

While naysayers focus on a civil war in Iraq, our troops are committed to creating a civil society in Iraq which protects American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

REMEMBER THE TRIANGLE FIRE

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, March 25, came and went, and not enough of us took notice of its significance. March 25, 1911, was the anniversary of the tragic Triangle Fire, an event that truly encapsulated the lengths to which industrial greed was allowed to operate at the expense of the American worker.

When the fire had subsided, 146 of the 600 Triangle factory workers were dead in New York City. Many workers jumped to their deaths from eighth, ninth and tenth floors rather than face the searing flames.

But the harsh reality of working in a sweatshop was their lives. The Triangle factory had never conducted a fire drill, had locked doors, poor sanitation, crowding, all symptoms that contributed to the high death toll.

It would be easy to believe that the Triangle Fire was a tragedy of the past, but the horrifying truth is that tragedies like Triangle are occurring throughout the world: 188 workers were killed on May 10, 1993, in Thailand when the factory of a toy company went up in flames; 52 workers were killed on November 25 of 2000 in a fire at a garment factory near Dhaka, Bangladesh. This is what happens when we try to Wal-Mart America. Think of it the next time you buy something off their shelves.

ACTION ON IMMIGRATION

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today our colleagues in the Senate begin hearings on immigration legislation. I rise to urge our colleagues in the other Chamber to follow the House's lead by passing legislation that focuses first and foremost on securing our broken border enforcement system.

Porous borders and the illegal immigration caused by them are a threat not only to our national security but to our national economic security. The Federal Government, more specifically Congress, has a duty to do everything we can to secure our borders.

Enforcement first legislation passed by the House last year was the right approach. Once we have effectively secured our border, then and only then should we focus on the other consequences of illegal immigration.

Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation of immigrants. Our Nation's greatness is built on the hopes and dreams of those

who have come here from another country. I understand that.

But above all, we are a Nation built on the rule of law. As a Nation and as a Congress, our duty is to enforce these laws and secure our borders.

REQUESTING A REFUND FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, it is time we give the American people a refund, because this Congress is not giving them what they paid for. Day after day, we see headlines detailing the incompetence, mismanagement and sometimes outright corruption of our government, and yet this Congress sits idly by rubber-stamping the administration's policies.

Three years after the invasion, we are mired in an endless occupation of Iraq. Yet this Congress has approved \$480 billion without a single question of where the \$10 billion that is missing has gone and how did Halliburton continue to get its no-bid contracts.

A few days ago we learned that government investigators were able to smuggle enough radioactive material in the U.S. to make two dirty bombs. Not a single question by the administration or this Congress, because they have not provided the money for border and port security.

Since 2000, the Congress has added \$3 trillion to the national debt. Yet we didn't hear so much as a peep out of this Congress when the debt limit was raised for the fourth time in 5 years. The taxpayers bought thousands of trailers in Louisiana, and they sit empty.

Mr. Speaker, the people's House is here to serve the people, not the special interests. It is time the American people either got their money's worth or a refund. It is time for new priorities. It is time to end this rubber-stamp Congress.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM WORKING

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it appears that the more the Democrats talk down the new Medicare prescription drug program, the more the enrollments seem to go up. Democrats have been doing nothing but demagoguing and criticizing this program, yet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced just last week that more than 27 million Medicare beneficiaries are now getting coverage and saving money on their prescription drugs.

In fact, they just announced that another 1.9 million additional beneficiaries have signed up just since February. This is wonderful news. Even the

New York Times is reporting success stories from seniors who signed up for the program and are now saving hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on their prescriptions.

Mr. Speaker, this prescription drug benefit is doing something that most Democrats probably didn't even think would happen, maybe they didn't want to have happen: it is helping seniors; it is reducing their costs.

As nice as it would be to hear Democrats stop for a moment and actually admit that this program is a success, perhaps they should just keep up their futile demagoguery, because at this rate, we will be at 100 percent enrollment in no time at all.

REPUBLICAN RUBBER-STAMP CONGRESS REFUSES TO HOLD BUSH ACCOUNTABLE FOR KATRINA

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, gulf coast residents continue to pay the price for the Bush administration's incompetence, cronyism and failed leadership. Yet, House Republicans refuse to ask the tough questions of an administration that showed no competence during Hurricane Katrina.

The House Republican Davis report on the Katrina response is woefully incomplete. The White House was allowed to ignore congressional subpoenas, and Michael Brown's e-mails were excluded. How is that a proper investigation? Worse yet, Republicans hold no one in the Bush administration accountable.

Americans cannot afford to gamble their security on the same Bush administration team that mismanaged Katrina. The American people deserve a bipartisan independent Katrina commission, like the 9/11 Commission, to get all the answers we need to better prepare for future natural and terrorist disasters.

Hurricane Katrina should have served as a wake-up call to House Republicans about the critical need for congressional oversight. Unfortunately, they refuse to ask the tough questions.

NATIONAL MOM AND POP BUSINESS OWNERS DAY

(Ms. BEAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BEAN. Mr. Speaker, I am excited to rise today to support National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day. This celebration honors the husband and wife business owner teams whose work helps drive the economy and fuel job growth.

Married couples who work together to build and maintain a business assume broad responsibilities. Not only is their work important to our local and national economies, but their success is central to the well-being of their families.

My Eighth District, like others, counts on these family businesses and their teams working hard to support their families and aid their communities. As retailers, these teams often bring different or unique products to the marketplace. In manufacturing, they create innovative concepts and ideas. They manage to do all of this while at the same time providing stellar and personal customer service.

As a member of the House Committee on Small Business and because of my own experience as a small business owner, I am appreciative of the impact these small businesses have on our local economies. In fact, 80 percent of our domestic job growth comes from the small- and medium-sized business community.

I am proud of the contributions of these mom and pop business owners across America and hope that my colleagues will join with me in celebrating this important day.

□ 1030

CLOSE THE LOOPHOLE ON 527 GROUPS

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, what we have today is more liberal lunacy. Billionaires like the Daddy Warbucks of the Democratic Party, George Soros, are pushing their left-wing agenda by funneling hundreds of millions of dollars through shady organizations called 527 groups.

Section 527 groups operate outside of campaign finance laws by spending hundreds of millions of dollars on ads and partisan voter recruitment efforts with no oversight and no accountability.

Mr. Speaker, \$370 million flowed through 527 groups in the last campaign election cycle, and this is outside of campaign disclosure. So much for taking big money out of politics.

Over one-fifth of the \$370 million channeled through 527s came from four individuals. This is money laundering on a scale that would make even Tony Soprano blush.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we close this loophole on 527s and open transparent and accountable campaigns to the American people.

REPUBLICAN REFUSAL TO EXTEND PRESCRIPTION DRUG SIGN-UP PERIOD

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is time the House Republicans stand up to the Bush White House and say they are not going to allow America's seniors to be penalized for a complicated and confusing drug proposal they helped create.

It was bad enough that the Republicans allowed the big drug companies to write their own prescription drug plan for them, but now that a deadline looms 47 days away that would inflict a tax on seniors who have not yet chosen a plan, Republicans seem willing to, once again, blindly follow the President.

Earlier someone made the comment that Democrats are not doing enough to have seniors sign up for the plan. I beg to differ. I work very hard to have my seniors sign up and save money, but they will never save as much, the billions of dollars that went to the drug companies, as the drug companies will receive in that process.

House Republicans seem willing to once again rubber-stamp a plan that would inflict a Bush prescription drug tax on seniors for the rest of their lives. They have yet to show any support for Democratic efforts to extend the sign-up deadline to the end of the year.

While America's seniors continue to pay outrageously high prices for their prescription drugs, House Republicans can no longer just rubber-stamp.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of securing our borders and getting legislation to the President's desk that will stop the flow of illegal immigrants into our country.

This week, the Senate is debating immigration reform, and it is crucial that they pass legislation that puts enforcement first and says "no" to blanket amnesty.

As a physician, I know you have to stop a patient's bleeding before you can heal the wound. Likewise, we must stop the bleeding of our borders before we can address other areas of reform.

Our southern border is not just bleeding; it is hemorrhaging. Thousands of illegal immigrants cross it each month, and our incomplete border fence does little to tame the flow. Our border enforcement is woefully understaffed, and local law enforcement officials lack the jurisdiction to apprehend illegal immigrants within their own communities.

Mr. Speaker, the House passed legislation in December to address each of these concerns. Reforming our immigration system requires a commitment to security and lawfulness, and our Senate colleagues must pledge their resolve to these core principles as they move forward in this debate.

REPUBLICANS REFUSE TO TAKE 9/11 COMMISSION SERIOUSLY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, more than 4 years have passed since 9/11, and

Washington Republicans have failed to make the American people as safe as they should be.

House Republicans continue to ignore the real security risks that we face. They allow President Bush to disregard the recommendations from the independent 9/11 Commission. After all, House Republicans stood by the Bush administration in its attempts to keep the 9/11 Commission from ever being created.

A report from the commission in December gave the Bush administration failing grades in securing our Nation. From chemical plants to subways, ports and the border, the commission report showed how Washington has failed to take the proper steps needed to close security gaps.

House Republicans could make homeland security a priority if they joined us this month in rejecting President Bush's 2007 budget that dramatically underfunds key homeland security programs. Unfortunately, I am concerned Republicans will once again pay lip service to these critical security needs and will, instead, once again, rubber-stamp a Bush budget that leaves us vulnerable to those who wish us harm.

HONORING FIRST SERGEANT MICHAEL MATTHEWS

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize an American who has given so much to our community and our country.

In January of this year, Michael Matthews of the Roswell, Georgia, Police Department was named the 2005 Officer of the Year for his work as a patrol officer and SWAT team member. When Officer Matthews is not serving the Roswell Police Department, he dedicates his time to protect America as a member of the Army National Guard.

On August 30 of last year, First Sergeant Matthews was on patrol in Iraq when his convoy was struck by an IED. Suffering injuries requiring surgery, First Sergeant Matthews received the Purple Heart for being wounded in combat. The deepest gratitude of the American people go to First Sergeant Matthews and his fellow soldiers.

True patriots are protecting and serving their local communities, as well as our country at large. As these brave men and women stand on the front lines of the war on terrorism, there should be no limit to the time and opportunities we take here at home to remind the American people of their courageous and selfless acts.

REAUTHORIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Higher Education Act, which will be reauthorized