

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to talk about how President Bush and this Republican Congress have fought to honor America's veterans. As Florida's First Congressional District is home to more veterans than anywhere else in the Nation, keeping the promises to veterans is certainly my priority and it has been one for this Republican Congress as well.

I think it is safe to say that all of our colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, tell their constituents that they support veterans and will keep the many promises we have made to them throughout the years. The difference is that President Bush and our Republican colleagues have kept those promises. It is the Democrats who have not.

Republicans have increased to record levels spending on veterans' health care and benefit programs. We have enacted countless measures to enhance and expand compensation, retirement, health, and medical programs for America's 25 million veterans and their families since becoming the majority party in this Congress.

We have also provided more than \$22 billion to allow disabled veterans to receive both their disability compensation and retirement pay, a practice which a 100-year-old law previously prohibited. In fact, Republicans are the only ones who have provided any, any, concurrent receipt benefits for disabled military retirees. Democrats had 40 years to do so as the majority party, and they did not.

President Roosevelt said "A man good enough to shed blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards." We should be proud of what President Bush and our Republican colleagues have done.

#### PEACE CORPS WEEK

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because March 1 through March 7 is National Peace Corps Week. One hundred and seventy thousand volunteers have served in 137 countries over the past 43 years to make an impact on this world, and I would just like to congratulate all of those who are in the field right now, who are in foreign countries all over the world, and send a special congratulations to each of them during this National Peace Corps Week for their service and contribution to the developing countries throughout the world.

And I would like to also remind them that what we heard yesterday in testimony by the leading generals in Iraq was that the military understands that until we cross the cultural divide, until the United States crosses the cultural divide, we will not have peace in this world. And the people that are being

able to cross that cultural divide and bring the best of what is in America to the best of what is outside America together is the National Peace Corps.

And I would just like to say on this week of anniversary that the Peace Corps volunteers do not give handouts. They instead share their knowledge, experiences, technical skills with locals who in turn learn valuable lessons from them, the host country nationals, as well as the host country nationals learning from us. I am especially proud to be a return Peace Corps volunteer from Colombia, where I served in the 1960s, and the friendship and understanding and compassion that developed between myself and the Colombians is forever with me and with them.

And there are other Members, the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA), the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI), the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) who are also return Peace Corps volunteers, and I, with them, we extend congratulations to all those who are serving and to all those who applied to serve in the United States Peace Corps. I thank them very much on this week of the anniversary of the Peace Corps.

#### FIGHTING FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree more with the gentleman from North Florida about all of the gains that veterans have made during the Republican administration. There have been so many legislative accomplishments on behalf of veterans that have been made since 2000.

The issue of concurrent receipt stands out actually as the primary example of Republican achievement versus Democrat rhetoric. The injustice of concurrent receipt actually existed for well over 100 years. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) introduced the bill every session of Congress, and it has been here for about 15 years.

Veterans need to know that Democrats never led on this issue because under their control it never saw the light of day. It took a Republican President and a Republican Congress to end this unfair penalty on disabled veterans. The battle over concurrent receipt is well over 100 years old. We finally began to respond to the need and address every disabled veteran so that they will now be able to receive benefits for 50 percent or greater disability, that there will no longer be that offset. Veterans deserve no less than this, and, in fact, they actually deserve more.

As history has demonstrated, America's veterans can count on the Republican majority to support them and to honor them when they return home.

#### THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE

(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, what is known around here as business as usual would make a Chicago alderman blush. In Chicago we have a pretty high standard. If we look at today's Washington Post and New York Times editorial page, they talk about the relationship between two lobbyists and the Republican majority. Roll Call's headline: "Revolving Door Snags Hill Aide: Staffer Negotiated Lobby Contract While on House Payroll."

The pharmaceutical industry was working the halls, working on the pharmaceutical prescription drug legislation. The energy lobbyist got an energy bill.

Let me do a case in point. Four Indian tribes paid \$45 million in 3 years to buy access.

Mr. Speaker, there are good people on both sides of the House with good values. It is unfortunate the conduct of a few brings shame on this institution. The Speaker's gavel is intended to open the People's House, not to close the Auction House.

#### MEDICARE'S PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, in 1965 if one asked a group of people how many in their family have to take five, six, seven pills a day just to survive, how many hands would be raised? Probably not many because in 1965 we did not have the miracle drugs that we have today. But today in almost any given audience if one asks that question, how many who have somebody in their family who have to take three or four or five pills a day, 80 percent of the hands go up.

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That is why the Republican Party has added a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. It is a choice; it is an option. If you are in Medicare now and you love it as is, you do not have to do this, because this is voluntary. But if you want a 50 percent reduction in the cost of your prescription drugs, this is a plan that you should take a careful look at.

The volunteer plan starts in 2006. To bridge the gap in the meantime, all seniors this summer, if they want to, again, voluntarily, can buy a \$30 discount card that will reduce the cost of drugs about 20 to 25 percent.

This is a significant step for better health care for our seniors and a major Medicare reform.