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Jackson (IL)  
Jackson-Lee  
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Johnson, E. B.  
Johnson, Sam  
Jones (NC)  
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Kennedy (MN)  
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Miller, Gary  
Miller, George  
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Roybal-Allard  
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Sanchez, Linda  
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Sanchez, Loretta  
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Saxton  
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Wynn  
Young (AK)  
Young (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE) (during the vote). Members are reminded that there are 2 minutes remaining on this vote.

□ 1836 So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, 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. 1114

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1114.

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

There was no objection.

MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, recent media interviews, both print and television, have subjected our young troops to questions which in my mind have no business being posed days before possible military action. These interviews are asking questions regarding fratricide, combat deaths, chemical or biological weapons, "personal demons," and "bloody urban fighting." As many of us in the House are veterans, we know the sacrifices that come with service, including the loss of life. Our troops and their commanders know they must focus on the task assigned and the mission objective that must be completed. I believe that focus can be hindered when certain media personalities continue to dredge up these feelings purely for national coverage. We must be mindful that reporting facts is quite different from generating an emotional story for rating purposes.

Today's media has a tremendous amount of access, much more so than they did in Desert Storm. There are 600 journalists embedded in our military operations. I ask that the media let our troops focus on the mission at hand and let them do their job and return home safely.

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mission objectives that must be completed. I believe that focus can be hindered when certain media personalities continue to dredge up these feelings purely for national coverage.

Let me state that I do not advocate censorship. I do advocate common sense. Providing media access to our troops is necessary to assist in providing accurate information for the American public and to counter false propaganda from other sources seeking to undermine our objectives.

However, we must be mindful that reporting facts is quite different from generating an emotional story for ratings purposes. Today's media has a tremendous amount of access—much more so than during Desert Storm in 1991. There are 600 journalists embedded in our military operations. With that access comes responsibility . . . responsibility to the troops, their families and the public. I ask that the media let our troops focus on the mission at hand, let them do their job and return safely home.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

EXTENDING STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR AUTISM VICTIMS

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. Mr. Speaker, it used to be that one child in 10,000 was autistic. Now it is one in 200. We have had a 50-fold increase in the number of children that are autistic in this country. It is an absolute epidemic.

One of the causes, according to leading scientists around the world, is the mercury that was in children's vaccines. Mercury, can we believe that, being in a child's vaccine? It is toxic to the brain, it causes neurological disorders, and yet we have been using it as a preservative for years and years and years.

One of the things that I am very concerned about is that many of the parents who have autistic children missed the 3-year statute of limitations to file for money to help with their child's damaged brain because they did not even know their child was damaged by mercury, and the thimerosal in these vaccines until the 3-year statute of limitations had expired.

Now, there has been legislation proposed at various times, especially last year in the homeland security bill, which would have eliminated any possibility of those people going to court to get satisfaction for their child's damaged brain. Their child is ruined for life, and they cannot get into the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund, so there is no recourse.

Mr. Speaker, there is legislation that I have sponsored this year and legislation that Senator FRIST has sponsored

NAYS—1

Paul

NOT VOTING—14

Barton (TX)  
Carson (IN)  
Collins  
Combust  
Doyle

Fletcher  
Fossella  
Gephardt  
Gordon  
Gutierrez

Hyde  
Mollohan  
Slaughter  
Udall (CO)

in the other body that will deal with this problem. But we have to make absolutely sure that the legislation does open up the process so that these parents will have an opportunity to participate in the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund, which has \$1.8 billion in it right now.

Now, every night I am going to be coming down here reading letters from these parents who have had damaged children. I have thousands of them. It is extremely important that my colleagues and people across this country know what has been going on.

Here is a letter from a lady named Mary Cutler from Brick, New Jersey. She said, "Shortly after my son received his second and third rounds of DTP/Hib at 5 months and 7 months of age and then hepatitis B at 9 months of age, he began to be continually sick with ear infections and diarrhea and was late on meeting his milestones. After he received his first MMR shot at age 15 months, he began to head bang and wake up during the night.

"It was not until 2000 when I came across a report on thimerosal in vaccines and the comparison of the symptoms of mercury poisoning and autism did I find a true answer. My son has been tested. Mercury was found in his body and he has been undergoing chelation treatment for mercury poisoning. We test his urine often and after 2 years of chelation, there is still mercury coming out of his body."

Mercury that in all probability was put in by these shots that children get before they go to school.

"He has since made and continues to make steady improvements," but there is still mercury in him and it is coming out. "He became more and more verbal," and so and so forth.

She ends up by saying, "All of this has come at a great cost, both financially," and they have heavy credit debt and they have had to take out second and third mortgages on their home, "and emotionally to our family. My husband and I have not had a night out or a vacation in years or even been able to get a babysitter.

"Since we did not find out about the vaccine thimerosal ingredient until 2000, the 3-year limitation rule has put us outside the statute of limitations for the current Vaccine Injury Compensation Act. We hope someday our son may live a normal life, but it is a constant worry as to what will happen to him as we age and/or die and we are no longer able to take care of him. The money that autism costs to families and society at large in terms of special education, Social Security, disability, et cetera cannot be ignored or hidden from the general public. Thimerosal/mercury is a known neurotoxin and that the vaccine manufacturers could use it at all and that they still use it especially without looking at the cumulative effects on babies is unconscionable and must be addressed so it does not happen again."

Mr. Speaker, we need to reopen the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund

with a look-back provision for at least 1 year or 18 months so these families will have some recourse. They are losing their homes, they are going bankrupt, there are divorces being caused because they have no recourse and there is nothing they can do about their child's damaged brain. Our society and the pharmaceutical companies that had thimerosal in these vaccines should bear a responsibility, and that is why the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund, which was designed to protect the pharmaceutical companies as well as to provide a nonadversarial procedure so parents could get financial assistance for their damaged children who were damaged by vaccines, that we need to make sure that it is open to these people who have damaged children, who have been damaged through the mercury that is in the childhood vaccines.

□ 1845

Children get 26 vaccines before they go to school, vaccinations. Many of them, many of them become autistic. It has gone, as I said before, from 1 in 10,000 to 1 in 200.

This is something our government and our society can no longer ignore. We must hold the pharmaceutical companies accountable. We can do that with the kind of legislation we have been talking about; that is, to open up the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund for those families who missed that 3-year window of opportunity.

This is something we cannot forget. We must get on with it. Here are a few pictures of some of these kids that have been damaged.

#### DESPITE PENDING WAR WITH IRAQ, BUSINESS AS USUAL IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, some would say that the United States House of Representatives has walked away from its constitutional duties under Article I, Section 8, wherein Congress and only Congress, the House and Senate, have the sole authority to declare war; and then, on the eve of the first ever preemptive war in our Nation's history, that the House of Representatives, under the Republican leadership, has slipped into irrelevance, silent and compliant.

Just this evening we have just finished our regular business, three non-controversial bills, and the Republicans have fled downtown for what they expect to be the largest ever fundraiser in their history, business as usual, while 300,000 of our young men and women sit in the desert wondering what tomorrow or the day after will bring.

They have not been, I must admit, totally irrelevant over the last few weeks. Just last week, tremendous ac-

tions were taken here by House Republican leaders. They launched an attack against French fries. After a flurry of activity, hand-wringing, planning, and massing an assault, they wiped out the dread French fries from Capitol Hill. It is rumored that this week they are planning an assault on Russian dressing, and even tomorrow's turkey menu is a potential target. Meanwhile, 300,000 of our young men and women and a few allies sit in the desert wondering what their elected leaders are doing and thinking.

Have we done everything we could for those young men and women? Did we examine and push toward options short of war, war, which should always be only used in an extreme circumstance and a last case? I do not think so. We voted on October 14 on this issue, under pressure of the coming election, and gave the President a blank check. Since then, not one official act by this body has dealt with the issue of the looming war in Iraq.

Have we given all our young men and women everything they need? We spend a lot of time on the defense contractors, their profits and exotic weaponry, but I hear from dads and moms and from some of the troops themselves that they do not have all the things they need. Some of them were sent over there with the wrong camouflage. They got the forest camouflage. Others are worried about the huge number of defective chemical/biological suits which have slipped into the inventory due to the fraud and criminal acts of some of our defense contractors.

Have we served them well in terms of a plan? Have we had discussions here about how the U.S. will conduct this war? Those are scant. Those are all being kept downtown, or at the Pentagon.

Do we have and have we discussed and pushed to hear about an exit strategy? General Shinseki, in a candid moment which Secretary Rumsfeld tried to squash, and Assistant Secretary Wolfowitz demeaned, says he expects we will have to leave 250,000 to 300,000 of our young men and women in that country as an occupying force for quite some time. He said that. They said, oh, no, he is mistaken. He is only the head of the Army. He does not know anything. Then he came up to Capitol Hill again last week, and he repeated that statement. They did not want to hear it. They do not want the American people to hear it.

They do not have an exit strategy; they have a plan, when I cannot get unemployment benefits extended for the people in my State, to pay 2 million members of the Iraqi military and bureaucracy salaries out of the United States Treasury, and to rebuild the country quickly with U.S. defense contractors when I have bridges crumbling in my State.

If we paid half as much attention to the needs of the American people in our States, or the needs of our young men and women, I do not believe that