

bombers who have murdered scores of innocent Israeli men, women, and children.

Through it all, Israel has endured. As the only democracy in the region, it continues to be a beacon of hope and a model for her neighbors. It has been said that the strength of a nation is determined by the caliber of its people. There is perhaps no better example of this truth than the State of Israel and the Israeli people, vivid examples of conviction, courage, and faith; a people who served as an example for us all to emulate, as our own Nation had to come to grips with the horrors of terrorism following the deplorable attacks on our country on September 11. The bond between our nations and our people have never been stronger.

The United States could not ask for a better friend and ally in the region. The Israeli people know they will always be able to depend on the U.S. and the American people. I extend my best wishes and congratulations to the people of the State of Israel on their 55th Independence Day.

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Asian Pacific Islander Month. This national celebration, which started in 1977, continues to highlight and bring awareness to the many accomplishments and contributions that the Asian-Pacific Americans have made to this country.

The month of May was selected for this very important celebration to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States in 1843. As of the last census, there are an estimated 12.5 million Asian-Pacific Islanders in the United States. Representing the largest Vietnamese population outside of Vietnam, I know firsthand the richness of the culture and beauty that they, along with the rest of the Asian communities, bring to this Nation.

For generations, Asian-Pacific Americans have sacrifice for this country, and they have contributed to our growth and to our prosperity. This national celebration is a great way to honor all of their achievements.

JOB CREATION

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the President's leadership on the Job and Growth Tax Act. There are too many Americans still looking for work. As its first order of business, this Congress helped by extending unemployment benefits in January. Now it is time to help American

businesses create the jobs that these Americans need and want. Displaced workers have looked for employment for too long. We need a plan to encourage small business owners to expand and hire new people.

North Carolina's 10th district has been struck hard by the economic downturn. Our Unifour area's unemployment rate almost quadrupled in 2 years' time. Tax relief and fiscal restraint can help turn the tide and restore our economic vitality.

It is wrong for this Congress to play partisan politics with the future of employment of millions of Americans. Relief to American businesses will allow them to grow, providing new job opportunities.

Americans need paychecks, not handouts. The Jobs and Growth Tax Act will get us there.

PASS ELDER JUSTICE ACT OF 2003

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, we recognize older Americans each May. This May we must address the unpleasant fact that too many of our elders are beaten, neglected, and extorted. Like other family crimes such as child abuse and domestic abuse, elder abuse has existed for too long in the dark shadows of our society. Elder abuse remains underreported, underresearched, and underenforced. As high as 5 million elderly cases of abuse occur in nursing homes, nursing institutions, and private homes each year; but 80 percent never get reported.

In my home State of Illinois, 186 nursing home residents actually died of starvation, dehydration, or infected wounds in 1999 alone.

In response, with the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), I will introduce the Elder Justice Act which makes elderly abuse a Federal crime, helps law enforcement work hand in hand with our health and social service agencies that have always fought alone against this type of neglect. It is a bipartisan bill. We have a number of Republicans here in the House, and 12 Republicans and 11 Democrats who are also introducing a bill in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, the most meaningful way to honor our elder Americans this month is to pass the Elder Justice Act.

FRENCH VISAS TO THE IRAQI REGIME

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, right after September 11, France voiced its support in the war on terrorism. Lately, we are hearing a different story. It has been reported that the French Government secretly supplied fleeing Iraqi officials with passports in Syria to allow

them to escape to Europe. The French passports allowed the wanted Iraqis to move freely among 12 European Union countries.

There are also reports which indicate that a French company covertly sold spare military parts to Iraq in the weeks before the war and that a French oil company was working with a Russian oil firm to conclude a deal with Saddam's government in the days before military action began March 19.

All of this has undermined our efforts to root out terrorists in Iraq and capture members of the brutal Iraqi regime. If France wants to be an ally in the war on terrorism, it is time it started to act like one.

PASS THE TAX RELIEF PACKAGE NOW

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is written, if you owe taxes, pay taxes. No law-abiding American anywhere would argue the point. But one of my predecessors in this Chamber, Jack Kemp, also famously said, what you tax you get less of, what you subsidize you get more of.

Today in America as our economy continues to list under the strain of overtaxation and overregulation for the past decade, we are taxing capital gains and investment in savings; and eastern Indiana, that I serve here in Washington, is getting less for it.

Families, small businesses and family farms are hurting as jobs evaporate in communities across eastern Indiana. Many in this town are playing politics, demagoguing the President's drive to pass additional tax relief and put Americans back to work; but it is time to set politics aside. We need to bring real tax relief on income inheritance, marriage, savings and investment in America. We need to turn this economy around. Our recovery is stalled. Our Nation is impatient. It is time we heed the President's call for economic renewal and pass the tax relief package now.

ADRIATIC TREATY SIGNED

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to inform the House about the signing of the Adriatic treaty last Friday in the Albanian capital of Tirana. This agreement was signed by Secretary of State Powell and the foreign ministers of Albania, Croatia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the three currently-remaining NATO aspirant nations.

The Adriatic Charter pledges the United States to support efforts by Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to join NATO and other Euro-Atlantic institutions. In this agreement, the three aspirant nations commit themselves to