

sending you these bricks in support of an increase in the border security of the United States. These bricks should give you a start in building a wall. The American public demands some solutions to our open borders. A comprehensive border plan must include a security wall in some places, better technology, more funding of personnel for Border Patrol, and overall increased security presence on the southern border. When our borders are secure, then we can discuss the aspects of illegal immigration issues. We are tired of open borders, uncontrolled immigration, terrorist infiltration, criminal alien gangs, and all of the other horrors that arise due to our defenseless borders and unenforced immigration laws.”

Mr. Speaker, the voice of America continues to cry out for us to enforce the rule of law, protect the dignity and safety of the American people. Government’s number one job is public safety, and public safety starts at the border.

We have an obligation to stop the illegal invasion and stop the colonization of our country and homeland by foreign nations. Failure to do so will result in America being lost to foreign nations without even firing a shot.

And that’s just the way it is.

HONORING THOSE WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, it is an important duty of all of us who serve here to pay respect, to express our gratitude, to join in the sorrow of those and their families who are serving this Nation in a time of war. I have tried very hard to do that whenever the occasion occurred. I have attended funerals of young men who were killed, and in one case a man not so young.

I was pleased on Saturday to attend a welcoming home ceremony for one young man who returned. I attended a ceremony to see off a group of Guardsmen.

The merits of the war are irrelevant when it comes to honoring and expressing our gratitude to those who have served.

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Having said that, I want to say that I deeply regretted that yesterday, Tuesday rather, I felt called upon to vote against a bill that was presented here under the suspension of the rules which allowed for no serious debate and zero chance of amendment, a bill which in part protected veterans’ funerals from the disruption that they have encountered. And it is true that a particularly contemptible group of bigots are harassing people at some funerals. And we have every right and under the Constitution the power to stop it.

Sadly, a badly overrafted bill was brought forth with no chance for us to

amend it. And I do not think we honor our veterans by failing to honor our Constitution. So I had to vote against the bill. Part of the bill, if it had been in part, if we could have amended it down, I would have proudly supported, the part that would have said you cannot have a demonstration in which any individual is willfully making or assisting in the making of any noise that disturbs or tends to disturb the peace or good order of the funeral, memorial service or ceremony on a military cemetery. But the bill went before that.

The bill says that for 60 minutes before a funeral and 60 minutes after, within 500 feet of the cemetery, you can’t hold up a sign that might be offensive to people. You can’t picket. It doesn’t just say noise. It says diversion, and it defines it, any picketing, the display of any placard, banner, flag or similar device.

When we had an outrageous effort to intimidate a Danish newspaper because they exercised the right of free press and published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, which many Muslims found offensive, some people, apologists for this outrageous behavior against the newspaper, said, well, you know it is free speech. But free speech has to be respectful. Free speech has to be within limits.

No, it does not. Free speech is not respectful speech. Indeed, the American Constitution, the principle of free speech precisely protects the right of despicable people to be obnoxious. If you don’t believe in that, you don’t believe in free speech.

In fact, the particular group of vicious people who have been disrupting the funerals have as their major goal getting rid of people like me, gay men and lesbians. They particularly hate us. But I will not allow their bigotry against me and the reaction against that to be used to reduce the protections of our Constitution.

The parts of this bill that say that if you try to disrupt a funeral you are going to be prevented, they are fine. But telling people that 60 minutes before or after a funeral, within 500 feet of a national cemetery, they can’t picket or hold up a banner, that is not free speech. That is not what we fight for.

I have defended previously the right of the Nazis to march in Skokie, to the great horror of victims of the Holocaust, or survivors of the Holocaust.

I told the Muslims who tried to coerce the Danish press that no matter how offensive they found that cartoon, freedom of expression meant that no government should stop you from being offensive.

Disrupting a funeral, of course you should not do that. We should not allow ourselves, through restrictive legislative procedures, to act against an admitted evil, the disruption of those ceremonies, in ways that could undermine the Constitution.

So I hope this will come back from the Senate in a form I can vote for. I

would have voted for part of this bill; but I cannot, no matter how despicable the bigots who are defaming this Nation and disrupting cemeteries, I will not allow their behavior to be used as an excuse for undermining the right of other people in other places to hold signs. People holding signs within 200 feet of a cemetery, a half hour after a funeral that some people find offensive, that is free speech. And the way to counter that is to counter that. So I regret very much, in fact, Mr. Speaker, and I don’t mean to look for sympathy here. I had an operation here last week. I had a stent, and I was supposed to return early Tuesday to have the stent removed. I delayed my return because I wanted to attend this funeral of the young man who was killed. Obviously, the discomfort of my stent was nothing to what people face who are in Iraq. But I simply want to testify that I will do everything I can to continue to honor these people, but that does not require us to demean the first amendment to the Constitution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes. (Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of America’s nurses, and I want to bring my colleagues’ attention to the fact that this is National Nurses Week.

As a physician for nearly 30 years, I certainly know the importance of nurses to our Nation’s health care system, and I can say without hesitation that nurses are the glue that holds our hospitals and our health care system together. They are literally on the front lines of health care, and they are the faces our patients see day in and day out.

Our Nation is facing a critical shortage in the nursing profession, Mr. Speaker. As Americans grow older and live longer, our health care system will be stretched even further to accommodate new demands. And in order for us to continue to deliver high-quality health care in this country, we will need increasing numbers of health care providers and especially registered nurses.

According to the latest projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published in February of 2004, more than one million new and replacement nurses will be needed by the year 2012.