

share this same dedication to fully funding veterans programs. In fact, the Republicans recently passed a 5-year budget that cuts veteran health care by \$6 billion, even as hundreds of thousands of new veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan in need of VA care. They yell "support our troops, support our troops," but these returning men and women will have to wait almost a year for some appointments.

Mr. Speaker, the brave men and women who risk their lives in our Armed Forces deserve more than just our respect. They also deserve the quality health care we promised them when they enlisted.

TAX RELIEF LEGISLATION PROVIDING RELIEF TO AMERICANS

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Florida once again led the Nation in job growth during the past year with 261,000 new jobs. To continue this growth, Mr. Speaker, in Florida and the rest of the country, this Republican Congress passed a tax relief bill which ensures millions of American families, small businesses and seniors will continue to enjoy relief from budget-busting, economy-killing tax increases.

Yet despite our sustained economic success and the shrinking deficits, Democrat leadership continues to endorse policies that would slam the brakes on our economic success and our remarkable job growth. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, House Democrats, like the minority leader and the ranking Democrat member of the Ways and Means Committee, voted for a massive tax hike on hard-working Americans, more than half a trillion dollars in increased taxes over the next 5 years, or enough to pay for all the expenditures of all the governments of the Western Hemisphere combined for an entire year.

The American people, Mr. Speaker, want and deserve a fiscally responsive government, not the burdensome tax burden one that the Democrats continue to vote for.

STEM CELL RESEARCH: IT'S TIME FOR THE SENATE TO ACT

(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, today marks the one year anniversary of the House passage of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. By a vote of 298-134, the House overwhelmingly approved the stem cell bill, which would expand the Federal Government's investment in vital promising research.

Embryonic stem cells hold the key to the treatment of diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ALS and many

other currently incurable diseases. An overwhelming majority of Americans support this research.

This is not a traditional Democrat versus Republican issue, it is about a right versus a wrong. Yet a year after House action, America is still waiting on the Senate.

Two weeks ago, the Senate held its "Health Week," a series of votes, but the Republican leadership refused to take a vote on stem cell research that would have saved lives in the area we are talking about. Health Week in the Senate will be known from now on as the "Hoax Week."

When the Senate majority leader refused to hold a vote, despite his past public support, the majority leader showed America his priorities, and I am afraid it has little to do with funding treatments for incurable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, if the majority leader is as committed to stem cell research as he says, then it is time for an up or down vote on this important research that will save many lives, and then the Senate will earn the title "Health Week" back again.

RENEWING THE AMERICAN DREAM: THE REAL RATIONAL MIDDLE GROUND ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, one week ago President Bush set out his views on immigration reform to the American people. He stated, "There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation."

I agree with the President that there is a rational middle ground that can be found between amnesty and mass deportation, but amnesty is not that middle ground.

Today at the Heritage Foundation, here in Washington, DC, I will unveil the real rational middle ground on immigration reform. I call it the Border Integrity and Immigration Reform Act. It sees the solution to this crisis as a four-step process. First, secure the border. The second step is to make the decision once and for all to deny amnesty to people whose first act in the United States was a violation of the law. Third, is to put in place a guest worker program without amnesty that will efficiently provide American employers with willing guest workers who come into America legally. The final step is tough employer sanctions that ensure a full partnership between American business and the American government in the enforcement of our laws on immigration.

There is a real rational middle ground on immigration reform, and I hope and humbly submit the Border Integrity and Immigration Reform Act might just be it.

WAR WITH IRAN NOT INEVITABLE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, war with Iran is not inevitable if the U.S. is ready to lead the way with honest, patient negotiations. However, this administration seems intent on war with Iran. The administration is ignoring any diplomatic initiatives which could set the stage for talks to end the confrontation and the escalation.

The administration is seeking to isolate Iran from the international community and threatens to punish nations which try to intervene to end the crisis. The administration is ratcheting up fears in Europe over a first strike nuclear capability, which Iran does not have.

Dozens of Members of Congress have now signed a letter to the President urging the United States to open up talks with Iran. Foreign policy experts such as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright are urging negotiations.

President Kennedy once said in his inaugural, "We should not negotiate out of fear, but we should never fear to negotiate." We must make a new beginning and begin talks with Iran. War is not inevitable. Peace is inevitable, if we are ready to work for it.

DEMOCRAT PLAN TO ACHIEVE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, when I return to my home district, where the price of regular gas has topped \$3 a gallon at many service stations, I hear constituents tell me loud and clear that they believe that the Republican majority in Congress has led this country in a drastically wrong direction.

Unfortunately, from the very beginning, the Bush administration has excluded the concerns of ordinary Americans from their energy policy debates. In fact, the secretive energy task force, headed by Vice President CHENEY, deliberated behind closed doors, and, as a result, billions of dollars in subsidies were provided to big oil interests.

Last fall, the Republican House rubber stamped an energy bill that even President Bush's own Energy Department predicted would raise gas prices. Almost 1 year later, the price of gas at the pump has skyrocketed. In fact, Americans are now paying an incredible 100 percent more for gas than they were when President Bush took office. Meanwhile, the incomes of middle income families have fallen every year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we turn out those who have given us this flawed policy.

REPUBLICAN DO-NOTHING CONGRESS REFUSES TO ADDRESS RISING GAS PRICES

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, as of today, this House has been in session only 36 days this year. We are scheduled to meet a total of 93 days. That is 15 days less than the do-nothing Congress of 1948. How are we supposed to address the issues most important to all of our fellow countrymen if we are hardly ever in session?

This weekend, millions of Americans will take Memorial Day vacations. They will be forced to pay hundreds of dollars more in travel bills, thanks to high prices at the pump.

For weeks now, House Republicans have ignored this very serious economic issue. That is, until this week, when the House Republicans plan to offer their second solution. Their first solution a couple years ago was to throw billions of dollars at the oil companies. The second solution is drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Despite the environment havoc this would cause, it will do nothing to lower gas prices today. When Republicans tout this as a solution, they ignore the fact that drilling in ANWR would not be possible for another decade and would provide only 6 months of oil, in any event, for the American consumer.

Once again this week, the House Republicans plan to do nothing to address high prices at the pump. They simply refuse to offer any real solutions to our energy problems. It is time for a change in leadership.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5384, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 830 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 830

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5384) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-

minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except for sections 749, 751, and 752. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

□ 1030

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 830 is an open rule providing 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of H.R. 5384, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriation Act of 2007. Under the rules of the House, the bill shall be read for amendment by paragraph.

House Resolution 830 waives points of order provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI prohibiting unauthorized appropriations or legislative provisions in an appropriation bill, except as specified in the resolution.

The rule authorizes the Chair to accord priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that yesterday the House Rules Committee reported by voice vote an open rule for consideration of H.R. 5384, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2007.

As with most appropriation bills, the Rules Committee has once again afforded Members an opportunity to offer amendments to this legislation that comply with the rules of the House. Members of the House may bring forth an idea or change they wish to see and express their views on how our Nation should prioritize its spending.

Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee reported out a bill that provides important resources for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and various other agencies. Specifically, H.R. 5384 makes available nearly \$95 billion to fund agriculture, rural development, drug safety, food nutrition programs for the fiscal year 2007.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides the funding necessary for the programs and activities of USDA while at the same time maintaining fiscal discipline and reflecting our Nation's priority spending needs.

Mr. Speaker, the USDA carries out widely varied responsibilities through about 30 separate internal agencies and offices staffed by some 100,000 employees. Important programs covered under the agriculture spending bill include the food nutrition programs such as the Food Stamp Program, the Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children or WIC, and child nutrition programs, farm and foreign agricultural services, certain mandatory conservation and trade programs, crop insurance, farm loans, foreign food aid programs.

Additionally, it includes natural resources and environmental conservation programs and food safety and rural development activities. The underlying bill provides essential funding for agriculture research activities which include USDA's Agriculture Research Service as well as university research and extension programs.

I have visited, Mr. Speaker, several agricultural research centers in central Washington, and I am impressed by the innovative work being accomplished to equip farmers with the tools they need to improve the quality and production of their agricultural products.

Agriculture research enables American farmers to reap the benefits of science and technology they need to remain competitive in an ever-changing international marketplace. H.R. 5384 also provides several programs that seek to protect human health and safety.

Avian flu pandemic countermeasures and monitoring are funded at \$80 million. The Food Safety and Inspection Service is funded at \$853 million. The Animal Plant and Health Service Inspection Service activities are funded at \$904 million, with \$90 million going to BSE detection and prevention activities.

One program of importance to farmers in my area of central Washington is the Department of Agriculture's Market Access Program, which is aimed at creating, expanding and maintaining foreign markets for U.S. agriculture products through consumer promotions, market research and technical assistance.

One of the biggest challenges facing American agriculture, especially the specialty crops, is the need to expand overseas markets in the face of often subsidized foreign competition. By opening foreign markets to American