

The importance of quality and trusted nurses is best illustrated by my telling you about two of them who are particularly special in my life. When I was a practicing OB-GYN physician in Marietta, Georgia, Lynn Olmstead was a wonderfully gifted nurse who worked with me for 20 loyal and dedicated years.

Lynn is a graduate of Michigan State University, a Spartan, as is her husband, Ken. She had worked in labor and delivery at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital in Marietta, Georgia, in my district for 10 years; and I had an opportunity to see her and her compassion and working with patients in the wee hours of the morning and was very, very fortunate that she agreed to come and work in my office and where she spent the next 20 years, as I said, working so compassionately with patients and helping me, in fact, make right decisions a lot of the times. And I remain dedicated and grateful to Lynn for that service that she gave to me and our patients at Marietta OB-GYN Affiliates.

The other nurse, Mr. Speaker, is my daughter-in-law, Emily House Gingrey. Emily is a graduate of the University of Georgia. She recently, after making a decision a couple or 3 years ago to go back to school and get her registered nursing degree from Georgia Baptist School of Nursing, now works at the Northside Hospital in Atlanta in the neonatal intensive care unit, taking care of the most fragile, not just premature babies, but what we know as immature babies, those less than 2,500 grams.

And I see Emily as she is beginning her career in that most important area of neonatal intensive care, providing life, really, to these very fragile babies that might possibly not make it in this world without the dedication of young nurses like Emily House Gingrey, the wife of my son, Billy.

So it is with a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to take just these few minutes this evening to pay tribute to all nurses, and I rise today to applaud the profession of nursing and encourage young Americans to consider this noble work as a future career.

IRAQ AND THE FY07 DEFENSE BILL

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, this Congress had a great opportunity today to pass a defense authorization bill that is good for the American people, a bill that reflects the very best of American values. Foremost among those values is our desire for peace, our capacity for global leadership, and our compassion for the people of the world. We could have reflected those values by utilizing the defense bill as a means of voicing our opposition to prolong the war in Iraq. The Rules Committee, however, prevented me from offering

just such an amendment to the defense authorization bill.

My amendment expressed the sense of the Congress regarding the war in Iraq in two parts. First, it instructs the President, the Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces, to develop a plan to bring the members of the U.S. Armed Forces home from Iraq and to bring the plan to the congressional defense committees.

It is clear that we need to begin the process of bringing our troops home because, among many other reasons, the presence of nearly 150,000 American troops in Iraq is an obvious rallying point for dissatisfied people in the Arab world, making the situation in Iraq worse and not making the U.S. any more secure.

The second part of my amendment describes how the United States should support Iraq once our troops have come home. The amendment directs the United States to engage the international community, including the U.N. and NATO, to establish a multinational interim security force for Iraq. The U.N.'s Department of Peacekeeping Operations actually is particularly well suited to this task.

Next we would have shifted our role from that of Iraq's military occupier to its reconstruction partner. By working with the Iraqi people to rebuild their economic and physical infrastructure, we can give Iraq back to the Iraqis and help to create Iraqi jobs and Iraqi security.

Finally, my amendment urged the President to involve the United Nations in establishing an international peace commission comprised of members of the global community who have experience in international conflict resolution so that they would oversee Iraq's post-war reconciliation process, beginning Iraq's long road to recovery after years of sanctions and war.

The House should have been able to debate the importance of ending the war while we helped to stabilize this war-torn nation. Unfortunately, this Congress had other priorities, priorities like authorizing another \$50 billion to continue a devastating war in Iraq that has already taken the lives of more than 2,400 American soldiers, countless tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians, and forever shattered the lives of another 16,000 injured and wounded American troops.

Priorities like authorizing another \$10 billion, that is billion with a "B," on a still unproven missile defense system that can't stop the greatest threat we face, nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists, and has never even been able to stop the missiles it is designed to destroy.

It is beyond dispute that this administration, in tandem with the Republican Congress, has been, to put it mildly, less than fiscally responsible.

Earlier this month I introduced new legislation called the Commonsense Budget Act of 2006 that finally put some sanity back into the Nation's fis-

cal policy. This bill already has the support of almost 40 cosponsors.

The Commonsense Budget Act would trim \$60 billion in waste from the Pentagon budget and put it to work on behalf of the people and programs that truly strengthen America.

These programs include \$10 billion for the modernization of every public school, \$12 billion for health insurance for every child in America, \$10 billion to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency programs, \$13 billion to feed the hungry, \$5 billion to improve homeland security, and \$5 billion to start the reduction of our deficit.

We need to change the way we think about national security, Mr. Speaker. The return on the investments I have proposed as part of the Commonsense Budget Act will benefit the entire society, and they won't cost us a dime more than we currently spend on our bloated national defense.

Any change in budget priorities, though, has to go hand in hand with change in policy on the ground. The very first of those needs to be an end to the war in Iraq. For the sake of our soldiers, their families and our national security, it is time to bring our troops home.

□ 1730

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

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

BUSH ADMINISTRATION TAX CUTS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, with little notice or fanfare, a modest tax benefit for families who are struggling to help their kids get a higher education expired this year. It was what is called an above-the-line deduction, up to \$4,000 towards tuition could become an above-the-line deduction.

Now for a family with \$40,000, \$50,000 income, that would be worth about 1,000 bucks off their taxes, not insignificant when they are straining on that income to try and help their child get an education, get ahead, realize the American dream.

But the Republican majority, being the fiscal conservatives they are, said it was too expensive. We could not afford to renew this modest tax benefit for middle income families to give them a little help with tuition for their kids. Now, well and good.

When you see their budget that they have pulled from the floor for the third time in 3 weeks, they are going to pass a budget, probably next week, that will have America borrowing \$1.4 billion a day, a lot of it from foreign sources.

It will have a lot of us borrowing from this year's Social Security surplus, \$193 billion, and spending it on