDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS.—No amount paid or incurred for health insurance coverage pursuant to a salary reduction arrangement shall be taken into account under subparagraph (A).

''(3) FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE.—The term 'full-time employee' means, with respect to any period, an employee (as defined in section 3001(a)(3) of such Act) of an employer if the average number of hours worked by such employee in the preceding taxable year for such employer was at least 35 hours per week.

''(d) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For each taxable year after 2009, the dollar amounts specified in subsections (b)(2)(A), (b)(2)(B), and (c)(1)(A)(iii) (after the application of this paragraph) shall be the amounts in effect in the preceding taxable year or, if greater, the product of—

''(A) the corresponding dollar amount specified in such subsection, and

''(B) the ratio of the index of wage inflation (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) for August of the preceding calendar year to such index of wage inflation for August of 2008.

''(2) ROUNDING.—If any amount determined under paragraph (1) is not a multiple of $100, such amount shall be rounded to the next lowest multiple of $100.

''(e) APPLICATION OF CERTAIN RULES IN DETERMINATION OF EMPLOYER SIZE.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) APPLICATION OF AGGREGATION RULE FOR EMPLOYERS.—All persons treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 shall be treated as 1 employer.

''(2) EMPLOYERS NOT IN EXISTENCE IN PRECEDING YEAR.—In the case of an employer which was not in existence for the full preceding taxable year, the determination of whether such employer meets the requirements of this section shall be based on the average number of full-time employees that it is reasonably expected such employer will employ on business days in the employer's first full taxable year.

''(3) PREDECESSORS.—Any reference in this subsection to an employer shall include a reference to any predecessor of such employer.

''(f) COORDINATION WITH ADVANCE PAYMENTS OF CREDIT.—With respect to any taxable year, the amount which would (but for this subsection) be allowed as a credit to the taxpayer under subsection (a) shall be reduced by the aggregate amount paid on behalf of such taxpayer under section 7527A for months beginning in such taxable year. If the amount determined under this subsection is less than zero, the taxpayer shall owe additional tax in such amount under this chapter.

''(g) CREDITS FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—Any credit which would be allowable under subsection (a) with respect to a qualified small business if such qualified small business were not exempt from tax under this chapter shall be treated as a credit allowable under this subpart to such qualified small business.''.

(b) ADVANCE PAYMENTS OF CREDIT.—Chapter 77 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 7527 the following new section:

''SEC. 7527A. ADVANCE PAYMENT OF CREDIT FOR HEALTH INSURANCE COSTS FOR QUALIFIED SMALL EMPLOYERS.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—Not later than December 31, 2008, the Secretary shall establish a program for making monthly payments on behalf of qualified small employers to the program established under title XXX of the Public Health Service Act. The amount of the monthly payment for a qualified small employer shall be one twelfth of the amount of the credit for the tax year to which the qualified small employer is entitled under section 36. If a monthly payment is made by the Secretary for which the employer is not entitled to a corresponding credit, the employer shall owe additional tax in such amount under this chapter.

''(b) QUALIFIED SMALL EMPLOYER.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified small employer' has the meaning given such term in section 36(c)(1).''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The table of sections for subpart D of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

''Sec. 45O. Small business employee health insurance credit.''.

(2) The table of sections for chapter 77 of such Code is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7527 the following new item:

''Sec. 7527A. Advance payment of credit for health insurance costs for qualified small employers.''.

(d) DEDUCTIBILITY.—The payment of premiums by a participating employer under this Act shall be considered to be an ordinary and necessary expense in carrying on a trade or business for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and shall be deductible.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to amounts paid or incurred in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2008.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to join with my colleagues Senators DURBIN, COLEMAN, and LINCOLN, to introduce the landmark Small Business Health Options Program Act of 2008 or the SHOP Act because after more than 10 years of discussion in Congress of this No. 1 priority for America's small businesses, this bill should finally be the vehicle that brings us to the finish line in passing legislation that's critical not only to our small businesses but also to millions of America's uninsured.

This compromise proposal represents the culmination of 15 months of coming together, of reaching across the partisan divide, to fashion a workable solution to pass this year. So I want to thank Assistant Majority Leader DURBIN for his steadfast and stalwart leadership on this issue—he has been a true champion in this cause—and Senator LINCOLN, my esteemed colleague on the Senate Finance Committee—she and I had pledged to work together on small business health insurance at the start of this Congress—for her remarkable

dedication to making this moment possible. I also thank Senator COLEMAN, who recently held a Small Business Committee field hearing on health insurance reform in St. Paul, Minnesota, for joining us and for his staunch support of our Nation's small businesses.

As former chair and now ranking member of the Senate Small Business Committee, if there is one concern I have heard time and again—from small businesses in Maine and across the country—it is the exorbitant cost to small businesses of providing health insurance to their employees. Throughout America, health insurance premiums have increased by a staggering 78 percent since 2001—far outpacing inflation and wage gains. In Maine, annual premiums in the small group market now average an astronomical $4,868 for individual coverage and $14,605 for a family plan. Just recently a group of Maine small businesses told me that, incredibly, the most ''affordable'' insurance policies available to them included a $636 monthly premium with a $2,500 annual deductible

This is just simply unacceptable. And the reality of these unreal increases is that it perpetuates a vicious cycle of spiraling costs and declining access—as fewer and fewer small businesses can afford to offer health insurance to their employees. Today, only 45 percent of our smallest businesses are able to provide this workplace benefit—a 13-percent drop from 2002. No wonder that nearly 9 out of 10 to firms told the National Association of Manufacturers last year that the cost of health insurance is one of their top-three concerns—even above Government regulations and foreign competition. And when you couple all this with the fact there are already around 47 million uninsured in America, shouldn't we be helping to add to the rolls of the insured, rather than the uninsured? What exactly is there not to get when the status quo absolutely makes no sense?

That is why in the 108th and 109th Congresses, when I was chair of the Small Business Committee, I championed a Small Business Health Insurance Plan bill the full Senate considered back in May 2006—thanks largely to the stewardship of Senator ENZI—and we came up just a handful of votes short. At the same time, Senators DURBIN and LINCOLN advocated for a different approach, the Small Employer Health Benefits Program. Yet, regrettably, Congress has failed to muster the bipartisan support to pass either of these measures—despite overwhelming public support, on both sides of the aisle, to pass something.

Well, the clock has been ticking for far too long for America's small businesses—and with this bill, we believe their hour may have finally arrived because with the SHOP Act, we blend the best of the previous approaches and address the major concerns critics have expressed in a package that both the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the National Association of Realtors, and the Service Employees International Union agree on—and that is what I call a diverse base of support that speaks volumes for this bill's chances for success.

In short, we make health insurance more affordable and accessible by encouraging development of State-based purchasing pools backstopped by a voluntary, nationwide small business risk pool. The SHOP Act maintains the basic premise of allowing small businesses and the self-employed to pool together, across State lines—just as larger employers are able to do—to secure quality coverage that is more affordable, thanks to a reduction in administrative costs, which today account for an astonishing 25 percent of small business premiums—compared to just 10 percent for large employers.

So the creation of these purchasing pools will increase competition among insurers and provide more coverage choices for small businesses. And that is all the more critical as small group insurance markets—like those in Maine—currently have no real competition. In fact, the largest insurers now control 43 percent of the small group markets, and in Maine, a sum total of 4 large insurers now control 98 percent of the small group market. This cannot be allowed to continue because no competition means higher costs. Higher costs mean no health insurance. And we need more insured in America, not fewer.

Moreover, under the SHOP Act, business and trade associations would serve as health plan ''navigators,'' helping employers and employees alike with enrollment in health insurance plans and in responding to questions and distributing information about SHOP. And to assist small employers who offer health insurance, we provide a targeted tax credit of up to $1,000 for each covered employee, and $2,000 for family coverage—with a bonus credit for employers who contribute more than 60 percent of the premium—encouraging our Nation's smallest businesses to offer health insurance for their employees as a workplace benefit.

But perhaps most significantly, what this bill does that others have not is it resolves the persistent policy concerns that have thwarted previous attempts to pass small business health insurance legislation in the Senate.

As we know, some have voiced concern that small business health insurance plans could offer stripped-down, ''bare-bones'' coverage plans that would leave out such key benefits as cancer screenings, diabetic supplies, mammograms, and maternity care. Well, we agree and we address this concern by requiring SHOP's nationwide plans to meet or exceed a minimum benefit ''floor'' to be developed by the nonpartisan and highly respected National Academies of Science's Institute of Medicine—based on clinically appropriate and affordable practices in today's small group market. So this issue of coverage should no longer be a legitimate roadblock.

Others have said that small business health insurance legislation could drive up premium costs for all those who don't participate in these new small business plans because these plans would be playing by different and more advantageous rules. They have been concerned that, as a result, companies would set up plans that would attract a healthier pool of individuals—who would pay lower premiums—while potentially relegating the less healthy to existing group or individual plans that would then have to raise premiums.

So we worked closely with the nonpartisan National Association of Insurance Commissioners to create strong incentives for states to ensure a level playing field for all plans—both inside and outside of SHOP. We say, if you want the small businesses in your State to be eligible for that targeted tax credit of up to $1,000 for individual employees and $2,000 for family coverage that's included in our bill, you must have rules prohibiting ''health status'' as a factor for varying insurance and reducing excessive variations for other factors. As an additional benefit to the self-employed, States must also ensure that those individuals have the option to purchase a small group plan—rather than being left with only the far more expensive option of the individual insurance market.

Still others have expressed concerns about a potential role of the Federal Government in insurance regulation, which has traditionally been left to the States. So under the SHOP Act, we ensure that State insurance commissioners—not the Federal Government—would handle all consumer complaints about health plans and would be responsible for ensuring that all SHOP health plans operating in their State meet State requirements for financial solvency and for grievance claim and appeals procedures.

In conclusion, for all of these reasons I firmly believe they Small Business Health Options Program Act represents our best hope for achieving passage this Congress. By addressing the major concerns about previous legislation, frankly there is now no longer any good reason we cannot make it happen. I look forward to working with Chairman BAUCUS and Ranking Member GRASSLEY on the Finance Committee to consider this bipartisan measure, so it can be passed by the full Senate.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 2796. A bill to require a pilot program on the use of community-based organizations to ensure that veterans receive the care and benefits they need, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce legislation today that will help the Department of Veterans Affairs reach out to underserved veterans, through collaboration with community organizations.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is the second largest cabinet level Federal department, operating the Nation's largest health care system. VA provides benefits and health care to millions of veterans and their families every year. Without question, VA helps countless veterans through its various programs every day, largely thanks to its employees, who make it their mission to serve those who served their country honorably.

Unfortunately, while VA makes a positive impact on the veterans it serves, many others are left underserved. Far too often, these are veterans already in difficult circumstances, those who could benefit most from VA support. For example, veterans from rural areas must do without the kind of local support systems urban and suburban veterans often enjoy. Many veterans from racial and ethnic minority groups also remain underserved by VA, regardless of their physical proximity to veterans' programs.

More must be done for these veterans, who look at VA and see a system either out of reach or out of touch. The legislation I have introduced today pursues one potential solution: VA partnerships with community based organizations.

If enacted, this bill would require VA to work with community based organizations to reach out to veterans who are underserved. Five community organizations, chosen by VA, would be selected for pilot partnerships. Special consideration would be given to rural communities and areas with a high proportion of minorities and other underserved veterans. The five pilots, each in partnership with a VA medical center, would focus on providing support to their underserved group by helping servicemembers transition from military service to veteran status, and helping them navigate the complicated veterans' health care and benefits system. Also, the pilot programs would reach out to the families of veterans, in recognition of the central role that families play in helping veterans readjust and reintegrate.

As Mental Health America, the country's oldest and largest mental health nonprofit, has pointed out, America's newest generation of veterans is returning from combat with invisible wounds that require care. These and other complicated injuries place new challenges on VA to provide the quality health care and benefits veterans have earned through their service. I hope that through the partnerships outlined in this legislation, VA will be better able to provide services to veterans who deserve support, yet are underserved.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 2797. A bill to authorize major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2009, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I introduce legislation requested by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, as a courtesy to the Secretary and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Except in unusual circumstances, it is my practice to introduce legislation requested by the administration so that such measures will be available for review and consideration.

This ''by-request'' bill would authorize $1.87 billion in construction projects in various areas of the country in fiscal year 2009. It also would authorize one new polytrauma center in San Antonio, TX, and upgrades to the polytrauma center in Palo Alto, CA.

The bill would also extend and increase the total authorizations for new VA Medical Centers in Denver, CO, and New Orleans, LA.

Finally, this bill authorizes $60 million in leases for 12 outpatient clinics in various States and territories.

I am introducing this bill for the review and consideration of my colleagues at the request of the administration. As chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have not taken a position on this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill and a transmittal letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2797

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2009 MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects in fiscal year 2009, with each project to be carried out in the amount specified for each project:

(1) Construction of an 80-bed replacement facility in Palo Alto, California, to replace a seismically unsafe acute psychiatric inpatient building, in an amount not to exceed $54,000,000.

(2) Construction of an outpatient clinic to meet the increased demand for diagnostic procedures, ambulatory surgery, and specialty care in Lee County, Florida, in an amount not to exceed $131,800,000.

(3) Seismic corrections to Building 1 at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in an amount not to exceed $225,900,000.

(4) Construction of a facility for a state-of-the-art polytrauma healthcare and rehabilitation center in San Antonio, Texas, in an amount not to exceed $66,000,000.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects in fiscal year 2009, as originally authorized by section 801 of the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–461; 120 Stat. 3442) and as follows with each project to be carried out in the amount specified for that project:

(1) Replacement of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Denver, Colorado, in an amount not to exceed $769,200,000.

(2) Restoration, new construction, or replacement of the medical center facility for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, due to damage from Hurricane Katrina, in an amount not to exceed $625,000,000.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2009 MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility leases in fiscal year 2009 at the locations specified, and in an amount for each lease not to exceed the amount shown for each such location:

(1) For an outpatient clinic, Brandon, Florida, $4,326,000.

(2) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Colorado Springs, Colorado, $3,995,000.

(3) For an outpatient clinic, Eugene, Oregon, $5,826,000.

(4) For expansion of an outpatient clinic, Green Bay, Wisconsin, $5,891,000.

(5) For an outpatient clinic, Greenville, South Carolina, $3,731,000.

(6) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Mansfield, Ohio, $2,212,000.

(7) For a satellite outpatient clinic, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, $6,276,000.

(8) For a community-based outpatient clinic for Southeast Phoenix, Mesa, Arizona, $5,106,000.

(9) For interim research space, Palo Alto, California, $8,636,000.

(10) For expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Savannah, Georgia, $3,168,000.

(11) For a community-based outpatient clinic for Northwest Phoenix, Sun City, Arizona, $2,295,000.

(12) For a primary care annex, Tampa, Florida, $8,652,000.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2009 for the Construction, Major Projects, account—

(1) $477,700,000 for the projects authorized in section 1; and

(2) $1,394,200,000 for projects whose authorization is extended by section 2.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2009 for the Medical Facilities account, $60,114,000 for the leases authorized in section 3.

(c) LIMITATION.—The projects authorized in sections 1 and 2 may only be carried out using—

(1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2009 pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a) of this section;

(2) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2009 that remain available for obligation;

(3) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2009 that remain available for obligation;

(4) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for fiscal year 2009 for a category of activity not specific to a project;

(5) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before 2009 for a category of activity not specific to a project; and

(6) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after 2009 for a category of activity not specific to a project.

SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, February 13, 2008.

Hon. RICHARD B. CHENEY,
President of the Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. VICE PRESIDENT: I am pleased to submit the enclosed draft bill to authorize $1,871,900,000 for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) major facility construction projects for Fiscal Year 2009 and $60,114,000 for major facility leases for Fiscal Year 2009.

Title 38 U.S.C. section 8104(a)(2) requires statutory authorization for all VA major medical facility construction projects and all major medical facility leases prior to the appropriation of funds. In accordance with title 38, the draft bill authorizes six major medical facility construction projects and twelve major medical facility leases. The six major medical facility construction projects are located in: Lee County, Florida; Palo Alto, California; San Antonio, Texas; San Juan, Puerto, Rico; Denver, Colorado; and New Orleans, Louisiana. Previously, Congress authorized funds necessary for Denver and New Orleans under P.L. 109–461. This proposed bill would authorize additional funds necessary to complete the remaining construction for these projects.

The proposed project in Lee County provides a state-of-the-art ambulatory care facility which is expected to improve the ''quality of life'' of the veteran population. Needed services for diagnostic procedures, ambulatory surgery, and specialty care will be provided in response to these areas being identified as service shortfalls in the CARES analysis. The proposed project in Palo Alto is required to replace a functionally deficient and seismically unsafe acute psychiatric inpatient building. This will be accomplished by constructing an approximately 80–bed replacement facility. The proposed project in San Antonio is for a state-of-the-art polytrauma healthcare and rehabilitation center that will include patient ward space and transitional housing space. The proposed project in San Juan will provide needed seismic corrections to Building 1 at the VA Medical Center.

The proposed project in Denver will provide a replacement facility near the University of Colorado, Fitzsimons campus. The project will accommodate the tertiary, secondary and primary care operations for the Eastern Colorado Health Care System. Previous authorization, in the amount of $98,000,000, provided pursuant to P.L. 109–461, only satisfied the cost of land acquisition and some architect engineering costs. Additional authorization is required to complete this project.

The proposed project in New Orleans will reestablish the services in Southeast Louisiana that existed prior to Hurricane Katrina. A tertiary care medical complex will be constructed and will include 200 inpatient beds with 60 nursing home beds. Through P.L. 109–461, this project, as a facility to be co-located with the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans (LSU), was authorized in the amount of $300,000,000; however, additional authorization is required to deliver the project described. Authorization is requested in an amount not to exceed $625,000,000 regardless of whether the project is co-located with LSU as prescribed in P.L. 109–461.

The proposed authorization will allow leases for Outpatient Clinics in Brandon, Florida; Eugene, Oregon; and Greenville, South Carolina. An Outpatient Clinic will be expanded through a lease in Green Bay, Wisconsin. A lease for a Satellite Outpatient Clinic will be acquired in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. Leases for Community Based Outpatient Clinics will be acquired in Colorado Springs, Colorado; Mansfield; Ohio; Mesa, Arizona; and Sun City, Arizona. A lease in Savannah, Georgia, will expand its Community Based Outpatient Clinic. A lease for Interim Research Space will be acquired in Palo Alto, California. A lease for a Primary Care Annex will be acquired in Tampa, Florida.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that the transmission of this legislative package is in accord with the Administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES B. PEAKE.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida:

S. 2803. A bill to amend the Act entitled ''An Act authorizing associations of producers of aquatic products'' to include persons engaged in the fishery industry as charter boats or recreational fishermen, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President. I rise today to introduce legislation to aid an industry that is vital to the State of Florida and that, like many others in this Nation, is suffering during the current economic downturn: the charter and recreational fishing industry.

I am introducing the Charter and Recreational Fishing Collective Marketing Act of 2008. This bill would allow charter boat and other recreational fishermen to act together in associations for the purposes of catching, producing, and marketing aquatic products. By gaining strength in numbers through such associations, charter and recreational fishermen could negotiate lower prices when purchasing services and products, such as insurance, fuel, ice, and other supplies.

If they choose to do so, this bill would also allow these associations to implement vessel capacity reduction programs—in other words, to buy-out those members who already wish to leave the industry voluntarily but lack the financial wherewithal to do so. These associations could also undertake research, such as scientific monitoring of their fisheries, and in the process help improve conservation and management of fishery resources.

Mr. President, this legislation does nothing more than provide charter and recreational fishermen the same rights and abilities to work collectively that commercial fishermen have enjoyed since 1934. This legislation has no hearing on fishing allocations or related regulations. In light of the great economic challenges that our country is facing, we have an obligation to ensure the viability of industries that support our coastal communities. The Charter and Recreational Fishing Collective Marketing Act of 2008 would help us meet that obligation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2803

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 ''The Charter and Recreational Fishing Collective Marketing Act of 2008''.

SEC. 2. CHARTER BOATS AND RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Act entitled ''An Act authorizing associations of producers of aquatic products'', approved June 25, 1934 (15 U.S.C. 521), is amended—

(1) in the second undesignated paragraph, by inserting ''and recreational'' after ''includes all commercial''; and

(2) by inserting after the first undesignated paragraph the following:

''Persons engaged in the fishery industry, as charter boat or recreational fishermen catching aquatic products, may act together in associations, corporate or otherwise, with or without capital stock, in collectively catching, producing, and marketing such aquatic products, including implementing a vessel capacity reduction program, improving the operational and economic efficiency of a fishery, undertaking research, and improving the conservation and management of a fishery resource.''.

(b) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or the amendments made by this section shall be construed to diminish or supersede any authority or provision of the Magnuson-Sevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.).

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. MARTINEZ):

S. 2804. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Everglades National Park, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2804

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 ''Everglades National Park Boundary Adjustment Act of 2008''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) the Tarpon Basin property proposed for acquisition by the Secretary (acting through the Director of the National Park Service) contains habitat for—

(A) the wood stork and the West Indian manatee, each of which is listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); and

(B) the roseate spoonbill and the white-crowned pigeon, each of which is listed as a threatened species by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission;

(2) the Tarpon Basin property also includes approximately 10 acres of subtropical hardwood hammock, a habitat found only in South Florida and the Florida Keys;

(3) more than 70 percent of the hardwood hammock in South Key Largo has been lost to development; and

(4) vessel owners often anchor the vessels of the owners in a saltwater pond—

(A) that is located within the Tarpon Basin property; and

(B) to protect the vessels from tropical storms and hurricanes.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) HURRICANE HOLE.—The term ''Hurricane Hole'' means the saltwater pond that—

(A) is located east of the Intracoastal Waterway as the Waterway passes through Dusenbury Creek; and

(B) has been used historically to moor sailboats during tropical storms and hurricanes.

(2) MAP.—The term ''map'' means the map entitled ''Proposed Tarpon Basin Boundary Revision'' and dated April 14, 2003.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(4) TARPON BASIN PROPERTY.—The term ''Tarpon Basin property'' means the land that—

(A) is comprised of approximately 600 acres of land and water surrounding Tarpon Basin, as generally depicted on the map; and

(B) is located in South Key Largo.

SEC. 4. BOUNDARY REVISION.

(a) BOUNDARY REVISION.—The boundary of the Everglades National Park is adjusted to include the Tarpon Basin property.

(b) ACQUISITION AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with paragraph (2), the Secretary may acquire, through a voluntary donation, sale, or exchange, any land or interest in land that is located in the Tarpon Basin property.

(2) REQUIREMENT RELATING TO SALES.—With respect to a sale to acquire any land or interest in land under paragraph (1) that is located in the Tarpon Basin property, the Secretary may only use donated or appropriated funds.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(d) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall administer each land and water added to the Everglades National Park by subsection (a), or through a voluntary donation, sale, or exchange under subsection (b)—

(1) as part of the Everglades National Park; and

(2) in accordance with applicable laws (including regulations).

SEC. 5. USE OF HURRICANE HOLE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO ISSUE PERMITS.—The Secretary may issue a permit to any owner of a sailing vessel who, before the date of enactment of this Act, had secured the sailing vessel of the owner in Hurricane Hole to protect the sailing vessel from a tropical storm or hurricane.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—

(1) EVIDENCE OF PRIOR USE.—To be eligible to receive a permit under subsection (a), an owner of a sailing vessel shall provide to the Secretary evidence that the Secretary determines to be sufficient to establish that the owner of the sailing vessel had, before the date of enactment of this Act, secured the sailing vessel of the owner in Hurricane Hole to protect the vessel from a tropical storm or hurricane.

(2) INDEMNITY REQUIREMENT.—To be eligible to receive a permit under subsection (a), an owner of a sailing vessel shall agree to hold the United States harmless, and to indemnify the United States from any claim or damage that may arise from any activity conducted under the permit (including damage to the sailing vessel that is the subject of the permit).

(c) CONDITIONS OF PERMIT.—

(1) SAILING VESSELS.—A permit issued under subsection (a) shall be valid only for a sailing vessel.

(2) TRANSFERABILITY.—A permit issued under subsection (a) shall not be transferrable.

(3) EXPIRATION.—A permit issued under subsection (a) shall expire on the date of the death of the holder of the permit.

(d) PROTECTION OF RESOURCES.—

(1) AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.—The Secretary may include in a permit issued under subsection (a) any term or condition that the Secretary determines to be necessary—

(A) to protect the resources of the Everglades National Park; and

(B) to ensure the safety of the public at the Everglades National Park.

(2) BOND.—To accomplish each goal described in paragraph (1), the Secretary may require each holder of a permit issued under subsection (a) to post a bond.

(e) FEES.—The Secretary may charge a fee to recover the cost of issuing, and monitoring the compliance of, the permits under subsection (a).

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

By Mr. BINGAMAN:

S. 2805. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, to assess the irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos in the State of New Mexico and provide grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements with, the Rio Grande Pueblos to repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct existing infrastructure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Rio Grande Pueblos Irrigation Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2008. This legislation is based on recommendations made by the 2000 report by the Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs entitled Pueblo Irrigation Facilities Rehabilitation Report. This report identifies the serious needs that exist in rehabilitating Pueblo Indian irrigation infrastructure, and more importantly, the lack of any existing program to meet these challenges.

The 18 Pueblos of the Rio Grande basin have historically sustained themselves through agriculture, irrigating their crops with water from the Rio Grande watershed. However, the number of Pueblo irrigation works in serious disrepair has placed this way of life in jeopardy. In many cases, diversion structures and other facilities are unsafe, barely operable, and wholly inefficient, thereby preventing the irrigation of historical farmland. Despite the time and effort the Pueblo people have committed to operating and maintaining these irrigation systems, the tribes lack the financial and technical resources to carry out the necessary improvements by themselves.

Unfortunately, according to a recent GAO Report on the Bureau of Indian Affairs' irrigation program, it appears that the BIA also lacks the resources necessary to maintain irrigation infrastructure on Indian land. Given this and the BIA's historical lack of attention to the issue, it is clear that the Bureau of Reclamation may be best suited to provide the technical expertise needed to assist the Pueblos. Over the last 5 years, Reclamation has funded a number of water conservation efforts within its irrigation projects in New Mexico. The work that's been done has been highly beneficial, and it's time to include the Rio Grande Pueblos in that effort.

Accordingly, this bill directs the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, to work with the eighteen Pueblos in the Rio Grande basin to assess Pueblo irrigation infrastructure and initiate projects to rehabilitate and repair such infrastructure on Pueblo lands. Moreover, the activity authorized in the bill is consistent with the goals of Reclamation's Water 2025 program. Recognizing the limited resources available within Reclamation, though, the bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to work with BIA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Army Corps of Engineers to identify opportunities to use the authorities of those agencies to collaborate on projects that make sense to all involved.

By focusing Federal resources and expertise on this problem now, the federal government, as part of its trust responsibility, will help prevent further deterioration of Pueblo irrigation systems and any additional rehabilitation costs in the future. The Rio Grande Pueblos will benefit markedly from increased agricultural productivity, increased water conservation, and overall safer facilities. More importantly however, these improvements have the capacity to assist the Pueblos in sustaining their historical way of life, both economically and culturally. Finally, the overall health of the Rio Grande basin will likely benefit through increased efficiency in water use. For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2805

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 ''Rio Grande Pueblos Irrigation Infrastructure Improvement Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) drought, population increases, and environmental needs are exacerbating water supply issues across the western United States, including the Rio Grande Basin in New Mexico;

(2) a report developed by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2000 identified a serious need for the rehabilitation and repair of irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos;

(3) inspection of existing irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos shows that many key facilities, such as diversion structures and main conveyance ditches, are unsafe and barely, if at all, operable;

(4) the benefits of rehabilitating and repairing irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos include—

(A) water conservation;

(B) extending available water supplies;

(C) increased agricultural productivity;

(D) economic benefits;

(E) safer facilities; and

(F) the preservation of the culture of Indian Pueblos in the State;

(5) certain Indian Pueblos in the Rio Grande Basin receive water from facilities operated or owned by the Bureau of Reclamation; and

(6) rehabilitation and repair of irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos would improve—

(A) overall water management by the Bureau of Reclamation; and

(B) the ability of the Bureau of Reclamation to help address potential water supply conflicts in the Rio Grande Basin.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to direct the Secretary—

(1) to assess the condition of the irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos;

(2) to establish priorities for the rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos in accordance with specified criteria; and

(3) to implement projects to rehabilitate and improve the irrigation infrastructure of the Rio Grande Pueblos.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) 2004 AGREEMENT.—The term ''2004 Agreement'' means the agreement entitled ''Agreement By and Between the United States of America and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, Providing for the Payment of Operation and Maintenance Charges on Newly Reclaimed Pueblo Indian Lands in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, New Mexico'' and executed in September 2004 (including any successor agreements and amendments to the agreement).

(2) DESIGNATED ENGINEER.—The term ''designated engineer'' means a Federal employee designated under the Act of February 14, 1927 (69 Stat. 1098, chapter 138) to represent the United States in any action involving the maintenance, rehabilitation, or preservation of the condition of any irrigation structure or facility on land located in the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos.

(3) DISTRICT.—The term ''District'' means the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, a political subdivision of the State established in 1925.

(4) PUEBLO IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term ''Pueblo irrigation infrastructure'' means any diversion structure, conveyance facility, or drainage facility located on land of a Rio Grande Pueblo that is associated with the delivery of water for the irrigation of agricultural land.

(5) RIO GRANDE BASIN.—The term ''Rio Grande Basin'' means the headwaters of the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande Rivers (including any tributaries) from the State line between Colorado and New Mexico downstream to the elevation corresponding with the spillway crest of Elephant Butte Dam at 4,457.3 feet mean sea level.

(6) RIO GRANDE PUEBLO .—The term ''Rio Grande Pueblo'' means any of the 18 Pueblos that—

(A) occupy land in the Rio Grande Basin; and

(B) are included on the list of federally recognized Indian tribes published by the Secretary in accordance with section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 479a–1).

(7) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation.

(8) SIX MIDDLE RIO GRANDE PUEBLOS.—The term ''Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos'' means each of the Pueblos of Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Sandia, and Isleta.

(9) SPECIAL PROJECT.—The term ''special project'' has the meaning given the term in the 2004 Agreement.

(10) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of New Mexico.

SEC. 4. IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in accordance with paragraph (2), and in consultation with the Rio Grande Pueblos, shall—

(A) conduct a study of Pueblo irrigation infrastructure; and

(B) based on the results of the study, develop a list of projects (including a cost estimate for each project), that are recommended to be implemented over a 10–year period to repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct Pueblo irrigation infrastructure.

(2) REQUIRED CONSENT.—The Secretary shall carry out paragraph (1) with the consent of each Pueblo that notifies the Secretary of the intention of the Pueblo to participate in—

(A) the conduct of the study under paragraph (1)(A); and

(B) the development of the list of projects under paragraph (1)(B).

(b) PRIORITY.—

(1) CONSIDERATION OF FACTORS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In developing the list of projects under subsection (a)(1)(B), the Secretary shall—

(i) consider each of the factors described in paragraph (2); and

(ii) prioritize the projects recommended for implementation based on—

(I) a review of each of the factors; and

(II) a consideration of the projected benefits of the project on completion of the project.

(B) ELIGIBILITY OF PROJECTS.—A project is eligible to be considered and prioritized by the Secretary if the project addresses at least 1 factor described in paragraph (2).

(2) FACTORS.—The factors referred to in paragraph (1) are—

(A)(i) the extent of disrepair of the Pueblo irrigation infrastructure; and

(ii) the effect of the disrepair on the ability of the applicable Rio Grande Pueblo to irrigate agricultural land using Pueblo irrigation infrastructure;

(B) whether, and the extent that, the repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of the Pueblo irrigation infrastructure would provide an opportunity to conserve water;

(C)(i) the economic and cultural impacts that the Pueblo irrigation infrastructure that is in disrepair has on the applicable Rio Grande Pueblo; and

(ii) the economic and cultural benefits that the repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of the Pueblo irrigation infrastructure would have on the applicable Rio Grande Pueblo;

(D) the opportunity to address water supply or environmental conflicts in the applicable river basin if the Pueblo irrigation infrastructure is repaired, rehabilitated, or reconstructed; and

(E) the overall benefits of the project to efficient water operations on the land of the applicable Rio Grande Pueblo.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In developing the list of projects under subsection (a)(1)(B), the Secretary shall consult with the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (including the designated engineer with respect to each proposed project that affects the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos), the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Chief of Engineers to evaluate the extent to which programs under the jurisdiction of the respective agencies may be used—

(1) to assist in evaluating projects to repair, rehabilitate, or reconstruct Pueblo irrigation infrastructure; and

(2) to implement—

(A) a project recommended for implementation under subsection (a)(1)(B); or

(B) any other related project (including on-farm improvements) that may be appropriately coordinated with the repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of Pueblo irrigation infrastructure to improve the efficient use of water in the Rio Grande Basin.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(1) the list of projects recommended for implementation under subsection (a)(1)(B); and

(2) any findings of the Secretary with respect to—

(A) the study conducted under subsection (a)(1)(A);

(B) the consideration of the factors under subsection (b)(2); and

(C) the consultations under subsection (c).

(e) BIENNIAL REVIEW.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the Secretary submits the report under subsection (d) and biennially thereafter, the Secretary, in consultation with each Rio Grande Pueblo, shall—

(1) review the report submitted under subsection (d); and

(2) update the list of projects described in subsection (d)(1) in accordance with each factor described in subsection (b)(2), as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

SEC. 5. IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may provide grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements with, the Rio Grande Pueblos to plan, design, construct, or otherwise implement projects to repair, rehabilitate, reconstruct, or replace Pueblo irrigation infrastructure that are recommended for implementation under section 4(a)(1)(B)—

(1) to increase water use efficiency and agricultural productivity for the benefit of a Rio Grande Pueblo;

(2) to conserve water; or

(3) to otherwise enhance water management or help avert water supply conflicts in the Rio Grande Basin.

(b) LIMITATION.—Assistance provided under subsection (a) shall not be used for—

(1) the repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of any major impoundment structure;

(2) any on-farm improvements; or

(3) the rehabilitation of any Pueblo irrigation infrastructure for the purpose of irrigating Rio Grande Pueblo land that has not been historically irrigated.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out a project under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) consult with, and obtain the approval of, the applicable Rio Grande Pueblo;

(2) consult with the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

(3) as appropriate, coordinate the project with any work being conducted under the irrigation operations and maintenance program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(d) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Federal share of the total cost of carrying out a project under subsection (a) shall be not more than 75 percent.

(B) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may waive or limit the non-Federal share required under subparagraph (A) if the Secretary determines, based on a demonstration of financial hardship by the Rio Grande Pueblo, that the Rio Grande Pueblo is unable to contribute the required non-Federal share.

(2) DISTRICT CONTRIBUTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may accept from the District a partial or total contribution toward the non-Federal share required for a project carried out under subsection (a) on land located in any of the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos if the Secretary determines that the project is a special project.

(B) LIMITATION.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) requires the District to contribute to the non-Federal share of the cost of a project carried out under subsection (a).

(3) STATE CONTRIBUTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may accept from the State a partial or total contribution toward the non-Federal share for a project carried out under subsection (a).

(B) LIMITATION.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) requires the State to contribute to the non-Federal share of the cost of a project carried out under subsection (a).

(4) FORM OF NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal share under paragraph (1)(A) may be in the form of in-kind contributions, including the contribution of any valuable asset or service that the Secretary determines would substantially contribute to a project carried out under subsection (a).

(e) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.—The Secretary may not use any amount made available under section 8(b) to carry out the operation or maintenance of any project carried out under subsection (a).

SEC. 6. EFFECT ON EXISTING AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Nothing in this Act—

(1) affects any existing project-specific funding authority; or

(2) limits or absolves the United States from any responsibility to any Rio Grande Pueblo (including any responsibility arising from a trust relationship or from any Federal law (including regulations), Executive order, or agreement between the Federal Government and any Rio Grande Pueblo).

SEC. 7. EFFECT ON PUEBLO WATER RIGHTS OR STATE WATER LAW.

(a) PUEBLO WATER RIGHTS.—Nothing in this Act (including the implementation of any project carried out in accordance with this Act) affects the right of any Pueblo to receive, divert, store, or claim a right to water, including the priority of right and the quantity of water associated with the water right under Federal or State law.

(b) STATE WATER LAW.—Nothing in this Act preempts or affects—

(1) State water law; or

(2) an interstate compact governing water.

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) STUDY.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 4 $4,000,000.

(b) PROJECTS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 5 $6,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010 through 2019.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. SNOWE):

S. 2806. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider the decision of the Administrator to deny the request of the State of California to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new motor vehicles, and to complete further proceedings in accordance with the decision of the Supreme Court in Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today, on the 1-year anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark Massachusetts v. EPA decision on global warming pollution, to introduce the Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding Deadline and California Waiver Reconsideration Act. The bill would force the EPA and this administration to act—at long last—against global warming.

This legislation will impose two significant deadlines on the Environmental Protection Agency.

First, the legislation gives EPA 60 days to respond to the Massachusetts v. EPA ruling.

Second, this bill requires EPA to reconsider its unprecedented decision to deny the State of California a Federal waiver that would have allowed the State to limit tailpipe greenhouse gas pollution from cars and trucks.

Unfortunately, deadlines for EPA action are necessary in both cases.

In its landmark Massachusetts v. EPA ruling, issued 1 year ago today, the Supreme Court gave EPA a specific task: Determine whether the emissions of greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare, and then comply with the Clean Air Act requirements that result from this determination.

Yet 1 year later, EPA has done nothing. EPA Administrator Johnson pledged to act by December, but that day came and went.

I wrote to Administrator Johnson in January asking for a timeline for action.

He wrote back to tell me he could not give me one.

Last month, when I asked Mr. Johnson how many people were working on this endangerment finding, he could not tell me if anyone was working on it.

In a March 27, 2008, letter to me and many of my colleagues, EPA indicated that it intends to begin soliciting comments from the public as the Agency ''considers'' regulations of greenhouse gas emissions.

EPA's letter indicates that it does not intend to determine whether greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare, as the court instructed it to do, anytime in the near future.

Instead EPA's Administrator stated that ''implementing the Supreme Court's decision could affect many sources beyond just the cars and trucks considered by the Court,'' suggesting that the U.S. Supreme Court would have come to a different conclusion had it better understood the Clean Air Act.

The process will not begin until ''later this spring.''

EPA has no further timeline for action, nor has it set a deadline for completion.

The plaintiffs in the Massachusetts v. EPA case today returned to court to compel the EPA to act. This bill is intended to work in tandem with their suit, compelling EPA to take an action, which both the courts and the law indicate should not be unreasonably delayed. No one should interpret this bill as a substitute for the courts taking action to compel EPA to act without delay under existing law. Both the new lawsuit and this bill are prompted by the clear failure of EPA to act on a reasonable timeline.

Bottom Line: Responding to the Supreme Court's remand cannot and should not be delayed for an undefined period of time.

EPA has had a full year to collect public comment and consider the implications of its response, and it has done so. EPA staff told Congress that they spent thousands of hours writing an endangerment finding and proposed regulations this past autumn. A draft has already been submitted to the White House Office of Management and Budget.

This legislation puts EPA on the clock to finish the job it was assigned by the highest court in the land.

The second deadline in this legislation requires the EPA Administrator to reconsider, and either confirm or reject, EPA Administrator Johnson's December decision to deny California a Clean Air Act waiver.

Without the waiver, California and 15 other States are unable to control greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles.

EPA Administrator Johnson denied this waiver even though EPA's legal and technical staff unanimously recommended that the waiver be issued.

EPA's attorneys had told Mr. Johnson that a waiver denial in this case would ''in effect, amend the Clean Air Act by Administrative Action.''

They told him that EPA would be sued and ''was likely to lose suit.''

The decision was made before the legal justification had been written. EPA staff had been cut out of the process entirely.

His official legal document, issued more than 2 months after Mr. Johnson issued the decision, asserts that the waiver was denied based almost entirely on the legislative history of the 1967 Clean Air Act. His legal document made no mention of the fact that Congress rewrote the operative section in 1977.

In hearing after hearing, Mr. Johnson has asserted that he made this decision himself. Apparently he read the law differently than every one of his agency's experts and attorneys—a different reading he has never explained. But even he has acknowledged that the process under which this decision was made was unusual.

I believe that an unusual process led to an unusual result.

This bill would give EPA the opportunity to reconsider this decision. And with this reconsideration we will see whether a normal process will produce a different result.

This legislation sets firm deadlines by which EPA must complete its work. It instructs the administration to act in the face of climate change. It brings an end to the delay and obfuscation that impede progress.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2806

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 ''Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding Deadline and California Waiver Reconsideration Act''.

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS OF ADMINISTRATOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.

(a) RECONSIDERATION OF DENIAL.—Not later than June 30, 2009, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (referred to in this section as the ''Administrator'') shall reconsider, and confirm or reverse, the decision of the Administrator to deny the request of the State of California to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new motor vehicles.

(b) ISSUANCE OF FINDING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue a finding in accordance with—

(1) section 202(a)(1) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7521(a)(1)) with respect to whether the emission of greenhouse gases from any 1 or more classes of new motor vehicles or new motor vehicle engines, in the judgment of the Administrator, causes or contributes to air pollution that may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare; and

(2) the decision of the Supreme Court in Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency, 127 S. Ct. 1438 (2007).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 496—HONORING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CARVING OF THE CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL

Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 496

Whereas sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski, who never received any formal art training but nonetheless won 1st place for sculpture at the New York World's Fair in 1939, came to the Black Hills of South Dakota as an assistant to Gutzon Borglum to help carve Mount Rushmore;

Whereas Lakota Chief Henry Standing Bear contacted Korczak Ziolkowski in 1939 to encourage him to create another mountain memorial, saying in his letter of invitation: ''My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know the red man has great heroes, too'';

Whereas Crazy Horse was remembered by his people as a fierce warrior and visionary leader who was committed to preserving the traditional Lakota way of life;

Whereas Korczak Ziolkowski was inspired to honor the culture, tradition, and living heritage of North American Indians, and thus designed a metaphoric tribute to the spirit of Crazy Horse and his people;

Whereas Korczak Ziolkowski was dedicated as well to helping his country preserve freedom, enlisted in the Army, and was wounded in 1944 at Omaha Beach;

Whereas Korczak Ziolkowski returned to South Dakota after World War II in order to find a suitable mountain to carve in order to honor Crazy Horse and his people;

Whereas Korczak Ziolkowski and Chief Standing Bear dedicated the Crazy Horse Memorial on June 3, 1948;

Whereas Korczak Ziolkowski worked until his death in 1982, and his wife, Ruth, and their family have dedicated their lives to carving the mountain and continuing the mission of the Crazy Horse Memorial;

Whereas there is no way to predict when the mountain carving will be completed, owing to the uncertainty of weather, the availability of private funding, and the challenges of mountain engineering;

Whereas, when completed, the Crazy Horse mountain carving will be the largest carving in the world, at 641 feet long by 563 feet high;

Whereas Korczak Ziolkowski's parting words to his wife were, ''You must work on the mountain—but go slowly so you do it right'';

Whereas the Ziolkowski family and the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation have continued to do it right, have proceeded without government financial support, and remain dedicated to making steady progress on the Memorial's humanitarian goals; and

Whereas the Crazy Horse Memorial will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the dedication of the mountain carving on June 3, 2008: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate, on the 60th anniversary of the commencement of the mountain carving of the Crazy Horse Memorial, honors sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski, the Ziolkowski family, and the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation for their dedication to honoring the culture, tradition, and living heritage of North American Indians and the spirit of Crazy Horse and his people.

SENATE RESOLUTION 497—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT PUBLIC SERVANTS SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND CONTINUED SERVICE TO THE NATION DURING PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK, MAY 5 THROUGH 11, 2008

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WARNER, Mr. OBAMA, and Mrs. MCCASKILL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. RES. 497

Whereas Public Service Recognition Week provides an opportunity to recognize and promote the important contributions of public servants and honor the diverse men and women who meet the needs of the Nation through work at all levels of government;

Whereas millions of individuals work in government service in every city, county, and State across America and in hundreds of cities abroad;

Whereas public service is a noble calling involving a variety of challenging and rewarding professions;

Whereas Federal, State, and local governments are responsive, innovative, and effective because of the outstanding work of public servants;

Whereas the United States of America is a great and prosperous Nation, and public service employees contribute significantly to that greatness and prosperity;

Whereas the Nation benefits daily from the knowledge and skills of these highly trained individuals;

Whereas public servants—

(1) defend our freedom and advance United States interests around the world;

(2) provide vital strategic support functions to our military and serve in the National Guard and Reserves;

(3) fight crime and fires;

(4) ensure equal access to secure, efficient, and affordable mail service;

(5) deliver social security and medicare benefits;

(6) fight disease and promote better health;

(7) protect the environment and the Nation's parks;

(8) enforce laws guaranteeing equal employment opportunity and healthy working conditions;

(9) defend and secure critical infrastructure;

(10) help the Nation recover from natural disasters and terrorist attacks;

(11) teach and work in our schools and libraries;

(12) develop new technologies and explore the earth, moon, and space to help improve our understanding of how our world changes;

(13) improve and secure our transportation systems;

(14) promote economic growth; and

(15) assist active duty service members and veterans;

Whereas members of the uniformed services and civilian employees at all levels of government make significant contributions to the general welfare of the United States, and are on the front lines in the fight against terrorism and in maintaining homeland security;

Whereas public servants work in a professional manner to build relationships with other countries and cultures in order to better represent America's interests and promote American ideals;

Whereas public servants alert Congress and the public to government waste, fraud, abuse, and dangers to public health;

Whereas the men and women serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, as well as those skilled trade and craft Federal employees who provide support to their efforts, are committed to doing their jobs regardless of the circumstances, and contribute greatly to the security of the Nation and the world;

Whereas public servants have bravely fought in armed conflict in defense of this Nation and its ideals and deserve the care and benefits they have earned through their honorable service;

Whereas government workers have much to offer, as demonstrated by their expertise and innovative ideas, and serve as examples by passing on institutional knowledge to train the next generation of public servants;

Whereas May 5 through 11, 2008, has been designated Public Service Recognition Week to honor America's Federal, State, and local government employees; and

Whereas Public Service Recognition Week is celebrating its 24th anniversary through job fairs, student activities, and agency exhibits: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends public servants for their outstanding contributions to this great Nation during Public Service Recognition Week and throughout the year;

(2) salutes government employees for their unyielding dedication and spirit for public service;

(3) honors those government employees who have given their lives in service to their country;

(4) calls upon a new generation to consider a career in public service as an honorable profession; and

(5) encourages efforts to promote public service careers at all levels of government.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to introduce a resolution honoring the dedication, commitment, and noble service of Federal, State, and local government employees during Public Service Recognition Week.

For the past 23 years, the first full week of May is reserved to recognize the men and women of the military and civilian workforces diligently serving our Nation and celebrate their achievements.

Throughout the history of this Nation, public servants have been the first in many fields. Public servants are the first to respond to an emergency. They were the first to walk on the moon, the first to subnavigate the North Pole, and the driving force behind the creation of the Internet. However, there are lesser known achievements of public servants that improve all of our lives. Researchers at NIH were the first to make a discovery that lead to the Human Papillomavirus vaccine. They were the first to create a program allowing States and localities to analyze DNA evidence on thousands of cases. And, they have been the first to discover hormones produced by the heart that have profound benefits in treating many deadly diseases.

Public Service Recognition Week is a time for all Americans to recognize the contributions which public servants make to this country that are often overlooked. We are familiar with the police officers who patrol our streets, the teachers who teach our children, the public officials we elect to govern, and the war fighters so bravely defending our country. However, there are many other public servants who protect and care for our National Parks, provide care to veterans, protect the water we drink, build the roads we drive on, archive American history and the American experience, and curate our public museums that work behind the scenes without much attention or praise. These are just some of the silent servants who are the backbone of America.

Public servants have chosen a career path that does not often exalt or glorify their work. We rarely hear about the support the civilians in the Department of Defense are providing to the military during this time of war or the doctors and nurses at the Veterans' Affairs Administration who provide care to the many men and women returning home from combat while struggling with insufficient resources. PSR week is a time we thank them for their service and recognize their efforts.

This week is not just a time for us to honor their work, but a time for us to get to know the groundbreaking efforts made by the military and civil servants. Across the country, mayors, State governments, Governors, county governments, and many other civic organizations are participating in Public Service Recognition Week through proclamations, honorary events, awards, and exhibits. In Washington, DC, Federal agencies are coming together on the National Mall to demonstrate to the public all that they do for America. The military will show its might with planes, helicopters, tanks, and other machinery located throughout the exhibit. The civil service will show innovations in scientific research, advances in criminal detection and law enforcement, and ways it is improving the lives of Americans everyday.

We sit on the edge of great change in the Federal workforce. According to the Office of Personnel Management, an estimated 40 percent of the 1.8 million federal employees will retire in the next 10 years as many more become eligible to retire. According to a number of recent reports published by the Partnership for Public Service, we know that young people want meaning in their careers. They can find both meaning and nobility in public service. Our challenge is to show the next generation of employees that public service offers a range of options for meaningful experiences and dynamic opportunities.

As we celebrate the 24th annual Public Service Recognition Week May 5–11, I encourage all Americans to take time out of their busy schedules to learn more about the work of public servants and recognize them for their commitment and dedication.

SENATE RESOLUTION 498—DESIGNATING APRIL 8, 2008, AS ''NATIONAL CUSHING'S SYNDROME AWARENESS DAY''

Mr. REID submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 498

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome affects an estimated 10 to 15 people per 1,000,000 people annually, most of those affected are between the ages of 20 and 50;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome is an endocrine or hormonal disorder caused by the prolonged exposure of the body's tissue to high levels of the hormone cortisol;

Whereas exposure to cortisol can occur by overproduction of cortisol in the body or by taking glucocorticoid hormones, which are routinely prescribed for asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus, or as an immunosuppressant following organ transplants;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome may also result from pituitary adenomas, ectopic adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) syndrome, adrenal tumors, and Familial Cushing's Syndrome;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome can cause abnormal weight gain, skin changes, and fatigue and can ultimately lead to diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, osteoporosis, or death;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome is diagnosed through a series of tests, often requiring x-ray examinations of adrenal or pituitary glands to locate tumors;

Whereas many people who suffer from Cushing's Syndrome are misdiagnosed or go undiagnosed for years because many of the symptoms of Cushing's Syndrom are also indications of milder diseases, and those errors in diagnoses delay the implementation of important treatment options;

Whereas treatments for Cushing's Syndrome include surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, the use of cortisol-inhibiting drugs, and reducing the dosage of glucocorticoid hormones;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome was discovered by Dr. Harvey Williams Cushing, who was born on April 8, 1869;

Whereas the Dr. Harvey Cushing stamp was part of the United States Postal Service's ''Great American'' series of stamps, initiated in 1980 to recognize individuals for making significant contributions to the heritage and culture of the United States;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan spoke on April 8, 1987, in the Rose Garden at a White House ceremony to unveil the commemorative stamp honoring Dr. Harvey Cushing;

Whereas, following the ceremony, President Reagan hosted a reception in the State Dining Room for Mrs. John Hay Whitney, Dr. Cushing's daughter, and representatives of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons; and

Whereas the Senate is an institution that can raise awareness of Cushing's Syndrome in the general public and the medical community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 8, 2008, as ''National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day'';

(2) recognizes that all people in the United States should become more informed and aware of Cushing's Syndrome;

(3) calls upon the people of the United States to observe the date with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

(4) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Cushing's Understanding, Support, and Help Organization.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4384. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3221, moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4385. Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3221, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4386. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3221, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4384. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3221, moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. INCREASE IN SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS.

Section 2102 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2), by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$12,000''; and

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$50,000'' and inserting ''$60,000''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$12,000''.

SA 4385. Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3221, moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. STREAMLINING ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS FOR CERTAIN EMERGENCY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to Congress a joint report on ways to streamline the environmental approval process for community development block grant housing development in areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma of 2005.

SA 4386. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3221, moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end add the following:

TITLE __—GO ZONE PROPERTY

SEC. __01. WAIVER OF DEADLINE ON CONSTRUCTION OF GO ZONE PROPERTY ELIGIBLE FOR BONUS DEPRECIATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (B) of section 1400N(d)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(B) without regard to 'and before January 1, 2005' in clause (i) thereof,''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to property placed in service after December 31, 2007.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 10 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to hold a hearing entitled, ''Oversight on the Listing Decision for the Polar Bear Under Endangered Species Act.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. to hold a hearing on Iraq.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a hearing on Iraq.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 11 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nuclear Terrorism: Assessing the Threat to the Homeland.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Department of Homeland Security'' on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 9:30 a.m., in room SH–216 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

Witness list

The Honorable Michael Chertoff, Secretary, United States Department of Homeland Security, Washington, D.C.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in open session to receive testimony on Department of Defense contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 10 a.m., in open session to receive testimony on the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program; and the proliferation security initiative at the Department of Defense and Nuclear Nonproliferation Programs at the National Nuclear Security Administration in review of the Defense authorization request for fiscal year 2009 and the future years Defense program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Eric Reither from Senator ENSIGN's office be granted floor privileges for the duration of the debate on H.R. 3221.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL CUSHING'S SYNDROME AWARENESS DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 498.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 498) designating April 8, 2008, as ''National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 498) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 498

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome affects an estimated 10 to 15 people per 1,000,000 people annually, most of those affected are between the ages of 20 and 50;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome is an endocrine or hormonal disorder caused by the prolonged exposure of the body's tissue to high levels of the hormone cortisol;

Whereas exposure to cortisol can occur by overproduction of cortisol in the body or by taking glucocorticoid hormones, which are routinely prescribed for asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus, or as an immunosuppressant following organ transplants;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome may also result from pituitary adenomas, ectopic

adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) syndrome, adrenal tumors, and Familial Cushing's Syndrome;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome can cause abnormal weight gain, skin changes, and fatigue and can ultimately lead to diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, osteoporosis, or death;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome is diagnosed through a series of tests, often requiring x-ray examinations of adrenal or pituitary glands to locate tumors;

Whereas many people who suffer from Cushing's Syndrome are misdiagnosed or go undiagnosed for years because many of the symptoms of Cushing's Syndrom are also indications of milder diseases, and those errors in diagnoses delay the implementation of important treatment options;

Whereas treatments for Cushing's Syndrome include surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, the use of cortisol-inhibiting drugs, and reducing the dosage of glucocorticoid hormones;

Whereas Cushing's Syndrome was discovered by Dr. Harvey Williams Cushing, who was born on April 8, 1869;

Whereas the Dr. Harvey Cushing stamp was part of the United States Postal Service's ''Great American'' series of stamps, initiated in 1980 to recognize individuals for making significant contributions to the heritage and culture of the United States;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan spoke on April 8, 1987, in the Rose Garden at a White House ceremony to unveil the commemorative stamp honoring Dr. Harvey Cushing;

Whereas, following the ceremony, President Reagan hosted a reception in the State Dining Room for Mrs. John Hay Whitney, Dr. Cushing's daughter, and representatives of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons; and

Whereas the Senate is an institution that can raise awareness of Cushing's Syndrome in the general public and the medical community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 8, 2008, as ''National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day'';

(2) recognizes that all people in the United States should become more informed and aware of Cushing's Syndrome;

(3) calls upon the people of the United States to observe the date with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

(4) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Cushing's Understanding, Support, and Help Organization.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2807, S. 2808, S. 2809, S. 2810, AND S. 2811

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand there are five bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the titles of the bills.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2807) to protect the liberty and property of all Americans.

A bill (S. 2808) to require that citizens within a National Heritage Area are informed of the designation and that government officials must receive permission to enter private property.

A bill (S. 2809) to ensure that there are no adverse effects of a National Heritage Area designation to local communities and home owners.

A bill (S. 2810) to require an annual report detailing the amount of property the federal government owns and the cost of government land ownership to taxpayers.

A bill (S. 2811) to require citizens' approval of federal government land grabs.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bills will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2008

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, April 3; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, the Senate adopt the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221, and after reporting of the bill, Senator DODD or his designee be recognized to offer a substitute amendment to the bill; and that following opening statements by Senators DODD and SHELBY, Senator DURBIN be recognized to offer an amendment relating to bankruptcy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:26 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 3, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOHN P. HEWKO, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, VICE ANDREW B. STEINBERG.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

JEFFREY F. KUPFER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF ENERGY, VICE JEFFREY CLAY SELL, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RICHARD E. HOAGLAND, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN.

MARIE L. YOVANOVITCH, OF CONNECTICUT, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA.

WILLIAM J. BURNS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL AFFAIRS), VICE R. NICHOLAS BURNS, RESIGNED.

JANICE L. JACOBS, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS), VICE MAURA ANN HARTY, RESIGNED.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

ALEXA E. POSNY, OF KANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY ADVISORY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING NOVEMBER 25, 2011. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

ELAINE C. DUKE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, VICE PAUL A. SCHNEIDER.

FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY

BRANDON CHAD BUNGARD, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE COLLEEN DUFFY KIKO, RESIGNED.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

YULIANA ESPINOZA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Yuliana Espinoza who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Yuliana Espinoza is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Yuliana Espinoza is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Yuliana Espinoza for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character to all her future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF HARRISON HIGHTOWER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Harrison Hightower's victory at the Ohio High School Athletic Association's 2008 Division II Wrestling Championships.

Harrison Hightower is a star senior at Hunting Valley University School in Strongsville, Ohio, and bested his 130 lb. weight class with a 7-2 decision. Hunting Valley University School has a strong wrestling program and a history of cultivating champions. Hightower, loved by his friends and family for his sense of humor, is now a local hero and an example of what perseverance and dedication to your sport, school and teamwork can do.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognizing the accomplishments of Harrison Hightower, an outstanding team member and now a State wrestling champion.

TRIBUTE TO CAMILLE ''KING DERBY'' MACEDON

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to salute a cultural icon in my home community of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, Camille ''King Derby'' Macedon, who has spent much of his life in the performance and preservation of our musical art forms.

In 1957, Camille ''King Derby'' Macedon began singing calypso, or ''kaiso'' as he always reminds us, as it is a link from our African musical heritage that took root in the Caribbean over the 400 years of our people's sojourn there. Since that time he has performed for audiences large and small and is an 11-time winner of the St. Croix Calypso Crown. He has won competitions in calypso tents from St. Lucia to Canada.

King Derby is a well-known figure, as he performs with his ukulele, solo or with a quelbe band, lending his rhythm and distinctive musical styling to the songs of our lives, which are often social commentary par excellence. He has recorded several popular compositions such as ''Juan Luis Jam'' (1979), ''Rum and Coke'' (1989), and ''Witey Could Wine'' (1982).

In 1982, in an effort to preserve the calypso art form, King Derby founded Calypso, Inc., an organization which gives workshops in the Virgin Islands schools to students who have the talent and are interested in becoming musicians. He has taught our youth the traditional means of preserving history and telling stories with local flavor and color in order to keep our vibrant culture alive. The young people with whom he has worked over the past two decades are known as ''Junior Calypsonians'' and perform every year during our Christmas Festival and Agricultural Festival.

As his day job, Camille ''Derby'' Macedon has worked for the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works for the past 40 years, the last 20 in the Utilities Division.

He has been married for 39 years to his wife Leona and they have seven children to include Walton, Randall, Michelle, Renee, Doreen, Monique, Marjorie and Aubrey.

HONORING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LT. JOSEPH M. WILCOX CHAPTER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the Lt. Joseph M. Wilcox Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) on the occasion of its 85th anniversary.

The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution was organized on August 9, 1890, in Washington, D.C. Thirty-three years later, on February 8, 1923, the DAR chapter in Camden, Alabama, was founded by my grandmother, Ezra Robins Bonner, with 19 charter members. The chapter will celebrate its 85th anniversary on April 3, 2008, at Camden Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The DAR, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C., is a volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism and preserving American history through better education for children. The society's purpose remains much the same today as when it was chartered by an Act of Congress in 1895: ''To perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved American independence; to promote, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge; to cherish, maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, to foster true patriotism and love of country.''

Nationally, DAR members volunteer more than 60,000 hours annually to veteran patients, award over $150,000 in scholarships and financial aid each year to students, and support schools for the underprivileged with annual donations in excess of one million dollars.

Madam Speaker, the organizing and charter members of the Lt. Joseph M. Wilcox Chapter were: Ezra Robins Bonner, Regent; Ervin McWilliams Carr, Vice Regent; Madison McWilliams Ervin, Recording Secretary; Nannie Miller Turner, Corresponding Secretary; Charlotte Tait Beck, Treasurer; Lucy D. Jones Moore, Registrar; Mary Goode Berry, Chaplain; Sarah Ervin Henderson, Historian; Grace Pugh Goode; Anna Mary Robins Crain; Katie Lee Robins; Janie Margaret Robins Wood; Narcissa McDowell Harris; Maud McWilliams; Amelie Ervin Hixon; Henrietta Irby; Mary Bibb Irby; Miriam Perryman Primm; and Mabel Stokes. May all of these ladies—and their proud descendants—know that their work throughout the years has left a lasting mark on the people of Wilcox County, Alabama.

It is indeed my sincere hope that the Lt. Joseph M. Wilcox Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will continue its vital service for another 85 years. I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the Camden chapter, along with all of the other DAR chapters around the country, for their patriotism and love of country, as well as for their dedication and hard work. We wish them all the best at this historic celebration.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING ARRIANNA SCHROCK FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Arrianna Schrock showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Arrianna Schrock was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Arrianna Schrock always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Arrianna Schrock on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING HAMILTON HORNETS GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize the outstanding achievement of the Hamilton Hornets Girls High School Basketball team on defeating the Westran Hornets by a score of 46–39, to win the Class 2A girls' basketball state championship. The Hornets finished their incredible season by posting an unblemished record of 32–0 this season in Class 2A girls' basketball. This team is the second team in the school's history to have an undefeated season.

The Hornets consist of 15 remarkable young women, including Jordan Esry, Lacy Jones, Micah Brown, Taryn Bruce, Ashley Flook, Eileen Greenwood, Shelby Dickey, Carissa Conger, Brooke Flook, Lindsay Vollmer, Katie Jones, Emily Schieber, Angie Dalton, Katie Rasmussen and Kelsey Schieber.

Also, I want to recognize the great leadership of the team, including Head Coach David Prather, who was assisted by Christy Prather and Sara Lasher. I also want to acknowledge the work of school administrators, Superintendent Steve Yost, Principal Tim Schieber, and Athletic Director Troy Ford, as additional keys to success.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in congratulating the achievement of the Hamilton Hornets Girls High School Basketball team on their perfect season and state championship. It is an honor to represent this team in the United States Congress.

TAYLOR PLATT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Taylor Platt who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award. Taylor Platt is a senior at Arvada High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Taylor Platt is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Taylor Platt for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication he has shown in his high school career to his college career and future accomplishments.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CAROL KIENER

HON. DAVID DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Carol Kiener, a resident of the First District, who passed away on March 24th of this year.

Mrs. Kiener was a pillar of her community and cornerstone of her family. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family during this difficult time.

Mrs. Kiener spent more than thirty years in the field of education. She loved life and shared that with the children she taught. As a passionate volunteer, Mrs. Kiener taught adult GED classes in her spare time.

Outside of teaching, Mrs. Kiener volunteered her time with the Washington County Historical Society, the Girl Scouts of America, and the March of Dimes. She also was an active member of the Washington County Republican Women and was a member of the B'nai Sholom Congregation in Bristol.

Mrs. Kiener was well respected by her students, colleagues, and parents as an admired educator. Madam Speaker, I ask you and my fellow members to join me in honoring the life of Mrs. Carol Kiener, a loving wife, servant in her community, and a compassionate educator, whose commitment and unwavering determination will be greatly missed throughout East Tennessee.

COMMEMORATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

SPEECH OF

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, Martin Luther King, Jr. is a national hero. He embodied the tenacious spirit and compassionate understanding of the American ideal. The power of his words has moved millions to live with hope in their hearts and welcome in their embrace.

Dr. King fought for racial equality and desegregation with nonviolent protest. Peace, he taught us, is our most powerful weapon. He helped communities begin to heal the wounds of hatred and indignity by replacing them with cooperation and tolerance. The mark he left on our society is indelible. When an assassin took him from us on that April day in 1968, Americans mourned a terrible loss. Sooner than expected, we had to enact the lessons he taught us without his guidance to show us the way. But his ink was already imprinted on our moral fiber, and our country continued his fight to end discrimination and segregation.

Madam Speaker, let us, as an American community, pause today to remember the legacy Dr. King left for each of us to carry—to dream, to love, and to accept.

THE GOALS, IDEALS, AND HISTORY OF NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

Mr. SHULER1. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1021, honoring the goals, ideals, and history of National Women's History Month, which recognizes the women and organizations in the United States, past and present, who have fought for and continue to promote women's rights and history. This resolution will ensure that the legacy of gender equality continues and that the struggles of those who came before us and fought for equality are not forgotten.

The revolutionary ideas of equality on which our Nation was built took a long time to be extended to the whole population. The abolition movement of the mid–1800s fought for the equal treatment of men regardless of race and brought together many female activists, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. These women went on to host the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, where many women gathered in a large public forum to discuss women's rights and expressed themselves through a Declaration of Sentiments, which was based on our Nation's founding document.

Although over 70 years passed between this momentous gathering and the passage and ratification of the 19th amendment, the work and dedication of women pushing for the right to vote and equal treatment under the law is a lasting legacy. We are reminded daily of the successes of the women's suffrage movement as we walk through the United States Capitol Rotunda and pass the portrait monument to Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony.

Without the diligent work and dedication of those women who strove for equal representation in Government, we would not have been able to have you, Ms. PELOSI, serve as the first female Speaker of our House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues today to vote for this important resolution that will give due honor and respect to the women of America past and present with the celebration of National Women's History Month.

HONORING PFC PATRICK J. MILLER

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, Patrick J. Miller of New Port Richey, Florida, was killed in Iraq over the weekend defending the freedom and liberties of those unable to defend themselves.

Private First Class Miller, also known as P.J., was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division, stationed in Fort Riley, Kansas. He was deployed in Iraq since September 2007 and was fatally wounded when his unit came up against an IED attack and small arms fire during combat operations in Baghdad.

Although I did not have the privilege of knowing this courageous young man, by all accounts he was someone who lived every day with the same honor and integrity that he brought to the service of his country.

Prior to joining the Army, P.J. graduated from Mitchell High School in New Port Richey. While there, he excelled both in academics and athletics. These traits would serve him well later in life in both college and as a soldier in the U.S. Army. P.J. eventually earned his bachelor's degree in biology from the University of South Florida and aspired to one day further his education in graduate school.

Private First Class Miller's life was one of courage, perseverance and determination. He gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect us and the country he loved. This is a debt that can never be repaid to his family and loved ones.

Madam Speaker, I am saddened by the loss of P.J. and grieve for his family. May God bless them and comfort them in this time of great loss. May God also bless this great country for which Private First Class Miller so nobly fought and died. We shall never forget him.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATALIA, TEXAS AND THE 20TH ANNUAL BLUEBONNET FESTIVAL

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I am honored to rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of Natalia, Texas and the 20th Annual Bluebonnet Festival, to be held on Saturday, April 5, 2008. The Bluebonnet Festival has grown into a homecoming for former residents and others who wish to celebrate the incorporation of Natalia, Texas.

Natalia was founded in 1912 by Dr. Frederick Stark Pearson who named the town in honor of his daughter, Natalia Pearson Nicholson. Dr. Pearson was the engineer, designer and builder of the Medina Dam, and Natalia was established as the headquarters for the irrigation district. Destined to be the ''Queen City of the Southwest,'' Natalia was quickly built with macadamized streets, electric power and water works. Today Natalia continues to be home to the seat of the irrigation district, now known as the Bexar, Medina, Atascosa Water District (BMA). BMA owns and operates Medina Dam, Medina Lake and the entire canal system, furnishing water for 35,000 acres of land year-round for vegetable crops, grain and hay.

Though established by Dr. Pearson, Natalia was not incorporated as a city until March 2, 1968. In January of that year, a group of 50 citizens petitioned Medina County to incorporate as a municipality using a City Council form of government. A vote was held on the 2nd of March and by a tally of 116 to 50, Natalia, Texas was incorporated. Just a few weeks later the first elections for Mayor, Alderman and City Marshall were held. During the 40 years of the City of Natalia's existence, the goal of its elected officials has always been to offer a better quality of life for its citizens. Natalia continues to retain its small-town charm while also constantly preparing for the future.

There is perhaps no better way to celebrate Natalia's anniversary than with the Texas Bluebonnets. The flower blooms in early spring across fields and roadsides in central and south Texas. Aptly named for its vibrant color and shape, the Bluebonnet's petal is often said to resemble a woman's sunbonnet. Though especially prevalent in towns like Natalia, the Bluebonnet has come to symbolize the entire State of Texas and it was chosen as its state flower in 1901. The annual Bluebonnet Festival celebrates not only the anniversary of Natalia, but also the wild beauty that we have come to associate with the Bluebonnet and the untamed landscape of West Texas.

As they celebrate 40 years of city incorporation, I congratulate all current and past residents of Natalia, Texas for working to achieve the dream of Dr. Pearson of being the ''Queen City of the Southwest.''

CHRISTINE SHEHAN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Christine Shehan who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award. Christine Shehan is a senior at Arvada High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Christine Shehan is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Christine Shehan for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her high school career to her college career and future accomplishments.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ROBERT E. DOGGETT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Robert E. Doggett, and to honor a life spent in service to his country, his community, and his family.

As a young man, Mr. DOGGETT served our country bravely during World War II, earning a Purple Heart of Honor for his service in the first African-American army combat unit in the South Pacific Theatre. After returning stateside from his service, he followed his parents to Cleveland to put down roots in Northeast Ohio in the late 1940's. An artist at heart and by trade, he first utilized his artistic talents by designing calendars for local businesses. He later began work with the City planning commission as a draftsman in 1951, work which would mark the beginning of a career-long commitment to the City of Cleveland and the residents of Northeast Ohio. During his twenty years at the City planning commission, he became the city's first African-American senior planner. His integrity and work ethic carried him up the ranks quickly when in 1972, Mayor Ralph Perk appointed Mr. Doggett as the Cleveland director of the federal community redevelopment Model Cities Initiative, a program dedicated to rebuild Cleveland's East Side. To top off his career of civic service, Robert is responsible for the architectural designs of more than thirty churches, office buildings and restaurants.

Recognized for his talents as a great abstract and landscape artist by his friends and family, he was also a known jazz aficionado and has met Jazz greats Duke Ellington and Lionel Hampton who both performed regularly in the Cleveland area. Mr. Doggett is survived by his loving wife of 53 years, Georgia; his children Lisa, Enid and Steven; and one granddaughter. He will be affectionately remembered by his family and friends for his compassion, humor, intelligence and artistic talents.

Madam speaker and colleagues, please join me in remembering Robert E. Doggett, and to honor his commitment to his country, community, and family. May his exemplary life serve as an example for us all to follow.

TRIBUTE TO MR. RHUDEL A. GEORGE

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I am proud to recognize a man from my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, who is being celebrated as a ''selfless humanitarian.'' Mr. Rhudel A. George is well known in our community as a tireless government worker, an advocate for the small businessman, a teacher and a political organizer. As a friend and supporter that I can always count on, Rhudel is exemplary. We are all encouraged by his work as president of Concerned Virgin Islanders, an advocacy group that is determined to both preserve and invigorate the cultural touchstones that make the Virgin Islands special.

He grew up in the Down Street area of Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas and graduated in 1956 from the Charlotte Amalie High School (CAMS). He relocated to New York City where he joined the army in 1957 and served honorably for two years, leaving with a rank of Specialist 4th Class. Upon returning to the territory in 1959, he worked in both the private and public sector, while at the same time pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management at the University of the Virgin Islands in 1975. In 1975, he began to work for the V.I. Small Business Development Agency, first as a Field Investigator, and later as a Loan Officer. He was appointed Deputy Director of the

Agency by Governor Alexander Farrelly and rose to the position of Director, where he served until his retirement in 1995. In addition, Rhudel George served as a part-time instructor of business management and accounting at the CAHS Adult Continuing Education Program from 1981 through 1990. He also taught Business Management at the University of the Virgin Islands in 1991. He also served as a panelist with the U.S. Small Business Administration, conducting small business seminars and workshops in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands, and St. Martin for over 10 years.

Mr. Rhudel George received several prestigious awards for his work, to include being named the Small Business Advocate of the Year from the U.S. Small Business Administration 1990/1991 and a Certificate of Commendation for Service beyond the call of duty after Hurricane Hugo in 1989. He also served his community on various boards and commissions, lending his financial and business management expertise as Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Virgin Islands Port Authority, the Public Employees Relations Board, the Board of Land Use Appeals, the V.I. Small Business Development Agency's Board, the U.S. Small Business Administration Advisory Council for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Rhudel George is currently the President of Concerned Native Virgin Islanders, Inc., an organization that has awarded 15 scholarship awards to deserving high school graduates. Mr. Rhudel George is an extraordinary community minded individual who has lent his expertise when needed. He has been married for 43 years to Lucia Cid-George and has two daughters, Semele and Sionne.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM DICKINSON

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the memory of former Alabama Congressman William "Bill" Dickinson and his lifetime of dedication to the people of Alabama and the United States. I was deeply saddened to learn of his passing. Our Nation lost a wonderful friend and an individual who made countless contributions toward the betterment of America.

A native of Opelika, Alabama, Bill enlisted in the Navy upon graduation from high school. He served from 1943 until 1946 before joining the Air Force Reserves. He graduated from the University of Alabama Law School in 1950 and was admitted to the bar that same year. He returned to his hometown of Opelika and practiced law there until 1952 when he became an Opelika city judge. Two years later, he became judge of Lee County Court of Common Pleas and of the Juvenile Court before becoming a judge on the Fifth Judicial Circuit of Alabama in 1958. In 1962, Bill was named assistant vice president of the Southern Railway System and moved to Montgomery.

A lifelong conservative Democrat, Bill changed parties in 1964 and ran as a Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives for Alabama's Second District. In so doing, he was part of the Barry Goldwater sweep in Alabama that propelled five Republican congressional candidates to victory in what had previously been solid Democratic country.

Bill Dickinson went on to serve 13 consecutive terms in Congress and was a leading advocate for a strong national defense. He served as ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, and from this position, he was a staunch supporter of increased military funding and halting the spread of communism throughout the world. He was also a fierce protector of military bases vital to Alabama's economy.

Madam Speaker, we are privileged to have known such a passionate and loyal individual, and I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering this dedicated public servant. Congressman Dickinson will be deeply missed by his family—his wife, Barbara; their four children, Christopher Dickinson, Michael Dickinson, Tara Dickinson Sherer, and William Dickinson, Jr.; and their five grandchildren—as well as the countless friends he leaves behind. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all at this difficult time.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING KATELYN STUCKEY FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Katelyn Stuckey showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Katelyn Stuckey was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Katelyn Stuckey always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Katelyn Stuckey on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING RODNEY ALEXANDER AMES

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Rodney Alexander Ames, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 134, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Rodney has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Rodney has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Rodney Alexander Ames for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

ATSEDU KIDANE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Atsedu Kidane who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Atsedu Kidane is a senior at Arvada High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Atsedu Kidane is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Atsedu Kidane for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her high school career to her college career and future accomplishments.

LOSS OF GEORGE LACKMAN

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to herald the lifetime achievements of Tampanian George Lackman. Mr. Lackman was a jack of all trades. He made contributions to our community ranging from shipbuilding to banking to philanthropy.

Mr. Lackman was born in Palmetto Beach in 1931. He spent most of his career as a shipbuilder. He worked his way up the ranks from a mechanic's assistant to vice president at Tampa Ship Repair and Dry Dock, and he oversaw construction of Tampa's legendary pirate ship, the Jose Gasparilla. For 35 years he served as the ship's captain during Tampa's annual pirate invasion and festival, "Gasparilla." He also built submarines and stern-wheelers and refurbished a steam locomotive for the opening of the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World in 1971.

Working with bass pro Doug Hannon, Mr. Lackman invented an electric boat propeller that prevents seaweed from becoming entangled in the blades. Many anglers swear by this invention, and Mr. Lackman would joke that it raised enough money to put his kids, son Peter and daughter Nancy, through college.

In a new career endeavor, Mr. Lackman founded Citrus Park Bank, where he served as president. Later, he started the private banking program for First Union Bank in

Tampa. He retired from First Union as vice president of corporate development. He also served as president of Nutri-Sol Chemical Company, Marine Insulation Company, Corban Industries, and Acetogen Gas Company of Florida.

In his philanthropic efforts, Mr. Lackman started Genesis Clinic to provide prenatal care to mothers who were unable to afford proper health care. Infant mortality dropped in Tampa as a result of the services provided at Genesis. He also served as chairman of the Hillsborough County Hospital Board for two terms and helped save Tampa General Hospital when it faced the possibility of closing its doors.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Lackman's death on March 29 marked a great loss to his wife Patricia, to Peter and Nancy, to his grandchildren George III, Caroline, and Grace, and to the entire Tampa Bay area. His unique contributions to our community and his common sense and intelligence will not soon be forgotten.

COMMEMORATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

SPEECH OF

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 1061, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and encouraging people of the United States to pause and remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King dedicated his life to fighting for equality for all men and women, regardless of race, creed or class. He was a courageous activist who worked tirelessly to give a voice to Americans whose voices had been silenced.

We live in a society that has undergone infinite change because of this courageous man and his relentless pursuit of a better America. Yet while we have made immense progress in some areas, we must not turn a blind eye to the fact that the work that Dr. King started is not yet complete. Today the responsibility rests on our shoulders to continue his efforts. We must keep working.

The American Dream means something different to everyone. And while it may mean something different to you than it does to your parents or the person sitting next to you at church, I know this: The American Dream is about being able to afford health care, and not having to decide between prescriptions and groceries. It is about being able to earn a wage that is sufficient enough to provide for your family. It is about being able to send your kids to college so they have access to more opportunities than you do.

We teach our children that Dr. King gave his life in Memphis, but we forget to tell them that he was there helping sanitation workers fight for a living wage. We honor Dr. King by name today, but I believe we honor him best by passing legislation that makes it easier for Americans to realize the dream that Dr. King fought for. Most recently, we voted to approve the College Opportunity and Affordability of 2008, which authorizes the Federal Government's major federal student aid programs, among many other things. Our successes in these areas are made in his name and will help serve as a catalyst for even greater movements.

Dr. King's eloquence and determination forced this House to pass long overdue civil rights legislation. This House should never be forced to do the right thing again. Dr. King said: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." This House should never be silent on the issues that mattered most to Dr. King, including protecting the rights of working Americans.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH GREECE AHEAD OF THE NATO SUMMIT AND URGING A MUTUALLY AGREED UPON RESOLUTION TO THE NAME ISSUE REGARDING FYROM

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my support for a resolution of a 15-year impasse on a mutually agreed upon name for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as we near the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Heads of State and Government summit in Bucharest, Romania. One of the major issues considered will be the expansion of NATO and the possible extension of membership invitations to Albania, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Greece is the greatest supporter and promoter for the realization of the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of all countries in S.E. Europe and has contributed to that end enormous human and financial capital.

Greece has been FYROM's best friend in the Balkan neighborhood by donating over $1 billion in aid and bolstering its fledgling market economy. While Greece wholehearted, however, cannot agree to the accession of FYROM that is wholly contrary to the principles of NATO.

According to the Membership Action Plan NATO adopted in 1999, potential members must first display a willingness "to settle international, ethnic or external territorial disputes by peaceful means, commitment to the rule of law and human rights, and democratic control of armed forces." Clearly, the FYROM has failed to meet even this first criterion. The addition of FYROM to NATO would undoubtedly enhance the Alliance but only if it displays an adherence to the rule of law. FYROM must resolve the name issue in accordance with adherence to U.S. policy and a UN-brokered agreement that calls for ending negative propaganda against Greece by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and settling the name issue.

Madam Speaker, I hope that NATO and the international community will do the right thing by requiring FYROM to work with Greece in reaching a mutually agreed upon name resolution that comports with bilateral and international agreements. Once that is accomplished we can then and only then know that FYROM is serious about engaging in good neighborly relations.

81ST BIRTHDAY OF CESAR CHAVEZ

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to recognize and to celebrate what would have been the 81st birthday of Cesar Chavez by urging Congress and the President to make this day a national holiday.

Cesar Chavez grew up in migrant labor camps, into the poverty of a migrant worker's life. He became an historical figure who embodied humility and extraordinary strength in his peaceful struggle toward social justice. By dedicating his life to tirelessly championing the rights of farm laborers, along with Dolores Huerta, he helped found the United Farm Workers Union, fighting for better wages, conditions, and respect for farmworkers.

As our country faces the continuing bad news on the economy and more Americans are searching for jobs, we are reminded on the birthday of Cesar Chavez that the types of working families to whom Chavez dedicated his life will suffer the most if gas prices continue to rise, people continue to lose their homes, and job losses continue to grow.

Cesar Chavez has been an icon in my home State of Texas, where he is honored statewide on his birthday. In San Antonio, there is an annual Cesar Chavez march, which took place this past Saturday and had about 4,000 people in attendance. In San Antonio, we also have Cesar Chavez Boulevard, and in the county of Hidalgo there is a town named after Cesar Chavez, where 1,469 people live.

I hope that his legacy and memory will someday become a fundamental piece of American history so that all Americans will understand the fight that Cesar Chavez began in the fields—a fight for social justice, civil rights, and human rights that continues today.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues in urging the President and Congress to establish a national holiday by passing H. Res. 76.

ARIEL TOVAR

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ariel Tovar who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Ariel Tovar is a student at Arvada Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Ariel Tovar is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels

strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Ariel Tovar for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character to all his future accomplishments.

IN HONOR OF MAYOR THOMAS P. PERCIAK

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Honorable Thomas P. Perciak, the Mayor of the City of Strongsville, Ohio. A profoundly respected and influential member of Cleveland's Polish community and a leader of greater Cleveland's civic culture, Mayor Perciak is the recipient of the Forty-Fifth annual ''Good Joe'' Polish Heritage Award.

Mayor Perciak, a lifelong resident of the Cleveland area, carries with him a rich history of public service and advocacy for northeast Ohio, especially in the Polish community. A graduate of the David M. Myers University, he has served and continues to serve in many leadership roles. Prior to becoming Mayor of Strongsville, he held various senior positions within Fifth Third Bank, including Executive Vice President of the Northeastern Ohio region. In addition, Mayor Perciak leads the charitable gift and fundraising arm of Southwest General Hospital as Chairman of the Southwest General Community Health Foundation, a position he has held since 1996.

From his time as a student at St. Andrews Abbey—founded Benedictine High School—located in Cleveland—to his volunteer service on their Board of Trustees, Mayor Perciak has represented the Benedictine Order of Cleveland with pride and distinction. His religious faith also compels him to dedicate his time and talent toward serving on the Board of Financial Advisors for the Diocese of Cleveland, as well as on the Finance Committee of St. John Neumann Catholic Church.

Mayor Perciak has been the recipient of many honors and awards, including induction into the Benedictine High School Hall of Honors and Companions on the Journey Awards of outstanding service and generosity. In addition, in the summer of 2007, the Southwest General Residential Hospice was renamed the Thomas P. Perciak Family Residential Hospice.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognizing Mayor Thomas Perciak for his outstanding and tireless efforts as a supporter and advocate for Polish causes, as well as for his extensive and diverse service to many individuals and families who call the Cleveland area home.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING REBEKAH THOMAS FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Rebekah Thomas showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Rebekah Thomas was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Rebekah Thomas always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Rebekah Thomas on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING JOSHUA TYLER BOYDSTON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Joshua Tyler Boydston, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Joshua has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Joshua has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Joshua Tyler Boydston for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JUANITA PERRY

HON. DAVID DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mrs. Juanita Perry, a longtime resident of the First District, who passed away on March 24th of this year.

Mrs. Perry was a leader in the First District where she has touched many lives through her countless hours of dedication to her community. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family as they mourn her loss.

Juanita loved to help anyone in need. She spent sixty-two years volunteering at Mountain Home Veterans Affairs Medical Center where she carried the name of ''Little Sweetheart of Mountain Home.''

Juanita was also a lifetime member at Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Post 2108 and Military Order of the Purple Heart Post 224. Her time spent with the Tennessee Federation of Republican Women's Club was honorable and she received a Certificate of Award from the National Federation of Republican Women in 2007.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my fellow members to join me in honoring the life of Juanita Perry, a loving family member whose commitment and unwavering support to East Tennessee will be greatly missed.

RECOGNIZING WORLD AUTISM DAY

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize World Autism Day in an effort to increase awareness about one of the most common mental disorders afflicting our country today. Autism is becoming an increasingly common disorder; more and more children in America and throughout the world are born with it every day. The first step toward treating this incurable condition is recognition. Therefore, I rise today in support of World Autism Day and to help shed light on this growing and very serious problem.

The statistics concerning autism are, to say the least, alarming. One in 150 children born today is diagnosed with autism. One in 94 newborn boys is now autistic. In fact, today alone there will be approximately 67 new cases of autism diagnosed. That translates to a new diagnosis every 20 minutes. These are incredibly alarming numbers and we must recognize that this disorder is increasingly common and also that, while there is no cure, the quicker we identify what the problem is, the quicker we can act. We may not yet be able to cure autism, but with a strong commitment from the Federal Government we can create better lives for the growing number of children that are afflicted with this condition.

There is no medical way to detect autism in a child. We must rely on a physician's trained eye to diagnose a child as autistic, and even then we cannot cure it, we can only treat it. There are various symptoms that indicate autism that a physician must recognize. This is why awareness and education are so important.

Today, I would like to recognize the efforts of doctors, advocates and families on World Autism Day and also bring attention to the shocking frequency with which autism is diagnosed. Therefore, I rise today to recognize World Autism Day, to commend those working toward education, treatment and some day a cure and to offer my support for these efforts.

TRIBUTE TO POLICE CHIEF ALBERT W. BELL

HON. JOHN T. SALAZAR

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pay tribute to a respected leader from southwest Colorado, Police Chief Albert W. Bell of Durango, Colorado. Chief Bell has served the community of Durango with distinction for 14 years and has now announced his retirement, effective April 5, 2008.

Chief Bell's career in law enforcement started 37 years ago as a patrolman for the Topeka Police Department. On July 1, 1999, then Colorado Governor Bill Owens appointed Chief Bell to the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training, POST, Board. Chief Bell served that Board with distinction and in the highest traditions of the law enforcement profession.

Chief Bell is a member of the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police and has served on numerous boards that serve the interests of the citizens of Colorado. In service to his local community, Chief Bell has served as Undersheriff in the La Plata County Sheriff's Department and also served on the Community Connections Board at Hilltop House.

Chief Bell has demonstrated an outstanding level of professionalism and is recognized as a leader among law enforcement professionals in the Third Congressional District, fostering cooperative relationships amongst the Federal, State, and local law enforcement communities.

Madam Speaker, I commend Durango Police Chief Al Bell for his outstanding leadership, service, and dedication to the residents of Durango, Colorado. While we will all miss Chief Bell's service and dedication, I ask that you join me in wishing him well upon his retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ''GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2008''

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, the ''Government Accountability Office Act of 2008'' (the Act), is intended to improve the oversight, administration, and pay adjustment functions at the Government Accountability Office, GAO.

The former Comptroller General has asserted that Federal agencies should have ''modern, effective, credible, and, as appropriate, validated performance management systems in place with adequate safeguards, including reasonable transparency and appropriate accountability mechanisms, to ensure fairness and prevent politicization and abuse.'' Some of the safeguards recommended by the Government Accountability Office, GAO, include a performance management system that makes meaningful distinctions in individual employee performance; involves employees and stakeholders in designing the system; and achieves consistency, equity and nondiscrimination.

Over the last 24 months, the subcommittee has conducted oversight, and more recently investigated, the implementation of GAO's new personnel system to determine if it meets the aforementioned criteria. The subcommittee found that it did not. In addition, based on its investigation the subcommittee concluded that, contrary to legislative intent, GAO employees who met and exceeded expectations in 2006 and 2007 did not receive the annual across-the-board increase that other GAO employees received.

The Act would restore the 2006 and 2007 annual across-the-board increase to GAO employees who met expectations but did not receive the adjustment. It would also set a ''floor guarantee'' that would preserve GAO's performance-based compensation system, while ensuring that GAO employees receive an annual increase in their permanent pay, provided they ''meet expectations,'' that is at least equal to the Congressionally approved across-the-board increase.

The floor guarantee will be comprised of the annual adjustment to the GAO pay schedule plus the permanent merit pay increase received by an employee under GAO's merit pay system. At a hearing the subcommittee held on March 23, 2008, on this legislation and GAO's personnel reforms, the subcommittee learned from the Ivy Planning Group, a consulting firm hired by GAO to conduct an African American Performance Assessment Study at GAO, that there are significant differences between the ratings for African American analysts and Caucasian analysts. Therefore, the personnel reforms at GAO had a significant negative impact on African American staffers. Furthermore, a survey that was administered to GAO employees at my request, found that 81 percent of respondents thought morale in general at GAO is worse or much worse than before the reforms and a majority of the respondents felt that not having an across-the-board increase for all staff is very or somewhat unreasonable. While the subcommittee recognizes that more work needs to be done at GAO, the Act will help improve the morale at GAO and remedy the inequities that resulted from the denial of the 2006 and 2007 across-the-board adjustments.

Other provisions in the Act include creating a statutory Inspector General for GAO; permitting the Comptroller General, CG, greater flexibility to administer oaths to witnesses when auditing and settling accounts; enabling the CG to accept gifts and to make expenditures for meals and other expenses in connection with recruitment; and eliminates the statutorily imposed GS–15 pay cap to allow the CG the authority to pay employees up to the rate for Executive Level III. The Act has the support of GAO and its union, the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.

''ALL IN A NAME,'' GREECE'S CONCERNS REGARDING THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA'S ACCESSION TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, later this week the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will hold a Heads of State and Government summit in Bucharest, Romania. One of the major issues considered will be the expansion of NATO and the possible extension of membership invitations to Albania, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). In this context, I would like to bring to the House's attention excerpts from the April 1, 2008 Op-ed in the Wall Street Journal titled ''All in a Name,'' written by Greece's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dora Bakoyannis.

[FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, APR. 1, 2008]

ALL IN A NAME

(By Dora Bakoyannis)

ATHENS.—The NATO summit comes to Southeastern Europe this week, and Greece is looking forward to it . . . As the region's oldest NATO and EU member, Greece feels a profound obligation to be constructive, supportive and practical regarding our neighbors. We wholeheartedly espouse the policy of enlargement, and I am happy to say that two members of the so-called ''Adriatic Three,'' Croatia and Albania, are today in a position to further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty and earn their invitation to NATO in Bucharest. However, it saddens me that we cannot so far say the same about our neighbor, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Fyrom).

For over 15 years, our two countries have been involved in United Nations-sponsored negotiations regarding Fyrom's name. Greece has real and concrete concerns over the issue. What's in a name, you may ask? A great deal, I can assure you. The term ''Macedonia'' has always been used to delineate a wider geographical region, approximately 51% of which is part of Greece, 38% of which is in Fyrom, and 9% of which is in Bulgaria.

Not only does the government in Skopje insist on being the sole claimant to the name of an entire area—the largest part of which lies outside its borders—but authorities in Fyrom insist on portraying Greek Macedonia as ''occupied'' territory. While government leaders declare they have no designs on Greek territory, they refuse to remove such claims from textbooks, state maps and national documents . . .

And we are not alone in our quest. In the U.S. Congress, 115 members, both Republicans and Democrats, recently co-sponsored House Resolution 356, which expressed the ''sense of the House of Representatives that Fyrom should stop hostile activities and propaganda against Greece, and should work with the United Nations and Greece to find a mutually acceptable official name.''

NATO has consistently encouraged full normalization of relations not only with aspirants themselves but with neighboring third countries not belonging to the Alliance. Greece will spare no effort in reaching a real and viable solution for the sake of peace and stability in the region. Alliances and partnerships, however, can only be fostered among countries if there is mutual trust and goodwill.

TYLER SALEN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Tyler Salen who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Tyler Salen is a student at Oberon Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Tyler Salen is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Tyler Salen for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character to all his future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CHINESE SPECTACULAR SHOW

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Chinese Spectacular Show, a world-class troupe that showcases Chinese Classical performance to audiences worldwide and serves as a bridge between cultures.

In 2006, the Chinese Spectacular was ranked number seven on Billboard Magazine's top shows and has played in the finest theaters around the country. This year, as men and women of Asian descent celebrate the Year of the Rat together with their friends, family and neighbors in Cleveland, the Oriental Cultural Association, OCA, is bringing this great show to the State Theatre. In keeping with its mission as an organization that promotes a cultural exchange and understanding, the OCA is proud to bring this spectacular show to Cleveland. The show is a unique opportunity to showcase and bring together Cleveland's rich multicultural society and appreciation of the various rich cultures that constitute the greater Cleveland community.

The Chinese Spectacular show is the largest overseas Chinese cultural production and exemplifies the very best of classical Chinese music and dance through its lavish costumes and choreography. They have toured over 65 cities around the world just this year and are able to show a side of Chinese culture that is often not seen in the United States.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognizing this year's Chinese Spectacular show and celebrating Cleveland's rich multicultural community.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING ASHLEY WEAVER FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Ashley Weaver showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Ashley Weaver was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Ashley Weaver always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Ashley Weaver on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING ZACHARY JAMES BUCKNER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Zachary James Buckner, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Zachary has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Zachary has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Zachary James Buckner for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

EXXONMOBIL'S RECKLESSNESS

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, on March 24, 1989, the worst oil spill in our Nation's history occurred as the supertanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on Bligh Reef and dumped 11 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound off the scenic Alaskan coast. Five years later, a Federal jury in Anchorage awarded the fishermen, businesses, and affected communities punitive damages. However, to date, Exxon has paid none of the $2.5 billion punitive damages awarded to these fishermen as a result of the environmental devastation caused by ExxonMobil's recklessness.

What has ExxonMobil done? While the company has paid for the value of the lost fish, it has never compensated the families for their other continuing damages including, in the words of one trial judge, the fact that ''the social fabric of Prince William Sound and Lower Cook Inlet was torn apart.'' There are still thousands of fishermen, food processors, and others who are awaiting justice. Tragically, this number is dwindling as many of those affected have passed away while waiting for some form of resolution that has never come. All the while, ExxonMobil employs one primary tactic: delay. I would usually not comment on litigation that is ongoing, but these delay tactics of repeatedly appealing a just verdict all the way to the Supreme Court are irresponsible and indefensible. It has now been over 19 years since one of the worst environmental disasters in our Nation's history and 14 years since the initial jury verdict.

I believe in the free market, and I believe a corporation has the right to earn profits, but they also have a responsibility to their community and their country, especially when they make an awful mistake. ExxonMobil has done the former by earning $36 billion in 2006, a record for a single company. Now it is time for ExxonMobil to face up to its corporate responsibility, close this dark chapter in the company's history, and end this undue burden on the victims and the courts.

March 24, 2008, marked the 19th anniversary of this tragedy—but the question has now turned to: Will our Nation's highest court uphold the judgment that these victims still sadly await?

PAYING TRIBUTE TO WHMI RADIO IN HOWELL, MICHIGAN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the recent accomplishments of WHMI radio in Howell, Michigan, on the occasion of the station receiving the prestigious Associated Press ''General Excellence'' Award.

WHMI was recognized above all other medium market radio in the State of Michigan, including Flint, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Bay City/Saginaw, Ann Arbor, and Kalamazoo/Battle Creek. To achieve the ''General Excellence'' Award, WHMI earned recognition for Best Newscast, Best Continuing Coverage, Best Feature Story, Best Investigative Reporting and Best Natural Sound.

Celebrating 51 years of service to the Howell and Livingston County communities, WHMI adds to its many awards for broadcast excellence and community service this new recognition. All of this comes thanks to the hard work of owners Greg and Marcia Jablonski, General Operations Manager Reed Kitteridge, News Director Jon King, and the entire WHMI team.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring WHMI for its contributions to the community. Their new milestone is truly deserving of our respect and admiration.

CONGRATULATING THE FRANKLIN ACADEMY HUSKIES UPON WINNING THE 2008 NEW YORK STATE GIRLS CLASS A CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. JOHN M. McHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. McHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Franklin Academy Huskies of Malone, New York, upon winning the 2008 New York State Girls Basketball Class A Championship. I am proud to represent the Huskies, who won Franklin Academy's first team state championship in their third consecutive final four appearance.

On March 15, 2008, the Franklin Academy Huskies won the New York State Class A Championship when they defeated the Honeoye Falls-Lima Cougars 43 to 41. In that game, the Huskies persevered and came from nine points behind in the second half to take the lead with 2:20 left on a three pointer by Tournament MVP and Class A Player of the Year Alyson Johnson, who led all scorers with 17 points and also had five rebounds. All Tournament and Second Team All State selection Haley Poupore added 10 points and nine rebounds for the Huskies while teammate Kelsey Johnson contributed seven points and four rebounds to the Huskies' total and received the Tournament Sportsmanship Award.

The Franklin Academy Huskies completed the 2008 season with a record of 25 and 3. They were coached by Class A Coach of the Year Mike Wescott and assistant coaches Greg Dumas, Dave Farden, and Shelley Skelly. Other team members were Maggie Aguglia, Stephanie Edwards, Brittany Flick, Erica Johnson, Monique LaFlesh, Ashley Marshall, Brittany Marshall, Meaghan Patterson, Abby Premo, and Emily Sharlow.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in extending congratulations to the Franklin Academy Huskies for winning the 2008 New York State Girls Basketball Class A Championship.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF HERMINIA DUENAS DIERKING

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life and public service of Herminia Duenas Dierking, a distinguished leader from Guam who passed away on March 24, 2008. Herminia served the people of Guam in leadership positions in our community including as a Senator in the Guam Legislature, a professor at the University of Guam, and as a cabinet officer in the Government of Guam.

Herminia Duenas Dierking, daughter of the late Maria Pangelinan Guzman and Jose Cruz Duenas, was born on August 17, 1939 in the capital village of Hagåtña. She grew up aware of the hardships endured by our people during the occupation of Guam and she later used that knowledge and compassion to work for justice for our people as a member of the Guam War Reparations Commission.

Herminia is a fine example of how education can open doors to new opportunities. She received her high school diploma from the Academy of Our Lady of Guam and pursued college degrees from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and later from the University of Guam where she earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business. She continued to work toward an advanced degree from Emporia State University, Kansas and successfully obtained a Masters of Science in Business Administration.

Herminia began her professional career as an assistant professor at the University of Guam and rose to become the chairperson of the Accounting Department, serving thirteen years in the College of Business and Public Administration. Governor Ricardo J. Bordallo, my late husband, recognized her expertise in management and appointed her as the Director of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research in 1983. She was also appointed as the Chairperson of the Fiscal Policy Committee of the Government of Guam. Herminia's leadership helped to restore the fiscal health of the Government of Guam, leading to an economic recovery.

Herminia was urged by Governor Bordallo and other local leaders who recognized her leadership potential to run for a seat in the 18th Guam Legislature. She was successful in her first run for elected office and was subsequently reelected to the 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd Guam Legislatures. During her tenure as a Senator, she served as Chairwoman of the Committee on Ways and Means, Chairwoman of the Committee on Rules, Chairwoman of the Committee on Health, Welfare, & Ecology, and Vice Chair of the Committee on General Governmental Operations. In addition to her leadership positions in the Guam Legislature, Herminia also served on the Legislative Management Committee on the Assembly of the Legislature of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Executive Committee of the Western Legislative Conference, and the Committee on Suggested State Legislation on the Council of State Governments. She was appointed to represent Guam in the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures.

Herminia contributed her time and effort to community improvement by volunteer work and service in several community organizations. She served as president of the Association of Government Accountants, the Guam Business Education Association, and the Guam Business and Professional Women's Club. She was also appointed to serve in leadership roles for the Western Business Education Association, Manukai Swim Club, Far East Swim League, Beauty World Guam, Tamuning Elementary School PTA, Guam Beauty Association, Father Duenas Memorial High School Parents Guild, American Heart Association, and Guam Memorial Board of Trustees. She was a member of the Soroptomist International, the Guam Lytico and Bodig Association and the Guam Memorial Hospital Volunteers Association.

My thoughts and prayers are with Herminia's husband, Deacon John C. Dierking, their five children, Cliff, Kurt, Steven, Anna Maria, and John Paul, their grandchildren, and the many family and friends whose lives she touched. We honor her life's work as an educator and community leader. Most of all, she will always be remembered as a gentle woman who always had a kind word and a warm smile. She lived a full life and we are grateful for her public service. We will all miss her dearly.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE KERN COUNTY FIRE FIGHTERS UNION IAFF LOCAL 1301 ON THE CELEBRATION OF THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today, to congratulate the Kern County Fire Fighters Union, Inc. IAFF Local 1301 on the celebration of their 50th anniversary.

The Kern County Fire Fighters Union dates back to 1957, when the first organizing meeting was held. Kern County Fire Fighters Union, Inc. IAFF Local 1301 was officially organized on March 24, 1958 with 44 charter members, including Organizing President Arthur A. Arvizu and First Elected President Lester Cheek.

The first Union office was a cardboard box inside an automobile trunk. IAFF Local 1301 bought their first building located at 230 Truxtun Avenue in Bakersfield, California in April of 1968. The office on Truxtun Avenue was eventually sold and the Union moved to 3615 Mt Vernon Avenue in August of 1982.

While the Union has kept pace with all phases of Kern County Fire Fighter wages, hours and working conditions, some examples of its biggest accomplishments include establishing an Educational Incentive Plan, reducing the work week from 72 hours to 56 Hours with paid holidays, and playing a major role in the signing implementation of the Joint Powers Agreement between the Kern County Fire Department and the Bakersfield City Fire Department.

In the past 50 years, their membership has grown from 44 to 529 strong while 18 presidents have played a vital role in the Union's success.

The Union continues to make every effort to work with the Board of Supervisors, department heads and staff, as well as the Chief of the Kern County Fire Department and his staff, believing that greater strides can be made with all parties working together. Members have always felt secure knowing that no matter what task lies ahead, it will be met with enthusiasm by dedicated members who believe in and live by the Union motto, ''In Unity There Is Strength.''

The 50th anniversary of the Kern County Fire Fighters Union, Inc. IAFF Local 1301 is a perfect opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women who risk their lives every day for the safety of our community. Often, when people are running out of buildings, away from the danger, these brave men and women are the ones running toward the flames. They are our everyday heroes and I, along with all Kern County communities, am eternally grateful for their service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HAYGANOUSH MARKARIAN

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise with sadness and respect today, along with Congresswoman LYNN C. WOOLSEY, to honor Hayganoush Markarian, a resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, who passed away recently at the age of 105. Hayganoush was one of the few survivors of the Armenian Genocide of the early 20th century, so it further saddens me that she died without the government of Turkey, from where she fled, or the government of the United States, where she found refuge, officially recognizing that Genocide.

Much has been said about the facts and numbers and statistics. We know that in Turkey between 1915 and 1921, 1.5 million Armenians died—80 percent of the population. But it is women like Hayganous who put a human face on the Armenian Genocide and remind us that we are talking about actual people whose lives were lost or whose homes and families were destroyed.

Hayganoush Markarian was born on January 24, 1902, in the historic Armenian city of Kharpert, which suffered huge losses in the Armenian Genocide. She lived with her parents, older brother, and four sisters.

When the Turks came after her father and brother, both went into hiding—her brother dressed as a girl in order to safely cross dangerous areas and her father initially hid in the well at their home and later with Kurdish friends.

Her mother somehow saved the family from the deportations and massacres and re-united with her husband briefly after World War I, before he died as a result of the damp conditions in the wells he had hidden in for such long periods.

In 1923, the remainder of the family made their way to Syria, where Hayganoush married Markar Markarian in 1925. The Markarians later moved to Lebanon and eventually the United States. In both Syria and Lebanon, Hayganoush was an active member of the Armenian Relief Society, the oldest Armenian women's organization operating in the world.

Hayganoush resided in Oakland until her death in March of this year at the age of 105. She had prayed she would live to see the day when she and other victims of the Armenian Genocide would see the Genocide officially recognized both here and in Turkey.

Madam Speaker, although Hayganoush's prayer was not granted, she did see such a resolution pass the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives last fall. I am proud to be a cosponsor of that resolution, and I look forward to the day when the U.S. government officially recognizes the Genocide. Hayganoush Markarian's story will serve as a reminder to us of the sanctity of human life in Armenia and around the world.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HAYGANOUSH MARKARIAN

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise with sadness and respect today, along with Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, to honor Hayganoush Markarian, a resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, who passed away recently at the age of 105. Hayganoush was one of the few survivors of the Armenian Genocide of the early 20th century, so it further saddens me that she died without the government of Turkey, from where she fled, or the government of the U.S., where she found refuge, officially recognizing that Genocide.

Much has been said about the facts and numbers and statistics. We know that in Turkey between 1915 and 1921, 1.5 million Armenians died—80 percent of the population. But it is women like Hayganoush who put a human face on the Armenian Genocide and remind us that we are talking about actual people whose lives were lost or whose homes and families were destroyed.

Hayganoush Markarian was born on January 24, 1902, in the historic Armenian city of Kharpert, which suffered huge losses in the Armenian Genocide. She lived with her parents, older brother, and four sisters.

When the Turks came after her father and brother, both went into hiding—her brother dressed as a girl in order to safely cross dangerous areas and her father initially hid in the well at their home and later with Kurdish friends.

Her mother somehow saved the family from the deportations and massacres and re-united with her husband briefly after World War I, before he died as a result of the damp conditions in the wells he had hidden in for such long periods.

In 1923, the remainder of the family made their way to Syria, where Hayganoush married Markar Markarian in 1925. The Markarians later moved to Lebanon and eventually the United States. In both Syria and Lebanon, Hayganoush was an active member of the Armenian Relief Society, the oldest Armenian women's organization operating in the world.

Hayganoush resided in Oakland until her death in March of this year at the age of 105. She had prayed she would live to see the day when she and other victims of the Armenian Genocide would see the Genocide officially recognized both here and in Turkey.

Madam Speaker, although Hayganoush's prayer was not granted, she did see such a resolution pass the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives last fall. I am proud to be a cosponsor of that resolution, and I look forward to the day when the U.S. government officially recognizes the Genocide. Hayganoush Markarian's story will serve as a reminder to us of the sanctity of human life in Armenia and around the world.

ELIJAH QUINTANILLA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Elijah Quintanilla who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Elijah Quintanilla is a student at Arvada High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Elijah Quintanilla is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Elijah Quintanilla for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character to all his future accomplishments.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING JESSICA STUTZMAN FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Jessica Stutzman showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Jessica Stutzman was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Jessica Stutzman always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Jessica Stutzman on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING WILLIAM CROOKS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize William Crooks, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

William has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years William has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending William Crooks for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast votes on the following legislative measures on March 31, 2008. If I were present for rollcall votes, I would have voted "yea" on each of the following bills:

Roll No. 147, March 31, 2008: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended: H.R. 3352, To reauthorize and amend the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act, and for other purposes.

Roll No. 148, March 31, 2008: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended: H.R. 2675, To provide for the conveyance of approximately 140 acres of land in the Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma to the Indian Nations Council, Inc., of the Boy Scouts of America, and for other purposes.

Roll No. 149, March 31, 2008: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree: H. Con. Res. 302, Supporting the observance of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and for other purposes.

HONORING ANNA ETHEL LOUISE MOORE PORTER AND CORDEN PORTER

HON. BARON P. HILL

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, on April 8, 2008, Anna Ethel Louise Moore Porter will celebrate her 100th birthday. I would like to not only recognize this incredible milestone in Mrs. Porter's life, but also reflect upon all that she and her late husband, Corden Porter, have accomplished in their lives. Mr. and Mrs. Porter have given so much to the Jeffersonville community, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

The young Porter couple moved to Jeffersonville, Indiana, in 1928. Corden Porter's daughter described his life as "spent trying to overcome poverty and racial segregation." And, Mrs. Porter was always at his side, always supporting this mission.

Mr. Porter had a distinguished career as a long-time educator at Taylor High School in Jeffersonville. First a teacher, then a principal, Mr. Porter worked at Taylor High School from 1928–1952. Because of his position at the high school and well-regarded intellect, most of the Porter's friends and neighbors referred to him as "Doc Porter." He was an unparalleled leader in the African-American community of Jeffersonville. Unfortunately, his life was cut much too short when he passed away in 1963.

Mrs. Porter was also a presence at Taylor High. School, often serving as a substitute teacher. When not teaching, Mrs. Porter was known to collect donations for the local Red Cross and give piano lessons. She and her husband were very active in their church—Wesley Memorial Methodist Church. Mrs. Porter has been awarded two Guiding Light Awards as an outstanding person in the Jeffersonville African-American community. What she most often speaks about, however, is her family. The Porters have five children, 16 grandchildren, 27 great grandchildren and nine great-great grandchildren.

Happy birthday Mrs. Porter and thank you for giving so much back to the Southern Indiana community during your 100 years.

TRIBUTE TO THIRD DISTRICT CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNSEL

SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, last fall I invited high school students living in the Third Congressional District to join the Congressional Youth Advisory Counsel. The goal of the CYAC is to foster civic involvement and to encourage students to unleash their passions for America. Each meeting, they exceed my expectations and make me hopeful for the future.

The students who serve on the CYAC represent the best and the brightest in North Texas. Students are leaders, athletes, musicians, volunteers, and activists. They are the voice of their generation to Congress. They make a difference at each meeting and I'm proud of them.

For this year's community project, students interviewed a veteran and wrote an essay. The summary of each submitted essay follows.

It is my hope that some day the Congressional Youth Advisory Council will be associated with excellence and one of our highest standards of civic pride for young people in North Texas. I commend the students for volunteering their time on the Congressional Youth Advisory Council. Without a doubt, every student will continue to play an important role in our community for decades to come, and that America and North Texas, will continue to benefit from their dedication, smarts, and service.

To the members of the 2007–2008 Congressional Youth Advisory Council . . . Thank you. I salute you; God Bless You and God Bless America.

A twenty-six year old when the Korean War began, Seung Sik Kim was already a member of the armed forces. He had received education at the PoByungGamBoo Artillery School, from which he graduated as Class President. When the Korean War began, Kim was a Second Lieutenant who served in the field artillery service branch, and he was eventually promoted to the rank of Captain. His instructors consisted of General Kim Suk Won, Commander Shin In Gyoon, and Commander Kim Kae Won, who would later become a Secretary on the South Korean President's Cabinet. Kim and his unit played major roles in the incident at Ohdae Mountain in North Korea, where he starved for three days, and in the fight against the Chinese in the city Dukchun of the North Korean state Pyongamnamdo. Although his unit was pushed back at first, he and his fellow soldiers participated actively in strategically combating the North Koreans. This experience of interviewing a veteran and collecting and preserving his story has opened my eyes to and greatly increased my respect for the honorary members of our community who served for a cause and acted for remoter ends, for higher good, and for interests other than their own.—Susie Choi

The purpose of the Veterans History Project is to collect and archive the personal recollections of U.S. military veterans, which is a way of honoring their service and sharing their stories with current and future generations. Veterans of the United States military have demonstrated tremendous courage and heroism and made untold sacrifices in the service of our country to preserve freedom. Each veteran has a story that is unique, and of historical significance. The legacy of these men and women must be preserved. As I interviewed U.S. Army veteran: Specialist Joe White, I realized that veteran's stories must be told and preserved. I have gained the knowledge that the history of our veterans is vanishing rapidly. I have learnt the more eyes and ears we have around our country meeting with veterans, the more of this priceless information we are going to save. Sharing stories and gathering reminiscences had an immediate impact on me and the interviewee. Specialist White took away a sense of pride in his contribution to preserving freedom around the world. His accomplishments while in the U.S. Army will forever be archived in the annuals of U.S. history. Like most military veterans, Specialist White may have not been in combat, won a battle or firefight; but his contribution to freedom throughout the world has been immeasurable and lasting.—Derek Guckes

I met Mr. James Marberry through a friend of my father. Previously, I had been taking flight lessons for nearly seven years, and just recently needed a more schedule friendly instructor, and we found Mr. Marberry as the best answer. So, for the past 2½ months, Mr. Marberry has been my flight instructor. I began in Mid-December taking lessons from a laid-back, thorough man that I knew hardly anything about. As time progressed, and he told me stories of experiences he's had in his over forty years of flying, I continually became more intrigued. When I received this project from the Congressional Youth Advisory Council, I could think of only a few individuals that I was truly interested in interviewing and Mr. Marberry was one of them.

This interview is the first time that he and I had a conversation in whose subject was not about flying. He mentioned to me how he thoroughly enjoyed bringing back those old memories, and I likewise was elated to hear of his experiences. Many of the interview questions that one might ask if interviewing a combat seen veteran didn't apply here, but I can personally assure that even the men such as Mr. (Private) Marberry who never saw combat will forever remember their times serving our great nation. Military service is an unforgettable part of one's life and we should continue to hold the men and women of our military in the highest honor, respect, and esteem.—Brandon Maso

Mr. Ridgell M. McKinney was living prosperous. He had an amazing wife, owned and lived on his own chicken farm and had a great job managing McKinney's downtown general store. He had all he wanted or needed. Then World War II came about, and in 1942 Mr. McKinney gave up his more than satisfactory life to go fight for our country. Mr. McKinney voluntarily joined the United States Air Force as a private and fought for three honorable years on a B–24 Liberator. Mr. McKinney trained all over the United States to be part of the ten man crew that

flew the largest war aircraft of that time. During those three years Mr. McKinney and his squadron successfully completed over 50 bombing missions. This was a major help in the winning of World War II, but if you ask me his real accomplishment was joining the armed forces in time of war and coming home alive against all the odds.

Interviewing Mr. McKinney has flipped my view on things inside and out. He is a remarkable man with many life lessons to teach. I have learned several. For example, he had no selfishness. Even though life was going great for him, he looked at it as his patriotic duty to leave all of it behind and go fight for his country. Because of this, I now have even more respect and admiration for all of those men and women who have served in the past or are currently in the service.

''And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.'' John F. Kennedy—Corbin Dowell Ringley

My name is James Garrett Tollette and I interviewed Captain Ralph Peter ''Pete'' Langenfeld on January 26, 2008. Pete enlisted with the Air Force in the summer of 1942 and saw active duty in January 1943 as a 2d lieutenant. Pete was assigned to the 785th Bombardment Squadron of the 466th Bombardment Group of the 8th Air Division stationed in England as a bombardier for a B–24 Liberator. His last day of service was on December 19, 1945. For two years, Pete also flew B–29 Bombers during the Korean War. He held the rank of Captain when he was discharged on April 14, 1951.

On August 24, 2006 he received the Distinguished Flying Cross with valor for his heroism on January 2, 1945. On his 31st combat mission over Remagen, Germany, one of the live 2,000-pound bombs on his B–24 Liberator did not release. Pete removed his parachute and oxygen mask so he could move to the open bomb bay and manually release the weapon. Interviewing Captain Langenfeld has been an incredible experience. To listen to the thrill and patriotism in his voice is contagious. It makes one realize how important history is and we do not want to lose these experiences.—Garrett Tollette

SUNSET MEMORIAL

HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I stand once again before this body with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is April 2, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand—just today. That is more than the number of innocent American lives that were lost on September 11th, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,854 days since the travesty called Roe v. Wade was handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of our own children.

Some of them, Madam Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over their vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

All of them had at least four things in common.

They were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. Each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each of their mothers, whether she realizes it immediately or not, will never be the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever.

Yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims to date, those yet unborn.

Madam Speaker, perhaps it is important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here.

Thomas Jefferson said, ''The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government.''

The phrase in the 14th amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says: ''No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law.'' Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is that clarion Declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And yet Madam Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection that we should have given them.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude in the hope that perhaps someone new who heard this sunset memorial tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,854 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough; and that the America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous and compassionate enough to find a better way for mothers and their babies than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Madam Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are also numbered and that all too soon each of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time.

And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the cries of the innocent unborn. May that be the day we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

It is April 2, 2008—12,854 days since Roe v. Wade first stained the foundation of this nation with the blood of its own children—this, in the land of free and the home of the brave.

BROOKE KING

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brooke King who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brooke King is a student at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brooke King is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Brooke King for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character to all her future accomplishments.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING MYKEILA MAST FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Mykeila Mast showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Mykeila Mast was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Mykeila Mast always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Mykeila Mast on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING TAYLOR HALL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Taylor Hall, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Taylor has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Taylor has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Taylor Hall for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CLAUDE G. PERKINS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Claude G. Perkins for his long and distinguished career in teaching, program development, and educational leadership, and commend him on having a school named after him within the Clark County School District in his honor.

Claude is a graduate of Mississippi Valley State University, where he received his bachelor of arts in political science. He also earned a master's degree in teaching economics from the Krannert School of Management at Purdue University and his Ph.D. in instructional supervision from the Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. In 1978, Claude was appointed to be the superintendent of the Clark County School District, where he served as the first African-American superintendent for 12 years.

During his time as superintendent, there was an increase in students' performance results with standardized testing; an increase in the percentage of women hired as administrators and department heads, and expansion of various vocational programs within the school district.

After his time spent as superintendent, Claude became a tenured professor at Clarion University of Pennsylvania and the founding director of the Center for Educational Leadership at Clarion University. Following his time at Clarion, Dr. Perkins came to Albany State University as a professor and dean of the College of Education in 1997. Three years later he was promoted to associate vice president for academic affairs, and dean of the Graduate School. During his time spent as the dean of the Graduate School, graduate enrollment reached its highest level, new graduate faculty criteria were implemented, and most graduate programs were nationally accredited. Faculty scholarships and research interest were supported, more on-line classes were developed, and the post-tenure review process became well established at the university. He also established five international partnership agreements to promote expanded international opportunity for students and faculty members.

Claude has been the recipient of many awards, including the Medal of Merit Award from the Ohio University in 1982, the City of Richmond, Virginia Resolution in Recognition of Educational Leadership in 1997, the James Herbert White Preeminence Award for Education and Academics in 2002, and the Nevada State Senate Resolution of Educational Achievement in 2005. He presently serves as a professor of educational leadership, chair of the College Education Committee on graduate education and is the team leader for the African Educational Research Network, USA.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor the accomplishments of Claude G. Perkins as an experienced educator. I would also like to congratulate him on having an elementary school named in his honor by the Clark County School District.

HONORING BYRON JANIS: MUSICIAN, DIPLOMAT, AND INSPIRATION

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. DOYLE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Byron Janis, internationally recognized as one of the world's greatest pianists. The story of his life is one of immense talent, dedication and perseverance which has captivated audiences and inspired others across America and around the world.

Byron Janis was born in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, in 1928. At the age of 15, Mr. Janis made his orchestral debut, and by age 20, had made his Carnegie Hall debut in front of a sold-out audience. Later, Mr. Janis was selected to be the first American performer to participate in a cultural exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1960. On November 2, 1960, the New York Times wrote, ''If music could replace international politics, Byron Janis could consider himself an ambassador''. So successful was Mr. Janis' performance that the Soviet government invited him back just two years later for a six-week tour of the country. Since that time, Mr. Janis has performed for American Presidents and received acclaim around the world. Mr. Janis has been honored both in America and abroad with such distinctions as the Distinguished Pennsylvania Artists Award, the Gold Medal from the French Society for the Encouragement of Progress, and the Harriet Cohen International Music Award. He has also appeared on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, Good Morning America, 20/20 with Barbara Walters, and CNN.

Perhaps Mr. Janis' greatest contribution to America lies not in his graceful work at the piano, but rather the tremendous perseverance and unbreakable spirit he has shown in the face of significant adversity. In 1973, be was diagnosed with arthritis in both his hands and wrists, an affliction which seriously threatened his ability to continue practicing the craft he loved. Reflecting his will and determination to rise above the obstacle which was placed in his path, Mr. Janis once said, ''I have arthritis—it doesn't have me.'' For 12 years, Mr. Janis continued performing, often in great pain, while keeping his condition a closely held secret.

While announcing his affliction at the White House in 1985, Mr. Janis also declared he was assuming the role of Ambassador for the Arts for the Arthritis foundation. Through his music, he has raised a significant amount of money for the Foundation's work and research. More importantly, however, his story of determination is one which serves as an inspiration and makes Mr. Janis a role model for Americans with disabilities. In spite of his condition, to this day, Mr. Janis is still performing before admiring audiences. Mr. Janis is living proof that the American spirit can and will prevail in the face of challenges large and small.

2008 marks Mr. Janis' 80 birthday as well as the 60th anniversary of his first performance at Carnegie Hall. Each year, Congress honors individuals who have distinguished themselves with acts of courage and determination which capture the essence of the American spirit and serve as an inspiration to those around them. The life and accomplishments of Byron

Janis—as a musician, ambassador, and role model—embody the best in American culture and values. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Janis on the occasion of these two noteworthy anniversaries.

TRIBUTE TO CHAIRMAN DANIEL O'CONNELL AND THE SENIOR CITIZENS LEAGUE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am here to congratulate the Board of Trustees of The Senior Citizens League (TSCL) that works to educate the public about issues important to older Americans. The Senior Citizens League represents over 1 million members nationwide and over 2,500 in my congressional district.

Five retired enlisted association men work tirelessly as non-paid volunteers to help the plight of our most elderly and low income seniors: The Senior Citizens League Chairman Daniel O'Connell, Vice Chairman Nash Mines, Treasurer Marvin Stout, Secretary Thomas O'Connell, and PAC Treasurer Larry Hyland.

Chairman Daniel O'Connell spent a distinguished 29-year career in the U.S. Air Force including service as the Training NCO for the Queens College ROTC Program. Subsequently he served in protocol at the Air Force Space Command in Colorado Springs where he retired as Director of Protocol, an attribute that has come in handy when the chairman meets with dignitaries on Capitol Hill.

Vice Chairman Mines had a 23-year military career concluded by service as the Training NCO for Oklahoma State University's ROTC Program. Later, he worked as general services manager for a Colorado brokerage firm and for a Denver-based retirement investment company. His military experience as a senior master sergeant gave him the calm reasoned approach to problem-solving on the TSCL Board.

Treasurer Marvin Stout had a 26-year military career that concluded with medals for meritorious service. He has also worked as an owner of an income tax consultant firm bringing his expertise to use for the TSCL Board finances.

Secretary Thomas O'Connell served in the U.S. Army including service as Division Logistics NCO. And his experiences as a former high school teacher and librarian have facilitated his work as TSCL Secretary.

TSCL PAC Treasurer Larry Hyland retired from the U.S. Air Force as a senior master sergeant before launching a small business. He also re-entered the civil service overseas before returning to the states.

The organization's objectives are to encourage Congress to protect earned benefits of seniors (i.e., Social Security and Medicare), and to cosponsor bills that secure these promises to seniors and improve the quality of life for older Americans.

The TSCL Board of Trustee members visit Washington every quarter to personally meet with members of the U.S. House and Senate to consult with them about senior's issues including the Social Security Notch and cost-of-living adjustment, Medicare, drug importation, Alzheimer's research, and the Lock Box of Social Security Trust Funds.

The Senior Citizens League is a non-profit organization headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, that strives to educate millions of seniors via direct mail, e-alerts, senior faxes, and publications including a monthly newsletter The Advisor. On a day-to-day basis, TSCL operations are run by Executive Director Shannon Benton, with legislative activities guided by TSCL Legislative Consultants David and Betty Funderburk and Legislative Director Jamie McMillen.

Under the recent leadership of Chairman Dan O'Connell and Vice Chairman Nash Mines, TSCL has made significant progress in representing its seniors. The TSCL legislative team (with the Board of Trustee members on a quarterly basis) has met with over two-thirds of the Members of Congress and their chief staff members during the past 3½ years.

In the 110th Congress, a new Notch Resolution was introduced in the Senate by Sen. NORM COLEMAN with Sen. RICHARD BURR as an original cosponsor. This was the first such Notch resolution in almost 5 years.

Notably more Members of the House have cosponsored Representative Ralph Hall's (Social Security) Notch Fairness Act, H.R. 368, than ever before, setting a new record. It is a tribute to the continuing dedication of all of the TSCL Board members and to the leadership of its Chairman Dan O'Connell. The fact that more than 117 Members of Congress have already in this session of Congress cosponsored H.R. 368 proves the legitimacy and premise of the organization's fight for Notch victims. It reflects the fact that Chairman O'Connell has been dedicated and persistent in his desire to see TSCL have legislative success on the issues important to seniors.

In addition to support for the Social Security Trust Funds Lock Box and opposition to Social Security funds going to those who worked in the U.S. as "illegals" (via the U.S.-Mexico Totalization Agreement), TSCL has pledged to help promote Alzheimer's research.

It is a pleasure for me to pay tribute to the leadership of the Senior Citizens League, in particular its Chairman Daniel O'Connell, whose vision and determination to help the most worthy and needy of our citizens, are commendable.

I also thank each of these board members for their military service to our country. May God richly bless them for their continued contributions to seniors, to their communities and to our great Nation.

TRIBUTE TO MOINA SHAIQ, THE 2008 WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Moina Shaiq, the 2008 Woman of Achievement award recipient designated by California's Tenth Senate District. Moina is an exemplary community leader in the 13th Congressional District. She will receive her award on Saturday, April 5, 2008, from California State Senator Ellen Corbett.

Moina and her husband, Mohammed, have been residents of Fremont, CA, for the past 25 years and are the parents of four children. She has bachelor degrees in economics and psychology. Moina was a small business owner from 1991 to 1997. After the birth of her daughter, Samah, she chose to stay home and become more involved in community affairs. She has since been involved in a major way and has contributed tireless hours, making a positive difference in her community.

Numerous organizations continue to benefit from Moina's commitment, expertise and talents. She is a co-founder of the Muslim Support Network, established to improve the health and well-being of elders in the Muslim communities of Union City, Newark, and Fremont; serves as chair of the Fremont City Human Relations Commission; is a member of the Washington Hospital Foundation; and was a founder of the Muslim Spiritual Care Program for Kaiser Permanente.

Moina serves on the board of the Tri City Elder Coalition, coordinates the Community Ambassadors Program for Seniors and volunteers her service to the Palo Alto Medical Foundation's Citizens Advisory Committee, the Tri-City Interfaith Council, the Fremont Alliance for a Hate Free Community and the American Cancer Society.

I join the family, friends and admirers of Moina Shaiq who will gather on April 5 to commend her for her tireless volunteer efforts. The honor she will receive as the 2008 Woman of Achievement award is well deserved. She continues to set the standard for community service and is a model to follow.

TRIBUTE TO 127 ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE VETERANS

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize 127 Royal Australian Air Force veterans who on April 4 will be awarded the United States Air Force's Air Medal by the U.S. Embassy in Australia for their service during the Vietnam war.

These men bravely contributed to the tactical air mission of the United States Air Force in Southeast Asia between 1964 and 1972. Under dangerous conditions they displayed courage, dedication and resolve as they completed their missions.

I also wish to thank current and retired members of our military, including many who served alongside these Royal Australian Air Force veterans, for volunteering many hours to insure that they were properly recognized.

ARTHUR CONKLIN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Arthur Conklin who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Arthur Conklin is a student at Wheat Ridge Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Arthur Conklin is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Arthur Conklin for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character to all his future accomplishments.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING HILARY WEAVER FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Hilary Weaver showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Hilary Weaver was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Hilary Weaver always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Hilary Weaver on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING THE AUGUSTA STATE UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. PAUL C. BROUN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and pay tribute to an exceptional athletic team in my Congressional District of Georgia.

The men's basketball Jaguars achieved what no team had ever accomplished before them at Augusta State University. For the first time in school history, the basketball team advanced to the NCAA Division II Championship Game.

The basketball team played its most successful season with 27 wins in 2007–08. The players gave fans a dazzling performance on Thursday, March 27, as they beat Alaska-Anchorage 56–50 in the semifinals of the Elite Eight. They gave it their all on Saturday, March 29, as the Jaguars battled it out with Winona State University but came up just short of winning the National Championship.

The Tenth Ranked Jaguars have proven the team is among the best in the nation. Under

the leadership of Coach Dip Metress, the Blue Crew played an incredible season that bodes well for the future of the program. Their athleticism and determination put Augusta State in the national spotlight, establishing its team as a national contender. As Augusta State University's representative in Congress, I couldn't be more proud of what these young men have accomplished.

HONORING GALE ''WHITEY'' FLOCKERZIE OF BELLVILLE, OHIO

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today with deep respect to honor the life and service of Mr. Gale ''Whitey'' Flockerzie of Bellville, Ohio.

Like many in his generation, Whitey thinks of himself as an ordinary guy. He served the nation with honor in the United States Army. He was wounded in combat in Vietnam, fighting as a member of Battery A of the 6th Battalion, 29th Field Artillery, 4th infantry Division.

Whitey was honorably discharged as a Specialist Fourth Class and returned stateside. In 1973, he opened Whitey's Barbershop on a quiet street in the quiet town of Bellville. Things haven't been the same since!

Over time, customers became friends, and friends have become what is known throughout the area as the ''Barbershop Crew.'' More than a quarter-million haircuts later, the crew still gathers every Saturday morning at Whitey's for a town hall meeting to share opinions on the issues of the day. More importantly, they wait to hear Whitey's verdict—which, of course, is final.

Madam Speaker, I submit to you that if Congress followed some of the common sense and Midwestern logic employed by Whitey and the Barbershop Crew, the country would be in far better shape.

Is Whitey Flockerzie an ordinary guy? I would say he is extraordinary. The only thing ordinary about Whitey is that he represents a profound yet humble greatness about America that has helped us become the greatest nation in history: service before self, giving back to the country that gave so much to you, and living by example the sacrifice that allows each generation of Americans to reach higher than the last.

Whitey returned from Vietnam without officially receiving his Vietnam Service Ribbon. Out of respect and admiration, his friends recently obtained this ribbon for him and have graciously asked me to present it to him this weekend.

Throughout his lifetime of service, Whitey Flockerzie has affected countless lives in his part of Ohio. I am honored to recognize him on behalf of the House for all he has done.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION TO INCLUDE ALBANIA, CROATIA AND MACEDONIA INTO NATO MEMBERSHIP

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce a bipartisan resolution expressing the strong support of the House of Representatives for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, to extend invitations for membership to Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia at this week's Heads of State and Government summit in Bucharest, Romania. Representatives MARK SOUDER, ELIOT ENGEL, EARL POMEROY, and CANDICE MILLER have joined me in this effort.

Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia have been preparing for NATO membership for more than 8 years, and are undergoing a historic process of democratic and free market transformation after emerging from decades of occupation. They have made important improvements in the areas of ethnic diversity, human rights, free market economic principles, and the promotion of good neighborly relations.

They can also play important roles in NATO activities in southeastern Europe, through their unique geostrategic position. Lasting stability and security in southeastern Europe requires the military, economic, and political integration of emerging democracies into existing European structures.

In addition, Macedonia, Albania, and Croatia have been steadfast partners in the war on terror and the war in Iraq, sending troops to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is also important to note that Macedonia was the only former Yugoslav republic to win independence from Yugoslavia in the 1990s without bloodshed.

Madam Speaker, I proudly support the efforts of Macedonia, Croatia, and Albania to join NATO, and urge my colleagues in the House to support their efforts as well.

TRIBUTE TO HELLIER HIGH SCHOOL

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize some individuals in my district who are committed to maintaining ties to their community. In Pike County, the Hellier High School shut down a long time ago and many of its graduates scattered to all parts of the country. While it is true that many young people leave their hometowns, it is especially true in our region, dependent as it was on industries that rely on limited natural resources.

So it takes a special effort to remember those from high school. As young people reach that turning point where childhood is left behind and the tough choices about what career to choose, how to start a family and where to live come all at once, it is all too easy to leave those memories behind as we become adults.

The Hellier High School ''Hellcats'' have developed a strong alumni network to ensure that the past is more than something found in pages of an old year book. Rather, they make this part of Pike County stronger today by meeting every Memorial Day weekend and posting photos and comments on their alumni website.

They meet every May 24 and a growing number of re-connected alumni rightfully consider this ''Hellier High School Day.'' This year, eight more alumni were inducted into their alumni hall of fame, going back to the 1930's. They are starting an annual award for their 1941 basketball captain, Victor Ratliff, who lost his life defending our country in World War II.

We are working very hard to make our region of Kentucky one where people want to stay and raise their own families, and we are succeeding. We succeed because people remember the rich traditions and the values that guide the way during challenges that inevitably come later in life.

I am proud of the Hellier High School graduates who make the effort to embrace their past. In doing so, they remind us of what really counts in life—the people you meet along the way, fellow students, coaches, teachers, who play a critical role in making us productive citizens later on.

Every town needs people committed to making their communities better by actively participating in it. Communities are built by one high school, one church or one civic group at a time. They do not have to dry up and go away if we chose not to let them. We are fortunate to have that in Pike County, at the Hellier High School.

The people connected to Hellier High School made it more than an old school building. It is a symbol for many who wish never to forget the place they came from.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING JENA STUTZMAN FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Jena Stutzman showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Jena Stutzman was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Jena Stutzman always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Jena Stutzman on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ''MORTGAGE AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE RESOTRATION ACT OF 2008''

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, today, along with Representative MELANCON, I am re-introducing ''The Mortgage and Rental Assistance Restoration Act of 2008.''

My bill would reauthorize the Mortgage and Rental Assistance Act, MRA, which was discontinued by the Disaster Mitigation Act, effective May 2002. The MRA provides mortgage or rental payments to people who suffer a loss of income due to a federally declared disaster such as a hurricane or terrorist attack. Without a job, most people would be unable to keep their homes due to the financial burdens of mortgages or rents. The MRA provides cover for both homeowners and renters.

After the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, individuals who required temporary housing assistance relied upon the MRA, included in the Stafford Act, for aid. Under the MRA program, many were eligible for grants to repair homes to a habitable condition, or to obtain mortgage or rental payment assistance to prevent foreclosures or evictions.

The MRA program was a crucial component to help victims of the September 11 attack in my home State of New York. However, in 2005, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the MRA was not available for mortgage or rental assistance. As a result many people who would have been eligible for mortgage or rental assistance were unable to receive it. This was unfair and detrimental to the recovery process.

The United States Government has a responsibility to help communities recover from unpredictable disasters and help citizens keep from losing their homes. The MRA program helps provide stability during unstable times, and that is why it must be reauthorized.

THE OCCASION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF RID (REMOVE INTOXICATED DRIVERS)

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. MCNULTY. Madam Speaker, I wish to express my congratulations to RID (Remove Intoxicated Drivers) on its 30th anniversary. RID was the first organization to be effective in lowering DWI deaths in New York State.

RID is the oldest anti-DWI national organization in the U.S. It was formed in 1978 in Schenectady, New York, by Doris Aiken, the current president. RID began its battle against drunk driving after the deaths of Karen and Timothy Morris, 17 and 19, the only Morris children, caused by an intoxicated 22 year old on December 4, 1977.

RID's mission, then and now, is to deter impaired driving and teen binge drinking. RID educates the public about the impact of abusive alcohol use on life and health with materials, public awareness campaigns, and intense media interactions.

RID has chapters and/or coordinators in 41 States. RID relies heavily on volunteers. RID has never accepted funding from the alcohol industry or other special interests that do not support its goals. They have no paid workers in the field and do not hire professional fundraisers; 90 percent of all funds are spent on programs and 10 percent on administration and fundraising.

Madam Speaker, I ask all Members of the House to recognize and applaud the work of Doris Aiken and volunteers of RID. Their dedication and determination to end drunken driving and alcohol abuse is an excellent example of the power in each and every one of us to effect change in our communities and the Nation. May they continue to provide service and compassion for many years to come.

REMEMBERING THE TRAGEDY OF HALABJA 20 YEARS LATER

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker and colleagues, 20 years ago, on March 16, 1988, Saddam Hussein launched the largest chemical weapons attack ever used against civilians in the Kurdish town of Halabja. The deadly cocktail killed an estimated 5,000 residents. Saddam's regime held the gruesome distinction of being the first in history to attack its own population with poison gas.

The brutal attack on Halabja was part of a larger campaign, Anfal, which means ''the Spoils,'' to annihilate the Kurds of Iraq. It has been estimated that between 50,000 and 200,000 Kurds were killed during Anfal. Many died in mass executions; thousands more were simply ''disappeared'' by the regime.

Halabja symbolizes the suffering of the Kurdish people. The plight of Halabja's survivors continues today because of a lack of remediation. Little or no decontamination has been done and the health consequences of exposure to chemicals including mustard gas, sarin, tabun and VX continue to bring death and destruction to Halabja and surrounding villages. Children are born with deformities and cancers, and other diseases caused by genetic mutations are occurring at much higher rates than in other areas.

The world has historically failed to recognize what happened at Halabja. As we reflect on the tragedy of Halabja, it is important to look to the future, and we must honor Halabja's victims and stand in solidarity with those who survive.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT PUBLIC SERVANTS SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND CONTINUED SERVICE TO THE NATION DURING PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK, MAY 5 THROUGH 11, 2008

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, the week of May 5 through May 11, 2008, marks the 24th anniversary of Public Service Recognition Week, PSRW. PSRW is a week set aside to commemorate the hard work, dedication, and sacrifice made by our Nation's Federal, State and local government employees. I am proud to once again introduce this resolution honoring public service and public servants.

Public Service Recognition Week offers an opportunity for all Americans to both recognize and learn about the significant contributions public sector employees make on a daily basis to our local communities, States, and country. Whether fighting crime, educating future generations, or serving on the front line to protect our Nation, public servants touch every aspect of our lives.

While Public Service Week lasts only 7 days, I believe that the contributions and sacrifices of public servants ought to be recognized and appreciated throughout the entire year. By honoring public servants we show younger generations the importance of public service and inspire them to consider entering the field, whether on the Federal, State, or local level of government.

We, as a nation, have a responsibility to honor the commitment of government employees and to recognize that our country runs on their diligence and hard work. The commemoration of Public Service Recognition Week stands as a reminder to every citizen that the sacrifices and contributions made by American public employees is what makes our country a more perfect union and our Government one that is truly of the people, for the people and by the people.

CESAR CHAVEZ'S BIRTHDAY

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Monday, March 31, 2008, marked the 81st birthday of the late Cesar Chavez, a national hero who devoted his life to fighting for civil rights for all Americans. Today, I join the millions of Americans who will honor this migrant farmworker, labor organizer, and champion of social justice for his many contributions.

Cesar Chavez was a civil rights and human rights leader who learned about the importance of justice early in his life. After graduating from the eighth grade, a young Cesar Chavez went to work in the fields as a migrant farmworker to support his family. In 1962,

Chavez and Dolores Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association, later to become the United Farm Workers, UFW. Chavez had the foresight to train his union workers and then to send many of them into the cities where they were to use the boycott and picket as their weapon. The UFW would soon become a significant political force, demonstrating that Mexican Americans could and would participate in electoral politics.

Chavez was able to successfully organize farmworkers because of his tireless leadership and nonviolent tactics that helped pass laws which would permit farmworkers to organize into unions and allow collective bargaining agreements. He also helped make people aware of the struggles of farmworkers for fair wages and safer working conditions. His movement was the beginning of La Causa, ''The Cause,'' a cause that was supported by organized labor, religious groups, minorities, and students.

Cesar Chavez, the founder and president of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL—CIO, died peacefully in his sleep on April 23, 1993. On August 8, 1994, Cesar Chavez was posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom, our country's highest civilian honor, by President Clinton. Since his passing, ten States across the country have paid tribute to his memory by celebrating a statewide holiday name in his honor, including my home State of Texas.

Cesar Chavez left our world better than he found it. He taught us to face and overcome adversity with the rallying cry of ''Si Se Puede!'', or ''Yes We Can!''. His legacy inspires not just the more than 45 million Latinos in this country but every person who believes in nonviolence as a means to achieve social change. He truly was, in the words of Senator Robert Kennedy, ''one of the heroic figures of our time.''

ON THE BIRTH OF SARAH ELIZABETH BURT

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am happy to congratulate my cousin Elizabeth Hatchell Burt and her husband Travis Ryan Burt of Columbia, South Carolina, on the birth of their new baby girl. Sarah Elizabeth Burt was born on March 31, 2008, weighing 8 pounds and 3 ounces. She has been born into a loving home where she will be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future.

I am so excited for this new addition to our family. I want to congratulate Sarah's grandparents James Clarence Hatchell, Jr., and Dale Wilson Hatchell of Lexington, SC, and George W. Burt and Ramona L. Burt of Williston, SC. Additionally, I wish to send our best wishes to Sarah's great grandparents Richard Bryan Wilson and Mary Dale Lott Wilson of West Columbia and James C. Hatchell, Sr., of Columbia, as well as Frances Burt of Alabama. On behalf of my wife Roxanne, and our entire family, we want to wish Elizabeth, Travis, and Sarah all the best.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PHIL HARE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, on March 31, 2008, I was unavoidably detained. I would like the record to reflect that had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on rollcall No. 147, To reauthorize and amend the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act, I would have voted ''yea''; on rollcall No. 148, To provide for the conveyance of approximately 140 acres of land in the Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma to the Indian Nations Council, Inc., of the Boy Scouts of America, I would have voted ''yea''; and on rollcall No. 149, Supporting the observance of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, I would have voted ''yea.''

AMBER WESTERFIELD

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Amber Westerfield who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Amber Westerfield is a student at North Arvada Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Amber Westerfield is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Amber Westerfield for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character to all her future accomplishments.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING GABRIELLE FOWLER FOR WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Gabrielle Fowler showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Gabrielle Fowler was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, Gabrielle Fowler always displayed sportsmanship on and off of the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate Gabrielle Fowler on winning the Girls' Division IV State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship she has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

HONORING MS. HALLEY PAGE UPON RECEIVING THE 2008 GEORGIA ELEMENTARY SCIENCE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD BY THE GEORGIA SCIENCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

HON. PAUL C. BROUN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today with great enthusiasm to congratulate Ms. Halley Page for receiving the 2008 Georgia Elementary Science Teacher of the Year Award from the Georgia Science Teachers Association. Ms. Page is a science teacher at Fowler Drive Elementary School in the Clarke County School District, which is located in the heart of the congressional district, which I am proud to serve.

Throughout her 23 years as an elementary school teacher, 20 of which have been at Fowler Drive Elementary, Halley Page has been a role model and inspiration to the literally thousands of children whose lives she has touched and influenced. A graduate of Georgia Southern University, Ms. Page holds advanced degrees from the University of Georgia. Her dedication to teaching and her love for science are clear and obvious not only to the students who have had the privilege of having her as a teacher but also to the teachers whom she has befriended and mentored.

Today, Ms. Page spends many hours outside her regular schoolday working with her fellow science and Spectrum teachers throughout the district in developing and implementing a science curriculum that flows and maximizes the potential of every one of her students. Ms. Page has been instrumental in strengthening a partnership between Fowler Drive Elementary and the Richard Russell Agricultural Research Center, United States Department of Agriculture, often hosting USDA scientists who have come into the classrooms to provide our children with real hands-on experience. She also brings in multiple guests throughout the school year which not only excite the students about learning but also gives them an opportunity to learn about the outside world.

Accolades such as this one are not new to Ms. Page. She is a three-time Fowler Drive Elementary School Teacher of the Year—1994–1995, 1995–1996, and 2003–2004—and she also received the 2002 Georgia Marine Educator of the Year awarded by the Georgia Association of Marine Educators. Halley Page is indeed worthy of all of these great recognitions and the congratulations of the House of Representatives.

Also worthy of recognition are the more than 12,000 students who attend over 20 schools that make up the Clarke County School District. With over 19 native languages spoken throughout the district, many students face constant difficulty as they work to achieve their greatest potential. With the help of their teachers, parents, and the support of the community, they are overcoming the challenges and

succeeding. Just this past year, the graduates of the district's high schools received over $2 million in academic scholarships—not including the HOPE Scholarship. They are all to be congratulated for a job well done.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the over 2,000 faculty and staff working tirelessly throughout the school district. Their hard work and devotion to the students of Clarke County are succeeding. I also acknowledge the commitment of Superintendent James Simms and School Board Members Charles Worthy, Chester Sosebee, Denise Mewborn, Vernon Payne, David Nunnally, Sr., Allison Wright, John Knight, Sidney Anne Waters, and Ovita Thornton.

All of these great individuals, most especially Ms. Halley Page, deserve our highest praise and the commendation of the House of Representatives.

HONORING DON LOPEZ'S SERVICE TO THE SMITHSONIAN AND HIS COUNTRY

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of Donald S. Lopez.

Don, described as a ''walking encyclopedia'' by his friends and colleagues, was hired by the Smithsonian as assistant director for aeronautics in 1972. He was part of the team, which included Apollo astronaut and then director Michael Collins, that planned the National Air and Space Museum, which opened in 1976 and would become the most visited museum in the world.

Don's love of and knowledge of flight began as a boy—seeing Charles Lindbergh parade through the streets of Brooklyn, New York; reading World War I aviation publications; and hitching rides on barnstormers. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1942. A year later, Don received his wings. During his 2 years in China, he flew 101 missions and scored five victories to become a World War II ace fighter pilot. He received the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with One Oak Leaf Clusters, Soldier's Air Medal with Two Oak Leaf Clusters, Soldier's Medal, and Chinese Breast Order of Yun Hui.

After World War II, he became a test pilot and finished his education, earning a master's degree in aeronautics from the California Institute of Technology. Apollo 8 astronaut Frank Borman was one of his classmates. In the early 1960s, Don helped establish the aeronautics program at the new U.S. Air Force Academy. He retired from the Air Force in 1964 and worked as a systems engineer on the Apollo-Saturn Launch Vehicle and Skylab Orbital Workshop.

Lopez became deputy director of the National Air and Space Museum in 1983 and held various advisory positions through the late 1990s. He was most proud of the Pioneers of Flight gallery, which he filled with ''such great airplanes.'' In his lifetime, he flew more than 32 different types of aircraft.

I am especially grateful to Don for choosing my constituents at Corporate Flight Management and Tangent Industries to rebuild and modify a Cessna 150 for an interactive display in the museum's How Things Fly gallery.

Don Lopez will he interred at Arlington National Cemetery on April 22, 2008. A memorial fund at the National Air and Space Museum has been named in his honor.

Donald S. Lopez—a war hero, test pilot, educator, and preserver, of our Nation's aeronautic achievements—was truly a renaissance man.

RECOGNIZING CORONA DEL SOL HIGH SCHOOL'S STAND CLUB

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the STAND Club from Corona del Sol High School in my hometown, Tempe, Arizona, for its dedication to addressing the genocide in Darfur. The school club has worked tirelessly to raise over $7,000 for the Backpack Project and the Solar Cooker Project, which provide direct aid to the people in Darfur.

STAND, a group of about 30 high school students that was started just a year and a half ago, has spent countless hours doing fundraisers and projects to support and raise awareness of the Darfur cause. Specifically, the students have organized Thankful Thoughts at Thanksgiving and a Guitar Hero competition at Corona's Bonfire, as well as numerous candy, cookie, and candle sales. I would like to congratulate the students on their efforts to raise an additional $3,000 through its silent auction fundraiser, One Night STAND. Including guest speakers from the Lost Boys of Sudan, the upcoming event seeks to both raise money to directly assist those affected by the genocide as well as raise awareness about the ongoing tragedy.

The students should be proud of their accomplishments. I congratulate them on a job well done and ask them to keep up the good work.

HONORING MR. GEORGE NTIM, RECIPIENT OF J. WILLARD MARRIOTT AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. George Ntim, in recognition of receiving the J. Willard Marriott Award of Excellence. As director of guest relations and community services at the New York Marriott Marquis, Mr. Ntim is receiving this prestigious award for his dedication to excellence in service and hospitality. This is quite an honor as this award will be given to only nine individuals in the entire global operations this year.

Madam Speaker, the dedication that Mr. George Ntim shows to his profession is truly praiseworthy, and I thank him for his service to his numerous clients. I have personally had the good fortune to know Mr. Ntim, as he has assisted me various times during my stays at the Marriott. His affable personality and enthusiasm certainly does not go unnoticed, and contributes to his professional success. The hard work Mr. Ntim exhibits on a daily basis exemplifies that he is truly deserving of this honor.

IN HONOR OF MARY QUARRIER GOURLEY

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Quarrier Gourley, who passed away on Friday, March 14, 2008.

Mary, who was known to most people as Molly, was born in 1932 and grew up in Modesto, California. She attended Modesto Junior College and later Zweegman's School for Medical Assistants in San Francisco. In 1957, she married William H. ''Bill'' Gourley, who was a 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. While Bill traveled the world for the United States Army, Molly was at his side. Over a 35-year span they covered every corner of the United States and Europe. Even after Bill retired, they continued to hit the road often. Among Molly's favorite places to visit were Washington DC., Germany and Turkey.

Molly loved to spend her time researching her genealogy, gardening, traveling, and entertaining her friends and family. Through genealogy, she discovered her families' extraordinary history. She had family members who took part in the American Revolution and joined the Daughters of the American Revolution. Molly had a great amount of pride in her family origins. It was that pride in her family history that she imbued in her own family and what built strong bonds among them, bonds that keep them close despite being settled in disparate places.

I always knew Molly as a vivacious, bubbly person—always full of life and laughter. But that bubbly spirit was not to be confused with frivolousness. Absolutely not. Molly was a person of depth and substance, a woman of strength. Hers was a presence always felt and will be sorely missed.

Molly is survived by her husband, William Gourley, who attained the rank of Major General in the U.S. Army and is now retired: her son Michael; and daughter Cecily, Carolyn, Mary Jane; and her nine grandchildren. She will be laid to rest at Arlington Cemetery later this month.

Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Mary Quarrier Gourley, who was a thoughtful and loving wife, mother, and grandmother.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2008 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

APRIL 4

9:30 a.m.

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine the current employment situation.

SD–106

APRIL 8

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Iraq and progress made by the Government of Iraq in meeting benchmarks and achieving reconciliation.

SD–106

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Barbara McConnell Barrett, of Arizona, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, Yousif Boutrous Ghafari, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia, Frank Charles Urbancic, Jr., of Indiana, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus, Nancy E. McEldowney, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria, and Kurt Douglas Volker, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador.

SD–419

10 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the Federal Trade Commission reauthorization.

SR–253

Finance

To hold hearings to examine S. 970, to impose sanctions on Iran and on other countries for assisting Iran in developing a nuclear program.

SD–215

10:15 a.m.

Judiciary

Constitution Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the adequacy of representation in capital cases.

SD–226

2:30 p.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the digital television transition, focusing on consumers, broadcasters, and converter boxes.

SR–253

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine S. 2259 and H.R. 813, bills to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Prado Basin Natural Treatment System Project, to authorize the Secretary to participate in the Lower Chino Dairy Area desalination demonstration and reclamation project, H.R. 31, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District Wildomar Service Area Recycled Water Distribution Facilities and Alberhill Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation Facility Projects, H.R. 716, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Santa Rosa Urban Water Reuse Plan, H.R. 786, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Los Angeles County Water Supply Augmentation Demonstration Project, H.R. 1140, to authorize the Secretary, in cooperation with the City of San Juan Capistrano, California, to participate in the design, planning, and construction of an advanced water treatment plant facility and recycled water system, H.R. 1503, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Avra Black Wash Reclamation and Riparian Restoration Project, H.R. 1725, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Rancho California Water District Southern Riverside County Recycled Non-Potable Distribution Facilities and Demineralization Desalination Recycled Water Treatment and Reclamation Facility Project, H.R. 1737, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the design, planning, and construction of permanent facilities for the GREAT project to reclaim, reuse, and treat impaired waters in the area of Oxnard, California, and H.R. 2614, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in certain water projects in California.

SD–366

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine Iraq after the surge.

SH–216

Armed Services

SeaPower Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2009 on Navy force structure requirements and programs to meet those requirements, and the future years defense program.

SR–222

Intelligence

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.

SH–219

APRIL 9

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Iraq, focusing on progress made by the Government of Iraq in meeting benchmarks and achieving reconciliation.

SH–216

Veterans' Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine making Veterans Affairs the workplace of choice for health care providers.

SR–418

10 a.m.

Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine S. 1870, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify the jurisdiction of the United States over waters of the United States.

SD–406

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider pending legislation, and the nomination of Harvey E. Johnson, Jr., of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

SD–342

Appropriations

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2009 for the Department of State and foreign operations.

SD–138

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine S. 1633, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of including the battlefield and related sites of the Battle of Shepherdstown in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, as part of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield, S. 1993 and H.R. 2197, bills to modify the boundary of the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in the State of Ohio, S. 2207, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating Green McAdoo School in Clinton, Tennessee, as a unit of the National Park System, S. 2254, to establish the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the State of Mississippi, S. 2329 and H.R. 2627, bills to establish the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in the State of New Jersey as the successor to the Edison National Historic Site, S. 2502 and H.R. 3332, bills to provide for the establishment of a memorial within Kalaupapa National Historical Park located on the island of Molokai, in the State of Hawaii, to honor and perpetuate the memory of those individuals who were forcibly relocated to the Kalaupapa Peninsula from 1866 to 1969, S. 2512, to establish the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area in the State of Mississippi, and H.R. 3998, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct special resources studies of certain lands and structures to determine the appropriate means for preservation, use, and management of the resources associated with such lands and structures.

SD–366

Finance
To hold hearings to examine covering uninsured children, focusing on the provisions and regulations in the current Children's Healthcare Insurance Program (CHIP) directive.
SD–215

Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Science, Technology, and Innovation Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine coal gasification technologies, focusing on the need for large scale projects.
SR–253

APRIL 10

10 a.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine aviation safety oversight.
SR–253

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine climate change, focusing on a challenge for public health.
SD–430

2:30 p.m.
Intelligence
To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.
SH–219

APRIL 15

10 a.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine S. 2438, to repeal certain provisions of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.
SD–366

APRIL 16

10 a.m.
Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine National Security Letters, focusing on the need for greater accountability and oversight.
SD–226

APRIL 23

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine an update on the Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense cooperation and collaboration.
SR–418

2:30 p.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine phantom traffic.
SR–253

APRIL 24

10 a.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Business meeting to consider S. 2688, to improve the protections afforded under Federal law to consumers from contaminated seafood by directing the Secretary of Commerce to establish a program, in coordination with other appropriate Federal agencies, to strengthen activities for ensuring that seafood sold or offered for sale to the public in or affecting interstate commerce is fit for human consumption, S. J. Res. 28, disapproving the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission with respect to broadcast media ownership, S. 2607, to make a technical correction to section 3009 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, H.R. 3985, to amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to register a person providing transportation by an over-the-road bus as a motor carrier of passengers only if the person is willing and able to comply with certain accessibility requirements in addition to other existing requirements, H.R. 802, to amend the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships to implement MARPOL Annex VI, and the nomination of Robert A. Sturgell, of Maryland, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.
SR–253

MAY 7

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold hearings to examine pending benefits legislation.
SR–418

MAY 21

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold hearings to examine pending health care legislation.
SR–418

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2313–S2365

Measures Introduced: Seventeen bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2795–2811, and S. Res. 496–498. **Pages S2345–46**

Measures Passed:

National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 498, designating April 8, 2008, as ''National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day''. **Page S2364**

Measures Considered:

New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act and the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3221, moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation. **Pages S2314–37**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, April 3, 2008, Senate adopt the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and after reporting of the bill, Senator Dodd or his designee, be recognized to offer a substitute amendment to the bill; provided further, that following opening statements by Senators Dodd and Shelby, Senator Durbin be recognized to an amendment relating to bankruptcy. **Page S2365**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, the 2008 National Drug Control Strategy; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (PM–42) **Page S2342**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

John P. Hewko, of Michigan, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation.

Jeffrey F. Kupfer, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

Richard E. Hoagland, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Marie L. Yovanovitch, of Connecticut, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia.

William J. Burns, of the District of Columbia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs).

Janice L. Jacobs, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Bureau of Consular Affairs).

Alexa E. Posny, of Kansas, to be a Member of the National Institute for Literacy Advisory Board for a term expiring November 25, 2011.

Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security.

Brandon Chad Bungard, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years. **Page S2365**

Messages from the House: **Page S2342**

Measures Referred: **Page S2342**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S2342–43**

Executive Communications: **Pages S2343–45**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2346–48**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S2348–63**

Additional Statements: **Pages S2340–42**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S2363–64**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S2364**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S2364**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 7:26 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 3, 2008. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S2365.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

SAFEGUARDING WORKERS' RIGHTS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine National Labor Relations Board representation elections and initial collective bargaining agreements, focusing on safeguarding workers' rights, after receiving testimony from Peter C. Schaumber, Chairman, and Wilma B. Liebman, Member, both of the National Labor Relations Board; Gordon Lafer, University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center, Eugene; and John N. Raudabaugh, Baker and McKenzie LLP, Chicago, Illinois.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2009 for the Department of Energy, after receiving testimony from Raymond L. Orbach, Under Secretary for Science, Alexander Karsner, Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, and David G. Frantz, Director, Loan Guarantee Program Office, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, all of the Department of Energy.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities concluded a hearing to examine the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2009 for the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program and the Proliferation Security Initiative at the Department of Defense, and nuclear nonproliferation programs at the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the future years defense program, after receiving testimony from William H. Tobey, Deputy Administrator, Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Energy; and Joseph A. Benkert, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Security Affairs.

DOD CONTRACTING

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support concluded a hearing to examine Department of Defense (DOD) contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, after receiving testimony from James I. Finley, Deputy Under Secretary for Acquisition and Technology, Jack Bell, Deputy Under Secretary for Logistics and Materiel Readiness, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Lieutenant General N. Ross Thompson III, USA, Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, and Jeffery P. Parsons, Executive Director, Army Contracting Command (Provisional), United States Army Materiel Command, all of the Department of Defense.

POLAR BEARS

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the listing decision for the polar bear under the Endangered Species Act, focusing on the issues of climate change and conservation of polar bears, after receiving testimony from Douglas B. Inkley, National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Reston, Virginia; William P. Horn, Birch, Horton, Bittner and Cherot, Washington, D.C., on behalf of sundry organizations; and Kassie Siegel, Center for Biological Diversity, Joshua Tree, California.

IRAQ

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Iraq after the troop surge, focusing on military prospects, after receiving testimony from General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA (Ret.), BR McCaffrey Associates LLC, Arlington, Virginia; and Lieutenant General William E. Odom, USA (Ret.), Center for Strategic and International Studies, Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr., USA (Ret.), Colgen, Inc., and Michele Flournoy, Center for New American Security, all of Washington, D.C.

IRAQ

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Iraq after the troop surge, focusing on political prospects, after receiving testimony from Yahia Khairi Said, Revenue Watch Institute, and Nir Rosen, New York University Center on Law and Security, both of New York, New York; and Stephen Biddle, Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C.

ASSESSING THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine nuclear terrorism, focusing on assessing the threat to the United States, after receiving testimony from Charles E. Allen, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Intelligence and Analysis; Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, Director, Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, Department of Energy; Matthew Bunn, Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Gary Anthony Ackerman, University of Maryland National

Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), College Park.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OVERSIGHT

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Homeland Security, focusing on the Department's progress in securing the United States and protecting the American people, after receiving testimony from Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 10 public bills, H.R. 5677–5686; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 321; and H. Res. 1072–1074, were introduced. **Pages H1972–73**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1973–74**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 1071, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration (H. Rept. 110–563). **Page H1972**

Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the guest Chaplain, Rev. Elliott L. Foss, National Chaplain, American Legion. **Page H1891**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a yea-and-nay vote of 232 yeas to 177 nays, with 1 voting "present", Roll No. 153. **Pages H1891, H1902–03**

Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008: The House passed H.R. 5501, to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, by a recorded vote of 308 ayes to 116 noes, Roll No. 158. **Pages H1904–42**

Rejected the Ryan (WI) motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Foreign Affairs with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with amendments, by a yea-and-nay vote of 175 yeas to 248 nays, Roll No. 157. **Page H1939–41**

Accepted:

Blumenauer amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 110–562) that adds safe drinking water to nutrition and income security on the list of programs for which direct linkages are encouraged; **Pages H1934–35**

Fortenberry amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 110–562) that ensures that audits by the Inspector General include information on subcontractors; **Pages H1935–36**

McCollum amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 110–562) that adds Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho to the list of new "focus" countries proposed to be added in the bill; and **Pages H1936–37**

Carson amendment (No. 4 printed in H. Rept. 110–562) that directs the Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to expand their plan for strengthening health systems of host countries by allowing for postsecondary educational institutions, particularly in Africa, to collaborate with United States postsecondary educational institutions and specifically historically black colleges and universities (by a recorded vote of 415 ayes to 10 noes, Roll No. 156). **Pages H1937–39**

Agreed that the Clerk be authorized to make technical and conforming changes to reflect the actions of the House. **Page H1942**

H. Res. 1065, the rule providing for consideration of the bill, was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 221 yeas to 192 nays, Roll No. 155, after agreeing to order the previous question by a yea-and-nay vote of 215 yeas to 199 nays, Roll No. 154. **Pages H1894–H1902, H1903–04**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H1891.

Senate Referral: S. 980 was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on the Judiciary. **Page H1971**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes and two recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1902–03, H1903, H1903–04, H1938–39, H1941, and H1941–42. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Committee Meetings

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION CENTER FOR BIOLOGICS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Food and Drug Administration Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. Testimony was heard from Jesse L. Goodman, Director, Center for Biologics, Evaluation and Research, Department of Health and Human Services.

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Legal Services Corporation. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Legal Services Corporation: Helaine Barnett, President; and Frank B. Strickland, Chairman.

The Subcommittee also continued appropriation hearings. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

DOE WEAPONS ACTIVITIES/NAVAL REACTORS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Department of Energy—Weapons Activities and Naval Reactors. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Energy: Thomas P. D'Agostino, Under Secretary, Nuclear Security and Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; Robert L. Smolen, Deputy Administrator, Defense Programs; and Kirkland Donald, Deputy Administrator, Naval Reactors.

OPM

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a hearing on OPM. Testimony was heard from Linda Springer, Director, OPM.

CARGO/SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a hearing on Cargo, Container and Supply Chain Security. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Homeland Security: Jayson Ahern, Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection; and Vayl Oxford, Director, Domestic Nuclear Detection Office; and public witnesses.

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies held a hearing on the Indian Health Service. Testimony was heard from Bob McSwain, Acting Director, Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services.

DOD—BUDGET OVERVIEW

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs and Related Agencies held a hearing on Department of Defense—Budget Overview. Testimony was herd from the following officials of the Department of Defense: Tina W. Jonas, Comptroller; and Wayne Arny, Deputy Under Secretary, Installations and Environment.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held a hearing on Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) and the Contributions to International Organizations (CID) accounts. Testimony was heard from Kristen Silverberg, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION POLICY/ REVENUE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Highways and Transit Programs: The DOT Perspective on the Urgent Funding Needs for Today and Tomorrow. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Transportation: Phyllis Scheinberg, Assistant Secretary, Budget and Programs and Chief Financial Officer; James Simpson, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration; and James Ray, Acting Administrator, Federal Highway Administration.

The Subcommittee also held a hearing on Thoughts and Recommendations from the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission. Testimony was heard from Frank Busalacchi, Commissioner, Department of Transportation, Wisconsin; and public witnesses.

FAMILY SMOKING PREVENTION AND TOBACCO CONTROL ACT

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Ordered reported, as amended, H.R. 1108, Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

INTERNET GAMBLING ENFORCEMENT REGULATIONS

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade and Technology held a hearing entitled "Proposed

UIGEA Regulations: Burden without Benefit?'' Testimony was heard from Louise L. Roseman, Director, Division of Reserve Bank Operations and Payment Systems, Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System; Valerie Abend, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Critical Infrastructure Protection and Compliance Policy, Department of the Treasury; and public witnesses.

U.N. PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight held a hearing on the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: An Underfunded International Mandate—the Role of the United States Testimony was heard from Kristen Silverberg, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State.

The Subcommittee also held a briefing on this subject. The Subcommittee was briefed by Jane Holl Lute, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Officer in Charge of the Department of Field Support, United Nations.

AFGHANISTAN—TALIBAN RESURGENCE

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia held a hearing on the Strategic Chaos and Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on House Administration: Ordered reported the following measures: H.R. 5493, To provide that the usual day for paying salaries in or under the House of Representatives may be established by regulations of the Committee on House Administration; H. Res. 1068, amended, Permitting active duty members of the Armed Forces who are assigned to a Congressional liaison office of the Department of Defense at the House of Representatives to obtain membership in the exercise facility established for employees of the House of Representatives; H.R. 5036, amended, Emergency Assistance for Secure Elections Act of 2008; H.R. 281, Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act of 2007; H.R. 3032, amended, To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to permit candidates for election for Federal office to designate an individual who will be authorized to disburse funds of the authorized campaign committees of the candidate in the event of the death of the candidate.

The Committee also approved an amendment to Regulations Governing the Use of Official Funds, by Members, Committees, and Officers of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Committee also approved pending Committee business.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Ordered reported the following bills: H.R. 5570, amended, Religious Worker Visa Extension Act of 2008; H.R. 5060, To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow athletes admitted as nonimmigrants described in section 101(a)(15)(P) of such Act to renew their period of authorized admission in 5-year increments; H.R. 5569, To extend for 5 years the EB–5 regional center pilot program; H.R. 5571, To extend for 5 years the program relating to waiver of the foreign country residence requirement with respect to international medical graduates; H.R. 1777, Need-Based Educational Aid Act of 2007; and a private relief bill.

The Committee also adversely reported to the House the following bills: H.R. 2176, To provide for and approve the settlement of certain land claims of the Bay Mills Indian Community; H.R. 4115, To provide for and approve the settlement of certain land claims of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Ordered reported the following bills: H.R. 3513, amended, Cooper Salmon Wilderness Act; H.R. 5151, amended, Wild Monongahela Act: A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places; H.R. 831, amended, Coffman Cove Administrative Site Conveyance Act; and H.R. 3734, Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Act.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives held a hearing on Examining the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 2008. Testimony was heard from Robin Nazzaro, Director, National Resources and Environment, GAO; Robert Flaak, Director, Committee Management Secretariat, GSA; Frank Wilson, Director, Administration and Management, Department of Defense; and a public witness.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Committee on Rules: Granted, by voice vote, a structured rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4847, the ''United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008.'' The rule provides 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and Technology.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The rule provides that, in lieu

of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Science and Technology now printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the Rules Committee report shall be considered as an original bill for purpose of amendment and shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the report except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI.

The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in part B of the Rules Committee report. Amendments so printed may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by a proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Finally, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to a time designated by the Speaker. Testimony was heard from Representatives Mitchell and Gingrey.

INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

Committee on Science and Technology: Subcommittee on Research and Science Education held a hearing on International Science and Technology Cooperation. Testimony was heard from John H. Marburger III, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy; Arden Bement, Director, NSF; the following officials of the Department of State: Nina Fedoroff, Science and Technology Advisor to the Secretary; and Jeff Miotke, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Science, Space and Health, Bureau of Oceans and International and Environmental and Scientific Affairs; and Michael F. O'Brien, Assistant Administrator, External Relations, NASA.

NATIONAL FLOOD PLAIN REMAPPING

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Energy Management held a hearing on National Flood Plain Remapping: The Practical Impact. Testimony was heard from Representatives Ehlers, Boozman, Miller of Michigan, Matsui, and Hall of New York; Steven Stockton, Deputy Director, Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense; David Maurstad, Assistant Administrator, Mitigation Directorate, FEMA; and public witnesses.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY/VISION ISSUES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Related Vision Issues. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs: James Orcutt, M.D., Chief of Ophthalmology, Barbara Sigford, M.D., National Program Director, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, both with the Veterans Health Administration, and Glenn Cockerman, M.D., Chief of Ophthalmology, VA Palo Alto Health Care System; COL Loreen K. Sutton, M.D., Director, Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, Department of Defense; and public witnesses.

BRIEFING—HOT SPOTS

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Human Intelligence, Analysis and Counterintelligence met in executive session to receive a briefing on Hot Spots. The Subcommittee was briefed by departmental witnesses.

SUBPOENAS TO EPA; CURBING SOARING AVIATION EMISSIONS

Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming: Approved a resolution authorizing the Select Committee to issue subpoenas to the EPA as necessary to obtain the EPA's draft regulations and finding of "endangerment," from motor vehicle emissions as provided under the Clean Air Act regulatory and in response to the regulatory and in response to the *Massachusetts* v. *EPA* decision.

The Select Committee also held a hearing entitled "From the Wright Brothers to the Right Solutions: Curbing Soaring Aviation Emissions." Testimony was heard from Dan K. Elwell, Assistant Administrator, Policy, Planning, and Environment, FAA, Department of Transportation; Bob Meyers, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation, EPA; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

CURRENT ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the current economic outlook, after receiving testimony from Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

BUSINESS MEETING

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies—2008: Committee announced the following membership: Senator Feinstein (Chairman), Senator Reid, Senator Bennett, Representative Pelosi, Representative Hoyer, and Representative Boehner.

Also, Committee approved its budget.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2008

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine the status of the Surface Transportation Trust Funds and impact on federal spending, 9:30 a.m., SD–138.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2009 for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Fiscal Year, 10 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Gen. David D. McKiernan, to be General, and Commander, International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, to be General, and Vice Chief of Staff, and Lt. Gen. Walter L. Sharp, to be General, and Commander, United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command/United States Forces Korea, all of the United States Army, 9:30 a.m., SD–106.

Subcommittee on Airland, to hold hearings to examine the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2009 on Army modernization, and the future years defense program, 3 p.m., SR–222.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine turmoil in U.S. credit markets, focusing on the recent actions of federal financing regulators, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine international fisheries, focusing on management and enforcement, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the current price of oil, focusing on noncommercial institutional investors, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at United States colleges and universities, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine outside the box on estate tax reform, focusing on reviewing ideas to simplify planning, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the conditions and developments of Iraq in 2012, 9:30 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine Federal Emergency Management Agency, focusing on if the agency is better prepared for a catastrophe now than it was in 2005, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, to hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia to examine managing diversity of senior leadership in the Federal workforce and Postal Service, 2 p.m., 2154, Rayburn Building.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 2136, to address the treatment of primary mortgages in bankruptcy, S. 2133, to authorize bankruptcy courts to take certain actions with respect to mortgage loans in bankruptcy, S. 2041, to amend the False Claims Act, S. 2533, to enact a safe, fair, and responsible state secrets privilege Act, S. 702, to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to State courts to develop and implement State courts interpreter programs, S. Res. 468, designating April 2008 as "National 9–1–1 Education Month", and the nominations of Catharina Haynes, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, and Rebecca A. Gregory, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Mark S. Davis, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, David Gregory Kays, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, David J. Novak, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri, and Elisebeth C. Cook, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, 2:15 p.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: to hold hearings to examine legislative presentations from sundry Veteran Affairs organizations, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine scrambling for health insurance coverage, focusing on health security for people in late middle age, 10:30 a.m., SD–608.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, on Natural Resources Conservation Service Budget, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, on Attorney General, 10 a.m., and on Census, 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense/Select Intelligence Oversight Panel, executive, on Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative, 1:30 p.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, on Department of Energy—Nuclear Nonproliferation, 10 a.m., 2362–B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Financial Services, and General Services, on GSA, 10 a.m., 2220 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Homeland Security, on Candidate Protection and Investigatory Programs: Balancing the U.S. Secret Service Workload, 10 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, on Public Witnesses; 10 a.m., and on Bureau of Indian Affairs and Office of Special Trustee, 10:30 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies, on Veterans' Affairs Information Technology, 1:30 p.m., H–143 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces, hearing on Fiscal Year 2009 National Defense Authorization Budget Request on Army National Guard and Army Reserve Equipment, 2 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing on H.R. 5613, Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Selling the Department of Energy's Depleted Uranium Stockpile: Opportunities and Challenges,'' 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, to mark up H.R. 2634, Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation of 2007, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, hearing on proposals before the 110th Congress to amend Federal Restitution Laws, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, hearing on H.R. 5618, National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2008, 10 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, to mark up H.R. 3799, Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2007, 1:30 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, hearing on NASA's Exploration Initiative: Status and Issues, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, hearing on the Role of Credit Cards in Small Business Financing, 10 a.m., 1529 Longworth.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, hearing on Critical Lapses in FAA Safety Oversight of Airlines: Abuses of Regulatory ''Partnership Programs,'' 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, executive, hearing on Fiscal Year 2009 Budget—Special Program, 9 a.m., 405 Capitol.

Joint Meetings

Joint Hearing: Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, to hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia to examine managing diversity of senior leadership in the Federal workforce and Postal Service, 2 p.m., 2154, Rayburn Building.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 3

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will adopt the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3221, New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act, begin consideration of the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute will be offered, and Senator Durbin will be recognized to offer an amendment relating to bankruptcy.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, April 3

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 4847—U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Andrews, Robert E., N.J., E488
Bilirakis, Gus M., Fla., E472, E475
Bonner, Jo, Ala., E471, E474
Bordallo, Madeleine Z., Guam, E479
Broun, Paul C., Ga., E484, E487
Castor, Kathy, Fla., E472, E474
Christensen, Donna M., The Virgin Islands, E471, E473
Costa, Jim, Calif., E479
Davis, Danny K., Ill., E477, E481, E486
Davis, David, Tenn., E472, E476
Doyle, Michael F., Pa., E483
Farr, Sam, Calif., E488
Filner, Bob, Calif., E486
Franks, Trent, Ariz., E482
Gordon, Bart, Tenn., E488
Graves, Sam, Mo., E472, E474, E476, E478, E480, E482
Green, Al, Tex., E486
Hare, Phil, Ill., E487
Hill, Baron P., Ind., E481
Jones, Walter B., N.C., E483
Jordan, Jim, Ohio, E485
Kucinich, Dennis J., Ohio, E471, E473, E476, E478
Larson, John B., Conn., E476
Lee, Barbara, Calif., E480
McHugh, John M., N.Y., E479
McNulty, Michael R., N.Y., E486
Maloney, Carolyn B., N.Y., E486
Miller, Gary G., Calif., E484
Mitchell, Harry E., Ariz., E488
Pascrell, Bill, Jr., N.J., E485
Perlmutter, Ed, Colo., E471, E472, E473, E474, E475, E478, E480, E482, E484, E487
Porter, Jon C., Nev., E483
Reichert, David G., Wash., E478
Rodriguez, Ciro D., Tex., E473, E475
Rogers, Harold, Ky., E485
Rogers, Mike, Ala., E478
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana, Fla., E477
Salazar, John T., Colo., E477
Shuler, Heath, N.C., E472, E475
Space, Zachary T., Ohio, E471, E474, E476, E478, E480, E482, E484, E485, E487
Stark, Fortney Pete, Calif., E484
Wilson, Joe, S.C., E487
Woolsey, Lynn C., Calif., E480

Congressional Record

The *Congressional Record* (USPS 087–390). The Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C. The public proceedings of each House of Congress, as reported by the Official Reporters thereof, are printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through *GPO Access*, a service of the Government Printing Office, free of charge to the user. The online database is updated each day the *Congressional Record* is published. The database includes both text and graphics from the beginning of the 103d Congress, 2d session (January 1994) forward. It is available through *GPO Access* at www.gpo.gov/gpoaccess. Customers can also access this information with WAIS client software, via telnet at swais.access.gpo.gov, or dial-in using communications software and a modem at 202–512–1661. Questions or comments regarding this database or *GPO Access* can be directed to the *GPO Access* User Support Team at: E-Mail: gpoaccess@gpo.gov; Phone 1–888–293–6498 (toll-free), 202–512–1530 (D.C. area); Fax: 202–512–1262. The Team's hours of availability are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, except Federal holidays. ¶The *Congressional Record* paper and 24x microfiche edition will be furnished by mail to subscribers, free of postage, at the following prices: paper edition, $252.00 for six months, $503.00 per year, or purchased as follows: less than 200 pages, $10.50; between 200 and 400 pages, $21.00; greater than 400 pages, $31.50, payable in advance; microfiche edition, $146.00 per year, or purchased for $3.00 per issue payable in advance. The semimonthly *Congressional Record Index* may be purchased for the same per issue prices. To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250–7954, or phone orders to 866–512–1800 (toll free), 202–512–1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202–512–2250. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.