

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor tonight to rise in support of the CAFTA agreement, DR-CAFTA. It is important in three broad areas. One is trade. It is important to American manufacturers that the tariffs that they currently pay with goods and services built and made in the United States are sold into these countries.

It is also important for the agricultural interests in this country that we continue to send American goods and products into these countries for use under the Caribbean Basin Initiative.

It is also important from a national security standpoint. These are fledgling democracies in Central America. America is a safer place if we have democracies in place than if we have other forms of government. This trade agreement will help undergird these democracies and help them stand against influences like Hugo Chavez of Venezuela who does not have America's interests in his plans.

It is also important from an immigration standpoint. The Caribbean Basin Initiative will expire on its own terms in 2008. If those jobs created under that initiative go to other parts of the world like Thailand or the Philippines, then the people currently holding those jobs will feel pressured, percolating up from Mexico and entering this country illegally, to find work.

So, given the importance the impact of CAFTA will have on these broad areas, I stand in support of it and urge my colleagues to support it also.

#### ENCOURAGING ROVE TO LEAK

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, a lot has been made lately about leaks coming from the White House. The outing of Valerie Wilson was admittedly an egregious act.

But I, for one, would like more leaks, not less. I am not looking for the kind of leaks that tripped up Karl Rove and Scooter Libby.

Mr. Speaker, it would have been useful if someone had leaked the true cost of the Medicare prescription drug program. They told us it would cost only \$400 billion when they knew all along that the real cost was much higher. The American people would be asked to pay \$800 billion.

It certainly would have been nice if some brave soul in the White House had told the American people that the President's tax cuts would raid the Social Security Trust Fund. We are still waiting for someone to leak the President's plan on Social Security.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say, do not stop here, Mr. Rove. Dishing the names of our own national security agents may be your idea of political "fair game," but turn up that leaky faucet and tell us what we really need to know, and start with the truth.

#### AID FOR HURRICANE VICTIMS

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for very informative debate on H. Con. Res. 175 to focus on the African Americans of Latino descent in the Caribbean and places surrounding the United States.

I rise today to remind my colleagues that our neighbors to the south, from Jamaica to the coast of Mexico, certainly Haiti and certainly Cuba, over the last 7 days have faced very difficult times with the number of hurricanes that have hit their shore. I know that we faced enormous impacts last year to the State of Florida, but the resources that are utilized in those countries are so unequal.

As we debate the Foreign Relations Authorization bill, I hope we will be reminded of the enormous need. In Cuba, for example, 600,000 people were displaced. We come to find out that the offer from the United States was only \$50,000. I think that America can do better, and I would hope that humanitarian aid can really come from the people of the United States, somewhat similar to the tsunami relief. These are our neighbors. This is the third border of security.

So Jamaica and Haiti that are in crisis with the hurricane and other devastating aspects, I would hope that we would respect the idea that we are our brothers and sisters' keeper, and aid these individuals who are now suffering because of natural disasters.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### WORKING TO IMPROVE NICS SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk again about the National Instant Criminal Background Check. We know that the States are the weak link as far as getting background checks into our NICS system. We have seen so many times that thousands of people are slipping through the system because the States do not have the money to bring up their computer systems to be able to give the information to the NICS system here in Washington.

We know that the NICS system works. We know that over 700,000 people have been denied guns, those that

should not be able to buy them but, again, a system is only as good as the database that it has.

The NICS system did pass here in the House on a voice vote going back to 1999. Unfortunately, the Senate ran out of time, so I have reintroduced it, and I am hoping that we might be able to get it through here again on a suspension bill.

Some facts: Twenty-five States have automated less than 60 percent of their felony convictions. We know that people that are felons or who have been mentally institutionalized should not be able to buy a gun. Unfortunately, a tragedy that was in my own State of New York on the island in Nassau County where I live, a person was able to buy a gun legally because the States did not give the NICS system the information that he should have never been able to buy a gun.

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Unfortunately a shooting happened in a local church, Our Lady of Lourdes, and two people were killed, a priest and a parishioner at a morning mass. We know that mental health problems and restraining orders did not come up on the NICS system and that is a shame. When you think about what can be done to certainly deter those people that should not be able to buy a gun, and especially today in today's world that we are looking at. I know the debate here in the House all the time is the suspicion that we are trying to take away the right of someone to own a gun. I happen to believe in the second amendment. I happen to believe that people if they want to own guns should be able to. But again, we must look at those that should not be able to buy guns.

When we talk about the health care system in this Nation, we know it costs this health care system, our health care system, our taxpayers' health care system over \$1 billion a year because of gun violence in this Nation. And unless we open up the dialog a little bit differently and start to trust each other that we can do a better job, we should be doing a better job, and that is only going to happen if we help the States.

We know that when a judgment comes down against a person in the courts or there is a restraining order, the majority of States do not report that to the NICS system. When someone does a crime in Texas and they come to New York and buy a gun it is not brought up through the system. So we have to do a better job. We can save lives. We can save money on the health care system.

And by the way, I happen to think it is very important that we also look at how we look at our terrorisms that we are trying to deal with in the next few days. You know, when we talk about the PATRIOT Act coming up, I think that the debate will be about some civil liberties being taken away.

But yet when we look at gun ownership we should be making sure that