

inhabitants of the state in which they are chosen?

Answer. In addition to restoring congressional voting rights, the VRRRA also restores Maryland citizenship rights to be a candidate for, and to serve as, U.S. Representative, U.S. Senator, and presidential elector from Maryland.

D.C. is one of several federal enclaves in which the residents were not considered to be "inhabitants" of the states that ceded such enclaves to the federal government. There is no reason why Congress is any more powerless to restore the right of D.C. residents to be considered inhabitants of Maryland for federal electoral purposes than it was powerless to restore the rights of residents of other federal enclaves to be considered an inhabitant of the states, including Maryland, that ceded their place of residence to the federal government.

Question. Because representation in the Electoral College is based on the number of Senators and Representatives in the states, wouldn't Maryland receive only one more electoral vote to correspond with the new district? If so, and the District's three reliably Democratic electoral votes were eliminated, wouldn't the result be to tilt the votes in the Electoral College in favor of a Republican presidential candidate?

Answer. The VRRRA add one electoral vote to Maryland's total, and would eliminate D.C.'s current three electoral votes to eliminate double counting. Depending on how Maryland and D.C. vote, that would result in either a net pickup of 8 or a net loss of 2 electoral votes for Democrats, with a small possibility of changing the result one way or the other. It's also possible that the D.C. votes for Members of Congress provided by VRRRA could swing control of the House and Senate to the Democrats. The small risks involved for each political party are a reasonable tradeoff for correcting the 200-year-old injustice of depriving D.C. residents of congressional representation.

Question. Shouldn't a bill creating two new House seats for D.C. and Utah have a clause that the bill is not severable, meaning if the D.C. portion of the bill were found to be unconstitutional, the Utah portion also would fall?

Answer. Yes; the VRRRA has such a non-severability clause.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The Chair will recognize Members for Special Orders until 5 p.m., at which time the Chair will declare the House in recess.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

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

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

JOBS AND ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, in April 2003, the Bush administration pledged that its jobs and growth package, its Leave No Millionaire Behind Tax Cut Plan, would create 1,836,000 new jobs by the end of 2003, last month. The administration pledged to create 5.5 million new jobs this year in 2004; but as the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported this month, the economy had a grand total of 1,000 jobs in December. To begin reversing unemployment trends, there would need to be 250,000 new jobs each month.

More than 2.3 million jobs have been lost since President Bush took office, Mr. Speaker. More than 2.3 million jobs. In my State of Ohio, one out of six manufacturing jobs has disappeared, one out of six, and most of them permanently. Despite recent good news for corporate profits and the trumpeting of the Bush administration on economic growth statistics, the labor market is still in crisis; and we have seen the worst job loss in a recovery since Herbert Hoover in the Great Depression. But for some reason, I guess political reasons, the administration calls the economy strong.

Long-term unemployment is close to a 20-year high. Currently, the average length of unemployment is 5 months. While the administration has touted macroeconomic GDP growth numbers, indicators most important to middle class Americans just simply are not so bright. Simply put, high-paying jobs, industrial, manufacturing jobs are being replaced by low-paying jobs like Wal-Mart. New jobs created are forecast to pay an average of \$35,000, much lower than the \$43,000 average pay of jobs lost in the last 3 years.

The Bush administration now is deploying an executive agency to short-change average workers, this time on overtime pay. The Department of Labor's publishing documents "suggest ways that employers can avoid paying overtime to some of the \$1.3 million low-income workers who would become eligible this year." Think about that, a Federal agency is giving advice to employers on how to avoid paying overtime to some of its lowest-paid workers. Think about that. Among the options for employers would be to cut workers' hourly wages and add the overtime to equal the original salary.

This is part of an emerging pattern of using U.S. taxpayer resources to help big business, to help them cut corners at the expense of American jobs and American workers. The Labor Department's corporate assistance documents, as we call them, come just as the administration plans to eliminate overtime pay protection to 8 million American workers. The overtime plan was opposed by both conservative and progressive lawmakers on Capitol Hill. The Department of Labor's mission statement describes itself as the primary agency to "promote the welfare of job seekers and wage earners."

The Department of Labor was established to represent the interest of average workers, not the interest of corporate contributors to the President. Not Enron. Not Halliburton. The Department of Labor is there to represent average everyday salaried and hourly workers. The Department of Labor now seems to represent corporations at the expense of American workers.

The consequences of the Bush administration's policies for hardworking Americans are clear: first, the greatest job loss in a recovery since the Great Depression; 2.5 million jobs have been lost in the past 2½ years. Second, massive deficits to pass on to our children. The administration came into office with a huge budget surplus. It has been squandered. We now have an annual deficit of \$500 billion. That means that every day of the year about \$1.5 billion more is paid out by the government than is brought in. The President has added \$1.5 billion every day to the national debt that our children will pay. This collapse of fiscal discipline will lead to a \$5 trillion debt over the next decade. That is \$5 trillion more for our children and our grandchildren to pay.

The third result of the Bush administration's policy for working Americans is the rising numbers of uninsured and increasing health care costs for working Americans. There are 43 million Americans lacking basic health insurance today, with 4 million more Americans who do not have health insurance than those that had it when he took office. There were 39 million uninsured when President Bush took office; now it is up to 43 million, and it is climbing as we lose more industrial jobs, jobs replaced by low-benefit, low-wage jobs instead.

This administration is steering the country down the path of fiscal ruin for the benefit of a wealthy few. It is time to right our course. When we see the statistics over Christmas that the high-end stores like Neiman Marcus stores did very well, and regular stores catering to ordinary average Americans did not do so very well, that tells the story. The wealthier in this country are getting wealthier and wealthier, while the middle class is shrinking. Poor people are doing worse than ever. It is time to redirect this country.

HONORING AARON WEAVER, A FALLEN HERO IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with a very heavy heart that I rise today to express the condolences of a grateful Nation. I rise today so that this Nation will not forget the service and sacrifice of those fallen heroes who fight to keep us free. I rise today because a Black Hawk helicopter was shot down over Iraq; and Chief Warrant Officer Aaron Weaver,

one of our Nation's finest, died in the crash.

Aaron Weaver was a husband, a father, a brother, and a son; but he was also a fighter. In Iraq, Aaron was fighting to protect our country's way of life while fighting for his own life as well. You see, Aaron Weaver was a cancer survivor. He was still being treated when his unit was called to duty in Iraq. Aaron had a choice to stay, but he elected to fight for the country that he loved. Aaron was on the way to have his blood tested for cancer when the Black Hawk he was riding in was shot down, killing all on board.

We know well our freedom could not have been won nor our liberty maintained without those willing to make this ultimate sacrifice. But I know these are weak words to the grieving family left behind. I pray the Lord will maintain their memory of Aaron and assuage their pain. Aaron survived the battles in Mogadishu, he fought cancer, and was engaged in a great and noble cause in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring a true American hero.

Last Saturday, I attended services for Aaron. He lived in Citrus County, and his father still resides there. The whole family was there. They are a military family, a very, very devoted military family, and a very close family who all grieved the loss of Aaron. I would like to paraphrase his widow's comments. His widow is Nancy Weaver, and she made a comment that Aaron's life, the loss of his life, will not be in vain if children in America can live safely; if his children and every other child in America can live without fear of another attack like 9-11.

Mr. Speaker, Aaron Weaver truly was a modern American hero, and we are grateful for his service and the service of all the men and women who are serving our country.

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

(Mr. MEEK of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CALIFORNIA AND THE ECONOMY

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, tonight when President Bush begins to talk about the state of the Union, I hope that he includes remarks that will address the plight of the people that I represent in my district.

On the economy, the President will probably talk about how our country is coming out of a recession, and in some parts of my district the recession has been there for 3 years. In fact, in at least two areas I represent, in East Los Angeles, the unemployment rate is still above 9 percent. In the city of

South El Monte, neighboring the community I live by, which is about 70 percent Latino, I would say the recession has not gone home. It is there. It is 9 percent.

Over 60,000 Californians in my State have exhausted their Federal unemployment benefits and another 340,000 Californians will lose those benefits in the next 4 months alone. Long-term unemployment is at a 20-year high. President Bush claimed that the \$330 billion so-called jobs through tax cuts would help create 5.5 million new jobs by the end of 2004 or 306,000 a month. The thousand jobs added to the economy in December left the Nation 305,000 short of the Bush job promise in that month alone.

Grocery workers in the State of California, 70,000, are right now on strike. They have no employment and no unemployment insurance, these families that we are talking about, not just people that have somehow disregarded their employment status. Many are women with children who are faced with having to go to food lines and go seeking other types of assistance because our State will not even provide them with unemployment insurance. The grocery strike is a part of a larger debate on health care and wages going on in this country; and these workers, and workers around the country, are fighting for fair and livable wages and for health care benefits that will allow them to ensure health care for their families.

On homeland security, at a time when we are susceptible to being attacked now more than ever, we are seeing more cutbacks in our local government enforcement of law enforcement and firefighters. In my district, people are telling me that they no longer have the support to continue to work overtime. And every time that red alert or orange alert goes on, there is a lack of money, of sufficient funds to provide for the kind of coverage that we all believe that we should have.

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In health care, the President's Medicaid block grant proposal jeopardizes the future of the Medicaid program for millions and millions of low-income families and children. At a time when States like California are facing growing budget deficits, Medicaid reform proposals must focus on strengthening health care coverage and the safety net for our Nation's most vulnerable. Block granting Medicaid will force States to ration care by limiting the number of people who can enroll in those programs. It will reduce services and will increase the amount of money that low-income people must pay. Medicaid provides health coverage to one in six Americans, more than one-fifth of the Nation's children and their future must be the responsibility of this government.

With respect to racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S., they continue to suffer poor health care. Their

outcomes are not good. In fact, the risk for type II diabetes among Latinos is almost twice that for non-Latinos. Eliminating these disparities requires a commitment on the part of the Federal Government to ensure that the needs of minority communities are being heard.

On education, how can schools, teachers and students be expected to meet the high standards of the No Child Left Behind Act when the President refuses to fully fund this initiative? At a time when in my home State of California, the education budget is threatened by a cut of \$2 billion, it is unfair to place this additional burden upon our children and our parents in California.

On the environment, Republicans continue to protect the wealthy corporate interests and bend over backwards to manipulate our environmental regulations to profit their allies. The health of our children and families is threatened. We should not sacrifice clean air, clean water, our most precious natural resources, and, most importantly, the health of our families.

With respect to Iraq and our veterans, the capture of Saddam Hussein was a great victory for our troops. However, we have a lot more to do. The war is not over. Our real enemy has not been captured. For example, over 500 soldiers have been killed in Iraq, with 372 of them since the President declared the end of major combat in Iraq. At this time of conflict we are reminded every day that our soldiers' sacrifices should not be taken in vain. Although we have lost a significant number of soldiers, a lot more, approximately 2,900, have been wounded in combat or disabled. Furthermore, these numbers mask the true impact of our wounded and fallen soldiers.

We need to do more. President Bush must encourage the Republican Party to keep their promise to our troops and to our country.

HEARTLAND FIRES ARE BURNING ON EVE OF PRESIDENT'S VISIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this evening the President will address this Congress and America. Tomorrow morning he will travel to northwest Ohio, the region in which I reside and represent. Ohio's snow-covered fields and towns this time of year give a placid impression, but they mask the fire that is burning inside the homes that dot the real Ohio that the President will not visit. It really is too bad. Air Force One will pass over most of us in northern Ohio on Wednesday morning, tomorrow.

Sealed off from the general public in a tight security bubble, the President will land at an airfield and travel by