

(Ms. PELOSI addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### TURNING HIS BACK ON OHIO

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to claim the gentlewoman's time and address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the people of Ohio are wondering why the Bush administration has turned its back on them. After all, Ohio was the linchpin State in the Bush victory in 2004.

Now, what else can Ohioans think? The Bush administration has just cut the funding for homeland security in Ohio and its major cities by one-third. Over \$8.5 million was cut. Last year, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, the four largest Ohio cities received \$26.1 million in antiterrorism funding; this year \$17.6 million, an \$8.5 million reduction. Why?

Surely President Bush does not think the terrorist threat has diminished. If he does, perhaps he should read the newspapers. Dateline Toronto, the Canadian Government just broke up an alleged terrorist ring in Ontario Province. That is on the north side of Lake Erie, and Ohio shares a border across that lake with Canada. And that ring apparently possessed enough material, 3 tons of it, to cause an explosion three times larger than that which destroyed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995.

If that is not enough to think about, Mogadishu, Somalia, has just fallen into the hands of Muslim militia groups in what the New York Times calls "a setback for U.S. policy." Now that failed state might become another stronghold for al Qaeda. That is not good news.

How about Baghdad? The violence in Iraq continues to escalate. And in Kabul the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate. And here in Washington the Bush administration responds by making deeper cuts to homeland security funding to the four largest cities in Ohio.

What did Ohio do that would cause President Bush to turn his back on her? Funding in Columbus, the largest city in the State, will fall from \$7.6 million last year to \$4.3 million this year. Mayor Coleman said that Columbus is the 15th largest city in the country, "and time and again we are being told to do it yourself. Best of luck."

My own hometown of Toledo is being cut from \$5.3 million to \$3.85 million this year. I think the President spent almost that much just on ads during the last campaign in our region. Yet recently in our city, the U.S. Justice Department made national news with the arrests of three men whom it suspects of being potential terrorists. Indeed, Ontario's terrorists drove from

Columbus through Toledo, up to Detroit, across the bridge to Windsor to their Ontario hideouts.

□ 1930

Toledo is a major port on the Great Lakes, literally the crossroads of America.

Our position as a premier international transportation center, with such great proximity to our Nation's population center, is key to our economic vitality. We have to make sure that our air, water, rail, port and surface transportation infrastructure is safe and secure, and we need the Federal Government's help to do exactly that.

At this very moment, this crucial moment in our Nation's history, this President is turning his back on Ohio, the State that delivered for him, turning his back on Toledo and Columbus and Cincinnati and Cleveland. He is turning his back on virtually every city across our country, cutting homeland security funds by over one-third when our communications systems cannot even work interoperably.

No, Mr. President, mission not accomplished. There's still a lot to do. National security is the responsibility of the Federal Government. National security is the job of the Federal Government. Let the record show, Mr. Speaker, that the Bush administration has turned its back on the safety of Ohioans and across this country on the safety of Americans, including especially on our Nation's fourth seacoast.

I hope the Bush administration listens to this message this evening. We need help with homeland security in Ohio, in our major cities and across this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). 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.)

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

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### HELPING OUR VETERANS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to go out of order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Ohio is home to one million veterans and servicemembers. On May 22, a couple, 3 weeks ago, the Pentagon announced that the names, the Social Se-

curity numbers and other personal information of 26.5 million veterans and their spouses, including most of the 1 million in Ohio, across the country, including every living veteran discharged since 1975, had been stolen from the home of a Department of Veterans Affairs data analyst.

Now, this is a department, the VA, which has a leader, a political appointee, who was rewarded for his service as a national party chair for one of the two political parties, not someone who was put in place because of his lifetime dedication to veterans.

This breach of confidence at the VA is unacceptable. To fix this, our government owes to veterans, we should offer veterans free credit reports and work with America's credit bureaus to waive fees associated with placing security alerts on their credit accounts. We should be willing to reimburse veterans for costs caused by identity theft resulting from this scandal, and we should amend the bankruptcy law passed by this body last year. When the bill was then considered, I opposed it, as did many in this body, in part because it did not extend bankruptcy protections to victims of identity theft, which is what could happen to many of these veterans.

Veterans trusted that their government would protect this personal information. They did not think this Department of Veterans Affairs would be run by a political operative. We must regain that trust by taking the important steps I just mentioned.

Ten days ago, we all honored our veterans and honored those who died in the line of duty on Memorial Day. Once the parades were completed, once the graveside ceremonies were finished, too many politicians came back to Washington, simply not concerned about what happens to veterans in this country.

Negligent policy and irresponsible budgets have endangered the care available to veterans. We have failed to adequately fund the VA health care system to improve the quality of health care, to reduce the wait times for all veterans. As good as the service is at VA hospitals like Brexfield, like Wade Park in greater Cleveland, all over Ohio, and all the VA clinics all over our State, veterans too often have to wait too long for care. We need to provide enhanced mental health care service for soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Returning veterans should have access to first-rate education benefits through an enhanced 21st century GI bill and job training programs. Current benefits for vets with 4 years of active duty military service cover less than two-thirds of the average cost of tuition and fees at a 4-year public college. We should be covering more of that cost.

We must not forget, it is not just the veterans; it is the families and children of servicemembers and veterans who also are sacrificing for their country.