

their hearts and minds and also to defeat terrorism and make America safer, we need a smart security approach. That means empowering Iraqis and Afghans with civilian support and humanitarian aid, with programs to alleviate poverty, build schools, promote public health and so very much more.

The current approach is alienating the populations we're trying to win over and emboldening the very insurgents we're trying to destroy. How much longer will this go on?

There are American teenagers with no memory of their country not at war. We've already lost nearly 5,500 Americans to these conflicts. Thousands and thousands more have come home wounded, disabled, or suffering from the devastating effects of posttraumatic stress syndrome.

And as we all prepare to pay our taxes tomorrow, let's remember that every American is making a financial sacrifice for this folly. In just the time it's taken me to give this speech, we've racked up about \$1 million in costs for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As long as this tragic and unnecessary war continues in both of these areas, I will continue to come to the floor of the House to state my firm opposition. I will not stop until our troops are brought safely home. I suppose I'll be giving my 351st speech tomorrow.

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 addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEED RELIEF

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. Mr. Speaker, in these final hours of this year's tax season, Americans are finishing up their tax returns. For a majority of these taxpayers, it's painfully clear that our Nation's tax system is deeply flawed and in need of significant reform.

American workers are asked to work for 3 full months to fulfill their yearly Federal, State, and local tax obligations. This is unacceptable. To require already stressed family budgets to forfeit at least a quarter of their income to prop up expanding bureaucracy and increasing Federal employment is just wrong.

We are taught at a young age to work hard and that we will reap the benefits of hard work. Americans have witnessed that government is claiming more and more of those hard-earned benefits from the fruits of our labors.

Instead of searching for a way to provide relief to American households,

some officials within the administration have proposed new taxes that will further burden small businesses and consumers. The European-style value-added tax would levy a tax at each stage of manufacturing, thereby increasing the cost of the finished product. This is damaging not only to the consumer, but also to many industries involved in manufacturing production.

I'm a member of the Anti-VAT Caucus. I recognize the dangers of imposing this new tax upon the American economy, and I've joined over a dozen of my colleagues in working to educate Members of Congress on the problems posed by establishing a whole new series of taxes.

Instead of adding new taxes, Congress should be focused on reforming the current tax structure. I've called upon the new chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), to schedule hearings on Tax Code simplification. The FairTax proposal was one of those ideas that I've asked his committee to consider. The FairTax can start the conversation on tax reform, and I encourage my colleagues who are serious about having this discussion to join me in contacting the chairman.

People across the country are demanding that Congress listen to their concerns and find a more equitable and less burdensome way of paying taxes. I share their frustration and have called upon my colleagues in Congress to put the politics aside and provide tax relief and reform for this country.

Americans have made it known that they are in need of serious tax reform. Through increased spending and budget deficits, Congress has awakened an American majority dedicated to government reform. Members of Congress have an obligation to be responsive to our people's needs. As the American people gather this week to make their voices heard, Congress must listen. These gatherings are occurring all over our country and here on Capitol Hill.

In my home State of Kansas, these engaged citizens will be meeting in Mound City this evening; Kansas City, Hutchinson, Salina, Manhattan, Wamego, and Wichita tomorrow; and Ottawa and Emporia will have meetings on Saturday. While these gatherings are occurring, millions of other Americans unable to attend will join in spirit to protest the expansion of government in our daily lives.

As we approach the end of tax season, Congress must remember the sacrifices made by each American household. While this is the end of tax season, the rest of the year should be deemed the season of tax reform. The American people need relief, and Congress should respond. Jobs today and the health of the U.S. economy tomorrow demand our action.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. BERKLEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING THE LIFE OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS POLICE OFFICER THOMAS PATTON II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Cleveland Heights Police Officer Thomas Patton II.

On March 13, Officer Patton was on patrol when he began chasing down a suspect. Tragically, he collapsed during the chase and died shortly after the incident. He was only 30 years old.

Officer Patton was the only son of my friend and our community leader, Ohio State Senator Tom Patton, and his late wife, Evelyn.

Officer Patton leaves behind a loving fiancée, Tricia, and beautiful 8-month-old daughter, Kayleigh Evelyn. Thomas meant the world to his family and was even nicknamed "Precious" by his five sisters.

It was without question what career path Thomas would take. He came from a family with a strong tradition of police officers that began with his grandfather, who joined the Cleveland Police Department in 1946. As a child, he would dress up in old police uniforms and dream of what it might be like to be a patrolman.

Thomas grew up in Strongsville, Ohio, in the heart of the 13th Congressional District, and he attended Holy Name School.

He saw the dedication and commitment that his grandfather and uncle made as police officers and decided to take that step for himself. He knew the challenges and risks, and he fully embraced the spirit of the job. He loved the excitement of working nights. He loved serving others, and he died doing what he loved. He died serving and protecting the rest of us.

Officers from nearby communities gathered outside his hospital the night he died, and many more at his memorial service. The sea of blue uniforms was a testament to the fraternal brotherhood of police that he embraced.

His spirit and dedication to his community will be sorely missed, but his service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. He will live on as a hero to his family, to Ohio, and the Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FOXX addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)