

This is my country! Land of my choice!

This is my country! Hear my proud voice!

I pledge thee my allegiance, America, the bold,

For this is my country to have and to hold.

As a youngster in elementary school, I sang this song proudly many times. And nearly a decade ago, 9/11 responders embodied the American spirit proclaimed in this song when they dropped everything to help this country. These Americans paid the ultimate sacrifice and risked their health and lives when our country was attacked. Unfortunately, many have developed health issues as a result of their service.

But my Republican colleagues believe that this treatment is too costly. The 9/11 Health and Compensation Act would provide monitoring and specialized treatment for those responders who were exposed to toxins during 9/11 and this bill is completely paid for. No responders questioned whether they should go in.

Those American flag-wearing lapel Senators should vote for the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act.

□ 1120

CONTINUING RECORD OF SUCCESSFUL JOB CREATION

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

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my hope that the 112th Congress will continue this Congress' record of successful job creation.

We have taken the necessary steps during this, the most productive Congress in years, to pass a long list of important legislation. From middle class tax relief to the small business jobs initiatives, to teacher and health care jobs, to programs helping to keep Americans in their homes, the 111th Congress has succeeded in moving the American people's agenda forward. We have already created millions of jobs and spurred 11 months of private-sector job growth.

But this recession cannot be corrected overnight. Next year, we must all focus on building the next generation of workers, increasing access to quality education, remaining competitive in the global marketplace and reducing the deficit. Together, we must all continue moving our country forward. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the next Congress.

Thank you, God bless, happy holidays, and happy new year.

MOST ASTUTE, CONSCIENTIOUS CONGRESS IN THE HISTORY OF THE NATION

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, my colleagues are absolutely right. This has been the most astute and conscientious Congress in the history of our Nation, the 111th Congress, led by the very astute and courageous NANCY PELOSI, the historic first woman Speaker. I thank her and the leadership.

Thank you for health care and Wall Street reform. Thank you for the reform of the GI Bill, to provide more opportunity. And, as well, thank you for moving and pushing compassionately the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. The White House ceremony today was powerful.

Thank you again for recognizing that the 9/11 heroes health bill must be taken care of. I ask the other body to act now and do not go home without doing so. But yet the omnibus bill that will help so many millions of Americans with resources directed to them has been imploded, and I call upon the Senate, I call upon this House when we return, to be able to return America's resources back to them. We negotiated that omnibus. It is time to make sure that those veterans and those who need PTSD recovery and those who need health care are provided for through this omnibus bill.

Happy holiday, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

PASS THE 9/11 HEALTH BENEFITS BILL

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

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, what does the Congress owe the American people? I think it owes a young man or a young woman who will put on the uniform of this Nation and agree to sacrifice his or her life the right to serve. The Republicans, all but a handful of courageous Republicans, disagree.

I think that it owes a child who was brought here by their parents from a country they don't know, who speaks a language they don't speak, the opportunity to serve, to get a degree, to ultimately become an American. The Republicans disagree.

But I know, Madam Speaker, that we owe those brave responders who went to the site of 9/11 and risked their health and risked their lives to serve others in this Nation's moment of pain, we owe them health care. The Republican Party disagrees. And it is to the shame of this institution and it will be to the eternal shame of the Republican Party if they do not allow us, after helping the banks, after helping the auto companies, after helping Americans, if they do not allow us to help the volunteers of 9/11.

A VERY PRODUCTIVE CONGRESS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I don't think there is any doubt that this has been one of the most productive Congresses in American history, but I also want to talk about the lame duck session and how productive that has been as well.

In this lame duck session, we have had one of the largest major tax cuts to help the average person, to help the middle class, in the history of the Republic. Child tax credits, payroll tax reduction, education tax benefits, the list goes on.

In addition to that, we did the "doc fix" for Medicare for another year. We also repealed Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Finally, yesterday, we did the food safety bill, one of the most comprehensive bills that we could possibly pass.

So there is no question that this has been a productive Congress, and this has been a very productive lame duck Congress. I am also hopeful that today in the Senate and here in the House we will also pass the 9/11 health bill for first responders, and that will complete, again, one of the most productive lame duck sessions and productive Congresses in American history.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the Senate amendments to H.R. 6523.

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

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 25 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1550

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland) at 3 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 22, 2010.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, U.S. Capitol,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of rule II of