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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 19, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CANDICE S. MILLER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Monsignor Robert Sheeran, President, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, bless America, our land and our people. Bless America, among the greatest of all human endeavors.

Lord God, make America worthy of the dreams of our Founders. Worthy of the sacrifices of those who have gone before us and who have given their lives for us. Make America worthy of the calling and leadership that You place on our shoulders in this our generation.

Let wisdom, goodness and generosity grow and take deeper root in our people and in this chosen body of representatives.

This day, Lord, You have given to us as our day. These hours before us are ours, set before us to do good as You show us the good, and to avoid evil as You show us the way.

May our work, in some small way, be part of Your work, never in vain and always to the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JINDAL led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5117. An act to exempt persons with disabilities from the prohibition against providing section 8 rental assistance to college students.

WELCOMING MONSIGNOR ROBERT SHEERAN

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

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome Monsignor Robert Sheeran to the House floor and thank him for taking time to be our guest chaplain today. Monsignor Sheeran is joining us in part because Seton Hall University is celebrating its sesquicentennial this year. The celebration started last year on October 1, and for the past year Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ, where Seton Hall is located, has been celebrating its 150th anniversary.

New Jersey's largest Catholic university was founded in 1856 by Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley and named after the first American-born saint, Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton. Seton Hall is the oldest diocesan university in the United States.

Monsignor Sheeran has a long history with Seton Hall University, receiving his bachelor's degree in classical languages, and, finding his way back to his alma mater in 1980, he served as rector of Saint Andrew's College Seminary. He was then appointed assistant provost of the university in 1987 and promoted to associate provost in 1991.

After another short leave, he returned to Seton Hall to hold the position of executive vice chancellor in 1993, and 2 years later he was appointed to be president of Seton Hall University, and is still serving as president today.

I am honored to welcome Monsignor Robert Sheeran to the United States House of Representatives. On behalf of the whole House, I congratulate him on Seton Hall's milestone.

WELCOMING MONSIGNOR ROBERT SHEERAN

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

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the United States House of Representatives today's guest chaplain, Monsignor Robert Sheeran, a friend and an innovative leader who serves as the 19th president of my alma mater, Seton Hall University, which happens to reside in my 10th Congressional District of New Jersey.

After studying at Seton Hall as an undergraduate, Monsignor returned to the university in 1980 to serve as rector of St. Andrew's College Seminary. In 1987, Monsignor Sheeran was appointed assistant provost of the university.

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Under his leadership, the school saw a marked decrease in undergraduate attrition.

After completing Harvard University's management development program in 1989 and being promoted to the assistant provost in 1991, he was selected as a fellow of the American Council on Education. Upon his return to Seton Hall, he was appointed executive vice chancellor, a post he held until his appointment as president 2 years later.

Under Monsignor Sheeran's leadership, Seton Hall has moved forward technologically, with the distinction of being named one of the most connected college campuses in the United States by Forbes magazine. Under construction is a new science and technology center which will help train graduates to compete in the workforce of the future.

In addition, the White House School of Diplomacy and International Relations has formed an innovative partnership with the United Nations, which is of special interest to me as a member of the House International Relations Committee and one of the two congressional delegates to the United Nations serving in the House.

I hope that Seton Hall will play a constructive role in confronting the many foreign policy challenges our Nation faces. I know my colleagues join with me in welcoming Monsignor Sheeran and thanking him for his devoted service throughout his life.

REDUCING EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE

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

Mr. MURPHY. Madam Speaker, while this week we are discussing ways to treat disease with stem cells, let us not overlook what we should also be doing to prevent disease.

Each year nearly 50,000 adult nonsmokers die from lung cancer or heart disease from secondhand smoke. A recent U.S. Surgeon General report found 60 percent of nonsmokers, about 126 million people, have biologic evidence of nicotine, carbon monoxide and tobacco-specific carcinogens in their systems from secondhand smoke.

In adults, secondhand smoke can increase the risk of developing lung cancer and heart disease by up to 30 percent. And in children secondhand smoke leads to premature birth, asthma, respiratory illness and ear infections.

Encouraging smoke-free workplaces will help to reduce $10 billion in annual medical costs. Offering deductions in health insurance, and smoking-cessation treatment are just a couple of ways that the Federal Government and employers can cut health care costs.

To learn more about ways to save lives and money in health care, I urge my colleagues to visit my Web site at murphy.house.gov.

THIS IS THE TIME FOR PEACE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, the Book of Ecclesiastes says there is a time for war and a time for peace. This is the time for peace.

Now is the time to stop the disintegration into a worldwide conflict. Now is the time to show the world that the United States is strong enough to be a leader in peace, not war. Now is the time to call for an immediate cessation of violence in the Middle East. Now is the time to commit the United States diplomats to multiparty negotiations with no preconditions. Now is the time to reaffirm our support for Israel by showing leadership and diplomacy.

Unilateralism breeds unilateralism. And then the awful dialectic of conflict moves as a force beyond our control and takes its deadly toll. One hundred civilians a day are being killed in Iraq. Things are spinning out of control. The war on terror has become a war of errors. We must bring a halt to this march of folly.

Communication is the controlling factor. Diplomacy is the controlling factor.

There is a time for war and a time for peace. This is the time for peace.

ISRAELI COWBOYS V. HEZBOLLAH OUTLAWS

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, what is playing out in southern Lebanon is analogous to the days of yesteryear in the Old West. It is the cowboys versus the outlaws.

There is a basic human right to self-defense. There is a basic right to shoot back when shot at. You don't have to duck, run or hide. And there is a further right to keep on shooting back until the bad guys stop shooting.

This is taking place in the gunfight with Hezbollah outlaws and Israeli cowboys, just like the Old West.

Hezbollah, a fancy name for a gang of terrorists, are kidnappers and killers, and they are hiding out in the hills of southern Lebanon. They are a state within a state. They are spreading terror. That's what terrorists do. They started shooting at Israeli citizens, kids and soldiers, and they won't stop no matter what we do. The outlaws have fired 1,100 rounds, and they will shoot thousands more because they preach death to Israel.

So, Madam Speaker, what's a cowboy to do? Well, shoot back and keep on shooting until the Hezbollah gang stops, gives up, or is rounded up and locked up.

It is a basic human right to defend yourself and take out the outlaws. And that's just the way it is.

REJECT OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Oman Free Trade Agreement. This deal is an expansion of a failed trade model that does not guarantee even the most basic labor standards, and it is simply unacceptable.

We are talking about an agreement with a country that our own State Department says does not meet the minimum requirements for trafficking people into forced labor. Even more shocking, labor unions don't even exist in Oman. Instead, workers are supposed to be represented by committees that actually are run by management.

In fact, Oman has only fixed one out of 10 areas where they are not compliant with the ILO. This is unacceptable.

We cannot preach about spreading freedom and opportunity around the world while ignoring the lack of labor and human rights standards in our trade bills. I urge my colleagues to reject the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

VENEZUELA AND OUR ENERGY SECURITY

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

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, today more than ever our energy supply is a matter of national security. Venezuela is our fourth largest supplier of crude oil, but since the Castro ally Hugo Chavez came to power, production has dropped sharply. As Chavez purchases Russian arms and assembles a regional anti-American coalition, many predict that decline will continue.

According to the Wall Street Journal, a GAO study found that a 6-month disruption in Venezuelan output would increase oil prices by $11 a barrel, costing our economy about $23 billion. Rather than respond to such a crisis after it arises, we should take the initiative to encourage exploration here at home, diversify our energy supplies by promoting alternatives, including nuclear power.

Finally, since the lack of freedom and democracy is synonymous with instability, we should consider the promotion of these values in Venezuela not only a moral imperative, but in our national interest as well.

VOTE ''NO'' ON OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, if we are really serious about national security, especially given the bipartisan

outrage over the Dubai Ports World situation earlier this year, we must reject the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

The Oman agreement allows foreign tribunals to second-guess American decisions about who can operate our ports and dictate to us what is in our national security interest.

Simply put, foreign tribunals should not determine what is a security threat to the United States. We should. This provision should not be in this trade agreement, period.

It is bad enough that we are asked to support agreements that will ship our jobs overseas, that undermine our environment, and ask us to stick our head in the sand over serious human rights violations, but it is simply outrageous to ask Congress to support legislation that can undermine the security of our Nation.

Whether you consider yourself a free trader or not, I cannot think of one Member of Congress who would support weakening our national security, and this agreement does that. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

VETO HUMAN EMBRYO RESEARCH

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

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, President Ronald Reagan famously said, ''We cannot diminish the value of one category of human life, the unborn, without diminishing the value of all human life.''

Yesterday the United States Senate passed a bill that authorizes the use of Federal tax dollars to fund the destruction of human embryos for scientific research.

While supporters of the bill argue this debate is a battle between science and ideology, that really misses the point.

If the Castle-DeGette bill returns to the Congress tonight, we will simply decide whether Congress should take the taxpayer dollars of millions of prolife Americans and use them to fund the destruction of human embryos for research.

You see, I believe that life begins at conception; that a human embryo is human life. I believe it is morally wrong to create human life to destroy it for research, and I believe it is morally wrong to take the tax dollars of millions of prolife Americans who believe that life is sacred and use it to fund the destruction of human embryos for research.

This debate then tonight will not be about what an embryo is. It will be about who we are as a Nation and whether we respect fully half of our country. On behalf of those millions of prolife Americans, Mr. President, veto this bill.

□ 1015

CONNECT THE DOTS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, after 9/11 there were calls to connect the dots. And as we approach the first anniversary of Katrina, with wildfires raging across the West, it is time to connect the dots dealing with natural disaster.

Former National Parks Director, Roger Kennedy, wrote an outstanding op-ed in the New York Times yesterday entitled '' Houses to Burn,'' and recently published a book '' Wildfires in America.'' He documents that we in government are part of this problem. We construct roads and infrastructure into hazardous areas. We don't have appropriate building codes, and often we don't even enforce the building codes that we have. We even build, as the Federal Government did, Los Alamos Research Laboratories in the midst of an area that has burned repeatedly decade after decade for centuries. And it is only going to get worse by sprawl and global warming.

It is time for government at all levels to connect the dots, to reduce and ultimately protect Americans from wildfires and other natural disasters, to make our communities more livable and our families safer, healthier and more economically secure.

BORDER SECURITY

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, when I am in my district there is one issue that tops all others with our constituents; it is the issue of border security.

In this environment, Madam Speaker, every town has become a border town and every State has become a border State. And our constituents are sending the message, and they couldn't be clearer, secure our Nation's borders.

I want to thank our House Republican leadership for standing up to the Senate and their Reid-Kennedy immigration reform bill, which would, among many other things, grant amnesty to those who break our laws in coming to this Nation.

Madam Speaker, it is time to halt illegal entry into this country. It is time to halt the flow of illegal drugs and weapons into this great Nation, and it is time to secure our borders.

I thank the Republican leadership for working on this issue, for standing firm. It is what the American people want to see done.

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, both Houses have passed legislation that would ensure funding for important research on embryonic stem cells and hold great promise of cures for diseases that have confounded scientists for years, diseases that have taken and continue to take many lives.

Cord blood, while important, is only a small part of the answer. Adult stem cells is an unknown and too far into the future.

Meanwhile, our loved ones continue to suffer and die.

We in the Congressional Black Caucus Health Brain Trust work to improve the quality and length of life of minorities and all Americans. H.R. 810 becoming law is a critical part of that effort.

A veto of this legislation would be conceding our country's moral leadership and leadership in medical science. A veto would put Americans at the mercy and largesse of other countries for our well-being. A veto of this legislation would be a veto of the right of many to a cure, to wellness and to life itself.

We have to stand up against the conservative fundamental ideologues of the right, and we must stand up for life, for this important research, embryonic stem cell research, which has the potential to give the gift of life to millions.

I cannot believe the President would veto a bill like this, but if he does, we owe it to our country to override.

ISRAEL'S SELF-DEFENSE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on June 25, Hamas terrorists from Gaza carried out a cross-border attack into Israel, killing two soldiers and kidnapping a third. Shortly thereafter, Hezbollah terrorists from Lebanon attacked Israeli soldiers, killing three and capturing two. Just yesterday, Hezbollah fired missiles into Israel at a rate of one per minute for a full hour. Rather than using diplomacy to deescalate the situation, Iranian President Ahmadinejad falsely claimed Israel was trying to reoccupy Lebanon and, once again, denied the existence of the Holocaust.

I agree with President Bush when he said yesterday ''The root cause of the problem is Hezbollah.'' President Bush further said that Israel has a right ''to defend herself from terrorist attacks.'' The kidnapped Israeli soldiers need to be released. Hamas and Hezbollah need to turn away from the current path of terror, violence and intimidation. We must stand with Israel in her fight against misguided religious extremism and those who glorify death over life. We must stand with Middle Eastern allies to establish peace.

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

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, virtually every family in America has been stricken with one dread disease or another. It may be cancer, it may be heart disease, it may be diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's. The list goes on and on. And finally, there are scientific breakthroughs called embryonic stem cell research that allow hope for a cure.

Sadly, the President of the United States is about to veto the legislation that this Congress has finally passed to give these families hope. This is a sad day for America because the President has never vetoed any other bill. He is the first President since Thomas Jefferson to endorse all our legislation as if it were perfect, except for this one bill, the bill that gives hope to virtually all American families.

Why, Mr. President, are you vetoing hope for Parkinson's victims, vetoing hope for cancer victims, for diabetes victims, for Alzheimer's victims?

Why, Mr. President are you, alone, standing in the way of hope and progress for our people?

WAR ON TERROR

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, there have been many reminders across the world recently of why we and the global community must maintain our commitment to fighting terror.

From the 1-year anniversary of the horrific bombings in London to the upcoming 5-year anniversary of September 11, we are constantly reminded of why our resolve and perseverance are crucial. America has shown the world that a strong, vibrant Nation faced with adversity can come together, unlike any nation on Earth. America has distinguished itself as the shining beacon of democracy throughout the world. When attacked, and freedom is in danger, we have proven that freedom will prevail.

Madam Speaker, I want to commend our troops for their sacrifice, their dedication and their bravery. They are freeing people from oppression so they may enjoy the same freedoms that Americans cherish. They are fighting a global war on terror, and they are winning

IN SUPPORT OF EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, yesterday the House of Representatives gave a victory to those hoping for cures for some of the most terrible illnesses of our time by defeating a fake bill on stem cell research.

Today, it is back to the calendar. The only reason we are considering this bill is to give our colleagues political cover when the President vetoes the bill that will provide real hope for cures, the Castle-DeGette embryonic stem cell legislation.

Let's make one thing clear this morning. A Presidential veto of the Castle-DeGette stem cell research bill will slow, if not stall, the real hope for cures and slam the door of hope right in the face of millions of Americans suffering from scores of incurable diseases.

The New Testament tells us that religious leaders in biblical times attacked Jesus for healing the sick on the Sabbath. We have religious leaders today who want to sit in judgment of today's healers.

Each of us on the floor today has a friend or family member who could benefit from increased embryonic stem cell research, whether they suffer from spinal cord injury, Alzheimer's or juvenile diabetes.

We must remember those who suffer and the compassion of the New Testament, not play political games with the hopes and prayers of the American people.

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL LEGISLATION

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, scientific discovery should never compromise our moral integrity. Embryonic stem cell research, which they call hope, which some call hope, destroys human life.

What they do, in essence, is they create a new human life. They fertilize an embryo, the essence of life. Then they take that embryo and destroy it, the essence of human life. It is a destructive concept for our society. And government has no business funding research that creates life in order to destroy it. And at its essence, that is what embryonic stem cell research does. It is not progress. It is a breakdown in medical ethics, and government should not support it or endorse it.

Additionally, embryonic stem cell research has not produced a single medical treatment, whereas ethical adult stem cell research has produced 27, at least, disease and condition recoveries for cerebral palsy and spinal cord injuries.

We need to actually encourage human life, not destroy it. And I urge the President to veto this unethical research.

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, President Bush has not vetoed a single bill, even though this Republican Congress has passed some really lousy legislation. It is amazing to me that he would choose his first veto on a bill that is critical to finding cures for cancer, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, MS, and so many other diseases.

H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act offers real hope, and the President should not veto it. Washington Republicans, worried that a veto of this important and popular bill will damage them politically, are also pushing two other bills.

The American people will not be deceived. They know that H.R. 810 is the real deal, and that it deserves to become law.

This week the American Medical Association and 92 other organizations sent out a letter stating, and I quote, ''Only H.R. 810 will move stem cell research forward in our country. This is the bill that holds promise for expanding medical breakthroughs. The other two bills are not substitutes for a 'yes' vote on H.R. 810.'' They conclude by saying that H.R. 810 is the ''pro-patient and pro-research bill.''

Madam Speaker, President Bush has a choice to make. He can act on behalf of his extreme right wing, or he can act on behalf of millions of Americans who are suffering from terrible diseases. I hope he makes the right choice.

ISRAEL'S SELF-DEFENSE

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

Mr. JINDAL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of Israel's right for self-defense. The killing of Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of their soldiers by Hamas and other groups were unprovoked acts of war.

Israel's response to these acts of war is designed to secure the release of its soldiers, end ongoing rocket strikes by terrorist groups and deter further attacks on its citizens.

Israel is exerting its right to defend itself by carrying out operations, both inside Gaza and southern Lebanon.

This strike took place following Israel's full withdrawal from Lebanon, a move that was applauded by the international community and fully certified by the U.N. Security Council.

Hezbollah, since then, has launched dozens of unprovoked attacks since Israel withdrew from Lebanon, including the firing of hundreds of rockets and mortars at civilian areas and the kidnapping of a number of Israelis.

During the past 6 months alone, nearly 1,000 short-range rockets have been

fired into Israel landing on homes and in schools. An additional 150,000 Israeli citizens and numerous strategic facilities are now within range of these missiles and their ability to reach Israel.

Israel's actions are aimed at securing the release of its soldiers and degrading the abilities of Hamas and Hezbollah to threaten its citizens with ongoing barrages of rockets.

Madam Speaker, that is why I ask the United States to stand at Israel's side as it defends itself.

□ 1030

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH DESERVES FEDERAL FUNDING

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

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to reject the cynical attempt to politicize a critical health care issue that offers hope to millions of Americans, embryonic stem cell research. Last year a bipartisan coalition in this House voted for hope, and we should not abandon that today.

In my State almost 1 million people suffer from chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, and spinal cord injuries, and I will not turn my back on them.

Expanding Federal support for stem cell research is also vital to helping America maintain our leadership in medicine and the life sciences. And for minorities and lower-income Americans who suffer from higher rates of chronic diseases, embryonic stem cell research could unlock the secrets to closing the health care disparities gap.

The American people support this research because they know that someone they love will be helped. We should not sacrifice that hope on the altar of partisan politics.

THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, thanks to the tax relief passed by Republicans in Congress, our economy continues to roll, creating 5.4 million jobs in just 2 years. And because our taxes have been lowered, Americans are working, saving, and investing even more.

That means Republican progrowth tax policies have actually resulted in higher tax revenues, which in turn means that the budget deficit has now dropped from $423 billion to $296 billion.

Madam Speaker, despite the opposition of the Democrats, the deficit is down, after-tax incomes are up, homeownership is at an all-time high, and more Americans are working today than ever before. In my district a worker in Mesquite is entering the workforce, a family in Jacksonville can better afford to send their daughter to college, a newlywed couple in Dallas can now put a down payment on a home, and a small business owner in Garland can hire three new workers.

The numbers and stories reveal that tax relief is working and making the lives of Americans better. That is why we will continue to fight the Democrat agenda of excessive taxation, mind-numbing and senseless litigation that will only close down small businesses and hurt our jobs.

GOP MISGUIDED PRIORITIES ARE NOT HELPING MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, House Republicans are ignoring the priorities of America's families. Once again they refuse to bring up one single bill that will help working families who are struggling to make ends meet.

This morning I would like to offer my Republican colleagues a challenge: Name for me one bill that you have passed into law this year that has significantly helped middle-class Americans.

The American people want a government that works for them, and right now under this House Republican majority, they are not getting it. Middle-class Americans are struggling. For 5 years their wages have remained stagnant, while everything else, housing and health care, energy costs, food, and college costs, has increased dramatically. If you factor in inflation, hourly wages are only .7 percent higher today than they were in 2001. Weekly wages are about the same.

It is no wonder that a large majority of Americans are concerned about their futures. But House Republicans refuse to listen.

Madam Speaker, America works best when we work together for the common good. It is time for a change in Washington.

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of West Georgia on its centennial anniversary. For the past 100 years, West Georgia has been educating some of our State's brightest minds, and I know the school will continue providing educational excellence for many years to come.

West Georgia's roots are humble. In 1906, it was founded as the Fourth District A&M School, a charter member of the university system of Georgia. In January 1908, the school opened its doors to students, enrolling 52 boarding pupils and 58 day pupils. Those first students would hardly recognize West Georgia today, home to more than 10,000 pupils and over 100 programs of study.

Yet despite the changes of the past 100 years, one thing has remained the same, and that is the dedication of the staff, faculty, students, and community. I want to congratulate university president Dr. Beheruz Sethna, the city of Carrollton, County of Carroll, and the entire West Georgia community on reaching this historic milestone.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating the University of West Georgia, and here is to another 100 years of educating Georgia's students.

WHILE REPUBLICANS DIVIDE AND DISTRACT, DEMOCRATS ARE UNITED ON NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I whipped up my snake oil this morning. Snake oil, that is what every 2 years the Republicans whip out. Snake oil this week in Congress. That is, passing legislation that they know will never come into law.

But Democrats are united in taking America in a new direction.

This week marks the second anniversary of the release of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. House Republicans have refused to institute their recommendations, receiving Ds and Fs from the 9/11 Commission on protecting the homeland.

House Democrats want to make the recommendations into law as soon as possible. We want to secure the 25 million passengers who ride Amtrak each year, our neighborhoods, our ports, and our borders. Democrats want to ensure all Americans have access to good-paying jobs by raising the minimum wage and ending outsourcing. We want to make college more affordable.

This time the American people will not be fooled. No more snake oil.

We want to make college more affordable for middle class families by making some college tuition costs tax deductible, expanding Pell Grants and cutting interest costs on student loans in half.

For too long, House Republicans have ignored the needs of hardworking middle class families. Their attempts to distract and divide won't work. The American people are ready for a change.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 810, STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, today is certainly a momentous day. President Bush is about to veto the first bill

of his 6-year Presidency, and we will have the opportunity to override this veto and reaffirm the House of Representatives' support for lifesaving medical research.

I take this moment to remind my colleagues of what H.R. 810 and stem cell research can do. Embryonic stem cells have the unique ability to become any other kind of bodily cell. These cells have the potential to help researchers find cures, that is right, cures, for diabetes, Alzheimer's, ALS, cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's, the list goes on.

Under H.R. 810 these cells would be extracted from embryos that are already created for in vitro fertilization and are no longer needed. Use of these surplus embryos would only be done with the consent of the donor.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the override and put us on the path to saving lives.

IT IS TIME TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is past time to raise the minimum wage. It was last raised in 1997. Currently, a person working full time at $5.15 an hour will make $10,712 per year. The poverty line is $13,461 for a family of two.

We must raise the minimum wage. No one should work full time and stand in a welfare line. No one should work full time and live below the poverty line. People do not want welfare. People want self-care.

It is time to raise the minimum wage.

IN HONOR OF SETON HALL UNIVERSITY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Seton Hall University on its 150th anniversary and recognize the extraordinary contributions the university has made to my home State of New Jersey.

As Seton Hall marks a century and a half of achievements, I join my fellow New Jerseyans in commending this esteemed university and its faculty, led by Monsignor Robert Sheeran.

Seton Hall, located in South Orange, is New Jersey's largest Catholic university, and it was founded in 1856. Today, after 150 years, Seton Hall has become both a pillar of academic life in New Jersey and an invaluable member of the South Orange community.

I proudly join the residents of the Ninth District of New Jersey in congratulating the students, faculty, and administration of Seton Hall University and wishing them a happy 150th anniversary.

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES BRINGING IN RECORD PROFITS FROM MEDICARE PART D PLAN

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, the American taxpayer is being ripped off by the Republican prescription drug law. Any Republican who wants to dispute this fact should take a look at yesterday's New York Times. Under the headline ''A Windfall from Shifts to Medicare,'' we have yet another example of how the pharmaceutical companies are reaping record profits while the American taxpayer is left holding the bill.

Before the Republican law went into effect this year, more than 6.5 million low-income Americans received help with their prescription drug bills through Medicaid. Under the Medicaid system, States could purchase the drugs at the lowest available prices. While this was good news for the taxpayer, it certainly cut into the profits of the pharmaceutical companies.

So now those 6.5 million Americans have been moved into the Republican plan, and they are no longer receiving the lowest prices. And the higher costs, adding up to as much as $2 billion this year alone, will be passed on to the American taxpayer.

And House Republicans still claim to be fiscal conservatives? House Republicans sold out to the pharmaceutical companies, and now the American taxpayers are paying the price.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2389, PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 920 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows

H. RES. 920

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. 2389) to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to the jurisdiction of Federal courts over certain cases and controversies involving the Pledge of Allegiance. 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 Majority Leader and Minority Leader or their designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. 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 Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), 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.

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 920 is a structured rule, and it provides 1 hour of general debate that is equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and minority leader or their designees. This resolution waives all points of order against consideration of the bill, and it makes in order only those amendments that are printed in the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution. It provides that the amendments printed in the report may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. Further, it waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report, and it provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 920 and, of course, the underlying bill, H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act of 2005.

□ 1045

Madam Speaker, I would first like to take this opportunity to thank my friend and colleague from Missouri, Representative TODD AKIN, the author and lead sponsor of the underlying bill. As an original cosponsor of H.R. 2389, I am glad to see that we will have the opportunity to set the record straight and defend our traditions against a few activist judges who would supplant the will of the people with their own personal agenda.

Yesterday, this House had the opportunity to debate and vote on an amendment to the Constitution defining marriage as the union between one man and one woman. Unfortunately, the necessary two-thirds vote in support of the amendment simply was not there. While some may characterize yesterday's debate as an act of futility, I

wholeheartedly disagree. Yesterday's vote put each and every Member of this House on record with their constituents and with the American people as to where they stand on defending our culture, on defending our values, against a few activist judges seeking to turn our society upside down.

I make mention of this because I anticipate that the opponents of this underlying bill will attempt to make the same arguments against this bill as they did yesterday against the Marriage Protection Act. And, Madam Speaker, they were wrong yesterday, and they continue to be wrong today.

The Pledge Protection Act, as well as the Marriage Protection Act, represents more than just the underlying issues of our Pledge of Allegiance or the traditional definition of marriage. These bills affirm that it is the American people, not a few activist judges, that have the right to create laws and establish the policies that will shape their lives.

Now, I know that the opponents of this bill will also try to confuse and confound this debate by arguing that there are other more pressing things to consider and that this Congress has passed nothing of importance to the American people. Well, Madam Speaker, I have to ask myself, where were they? Where were these individuals when we passed H.R. 4297, that cut taxes and prevented tax increases for millions of Americans? Where were they when we passed lobbying reform out of this House with bipartisan support? Where were they when we passed out of this House comprehensive border security legislation? Where were they when we passed 10 of 11 appropriations bills that fund the operations of this government? Where were they when we passed legislation to increase oil production through domestic production and refinery capacity to bring down the price of gasoline?

Madam Speaker, I could go on and on, but I believe I have made my point that this House has a proven track record of passing legislation important to the American people and their families, and the Pledge Protection Act simply builds upon that track record.

H.R. 2389 will affirm the ability of Americans across this country to recite the Pledge of Allegiance anytime, anywhere, with or without the phrase ''one Nation under God.'' The point is, the individual will get to choose.

Since the days of colonial America and the founding of this great Nation, the vast majority of our citizenry has celebrated and honored the role of Almighty God in shaping the history of this great land and defending her through many trials and tribulations and in lifting her up as a shining city on a hill.

As our founders set forth in the Declaration of Independence, ''We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.''

Madam Speaker, the recognition of a higher authority above human law and above temporal law is fundamental to the establishment and preservation of our fundamental rights and liberties. Those who would divorce the recognition of a higher authority from the rights he secures are guilty of throwing the baby out with the bath water.

If our fundamental rights come from human beings, then human beings can take them away. But because our rights are endowed to us by our creator, no man, no woman, no government can take them away. Therefore, we in this Congress have an obligation to uphold the ability of citizens across this great land to recite and pledge their allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank Dr. GINGREY for the time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I listened to Dr. GINGREY, and I have the misfortune of reading the paper every now and again. Dr. GINGREY, you are quoted as saying yesterday in the discussion with reference to banning gay marriage, the quote says, ''This is probably the best message we can give to the Middle East in regards to the trouble we are having over there right now.''

I say to you, sir, that I find that very confusing in the sense that I don't understand how, with all of the things going on in this country and around the world, that gay marriage, yesterday, was the most important thing that we could contribute to the horror of what is going on in the Middle East.

But I don't intend to use much of my time this morning, frankly. I really am embarrassed for the House of Representatives today. Why? Let's be clear about what the priorities are for the majority and what they are for the rest of the world.

Today, the Federal minimum wage purchases less than it has at any point in the last 50 years. Let me repeat: The Federal minimum wage purchases less than it has at any point in the last 50 years. It hasn't been raised in 9 years, and today the House is going to spend its time protecting something that all of us say every morning in the House of Representatives, the Pledge of Allegiance.

In the last year, 23 percent of all Americans say they or someone in their family have had to stop medical treatment because of the cost, and today the House will spend its time attempting to turn the independent judiciary into an echo chamber of the right wing of this particular majority.

If today is anything like the typical day of the past 3 years, three American soldiers will die in Iraq or Afghanistan, the Taliban will get a little stronger in Afghanistan and the civil war will continue to be enhanced in Iraq. And the American people will watch their Congress do nothing, but listen to a bunch of demagogues who claim a crisis in the United States courts.

The Middle East is literally going up in flames, as is California, and Katrina's problems haven't been solved, and Congress' response is to criticize Federal judges.

Today in America, 110 people will be treated in an emergency room for their wounds from a handgun and there is an epidemic of violence with reference to handguns, particularly by our youth in this country. 1,500 people will die of cancer today in America, and 1,900 people will die of heart disease. And the United States House of Representatives will speechify about patriotism.

Let me tell you something, Madam Speaker: Patriots try to solve real problems and not seek out remedies to perceived problems. Yesterday in this country we had people die of hunger and malnutrition. In some parts of this country, the infant mortality rate rivals that of sub-Saharan Africa. We have a public education system that ranks below that of almost any other Western nation. We have a looming Social Security crisis, and health care costs are spiraling out of control. And what do we do? Speechify about patriotism.

These are some of the problems, just some of the problems, confronting the American people today. And what is the majority's response to this? Today we will make sure that the Pledge of Allegiance is safe from so-called activist judges.

I could go on and on, but I have already taken more time than this deserves. Court-stripping bills such as this are, according to the Chief Justice of the United States of America, John Roberts, and let me quote the Chief Justice of America, they are bad policy.

I hope the American people are paying attention to their priorities, the priorities of the Republican majority.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 20 seconds.

I just wanted to respond to my friend from Florida. I didn't see that quote. I need to grab that newspaper that he was referring to. It sounds like I was either misquoted or my words were taken out of context.

Yesterday I spoke several times, and I mainly was speaking about our value system as a great Nation. We were talking about values yesterday from my perspective and the image that we present to the rest of the world, and particularly at this time to the countries in the troubled Middle East. So I don't know what the exact quote was, but I just want to try to clarify that

Madam Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to my colleague on the Committee on Rules, the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me time, and I rise in support of the rule and the underlying bill.

I am a proud cosponsor of the Pledge Protection Act, and, like many of my West Virginia constituents, I am disappointed that this legislation is necessary.

I was disappointed 4 years ago when two judges of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that our Pledge, our statement of shared national values, was somehow unconstitutional.

I do not take legislation that removes an issue from the jurisdiction of this court system lightly. This legislation is appropriate, however, because of the egregious conduct of the courts in dealing with the Pledge of Allegiance. By striking ''under God'' from the Pledge, the Ninth Circuit has shown contempt for the Congress which approved the language, and, more importantly, shows a complete disregard for the millions of Americans who proudly recite the Pledge as a statement of our shared national values and aspirations.

One of the many great things about living in a Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, is that no one is required to recite the Pledge if they disagree with its message.

We are a Nation that respects minority opinions. Those who disagree with the Pledge have every right to attempt to convince others of their point of view and convince Congress to change it. That is how our system works. Instead, the Ninth Circuit would allow the opinion of one person who disagrees with the Pledge to override the opinions of tens of millions of Americans who want to express their belief that America is in fact one Nation under God.

I am proud to stand with the vast majority of Americans and certainly the vast majority of West Virginians who support our Pledge of Allegiance the way that it is. We do not need Federal judges to dictate what our Pledge says. I hope my colleagues will join me and support the Pledge Protection Act.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased at this time to yield 6 minutes to my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

Madam Speaker, for 9 years there has been no increase in the minimum wage. Meanwhile, CEOs of the largest corporations in this country have seen their pay rise to record heights, almost 200 times the size of the paycheck for an average worker in this country.

For the last month, we on this side of the aisle have been trying to get the majority party to allow for a simple, straight up or down vote on increasing the minimum wage. We tried over a month ago to attach it to the appropriations bill for the Department of Labor, and we succeeded. When we did, the majority party decided they would not allow that bill to come forward because they didn't like the results.

We are now told, if you read Congress Daily put out by the National Journal, we are now told that the Speaker of the House, Mr. HASTERT, is against the minimum wage increase; we are told that the Majority Leader of the House, Mr. BOEHNER, is against the minimum wage increase. But they don't want to evidently face this issue up or down.

□ 1100

So the article in CQ this morning says, ''It is unlikely that GOP leaders would allow an up-or-down vote on a wage increase. Rather GOP aides say that if they craft a bill, it would likely include so-called sweeteners.''

Madam Speaker, I am proud of the fact that on this side of the aisle, our Members do not have to be maneuvered and cajoled and enticed into voting for a minimum wage increase. I am pleased by the fact that on this side of the aisle, Members do not need sweeteners in order to do what is right on this issue.

So we are trying today to attach the minimum wage increase to this bill. There are those on the other side of the aisle who will say that is inappropriate. Well, the previous speaker just recited part of the Pledge of Allegiance. When we stand on this House floor every day and take that pledge, we pledge to provide liberty and justice for all; not for most, not just for CEOs, not just to the wealthiest 1 percent of people in this country, but for all.

This Congress has provided $50 billion in tax cuts this year for people who make $1 million or more a year, and yet it is steadfastly refusing, on the direction of the top Republican leadership of this House, it is steadfastly refusing to do anything at all on the wage front for people who live life on the underside.

I think it is disgraceful for a Member of Congress, or for this Congress, to allow a pay raise for Members of Congress to go through at the same time that they are trying to block an increase in the minimum wage for the poorest people among us.

We have 15 weeks between now and the election. Do you realize, Madam Speaker, that we are going to spend 4 of those weeks in town here, and 11 weeks we are going to be spending back home campaigning for reelection? Meanwhile we will have taken no action to provide a Manhattan-like project on the energy front so that we are not stuck with $3 and $4 gasoline prices.

This Congress will have taken no action to provide health care for every child in this country. It will have taken no action to guarantee that we provide as much protection for the average worker in a company as we do for the board of directors and the CEO if that company goes bankrupt. We are taking no action to make college more affordable for every family in this country. We are not doing any of that.

Cannot we at least provide a minimal increase in the minimum wage for people who are living on life's edge? That is what we are asking you to do. I am amazed that we are told that we cannot do it.

Oh, you have time to strip a court from jurisdiction, just like you had time to call the Congress back to stick your nose in the family affairs of the Terry Schiavo family, but you do not have time and you do not have the will to provide some decent economic help to people who need it more than virtually anybody else in this society.

Shame on every one of you who will not move on this issue.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute just in response to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Madam Speaker, a couple of weeks ago on another rule that I was managing, this same issue was brought up, had really nothing do with the subject at hand, but was in regard to the minimum wage. I pointed out in a little colloquy with the gentleman from Wisconsin that I did not vote for that congressional pay raise, and he said that he did not either.

I just want to point out, this gentleman from Georgia, to the gentleman from Wisconsin that this just once again proves that cheese and crackers occasionally go good together. So I do not disagree with the gentleman on that particular point.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 4 minutes to the author, the distinguished author, of this bill, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN).

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I came here to discuss, I thought there would not be much discussion on the rule, because that is what we are supposed to be debating and discussing right now, the rule on the Pledge Protection Act.

Instead, most of the discussion that seems to come from the other side is complaining about priorities. I did not know that this is where we were going to complain about priorities. I suppose there are some connections.

It seems that judging by the comments in the Rules Committee yesterday, that the Democrats have a very hard time understanding the importance of the Pledge or the words ''under God'' or even the first amendment, which is about free speech. They seem to consider that to be a rather minor thing, and that perhaps may fit in with their view of government.

But I would recall that if you were to summarize what America stands for, we have always stood for the idea, the simple principle, that there is a God, even though we disagree as to who He might be, who gives basic inalienable rights to all people, and that it is the job of government to protect those rights.

That is, in a sense, a formula that Americans have gone to war about through the ages. That is why we went to war with King George, that is why

we fought the War of Independence, because we believed in that basic formula.

The Democrats are saying now that formula is not very important, we should not give it time to discuss it or think about it. But if they spent a little more time thinking about it, they would realize that is why we are in the war against these radical Islamists, why we fight the war of terror, why our sons and daughters are overseas.

The reason we fight is because these terrorists take away people's innocent lives and blow them up for political statements. We fight because these terrorists want to terrorize, to take away people's freedom. And the other side, the Democrats, want to cut and run from that fight. They would not want to cut and run if they understood the importance of those basic principles and that inalienable rights are impossible without a recognition of God, and that is why the Pledge bill is important and not irrelevant or trivial.

And so while we hear all of these discussions about, oh, you are not doing this, you are not doing that, you are not doing the other thing, fortunately government can do more than one thing at a time. There are many people at work in government.

The energy bill was brought up. I am surprised that the Democrats would mention the energy bill. It would be an embarrassment to me if I were a Democrat, and the Republicans had brought an energy bill on this floor in 2001, and it was killed by Democrats in the Senate. 2002, we brought an energy bill. That was killed by Democrats in the Senate. 2003, we brought an energy bill. It was killed by the Democrats in the Senate. And 2004, the Democrats killed it again. Finally in 2005, we get an energy bill.

If I were a Democrat, I would not be talking about energy prices after basically filibustering an energy bill for 5 years.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume before yielding to the distinguished minority whip from Maryland, my very good friend, a Member of this body who works tirelessly, tirelessly to alleviate the squeeze on America's middle class.

Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to my friend from Georgia who was responding to my friend from Wisconsin Mr. OBEY when he says cheese and crackers go together. And the context, as I understand it, was that you did not vote for the pay raise.

The question is, do you favor and can you push for the minimum wage? Cheese and crackers may very well go together, but they need to be washed down with milk or Coca-Cola. And the fact of the matter is people living on the minimum wage cannot buy cheese, crackers, Coca-Cola or milk, and so somewhere along the line that needs to be understood

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), my good friend.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

The gentleman who just spoke previously on the other side of the aisle was wrong, and he misstates the position of the Democrat Party. Indeed, he misstates the need for this bill. There is no court case that is pending that has shunted this aside, of articulation of ''under God.'' In fact, the Supreme Court said the litigant did not have standing.

Madam Speaker, I believe that our Pledge of Allegiance with its use of the phrase ''one Nation under God'' is entirely consistent with our Nation's cultural and historic traditions.

I also believe that the United States District Court in Sacramento, in September of 2005, holding that use of this phrase is unconstitutional is wrong. I want the gentleman to hear me. I believe the decision was wrong.

As a matter of fact, as the gentleman knows, 383 people on the floor of this House, overwhelming numbers of Democrats and Republicans, said it was wrong. The gentleman may recall that resolution.

But this court-stripping bill is not necessary. In fact, the Department of Justice is seeking to overturn the district court's decision. For political reasons, the other side of the aisle does not want to allow the judicial procedure to continue as our Founding Fathers perceived it to be in the best interests of our Nation, a Nation of laws.

Yet today with this radical court-stripping bill, our Republican friends completely overreact to this lone district court decision, which I believe is clearly likely to be overturned.

This legislation would bar a Federal court, including the Supreme Court, from reviewing any claim that challenges the recitation of the Pledge on first amendment grounds. If we are a Nation of laws, we must be committed to allowing courts to decide what the law is.

Let us be clear. This bill is unnecessary and, I believe, probably unconstitutional. It would contradict the principle of Marbury v. Madison, intrude on the principles of separation of powers, degrade our independent Federal judiciary, which, by the way, is a pattern of the majority party that is constantly wanting to undermine the judiciary. It is an end run.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, the House should not be spending its time today addressing a single Federal court decision that should be overturned on appeal. My goodness, how many bills we would have to have to disagree with every court opinion that comes down.

What we should be doing, Madam Speaker, is taking up legislation providing a long overdue increase in the Federal minimum wage, which has stood at $5.15 per hour since 1997, the longest period of time that we have not raised the minimum wage since Ronald Reagan and George Bush were President of the United States, in which case it was a longer period of time.

An estimated 6.6 million, indeed some estimate as many as 18 million people, are impacted by the minimum wage. Yes, we are raising this issue now because it is the right thing to do whenever you do it, in whatever forum you do it, at whatever time you do it. It is time that we take people working in America every day, playing by the rules, take them out of poverty. Let's do it now. Give us this opportunity. Give them a chance.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We have heard on both sides reference, of course, to our Founding Fathers in this debate. Madam Speaker, deep concern that Federal judges might abuse their power has long been noted by America's most gifted observers, including Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

Thomas Jefferson lamented that, this is the quote, ''the germ of dissolution of our Federal Government is in the constitution of the Federal judiciary; . . . working like gravity by night and by day, gaining a little today and a little tomorrow, and advancing its noiseless step like a thief, over the field of jurisdiction, until all shall be usurped . . . ''

In Jefferson's view, leaving the protection of individuals' rights to Federal judges employed for life was a serious error.

Listen to what Abraham Lincoln said, Madam Speaker, in his first inaugural address in 1861. ''The candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practical resigned their Government into the hands of eminent tribunal.''

That is the concern that we express today in this debate, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1115

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I look forward to the day that somebody offers a bill to eliminate the Court. I mean, you talk about Jefferson and Madison. I don't know how many of you have read the Federalist Papers and clearly understand the dynamics of establishing the Federal judiciary and the importance of the separation of powers.

That is what they went to war about or with King George, it was to make sure that we had a separation of powers. I travel in countries all over this world where the leaders of the country dictate to the courts, if they have any.

I don't want to see America in that position, and I believe my good friend from California feels likewise.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, we are here today because the Republican leadership has

made a stunning decision that it thwart the will, a bipartisan will of the House of Representatives, a bipartisan majority will of the House of Representatives to increase the minimum wage. They have decided that they are not going to follow the rules of democracy. They are not going to let this body reflect over 80 percent of the American people that believe that the minimum wage that is stuck at 1997 levels should be brought up to date for those workers who work hard every day.

In fact, when the Appropriations Committee spoke on a bipartisan majority, they refused to bring the bill to the floor, because it had an increase in the minimum wage that was put there by Mr. OBEY and Mr. HOYER. We just see last week, 26 Members of the Republican Party of this House wrote the majority leader demanding action before we leave in August.

Two Members of the Republicans voted for our motion on the previous question and we will offer it again today. So what we now understand is there is a majority. If we want to strip somebody of authority, maybe we ought to strip the Republican majority in this House of its authority to block the democratic will of both Members of this House who are duly elected under the Constitution and reflecting the will of the American people to increase the minimum wage. Forget stripping the Court of its authority. Let us strip the Republican leadership.

Just last week the Republican leader, Mr. BOEHNER, completely misrepresented the record on the minimum wage when he suggested that he had never heard from the Democrats about the minimum wage in an odd-numbered year.

Now, maybe Mr. BOEHNER doesn't know odd from even. But the fact of the matter is we introduced a minimum wage bill in 1997. I believe that is an odd-numbered year. We introduced a bill in 1999, another odd year; 2001, another odd year; 2005 an odd year.

We wrote to Mr. BOEHNER, as the chairman of that committee, time and again in 1991, asking for hearings and a markup. We asked again in October of 1999. In March of 2001 we sent Mr. BOEHNER letters from the members of the committee again asking for actions; in March of 2001 and in July of 2001. There have been numerous events calling upon the majority leader and the Speaker of this House to provide for an increase in the minimum wage.

It goes on and on and on. I have 30 here that I would like to enter into the RECORD. I suspect there are hundreds where the Democrats have asked time and time again this leadership to provide us an up-or-down vote on the minimum wage. Why do we do that? Because, as Mr. OBEY and Mr. HOYER pointed out, 6 million workers in this country are stuck in a wage that this Congress set in 1997.

No other workers in this country are stuck at that wage except these individuals. These are people who get up every day and go to work at very difficult jobs at the lowest wage you can pay in this country legally, and they go every day and every week and every month. At the end of the year, at the end of the year, they end up poor.

By official action of this Congress, they end up poor. The gas that they buy to go to work is not at 1997 prices. The bread and the milk they buy to bring back to their families is not at 1997 prices. The health care they hope to buy someday for themselves and their family is not at 1997 prices, nor is the housing where they rent homes.

These are people, because of the official action of the Republican leadership of the House of Representatives, these people must continue to be impoverished. Yet we tell them that we value their work.

No, we don't. We ought to strip this Republican leadership so that these people can have economic justice so that they can share in some of the liberties and freedoms that the other side talks about so much. It is very hard to share in liberties and freedom at $5.15 an hour, very difficult to do that. But the Republicans wouldn't understand that, because they just don't understand the plight nor do they care about the plight of these workers. That is why we should raise this minimum wage.

Minimum Wage Legislation Introduced By Democrats in Odd-Numbered Years

1. 105th Congress 1997: H.R. 2211 ''American Family Fair Minimum Wage Act of 1997''—Republican-controlled E&W Committee refused to take action on the bill.

2. 106th Congress 1999: H.R. 325 ''Fair Minimum Wage Act of 1999''

3. 107th Congress 2001: H.R. 665 ''Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2001''

4. 109th Congress 2005: H.R. 2429 ''Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2005''

Letters to Ed and Workforce Chairman Goodling From Ranking Democrat William Clay Requesting Action on the Minimum Wage—in Odd-Numbered Years

5. March 1, 1999, asking for hearing and markup of minimum wage legislation.

6. October 29, 1999

Letters To Ed and Workforce Chairman Boehner from Senior Member Miller Requesting Action on the Minimum Wage—in Odd-Numbered Years

7. March 2, 2001 from all 22 Democratic Members of the Committee requesting hearings on H.R. 665 to increase the minimum wage

8. July 16, 2001 from George Miller requesting, among other things, ''immediate action to increase the minimum wage.''

Press Events/Statements/Reports—in Odd-Numbered Years

9. Ranking Member Clay Makes a Statement in Ed and Workforce Committee urging passage of the minimum wage, October 7, 1999.

10. Ranking Member Clay asks unanimous consent in the Education and Workforce Committee to bring up H.R. 325 to increase the minimum wage, November 3, 1999.

11. Democrats issue ''A Mid-Term Report Card, the Republicans Failed Labor Education and Health Care Record'' with section entitled ''Republicans Continue to Block a Fair Minimum Wage'' and notes no committee action ''[d]espite the submission to the committee's chairman for repeated written requests for a markup of minimum wage legislation . . .'' November 29, 1999 (Report).

12. Statement on the Introduction of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2001 (February 7, 2001)

13. Miller Introduces Legislation to Increase the Minimum Wage, February 27, 2003 (press release)

14. ''Bush Administration Assault on Working Families—First 100 Days'' calls for Republicans to stop blocking an increase in the minimum wage. April 26, 2001 (Report)

15. This Christmas, Congress Should Help the Less Fortunate by Raising Minimum Wage, December 14, 2005. (press release)

16. House Again Refuses to Give Minimum Wage Workers a Raise, July 12, 2005 (press release)

17. Miller Calls for Minimum Wage Increase, May 18, 2005 (press release)

Sample of Dear Colleagues Sent in Odd-Numbered Years on Minimum Wage

18. Support a Fair Increase in the Minimum Wage, January 8, 2003 (Miller)

19. Support an Increase in the Minimum Wage, January 31, 2003 (Miller)

20. Co-sponsor the Minimum Wage, February 25, 2003 (Miller)

Sampling of Floor Statements (Congressional Record) on Minimum Wage by Key Democrats in Odd-Numbered Years

21. Rep. George Miller, October 25, 2005:

''Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of millions of American working men and women who are in desperate need of a raise. It has been a disgraceful 8 years since Congress last voted to raise the national minimum wage which is stuck today at only $5.15 an hour. A person making the minimum wage today would have to work for the better part of an hour just to afford a single gallon of milk or a gallon of gasoline.'' (Congressional Record, Page H9049)

22. Rep. George Miller, May 18, 2005:

''Mr. Speaker, today, together with 100 of my colleagues, we are introducing legislation to raise the Federal minimum wage from $5.15 to $7.25 over 2 years. Senator Edward Kennedy is introducing identical legislation in the Senate. Two reports that are also being released today, one by the Center for Economic and Policy Research and one by the Children's Defense Fund, make obvious the importance of raising the minimum wage for workers, children, and families.'' (Congressional Record, Page E1024)

23. Rep. George Miller, February 27, 2003:

''Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to be joined by 73 of my colleagues in introducing legislation to increase the minimum wage. The legislation that we are introducing today provides for a $1.50 increase in the minimum wage, in two steps. Our bill raises the minimum wage from its current level of $5.15 per hour to $5.90 sixty days after enactment and raises it again to $6.65 one year thereafter. In addition, the legislation extends the applicability of the minimum wage to the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Our bill is identical to legislation introduced in the other body by the Democratic Leader, Mr. Daschle, and 34 of his colleagues.'' (Congressional Record, Page E333)

24. Rep. George Miller on CNMI, July 26, 2001:

''Today, I am joined by more than 40 cosponsors as we introduce the ''CNMI Human Dignity Act,'' which would require that the Americans living in the US/CNMI live under the same laws as all of our constituents in our home districts. This legislation would extend U.S. immigration and minimum wage laws to the US/CNMI.'' (Congressional Record, Page E1442)

25. Rep. Rob Andrews, May 23, 2001:

''That compassion is sorely lacking when there has been a commitment by the majority not to move a bill to raise the minimum

wage of many of those parents that we are talking about today.'' (Congressional Record, Page H2601)

26. Rep. Major Owens, March 7, 2001:

''What we are experiencing today is the beginning of warfare on a large scale which has a psychological significance. It is very strategic. After we roll over ergonomics, it is going to be Davis-Bacon's prevailing wage act. It is going to be onward marching toward the elimination of any consideration of any minimum wage from now until this administration goes out of power.'' (Congressional Record, Page H664)

27. Rep. George Miller, November 3, 1999:

''Now the Republicans tell us that we cannot afford a prescription drug benefit for our seniors, that we cannot afford a Patients' Bill of Rights to protect our families against managed care and HMOs that deny them care, that we cannot afford a minimum wage for our low-income workers in this Nation, and that we cannot extend the fiscal security of social security by even one day. No, the Republicans still want to try to pass tax breaks for the wealthiest individuals, corporations, and special interests in this country. When in this session, in the last remaining 8 or 10 days of this session, when is it that Republicans are going to start thinking about our elderly, our children, and the working families of this Nation?'' (Congressional Record, Page H11376)

28. Rep. William Clay, June 18, 1997:

''Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention an important editorial that appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Monday, June 16, 1997. It brings to light the harsh reality of a GOP plan that deprives welfare participants of minimum wage.'' (Congressional Record, Page E1251)

29. Rep. George Miller on CNMI, April 24, 1997:

''Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to address the systematic, persistent, and inexcusable exploitation of men and women in sweatshops in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a territory of the United States of America. . . . This legislation will increase the minimum wage in the CNMI in stages until it matches the Federal level.'' (Congressional Record, Page E748)

30. Rep. George Miller, September 5, 1997:

''This is not a matter of conjecture, this is a matter of record that hundreds of thousands of workers on a regular basis are denied their overtime pay. That overtime pay is the difference of whether or not they can provide for their family or not provide for their family. That minimum wage pays the difference of whether or not they need public assistance or they do not need public assistance, whether they can provide child care or they cannot provide child care for their children as they work.'' (Congressional Record, Page H6931)

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Eleven minutes remain for the gentleman from Florida; the gentleman from Georgia, 16½.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, a young man whose sensitivities have shown through on this subject of countless others who are less fortunate, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Madam Speaker, if this issue were not so serious it would be a joke. The Republican majority today is talking about a Pledge of Allegiance where they are saying that we should include the words ''under God'' as they have been historically in our country. They preach God all the time. They even call themselves the Christian Coalition. But you look at their policies, and you would not see anything Christian about their policies.

My Aunt Rosemary was mentally retarded. If she didn't come from my family and have all of the financial support to give her, all of the support she needed, under the Republican Medicaid budget, she would have to live in the right State in order to get the support of services she needed because this Republican Congress has cut funding for the developmentally disabled in this country.

The very people who are treating the most vulnerable people in our society, the handicapped, the people who are living in group homes, in institutions, those people are being paid the least. They are being paid the minimum wage. They are taking care of God's children, God's children, and yet this majority says they want to make sure they stand up for God.

Where is their religiosity when it comes to standing up for the children of God? Where is their sense of justice when it comes to making sure that we treat others with the dignity and respect that God would have us treat one another with?

This is a joke, Madam Speaker, that this majority would talk about God and yet not even work to raise the wages of the very people that are taking care of the children of God.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman from Rhode Island, I greatly respect. The other side, making points about minimum wage or mental health parity and implying that these are the godly things to do, then I think in a way that they are inadvertently making my case.

Let us go along with the wishes outlined in this bill to keep ''under God'' in our Pledge of Allegiance, as we stand up every day and honor our flag. That, indeed is what it is all about. I thank them for helping to make the case for this particular piece of legislation, H.R. 2389.

I do hope that we have a recorded vote on the rule, and obviously on the bill, and I look forward to wide, maybe unanimous, bipartisan support on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) to respond.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Madam Speaker, in 1960 my uncle, President Kennedy, in one of his remarks in the inaugural address said, ultimately, our truest test here on Earth, we need to make sure we do God's will, because God's work is ultimately our own.

I find it so interesting that when it comes to our implementing the kinds of things that this gentleman would say we are somehow being inconsistent; it is really my point that the gentleman is being inconsistent, saying that he is for making sure we have God in our Pledge of Allegiance, but that God does not exist anywhere else in the Republican majority positions.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Before the gentleman from Georgia goes forward, may I say that we have but one more speaker, and then I will be prepared to close if the gentleman is prepared to close.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, to my good friend from Florida, at this time I have no additional speakers. I will reserve to close.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Before yielding to the distinguished minority leader whom I believe will cause in November the priorities of this House to change substantially, and to protect not only minimum wage earners, but the middle class of this country better than we have, I would like to come to today's discussion.

I find it difficult to believe that God would want us to strip the courts of their powers to interpret the laws of this land, albeit with the divergent opinions. I shudder that my colleagues do not understand the dynamics of the Federal judiciary.

But let me do something, perhaps not dramatic, perhaps a little melodramatic. Under Madam Speaker are the words ''In God we trust.'' I have been in this body 14 years, and I have had the distinct privilege, as have many other Members of the House of Representatives, of opening these proceedings with other speakers in the chair, at least five times, from my memory.

Every time that I participated in the opening proceedings, we said the Pledge of Allegiance, and we used the term ''God.'' I don't have as many of these as I want, and minimum wage workers don't have this many, and the middle class is suffering immensely in this country. But on our money is ''In God we trust.''

Please understand this. Only once has a court ruled that you cannot say the Pledge of Allegiance in this country, and that law was stricken down. I ask you, please, to listen to the Chief Justice when he says that court-stripping would be bad policy.

You may have the right intention, but you are doing it in the wrong way.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished minority leader, Ms. PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Florida for his leadership on this important issue, and for his eloquence on it as well.

Madam Speaker, my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I have really good news for you. The pledge to the flag and the words ''under

God'' are not in trouble. They are very safely ensconced in the Pledge of Allegiance, which, as our colleague mentioned, we pledge every single day that this body comes to order, school children across the country, the beginning of meetings all over our country. The profession of our pledge to the flag, and one Nation under God, is safe and it is sound.

That is why it is hard to understand why you would take up the time of this Congress to bring something to the floor that is so out of touch with the concerns of America's middle class. We are talking about democracy here and the intentions of our Founding Fathers. Essential to a democracy is a strong, thriving and growing middle class.

The policies of this Congress, this Republican Congress, undermined the security and the size of that middle class. That is why, if you are at home with someone who is sick, or a child home from school, and you happen to turn on the TV, and you see the proceedings of Congress, what would an American think? What they are doing is totally irrelevant to my life, totally irrelevant to my life, whether it is the health of my family, the education of my children, the economic security of our family and the safety of my neighborhoods.

Why isn't Congress addressing the concerns of America's great middle class? Why, indeed, are the Republicans taking up the time, day in and day out, with their proposals which have no prospect of success, which have no basis in reality, and which, in fact, undermine the Constitution of the United States which each one of us takes an oath of office to support and defend.

Why, instead of having this conversation, which as Mr. HASTINGS and others have said, this is not at risk. We all agree. One Nation under God. What a beautiful pledge. We all agree.

□ 1130

So rather than addressing the concerns of the American people, we are making here an all-out assault on the Constitution of the United States, which, thank God, will fail. Court-stripping. Court-stripping.

Fundamental to our democracy is the separation of powers, a system of checks and balances, but this Republican Congress says that Congress should strip the courts of the power to be a check and a balance to the other branches of government.

They have said in their meetings that Marbury v. Madison, which established precedent of judicial review, was wrongly decided. Over 200 years of precedent on judicial review they say was wrongly decided, and therefore, they can strip the courts of the ability to review the constitutionality of an act of Congress. That means by a simple majority, and if the other body were willing and the President were to sign, by a simple majority they can amend the Constitution with bills that are not constitutional but have no court to judge that constitutionality.

It is absolutely wrong, and Justice O'Connor said recently on this subject that this was brought up at the time of desegregation. They tried to use it then. Thank God, thank God, thank you, God, they failed. Thank God they failed.

What we should be talking about today is what is important, the issues that are important to America's middle class. Again, when people ask me what are the three most important issues facing the Congress I say the same thing: our children, our children, our children; their health, their education, the economic security of their families, which includes the pension security of their grandparents, the healthy environment and safety of the neighborhoods in which they live, a world at peace in which they can thrive.

But turn on the television and tune in to C–SPAN and see what is going on in Congress, and what do you see? The politics of divide and distract. It is really sad, as Mr. KENNEDY said. It would be almost a joke but it is just really not that funny.

So let us instead vote, when we have a chance to vote on this rule, against the previous question; and that vote will be a vote to increase the minimum wage. That is relevant to the lives of the American people. In fact, it is relevant to the lives of millions of American people, many of them single moms. Many of them single moms.

Right now, minimum wage is $5.15 an hour. If you work full time at the minimum wage you make about $10,000. If you are two wage earners in a family and you both work full time and make the minimum wage, you make $20,000. You are below the poverty line for a family of four. Imagine two wage earners working full time. Is that fair? Is that just? I do not think so.

This Congress had no hesitation to give itself a raise over the past 9 years, $30,000 in raises. That $30,000 would take a minimum wage worker 3 years to earn just the increase in salaries that Congress gave itself. So there is no justice in what we are talking about here.

I quoted another debate on this subject, the recent encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI. This is a quote from Cardinal McCarrick, quoting the Pope quoting a saint. In his encyclical, ''God is Love,'' Pope Benedict talks about the responsibilities of politicians, people in government, and he quotes Saint Augustine who said that unless politicians, people who are in the public domain, are there to promote justice, they are just a bunch of thieves. Saint Augustine said, unless politicians were there in office to promote justice, they were just a gang of thieves. The Pope quoted Saint Augustine and the cardinal quoted the Pope in his farewell address to us.

It is true, it is true, how can we be talking about justice, how can we be talking about our Constitution, how can we be talking about under God if we do not even meet the simple test of fairness to America's middle class, which is central to our democracy? How can we be talking about that here when people are suffering in our country? They do not know how they are going to pay for their health bills, and millions of them do not have health insurance. In fact, 6 million more people in America do not have health insurance since President Bush became President, a 70 percent increase in the cost of health insurance since President Bush and this Republican Congress went to work on the American people.

So the injustices are there. The opportunity is here, and it is being ignored because the priority of the Republicans in Congress is to distract and divide the country. It is time for the politics as usual to end. It is time for this House to be the marketplace of ideas that our Founders intended, where we come to do the work of the American people, where they tell us to make laws to grow our economy, to make our country strong militarily, and then the health and well-being of the American people, make our country strong in the unity and the reputation that we have in the world.

Instead, we have this freak show one day after another of a rollout of distractions and divisions that is unworthy of this House, unworthy of the American people and certainly does not honor the vision of our Founding Fathers, the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform or the aspirations of our children.

So I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the previous question, and that vote will be a vote to increase the minimum wage, which is, again, $5.15 an hour. It has not been increased in 9 years. While the price of gas, food, health care and everything else has gone up, the purchasing power has gone down.

Let us not be a bunch of thieves. Let us be a deliberative body that is here to promote justice. Vote ''no'' on the previous question. Vote ''no'' on this court-stripping bill which dishonors the oath of office that we all take.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN), the author of the bill.

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, the question has been placed: Is there really a need for this legislation? And I think the statement was made, inaccurately, that there was just only one time that the Pledge had been challenged as being unconstitutional.

The words ''under God'' were found by the Ninth Circuit to be unconstitutional. It was not once. It was done first by a three-judge panel there. They came to the conclusion that school kids are not allowed to say the Pledge of Allegiance. They were then backed up by the entire Ninth Circuit that supported that same position.

The case then went to the U.S. Supreme Court. If we could be so assured that the phrase ''one Nation under

God,'' Madam Speaker, that is over your head is safe, if the words ''in God we trust'' on our money is safe, well, then certainly the words ''under God'' in our Pledge should be safe. So the Supreme Court could simply have ruled this is a ridiculous and a silly case that the Ninth Circuit has sent to the Supreme Court; we strike down their decision. They could have ruled that way.

I was there when the case was heard. The President's attorney recommended that the Court dismiss the case based on lack of standing of the person who brought the case. And one of the Supreme Court judges said we consider that the lower courts will take care of whether or not somebody has standing; that is not the kind of issue we consider. And yet on deliberation, instead of striking the Ninth Circuit decision, the Court said, oh, we are going to dismiss it for lack of standing.

That gives many of us very little cause to not be concerned not only with our Pledge, but with the money that says ''in God we trust,'' ''in God we trust'' over the Speaker's chair, and ''one Nation under God'' on our money. So it is a matter of debate whether or not there is a threat here, but this is the same Court who not so long ago made the decision that we could also ignore the fifth amendment and redistribute private property to other people without it being for government use. If they would ignore the fifth amendment, is it possible they might turn the first amendment upside down and use it as a tool of censorship? Certainly, many authorities think so.

This bill has merit, and it needs serious consideration. We take an oath of office to uphold the Constitution. That includes the first amendment, and this is about free speech, not censorship.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is hard to correct my friend from Missouri. I said to him last night, earlier yesterday, as it were, in the Rules Committee that he is an engineer and I am a lawyer of 44 years standing, twice a judge as it were, and I understand a little bit about how the Federal judiciary works. I said to him that I do not come into his engineering association to tell them how to construct bridges and tunnels, and not that there is any premium on lawyers or judges having clarity, but he muddies the water on this subject.

I would urge him to understand that it was under President Eisenhower that the words ''under God'' were put in the Pledge of Allegiance. Somehow or another, during World War I and World War II, without the words ''under God,'' we managed to win those wars. Somehow or another we were not a godless society any more than we are not today.

Please understand that the pendulum swings in the Federal judiciary, and there may be a day when things that you envision are important for the Court to undertake constitutionally will allow for some more liberal Congresspersons to come along than you and strip the courts of those powers.

We have a beautiful system of checks and balances in this country. Madam Speaker, I would urge that we do not impinge upon that territory.

I urge all Members to vote ''no'' on the previous question so I can amend the rule and provide this House with yet another chance to vote on legislation to increase the Federal minimum wage.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment and extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. My amendment provides that immediately after the House adopts this rule it will bring H.R. 2429, the Miller-Owens minimum wage bill, to the House floor for an up-or-down vote. This bill will gradually increase the minimum wage from the current level of $5.15 an hour to $7.25 an hour after about 2 years.

A footnote right there; I am so proud of my State. By petition, the State of Florida passed a minimum wage with an acceleration clause pegged to the cost of living. Hurrah for Florida.

The bill is identical to language that was included in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill that was blocked by the majority leadership last month. It is also identical to the language that we on the Democratic side have tried to bring to this floor in recent weeks.

Madam Speaker, every day that we fail to bring legislation to the floor to increase the minimum wage is another day we turn our backs on America's low-income and middle-class families who desperately need our help. These workers, as many have said, struggle every day to make ends meet. Many minimum-wage earners work two and three jobs just to get by, and it is unconscionable that we have waited this long to offer even a little relief to those in this Nation who need it most.

There is a statistic that was quoted very recently, but no offense to rich people, but America's corporate executives collectively, when paired down in the first 4 hours of any given year that they worked, they earn in 4 hours more money than a minimum-wage earner makes all year long.

It has been nearly a decade since this House voted to increase the minimum wage. The minimum wage, as I said earlier, is now at its lowest level in 50 years.

□ 1145

A full-time minimum-wage earner makes just $10,700 a year, an amount that is $5,000 below the poverty line for a family of three.

I am going to cut it off right here, Madam Speaker, and go back to my original remarks. We have not done anything about genocide in Darfur; the Middle East is in flames. California is suffering forest fires. We have left the Hurricane Katrina victims by the wayside with more hurricanes looming to come during this hurricane season. The deficit is at an all-time high and accelerating. The national debt is crippling this Nation. And the middle class, we didn't fully fund education to the extent that we left no children behind. We are not putting sufficient police on the streets in order to be able to protect our Nation. Our homeland is vulnerable in more ways than one, including the containers that go on our aircraft and those that are not inspected in our ports. I could go on and on, including the potential for $4-a-gallon gas prices.

And what we are going to do? We are going to strip the courts. We ought to strip some of these people that are in the business of stripping the courts.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I rise again in support of this rule and in recognition of the importance of the underlying bill, H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act of 2005.

I want to express my appreciation to my colleagues who participated in the preceding debate on this rule, and I want to ask my colleagues to continue their participation as we move into the general debate.

I also want to again commend Representative AKIN, both a friend and a colleague, for leading the charge in defense of not only our Pledge of Allegiance, but also many of our time-honored traditions that are currently under assault by some activist judges, as he just enumerated.

As I stated yesterday, we did not raise these issues; a few activist judges did when they decided to throw out precedent and make new law without one vote cast in either a legislature or at the ballot box. So it is now the responsibility of this Congress to stand up for the will of the American people and sanction our Pledge of Allegiance. Let us affirm this is ''one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.''

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Florida is as follows:

PREVIOUS QUESTION ON H. RES. 920, RULE FOR H.R. 2389 THE PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

At the end of the resolution add the following new section:

''SEC. 2. Immediately upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2429) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) 60 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce; and (2) one

motion to recommit with or without instructions.''

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives, (VI, 308–311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

Because the vote today may look bad for the Republican majority they will say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adopting the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 200, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 382]

YEAS—224

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boustany
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Gutknecht
Hall
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schmidt
Schwarz (MI)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—200

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Case
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shays
Sherman
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOT VOTING—8

Evans
Ford
Goode
Gutierrez
Harris
Linder
McKinney
Northup

□ 1213

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas and Mr. POMEROY changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. SULLIVAN changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 257, nays 168, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 383]

YEAS—257

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Baca
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Berkley
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Gutknecht
Hall
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
Matheson
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Melancon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Pastor
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Salazar
Saxton
Schmidt
Schwarz (MI)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Tanner
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—168

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berman
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boswell
Boucher
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Case
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Gonzalez
Grijalva
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rangel
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sabo
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shays
Sherman
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOT VOTING—7

Evans
Ford
Gutierrez
Harris
McKinney
Northup
Ryan (OH)

□ 1223

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BLUNT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2389.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 920 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2389.

□ 1225

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2389) to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to the jurisdiction of Federal courts over certain cases and controversies involving the Pledge of Allegiance, with Mr. LATOURETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As we approach this bill today, Mr. Chairman, I want to make the point that clearly the Pledge of Allegiance is well understood by this body and the Members of this body. It is repeated here every day. The words of the Pledge are words that we have learned since our childhood:

''I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.''

When Congress passed the bill adding the words ''under God,'' Congress stated its belief that those words in no way run contrary to the first amendment, but recognize ''only the guidance of God in our national affairs.''

Two words, ''under God,'' in the Pledge helped define our national heritage as the beneficiaries of a Constitution sent to the States for ratification ''in the year of our Lord,'' as the ratification statement said, 1787, by a founding generation that saw itself as guided by a providential God. These two words were added to the Pledge in the 1950s, and at that time President Eisenhower made the point that in those days of Cold War, those days after World War II, that it was important that we realize that there was something bigger than ourselves and that our country was guided by that.

For decades children have been reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in classrooms across America. The Pledge of Allegiance is an important civic ritual. It binds us together as Americans. But last year that daily ritual was halted in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The court actually told teachers and children in Alaska and Arizona, in California and Hawaii, in Idaho and Montana, in Nevada, Oregon, and Washington that they could not recite the Pledge of Allegiance as they had for decades in their classrooms.

The Court's reasoning? The words ''under God'' constituted a violation of the establishment clause of the first amendment. According to the court, it was unconstitutional to lead students, even voluntarily, in the Pledge of Allegiance because it included the phrase ''under God.''

Any of the phrases in the Pledge do not need to be subject to this kind of court interpretation. The Pledge of Allegiance, an act of Congress, modified by the Congress in 1950s, still continues to be the Pledge of Allegiance said by school students and Members of this body and others all over the country today. Judges should not be able to rewrite the Pledge. Passing this bill will protect the Pledge from Federal judges and will strike an important blow for self-government.

This legislation, Mr. Chairman, is in the spirit of the first judiciary act, the Judiciary Act of 1789, drafted by individuals who had drafted the Constitution, voted on by Members who had been at the drafting of the Constitution, all willing to define the role of the Federal courts and to narrow the role of the Federal courts, as this bill proposes to do.

I look forward to the debate.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I really hate to be an ''I told you so,'' but when, in 2003, we considered legislation to strip the Federal courts of jurisdiction, in that case to hear cases challenging the Defense of Marriage Act, I warned that there would be no end to it.

In fact, when we first marked up this bill, I asked my friend, the chairman of the Constitution Subcommittee, whether there would be other court-stripping bills. He assured me that this and the marriage court-stripping bill were the only ones ''so far.'' As we know, he was being, as always, truthful.

Our former colleague Bob Barr, the author of the Defense of Marriage Act, whose legislation Congress was purporting to protect in that case, said, no thanks.

He wrote: ''This bill will needlessly set a dangerous precedent for future Congresses that might want to protect unconstitutional legislation from judicial review. During my time in Congress, I saw many bills introduced that would violate the takings clause, the second amendment, the 10th amendment, and many other constitutional protections. The fundamental protections afforded by the Constitution would be rendered meaningless if others followed the path set by this bill.'' Z! EXT .033 ...HOUSE... K19JY7 PERSONAL COMPUTERJ049060-K19JY7-033-*****-*****-Payroll No.: -Name: -Folios: - -Date: mmddyy -Subformat:

□ 1230

Bob Barr was right. Today it is the turn of the religious minorities.

Once upon a time in this country a student could be expelled from school for refusing to cite the Pledge because it was against his or her religion. In 1943, the Supreme Court in West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette held that children, in that case Jehovah's Witnesses, had a first amendment right not to be compelled to swear an oath or recite a pledge in violation of their religious beliefs.

This legislation would, of course, strip those families of the right to go to court and to defend their religious liberty. Schools would be able to expel children for acting according to the dictates of their religious faith, and Congress will have slammed the courthouse door in their faces.

As dangerous as this legislation is, even for an election season, it is part of a more general attack on our system of government which includes an independent judiciary whose job it is to interpret the Constitution even if those decisions are unpopular. It is their job to protect individual rights, even if the exercise of those rights in given instances are unpopular.

Sometimes we do not like what the court says. I don't like that the Supreme Court struck down part of the Violence Against Women Act, or that they struck down part of the Gun Free Safe Schools Zones Act, or that they are misapplying, in my opinion, the commerce clause and the 11th amendment in order to gut some of our civil rights laws. I really didn't like it that Republican-appointed justices traversed, perverted justice in order to put someone in the White House who got more than half a million votes less than the other candidate who really won the election.

I don't hear my colleagues on the other side screaming about judicial activism by unelected judges in these cases.

As wrong as I believe the current Supreme Court to be on many issues, I understand that we cannot maintain our system of government and especially our Bill of Rights if the independent judiciary cannot enforce those rights, even if the majority doesn't like it.

Again, I will refer to the Soviet Stalinist Constitution of 1936, which had many rights in it, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of the press, freedom of religious and antireligious propaganda, as they quaintly put it. But, of course, it wasn't worth the paper it was written on because they had no judicial enforcement of it, and if you tried to bring a lawsuit to enforce your right, they shot you before they brought you to court. Any constitutional right without the ability to enforce it in court is no right.

This House appears infected with hostility toward the rule of law. This bill is a perfect example. Even more egregious is the way it has reached the floor. The Judiciary Committee twice voted against reporting this bill to the House. The ''no'' vote was bipartisan. Now the Republican majority is abusing its power to bring it to the floor anyway.

Neither the Parliamentarian nor the Congressional Research Service has been able to find any other case like this. They report, ''We found one instance of a bill, a joint resolution, between the 100th Congress and the current Congress, in which a committee specifically voted not to report a measure that was later considered by the House.'' That measure was a 1996 agriculture bill that was rejected in committee and later folded into a reconciliation bill.

Now the Republican majority exceeds even that arrogance. We are asked to vote on a bill that guts our system of government and guts the protection of our individual rights when the committee tasked with the consideration of this bill rejected it. It must be an election year.

To return to Justice Jackson and the flag salute case, he observed that, and I quote because it is very apposite here, ''The very purpose of the Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One's right to life, liberty and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote. They depend on the outcome of no elections.''

But now some would strip the courts of any ability to protect these individual rights against a temporarily intolerant majority.

As to the complaints about unelected judges, I would refer my colleagues back to their high school civics textbooks. We have an independent judiciary precisely to rule against the wishes of the majority, especially when it comes to the rights of unpopular minorities. That is our system of government and it is a good one and we should protect it.

As Alexander Hamilton said in Federalist Number 78, ''The complete independence of the court of justice is peculiarly essential in a limited Constitution. By a limited Constitution, I understand one which contains certain specified exceptions to the legislative authority; such, for instance, as that it shall pass no bills of attainder, no ex post facto laws, and the like. Limitations of this kind can be preserved in practice no other way than through the medium of courts of justice, whose duty it must be to declare all acts contrary to the manifest tenor of the Constitution void. Without this, all reservations of particular rights or privileges would amount to nothing.''

Where would this bill leave religious liberty? The Republicans tell us State courts can protect those rights. What would this mean? It would mean that your rights might be protected in one State, but not in another. I thought the 14th amendment to our Constitution settled that issue.

One of the reasons we have a Supreme Court is so that the Federal

Constitution means the same thing in New York as in California or Mississippi or Minnesota. This country must be one country, not 50 separate countries.

We are really playing with fire here. Do you really hate unpopular religious minorities so much that you are willing to destroy the first amendment? I urge my conservative colleagues especially to shape up and act like conservatives for once. We live in a free society that protects unpopular minorities, even if the majority hates them or hates the expression of their opinion.

If someone doesn't want to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or doesn't feel conscientiously able to recite the words ''under God,'' that is their privilege. Our Constitution protects it, our civil liberties protect it, this country should protect it, and I urge the defeat of this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the principal sponsor of the bill, my colleague from Missouri (Mr. AKIN).

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to introduce the Pledge Protection Act and just to give a quick and brief history as to why it is important. We have heard some discussion that this is really not necessary, that we can rest assured that the words of the Pledge of Allegiance will just stand firm forever. Unfortunately, that is not what our recent history shows.

First of all, three judges on the Ninth Circuit Court in California ruled that the words ''under God'' are unconstitutional. They were supported by the entire Ninth Circuit.

The case went to the Supreme Court, and I was there at the hearing at the Supreme Court. The President's attorney there argued that the Supreme Court should kick the case out because the person, Mr. Newdow, bringing the case did not have standing. The response of one of the Judges was, as a Supreme Court we never kick a case out based on standing, because we assume the lower courts have already taken care of that.

Why did the Supreme Court do this? They could easily have ruled that the Pledge is just fine, that it is completely constitutional. Is that their ruling? No. They kicked the case out based on standing.

So we believe that there are not five Judges on the Court, which is what it would take to uphold the Pledge of Allegiance. Hence we use a constitutional authority granted to us from the Founders that wrote the Constitution to protect the Pledge of Allegiance. That constitutional authority is known as Article III, section 2.

What we do is we create a very simple fence around the Federal court system. We say just regarding the Pledge of Allegiance, that no Federal Court has authority to hear a claim that the Pledge is unconstitutional. So we put a fence around the Federal court system.

Well, what does that mean, if somebody really wants to make a claim that the Pledge is unconstitutional? It means that they go to their local State courts, with the ultimate decisions being made in 50 separate supreme courts and a court here in the District of Columbia. So that is the reason for why we need to pass the Pledge Protection Act.

It seems a bit ironic that some people will complain about the fact that we have no respect for the Constitution and that we are eroding the separation of powers, and yet it is the very Constitution that gives Congress the authority and the responsibility to stand up to the Court when they are misusing the Constitution. If you claim you respect the Constitution, part of that is the first amendment, and the first amendment to the Constitution is about free speech. It is not about censorship.

To say that a child cannot say the Pledge of Allegiance is a form of censorship. The Court has already ruled that no child has to say the Pledge. But now the Court wants to go the other step and say no, we are going to use the first amendment about free speech to say that you cannot say the Pledge. We must step in.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 7 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, anytime we consider legislation like this, one can be assured that veterans benefits have either just been cut or are about to be cut. Instead of addressing the real issues of patriotism, such as the adequacy of health care funding for veterans or the fact that the number of veterans waiting for benefit determinations has increased by approximately 80,000 since last year alone, we are going to use this bill to divert attention from those more pressing issues.

Mr. Chairman, this bill is aimed at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals case, Newdow v. U.S. Congress, which held that the words ''under God'' in the Pledge are unconstitutional in the context of public school recitations. I happen to disagree with that decision and I agree with the dissent in that case which stated, ''Legal world abstractions and ruminations aside, when all is said and done, the danger that 'under God' in our Pledge of Allegiance will tend to bring about a theocracy or suppress someone's belief is so miniscule as to be de minimis. The danger that the phrase represents to our first amendment's freedoms is picayune at best.''

I agree with that language, Mr. Chairman. So as we discuss the constitutionality of ''under God'' in the Pledge, we must recognize that every bill that is introduced, every hearing we have, every vote that we take on the issue enhances the importance of this issue and these actions serve to chip away at the de minimis argument and actually increase the chance that the court will ultimately decide that the Pledge is unconstitutional.

The simple fact is that we need to respect the Constitution and the right of courts to decide whether the Pledge is constitutional or not. But the majority will not do that. H.R. 2389 is a court-stripping bill as the bill does not address the substance of the arguments pro and con, it just prohibits Federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from deciding the case.

This bill is a blatant attempt to prevent the judicial branch from doing its job. The foundation of our democracy rests on the principle of checks and balances of power among three coequal branches, and this bill is a flagrant disregard of that principle. In addition, this bill will result in unprecedented confusion as each State court will decide how to interpret the Federal Constitution.

It also sets a poor precedent that at any time we are considering a bill that might be found unconstitutional by the courts, we might just prohibit the courts from saying so by taking away their right to hear the case.

Mr. Chairman, this bill would strip Federal courts from their ability to hear cases that are clearly within Federal jurisdiction because those cases address Federal constitutional rights and individual liberties guaranteed under the Bill of Rights, and many rights may be involved because the bill is not limited to cases addressing the words ''under God.'' The recitation of the Pledge may in some situations implicate the right of free speech, the right of freedom of association, the right to free exercise of religion, the establishment clause protections, all guaranteed under the first amendment of the Constitution.

The passage of this bill will mean that there will be no Federal law on a Federal constitutional question, not even a supreme law of the land to guide other Federal or State courts on the matter or to definitively state the law when there are inconsistent decisions in different States. So a Federal constitutional right could be applied inconsistently to American citizens simply because they live in different parts of the country.

The need for a Federal review of many different rights that may be involved is not speculative. For example, Mr. Chairman, even before the words ''under God'' were in the Pledge, the Supreme Court in 1943 held in West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette that a compulsory flag salute and accompanying Pledge were unconstitutional when required of a public school student in violation of the student's religious beliefs.

In that case, the lawsuit was originally filed in Federal Court and was never considered in State court. If this legislation passes, State courts won't even have to follow prior Supreme Court precedents. The reason that State courts are prohibited from ignoring Supreme Court precedent is if they

do so, the Supreme Court is there, ready and willing and able to reverse the State court's decision. But no more under this bill. We may well end up with 50 interpretations and applications of a single Federal constitutional right.

For over 200 years, since Marbury v. Madison in 1803, the Supreme Court has been the final arbiter of what is constitutional and what is not. So while Congress has the power to regulate jurisdiction of Federal courts, the court-stripping language of H.R. 2389 grossly exceeds that power in violation of the principles of separation of powers.

□ 1245

If this court-stripping idea had been around in 1954, Congress could have prohibited the Supreme Court from hearing issues involving student assignment to public schools. We never would have had the decision of Brown v. Board of Education, or it could have passed in the 1960s, and the decision in the Federal court in Loving v. Virginia, to overrule the will of the people of Virginia and require Virginia to recognize racially mixed marriages, might not have ever happened.

The judges in those decisions were described just as judges are described today: liberal, rogue, unelected, lifetime appointed activist judges. But they made the right decisions in those cases. The truth is that we rely on Federal courts to determine and enforce our constitutional rights.

America is more politically and religiously diverse than it was in 1943, but instead of embracing that diversity, this bill would jeopardize our fundamental rights. We should instead adhere to the wisdom of the Supreme Court in the Barnette case which said, and I quote, "The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy and place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials, and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One's right to life, liberty and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no elections."

Mr. Chairman, there are numerous legal, civil rights and religious organizations opposed to this legislation, including the American Bar Association, the ACLU, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Baptist Joint Committee, the Constitutional Project, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Legal Momentum, the National Women's Law Center and People for the American Way.

Mr. Chairman, I will ask unanimous consent to insert those letters into the RECORD at the appropriate time, and there are other organizations, of course, that are opposed to the bill. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this legislation.

JUNE 14, 2006.

Protect Separation of Powers and Religious Minorities' Longstanding Constitutional Rights; Oppose Final Passage of H.R. 2389.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: We, the undersigned religious, civil rights, and civil liberties organizations, urge you to oppose H.R. 2389, the "Pledge Protection Act," misguided legislation that would strip all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from hearing First Amendment challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance and from enforcing longstanding constitutional rights in federal court.

The signatories to this letter include organizations that supported the court challenge to the constitutionality of including "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, organizations that opposed that challenge, and organizations that took no position on the matter. We are united, however, in believing that H.R. 2389 threatens the separation of powers that is a fundamental aspect of our constitutional structure. Beyond this, while the legislation ostensibly responds to the controversy surrounding "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, this legislation sweeps far more broadly, with potentially severe constitutional implications for religious minorities who are adversely affected by government-mandated recitation of the Pledge.

First and foremost, we are opposed to H.R. 2389 because this legislation, by entirely stripping all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of jurisdiction over a particular class of cases, threatens the separation of powers established by the Constitution, and undermines the unique function of the federal courts to interpret constitutional law. This legislation deprives the federal courts of the ability to hear cases involving religious and free speech rights of students, parents, and other individuals. The denial of a federal forum to plaintiffs to vindicate their constitutional rights would force plaintiffs out of federal courts, which are specifically suited for the vindication of federal interests, and into state courts, which may be hostile or unsympathetic to these federal claims, and which may lack expertise and independent safeguards provided to federal judges under Article III of the Constitution.

In addition, as drafted, the bill would deny access to the federal courts in cases to enforce existing constitutional rights for religious minorities. Over sixty years ago, the Supreme Court decided the case of West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943). In Barnette, the Supreme Court struck down a West Virginia law that mandated schoolchildren to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Under the West Virginia law, religious minorities faced expulsion from school and could be subject to prosecution and fined, if convicted of violating the statute's provisions. In striking down that statute, the Court reasoned: "To believe that patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institutions to free minds . . . If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high, or petty can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion." 319 U.S. at 639–40.

Moreover, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, holding unconstitutional two provisions of a Pennsylvania law mandating recitation of the Pledge, said, "It may be useful to note our belief that most citizens of the United States willingly recite the Pledge of Allegiance and proudly sing the national anthem. But the rights embodied in the Constitution, most particularly the First Amendment, protect the minority—those persons who march to their own drummers. It is they who need the protection afforded by the Constitution and it is the responsibility of federal judges to ensure that protection." Circle School v. Pappert, 381 F.3d 172, 183 (3d Cir. 2004).

H.R. 2389 would undermine the longstanding constitutional rights of religious minorities to seek redress in the federal courts in cases involving mandatory recitation of the Pledge. As a result, this legislation will seriously harm religious minorities and the constitutional free speech rights of countless individuals.

H.R. 2389 also raises serious legal concerns about the violation of the principles of separation of powers, equal protection and due process. The bill undermines public confidence in the federal courts by expressing outright hostility toward them, threatens the legitimacy of future congressional action by removing the federal courts as a neutral arbiter, and rejects the unifying function of the federal judiciary by denying federal courts the opportunity to interpret the law. We strongly believe that this legislation as drafted will have broad, negative implications on the ability of individuals to seek enforcement of previously constitutionally protected rights concerning mandatory recitation of the Pledge. We therefore urge, in the strongest terms, your rejection of this misguided and unwise legislation.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union.
American Humanists Association.
American Jewish Committee.
Americans for Democratic Action.
Americans United for Separation of Church and State.
Anti-Defamation League.
Baptist Joint Committee.
Buddhist Peace Fellowship.
Central Conference of American Rabbis.
Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples of Christ).
Equal Partners in Faith.
Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA).
Friends Committee on National Legislation.
Human Rights Campaign.
Jewish Council For Public Affairs (JCPA).
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.
Legal Momentum (formerly NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund).
National Council of Jewish Women.
National Council of Negro Women, Inc.
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association (NFPRHA).
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
People For the American Way.
Secular Coalition for America.
Sikh Coalition.
The Interfaith Alliance.
The Workmen's Circle/ Arbeter Ring.
Union for Reform Judaism.
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.
Woodhull Freedom Federation.

JUNE 9, 2006.

Oppose the "Pledge Protection Act," H.R. 2389.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: We, the undersigned organizations dedicated to protecting women's reproductive health and rights, write to urge you to oppose H.R. 2389, the so-called "Pledge Protection Act." The implications of this bill go far beyond the context of the Pledge of Allegiance. This bill would set a dangerous precedent that would disrupt the traditional separation of powers and undermine the longstanding role of the federal

judiciary in safeguarding constitutional rights, including the right of reproductive choice.

H.R. 2389 would deny all federal courts—including the U.S. Supreme Court—the jurisdiction to hear any cases concerning the interpretation or constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance. The bill would irreparably alter the relationship between the judicial branch and the two other branches of the federal government by depriving the federal courts of their traditional role as interpreters of the U.S. Constitution. Even more disturbing, unlike other previous versions of court-stripping legislation, H.R. 2389 deprives even the U.S. Supreme Court of jurisdiction, divesting the Court of its historical role as the final authority on the U.S. Constitution.

We are deeply concerned about legislation like H.R. 2389 that strips federal courts of their important role in safeguarding constitutional rights and freedoms. While the target today is a controversial view of the Pledge of Allegiance and the separation of church and state (a view that the Supreme Court has not endorsed), there can be no doubt that anti-choice lawmakers and their allies in Congress intend to use this strategy to achieve other policy goals that they are unable to accomplish without toppling the delicate constitutional balance of powers that has served this country for more than 200 years. In the past, Republican leadership has discussed ''jurisdiction stripping'' measures to achieve other social policy goals. While they have claimed that the time is ''not quite ripe'' to apply this legislative tactic to the issue of abortion, in fact, anti-choice lawmakers have already made the attempt—in 2002, when considering the Federal Abortion Ban. Although that particular effort failed, passage of H.R. 2389 would set a dangerous precedent for future attempts to strip federal courts of jurisdiction to hear cases regarding reproductive choice. The federal courthouse doors should not be closed to women seeking to vindicate their right to obtain critical reproductive health services.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose H.R. 2389.

Sincerely,

Center for Reproductive Rights.
Choice USA.
Feminist Majority.
Legal Momentum.
NARAL Pro-Choice America.
National Abortion Federation.
National Council of Jewish Women.
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association.
National Organization for Women.
National Partnership for Women & Families.
National Women's Law Center.
Planned Parenthood Federation of America.
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS).

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
ON CIVIL RIGHTS,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2006.

Re Oppose the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2005'' (H.R. 2389): It Threatens Constitutional Protections and Civil Rights.

DEAR JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MEMBER: On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil rights coalition, we urge you to vote against H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2005.'' LCCR strongly opposes any proposal that would eliminate access to the federal judiciary for any group of Americans. H.R. 2389 would do just that: it would deny constitutional rights to religious minorities by stripping the courts of jurisdiction to hear some cases.

For decades, the judicial branch has often been the sole protector of the rights of minority groups against the will of the popular majority. Any proposal to interfere with this role through ''courtstripping'' proposals would set a dangerous precedent that would harm all Americans. Allowing the courthouse doors to be closed to any minority group, as H.R. 2389 would do to religious minorities, is not only unnecessary in itself, but will also set a dangerous precedent that will undermine the rights of other minority groups that may need to turn to the courts for justice.

Further, H.R. 2389 threatens the separation of powers established by the Constitution, and undermines the unique function of the federal courts to interpret constitutional law. It deprives federal courts of the ability to hear cases involving religious and free speech rights of students, parents, and other individuals. The denial of a federal forum to plaintiffs to vindicate their constitutional rights would force them out of federal courts, which are specifically suited to hear such cases, and into state courts, which may be hostile or unsympathetic to these federal claims and which may lack the expertise and independent safeguards that distinguish Article III courts.

In West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943), the Supreme Court recognized the importance of protecting the religious beliefs of all Americans, by striking down a West Virginia law that required schoolchildren to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The Court reasoned: ''To believe that patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institutions to free minds.'' H.R. 2389 would slam the federal courthouse doors to all religious minorities trying to do nothing more than vindicate a fundamental, existing constitutional right that they have had for over 60 years.

LCCR urges you to vote against H.R. 2389 because of the dangers it poses to constitutional protections and to the enforcement of civil rights laws. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rob Randhava, LCCR Counsel or Nancy Zirkin, LCCR Deputy Director. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

WADE HENDERSON,
Executive Director.
NANCY ZIRKIN,
Deputy Director.

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE
FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2006.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) urges members of the Judiciary Committee to vote no on H.R. 2389, the so-called ''Pledge Protection Act,'' when considered during markup tomorrow. The BJC is a 70–year-old organization committed to the principle that religion must be freely exercised, neither advanced nor inhibited by government. We oppose any legislation that seeks to strip the federal courts of their fundamental role in protecting individual liberties.

The existence of an independent judiciary, free from political or public pressure, has been essential to our Nation's success in protecting religious liberty for all Americans. Indeed, the role of the federal courts has long been recognized as essential in the battle for full religious liberty. As Justice Jackson stated in the case of West Virginia State Board of Education v. *Barnett*: ''The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One's right to life, liberty, and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no elections.'' 319 U.S. 624, 639 (1943).

Moreover, the result of any particular case does not undermine the important role of the judiciary. The misnamed ''Pledge Protection Act'' represents a dangerous attack on our tradition of religious freedom, on the constitutional separation of powers and indeed our system of government. It represents an unwarranted attempt to restrict the power of the federal judicial system.

Whatever the motivation, there is insufficient basis to depart from a long-standing congressional custom against using jurisdiction-stripping to control the federal courts. Federal judicial review has consistently supported the proper separation of church and state so vital to all Americans, and we must trust that the courts will continue to do so. We ask the Judiciary Committee to reject H.R. 2389.

Sincerely,

J. BRENT WALKER,
Executive Director.
K. HOLLYN HOLLMAN,
General Counsel.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2006.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of more than 1,050 congregations that make up the Unitarian Universalist Association, I urge you to oppose H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act''. As a tradition with a deep commitment to religious pluralism, we believe that this legislation would seriously undermine the First Amendment protections of the Constitution, and particularly the rights of religious minorities, by stripping federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of jurisdiction over cases concerning the Pledge of Allegiance.

In resolutions dating back to 1961, the highest policy-making body of the Unitarian Universalist Association has repeatedly affirmed the right of all Americans to religious freedom, including the right of religious minorities in public schools to not recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The Supreme Court has agreed in the case of West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943) that the Pledge cannot be mandatory for public school students.

Despite the Barnette ruling, we know from experience that the practice of mandatory recitation continues. By eliminating the mechanism for religious minorities to seek relief from this practice through appeals to a federal court, H.R. 2389 would have the practical effect of all but eliminating the right itself. As a result, we believe that this legislation will seriously harm religious minorities and the constitutional free speech rights of countless parents and children, many of whom are members of Unitarian Universalist congregations and are involved in our religious education programs.

By undermining the power of federal courts to protect constitutional rights affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, we believe that H.R. 2389 would weaken the separation of powers in a way that we find deeply troubling.

The congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association collectively affirm and promote the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in society at large. We are committed to the ideals of the founders of this nation, including religious liberty and religious pluralism, as well as the balance of powers that protects such rights.

I urge you to preserve the rights of religious minorities, as well as the constitutional separation of powers, by opposing the ''Pledge Protection Act.''

In Faith,

ROBERT C. KEITHAN,
Director.

RELIGIOUS ACTION CENTER
OF REFORM JUDAISM,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2006.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose more than 900 congregations across North America encompass 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), whose membership includes more than 1,800 Reform rabbis, I ask you to oppose H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act, when it is marked up by the House Judiciary Committee tomorrow.

As you know, the bill would strip federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of their authority to hear First Amendment cases pertaining to the Pledge of Allegiance. By supporting this legislation, you risk compromising the traditional—and vital—system of checks and balances upon which our government was founded. In addition, the bill threatens the ability of members of religious minorities to seek the protection of the federal courts in cases where they feel coerced into reciting the Pledge.

What this legislation places at stake is nothing less than the principle of the separation of powers that has allowed our nation to flourish for more than two centuries. Americans of all religious backgrounds, and of none, hold differing views about the inclusion of the phrase ''under God'' in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Movement I have the honor of representing, for example, took no position when the Supreme Court heard a case concerning the Pledge two years ago. Yet H.R. 2389 is not about that contentious issue. By removing cases involving the Pledge from the jurisdiction of the federal courts, Congress would undermine the ability of those courts to interpret constitutional law, the very core of the courts' functions. Plaintiffs seeking to have their federal rights upheld should not be forced to defend those rights in state courts.

In addition, H.R. 2389 threatens the rights of members of religious minorities, such as Mennonites, Buddhists, and others who in the past have been adversely affected by being forced to recite the Pledge in violation of Supreme Court rulings. Were H.R. 2389 to become law, elementary school students who are punished for declining to participate in the recitation of the Pledge based on their religious teachings would not be able to have their rights upheld in federal court. Under H.R. 2389 as currently drafted, even the Supreme Court would not be allowed to hear the case and uphold the child's rights. As a people who have long known the dangers inherent in limiting the protections afforded religious minorities, we are particularly sensitive to this effort to restrict courts from protecting such minorities.

The dangers of Congressional tampering with the jurisdiction of the federal courts and restricting their ability to uphold the rights of religious minorities could not be graver. The very values upon which our nation was founded—separation of powers and religious liberty—are threatened by H.R. 2389. I strongly urge you to oppose this perilous legislation.

Sincerely,

MARK J. PELAVIN,
Associate Director.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN,
New York, NY, June 6, 2006.

Hon. JAMES SENSENBRENNER,
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SENSENBRENNER: I am writing on behalf of the 90,000 members and supporters of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) in opposition to the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2005'' (H.R. 2389) which would strip all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from hearing First Amendment challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance and from enforcing longstanding constitutional rights in federal court.

NCJW is a volunteer organization, inspired by Jewish values, that works to improve the quality of life for women, children, and families and to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all. As such we must oppose the passage of any legislation that threatens religious liberty and an individual's access to the judicial process.

This bill threatens the separation of powers that is a founding principle of our nation and a key source of our liberties. In addition, it would impose religious and ideological conformity regardless of individual conscience, by preventing dissenting voices from appealing to the courts.

This attempt to restrict access to the courts is part of a larger campaign to roll back political and religious freedom by crippling the ability of the judicial branch of government to defend civil and individual rights. If this bill moves forward, it would undermine constitutional rights and the judiciary.

As Jews, we know that the power of the majority can become the tyranny of the majority if left unchecked. H.R. 2389 would undermine the longstanding constitutional rights of religious minorities to seek redress in the federal courts in cases involving mandatory recitation of the Pledge.

Sincerely,

PHYLLIS SNYDER,
President.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2006.

Re Pledge Protection Act of 2005 (H.R. 2389).

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the American Jewish Committee, the nation's oldest human relations organization with over 150,000 members and supporters represented by 33 regional offices nationwide, I urge you to oppose the Pledge Protection Act of 2005 (H.R. 2389).

While AJC has not taken a position on the constitutionality of including ''under God'' in the Pledge of Allegiance, we believe that the federal courts must be available to hear cases in which individuals contend that their First Amendment rights have been violated. H.R. 2389 would strip all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of the jurisdiction to hear First Amendment challenges to the Pledge. This legislation threatens the separation of powers that is a fundamental aspect of our constitutional structure and has potentially severe constitutional implications for religious minorities and others who are adversely affected when the government impermissibly seeks to mandate the recitation of the Pledge.

Furthermore, this legislation would undermine public confidence in the federal courts, threaten the legitimacy of future congressional action by removing the federal courts as a neutral arbiter, and reject the unifying function of the federal judiciary by denying federal courts the opportunity to interpret the law.

Finally, as drafted, the bill would deny access to the federal courts—even the Supreme Court—when individuals seek redress in cases involving mandatory recitation of the Pledge. As a result, this legislation will seriously undermine constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and religion. Coercing students to say the Pledge of Allegiance is contradictory to the very principles of conscience which both our Constitution and the Pledge of Allegiance itself represent. Students' First Amendment rights were protected in the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnett, 319 U.S. 624 (1943) (striking down a West Virginia law that mandated schoolchildren to recite the Pledge of Allegiance), and, more recently, in the decision of a federal appellate court in Circle School v. Pappert, 381 F.3d 172 (3d Cir. 2004) (holding that a Pennsylvania law mandating the recitation of the Pledge, even when it provided a religious exception, violated the Constitution because it violated the free speech of the students). H.R. 2389 contradicts these significant decisions by removing from the federal courts the jurisdiction to hear these types of cases.

For all of these reasons, the American Jewish Committee urges you to vote against this misguided and unwise legislation. Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

Respectfully,

RICHARD T. FOLTIN,
Legislative Director and Counsel.

THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE,
Washington, DC, June 9, 2006.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As the president of the Interfaith Alliance, I am writing to urge you vote ''No'' on passage of the ''Pledge Protection Act'' (H.R. 2389). The Interfaith Alliance is a nonpartisan, clergy-led organization that represents over 150,000 members. We are committed to promoting the positive and healing role of religion in public life and challenging those who employ religion to promote intolerance.

If passed, H.R. 2389 would strip all federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, from hearing any cases that have to deal with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Interfaith Alliance has not taken a position either for or against the inclusion of the phrase ''under God'' in the Pledge of Allegiance. We will advocate, however, for the right of any person of faith or of no faith at all to receive a fair hearing by the federal courts if they feel their Constitutional rights have been violated by this or any other imposition of sectarian religious references in public places. No citizen's rights or opportunities should depend on religious beliefs or practices.

This bill is not only an assault on the freedom of conscience guaranteed by our Constitution; it also undermines the federal courts' role of providing access to justice to those who are in the religious minority and those in religious majorities who believe that religious choices should be couched in freedom and never imposed by law. If passed, H.R. 2389 would slam the courthouse door and reduce the phrase ''Equal Justice under Law'' to just a hollow phrase above a courthouse that is off-limits to those who fall outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

It is time for congress to stop trying to curtail the power of the federal judiciary, a fundamental component of our nation's system of checks and balances. The efforts to prevent the courts from hearing cases on gay marriage and the Pledge of Allegiance, among others, appear to be nothing more than an attempt to pander to a political base.

Americans of all faiths—Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and Jews—and those who profess no faith—must have the right to practice their religions and raise challenges when they feel that there is a specific violation of the clause in the First

Amendment which guarantees that ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.'' How strange the times when the democratic process founded to protect the rights of minorities is being used to jeopardize or abolish the rights of minorities in the name of religion.

Although this legislation most directly affects those who do not adhere to the mainline religious traditions in our nation, in truth it diminishes any of us who see religious liberty as a non-negotiable part of our American democracy. H.R. 2389 is bad for the Constitution. It is bad for religion.

If there is anything that we at The Interfaith Alliance can do to assist you in this important matter, please do not hesitate to contact Preetmohan Singh, Senior Policy Analyst.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. C. WELTON GADDY,
President, The Interfaith Alliance, Pastor of Preaching and Worship, North Minister Baptist Church (Monroe, LA).

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT,
Washington, DC, September 21, 2004.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
The Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: I write on behalf of the Constitution Project to urge you to oppose H.R. 2028, the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2003.''

The Constitution Project, based at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute, specializes in creating bipartisan consensus on a variety of legal and governance issues, and promoting that consensus to policymakers, opinion leaders, the media, and the public. We have initiatives on the death penalty, liberty and national security, war powers, and judicial independence (our Courts Initiative), among others. Each of our initiatives is directed by a bipartisan committee of prominent and influential businesspeople, scholars, and former public officials.

Our Courts Initiative works to promote public education on the importance of our courts as protectors of Americans' essential constitutional freedoms. Its co-chairs are the Honorable Mickey Edwards, John Quincy Adams Lecturer at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and former chair of the House of Representatives Republican Policy Committee (R–OK), and the Honorable Lloyd Cutler, a prominent Washington lawyer and White House counsel to Presidents Carter and Clinton.

In 2000, the Courts Initiative created a bipartisan Task Force to examine and identify basic principles as to when the legislature acts unconstitutionally in setting the powers and jurisdiction of the judiciary. The Task Force was unanimous in its conclusion that some legislative acts restricting courts' powers and jurisdiction are unconstitutional. The Task Force also concluded that some legislative actions, even if constitutional, are undesirable. (The Task Force's findings and recommendations are published in Uncertain Justice: Politics and America's Courts 2000.)

Our Task Force arrived at seven bipartisan consensus recommendations, including the following, which are relevant to the legislation at hand:

1. Congress and state legislatures should heed constitutional limits when considering proposals to restrict the powers and jurisdiction of the courts.

2. Legislatures should refrain from restricting court jurisdiction in an effort to control substantive judicial decisions in a manner that violates separation of powers, due process, or other constitutional principles.

3. Legislatures should not attempt to control substantive judicial decisions by enacting legislation that restricts court jurisdiction over particular types of cases.

4. Legislatures should refrain from restricting access to the courts and should take necessary affirmative steps to ensure adequate access to the courts for all Americans.

Specifically, our Task Force was unanimous in its view that there are some constitutional limits on the authority the legislature to restrict court jurisdiction in an effort to control substantive judicial decisions. In particular, separation of powers, due process, and other constitutional provisions limit such authority. Task Force members had differing views about the scope and source of the constitutional limit on the legislature's power in this area. For instance, some believed that restrictions on jurisdiction become unconstitutional when they undermine the essential role of the Supreme Court. Others relied on a reading of the Vesting Clause of Article III, which places judicial power—the power to decide cases—in the hands of the courts alone. Nonetheless, all believed that constitutional limitations exist.

Apart from the constitutionality of laws restricting federal court jurisdiction, the Task Force was also unanimous in its view that legislative acts stripping courts of jurisdiction to hear particular types of cases in an effort to control substantive judicial decisions are undesirable and inappropriate in a democratic system with co-equal branches of government. Legislative restriction of jurisdiction in response to particular substantive decisions unduly politicizes the judicial process, and attempts by legislatures to affect substantive outcomes by curtailing judicial jurisdiction are inappropriate, even if believed constitutional. (Indeed, it was striking that members reflecting a broad ideological range—from, for example, Leonard Leo of the Federalist Society to Steven Shapiro of the American Civil Liberties Union—agreed that restrictions on jurisdiction to achieve substantive changes in the law are unwise and undesirable policy.)

The Task Force was also unanimous that legislation that restricts access to the courts and precludes individuals from using a judicial forum to enforce rights is undesirable and unconstitutional. Rights are meaningless without a forum in which they can be vindicated. Therefore, access to the courts at both the federal and state levels is essential in order for rights to have effect. Legislatures have the duty to ensure meaningful access to the courts and legislative actions that preclude this are undesirable and unconstitutional.

Our Task Force reached these conclusions and recommendations rightly. From its beginning, our system of constitutional democracy has depended on the independence of the judiciary. Judges are able to protect citizens' basic rights and decide cases fairly only if free to make decisions according to the law, without regard to political or public pressure. Similarly, the judiciary can maintain the checks and balances essential to preserving a healthy separation of powers only if able to resist overreaching by the political branches. Indeed, the cornerstone of American liberty is the power of the courts to protect individual rights from momentary excesses of political and popular majorities.

In recent years, as part of the polarization and posturing that increasingly characterize our national and state politics, threats to judicial independence have become more commonplace. Attacks on judges for unpopular decisions, even those made in good faith, have become more rampant. Politicians are responding to unpopular decisions and litigants by attempting to restrict courts' powers in certain kinds of cases. However, Americans have much to lose if we do not exercise self-restraint and instead choose short-term political gain at the expense of judicial independence. The independence of our judiciary is, as Chief Justice Rehnquist described, ''one of the crown jewels of our system of government.''

In conclusion, while Article III of our Constitution gives Congress the power to regulate federal court jurisdiction, this power is not unlimited, and Congress should not—and in some instances may not —use its power to restrict federal court jurisdiction in ways that infringe upon separation of powers, violate individual rights and equal protection, or offend federalism. H.R. 2028 is poised to do all three by stripping federal courts—including even the U.S. Supreme Court—of the authority to hear cases involving the Pledge of Allegiance, even when such cases involve First Amendment issues of free speech and freedom of religion. It sets the dangerous precedent of transferring questions of federal and constitutional law exclusively to state courts and preventing American citizens from seeking protection of fundamental rights in federal court, and it threatens the critical and unique role that the federal courts play in constitutional balance of powers, interpreting and enforcing constitutional law, and providing legal certainty.

For these reasons, as well as those detailed our Task Force's findings and recommendations, the Constitution Project urges you to oppose H.R. 2028. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

KATHRYN A. MONROE,
Director, Courts Initiative.

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2006.

Re H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act of 2005.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: We understand that the House is scheduled to consider H.R. 2389 tomorrow. We are writing to express our opposition to this legislation, which would strip from all federal courts jurisdiction to hear constitutional challenges to the interpretation of, or the validity of, the Pledge of Allegiance.

Our views on H.R. 2389 are informed by our long-standing opposition to legislative curtailment of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the United States and the inferior federal courts for the purpose of effecting changes in constitutional law. The ABA has taken no position on the underlying issues regarding recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools; instead, our strong opposition to H.R. 2389 and other pending legislation that would strip the federal courts of jurisdiction to hear selected types of constitutional cases is based on our concern for the integrity of our system of government.

This legislation would authorize Congress to use its regulatory power over federal jurisdiction to advance a particular legislative outcome by insulating it from constitutional scrutiny by the federal judiciary. In addition to being constitutionally suspect, this legislation would establish a dangerous precedent if enacted. As a matter of policy, Congress should not jettison our foundational principles because of current dissatisfaction with a controversial decision of the Supreme Court or lower federal courts by permanently stripping the jurisdiction of the federal courts to hear certain categories of cases. Rather than strengthening its legislative role, Congress, by pressing its own

checking power to the extreme, imperils the entire system of separated powers.

If enacted, H.R. 2389 would restrict the role of the federal courts in our system of checks and balances and thereby limit the ability of the federal courts to protect the constitutional rights of all Americans. Indeed, this legislation would leave the state courts as the final arbiters of federal constitutional law, creating the possibility that some state judges might choose not to follow Supreme Court precedents. Because the legislation would nullify the Supremacy Clause in certain classes of cases, the Constitution could mean something different from state to state; and, contrary to the expressed intentions of the Framers, our fundamental rights and the balance of power among the branches would be subject to evanescent majority opinion.

At a time when Congress is accusing the federal courts of overstepping their constitutional role and calling for judicial restraint, we urge you to likewise exercise legislative restraint and demonstrate your continued commitment to the doctrine of separation of powers and a government composed of separate but coequal branches by voting to defeat passage of H.R. 2389.

If you have any questions regarding our position, please have your staff contact Denise Cardman, Deputy Director of the Governmental Affairs Office.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. EVANS

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2006.

Re Don't Shut the Federal Courthouse Doors to Religious Minorities; Oppose H.R. 2389

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The American Civil Liberties Union strongly urges you to oppose H.R. 2389, ''the Pledge Protection Act of 2005.'' H.R. 2389 is an extreme measure that would remove jurisdiction from all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, over any constitutional claim involving the Pledge of Allegiance or its recitation.

H.R. 2389 would slam shut the federal court house doors to religious minorities, parents, schoolchildren and others who seek nothing more than to have their religious and free speech claims heard before the courts most uniquely suited to entertain such claims. Further, by entirely stripping all federal courts of jurisdiction over a particular class of cases, H.R. 2389 raises serious legal concerns, violating principles of separation of powers, equal protection and due process. The bill undermines public confidence in the federal courts by expressing outright hostility toward them, threatens the legitimacy of future congressional action by removing the federal courts as a neutral arbiter, and rejects the unifying function of the federal judiciary by denying federal courts the opportunity to interpret the law. H.R. 2389 would deny the U.S. Supreme Court its historical role as the final authority on resolving differing interpretations of federal constitutional rights. As a result, each of the 50 state supreme courts would be a final authority on these federal constitutional questions. This would potentially create a situation where we could have as many as 50 different interpretations of any relevant federal constitutional question.

It is in apparent recognition of many of these concerns that no federal bill withdrawing federal jurisdiction in cases involving fundamental constitutional rights has become law since the Reconstruction period. Federal courts were established to interpret federal law and to ensure that the states and the government did not violate the protections in the federal constitution. An effort to deny the federal courts, particularly the U.S. Supreme Court, of jurisdiction over the very sort of claim they were established to hear—governmental conduct that violates a constitutional right—is an extreme attack on the role of federal courts in our system of checks and balances. It strikes at the very intent of the Founders.

While the supporters of this bill see it as an appropriate response to recent court decisions that they dislike concerning the words ''under God'' in the Pledge, the impact of H.R. 2389 would NOT be limited merely to that issue. This bill would remove jurisdiction over ALL constitutional claims, related to the pledge, from ALL federal courts. This could potentially undermine decades of well-established Supreme Court precedents by denying access to the federal courts in cases brought to enforce existing constitutional rights for religious minorities. For example, over sixty years ago, the Supreme Court decided the case of West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943). In Barnette, the Supreme Court struck down a West Virginia law that mandated schoolchildren to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Under the West Virginia law, religious minorities faced expulsion from school and could be subject to prosecution and fined, if convicted of violating the statute's provisions. In striking down that statute, the Court reasoned: ''To believe that patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institutions to free minds * * *. If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.'' 319 U.S. at 639–40.

In 2004, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit held that a Pennsylvania law mandating recitation of the Pledge, even when it provided a religious exception, violated the Constitution because it violated the free speech rights of the students. Circle School v. Pappert, 381 F.3d 172 (3d Cir. 2004). In Pappert, the court found that: ''It may be useful to note our belief that most citizens of the United States willingly recite the Pledge of Allegiance and proudly sing the national anthem. But the rights embodied in the Constitution, particularly the First Amendment, protect the minority—those persons who march to their own drummers. It is they who need the protection afforded by the Constitution and it is the responsibility of federal judges to ensure that protection.'' Pappert, 381 F.3d at 183.

First comes marriage then comes the Pledge . . . Where will it end? Passage of H.R. 2389 would set a dangerous precedent for responses by Members of Congress to court decisions with which they disagree. In the 109th Congress alone, Congress is considering court-stripping legislation related to the Pledge of Allegiance, marriage, governmental acknowledgement of God, and impeachment of judges for considering certain religion cases.

Over the years, Congress has considered legislation designed to strip court jurisdiction on the issues such as public school busing, voluntary prayer and abortion. Fortunately, none of those proposals was adopted by Congress because legislators understood that setting a precedent for stripping the courts of their jurisdiction over a particular issue might, in the future, be used by some other group of advocates, when in the majority, to establish its views as the law of the land, safely out of the reach of the courts. We urge members of this Committee to oppose passage of H.R. 2389 and not to abandon this tradition of thoughtfulness and restraint.

Please do not hesitate to contact Terri Schroeder at (202) 675–2324 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

CAROLINE FREDRICKSON,
Director.

TERRI A. SCHROEDER,
Legislative Analyst.

AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2006.

Reject Efforts to Slam Federal Courthouse Doors on Religious Minorities and Vote ''No'' on H.R. 2389

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Americans United for Separation of Church and State urges you to vote ''No'' on passage of H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act,'' which is being marked up by the House Judiciary Committee this week. Americans United represents more than 75,000 individual members throughout the fifty states and in the District of Columbia, as well as cooperating houses of worship and other religious bodies committed to the preservation of religious liberty. H.R. 2389 is an extreme and unwise proposal that will undermine the crucial separation of powers at the heart of our government and deny religious minorities from seeking enforcement of their longstanding constitutional rights in the federal courts.

H.R. 2389 would deprive all federal courts—including the U.S. Supreme Court—of their ability to hear cases involving the Pledge of Allegiance and to enforce longstanding constitutional rights against coerced recitation of the Pledge. Americans United firmly believes that the text, history and structure of the Constitution, together with important policy considerations, should lead the Judiciary Committee to soundly defeat this dangerous and misguided bill, as well as any other court-stripping proposal.

THE PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

Article III, Section I of the United States Constitution creates the Supreme Court and provides the Congress with the power to establish ''such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time establish.'' Section 2 of Article III delineates sets of cases that the federal courts may hear, provides for areas of original jurisdiction of the U.S. Supreme Court, and also provides for the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in other areas ''with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make.''

Under Section 2, Congress may have some degree of authority to limit the Supreme Court's appellate jurisdiction, as well as the jurisdiction of lower federal courts. Although the extent of this congressional authority is in dispute and has been the subject of academic commentary over the years, there are clear limits to this authority—and these limits are also found in the Constitution. With the Pledge Protection Act, Congress makes its limited—and disputed—power in Section 2 more important than the fundamental due process rights of citizens and the fundamental notion of separation of powers underlying our government.

THE PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT WOULD VIOLATE DUE PROCESS RIGHTS AND UNDERMINE THE SEPARATION OF POWERS

Basic due process demands an independent judicial forum capable of determining federal constitutional rights. This legislation deprives the federal courts of the ability to hear cases involving fundamental free exercise and free speech rights of students, parents, and other individuals. Congress' denial of a federal forum to plaintiffs in a specified class of cases would force plaintiffs out of federal courts, which are specially suited for the vindication of federal interests, and into

state courts, which may be hostile or unsympathetic to federal claims, and which may lack expertise and independent safeguards provided to federal judges under Article III of the Constitution. It is in apparent recognition of this concern that no federal bill withdrawing federal jurisdiction over cases involving fundamental constitutional rights with respect to a particular substantive area has become law in decades.

Political frustration with controversial court decisions during the second half of the twentieth century provoked Congress to propose a number of court-stripping measures designed to overturn court decisions touching on a wide variety of issues, including: anti-subversive statutes, apportionment in state legislatures, ''Miranda'' warnings, busing, school prayer, abortion, racial integration, and composition of the armed services. All of these measures failed to pass Congress. In each instance, bipartisan concerns over threats to the American system of government and constitutional order gave way to a recognition of these court-stripping measures for what they truly were: attempts to circumvent the careful process required for amendments to the U.S. Constitution. As Professor Michael J. Gerhardt stated in his testimony regarding the ''Constitution Restoration Act of 2004'' before the Subcommittee on Courts on September 13, 2004: ''Efforts, taken in response to or retaliation against judicial decisions, to withdraw all federal jurisdiction or even jurisdiction of inferior federal courts on questions of constitutional law are transparent attempts to influence, or displace, substantive judicial outcomes. For several decades, the Congress, for good reason, has refrained from enacting such laws.'' Like so many failed court-stripping measures that have come before it, the Pledge Protection Act represents yet another illegitimate short cut to amending the Constitution, is against the weight of history, and must fail.

THE PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT IS EXTREME, UNWISE, AND REPRESENTS MISGUIDED POLICY

As drafted, the bill would slam the courthouse doors to religious minorities trying to gain protection for their fundamental constitutional religious and free speech rights. Over sixty years ago, the Supreme Court decided the case of West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943). In Barnette, the Supreme Court struck down a West Virginia law that mandated schoolchildren to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Under the West Virginia law, religious minorities faced expulsion from school and could be subject to prosecution and fined, if convicted of violating the statute's provisions. In striking down that statute, the Court reasoned: ''To believe that patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institutions to free minds . . . If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high, or petty can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.'' 319 U.S. at 639–40.

Moreover, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, holding unconstitutional two provisions of a Pennsylvania law mandating recitation of the Pledge, said, ''It may be useful to note our belief that most citizens of the United States willingly recite the Pledge of Allegiance and proudly sing the national anthem. But the rights embodied in the Constitution, most particularly the First Amendment, protect the minority—those persons who march to their own drummers. It is they who need the protection afforded by the Constitution and it is the responsibility of federal judges to ensure that protection.'' Circle School v. Pappert, 381 F.3d 172, 183 (3d Cir. 2004).

The Pledge Protection Act is an attack on our very system of government. Americans United strongly urges you to leave the independence of the federal judiciary in tact, protect longstanding constitutional rights of religious minorities in the federal courts, and respect free speech rights of countless individuals by rejecting this misguided legislation.

If you have any questions regarding this legislation or would like further information on any other issues of importance to Americans United, please do not hesitate to contact Aaron D. Schuham, Legislative Director, at (202) 466–3234, extension 240.

Sincerely,

REV. BARRY W. LYNN,
Executive Director.

PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2006.

House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBER: On behalf of the more than 900,000 members and activists of People For the American Way, we write to urge you to oppose H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2005,'' when it comes before the Committee today, June 7. This legislation would violate the First Amendment, and would set a terrible precedent against the separation of powers embodied in our Constitution that protects the fundamental rights of all Americans.

H.R. 2389 would eliminate any role for the federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, in challenges concerning the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance. This would have an immediate and dramatic impact on the ability of individual Americans to be free from government-coerced speech or religious expression. For example, this legislation would bar the federal courts from enforcing the U.S. Supreme Court's 1943 decision in West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, which barred a local school district from forcing children to recite the Pledge of Allegiance over their religious objections.

Apart from being unwise as a matter of policy, H.R. 2389 appears to be an unconstitutional overreach of Congress' power under Article III regarding the federal judiciary, particularly in light of the Fifth Amendment's due process clause and the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. Further, it would contradict common sense, and more than 200 years of constitutional history, to allow Congress to circumvent the words ''Congress shall make no law'' by eliminating effective enforcement of the First Amendment by the courts and the U.S. Supreme Court. We agree with U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater who stated about a similar attempt to strip federal courts of jurisdiction over fundamental rights more than twenty four years ago: ''If there is no independent tribunal to check legislative or executive action all the written guarantees or rights in the world would amount to nothing.''

Nor are state courts the appropriate sole and final venue for enforcement of federal constitutional rights. Indeed, H.R. 2389 raises the prospect of 50 different interpretations of the First Amendment. Guarantees of such fundamental rights as freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom from governmental religious coercion should not and cannot properly be relegated to such jurisprudential uncertainty. We note that the Reagan Administration, hardly an opponent of federalism, rejected historical and textual arguments for removing jurisdiction over federal constitutional questions to state courts:

''Nor does it seem likely that the [Constitutional] Convention would have developed the Exceptions Clause as a check on the Supreme Court in such a manner that an exercise of power under the Clause to remove Supreme Court appellate jurisdiction would . . . vest [the power] in the state courts. Hamilton regarded even the possibility of multiple courts of final jurisdiction as unacceptable.''

In addition, H.R. 2389 expressly sets the precedent for future Congresses to completely bar U.S. citizens from raising any judicial challenge to federal action. State courts can only assert jurisdiction over the federal government if it consents to be sued. Failing that consent, individuals would be left without recourse to unconstitutional actions of the Congress or the executive branch. Unreviewable federal power to infringe on fundamental individual rights of American citizens is alien to our republic.

Finally, H.R. 2389 threatens to disrupt the framework of checks and balances on governmental power embodied in the U.S. Constitution through the separation of powers by setting the precedent for Congress to remove legislation from constitutional review by the judicial branch. For all practical purposes, Congress could become the sole arbiter of constitutionality on any subject within its powers—or indeed outside its powers since it could legislate away any challenge to congressional interpretation of its own authority. Litigation over the meaning of Article III, a necessary part of the inevitable court challenge to H.R. 2389, could in of itself result in a constitutional crisis deeply damaging to the separation of powers.

H.R. 2389 would set a terrible precedent for separation of powers and protection of individual rights. We urge you to reject the premise that Congress is above the Constitution and vote no on this legislation.

Sincerely,

RALPH G. NEAS,
President.
TANYA CLAY,
Director, Public Policy.

SECULAR COALITION FOR AMERICA,
Washington, DC, June 9, 2006.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The Secular Coalition for America urges you to oppose H.R. 2389, the so-called Pledge Protection Act. Passage of this act would curtail the ability of the judiciary to make Constitutional determinations. It would interfere with the current protection of checks and balances provided by having three independent branches of government.

It is up to the U.S. Senate to approve or disapprove of federal judges. Thus the elected legislative body has both the right and the duty to ensure that our judiciary is of the highest quality. Once they are seated, it is essential that the judicial branch maintain its independence. By allowing the judiciary to be free of political pressures and majority rule, minorities in our nation gain the protections afforded by the First Amendment freedom of religion. This protection has allowed members of minority religions (such as Jehovah's Witnesses) as well as nonreligious Americans to be free of government required religious exercises. Individuals have been free to exercise their own decisions of conscience in public schools and governmental bodies.

Nontheists oppose the 1954 change to the Pledge of Allegiance, which turned that patriotic exercise into a statement of religiously-based division of Americans and used religion as a tool for political gain and theism as a litmus test for patriotism. By inserting religion into government, Americans who do not believe in God are relegated to a second-class citizenship. Regardless of

whether or not individuals support the revision of the pledge however, it is up to the judicial branch to enforce the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights.

Our nation has respected the separation of powers which our founders so wisely created to prevent anyone branch from gaining too much power. Congress must not encroach on the judiciary's power to resolve constitutional issues. If Congress passes constitutional laws, they should be upheld on judicial review. If Congress passes laws deemed to be unconstitutional, it is the duty of the judiciary to overturn such laws. Without such checks and balances, the rights of minorities guaranteed in the Bill of Rights would be meaningless; the Constitution could not be enforced; and a tyranny of the majority would ensue.

Passage of HR 2389 creates a slippery slope that would leave the judicial branch constrained to address only those issues of which Congress approves. Any time the judicial branch makes a decision unpopular with Congress, it could simply pass legislation taking away the court's jurisdiction. Passing this type of court-stripping legislation would subvert the will, not only of the people, but of the founders of our great nation.

Sincerely,

LORI LIPMAN BROWN, Esq.,
Director, Secular Coalition for America.

AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, June 8, 2006.

Re Oppose H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2005.''

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, The American Humanist Association (AHA) stands in opposition to H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2005,'' which would prevent all federal courts from hearing cases challenging or interpreting rights granted by the First Amendment as they relate to Pledge of Allegiance cases. We urge you to vote against this bill, which would compromise long held American legal principles of due process and separation of powers by shutting the federal courthouse doors to large numbers of Americans.

If passed, the Pledge Protection Act would set a dangerous precedent by stripping federal courts of judicial independence and paving the way to preventing federal judges from ruling on other controversial social issues from abortion and gun control to school vouchers and school prayer. As we warned with the Marriage Protection Act of 2005 (H.R. 1100), attempts by Congress to strip the judiciary of their power to review legislation are inequitable and will open the door to more of the same. If the Pledge Protection Act passes it will fuel the fires for similar bills.

Denying access to the federal court system is unacceptable to religious and Humanist minorities who have a due process right to have their cases heard.

The Pledge Protection Act presents a serious separation of powers concern. Federal courts are uniquely prepared to interpret federal constitutional concerns and to serve as a check on the constitutionality of actions of Congress and the Executive branch. That's why constitutional concerns are raised when an attempt is made to block the courts from reviewing and interpreting the constitutionality of a single act.

Congress should not disrupt the balance of power intended by our Founding Fathers. Restricting the federal courts' ability to protect First Amendment rights severely undermines the American judicial system.

Humanists are particularly concerned about this bill because it would violate judicial independence in order to undermine American citizens, in this case those of a minority faith or no religion, the right to access federal courts to challenge a piece of legislation.

In the past Congress has rejected attempts to withdraw controversial issues from the scope of federal courts and the AHA encourages you to do so again at this important juncture. We urge you to defend due process and separation of powers and vote no on the Pledge Protection Act.

Sincerely,

MEL LIPMAN,
AHA President.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, yielding myself 15 seconds, I would like to point out that clearly this is in absolute agreement with Marbury v. Madison. Even in that case, the Chief Justice dismissed cases later when the Federal courts had not been granted jurisdiction.

Granting jurisdiction is the constitutional job of this body.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I thank my distinguished colleague from Missouri for yielding me time.

The question was posed by the gentleman from New York and others is this Pledge Protection Act, H.R. 2389, constitutional? Is the whole concept of ''under God'' part of our Pledge constitutional? I submit this humble penny with Abraham Lincoln's picture on it. Do you know what it says on the side? ''In God We Trust.''

Behind the Speaker's chair, ''In God We Trust.''

At the Supreme Court they pray every day, asking for God's blessing. So Surely when we have a pledge, we should be able to use the word ''under God.'' Throughout our history this concept, as the United States being a providential Nation, has been the cornerstone of our success.

Would our Founding Fathers, if they were here today, decide to take ''under God'' from the Pledge? I do not think so. In fact, let's go and look at what the Founding Fathers talked about. This belief in our Nation being under God is a central part of our heritage. History bears this out.

Even before independence, a central theme among all forefathers was that our liberty flowed from our Creator. Josiah Quincy was one of these leaders. Not a lot of people know who he was. He was a charismatic leader in the American Revolution and outstanding lawyer. He wrote a series of anonymous articles for the Boston Gazette in which he opposed the Stamp Act and other British colonial policies. He, along with John Adams, bravely defended the British soldiers at a trial for the Boston Massacre, to show the world that the colonialists valued the rule of law above all.

In 1774, he was sent as an agent to argue the colonial cause for independence in England. He perished on the journey over. Yet, before he left, these are his immortal words that he uttered: ''For under God, we are determined that wheresoever, whensoever, or howsoever we shall be called to make our exit, we will die free men.''

Our Founding Fathers uttered similar statements time and time again, my colleagues, yet perhaps never more eloquently than the Declaration of Independence when even Thomas Jefferson penned the famous lines that ''we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.''

This same man who first wrote about separation of church and state also acknowledged, ''The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time.'' And so over the years our Nation's leaders have freely expressed their beliefs in a higher providence for this country.

In our darkest hour, President Lincoln during the Civil War and later President Kennedy during the civil rights movement reaffirmed that this Nation was founded under God, and that all men and women living here are entitled by God to equal liberty.

Even more recently, in the midst of the Cold War, my colleagues, President Reagan argued that ''freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged.''

So the whole idea of under God has been passed on from generation to generation. We are blessed by this concept. The Constitution was drafted to guard our liberties, obviously, our God-given liberties, and wisely established a system of checks and balances for our government structure. Mr. AKIN pointed these out. The power of Congress to limit jurisdiction of the courts is one of those primary checks on the power of the judiciary. So this is all according to procedures that our Founding Fathers established.

Article III, section 2 grants Congress the power to limit the jurisdiction of Federal courts. So what we are doing today is according to the Constitution.

The Pledge Protection Act invokes the constitutional powers and removes the Pledge from the jurisdiction of Federal courts. I ask you to support this act. I urge my colleagues for future generations to acknowledge our providential point in history.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is commenting and his entire speech was about the desirability or the worth of the words ''under God,'' which I think almost everybody agrees with. The issue in this bill is court-stripping. Do we take away from the courts the right to decide, to protect people's rights?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. STEARNS may be right in everything that he is saying, but he does not seem to have the confidence that the courts will agree with him, because if he did, he would not be supporting this legislation.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. NADLER. I yield myself 10 seconds so I can yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. STEARNS. Would you agree that we here in Congress can have the right in the separation of powers to overrule the Supreme Court?

Mr. NADLER. To overrule the Supreme Court? Certainly we do not have that.

Mr. STEARNS. Not to overrule, but to pass laws here to check the balance of the Supreme Court?

Mr. NADLER. We have the right, but I do not believe we have the right, given the fact that the Bill of Rights postdates the grant of the jurisdiction-setting authority in the Constitution, I do not think we have the right to take away from the Supreme Court the ability to protect constitutional rights.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 seconds to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, when I listed the organizations opposed to the bill, I inadvertently left off Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the National Council of Negro Women.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN).

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

As the gentleman pointed out, the gentleman from Florida gave a very compelling argument for why it is appropriate to have ''under God'' in the Pledge of Allegiance, and therefore concludes that since he thinks that is in jeopardy, based on the court case now moving through the judicial system arguing for stripping away the jurisdiction of the court to decide that issue.

But the bill before us goes far beyond the issue of under God, and that is why I would like to ask if the majority whip, I would like to use my time to make sure that you and I have the same understanding of the purpose of this bill.

Let's say, for example, that a school board in West Virginia decides that every student in the school system must recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of the school day. And a Jehovah's Witness family goes to court, to State court, after this bill is passed and says, it is a violation of our religious principles to pledge allegiance to anyone other than God. We are prepared to make all kinds of statements with respect to our regard for the country, but we cannot pledge allegiance to anyone but God.

And then that case goes to the State courts, and the West Virginia Supreme Court decides that, no, the school board is right. They have the right to compel every student in that school system to recite the pledge, even if it violates their religious principles. Or maybe it is telling an Orthodox Jewish child that they have to remove their skull cap for the recitation of the Pledge, and they say, no, if the West Virginia school board ruled that way, the individual's right to exercise their religious principles by keeping their skull cap on when they are outside and in this public arena is trumped by the school board's policy.

Should the U.S. Supreme Court be able to take that case on appeal that compels a decision that a State court, that compels the recitation of the Pledge in a way that violates the fundamental free exercise of religion of a student? That is my question.

Mr. BLUNT. If my friend is yielding to me, the principal sponsor of the bill, Mr. AKIN, has said he would like to respond to that. If that is appropriate, I would like for that to be our response.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) 1 minute of the remaining time I have.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, as the gentleman made the scenario, let's assume the bill passes that we are discussing now, is signed by the President.

Mr. BERMAN. My assumption is this bill is now law.

Mr. AKIN. Now is law. What happens then is you are going to a particular State, you are saying West Virginia. And what happens is that a school board or something like that in the State decides to just basically go against what is already established Supreme Court policy.

From 1944, the Supreme Court made the ruling that nobody is required to say the Pledge of Allegiance. We have no interest in changing that. We think that is good policy.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time. Because under this bill, they can decide to violate that Supreme Court decision, and the West Virginia Supreme Court, now the final arbiter of it, says, we did not like that decision in the first place, and now the Supreme Court cannot take jurisdiction of this case, so they decide to reverse, for West Virginia purposes, the Barnette case that the Supreme Court decided in 1944, and this bill strips away the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to say, you did not follow our precedent.

Mr. AKIN. What you are saying is, first of all, you are making, obviously you are taking this to a pretty extreme situation. You are saying a whole series of courts in West Virginia are going to overturn Supreme Court policy on the fact that people have to say the Pledge.

So first of all, they are going completely against what the Federal courts have already established. They then expose themselves to the checks and balances within that State. In at least 45, probably more, of the States, there are provisions where those judges can be removed by the people of that State.

Mr. BERMAN. Reclaiming my time. If you had stripped away the right of the U.S. Supreme Court, of the Federal courts to decide whether segregated schools, whether the doctrine of separate and equal should stand or whether it violated the 14th amendment of the Constitution, there are many States in this country where every State court would have affirmed that separate is equal, is compliant with the 14th amendment, and in many of those States, the voters in those States would have been quite happy with that decision.

You have eliminated the Supreme Court's ability to review fundamental decisions involving first amendment rights.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I will yield the gentleman 30 seconds, and yield for an answer to how he would have prevented, under this bill, all the States from negating the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education ruling.

□ 1300

Mr. AKIN. Well, the situation is that you are dependent on this bill with the various checks and balances on the Supreme Courts in the States. That is, those justices could be impeached for violating the Supreme Court.

Mr. BERMAN. And the voters of that State.

Mr. AKIN. And the voters of that State. It depends on the State laws.

Mr. BERMAN. The first amendment was to protect the exercise of religion, even if the majority didn't like that religion.

Mr. AKIN. The bottom line is we have a system of republics. We have a system of federalism. We have 51 established republics, one federated and 50 States.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my neighbor from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Chairman, I come to the floor today to support this legislation that will preserve America's Pledge of Allegiance. This Congress is working to strengthen America to taking steps to continue job creation, keeping our economy growing, providing the tools that we need to fight the war on terrorism and address the problems that are leading to high energy prices.

However, we also have a responsibility to take a few minutes today to reinforce the spirit and unity of the American people by protecting our Pledge. The Pledge of Allegiance is not just a statement that our kids rehearse in schools, it is an expression of we as Americans.

The American people are united by devotion, not just to our flag but to our country. Our devotion is not just to our public, but to our principles, including liberty and justice for all. Our shared Pledge of Allegiance should not be rewritten on a whim by a few judges against the will of the overwhelming majority of American public.

That is why this legislation is so important, and I appreciate Mr. BLUNT's and Mr. AKIN's leadership on this issue. The Pledge Protection Act, which has 197 cosponsors, passed the House in the

108th Congress by a wide margin. Article III of the Constitution gives Congress the authority to pass this legislation. We should use this authority with restraint.

But when it comes to protecting America's Pledge of Allegiance, we should take these thoughtful steps to exercise the will of the American people.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this bill, and it does pain me to be on the other side of a piece of legislation that so many of my friends are advocating so sincerely on the other side.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to no one in my commitment to the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Pledge of Allegiance that includes the words ''under God.'' However, it does not follow that the appropriate way to deal with this issue is to strip Federal courts of their jurisdiction to hear cases relating to the Pledge of Allegiance.

First of all, I don't believe that my colleagues who support H.R. 2389 realize the consequences of this bill, even though we just had a discussion about what those consequences might be. H.R. 2389 does not strip State and local courts from jurisdiction related to the Pledge, only the Federal courts, and specifically strips the U.S. Supreme Court of its ability to overrule State supreme courts in this matter.

So, for example, if the highest court in a State like Massachusetts rules that it is unconstitutional under the Constitution for the State schools to start their day with a Pledge of Allegiance, including the words, ''under God,'' H.R. 2389 would prohibit the U.S. Supreme Court from overturning that decision. Such a result would be ironically and supremely counter to the stated goals of this bill's proponents.

But that is what would become the result of this language becoming law. Members on my side of the aisle should seriously consider the consequences of the precedents that are being set.

Republican support for court-stripping makes it that much easier for the other side to someday strip a conservative Supreme Court of jurisdiction on an issue paramount to our liberty. For example, if our judges on the Court remain devoted to the second amendment, rather than upholding a universal gun ban that is put into place by a future President and Congress, and the other party, they will accuse our President of stripping the court in order to get their way.

Here we are neutering our ability to have protections for the constitutional things we believe in the future, in order to achieve a temporary, I might even say a political, goal in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The supporters of H.R. 2389 will come to regret this day when they are being quoted by some future liberal Congress in order to strip the Court of a decision made to protect our liberties.

Mr. Chairman, let us consider the long-term consequences of our actions and let us look before we leap. I would suggest that we vote ''no'' on this. That is the Reagan and conservative position.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

Mr. WAMP. I thank the distinguished majority whip.

Mr. Chairman, with respect, religion in the United States is rightly pluralistic. We are or in no way should we be theocratic at all. As a matter of fact, one of the great threats in the world today, jihadism, is born out of theocracy.

That doesn't mean, though, that this country should be godless. One of my greatest, one of the great sayings I love is if there is no God, nothing matters. But if there is a God, nothing else matters. We should remember that today.

Abraham Lincoln said we do not claim to have God on our side, but we strive to be on his. We should not and cannot rewrite history to ignore our spiritual heritage. It surrounds us. It cries out for our country to honor God and to seek and supplicate His will in our country's life.

Today the people from my State of Tennessee would listen to this debate, or even talk about a reference to God on our money or in the Halls of Congress or in our Pledge and say, please, let common sense and logic win the day and prevail versus legal mumbo jumbo.

In closing, let me just thank God, on the floor of the House, for not turning away from us even though we seem to be turning away from Him.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I now yield 3 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. I thank the ranking chairman of the Constitutional Subcommittee, Mr. NADLER, for yielding to me. I commend him for the incredible work that we have done to try to bring understanding to how difficult and unworkable this so-called Pledge Protection Act is.

Mr. Chairman, I hold in my hands this letter that has just come in to the Judiciary Committee from the American Bar Association, their Governmental Affairs Office.

The controlling sentence is this: ''As a matter of policy, Congress should not jettison our foundational principles because of current dissatisfaction with the controversial decision of the Supreme Court or lower Federal courts by permanently stripping the jurisdiction of the Federal courts to hear certain categories of cases. Rather than strengthening its legislative role, Congress, by pressing its own checking power to the extreme, imperils the entire system of separated powers.''

Ladies and gentlemen, this unconstitutional court-stripping bill, and it would be found unconstitutional if enacted, is only the latest attempt by a Congress to force a pluralist society into a one-size-fits-all set of beliefs. This is a remarkable violation of the separation of powers and the establishment clause.

If the act were to become law, it would clearly be held unconstitutional. Only State courts would be able to constitutionally challenge the Pledge, and so we would therefore end up with a 50-State collection of views as to what the free exercise clause, the establishment clause, meant in this context.

In addition, think of what this means to those groups that depend on this provision of our law not to be able to bring their issues to the court. This legislation would strip all Federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from hearing first amendment challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance and from enforcing longstanding constitutional rights in the court, and would slam the Federal courthouse door on religious minorities trying to do nothing more than enforce a fundamental constitutional right that they have had for over 60 years.

Please, let us turn this Pledge Protection Act down this afternoon.

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION,
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2006.

Re H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act of 2005.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: We understand that the House is scheduled to consider H.R. 2389 tomorrow. We are writing to express our opposition to this legislation, which would strip from all federal courts jurisdiction to hear constitutional challenges to the interpretation of, or the validity of, the Pledge of Allegiance.

Our views on H.R. 2389 are informed by our long-standing opposition to legislative curtailment of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the United States and the inferior federal courts for the purpose of effecting changes in constitutional law. The ABA has taken no position on the underlying issues regarding recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools; instead, our strong opposition to H.R. 2389 and other pending legislation that would strip the federal courts of jurisdiction to hear selected types of constitutional cases is based on our concern for the integrity of our system of government.

This legislation would authorize Congress to use its regulatory power over federal jurisdiction to advance a particular legislative outcome by insulating it from constitutional scrutiny by the federal judiciary. In addition to being constitutionally suspect, this legislation would establish a dangerous precedent if enacted. As a matter of policy, Congress should not jettison our foundational principles because of current dissatisfaction with a controversial decision of the Supreme Court or lower federal courts by permanently stripping the jurisdiction of the federal courts to hear certain categories of cases. Rather than strengthening its legislative role, Congress, by pressing its own checking power to the extreme, imperils the entire system of separated powers.

If enacted, H.R. 2389 would restrict the role of the federal courts in our system of checks and balances and thereby limit the ability of the federal courts to protect the constitutional rights of all Americans. Indeed, this legislation would leave the state courts as

the final arbiters of federal constitutional law, creating the possibility that some state judges might choose not to follow Supreme Court precedents. Because the legislation would nullify the Supremacy Clause in certain classes of cases, the Constitution could mean something different from state to state; and, contrary to the expressed intentions of the Framers, our fundamental rights and the balance of power among the branches would be subject to evanescent majority opinion.

At a time when Congress is accusing the federal courts of overstepping their constitutional role and calling for judicial restraint, we urge you to likewise exercise legislative restraint and demonstrate your continued commitment to the doctrine of separation of powers and a government composed of separate but coequal branches by voting to defeat passage of H.R. 2389.

If you have any questions regarding our position, please have your staff contact Denise Cardman, Deputy Director of the Governmental Affairs Office.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. EVANS.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the distinguished majority whip for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Pledge Protection Act and commend its author, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) for his yeoman's work on this thoughtful legislation.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I admire my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for their intellectual acumen and their commitment to their view and their philosophy of government. But while each of us may have a different philosophy of government, we don't get to have different facts.

The clear policy of Article III, section 2 of the United States Constitution reads, ''In all other cases before mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have developed jurisdiction, but it is the law and the fact with such exceptions and under such exceptions as the Congress shall make.'' It is black letter law in the Constitution of the United States of America that this body, this Congress, shall have the authority to set the jurisdiction of the courts.

So if I may say, respectfully, let us stop with all the conversation about anticonstitutional action being taken. In fact, restricting the Federal courts' jurisdiction is a common practice in the House of Representatives, and a long litany of recent legislation, like the Black Hills National Forest, the recent Class Action Fairness Act, attests to that.

But we are here about the business of protecting the contents of the Pledge of Allegiance, which some Federal courts have either resolved as unconstitutional or left unresolved.

We stand here today to say those words, which appear above you, Mr. Chairman, in the phrase ''in God we trust'' in our national model, words which were reflected in our founding documents that speak of a Nation that believes its rights are endowed by our Creator, and words that President Abraham Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, that this is one Nation under God, be protected and vouchsafed in our Pledge.

Let us take this jurisdiction away, which is our constitutional power to do, and leave that power with the people of the United States and the States severally.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Texas for a unanimous consent request.

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 2389, the Protect the Pledge Act.

I strongly support the Pledge of Allegiance. In fact, in the 107th Congress I introduced H.J. Res. 103, an amendment to the Constitution that would affirm that the Pledge of Allegiance in no way violates the First Amendment.

Unfortunately, Congress did not pass the resolution before it adjourned for the 107th Congress.

As an original cosponsor of H.R. 2389, I believe it is necessary to protect the Pledge of Allegiance from unnecessary court battles, but without infringing on the rights of the people.

Article III of the Constitution states that Congress has the power to define jurisdiction of Federal district and appellate courts.

This bill still allows for our system of checks and balances to work as it has for over 200 years.

The Pledge of Allegiance is an important symbol of the privileges and rights that our Founding Fathers fought so desperately to preserve.

It deserves protection from those trying to remove the words "under God."

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have left?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman has 3½ minutes.

Mr. NADLER. The other side?

The CHAIRMAN. They have 13½ minutes.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the majority whip for yielding. I especially thank Mr. AKIN for bringing this bill before this Congress. When we first met, he approached me with this bill, and I said, oh yes, Article III, section 2, I will sign on. Then we got to know each other after that. So it is a proud moment for me to stand here and stand with the gentleman from Missouri and God-fearing and God-loving people across this country.

□ 1315

The question about the constitutionality of court-stripping Article III, section 2, I think Mr. PENCE addressed it very well. Black-letter language in the Constitution was such exceptions and under such regulations as the Congress shall make, and those exceptions are legion.

In fact, the landmark case is Ex parte McCardle 1869 where Congress had authorized Federal judges to issues writs of habeas corpus, and they purported to be acting under its authority under Article III, section 2 to make those exceptions.

But in reviewing the statutes the Supreme Court's jurisdiction granted, they were not at liberty to inquire into the motives of the legislature. We can only examine its power under the Constitution. In fact, the majority decision on the Supreme Court said this: ''Without jurisdiction the court cannot proceed at all in any cause. Jurisdiction is power to declare the law, and when it ceases to exist, the only function remaining to the court is that of announcing the fact and dismissing the cause. And this is not less clear upon authority than upon principle.'' Ex parte McCardle, 1869.

And I would point out that Justice Scalia in the Hamdan case so recently wrote in his opinion, albeit in dissent, he said that ''the Court . . . cannot cite a single case in the history of Anglo-American law . . . in which a jurisdiction-stripping . . . was denied immediate effect in pending cases.'' But ''by contrast, the cases granting such immediate effect are legion . . . they repeatedly rely on the plain language of the jurisdictional repeal as an 'inflexible trump,'" and we know in our current experience in Congress, we have done this several times, particularly the Daschle case with Blackhawk Timber.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I thank the distinguished majority whip for yielding. I certainly thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, once wrote: ''Can the liberties of a Nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?''

Now, I have heard Democrat after Democrat saying that we should not be debating the Pledge Protection Act here today. Apparently, whether the phrase ''one Nation under God'' is stripped from our Pledge by activist judges is of little importance to them, but it is to most Americans, and it should be to our Democrat colleagues as well.

Mr. Chairman, what we are debating here today is nothing short of our very liberty. What could be more worthy of this body than a debate about our liberty?

When our forefathers gave birth to this new Nation, they also gave birth to a radical, revolutionary idea in history, the idea that our rights do not emanate from the State, that they are granted to us from the Almighty.

Who among us have forgotten the words enshrined in our Declaration of Independence that we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights? The answer appears to be some of our Democrat colleagues.

Nothing is more central to the foundation of our very liberty than the acknowledgment of God in public life, not the Christian God, the Jewish God or the Muslim God, but God, the Creator, as broadly defined and acknowledged and worshipped in many faiths and traditions.

But, Mr. Chairman, there is now a concerted effort among some, including apparently the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, to chase God from the schoolhouse, the courthouse and the statehouse, not to mention our very Pledge of Allegiance.

Through H.R. 2389, using our powers under Article III, section 2, we should stop them and protect liberty by enacting the Pledge Protection Act.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), the chairman of the Rules Committee.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, I thank my very good friend, the distinguished majority whip, for yielding time, and I congratulate my friend from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) for having shown his very strong commitment to the U.S. Constitution. As we all know, the specificity is Article III, section 2.

As I was talking to a friend of mine in Los Angeles yesterday, he was asking, what are you bringing up in the Rules Committee today? When I told him that we were bringing this measure to deal with the Ninth Circuit Court's decision, basically throwing out the use of ''one Nation under God'' in the Pledge of Allegiance, he, like most people, was horrified. He said, let us look at the natural extension of the Ninth Circuit Court's decision.

Well, for starters, in the County of Los Angeles, Mr. Chairman, we have already seen the removal of the cross from the seal of the County of Los Angeles. It seems kind of silly, and there obviously is a lot of outrage in southern California about that.

But then one must conclude that the natural extension of this, when we have dealt with the seal of the County of Los Angeles, let us look at some of the cities in California: The City of Angels, Saint Francis, San Francisco, San Diego, another saint. I found that my city that I reside in, the city of San Dimas, is the name for the reformed saint of thieves, San Dismas.

But one must come to the conclusion that if we are going to continue down this road, that the west coast would become what many in the country probably already believe it is, and that would be the lost coast, and I find that to be a very troubling sign, that we are moving in the direction to overturn that wise decision that was made by the United States Congress in the 1950s when President Eisenhower was here.

I think that we should realize that common sense needs to be applied when we look at an instance like this. The Ninth Circuit Court in California clearly overreached, Mr. Chairman, and as we look at how far they could go, I find the direction to be very, very troubling.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Chairman, the concern about the Constitution is certainly worthwhile, but when it says very clearly Article III, section 2, that in all other cases except those specified or mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction both as to law and fact with such exceptions and under such regulations as the Congress shall make, it also allows us to set the jurisdictions of the local courts.

So, clearly, this is something that is constitutional to take up. As an old judge and a former chief justice of an appellate court, those things are important to us.

Our friend from New York indicated that it seems like some of us do not have much faith in the Supreme Court, and he is right, some of us do not. I would submit to you that while they are lingering under this infirmity or disability of being prepositionally challenged, that this is a good issue to take up and to remove jurisdiction on.

For example, in the 10th amendment it says all the things not specified are reserved to the States and to the people. The Supreme Court seems to think that means reserved from the States and from the people. They are prepositionally challenged. They think freedom of religion means freedom from religion.

There is so much rewriting of history, the separation of church and state. It is not in the Constitution. That is in a letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptists about not specifying a specific denomination, and at the same time Madison wrote the first amendment, Jefferson wrote those words in a letter, they came to church, a nondenominational Christian church, right down the hall in Statuary Hall. For about 60 years there was a church down there.

So the question before us is, is this an issue we want to remove from the Supreme Court's consideration until they remove or are able to overcome the disability of being prepositionally challenged? I certainly think it is.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1½ minutes just to say that this debate clearly, once again, emphasizes the responsibility of the Congress to decide the jurisdiction of the courts.

It does not decide who has to say the Pledge of Allegiance. It does not decide separate but equal. In fact, separate but equal was decided by the Supreme Court just like the Dred Scott case was decided by the Supreme Court, which is why Abraham Lincoln, in his inaugural address, specifically talked about the danger of the Congress and the country letting the Court be the sole decision of these kinds of issues.

This is an issue that clearly resonates to the heart of what we are about as a country. It is the heart of what we are about as a people. All of our documents, our coins, our institutions, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, all have recognized a being superior to ourselves.

We think that protection for that phrase and other phrases in the Pledge is appropriate. Certainly we have not anticipated that State courts, who, by the way, were also recognized by the early Congress as appropriate determiners of some Federal laws, and early congressional determination in an early Supreme Court decision was that Federal laws that have been upheld by the State courts would not be subject to Federal review. This is in line with our responsibilities. It would be a responsibility some would like to suggest is different than it is, but it is our responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, every word that we have heard uttered on this floor by the majority side has, as Mr. SCOTT said, increased the likelihood of the courts ordering that the words ''under God'' in the Pledge of Allegiance cannot be recited in a public, in a school situation where there is an imputation of coercion or pressure because the students are, in fact, under the direction of the State agent, namely, the teacher.

As someone who very deeply believes in God, I think it is insulting to say that the words ''under God'' are not important, and yet that is the defense that is offered in court because the Constitution says there should be no establishment of religion. Well, saying that schoolchildren must recite the Pledge of Allegiance with the words ''under God'' is not an establishment of religion. The defense is, no, it is not because this is de minimis; it is not important; it is minor. I do not believe the words ''under God'' are minor or de minimis, unimportant. I think that it is an insult to religion.

But that whole question is for the courts, not for us, and here we are seeing another bill to strip the courts of jurisdiction. We are getting to a point where it is becoming boilerplate in any controversial issue to say the courts shall not have jurisdiction.

Consider this, the Defense of Marriage Act, the Pledge, we passed the bill a few weeks ago on the floor here saying that no funds should be expended to enforce a court order in some court in Indiana because we do not like what the courts do, or we think we might not like what the court will do; we will strip them of jurisdiction.

This is a danger to all our constitutional rights. The only thing that protects our rights as Americans, that

protects our freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly, et cetera, is the ability to go to court and tell the President or the Governor or whoever, you cannot do that, you cannot force them to do that, you cannot put them in jail for not doing it. Without the protection of the court, rights are meaningless.

There is a maxim in law: There is no right without a remedy. What we are doing here is saying to people who are unpopular, to people who may not want to recite the words ''under God,'' they may be wrong and unpopular, but we are saying you cannot go to court to defend yourself and assert your constitutional rights. It is very dangerous. As was pointed out before, if we had done that before, we would still have segregation in this country because in every State we would have stripped the Supreme Court of the ability to declare separate but equal schools unconstitutional. The State courts would have soon said it is fine, and we would still have Jim Crow.

Almost lastly, we should not have a separate law in every State. We should not have the Constitution mean different things in New York and New Jersey. We should be one country. That is why the Supreme Court is vested with jurisdiction to rule on appeals from the State supreme courts.

Finally, this bill is itself unconstitutional. Someone said that the courts have upheld Congress' ability to limit jurisdiction. Sure, they have. Every single case has upheld limitations to jurisdiction, regardless of subject matter, never with regard to constitutional claims, not one case in the history of the Republic.

At a hearing that was held 2 years ago on a similar bill, the majority witness, the Republican witness, professor of constitutional law, said the following: ''The due process clause of the fifth amendment requires that a neutral, independent and competent judicial forum remain available in cases in which the liberty or property interests of an individual or entity are at stake. The constitutional directive of equal protection restricts congressional power to employ its power to restrict jurisdiction in an unconstitutionally discriminatory manner,'' which is what this bill does.

There is no ability, for example, to constitutionally provide that Republicans, but no one else, may have access to the Supreme Court. No one will think Congress could do that. This bill is clearly unconstitutional for the same reason.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

□ 1330

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of our time to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN).

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Missouri is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I would like to start by quoting a person who I believe is the founder, or at least acknowledged as the father, of the Democratic Party, Thomas Jefferson. His words encased in stone on his monument read: ''The God that gave us life gave us liberty.'' It goes on to say: ''Can the liberties of a people be secure if we remove the conviction that those liberties are the gift of God?''

The author of our Declaration well understood that it is impossible to assert that we have inalienable rights and at the same time ignore the person that gave us the inalienable rights, the God that provided those rights itself.

This question goes to the heart of what America has always stood for and always fought for. We believe that there is a God that gives basic rights to all people, and it is the job of the government to protect those rights. If the courts come to the decision that we cannot acknowledge God, then we have ripped the heart out of the logic of what makes America, the fact that our rights come from God Himself, and we have thumbed our nose at Thomas Jefferson and our Declaration and our 300-plus years of history.

Now we have good reason to fear that the Court will not be content to ignore just the fifth amendment and say that you can take private property from people and redistribute it without a public purpose, but that they may also decide to take the first amendment and turn it upside down and use it as a sword of censorship rather than an oasis of free speech.

I am not persuaded by the pious hand-wringing of liberal activists who flinch not at the courts' unfettered march to create some imagined utopia at the expense of the separation of powers in the Constitution itself.

It is time for the Congress to reassert our legislative authority. It is time for the Congress to signal an end to the courts' freewheeling forays of unchecked legislative license.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act of 2005. This legislation is important to ensuring that over-zealous Federal courts do not strike down the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance. In Newdow, Ninth Circuit ruled that the pledge was unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Newdow decision based not on the substance of the issue, but rather because it found that Newdow did not have standing. The Supreme Court did not address the underlying question regarding whether the phrase ''under God'' was constitutional. The Ninth Circuit is expected to rule on this issue in March 2007.

The bill before us would prohibit Federal courts from ruling on issues related to the Pledge of Allegiance. Article III, Section 2, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution gives the Congress the authority to set such limits. The Constitution states:

> In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to law and Fact, *with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make* [emphasis added].

Mr. Chairman, today, by passing this law, we are making those exceptions.

I rise in strong support of this legislation and urge my colleagues to join me in support of it.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2389—the Pledge Protection Act—a bill which does not protect the Pledge of Allegiance, but instead endangers the constitutional balance between the legislative and judicial branches.

I believe in the Pledge of Allegiance. In the wake of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals opinion in Newdow v. U.S. Congress in 2002, the House acted swiftly to affirm our support of the Pledge as it has existed since 1954. I voted in favor of a resolution that disagreed with the court's opinion that the words ''under God'' in the Pledge violate the Establishment Clause of the Constitution.

My opinion today remains the same: the Pledge of Alliance is a simple, eloquent statement of American values. Each morning millions of school children pledge allegiance not only to the flag but to the Nation and our values and our principles. This act, like the prayer that opens each session of the House and the call that brings the Supreme Court to order, reminds us all of the greater context of our purpose.

I oppose this legislation, not because I do not support the Pledge of Alliance, but because I know that this legislation does not achieve its goal. This legislation takes a bold step towards a radical concept which undermines the constitutional checks and balances so crucial to our system of Government. We have taken steps to protect the Pledge and we will continue to do so—but this is not the way.

This bill proposes to strip the courts of their just jurisdiction. While the Congress is granted the power to create and establish Federal courts and this jurisdiction, this power has always been used to promote judicial efficiency. It has not, and should not, be used to stifle debate on any issue regarding fundamental rights and liberties.

Since the Supreme Court decided the case of Marbury v. Madison in 1803, the judiciary has performed its unique role of interpreting laws of this country. This bill is unconstitutional because it would fly in the face of 200 years of our constitutional tradition. I cannot imagine our democracy could long endure a system in which the Congress may take from the courts the ability to hear cases regarding the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, civil rights, or privacy.

The 108th Congress considered this legislation, and the Senate refused to pass this measure. Indeed, in this Congress the House Judiciary Committee refused to favorably report the bill to the full House.

The courts are now properly continuing to review constitutional challenges regarding the Pledge of Allegiance. The Supreme Court has dismissed a case regarding the Pledge, and the Ninth Circuit is again reviewing this matter. Congress has gone on record in support of the Pledge.

It is important that the courts remain as the neutral decision makers in constitutional cases. The Founders wisely enshrined the concept of judicial independence into the Constitution. Federal judges are given lifetime tenure, and Congress is prohibited from reducing their pay during their service in office.

Congress has indeed considered whether to intrude on the province of the Federal courts

throughout the history of this country. Congress wisely rejected President Franklin D. Roosevelt's plan to ''pack the court'' by increasing the size of the Supreme Court. In the 1970s Congress considered, but rejected, effort to strip jurisdiction away from the courts in the areas of civil rights and privacy cases, as a result of Supreme Court decisions of the 1950s and 1960s.

In many ways, this type of legislation is a thinly-veiled attempt to circumvent Article V of the Constitution, which gives Congress the ability to propose an amendment to the Constitution, and therefore overturn a constitutional decision of the Supreme Court. Congress and ultimately the states have the ability to amend the Constitution at their discretion, but under Article III of the Constitution the courts have the obligation to interpret the law and Constitution when ''cases or controversies'' arise in a lawsuit that is properly brought by parties before the court.

This bill would close the door to Federal courts. When there is no court to hear a case, then there is no liberty. A law without a venue for debate is a law without moral force. As the Ranking Member of the Helsinki Commission, I have seen too many countries run by dictators whose first actions are to shut down the independence courts and make them answerable to what the executive and the legislature wanted them to do. We cannot go down this path in the United States, and undermine our citizens' confidence in an independent judiciary that will decide cases without fear or favor.

I urge my colleagues to reject this legislation and attack on the independence of the judiciary, and oppose this legislation.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, at best this bill is a mistake. At worst, it is a cynical political stunt. Either way, it should not pass.

It seeks to end the ability of Federal courts—including the Supreme Court—''to hear or decide any question pertaining to the interpretation of, or the validity under the Constitution of, the Pledge of Allegiance'' as the pledge is now worded.

It responds to a 2002 decision of the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit that both the 1954 law that added the words ''under God'' to the pledge and a local school district's policy of daily recitation of the pledge as so worded were unconstitutional. (The ruling later was modified to apply only to the school district's recitation policy.)

The Supreme Court reversed that decision because the plaintiff did not have legal standing to challenge the school district's policy. But the Republican leadership evidently finds the possibility of a similar lawsuit so alarming—or maybe they think it presents such a political opportunity—that they back this bill to keep any Federal court from hearing a lawsuit like that.

I cannot support such legislation.

It mayor may not be constitutional—on that I defer to those with more legal expertise than I can claim. But I have no doubt it is not only unnecessary but even misguided and destructive.

I have no objection to the current wording of the Pledge of Allegiance. After the Ninth Circuit's decision, I voted for a resolution—approved by the House by a vote of 416 to 3—affirming that ''the Pledge of Allegiance and similar expressions are not unconstitutional expressions of religious belief'' and calling for the case to be reheard.

But this bill is a different matter. It may be called the ''Pledge Protection Act,'' but that is inaccurate and even misleading—because it not only fails to protect the pledge but also would undercut the very thing to which those who recite the pledge are expressing their allegiance.

It doesn't protect the pledge because even if it becomes law people who don't like the way the pledge's current wording would still be able to bring lawsuits in state courts. So, even if Colorado's courts upheld the current wording, the courts of other States might not. And the bill says the U.S. Supreme Court could not resolve the matter.

That would mean there would no longer be a single Pledge of Allegiance, but different pledges for different States—and the Constitution's meaning would vary based on State lines. That would directly contradict the very idea of the United States as ''one Nation'' that should remain ''indivisible'' and whose defining characteristics are devotion to ''liberty and justice for all.''

And that would be completely inconsistent with the idea of the Republic (symbolized by the flag) to which we pledge allegiance when we recite what this bill pretends to ''protect.''

How ironic—and how pathetic.

As national legislators, as U.S. Representatives, we can and should do better. We should reject this bill.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2389. Here we are again considering needless court-stripping legislation that would destroy our constitutional system of checks and balances. This time we wrap it in the flag and call it the Pledge Protection Act.

We dealt with this same legislation two years ago, and it failed to become law. I ask my colleagues, why are we bringing this same legislation up for consideration again 2 years later?

Could it be an election year? Could my colleagues in the majority want to rally a certain part of their base? The real question is whether the majority will put election year political concerns ahead of the good of the Nation? Unfortunately, with this action, it looks like the answer is yes.

This is another extraordinary piece of arrogance on the part of the House of Representatives to pass legislation which would strip American citizens of their right to access the Federal courthouse. Can you imagine anything more shameful than telling an American citizen you cannot go into court to have your concerns addressed, heard by the courts of your Nation?

The right for a citizen to access the courts to decide questions of policy is as old as the Magna Carta, and it is important to us as anything else in the Constitution. Here we calmly say, ''You cannot have access to the Federal courts, including the Supreme Court.'' Shame, shame, shame, shame.

This is a precedent which is going to live to curse us, and we are going to live to regret this day's labor because other precedents will be following this, wherein we strip the rights of citizens under the Second Amendment, the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments.

The Congress has considered these kinds of questions before. It is to be anticipated if this works, we can look to see this kind of abusive legislation considered in this body again. And you can be certain that somebody is sitting out there now thinking of new rights we can strip because we disagree with them.

I do not believe that we should strip the Federal courts of jurisdiction when it comes to issues related to the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. It drastically interferes with the separation of powers between the three branches of our government.

While I will always defend the autonomy and the power of the legislative branch, the principle of judicial review that Chief Justice John Marshall set out in the 1803 decision Marbury v. Madison is law. This landmark case established that the Supreme Court has the right to pass on the constitutionality of an act of Congress. To whittle away one of the bedrock powers of the judicial branch is wrong for the Union and wrong for our citizenry.

Tinkering with the foundation of our judicial branch could come back to haunt us. You can be almost certain with the passage of this legislation that there are interests out there deciding what other rights can be stripped of American citizens because we disagree with them. Maybe a future Congress will want to strip court challenges to gun control legislation by gun owners or sportsmen.

Mr. Chairman, we live in one Nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all. If we pass this bill, we begin to hollow out the true meaning of the pledge, the Constitution and what it means to live in this great Nation.

Like I did 2 years ago, I strongly oppose this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2389, which would strip from the federal courts and the Supreme Court the ability to hear any cases related to the Pledge of Allegiance. This bill eliminates the basic principle of judicial review that was established by the Supreme Court in Marbury v. Madison back in 1803.

This bill should not have come to the floor today because it seeks to make a dangerous change to our Nation's system of checks and balances. For that reason, this bill was rejected by the House Judiciary Committee. Yet, the Majority has brought it up today to intentionally divide the House. This is not the first time. We have seen this before. In September two years ago, we had this same vote, and I opposed it then.

The judiciary was designed to be the one branch of the federal government that is insulated from political forces. This independent nature enables the federal judiciary to thoughtfully and objectively review laws to ensure that they are in line with the Constitution. Throughout the development of our Nation, this check has been vital to protecting the rights of minorities.

Although the Constitution gives Congress the power to limit the jurisdiction of the federal judiciary and the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, I am certain that the founding fathers did not intend for Congress to use this power to shape the jurisdiction of the courts along ideological lines. This legislation will set a dangerous precedent by allowing Congress to avoid judicial review so that it can pass legislation that it thinks may be unconstitutional. This is a clear abuse of Congressional authority and a cynical attempt to question the patriotism of Members of this institution.

Like every Member of this body, I am proud to recite the Pledge of Allegiance as a way to express my loyalty to this Nation and its

founding principles. I make it a point during my town meetings in New Jersey to lead my constituents in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. I share the view of many Members that the current text of the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutional including the phrase ''under God''. I expressed my support for the Pledge in its current form when I joined many of my colleagues in voting for a resolution that urged the Supreme Court to recognize the constitutional right of children to recite the pledge in school. That resolution was an appropriate way for me, as a Member of Congress, to express my belief in the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Unfortunately, those who support this legislation seek to alter our delicate system of checks and balances and make their own decisions unchallengeable—as if they were infallible. They are attempting to alter the intended framework of our government, which has met the needs of a diverse population and allowed us to remain indivisible in times of crisis for more than 200 years. We should not make this dangerous change to upset the balance of power established by our Founding Fathers and enshrined in the Constitution.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 2389, ''The Pledge Protection Act.''

As I rise to address this body, I am reminded by the words above the Speaker's chair, ''In God We Trust'' and the significance those words hold for our great Nation. From the unalienable rights that Mr. Jefferson penned in the Declaration of Independence to the money that is minted just blocks from this Chamber, our Nation has and will continue to publicly recognize God's providence and guidance. However, the recognition of God contained within the Pledge of Allegiance has provided leverage for some courts to claim that reciting our Pledge is unconstitutional.

In 1954, this body recognized the need to add the phrase ''under God'' to our Pledge and for 46 years this was hailed by Americans and remained uncontested. Yet in 2002, these two words were exploited by courts claiming that it is unconstitutional for the Pledge of Allegiance to remain a part of American life. Congress acted swiftly to reverse the damage caused by such a ruling and preserve the patriotic act of reciting the Pledge. In 2002, both Houses of Congress overwhelmingly supported resolutions rebuking the court and upholding the Pledge of Allegiance. However, Congress failed to invoke our authority to prevent activist courts from destroying the American institution that is the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge embodies our patriotism and must be preserved. It serves to remind this body, at the beginning of each daily session, of our devotion to country. Protecting the Pledge ensures that the ideals of America will continue for generations to come.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to join with me in support of this bill to prevent the federal judiciary from hearing cases against the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, today, I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act.

The phrase ''under God'' belongs in our Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and the words In God We Trust belong on our currency. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals made a serious error in Newdow v. U.S. Congress when they declared our Pledge unconstitutional.

When the phrase under God was added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954, I was in elementary school and remember feeling the phrase belonged there. It appropriately reflects the fact that a belief in God motivated the founding and development of our great Nation.

The Declaration of Independence states, ''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights . . .'' Our forefathers understood it was not they, but He, who had bestowed upon all of us those most cherished rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness upon which our model of government is based.

At Gettysburg, President Abraham Lincoln acknowledged we were a Nation under God and, during his Second Inaugural Address, he mentioned our Creator 13 times.

Those historic speeches, the Pledge of Allegiance, our currency and the Declaration of Independence are not prayers or parts of a religious service. They are a statement of our commitment as citizens to our great Nation and the role God plays in it.

Our founders envisioned a government that would allow, not discourage or punish, the free exercise of religion and we are living their dream.

I oppose the Pledge Protection Act because I have faith in our Constitution and do not believe we should preclude judges from hearing issues of social relevance, simply because we may disagree with their ultimate decisions.

While the courts may, from time to time, produce a ruling we question, the principle of judicial review is essential to maintaining the integrity of our system of checks and balances and I fear the path we appear to be on. We are a Nation under God, and in Him we trust.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act.

While I strongly support the Pledge of Allegiance and the use of the term under God, I oppose this misguided legislation because it would strip all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of the jurisdiction to hear First Amendment challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance.

In the process, this legislation would strip federal courts of their important role in safeguarding Constitutional rights and freedoms. It will also work to undermine public confidence in the federal courts by expressing outright hostility to their role as a neutral arbiter of constitutional claims.

Through passage of this legislation, this body is endorsing the dangerous premise that Congress is above the Constitution. So in response, I ask my colleagues this question: do you believe our founding fathers designed the Constitution to protect the people from their government, or to regulate the conduct of its citizens?

I submit that if we strip federal courts of their judicial independence, nothing stops Congress from preventing courts to rule on other freedoms protected in our Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech, the right to bear arms, freedom of worship and freedom to assemble. Is that really the precedent we want to establish?

I believe we need our judicial system to protect our rights—and this bill prohibits the courts from doing just that. Indeed, I believe enactment of this legislation would have a dramatic impact on the ability of individual Americans to be free from government-coerced speech or religious expression.

In our system of democracy, our government works on a system of checks and balances. Instead of stripping power from the courts, I believe we should follow the process prescribed in our Constitution—consideration of a Constitutional amendment. In fact, as a member of the California Legislature, I passed a bill calling on Congress to pass a Pledge protection amendment, and I believe that is the appropriate way to address this issue.

I happen to believe that the inclusion of the term under God in the Pledge is appropriate and constitutional. Further, should the Supreme Court ever rule that the term is unconstitutional, I would vote for a constitutional amendment to it ensure its presence. I support the Pledge because it is an important part of our American fabric, and an important symbol of the rights our founding fathers fought so desperately to preserve—liberty and justice for every American.

But our justice is protected by our independent judiciary. Let us keep it that way for all Americans. Oppose this bill and support and protect our Constitutional rights.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I oppose the ''Pledge Protection Act'' because of its potential ramification for the judicial process. This legislation seeks to prohibit all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from hearing any case that challenges the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

This legislation is a response to recent challenges in the 9th Circuit Court involving the statement ''under God.'' While I do not agree with the court's decision, we are heading down a slippery slope when we authorize Congress to use its power over the courts to limit jurisdiction of constitutional challenges.

This seemingly bipartisan legislation is another attack on our principles of civil liberties and equal protection, just as we saw on yesterday's vote on the ''Marriage Protection Act,'' to please the most extreme of the Republican base. It is not worth undermining our system of checks and balances.

Yesterday, the state's domestic laws; today, the Pledge of Allegiance; tomorrow . . .?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act of 2005.

This bill precludes any Federal judicial review of any constitutional challenge to recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance—whether it be in the lower Federal courts or in the highest court in the land, the U.S. Supreme Court. Effectively, if passed, this extremely vague legislation will relegate all claimants to State courts to review any challenges to the pledge. This possibility will lead to different constitutional constructions in each of the 50 States.

The only way to make this bill palatable is to adopt the Jackson-Lee amendment, which provides for an exception to the bill's preclusion for cases that involve allegations of coerced or mandatory recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, including coercion in violation of the First Amendment or the Equal Protection clauses. Opposing the Jackson-Lee amendment is tantamount to endorsing the coercion of children to mandatory recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Closing the doors of the Federal courthouse doors to claimants will actually amount to a

coercion of individuals to recite the pledge and its ''under God'' reference in violation of West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette. In Barnette, the Supreme Court struck down a West Virginia law that mandated school children recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Under the West Virginia law, religious minorities faced expulsion from school and could be subject to prosecution and fines, if convicted of violating the statute's provisions. In striking down that statute, Justice Jackson wrote for the Court:

''To believe in patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institutions to free minds . . . If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high, or petty can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.''

H.R. 2389 would strip parents of their right to go to court and defend their children's religious liberty. If this legislation is passed, schools could expel children for acting according to the dictates of their faith and Congress will have slammed the courthouse door shut in their faces. When I was a child, I always wondered why, when the rest of the class recited the Pledge of Allegiance, one little girl always sat quietly. Today, I understand that it was because she was of the 7th Day Adventist faith and therefore reciting the ''under God'' provision would force her to undermine her religious faith. If H.R. 2389 were law back then, the school administrators could have forced her to say the pledge and she would have no recourse in the Federal courts.

The problem with this bill is that it does not protect religious minorities, Mr. Chairman.

Article III, Section I of the U.S. Constitution vests ''the Judicial Power of the United States . . . in one supreme court.'' The list of subject matter areas which the Federal courts have the power to hear and decide under section 2 of Article III establishes that, ''The Judicial power shall extend to all cases . . . arising under this Constitution.'' For over 50 years, the Federal courts have played a central role in the interpretation and enforcement of civil rights laws. Bills such as H.R. 2389 and the Federal Marriage Amendment we debated yesterday are bills to prevent the courts from exercising their article III functions and prohibiting discrimination. We cannot allow bad legislation such as this to pass in the House, and thereby eviscerate the Constitution and the values upon which this nation was originally founded. In the 1970s, some Members of Congress unsuccessfully sought to strip the courts of jurisdiction to hear desegregation efforts such as busing, which would have perpetuated racial inequality. We did not allow it then, and we should not allow it now.

H.R. 2389, as drafted, insulates the Pledge of Allegiance as set forth in section 4 of title 4 of the United States Code from constitutional challenge in the Federal court. The Jackson-Lee amendment protects children from being coerced or forced into reciting the Pledge of Allegiance against their will.

However, the statute and the pledge are subject to change by future legislation bodies. This means that if some future Congress decides to insert some religiously offensive or discriminatory language in the Pledge, the matter would be immune to constitutional challenge in the Federal courts.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to place in the RECORD a copy of a letter dated July 18, 2006 from the American Bar Association which supports my claims.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that my colleagues vote to protect religious minorities, vote to protect judicial review, vote to protect separation of powers, and vote to protect access to the Federal courts. I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 2389.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Chairman, I support our national Pledge of Allegiance 100 percent. I strongly believe the Pledge teaches America's children national pride and a sense of civic responsibility.

However, I oppose H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act.'' This bill is merely a reaction to one federal case: Newdow vs. U.S. Congress.

The 9th Circuit Federal court in Newdow held that the Pledge of Allegiance violated the Established Clause of the Constitution. The court ruled that the phrase ''one nation under God'' within the Pledge impermissibly takes a position with respect to the identity and existence of God.

I disagree with the 9th Circuit's ruling in the Newdow case. However, I don't believe the way to protect the Pledge of Allegiance is by banning all federal courts from hearing cases dealing with the Pledge, which is what H.R. 2389 does. H.R. 2389 goes way too far. In fact, it violates the Constitution and the very spirit of the Pledge itself.

The federal courts, not the United States Congress, have the power to interpret and enforce rights protected under the Constitution. That is what the famous Marbury vs. Madison case was all about: separation of powers. But, H.R. 2389 violates the constitutional separation of powers principle, because it strips all federal courts of their power to make rulings on an individual's right to choose whether to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

To ensure that America remains an indivisible and proud Nation, it is very important that we protect the Pledge of Allegiance, but it is even more important that we do not violate the Constitution and undermine the federal courts to do so.

Therefore, I oppose H.R. 2389.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2389, The Pledge Protection Act, offered by Representative TODD AKIN.

This legislation protects our Pledge of Allegiance by preventing radical judges and liberal lawyers from questioning the constitutionality of the phrase ''under God.''

The preamble of the Declaration of Independence states: ''We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.''

Our national motto is: ''In God We Trust.''

The opening announcement at the United States Supreme Court is: ''God save the United States and this honorable court.''

Unless there is a law limiting the jurisdiction of Federal courts, we will continue to see lawsuits such as the one that is trying to ban the Pledge of Allegiance in schools because it mentions ''One nation under God.''

The Constitution gives Congress the power to limit the jurisdiction of Federal courts in Article III, Section 2. Maintaining checks and balances on the power of the Judiciary Branch and the other two branches is vital to keep the form of government set up by our Founding Fathers.

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of The Pledge Protection Act and will vote in favor of this legislation.

God Bless America!

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 2389, the ''Pledge Protection Act.''

This legislation represents an attempt by the Majority to strip the federal courts of jurisdiction over yet another important issue. The effect of H.R. 2389 would be to prevent individuals who have legitimate cases from ever reaching a courtroom. The U.S. Constitution clearly states that a separation of powers, ensured by a system of checks and balances established by our Founding Fathers more than 200 years ago, must exist among the three branches of government. What the proponents of this bill want to do is to tell the courts what cases they can and cannot hear.

This bill is wrong and costs too high a price. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.R. 2389.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered read for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2389

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Pledge Protection Act of 2005''.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON JURISDICTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 99 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 1632. Limitation on jurisdiction

''(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), no court created by Act of Congress shall have any jurisdiction, and the Supreme Court shall have no appellate jurisdiction, to hear or decide any question pertaining to the interpretation of, or the validity under the Constitution of, the Pledge of Allegiance, as defined in section 4 of title 4, or its recitation.

''(b) The limitation in subsection (a) does not apply to—

''(1) any court established by Congress under its power to make needful rules and regulations respecting the territory of the United States; or

''(2) the Superior Court of the District of Columbia or the District of Columbia Court of Appeals;''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 99 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''1632. Limitation on jurisdiction.''.

The CHAIRMAN. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in House Report 109–577. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. WATT

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 109–577.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 1 offered by Mr. WATT:

Page 2, lines 12 and 13, strike ", and the Supreme Court shall have no appellate jurisdiction,".

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 920, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Chairman, in many ways my amendment is quite simple. It simply preserves the authority of the United States Supreme Court to do its job. My amendment, however, is fundamental in its simplicity because it reflects the cornerstone of our constitutional framework, a framework that recognizes three coequal branches of government, each with its own area of responsibility, each serving as a check and balance on the others.

For over 200 years, the separation of powers doctrine has worked well, vesting the legislative power with the Congress, the executive power with the President, and the judicial power with the Supreme Court and other inferior Federal courts. At the pinnacle of the judiciary is and has been the one Court mandated by the Constitution, the United States Supreme Court.

I have offered this amendment before, and I offer it today because the very idea of Congress unilaterally cutting off all Federal court review of a constitutional issue is both unprecedented and likely unconstitutional, but it is also impractical and imprudent.

Despite the substantial body of scholarship that suggests that Congress does not have the authority to strip the Supreme Court of this appellate jurisdiction in the manner proposed by this bill, let's for the sake of argument concede that it does have that authority, and let me address the imprudence of this bill.

As legislators exercising the legislative power committed to us by the Constitution, the compelling question is: Why would we want to do what this bill would have us do? What could possibly motivate this Congress to adopt this bill as sound public policy? How does this bill do anything to protect the Pledge of Allegiance? What respect does it show for our venerable institutions? How does it unify us as a Nation?

I suggest to you that this bill makes the Pledge far more vulnerable to assorted, distasteful interpretations than the current law that exists at present.

I appeal to our common sense. Under the bill as drafted, the likelihood that different opinions on the Pledge will issue from State, territorial and the District of Columbia courts is either ignored or deliberately sheltered from challenge. Rather than protect the Pledge of Allegiance, this bill invites a patchwork of interpretations from all over the country.

What if your State is the State that determines that your child can no longer recite the words "under God" in the Pledge? Will you move to a neighboring State? Move across the country? Wherever you find a friendly State interpretation? But what if there is no Federal constitutional determination, and State legislatures are left to change the law upon acquiring the appropriate majority. Would you become a nomad? Would you move from State to State in search of the right position for your child?

The bill eliminates every single recourse that you have. It establishes a mechanism under which an individual's Federal rights would depend entirely on the happenstance of location. Ultimately coercing children to recite the Pledge without the language "under God" may be prohibited in one place but not another. Constitutional protections could be strong in one State and weak or nonexistent in another.

My amendment would restore the obligation of the Supreme Court to exercise its role as the final arbiter of the Constitution. Even if the proponents of this measure believe the Federal, district, and circuit courts of appeal should be removed from the process, the role of the U.S. Supreme Court in establishing uniform standards to apply to all Americans wherever they reside should certainly be protected.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition to the amendment, and I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time and for his leadership on this issue.

This issue that is in front of us today is an example of congressional restraint, congressional restraint with regard to a court that is out of control.

The Ninth Circuit Court has thrown it back at this Congress time and time again, and the activism that has taken place out there in the ninth circuit brings me to some things that would be more drastic solutions to this than this very careful, very narrow, very gently defined legislation that we have before us. It only deals with the words "under God" in the Pledge.

We could do far more. In fact, I voted to split the ninth circuit in half. I would vote to abolish them if they continue this kind of behavior, throwing this into the face of the American people. We are not doing that. We are very carefully, very narrowly addressing something that the American people are asking for, very well within the jurisdiction of the United States Congress. And any Member who votes against this legislation may have their opinions, as Mr. WATT does, that they are either knowingly or inadvertently or perhaps even willfully conceding some power and authority this Congress has to control the courts.

In the end, it is the Congress that controls the courts. It is not three separate but equal branches. In the end, the congressional structure is set up for the Congress to determine the final authority over the judicial branch of government through the pursestrings. For all of our judicial courts and all of our appellate courts, everything is a creature of Congress, except the Supreme Court, which is also a creature of Congress, but established by the directive and the mandate of the Constitution.

Mr. Chairman, we have the authority to do this. It is a very narrowly and carefully defined piece of legislation.

The Watt amendment is a gutting amendment. It kills the bill. It hands this authority over to the Supreme Court, which is our very number one concern. We simply want to, with legislation, reflect the values of the American people, reflect the values of the history and the legacy of our Founding Fathers, and our rights that come from God within this Pledge. I urge we oppose the Watt amendment.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Essentially what our bill does, if you want to put it in a simple word picture, we are creating a fence. The fence goes around the Federal judiciary. We do that because we don't trust them. We don't trust them because of previous decisions and because of the simple fact that there are not five votes on the Supreme Court to protect our beloved Pledge of Allegiance. And 80 percent to 90 percent of Americans would like to leave the Pledge of Allegiance the way it is.

So what does this amendment do? This amendment simply opens a big hole in the fence. So the gentleman from Iowa was absolutely right: this is a gutting amendment. There is absolutely no reason to pass the bill if this amendment were to pass. We simply allow the Supreme Court to come in whenever they choose, turn the first amendment upside down and simply say to kids, you are not allowed to say the Pledge of Allegiance, and we are going to use the first amendment from now on as a weapon instead of for free speech to censorship on the courts.

So I am not persuaded by the pious hand-wringing of liberal activists who flinch not at the courts' unfettered march to create some imagined utopia at the expense of the separation of powers. It is time for us to do our job as Congressmen. It is time to assert ourselves, that we will not give unchecked legislative authority to the courts. We have been too long rolling

over to them. It is time to stand up and say on the Pledge of Allegiance, enough is enough.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Watt Amendment, which would restore the Supreme Court's jurisdiction over questions related to the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance is an important expression of our shared values, and it should be preserved in its current form. I fully support the Pledge of Allegiance and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The intent of this bill is good. In fact, I was a cosponsor of this bill in the 108th Congress. However, that was before the provision was added to restrict the Supreme Court from hearing cases involving the Pledge of Allegiance. The bill we vote on today again strips the Supreme Court's jurisdiction over this important constitutional issue.

I recognize that Congress clearly has the authority under Article III of the Constitution to define the jurisdiction or the federal district and appellate courts. But constitutional scholars say there is no direct precedent for making exceptions to the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

I would caution my colleagues to think twice before tampering with authorities clearly granted in the Constitution. The issue today may be the Pledge, but what if the issue tomorrow is Second Amendment rights, civil rights, environmental protection, or a host of other issues that members may hold dear?

I would also ask my colleagues, do we really want 50 different versions of the Pledge of Allegiance? I certainly don't think so.

The Watt amendment would restore to the bill the Supreme Court's jurisdiction over questions related to the Pledge of Allegiance, changing the bill back to the way it was originally introduced in the 108th Congress when I was a cosponsor.

I revere the Constitution and the Pledge of Allegiance. I believe that "Under God" are two of the most important words in the Pledge. I also believe that the Supreme Court should be the final arbiter of all federal questions. That's why I urge you to support the Watt Amendment to the Pledge Protection Act.

Mr AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote, and pending that, I make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON-LEE OF TEXAS

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 109–577.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 2 offered by Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas:

Page 3, line 2, insert after ''recitation'' the following: '', except in a case in which the claim involved alleges coerced or mandatory recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, including coercion in violation of the protection of the free exercise of religion''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 920, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I would imagine that Members across the campus in their offices and maybe even committee rooms are moved by the impassioned pleas by my friends on the other side of the aisle, so I want to make a pledge, and that is that I have stood on the floor of the House and acknowledged the importance of having our schoolchildren and others of America acknowledge and say the Pledge of Allegiance every single day. I stand by that statement.

What bothers me is when Members come to the floor and vote, they will look to the name of the proponent and they will simply vote ''no.'' They will not understand the crux of the debate. They will not understand the sheer quarrel or the sheer amazement that we have with this particular legislation in the first place.

This legislation deals with the idea of protecting the Pledge of Allegiance by denying access to the courthouse. My amendment is simple. It gives real meaning to the Pledge of Allegiance and the patriotism that is felt when it is recited by making it clear that no one can be forced or coerced to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or retaliated against for not reciting it in those cases where doing so violates one's religious beliefs.

What is the hindrance of Members agreeing to allow one to be able to access the courts on the simple ground that it violates one's religious beliefs?

□ 1345

In this way, my amendment ensures that the Pledge of Allegiance is being recited freely, voluntarily and without coercion or fear of retaliation. In this way, a recited Pledge of Allegiance remains sacrosanct, and our national commitment to religious freedom is preserved.

Might I cite for my friends a quote from President Reagan, the great communicator himself, who said in 1983, ''The first amendment of the Constitution was not written to protect the people of this country from religious values, it was written to protect religious values from government tyranny.''

What I would suggest is to close the courthouse door is an example of government tyranny. It means that if my 6-year-old friend by the name of Hazel, who had a religious belief, whose family had a religious belief, who was allowed to sit silently in her seat when all of us stood to say I pledge allegiance, that little girl, if forced by any school system to do so, now has the courthouse door closed to her.

It means that we are ignoring the West Virginia State Board of Education versus Barnett case that mandated that school children recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This was done in West Virginia. Under West Virginia law, persons who on religious grounds refused to recite the Pledge faced expulsion from school. But Justice Jackson wrote, ''To believe patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institution to free minds.''

Mr. Chairman, I have said it is good and good news to say the Pledge and to have our school children say the Pledge. This amendment is very clear. It does nothing to this particular legislation, other than to say that if your grounds are religious based, based on religion, based on your defined religious beliefs, why are you denying them the right to go into the courthouse on religious beliefs only?

That is the question that clergy are asking across America. That is the question that the American Bar Association, representing lawyers of all political persuasions, are asking at this time.

And I beg of my colleagues to understand that we are protectors of liberty. We are protectors of the first amendment. We are not to denounce the first amendment. We are not to ignoring the first amendment. We are not to stomp on the first amendment. And I would beg to say that if we call ourselves protecting the flag, the very flag that soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan are now on the battlefield shedding their blood, veterans, and we would deny Americans the right to utilize the constitutional branch of government created by the Constitution and created by this body.

Shame on us if we cannot accept the entreaty of a little girl named Hazel, who sat next to me in a school a few short years ago, I might add, lonely, unprotected, fearful, sitting isolated while we stood to say the Pledge. I am grateful that I had a teacher that understood that we would not stigmatize her, discriminate against her, and she had her freedom.

This is an important amendment to ensure that all of our freedom is protected. I ask my colleagues for a vote for religious freedom and liberty and to allow the Jackson-Lee amendment to go forward.

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk. I thank the members of the Rules Committee for allowing this amendment to go forward.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment gives real meaning to the Pledge of Allegiance and the

patriotism that is felt when it is recited by making it clear that no one can be coerced or forced to recite the Pledge, or retaliated against for not reciting it in those cases where doing so violates one's religious beliefs. In this way, my amendment ensures that the Pledge of Allegiance is being recited freely, voluntarily, and without coercion or fear of retaliation. In this way, a recited Pledge of Allegiance remains sacrosanct and our national commitment to religious freedom is preserved.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment draws inspiration from President Reagan, the Great Communicator himself, who said in 1983:

The First Amendment of the Constitution was not written to protect the people of this country from religious values; it was written to protect religious values from government tyranny.

H.R. 2389 precludes Federal judicial review of any constitutional challenge to recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance—whether it be in the lower Federal courts or the U.S. Supreme Court. My amendment does not disturb this legislative judgment except in the limited instance of cases involving claims of coercion and mandatory recitation. In other words, my amendment is intended to protect religious values from government tyranny. Nothing less, nothing more.

Mr. Chairman, in West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnett, the Supreme Court struck down a West Virginia law that mandated schoolchildren recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Under West Virginia law, persons who, on religious grounds, refused to recite the Pledge faced expulsion from school and could be prosecuted and fined for violating the statute. In striking down that statute, the great Justice Robert Jackson wrote for the Court:

To believe patriotism will not flourish if patriotic ceremonies are voluntary and spontaneous instead of a compulsory routine is to make an unflattering estimate of the appeal of our institutions to free minds . . . If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high, or petty can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment is important for another reason. H.R. 2389, as drafted, insulates the Pledge of Allegiance from constitutional challenge in Federal court.

However, the pledge itself is subject to change by future legislative bodies. This means that if some future Congress decides to revise the Pledge to include religiously offensive or discriminatory language in the Pledge, the authority of the government to compel a person to recite that Pledge could not be challenged in Federal court. None of us would want that to happen. My amendment ensures that it won't.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment protects religious minorities. My amendment protects judicial review. My amendment protects the separation of powers. My amendment strengthens the Pledge by ensuring that it recited voluntarily. My amendment ensures that the Pledge, like the oath all Members of Congress take, is "given freely, without mental reservation or purpose of evasion." I urge all Members to support the Jackson-Lee amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to my distinguished colleague from Arizona, TRENT FRANKS.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Chairman, may I first remind all of us of words we each spoke not so long ago.

''I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God.''

Mr. Chairman, when we swore this oath, we did not say that we would protect the Constitution from everyone except rogue judges.

The issue that brings us to the floor this day is an act on the part of the Ninth Circuit that ruled that the words ''under God'' in a voluntary Pledge of Allegiance by our school children is unconstitutional.

It astonishes me, Mr. Chairman, that we even have to address such an insane conclusion. I truly believe that if we had lived in the days of the Founding Fathers and accused them of intending to outlaw school children from saying the words ''under God'' in their voluntary Pledge of Allegiance, they would have challenged us to a duel for impugning their honor in such an egregious and outrageous fashion.

Mr. Chairman, when judicial supremacists on the bench desecrate the very Constitution that they are given charge, the sacred charge to defend, those of us in this Congress who have also made an oath to defend the Constitution must respond accordingly.

The Constitution of the United States, Mr. Chairman, does not prohibit school children from saying the words ''under God'' in a voluntary Pledge of Allegiance. It is that fundamentally simple.

Indeed, the Constitution does say that the Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

Mr. Chairman, when the Ninth Circuit decision said school children cannot voluntarily say the words ''under God'' in their Pledge of Allegiance, these judges, sir, were prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

This legislation would take such a decision away from such rogue judges.

Mr. Chairman, if Congress forsakes their oath and their duty to defend the Constitution and allows this magnificent document to fall prey to activist judges, we relegate this Republic to an arrogant judicial oligarchy. It is an abrogation of our oath of office and it tramples on the blood of our Founding Fathers and the soldiers who died to give us America and her rule of law.

There would be nothing left to us at that point but to board up the windows in this building and go home and quit pretending to be defenders of the United States Constitution or representatives of the greatest Republic in the history of humanity.

Mr. Chairman, it is not too late. I urge this amendment be rejected, and the bill be passed as written.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas will be postponed.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of reflection of this disastrous bill, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my rollcall vote only because I believe that we would denigrate the protection of religion even further by subjecting my very good amendment to a rollcall vote. It should be already included in this.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentlewoman's request for a recorded vote is withdrawn, to the end that the amendment stands rejected by voice vote.

There was no objection.

So the amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. AKIN

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 109–577.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 3 offered by Mr. AKIN:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and apply to any case that—

(1) is pending on such date of enactment; or

(2) is commenced on or after such date of enactment.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 920, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New York will control the 5 minutes in opposition.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, could I just ask, is the other side going to be speaking on the amendment?

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. NADLER has claimed the 5 minutes in opposition, so I assume he is going to speak.

Mr. AKIN. That is a good assumption.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of this amendment and the reason it was added, to some degree in a last-minute nature, was because of the Hamden decision. The Hamden decision, a majority of the Supreme Court on an Article III, section 2 question said that because a particular issue, in this case it was Gitmo, was being considered in the courts, that the article III, section 2 language didn't apply.

Now, this is completely inconsistent with all previous rulings of the Supreme Court. But we thought, just to be safe, that what we would do here would be to add language that makes it clear that not only does this bill consider any future cases that are brought before the court, the Federal courts, but also existing cases, in this case, again, the challenge to the Pledge that is already in the Federal court system and is before the Ninth Circuit out in California and some of the States in the West. So that was the reason for this technical and perfecting amendment, certainly to clarify, just simply to clarify that this bill would apply not only to future legislation but cases that are currently before the Court.

Along those lines, I think it is very important for us to once again affirm the importance of our discussion and our debate here today. It is ultimately the job of the legislative branch and the executive branch to provide some check and balance on the Supreme Court.

There would be no argument from me if the Supreme Court based all of their decisions on the rules, that is the U.S. Constitution. However, the Supreme Court has gone beyond that increasingly, and it is our concern that they will go well beyond the U.S. Constitution in considering this case.

We have every reason to believe that we do not have five Justices that will support the Pledge. We have every reason to believe that the Pledge could easily be struck, and it is for that reason that this bill has been introduced.

Now, some would say that, in fact I believe the minority leader called what is going on on this floor a charade. I think that is a rather harsh way of describing people that have a genuine interest in the Pledge of Allegiance, have a genuine interest in the heart of what this good Nation was based on, the idea that there is, in fact, a God that grants basic inalienable rights to all people, and that the job of government is to protect those basic rights.

Part of that U.S. Constitution includes the first amendment, and the first amendment has to do with free speech. I can understand the use of the first amendment to say to someone, you are not required to give an oath that you don't believe in. But I cannot understand how you can look at free speech as a tool to censor school children across America from saying that they cannot, they are going to censor the Pledge of Allegiance, they cannot say the Pledge of Allegiance.

This is the time for this Congress to stand up, to be strong, and to take notice of the fact that the Court will no longer be making these forays of absolutely unchecked legislative decision-making. And it is time for us to stand up and say no to a Court that is effectively trying to create their own set of rules instead of reading the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. Chairman, I think that there is good evidence from the way that the Court has handled the fifth amendment in allowing the redistribution of private property willy nilly, without a government purpose, I think there is good reason to be concerned as the Court has taken to itself a power to tax, which is unconstitutional. There is good reason for us to be concerned about the Court's overrunning their constitutional bounds.

It is time for us to show the backbone to stand up to the Court. It is time for us to say no to this unregulated, general legislative authority.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, we are now down to the heart of the matter. This entire spectacle is aimed at a possible decision by one Court that the directed recitation by school children under the instruction of their teacher of the phrase ''under God'' may violate the first amendment rights of those children.

Let's be clear. Nowhere in the United States is the use of the phrase ''under God'' prohibited in the public schools. In the only two cases in which the Court ruled that the directed recitation of the phrase ''under God'' violated the establishment clause, the Supreme Court vacated one ruling, and has issued a stay preventing the second ruling from interfering with the recitation of the Pledge.

For this we need to take a chain saw to the Constitution? For this we need to endanger the religious liberty of religious minorities like the Jehovah's Witnesses, who were thrown out of school because their religion barred them from saying the Pledge?

Only the Supreme Court protected their rights in violence against Jehovah's Witnesses that ensued.

This bill would not only prevent the Supreme Court from ruling on the constitutionality of directing school children to recite the phrase ''under God,'' it would also overturn the 1943 Supreme Court Jehovah's Witnesses case and allow the punishment or expulsion of school children for refusing to recite a pledge that violates their religion or their conscience.

□ 1400

We may be endowed, Mr. Chairman, by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, but people can, and routinely do, violate and take away those rights. That is why we need a Supreme Court, to protect these rights even when political majorities will not.

Supporters of this bill have candidly said they disagree with the Supreme Court, and that, in their opinion, the Supreme Court has gone beyond its powers, and that we, in effect, should overrule it and prevent them from ruling in these cases. We have heard this before. Look at the notorious ''Southern Manifesto'' against the Supreme Court decision in the Brown v. Board of Education 50 years ago: ''We regard the decisions of the Supreme Court in the school cases as a clear abuse of judicial power. It climaxes a trend in the Federal judiciary undertaking to legislate, in derogation of the authority of Congress, and to encroach upon the reserved rights of the States and the people.''

That is what we hear whenever people disagree with the Supreme Court, in the school desegregation cases and now. And this amendment makes the point of the bill explicit.

The sponsors are afraid of what the Supreme Court may do in a pending case on this subject that may come before them and therefore explicitly strip the Federal courts of jurisdiction even over a pending case. This is Congress saying to a specific plaintiff, we do not approve of your claim of a violation of your constitutional right; so we are going to shut the courthouse door in your face.

This is a dangerous enterprise. I respect my friend's concerns and his right to disagree with the courts, but we must not destroy our Constitution and the one independent bulwark of our liberty. I urge defeat of this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the distinguished ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. CONYERS.

(Mr. CONYERS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to oppose this amendment and am against any amendment that would throw out any case currently pending in the Court.

This amendment would add language making it explicit that this already unconstitutional bill is effective immediately and applies to all pending and future litigation. As it currently stands, this bill does nothing to protect religious minorities from being coerced into reciting the Pledge, in violation of their First Amendment right of free speech. This amendment would effectively throw out any case that is currently pending in court in which a child's right to be free from religious persecution is being vindicated, and would slam the courthouse door shut in their faces.

H.R. 2389 as a whole is premature and should not be on our list of priorities.

What I find particularly troubling about this bill, setting aside all of the concerns that I have already stated, is its timing. It seems that my colleagues in the majority have lost sight of our priorities. At a time of record budget deficits and gasoline prices, when we are engaged in a quagmire in Iraq, when more than 45 million people are uninsured in this nation, and every day workers are seeing their pensions and health care benefits jeopardized,

surely we can find better things to do with our time as a congress than bash the courts.

Why then is something as arbitrary as a bill that would strip our Federal courts of their authority to hear an issue that the highest court in our land has never spoke on at the top of our list of "things to do"? Need I remind my colleagues that the Supreme Court has never, since the inclusion of the words "under God" into the Pledge of Allegiance back in 1954, discussed or ruled on its constitutionality? Why then do we need this legislation at all? Why then do we need to offer this legislation now? It is our rights as individuals that are at stake right now—not the sanctity and preservation of the Pledge.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have left?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New York has 1½ minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I will not use the 1½ minutes. I will simply say that this amendment is dangerous for the same reason that the bill is dangerous. We should not say, in the case of this amendment, to someone who is a plaintiff in a court in a pending case, we are going to shut the courthouse door in your face because we are afraid the Supreme Court might issue a decision. It has not done it yet, but we are afraid the Supreme Court might issue a decision that we disagree with. We do not trust the courts. We do not agree with them. Never mind that George Bush has appointed two new members of the Court. We still do not agree with it, and, therefore, we are going to try to strip them of their jurisdiction.

That way strips the protection of our liberties from us. We need the courts to protect our liberties. Our constitutional rights can only be vindicated by the courts stepping in when the political branches of government violate the rights of unpopular minorities. That is what the courts have done throughout our history, and we need that protection to continue. And that is why this bill is not only subversive of our constitutional rights, but unconstitutional.

The bill ought to be defeated. The amendment ought to be defeated.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT) having assumed the chair, Mr. LATOURETTE, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2389) to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to the jurisdiction of Federal courts over certain cases and controversies involving the Pledge of Allegiance, had come to no resolution thereon.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3044

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name from cosponsorship of H.R. 3044.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

RECORD votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

COMMENDING NASA ON COMPLETION OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE'S SECOND RETURN-TO-FLIGHT MISSION

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 448) commending the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on the completion of the Space Shuttle's second Return-to-Flight mission.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 448

Whereas, on July 4, 2006, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration performed a successful launch of the Space Shuttle Discovery;

Whereas this mission, known as STS–121, marks the second Return-to-Flight mission;

Whereas the crew of the Discovery consisted of Colonel Steve Lindsey, Commander Mark Kelly, Piers Sellers, Ph.D, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Fossum, Commander Lisa Nowak, Stephanie Wilson, and Thomas Reiter;

Whereas the STS–121 mission tested Space Shuttle safety improvements, building on findings from Discovery's flight last year, including a redesign of the Space Shuttle's External Tank foam insulation, in-flight inspection of the shuttle's heat shield, and improved imagery during launch;

Whereas the STS–121 mission re-supplied the International Space Station by delivering more than 28,000 pounds of equipment and supplies, as well as added a third crew member to the International Space Station;

Whereas, due to the overall success of the launch and on-orbit operations, the mission was able to be extended from 12 to 13 days, allowing for an additional space walk to the two originally scheduled;

Whereas the success of the STS–121 mission is a tribute to the skills and dedication of the Space Shuttle crew, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and its industrial partners;

Whereas all Americans benefit from the technological advances gained through the Space Shuttle program; and

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration plays a vital role in sustaining America's preeminence in space: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration be commended for—

(1) the successful completion of the Space Shuttle Discovery's STS–121 mission; and

(2) its pioneering work in space exploration which is strengthening the Nation and benefitting all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 448, the concurrent resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in hearty support of H. Con. Res. 448, which commends the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for its successful completion of the space shuttle's second return-to-flight test mission. NASA gave the United States a birthday present and the best fireworks show imaginable with the breathtaking launch of the Discovery mission, also known as STS–121, on the Fourth of July this year.

The shuttle *Discovery* spent nearly 13 days in orbit, 9 of which were spent docked to the international space station. During the 18th shuttle mission to the international space station, the STS–121 crew members delivered over 28,000 pounds of equipment and supplies and transported one additional crew member to the station for a 6-month stay. The astronauts also performed three successful space walks to test equipment and to conduct maintenance.

This Discovery mission is an essential building block for the Vision for Space Exploration to the Moon, Mars, and Beyond. NASA is already fast at work on preparation for the next shuttle launch, with a window that begins on August 28, just a little more than a month away. This mission will resume the assembly of the international space station with the delivery of two truss sections and a set of solar arrays.

NASA Administrator Mike Griffin, the Discovery crew, and the men and women of NASA deserve accolades from the American public for a successful STS–121 mission and for effectively reviving America's space program to the heights of its glory. These astronauts represent the best of humankind. As the President stated upon the return of the Discovery crew on Monday: "Your courage and commitment to excellence have inspired us all, and a proud Nation sends its congratulations on a job well done. America's space program is a source of great national pride."

□ 1415

I urge the passage of H. Con. Res. 448.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman and ranking member of the full committee and the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. PAUL of Texas, Mr. BOEHLERT and Mr. CALVERT, and those of us enthusiastically in support of this very, very important resolution.

I would like to first of all acknowledge the human factor, and that is to call out the names of COL Steve Lindsey, CDR Mark Kelly, Piers Sellers, Ph.D., LTC Mike Fossum, CDR Lisa Nowak, Stephanie Wilson and Thomas Reiter, congratulations to these very expert, profound and committed Americans, brave Americans, and to really congratulate their efforts and the STS–121; to commend, as I said, my colleague from Texas, for allowing us today to acknowledge how important this launch is.

It was launched safely and it reentered safely. In addition, STS–121 was the 115th shuttle station, and the 18th to visit the space station, on which we left a very new member of the able space station family. This particular launch had a special emphasis because it was launched on July 4th, the Nation's birthday. What a spectacular event.

I would simply say in addition to its launch, the important work that was done, the important space exploration that was done by two of the members of the team, two crew members, Piers Sellers and Mike Fossum, ventured outside the Space Shuttle three times on space walks. I remember as a child the amazing experience that one would see and envision as the initial space launches began, and then subsequently as we saw the space walks that began, but then to be able to acknowledge when one astronaut stepped first on the Moon.

During the first space walk, they prepared the international space station's railcar for restoration and successfully tested whether the combination of the space shuttle's robotic arm and orbital boom sensor system could be a platform to make repairs.

During the second space walk, they restored the station's mobile transport. On the third space walk, Sellers and Fossum tested methods of repairing a damaged orbiter.

Let me just simply say as we look at all of the work, Mission Specialist Thomas Reiter remained in the international space station and he was the backup. Stephanie Wilson from my community, as many of you know, the astronauts live in Houston, let me also pay special tribute to Stephanie Wilson, the second African American woman to go into space. Lisa Nowak added to this pool of outstanding women.

So allow me to close by simply saying that this was unique not only because of its launch on July 4th, but because of the new culture of safety; because I questioned whether this launch should go forward in light of the safety engineer's comments and the controversy before the launch. But now, in the new culture of safety, NASA vetted those concerns and NASA continued to vet them throughout the launch. They did an extensive review of the space shuttle before reentry. This pronounces that we are ready, we are ready to take on the responsibility, and we are ready to accept risk but not without every attention to safety.

So I would simply say to my colleagues, I ask enthusiastically that we support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MILLER) be able to manage the rest of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL), the author of this resolution and a great supporter of the great work of NASA.

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to sponsor H.Con.Res 448, a resolution commending the people of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for the latest mission of the Space Shuttle Discovery, and I thank the Science Committee and the House leadership for their assistance in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Successfully launched on July 4th, this mission, known as STS–121, marks the second mission of the return-to-flight sequence. STS–121 originally was scheduled to perform just two space walks. However, due to the overall success of the launch, the mission was extended from 12 days to 13 days, allowing for an additional space walk.

Among the tasks that were performed on this mission are tests of shuttle safety improvements to build on findings from Discovery's flight last year, including a redesign of the shuttle's external fuel tank's foam insulation, inflight inspection of the shuttle's heat shield, improved imagery during launch, and the ability to launch a shuttle rescue mission. The external tank, which underwent work during the mission to reduce foam loss, performed well this time, especially early in the flight.

The STS–121 mission also bolstered the international space station by making a key repair and delivering more than 28,000 pounds of equipment and supplies, as well as adding a third crew member to the space station.

STS–121 was NASA's most photographed mission in shuttle history, as more than 100 high definition, digital, video and film cameras assessed whether any debris comes off the external tank during the shuttle's launch.

Mr. Speaker, the success of STS–121 is a tribute to the skills and dedication of all NASA employees, especially the Space Shuttle Discovery crew of Colonel Steve Lindsey, Commander Mark Kelly, Piers Sellers, Ph.D., Lieutenant Colonel Mike Fossum, Commander Lisa Nowak, Stephanie Wilson and Thomas Reiter.

I would like now to close with a particular quote that is very pertinent for what we are doing here with this resolution. This comes from a famous author of the last century, who might have been one of the most famous, who wrote a book that many Members of this Congress may well have read. The interesting thing about this quote, it comes from an individual who was not much in favor of big government. As a matter of fact, she was in favor of very, very limited government, and she introduced the ideas of libertarianism to millions of Americans.

But nevertheless, it just happened that NASA was her favorite government agency, and therefore after the Moon landing in 1979 she wrote very favorably about NASA, which in some ways contradicted her philosophy, but it also spoke to the tremendous brilliance and success of the Moon exploration program.

That author that I want to quote is the author of Atlas Shrugged, Ayn Rand, who wrote this shortly after the Moon landing in 1969. And although this is written in praise of the Moon landing, it applies to all those individuals who participated in STS–121.

The quote goes this way: ''Think of what was required to achieve that mission. Think of the unpitying effort; the merciless discipline; the courage; the responsibility of relying on one's judgment; the days, nights and years of unswerving dedication to a goal; the tension of an unbroken maintenance of a full, clear mental focus and honesty. It took the highest, sustained acts of virtue to create in realty what had only been dreamt of for millennia.''

I encourage all my colleagues and all Americans to join me in commending NASA for completing this mission and all of NASA's work.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution, and I rise, Mr. Speaker, to make note of the heroes in our society and the heroines in our society.

As I do so, I am reminded of a statement that calls to our attention the notion that a great person or great people will always rise to the occasion, and our astronauts have truly risen to the occasion. They are making it possible for us to travel not only to the planets, but also to the stars and beyond. They have truly risen to the occasion.

However, just as a great person will always rise to the occasion, it takes an even greater people to make the occasion, and I want to salute as well the many persons, some of whom are nondescript, who help make it possible for a great people to rise to the occasion: the janitors who work as a part of this team, all of the contractors and subcontractors who are a part of this team. Every person associated with this effort deserves to be commended for the outstanding job that has been done.

So today we celebrate not only those who rise to the occasion, but also those who make the occasion.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the crew and all of the NASA employees on the successful completion of their mission, known as STS–121, the second return-to-flight mission. The mission serves as another example of the historic accomplishments of each of NASA's centers.

I am proud to say that the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio played an essential role in the mission. Over the last year, NASA Glenn's researchers and scientists have worked to improve the safety of the shuttle.

Glenn's supersonic 8 by 6 foot wind tunnel was used to make detailed measurements of the ways in which the shuttle would be affected by the absence of what is called the protuberance air load ramps, PAL. The PAL ramp is used to smooth the airflow over the exterior cables and fuel lines. The information gained from the tests was used to decide to fly without the PALs, which is the biggest aerodynamic change in the history of the space shuttle.

Glenn has also been part of a team testing NOAX, a material designed to fill spaces in the shuttle's surface. On the third space walk, shuttle astronauts tested the compound's performance during the intense heat of reentry. Early indications are that the experiment went very well.

Glenn also has experiments in the international space station that will further the safety of human presence in outer space. For example, this mission began an experiment on the space station that will improve the detection of fire in a microgravity environment.

NASA is deserving of thanks and congratulations from Congress. I support this resolution. I thank Congressman PAUL for offering it, and I want to thank all of my colleagues who have been supportive of this program and who understand its relationship to the future of our Nation and the future of the world.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that there are no NASA facilities in my district. We are available if NASA has the need of additional facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. As the adult who sat transfixed as a child in my elementary school classroom and watched as we launched first Alan Shepard, then Gus Grissom and then John Glenn into space, and sat and watched transfixed each time we put human beings into space, it is a remarkable accomplishment. I feel as much in awe of the crew of STS–121 as I felt as a small child in watching those first Mercury flights.

It is an accomplishment that requires great skill, and, as we have been painfully reminded on two occasions, it is one that still requires great physical courage. This is not a safe undertaking. It cannot be made safe. It requires great physical courage for the crew to fly into space to pursue space travel as they do.

It is also a remarkable accomplishment for the team of employees at NASA who remained on the ground and for all the contractors as well, the team at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The crew of the STS–121, again, I know that Mr. CALVERT has already said who they were, Colonel Steve Lindsey, Commander Mark Kelly, Piers Sellers, Ph.D., Lieutenant Colonel Mike Fossum, Commander Lisa Nowak, Stephanie Wilson and Thomas Reiter, specifically launched into orbit above the Space Shuttle Discovery, the second return-to-space flight after the disaster, the tragedy of a few years ago.

□ 1430

Colonel Lindsey said after landing STS–121 that there were two goals for the mission. The first was to complete the return-to-flight tasks begun with the first return-to-flight mission in July of 2005 by flying an improved external tank and testing shuttle repair procedures while in orbit, which apparently is considerably more difficult than conducting those repairs in a garage bay or in a bay.

The second goal was to prepare the international space station for future assembly and to boost the number of people living on the space station from two to three.

Both of those goals were successfully completed by the mission. For the first time since 2003, the international space station now has three members. European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Reiter joined Russian Pavel Vinogradov and American Jeff Williams.

In addition to those goals, the crew was able to make never-before-seen high-resolution images of the shuttle during and after the July Fourth launch, making that mission the most photographed in the shuttle mission.

And the tragedy a few years ago has reminded us, or should remind us, that that ability to look at the shuttle and figure out its current status, its current condition is one that is critical to successful safe future flights.

There were many high-definition digital, video and film cameras documenting the launch and the climb into orbit, and they did help determine whether the shuttle had experienced any damage and whether there were any concerns with return to Earth such as the tragedy that came upon the Discovery.

They also performed inspection of the shuttle heat shield while in space. And on their third space walk during the mission, they tested different techniques for inspecting and repairing the reinforced carbon segments that protect the shuttle's nose cone and the right leading edge, again, an important safety concern because of the Discovery tragedy.

The crew also delivered 28,000 pounds of equipment and supplies to the international space station and repaired a rail car on the international space station.

Through this successful launch and the technological advances that the crew made while in space, we can look forward in the not-too-distant future to the complete assembly of the international space station.

Mr. Speaker, it also increases, the successful mission increases, the likelihood that we can keep the Hubble space telescope in service, perform necessary repairs as well as routine maintenance, to the extent that you can call that routine maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, the flights of the Discovery showed that the team of NASA employees and contractors still have the right stuff or still are deserving of our awe and admiration, as the awe and admiration I felt as a child for those first Mercury astronauts.

Mr. Speaker, there being no further speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Once again, I want to congratulate the crew, the NASA team, the contractors for the successful completion of STS–121. We look forward to future success as we continue our journey exploring the unknown and to do things that require skill, technical expertise, courage, and the will to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 448.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

MT. SOLEDAD VETERANS MEMORIAL PROTECTION ACT

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5683) to preserve the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California, by providing for the immediate acquisition of the memorial by the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows

H.R. 5683

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial has proudly stood overlooking San Diego, California, for over 52 years as a tribute to the members of the United States Armed Forces who sacrificed their lives in the defense of the United States.

(2) The Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial was dedicated on April 18, 1954, as ''a lasting memorial to the dead of the First and Second World Wars and the Korean conflict'' and now serves as a memorial to American veterans of all wars, including the War on Terrorism.

(3) The United States has a long history and tradition of memorializing members of the Armed Forces who die in battle with a cross or other religious emblem of their faith, and a memorial cross is fully integrated as the centerpiece of the multi-faceted Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial that is replete with secular symbols.

(4) The patriotic and inspirational symbolism of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial provides solace to the families and comrades of the veterans it memorializes.

(5) The Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial has been recognized by Congress as a National Veterans Memorial and is considered a historically significant national memorial.

(6) 76 percent of the voters of San Diego supported donating the Mt. Soledad Memorial to the Federal Government only to have a superior court judge of the State of California invalidate that election.

(7) The City of San Diego has diligently pursued every possible legal recourse in order to preserve the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in its entirety for persons who have served in the Armed Forces and those persons who will serve and sacrifice in the future.

SEC. 2. ACQUISITION OF MT. SOLEDAD VETERANS MEMORIAL, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.

(a) ACQUISITION.—To effectuate the purpose of section 116 of division E of Public Law 108–447 (118 Stat. 3346; 16 U.S.C. 431 note), which, in order to preserve a historically significant war memorial, designated the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California, as a national memorial honoring veterans of the United States Armed Forces, there is hereby vested in the United States all right, title, and interest in and to, and the right to immediate possession of, the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California, as more fully described in subsection (d).

(b) COMPENSATION.—The United States shall pay just compensation to any owner of the property for the property taken pursuant to this section, and the full faith and credit of the United States is hereby pledged to the payment of any judgment entered against the United States with respect to the taking of the property. Payment shall be in the amount of the agreed negotiated value of the property or the valuation of the property awarded by judgment and shall be made from the permanent judgment appropriation established pursuant to section 1304 of title 31, United States Code. If the parties do not reach a negotiated settlement within one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense may initiate a proceeding in a court of competent jurisdiction to determine the just compensation with respect to the taking of such property.

(c) MAINTENANCE.—Upon acquisition of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial by the United States, the Secretary of Defense shall manage the property and shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Mt. Soledad Memorial Association for the continued maintenance of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial by the Association.

(d) LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—The Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial referred to in this section is all that portion of Pueblo lot 1265 of the Pueblo Lands of San Diego in the City and County of San Diego, California, according to the map thereof prepared by James Pascoe in 1879, a copy of which was filed in the office of the County Recorder of San Diego County on November 14, 1921, and is known as miscellaneous map No. 36, more particularly described as follows: The area bounded by the back of the existing inner sidewalk on top of Mt. Soledad, being also a circle with radius of 84 feet, the center of which circle is located as follows: Beginning at the Southwesterly corner of such Pueblo Lot 1265, such corner being South 17 degrees 14′33″ East (Record South 17 degrees 14′09″ East) 607.21 feet distant along the westerly line of such Pueblo lot 1265 from the intersection with the North line of La Jolla Scenic Drive South as described and dedicated as parcel 2 of City Council Resolution No. 216644 adopted August 25, 1976; thence North 39 degrees 59′24″ East 1147.62 feet to the center of such circle. The exact boundaries and legal description of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial shall be determined by survey prepared by the Secretary of Defense. Upon acquisition of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial by the United States, the boundaries of the Memorial may not be expanded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask my colleagues' support for H.R. 5683, the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial Protection Act. Since 1954, a 29-foot cross has stood atop Mt. Soledad in San Diego, California, memorializing the sacrifices of American soldiers during World War I, World War II, and the Korean conflict.

This beautiful and historic memorial cross was erected and is maintained by a private organization, the Mt. Soledad Memorial Association, with the permission of the city of San Diego.

Over the years, the memorial association has added many elements to this memorial, including over 1,700 granite plaques commemorating individual servicewomen and men on concentric walls, bollards, pavers, and a flag pole proudly flying the American flag. The memorial cross now is fully integrated as a centerpiece of the multifaceted Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial. It is without question a world-class war memorial, dedicated to all of those, regardless of race, religion or creed, who have served our armed services.

In 1989, a single plaintiff brought suit against the city of San Diego because he stated he was offended by the sight of the cross. The district court found that presence of this memorial cross violated the California Constitution's guarantee of free exercise and enjoyment of religion without discrimination or preference and ordered the removal of the display.

The city of San Diego, like other municipalities faced with similar court orders, endeavored in good faith to divest itself of the memorial property by selling it to a private party who could choose to display the memorial cross.

In this case, however, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals found that the method of sale violated the California Constitution's ban on aid to sectarian purposes. On May 3, 2006, the district court ordered the city of San Diego to comply with the original injunction.

The city has appealed that order to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy has stayed enforcement of the order pending the outcome of that appeal.

In 2004, the United States Congress designated the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial a National Veterans Memorial and authorized the Federal Government to accept the donation of the memorial from the city of San Diego. The voters of San Diego passed, by an overwhelming 76 percent, a ballot measure providing for the donation. But in response to a complaint by the same lone plaintiff, a San Diego County superior court judge invalidated the citywide referendum as violating the California Constitution.

The vast majority of the citizens of the city of San Diego favor finding a way to keep the Mt. Soledad Memorial intact, even if that means giving up ownership of the parkland property on which it is located.

A 1994 ballot measure authorizing the sale of the property also passed with 76

percent of the vote, as did a 2005 ballot measure directing the city to donate the memorial property to the Federal Government.

The efforts of the city to vindicate the desires of the citizenry, however, have been stymied by one plaintiff and a few judges who find the city of San Diego's display of the decades-old memorial cross impermissible under the California Constitution.

H.R. 5683 vests title and possession of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial, a national memorial honoring the war dead and veterans of the United States Armed Forces, in the United States. Once the memorial property belongs to the United States, the constitutionality of the property transfer, as well as the display of the cross as an element of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial, will be determined under the establishment clause of the United States Constitution.

Applying the establishment clause to the government's display of religious symbols, the United States Supreme Court has determined that displays of religious symbols on government property are unconstitutional only if their purpose is entirely religious and they include no secular components.

Most recently the Supreme Court has determined that the establishment clause analysis of passive monuments like this one is driven by the nature of the monument and by our Nation's history. In the case of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial, it is surrounded by a plethora of secular symbols. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there are some 1,700 memorials that make up this overall veterans memorial.

In accordance with the United States' long tradition of memorializing members of the Armed Forces who die in battle with religious symbols, the memorial cross serves a legitimate secular purpose of commemorating our Nation's war dead and veterans. Therefore, the display of the Mt. Soledad memorial cross on Federal property as part of a larger memorial is constitutional.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have many pictures of large crosses in national cemeteries and other national property or Federal property across this Nation, and we will display those at the appropriate time.

The memorial cross on Mt. Soledad is not only a religious symbol, it is a venerated landmark, beloved by the people of San Diego for over 50 years. It is a fitting memorial to all persons who have served and sacrificed for our Nation as members of the Armed Forces.

Passage of H.R. 5683 will preserve the beautiful memorial for the families of those who have died in service, for all current military servicemembers, for veterans, for the citizens of San Diego and for the Nation.

For the RECORD, Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit letters of support from Jerry Sanders, mayor of San Diego; San Diegans for the Mount Soledad National War Memorial; the American Legion; AMVETS; Veterans for Foreign Wars of the United States; Disabled American Veterans; the American Center for Law and Justice; and Robert and Sybil Martino, the parents of a soldier who gave his life in the war on terror and was honored for his sacrifice at the Mt. Soledad Memorial

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,
Washington, DC, July 19, 2006.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY—H.R. 5683—ACQUISITION OF MT. SOLEDAD VETERANS MEMORIAL

(Rep. Hunter (R) CA and two cosponsors)

The Administration strongly supports passage of H.R. 5683 to protect the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego. In the face of legal action threatening the continued existence of the current Memorial, the people of San Diego have clearly expressed their desire to keep the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in its present form. Judicial activism should not stand in the way of the people, and the Administration commends Rep. Hunter for his efforts in introducing this bill. The bill would preserve the Mount Soledad Memorial by vesting title to the Memorial in the Federal government and providing that it be administered by the Secretary of Defense. The Administration supports the important goal of preserving the integrity of war memorials.

JULY 18, 2006.

Hon. DUNCAN HUNTER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HUNTER: As the U.S. House of Representatives prepares to consider the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial Protection Act (H.R. 5683), I write in support of this bill.

As you know, I have strongly voiced my support for maintaining the integrity of the Mt. Soledad Memorial as a multi-faceted site that recognizes veterans of all wars and all faiths.

H.R. 5683 provides that, ''The United States shall pay just compensation to any owner of the property for the property.'' As acknowledged in the legislation, ''The United States has a long history and tradition of memorializing members of the Armed Forces who die in battle with a cross or other religious emblem of their faith and a memorial cross is fully integrated as the centerpiece of the multi-faceted Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial that is replete with secular symbols.''

I believe this legislation provides a possible means of preserving the integrity of the memorial and for that reason I support these efforts.

Sincerely,

JERRY SANDERS,
Mayor.

SAN DIEGANS FOR THE MOUNT SOLEDAD NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL,
San Diego, CA, July 19, 2006.

Hon. DUNCAN HUNTER,
House Armed Services Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HUNTER: San Diegans for the Mount Soledad National War Memorial applauds your efforts on behalf of the vast supermajority of San Diegans, including thousands of veterans, to maintain the integrity of this important monument to those courageous heroes who have fought and died in defense of this great Nation.

By joining Congressmen Issa and Bilbray in introducing legislation that would transfer the site of the memorial to the federal government, you are upholding the will of over 75 percent of San Diegans who voted Yes on Proposition A to keep Mount Soledad as it is, where it is. You are also drawing a clear line in the sand against those who seek to undermine the history and heritage of our great Nation by eradicating from the historic record the heroic individual sacrifices that have not only preserved our own freedom, but liberated millions of people across the globe.

As Chairman of the committee that spearheaded the overwhelmingly successful referendary petition drive and subsequent ''Yes on Prop A'' campaign last July, and a practicing Jew, I am pleased to offer you the full support of San Diegans for the Mount Soledad National War Memorial and any further necessary assistance in preserving this sacred monument on behalf of the people of San Diego and the United States of America.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

PHILIP L. THALHEIMER,
Chairman.

MAY 15, 2006.

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: My wife and I would like to express our support for the effort initiated by Representative Duncan Hunter of California and the Mayor of San Diego to save the cross at Mt. Soledad wherein the Federal Government would take the property by eminent domain as a veteran's memorial.

Our son Captain Michael D. Martino, USMC, was killed in action in Iraq on November 2, 2005, when his Cobra Helicopter was shot down by a SA 16. This past week our son's Camp Pendleton unit, which had just recently returned from Iraq, dedicated plaques at Mt. Soledad to honor him and his fellow pilot Major Gerry Bloomfield for their heroic service. There is no better place to honor our fallen heroes than under that cross, overlooking the country they fought and died to preserve.

Our son loved his country and the many rights and liberties it provided, especially our right to freedom of religion. A few in this country would like to see the cross removed from Mt. Soledad and thus deny the majority their rights to religious expression. This cross is no more an affront to personal beliefs than the thousands of crosses in Arlington Cemetery.

Is it fair to the majority who have served or fallen for our Nation and wish to keep the cross for the sake of the few who look to strip all religion from our country, under a false interpretation of the separation of church and state? Our son died with a strong belief that he was fighting to preserve the freedom of all Americans. Please let us have OUR freedom from activist judges and their personal interpretation of our Constitution.

Mr. President, please take the Memorial at Mt. Soledad under federal ownership.

You are always in our prayers.

Sincerely,

ROBERT A. AND SYBIL E. MARTINO.

JUNE 21, 2006.

Hon. DUNCAN HUNTER,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HUNTER: As the leaders of the Nation's four largest veterans organizations, we respectfully request your assistance on an issue that is important to former military personnel and to American values.

The Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial is a historic site overlooking the Pacific Ocean that has stood for over 52 years as a tribute to our Nation's Armed Forces. This veterans memorial is the first and last thing that

ships see as they arrive or depart from one of the world's largest naval installations. Unfortunately a small group of plaintiffs wish to destroy the integrity of the Memorial and the courts have complied by requiring that the Memorial's centerpiece cross be removed by August 1, 2006. We believe that destruction of the Memorial is an affront to the sacrifices made by America's veterans and is contrary to the will of citizens of San Diego, 76 percent of whom voted in a recent referendum to try to preserve the Memorial. Accordingly, we request that the Congress pursue all available legislative options to take federal possession of the Memorial with the intention of preserving the Veterans Memorial in its current form.

Sincerely,

THOMAS L. BOCK,
National Commander, the American Legion.
PAUL W. JACKSON,
National Commander, Disabled American Veterans.
JAMES R. MUELLER,
Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.
EDWARD W. KEMP,
National Commander, AMVETS.

JUNE 29, 2006.

Hon. DUNCAN HUNTER,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HUNTER: As the leaders of the Nation's four largest veterans' service organizations, we write to you today in appreciation for introducing with Representatives Issa and Bilbray a measure which would provide for the immediate acquisition of the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial by the United States. While this step is extraordinary, our organizations feel it is the appropriate measure to take.

As we noted in our letter to you last week, we believe that the destruction of this Memorial is an affront to the sacrifices made by America's veterans and is contrary to the will of the citizens of San Diego. This Memorial has stood in its historic location overlooking the Pacific Ocean for 52 years, a silent tribute to the sacrifices made by veterans past, present and future.

As we answered the call in the past to serve this country, so we will answer the call now. Accordingly, we offer to help in any way we can to aid you in preserving this hallowed Memorial.

Sincerely,

THOMAS L. BOCK,
National Commander, the American Legion.
PAUL W. JACKSON,
National Commander, Disabled American Veterans.
JAMES R. MUELLER,
Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.
EDWARD W. KEMP,
National Commander, AMVETS.

AMERICAN CENTER FOR LAW & JUSTICE,
Washington, DC, July 17, 2006.

Congressman DUNCAN HUNTER,
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

CONGRESSMAN HUNTER: We write today in support of your legislation to protect the war memorial at Mt. Soledad, H.R. 5683.

We believe the public has a vital interest in ensuring that centuries-old American traditions and practices are not declared unconstitutional without careful and accurate judicial review of all issues involved. The Establishment Clause does not require that crosses, Stars of David, and other religious symbols be removed from Mount Soledad, Arlington National Cemetery, and the countless other places across the country where the lives and sacrifices of veterans are commemorated. The longstanding, venerable tradition of using crosses and other religious symbols on memorials and in the public square is fully consistent with the Supreme Court's Establishment Clause analysis in its County of Allegheny v. ACLU (1998), ACLU of Kentucky v. Mercer County (2005), Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow (2004), and Van Orden v. Perry (2005) decisions.

Your actions, those of other Members and the Departments of Defense and the Interior, and the citizens of San Diego, to help preserve the integrity and sanctity of memorials honoring the lives and sacrifices of veterans are well taken and constitutionally permissible.

To remove the Mt. Soledad cross is an insult to the men and women who fought to protect our freedoms. To allow activist organizations to strip religious symbolism from public life would cut against America's heritage and remove a vital component which makes our country unique.

We applaud your efforts and stand ready to assist you as you continue your fight to save the war memorial at Mt. Soledad.

JAY A. SEKULOW,
Chief Counsel.
COLBY M. MAY,
Senior Counsel & Director.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the chairman said a moment ago, this bill is intended to preserve the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California, and it allows for the immediate acquisition of this memorial by the United States Government.

The distinguished chairman, my friend from California, feels obviously very strongly about this issue, and apparently the people of that region also feel very strongly about it, by virtue of a vote that they took, a popular vote, indicating some 76 percent support for this idea.

Mr. Speaker, for that reason I will not be opposing the resolution. I will have some speakers who would like to speak to the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from San Diego, California (Mr. ISSA), who has been a real champion in this effort to preserve the memorial.

□ 1445

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this acquisition by the Federal Government, because it is so consistent with how we as Americans have honored our war dead and those who have given in service to our country.

I just want to point out for a moment a picture of Mt. Soledad, of the actual cross, and then, Mr. Speaker, as you look at pictures of the other Federal sites, the amazing thing is how similar they are. These are sites which are not contested. They are not contested because our Founding Fathers didn't want the establishment of a religion, but they didn't want a godless society; just the opposite, they wanted a freedom for people to observe their God as they chose fit. Particularly when we deal with those who have fallen in support of this country, they should be free to honor them with or without symbols that they find comfort in.

I think, Mr. Speaker, as we consider this important piece of legislation, I think it is important that we realize that that cross is about men and women who have given their lives and a symbol that says they gave their life for their country. It is an arbitrary symbol, but it is not a symbol without meaning. It stands, like those crosses in faraway lands of Americans who fell in Tripoli, Americans who were buried at Normandy, and of Americans who have never been returned home from the sea. It stands as a symbol of their passing and their sacrifice.

Mt. Soledad, no one ever doubted that this was a war memorial. No one ever doubted that. In fact, people found comfort in this symbol to those men and women in San Diego, the home of both Marines and Navy, for more than 100 years. No one ever found that this was inappropriate to honor our dead. What they found was one person, one out of 2 million people, who said, I am offended, I want no cross. It offends me.

Mr. Speaker, the definition of offensive language and offensive behavior and signs like the swastikas and other symbols of hate are just that. They are unique symbols that people have no doubt are designed to offend.

This cross was never intended to offend. Just the opposite; it was intended to do what it does for the vast majority of San Diegans and people who come to our fair city. It honors our war veterans for the sacrifice they made. That is the symbolism it has. That is the reason that hundreds of thousands of people climb that hill every year to spend a moment to look at the cross, but, more importantly, to look at the pictures of the men and women throughout the lower part of this memorial who, in fact, are there on plaques to be observed and remembered for their sacrifice.

I ask full support of this resolution.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to a distinguished member of the House Armed Services Committee, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying I appreciate the sensitivity of my colleagues on this issue who believe this bill is about veterans. I, too, have a deep appreciation of our veterans and the sacrifices they have made for our Nation and our freedoms.

If this bill were nothing more than a veterans issue, we would have a very simple decision before us today. But, unfortunately, that is not the case. The courts have told us time and time again what this issue is about. It is about a demonstrated preference of one religion over all others. It is about a uniquely religious symbol on public land. Make no mistake about it, this bill is not about preserving a veterans memorial. It is about preserving a 29-foot cross that sits within the boundaries of a veterans memorial, a veterans memorial that is supposed to honor all veterans.

Yet towering over the American flag, and the plaques, names, and photos of honored veterans, and I can see many of their faces in the plaques today, is a 29-foot symbol of one religion, and that is why we are here today.

A district court ruling on the memorial noted, ''Even if one strains to view the cross in the context of a war memorial, its primary effect is to give the impression that only Christians are being honored.''

I can certainly understand, Mr. Speaker, the emotion that this issue has generated. Believe me, I can understand that emotion. But as today's discussion has proven, this issue has become more about a cross than about a veterans memorial. Our focus should be on the veterans, and it should be inclusive of all veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to share the words of one of my constituents who just recently wrote me. He says, ''My father, a Bronze Star recipient for being wounded twice during D-Day, died a few years back, and I would like to pay tribute to his service to our country by purchasing a plaque to honor him.

''Mt. Soledad is one mile from where I live, and it would be the most logical choice, given its beautiful location and proximity.

''However, my father, being a practicing Jew, would be dishonored by the cross.'' That was the way he felt he would see it. ''Shouldn't,'' he asked, ''a war memorial pay homage to all who served and defended this country?''

And he continues to write, ''It is un-American to create a memorial to veterans which is not all-inclusive.

''There are many things,'' he writes, ''which could be erected as a tribute, but a cross, a crescent moon, a statue of Buddha, or a Star of David, are completely inappropriate and illegal.

''This is all about religion, because if the monument being considered were a statue of a dove or a soldier, we would not even be having this conversation.''

Mr. Speaker, I say to you, I fully understand the sensitivity of this issue. Believe me, it would be easy to vote with the majority on this issue. But the easiest decision, or the most popular one, is not always the right one.

In the words of James Fenimore Cooper, and I quote, ''It is a besetting vice of democracies to substitute public opinion for law. This is the usual form in which masses of men exhibit their tyranny.''

The beauty of our Constitution is that it protects the voice of the minority, so I ask you to join me in protecting that minority today.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from San Diego, California (Mr. BILBRAY), a gentleman who has worked tirelessly to preserve the memorial.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. This memorial is in my district. It is a very prominent memorial, not just in the landscape, but in the history of San Diego County.

I remember as a child my father driving me past this memorial and looking up and saying this is one of the few memorials in the country that recognize the heartbreak of what went on in Korea. As a Korean veteran, he was also very much impressed with the fact that San Diegans set aside a memorial for the Korean war.

Frankly, I am shocked in a time of war, a time when our men and women are out exchanging deadly fire with the enemy, that we are talking about destruction of a war memorial. It is a war memorial dedicated to 800-plus people that never came back from the Korean war, the missing in action.

Now, in San Diego County, we have many religious symbols on public lands. We have a cross to Father Serra on Presidio Hill. We have a cross to Cabrillo, who found San Diego Harbor. We have Point Lomo. We have a county synagogue in our county park, and we have a cross on Mount Helix that was set aside by a gentleman for his wife. We are not asking to tear those religious symbols down.

All I have to say, Mr. Speaker, is we have enough tolerance for a cross to Father Serra. If we can find the tolerance to save a major historical building such as the synagogue, Beth Israel Synagogue, if we can find the tolerance to have a cross for Cabrillo, my God, can't we find the tolerance to preserve a war memorial to 800,000 missing in action in Korea? This really is about common sense, common decency and tolerance.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who will find excuses to attack what they may not like, but this is not about religion; it is about the tolerance of our heritage and the memorials to those who have fought for our heritage across the board. I would just like to point out, if somebody wants to say that this is somehow a Christian conspiracy, that Phil Thalheimer, the chairman of Save the Cross, happens to be of the Jewish faith, his family survived the terrible Holocaust in Europe.

One of his biggest statements, that his family always talked about, the first thing that the Fascists wanted to do was to destroy religious symbols when his parents were trying to escape.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the State of California has many religious symbols, and we do too here. All I have to say is I don't think anybody in California or in this Chamber is asking for the cross in Father Serra's hands to be taken off that statue in Statuary Hall. The fact is that both of the statues for California happen to be someone who is affiliated with the Christian faith. But their affiliation with Christianity does not change the historical significance or the justification and the logic of us honoring him here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking today to do a very easy thing. Understand that mistakes can be made by courts; but the voters have said very clearly they do not find offense in a memorial to veterans. They do not find offense to this symbol for these people, for the people that committed so much for America.

I would ask anyone who thinks that the cross is offensive, because it is a religious symbol, to go to the memorial and walk around the wall of it. You will see every religious symbol thinkable around that memorial that have been dedicated.

If we take this cross down because someone may take offense to a religious symbol, when will they next go for the Star of David, the star or crescent? They will go after the other symbols that somebody may take offense to.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to honor our war dead, our missing in action from Korea. We should honor ourselves by showing that tolerance is not a politically correct catch term, but truly is the sign of an enlightened people, that as Moses looks down on us here, we will be proud to have him guide us on this vote.

I ask for a ''yes'' vote on this, and ask you, for the people of the 50th District of California, to support their will, support their veterans, and vote ''yes'' on this resolution.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Just to make one point, what we are doing with this legislation is taking ownership that we have already designated by law the memorial at Mt. Soledad, the Korean war memorial. We have already designated this memorial as a Federal memorial. What we are doing is taking ownership of the memorial.

So for those who don't like it and who think that it is unconstitutional, that memorial will still be intact and will be subject to any attacks that they or others may want to make on the memorial.

What it simply does is transfer title of the memorial, of the property, to the Federal Government. I think that is absolutely appropriate in light of the fact that these are veterans from all over America who are represented on those 1,700-plus little memorials that make up this big memorial. So it is absolutely reasonable and appropriate that the Federal Government, having designated this as a Federal memorial,

takes ownership of the property as a Federal memorial.

□ 1500

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN).

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak on this matter, but the eloquence of the gentlewoman from California and the remarks of the distinguished gentleman from California have moved me to stand up and say a few words.

I do not know why in a pluralistic society, in a great democracy that we are, that we have become, that we continue to be, that we look to find things and issues to divide us rather than to unite us.

I am not of the Christian faith. Christian symbols do not offend me. They stand for things that are good and decent and pure and idealistic, and I think that is wonderful. But to make them the symbol of something public is something that I do find offensive.

We talk about so often our Judeo-Christian heritage. I am not sure what that means exactly. I know it means that somebody is reaching out to try to include me and my small faith when they want to look pluralistic.

I know that my dad fought in World War II. I know that I had relatives who went to Canada to join the Royal Mounted Police because they were in World War II fighting the Nazis before the United States of America did. I know that people of all faiths of this great Nation died in that war and all other wars that we fought, and continue to die today as you read the list of people coming back, tragically killed by terrorists.

I do not know why we have to put a religious symbol on the entire monument. There is nothing wrong with the crucifix in the hands of whoever wants to hold it, even in Statuary Hall. Nobody is saying remove that cross. That is an individual sign of faith, not a collective societal sign of faith.

The gentleman from California justifies it by saying it is a symbol of our heritage. I beg to differ. It is not a collective symbol of our heritage because it is not the symbol of my heritage, though I respect it as a symbol of somebody else's heritage. And if, indeed, the only symbol up there was a statue of Buddha or a Muslim symbol or a Jewish Star of David, I would object as strenuously.

If you cannot represent all religions, then represent no religion. They did not die in a crusade. It was not a religious Korean war. Why put the symbol of Christianity or any other religion there?

Make it a monument for people who fought and died for freedom of liberty, who died for freedom of religion, who died for people's ability to express themselves in a free society. That was the intent, and I think that is something we would all be proud of, and we are proud of the veterans.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his statement. How much time do both sides have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) has 5½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) has 11½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HUNTER. Do we have the right to close?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. HUNTER. In that case, we would like to reserve our time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I do not have any additional speakers, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all Members for engaging in this debate. I think it is a good one and a healthy one, and I would like to point out to all Members that preserving this memorial, that is, transferring it to the United States of America, is supported strongly by the American Legion, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, by the Disabled American Veterans, and by AMVETS and by all of their national commanders.

Mr. Speaker, let me point out that there are dozens and dozens not only of crosses but of Stars of David and other religious symbols on Federal property throughout this country.

I noticed during the debate here that we are standing under a statement, ''In God we trust,'' that stands over the Speaker's chair, arguably a target for a constitutional argument that it violates separation of church and State.

Now, in answer to my friend from New York and his statement that why did we have to go and put this cross on this memorial, this memorial is 52 years ago. It is a memorial that has evolved and grown since not only the Korean war but actually right after the turn of the century, like so many memorials that we have.

Today, there is not really just one memorial. There are really 1,701 memorials in composite because there are 1,700 plaques to people that gave everything they had to the United States of America.

This last letter that I received in support of this from the parents of Captain Martino, who fell in Iraq last year, saying please do not let them tear down the memorial, reminded me to look back and look at some of the other people that are on this memorial. There is a thread of patriotism between every American alive today and those who served our country and those who fell for our country, those 619,000 Americans who died in the last century, those 2,500-plus Americans who have given their lives in Iraq and the 300-plus Americans who have given their lives in Afghanistan. There is a thread of patriotism between those people.

So for Captain Martino, who gave his life in Iraq just last year because of that, and for his family, somebody is able to teach at a synagogue or a church today or a college; because of a machine gunner in Belleau Wood early in this century, a businessman is able to operate freely in Cincinnati; and because of people who fell in the Korean war, a young couple is able to walk down the streets without being arrested in Washington, D.C.

So the freedoms that we have are combined by a thread to every single person who gave that full measure of devotion to our country, and whether we like it or not and whether the courts like it or not, the people, the families, the service people, think that those threads come together in little monuments and memorials throughout this country, not the least of which is Arlington Cemetery, but also not the least of which is 3,000 miles away on Mt. Soledad overlooking the Pacific Ocean where the 1st Marine Division embarked for those incredible fights in the island chains, taking back Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima and other islands in the Axis Powers in World War II. That is a point of embarkation. It is a point where many families last saw their loved ones.

This memorial has a thread of patriotism and a thread of meaning to the people of the United States, not just San Diego, and it is fully appropriate that the United States of America, having made this memorial a national memorial, now takes ownership of the memorial.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5683, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR THE PEOPLE OF INDIA IN AFTERMATH OF THE DEADLY TERRORIST ATTACKS ON JULY 11, 2006

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 911) expressing sympathy for the people of India in the aftermath of the deadly terrorist attacks in Mumbai on July 11, 2006, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 911

Whereas on July 11, 2006, during evening rush hour, seven major explosions occurred

on busy urban commuter trains in the Indian financial capital of Mumbai, killing as many as 200 and wounding more than 700 innocent civilians;

Whereas the Mumbai attacks occurred shortly after a series of grenade attacks took the lives of at least eight people and injured approximately 40 others in tourist areas of Srinagar, Kashmir;

Whereas India has been a strong partner of the United States in the Global War on Terror and offered immediate assistance to the United States after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001;

Whereas the United States and India are both multicultural, multireligious democracies that oppose terrorism in all its forms and will continue to work steadfastly to overcome terrorist ideology and establish international peace and security;

Whereas the bombings have been condemned by leaders from around the world, including from those attending the Group of Eight (G–8) meeting in Saint Petersburg, Russia; and

Whereas the United States stands with the people and the Government of India and condemns in the strongest terms these atrocities, which were committed against innocent people as they went about their daily lives: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns in the strongest possible terms the July 11, 2006, terrorist attacks in Mumbai and Srinagar;

(2) expresses its deepest condolences to the families and friends of those individuals killed in the attacks and expresses its sympathies to those individuals who have been injured;

(3) expresses its solidarity with the Government and people of India in fighting and defeating terrorism in all its forms; and

(4) expresses its support for the enhancement of relations between the United States and India, with the goal of combating terrorism and advancing international peace and security.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 911.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

At the outset, let me acknowledge the leadership of Mr. WILSON and Mr. CROWLEY in sponsoring this important and timely resolution, as well as that of the current cochairs of the India Caucus, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. ACKERMAN, as well as the leadership of Mr. HYDE and, of course, Mr. LANTOS, the distinguished ranking member.

I would also like to express appreciation to House leadership for scheduling floor time today for this measure.

On July 11, 2006, more than 200 people were killed and over 700 others injured in seven bomb blasts that targeted several locations on the local railway network in Mumbai, India's commercial capital during evening rush hour. Meanwhile, earlier that same day, grenade attacks in Srinagar, Kashmir targeted tourists, killing eight innocent civilians and wounding over 40 more.

Although the motivations behind this attack are still a bit vague, previous attacks have been designed to provoke communal conflict and to disrupt the Indian economy. However, India's multicultural and multiethnic democracy is enormously resilient, and the warped schemes of those who planned and executed these attacks have so far, thankfully, come to naught.

Mr. Speaker, it is self-evident that these brutal terrorist attacks are an affront to the world community, and they have, appropriately, been thoroughly and unequivocally condemned by leaders and ordinary citizens around the globe.

For example, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, President and Mrs. Bush issued a statement on behalf of the American people expressing their deepest condolences to the friends and families of the victims.

The President spoke for all Americans when he noted that ''The United States stands with the people and the Government of India and condemns in the strongest terms these atrocities which were committed against innocent people as they went about their daily lives. Such acts only strengthen the resolve of the international community to stand united against terrorism and to declare unequivocally that there is no justification for the vicious murder of innocent people,'' said President and Mrs. Bush.

More recently on July 17, representatives at the Group of Eight Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia also condemned these ''barbaric terrorist acts'' and emphasized their unity with India in a common resolve to intensify efforts to combat anarchistic acts of terrorism and uphold the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, tribute must be paid to the people of Mumbai who not only responded with great compassion to families of those who were killed and injured in the attacks, but who demonstrated such courage and resolve in almost immediately restoring normalcy in that great and bustling city. It is astonishing that in the wake of these attacks not only were Mumbai's trains running the next day, but millions of its citizens overcame their fears and returned to those trains in order to keep that extraordinary city thriving.

Likewise, at a time when international events seem to be spinning dangerously out of control, tribute must also be paid to the leadership of Prime Minister Singh, who has responded to the attacks in Mumbai and Srinagar with firm resolve but measured restraint as the investigation of these attacks unfold.

Here, Mr. Speaker, let me stress that the challenge of establishing a balance between the two ''Rs,'' resolve and restraint, involves the most difficult judgment call in international relations today. Senseless, anarchistic acts tempt human nature. It is easy to succumb to the third ''R,'' revenge, but not infrequently that is the response terrorists most desire because it escalates violence and disorder.

In this context, it is impressive how historically Indian democracy stands out, not only for its size, for its success in amalgamating extraordinary diversity, but for its origin in Gandhi-esque principles, revolution premised on nonviolence, the Indian term ''satyagraha.'' The power of principled nonviolence overwhelmed the power of colonialist arms.

Today, there are models in the world of military reaction to terrorist disorder. These models of escalated violence are understandable, but it will be interesting to see if the model of restraint being established in India today to these unpardonable acts of violence proves more effective, as well as more humane, than military responses.

I urge support for this resolution.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Just over a week ago, barbarism boarded seven trains in Mumbai, India, and turned them into a horror show. The toll was horrific, over 200 dead, hundreds of others maimed and traumatized. Across the region, shocked, grieving people had suddenly lost parents, spouses, children, brothers and sisters to this random, heinous act.

The explosive devices were placed to cause maximum havoc. Hidden in overhead luggage racks, they tore through the upper bodies of some victims, decapitating many. And they were set to detonate during Mumbai's rush hour to increase the carnage.

I wish to express my personal solidarity with the victims of this sickening, heartless act and with their families, along with the people of India as a whole. With our resolution today, Congress condemns this assault on civilization in the strongest of terms.

Mr. Speaker, as we in Congress move ahead with efforts to improve the geostrategic relationship with India, we now have a fresh incentive to forge ever-closer ties. At a time such as this, we consider what our two great democracies have in common: our values, our aspirations, our hopes, and our respect for human life.

Mr. Speaker, it is an irony of timing in the legislative process that the legislation we are considering today is referred to as H. Res. 911, but this coincidence serves to remind us of a common experience. In India, as in the United States, it is a tragic outcome of the civilized world's struggle with terrorism that the world's largest democracy and its oldest are both victims of terrorist attacks. Both of our great nations are targeted by terrorists hell-

bent on destroying the innocent and frightening our governments into submission and appeasement.

Let us reaffirm today that the terrorists will not succeed. The civilized and peace-loving nations of the world are joining forces to combat this evil ideology. Good will prevail. Life will triumph over death. Together, India and the United States will hold aloft the bright beacon of freedom and democracy to lead the way.

Mr. Speaker, this is far from the first such incident in India. Let it be the last, and let us send an unequivocal message that we stand with our brothers and sisters in Indian in the face of the barbarous onslaught in Mumbai.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to yield to the distinguished chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), for such time as she may consume.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Today I rise in strong support of H. Res. 911, and I would like to join my fellow Members of this Chamber in expressing our heartfelt sympathies to the families and friends of the victims.

Last Tuesday, as all of us know, the explosions in India's financial capital of Mumbai killed 207 people, wounding an additional 800. As the deadly bombings occurred during Mumbai's rush hour, aimed at killing as many innocent civilians as possible, they constitute the most heinous acts of terrorism.

The United States stands in solemn support of the Indian people in the face of this terrible tragedy. As cochair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, which I am proud to share with the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN), I take the everlasting bond between the United States and India very seriously.

Just last night Mr. ACKERMAN and I, along with other colleagues and members of the Indian American community, were together in celebrating this expanding and positive relationship between our two countries. We greatly value India's commitment to democracy, and we are grateful that it stands beside the United States as an ally in the war on Islamofascism.

In the wake of the tragic September 11 attacks, India was the first nation to step forward and offer assistance to our Nation. Five years later, the United States humbly offers its assistance to India. Your loss is our loss. Your struggles are our struggles.

Due to the Indian Government's swift response to the attacks, police have captured five persons suspected to be involved. America stands by the Indian people and its government in their efforts to bring to justice those responsible, and we will work together with India to disrupt and dismantle the networks that have made attacks like these all too possible.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguish chairman of the India Caucus, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN).

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution and thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I want to thank Mr. LANTOS for his leadership, along with Representative LEACH for everything that he has done on this issue, and Congressman WILSON as well; and my cochair of the India Caucus, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for her great leadership, and I especially single out Mr. CROWLEY of New York for his role in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, sadly on July 11, 2006, we have a date which will join the litany of the all-too-familiar terrorist attacks, along with the July bombings in London last year, the Madrid bombings in 2004, the Bali bombings in 2002, and, of course, the September 11 attacks on us.

What is also sad is this is not the first time Mumbai has been attacked. In fact, Mumbai has suffered from terrorist attacks since 1993. Indeed, India itself has been the victim of various forms of terrorism since its founding.

Last week's bombings are simply a continuation of India's ongoing struggle with terrorists. Eight bombs were planted by terrorists in the western commuter railway in Mumbai on July 11. Seven of them exploded. They were timed for the height of the rush hour, with the obvious premeditated intent to kill and maim as many innocent people as possible. The resulting explosions left as many as 200 innocent people dead and over 700 people wounded. The response by the authorities and the people of Mumbai to aid the wounded and comfort the families and friends was extraordinary.

The bombings horrified decent people everywhere and were condemned by leaders from all over the globe, including the G–8.

Terrorism is a disease. It is a cancer on the body of humanity, and all nations that oppose terrorism should work shoulder to shoulder to make sure that this scourge is not just cured, but eliminated. The Government of India has long recognized this truth, and in the wake of September 11, 2001, and its attacks on the United States, India was indeed the first nation to step forward and offer its assistance to our Nation.

Let us do the same for India. Let us be prepared not just to offer our condolences and sympathy, but our renewed and reinvigorated commitment to defeating terrorism globally.

I thank the Speaker, and I urge my colleagues to stand with India against terrorism and to support them and this resolution.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and for my colleagues in their steadfast support of H. Res. 911, expressing our collective sympathy and outrage for the attacks on the good people of India and Mumbai on July 11, 2006.

It harkens back to that tragic day, September 11, when the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked. It harkens back to that brutal devastation of the Spanish train bombing that occurred shortly after. It renews the sense of outrage about the London subway attacks a year ago, and it reminds us of Khobar Towers, the two African American embassies, the USS *Cole* and so many other targets preyed upon by savage individuals who know no bounds of decency, but only know how to destroy the innocent.

To attack a train of peace-loving people on the way to or from work is an absolute atrocity, and so we join together with our good friend India, this strong partner in the global war on terror, a strong partner in our humanitarian ties to help other nations in their time of need, one of the world's largest democracies, who has been there through thick and thin to assist not only our Nation, but nations around the world to ensure that we will not stop until we fully prosecute those responsible.

As they investigate, we urge all international partners to assist in this investigation, to take these leads and follow the leads and find, apprehend, detain and sentence the very people who brought this devastating disaster to the fine people of India.

Our prayers are with you. Our support is with you, and it should remind the world for us all to open our eyes to the dangers that lurk among us. The sad reality is that terrorism has destroyed too many lives, and that as a world, not just the United States and Great Britain and a few others, we must stand united in our efforts to eradicate this scourge from our world.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 4 minutes to a distinguish member of the International Relations Committee, the author of this resolution, my good friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY).

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for yielding me this time.

I want to join saluting all those who are sponsoring this resolution today. In particular I want to salute the cochairs of the India Caucus, Mr. ACKERMAN and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for their words in support of this resolution today and their leadership as cochairs of the caucus.

I rise to express myself in the strongest way in support of this resolution and extend my sincere condolences to all of the families of all of the victims of last week's bombing in Mumbai, India.

I would like to thank the majority leader for bringing this resolution to the floor today. And in particular once again I want to thank Mr. LANTOS for his leadership and Chairman HYDE for

his leadership on the committee in working with us to bring this important resolution to the floor.

On July 11, 2006, over 200 innocent people were brutally murdered in India's financial capital by terrorists. Right before these coordinated attacks, terrorists killed 8 people and injured 40 more civilians in Kashmir. Attacks like these are a scourge on our world that all democratic nations must join in unison to fight.

By targeting Mumbai's commuter rail service at the height of rush hour, the terrorists had hoped to accomplish the maximum amount of bloodshed for this cowardly act on innocent civilians. But the Indian people responded to the attacks by turning out in hundreds to donate blood, taking bed sheets to turn into stretchers, and offering assistance and comfort to the victims of this attack.

Today as Members of Congress we send our condolences to the families of the victims. We condemn this act of terrorism by these perpetrators of this senseless act of carnage.

□ 1530

And we express our sympathy with all the people of India and all the people of goodwill throughout this world. India has remained a strong ally of the United States in our global fight against terrorism. And the United States will never forget that. The terrorists who have been attacking India since their founding are the same brand of extremists who continue to threaten the United States of America. Our two countries need to increase our cooperation to root out all terrorism.

Since President Clinton's administration, our country has been moving closer to India to create the natural alliance we should have always had. And, thankfully, President Bush recognized what this relationship could become, and just over a year ago, our two nations signed the July 18 declaration. This declared our resolve to transform our relationship and establish a global partnership committed to the values of human freedom, democracy and the rule of law. This relationship will promote stability, democracy, prosperity and peace throughout the world and enhance our ability to work together to provide global leadership in areas of mutual concern and interest.

With this resolution today, we are reinforcing that relationship. We are pledging our support for the Indian Government as it seeks to reassure its people and capture and bring the perpetrators of this horrific crime to justice during these very, very difficult times in India.

I want to thank my over 100 colleagues who have joined us in sponsoring this resolution today. And I ask each and every one of you, my colleagues, for a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL).

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for offering this very important resolution. I rose to speak earlier today on the importance of America standing by our good friend, Israel, as it was attacked by terrorists. I rise today to also speak of the importance for America to stand by our good friend, India, as it too is attacked by terrorists.

On July 11 of this year, a series of seven explosions killed over 200 people on crowded commuter trains and stations in the Indian city of Mumbai. This deadly attack was an attack not only on India but on the very democracy and pluralism that India represents, values that are important for India, but also for America, values that are important in that part and every part of our world.

Nearly 700 people were injured in the blast in the city's western suburbs as commuters made their way home. All seven blasts came within an 11-minute time span. Timers apparently were hidden in pencils and discovered in at least three of these seven sites where these bombs exploded. The bombs were believed to have been made of RDX, one of the most powerful kinds of military explosives.

The attacks obviously reminded many of the terrorist attacks on the London public transportation system last July and the Madrid train bombings in March 2004. They also reminded India, however, of a series of terrorist attacks; for example, a series of bomb blasts in Mumbai in 1993 that killed more than 250 people. The Prime Minister of India, Prime Minister Singh, attended the G–8 summit with a clear agenda. The world community must declare, in his words, ''zero tolerance for terrorism anywhere.'' And he is correct. We must not forget.

March of 1993, there was a terrorist attack in India again that killed 257 people, wounded more than 1,000.

December of 2001, militants attacked India's Parliament, leaving 14 people, including several gunmen, dead.

In September of 2002 militants attacked a temple, killing 33 people, including two attackers.

March of 2003, a bomb exploded in Mumbai, killing 10 people.

August 2003, two taxis packed with explosives blew up outside a tourist attraction, killing 52 people.

October 2005, three bombs killed 62 people.

And in March 2006, bombs killed 20 people.

July 2006, bombs killed more than 140 people.

I applaud my colleagues for offering this resolution. I think it is important that America extend its sympathies and that we stand with the people of India and Israel as they are subject to these terrorist attacks and we help our allies, our democratic allies stand for the very values of pluralism and democracy that are so important to us here at home in America.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to yield 1 minute to the distinguished Democratic leader with whom I have the privilege of sharing representation of the great city of San Francisco (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, thank him for his extraordinary leadership in making foreign policy for our country that is values based, and it makes us safer.

My compliments, Mr. Speaker, to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina for bringing this important legislation to the floor.

Thank you, Mr. LEACH, for your leadership on this as well. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of it.

I wish this resolution expressing the condolences of yet another terrorist attack was not necessary. The people of the United States know only too well the shock and sorrow experienced by the people of India on July 11. We grieve with them and share their resolve to defeat the forces of evil who would perpetrate such heinous and, yes, cowardly acts.

We also salute the bravery of the millions of residents of Mumbai, who got back on those commuter trains the day after the attacks, refusing to alter their lives and thereby concede even a little to the terrorists.

At a time like this, when we are commending the people of India for their courage and expressing the sympathy and condolences of our constituents to the people and the Government of India, it gives us pause to think about how much we owe India. We in the United States came through, a generation ago, a civil rights movement that was inspired by the spirit of nonviolence which was led in India by Mahatma Gandhi. Our own Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King visited India to learn about nonviolence, and we all know what a tremendous impact it had on succeeding in advancing civil rights in our own country. We will be forever in the debt of India for that magnificent contribution to our own social progress in the United States.

And nobody knows better than Mr. LANTOS the debt of gratitude we owe India for its hospital to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. When I was a brand new Member of Congress, one of the first meetings I was invited to was by Mr. LANTOS to meet His Holiness. He talked about his plan for Tibet. And it has been rough sledding since then, but the Government of India has been a friend to all who are concerned about human rights and respect for the dignity and worth of every person and in the person of His Holiness, a man of peace, a man of balance, a man who would condemn this kind of violence. So India has certainly taken the lead in the nonviolence that influenced our own civil rights movement and the hospitality extended to His Holiness in so many ways as the largest democracy in the world. It is just that democracy and that freedom of movement that, of course, made them a target of these cowards.

So, again, I express the love of freedom and commitment to a democracy that the United States and India share. We will stand together against those who value neither and whose disdain for human life is evidence of the shallowness of the agenda they seek to advance.

The resolution before us is a strong testament to the shared values and the friendship which binds the United States and India. I urge its overwhelming adoption by this House, and again, thank Mr. CROWLEY for his leadership in bringing it to the floor.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman, Mr. ROYCE, also from California.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LEACH for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, I rise in support of this resolution and to strongly condemn the terrorist attack that took place last week in Mumbai, India.

Last week, eight bombs ripped through crowded commuter trains headed for Mumbai in a well-coordinated terrorist attack which claimed as many as 200 lives and injured hundreds more. Mumbai is, of course, India's commercial capital, teeming with people contributing to India's growing economy. Yesterday, life across that city of over 12 million halted for 2 minutes, 2 minutes of silence to remember those killed a week ago.

The style of the attacks and the targeting of mass transportation share the tactics of al Qaeda and Kashmiri militants, and echo the attacks of London, 7/7, and Madrid, 3/11. The attack in Mumbai took place not long after a series of grenade attacks took eight lives in Kashmir. Tests this week confirmed that the Mumbai bombers used the powerful military explosive, RDX, a weapon that has been favored by the Pakistani-led LeT. LeT has had links to al Qaeda, with a senior al Qaeda leader, Abu Zubaydah, being captured at a LeT safe house in 2002 in Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, while we commiserate with India, we must also view these attacks as a reminder that terrorism is indeed a global struggle. It is often said that India and America have a natural bond as two of the largest democracies. Today we share a bond of a common enemy: what the 9/11 Commission identified as Islamist terrorism.

Today our thoughts are with the people of India, and I am confident that the aftermath of these attacks and in that aftermath, we will see all the resilience that is embodied in the Indian people.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished member of the International Relations Committee, my friend from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague for giving me this time. And I rise, of course, in strong support of this resolution.

The United States and India are strong allies and friends, and our friendship will deepen in the years ahead.

Being a New Yorker, and having lived through the catastrophe of the World Trade Center bombings and here in Washington in the Pentagon, we certainly understand the feelings of the people of India because of this horrific terrorist attack killing innocent civilians on the trains.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no difference if terrorists attack Haifa in Israel or blow up children on buses in Tel Aviv in Jerusalem or blow up innocent civilians in Spain, in England, and in India. Terrorism is terrorism. And just as we support Israel and other democracies in the war on terror, we support India in its war on terror as well. And that is why the United States, as the oldest democracy in the world, and India, as the biggest democracy in the world, share so many things in common. And I am delighted that we are working very, very closely with the Indian Government.

And our hearts go out to the people of India, but it is not just sympathy. There has to be a resolve on the part of India and the United States, other democracies and freedom-loving people in the world, to stamp out the scourge of terrorism.

It is very important that we understand what happened. It is very important that we don't mince our words. It is very important that we stand together with the people of India.

So I am delighted that this has strong bipartisan support. I think it is important that the Congress act as one. And I think that in the future, India and the United States will continue to work closely together. Again, we share a common vision.

In the United States, when political campaigns are fought and the opposition party wins, we turn over the reins of government because we are a Nation of laws. The same thing happens in India. When the party in power loses control, they turn over the reins. And since 1947 when India became independent they have done that time and time and time again, unlike some neighboring states. And again, when we look at the vision of the future, the United States and India have the same adversaries. One of them, of course, is terrorism. But when we look at the geopolitical scene in Asia, the United States and India see things very, very closely.

□ 1545

So I am honored to add my voice to all my colleagues who have spoken on behalf of this resolution, to strengthen the U.S.-India relationship, to tell the people of India that we stand with them, we mourn their loss, and we are more resolved than ever with them to fight the war on terror.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished ranking member of the full committee and to the chairman of the full committee Mr. LEACH; sponsors of this legislation, two strong advocates, former cochairs of the India Caucus, Mr. CROWLEY and Mr. WILSON, whom I have had the opportunity to work with.

I remember, and all of us have recalled many times on this floor, the unspeakable experience of 9/11, as we are in betwixt two movies that are now coming out to recount again that tragic day. We also recall how the world stood alongside of America in her time of mourning and her time of sheer desperation and despair, for she had lost 3,000-plus of her citizens.

The same time we now come to stand alongside of India for that day of July 11, when not only was there an attack in Kashmir that saw eight people lose their lives, but we know the triggering of the terror act in Mumbai that generated 200 dead and probably many more injured and how many more to die because of their injuries.

So it is important to stand and to acknowledge our sympathy and as well our compassion. But at the same time I want to emphasize that good people everywhere abhor terror, and I hope that the region of South Asia will embrace those in India and offer their greatest sympathy and, of course, their support against the war on terror and those despots, desperate persons, those horrific individuals who would take their own causes and turn them into terror against others so that others' lives might be lost.

We fight on the battlefields of war. We debate in places like the United Nations, and we have heads of state that engage or disagree. But when we lift up against another human being, another nation, in reckless, random terror, there can be no solace. There can be no comfort. There can be no excuse. There can be no acceptance.

So we join with the people of India in acknowledging that, as the largest democracy and the oldest democracy, you have a friend in the United States. You have a democratic ally in the United States. And you have a family of human beings, ourselves, experiencing terror either in terms of ongoing threats or by watching our friends suffer the consequences.

So it is important, if you will, that today this resolution is more than our affirmation of our friendship and sympathy, but also our brotherhood and sisterhood in the war on terror. I look forward to a day when these resolutions will not be the call of the day, but simply that we will extinguish those who think that they can expand their causes by using terror against innocent, democratic, free-loving people around the world, wherever they might be.

And, again, my deepest sympathy to the people of India. And, again, we

stand with you at this time against acts of terror around the world.

Mr. LANTOS. May I inquire, Mr. Speaker, how much time is left for both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 3½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Iowa has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This resolution is a deeply felt emotional resolution expressing our solidarity with the people of India who were subjected to a totally unprovoked and brutal terrorist act.

Next week this body will consider one of the most significant pieces of legislation of the current session of Congress, establishing a relationship in the field of civilian nuclear power between the United States and India. That legislation will usher in a whole new era of the historic geostrategic relationship between these two great democracies.

I earnestly wish that we did not need to deal with this tragedy, but I think it is appropriate that we demonstrate to our friends in India that we are with them in their times of trouble, and we are with them at moments when they plan to accelerate their economic development and move into the 21st century with large-scale civilian nuclear power.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield the balance of my time to the distinguished Democratic whip, my good friend from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friends for yielding. I am glad that I got here in a timely fashion.

I join with my colleagues in supporting House Resolution 911 expressing our deep sympathy to the people of India in the aftermath of last week's horrific terrorist attacks in Mumbai and strongly condemning these reprehensible and cowardly acts.

I want to commend my colleagues, Representatives JOE CROWLEY and JOE WILSON, for sponsoring this resolution.

On July 11, during the height of the evening rush hour, a series of coordinated explosions shook the heavily traveled commuter rail lines in Mumbai. I am sure that has already been discussed. 207 people were severely injured and killed. Hundreds more were injured less severely. It is my understanding that this represents the deadliest terrorist bombing since the attacks of September 11 of 2001.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years relations between United States and India have improved dramatically. There was a period of time during the Cold War when we did not have good relations, but now the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy are forging a partnership and friendship that I think will redound to the benefit of not only the peoples of India and the peoples of the United States, but, indeed, the peoples of the international community.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, India pledged its full cooperation and offered the use of all its military bases for counterterrorism efforts. That was their offer to us.

Mr. Speaker, we mourn the loss suffered by our friends in India and offer our prayers to those who have lost loved ones and those injured in those heinous attacks.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. Quite obviously this will be a bipartisan effort on behalf of us all. Too few times we act in a bipartisan fashion, but certainly the respect that we have for our democratic friends in India, the respect we have for their history of bringing together almost 1 billion people and soon over 1 billion people together in a democracy and forging a free and open society is one that we can all respect and admire and certainly support.

When friends like those sustain great injury, we share with them a sadness and empathy, and we wish them the best, and we let them know that we will be there for them as they have been there for us.

I thank Mr. LEACH for yielding his time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, one of the extraordinary aspects of terrorism is that a few can, with relative ease, disrupt peace negotiations between nation-states. The challenge is to see that a small number of terrorists do not destroy the right to peace of the many.

As rightfully angered and concerned as the Indian Government must be, it would be a mistake of historic proportions to allow the violence of July 11 to end the warming dialogue that has commenced between the Indian and Pakistani Governments. There are few places on the globe where war can more easily break out than on the Indian subcontinent. India and Pakistan have fought three wars over the past 60 years, and both now possess nuclear weapons. The will to pursue peace is thus a social imperative. Revenge may be warranted, but real courage rests with maintaining restraint.

Our heart goes out to the families affected by these acts of violence, and our heads congratulate the care with which the Indian Government has refused, to date, to overreact. This Congress sympathizes with our Indian friends and holds in deepest respect the leaders in Delhi who have such difficult decisions to make in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 911, which expresses the House of Representatives' deepest condolences to the people of India and the victims and their families for the terrorist attacks that occurred in Mumbai on July 11, 2006.

India is a strategic friend and ally of the U.S. As the two largest pluralistic, free-market democracies in the world, it is only natural for the U.S. and India to seek closer ties with one another. India has one of the world's largest and fastest growing populations with nearly 1.1 billion people. According to the United Nations, India's population could overtake China by as early as 2030. In addition, Indian Americans have made an indelible mark upon the culture and diversity of our Nation. I was proud to sponsor H. Res. 227 that recognized the contributions of Indian Americans to our Nation, which the House passed earlier this year.

India and the U.S. have a strong history of cooperation. Directly after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, India was one of the first countries to offer immediate aid to the United States. Most recently, the two countries announced an agreement which would allow full trade in civil nuclear energy. In exchange for such trade, India has agreed to separate its military and civilian nuclear programs over the next eight years, placing 14 of its 22 reactors under permanent international safeguards, as well as all future civilian thermal and breeder reactors. It has also agreed to maintain its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing and to work with the United States toward a fissile material cutoff treaty, which would ban the production of fissile material, like plutonium-239, used in nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

The bloody attacks that took innocent lives in Mumbai earlier this month demonstrate that terrorism does not discriminate by race, ethnicity, or region. Instead, terrorists target those seeking to live a peaceful and free life. We must hunt the terrorists down and bring them to justice. There is no other way to respond to those so committed to the destruction of life. We must also stand in solidarity with the Indian government, its citizens, and the number of Indian Americans who also lost loved ones. This resolution does just that—making it clear that Congress and the American people are behind them during this difficult period.

Mr. Speaker, in closing let the House of Representatives speak in unison and with clarity on this issue—terrorism has no place in this world and will not be tolerated. I thank the leadership on both sides for allowing this resolution on the floor today and urge an aye vote.

Mrs. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 911, a resolution strongest possible terms the July 11, 2006, terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India.

I would like to express my condolences to the families of the victims and sympathy to the people of India in the aftermath of this deadly terrorist attack. The July 11th attack resulted in the death of hundreds of innocent civilians, and injuries to many more. I have traveled to India, and have been to Mumbai, and its people remain in my heart and mind.

India is the largest democracy in the world and since its establishment, India has been threatened by terrorists trying to undermine its democratic principles. The security of India's democracy is not only important to India, but it is important to every American as well.

I commend the courage of the people of Mumbai, who quickly responded to the attack by turning out to donate blood, taking bed sheets to turn into stretchers, and offering assistance and comfort to the victims of the attack. These same brave citizens resumed using the rail commuter system the very next day.

It is an honor to represent Illinois' diverse 9th Congressional District where so many Indian-Americans reside. My sympathies go out to everyone affected by the Mumbai train bombings. I stand with India, the United States must stand with India, and I encourage this Congress to pass this important resolution.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 911, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5684, UNITED STATES-OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109–579) on the resolution (H. Res. 925) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5684) to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1956, BUSINESS ACTIVITY TAX SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2006

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet the week of July 24 to grant a rule which would limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 1956, the Business Activity Tax Simplification Act of 2006.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Rules Committee in room H–312 of the Capitol by noon on Monday, July 24, 2006. Members should draft their amendments to the bill as ordered reported by the Committee on the Judiciary, which was filed with the House on Monday, July 17, 2006.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to ensure that their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 920 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2389.

□ 1558

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2389) to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to the jurisdiction of Federal courts over certain cases and controversies involving the Pledge of Allegiance, with Mr. SIMPSON (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 109–577 by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. WATT

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, the pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 183, noes 241, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 384]

AYES—183

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Bass
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Biggert
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bono
Boswell
Boucher
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Case
Castle
Clay
Clyburn
Cooper
Costa
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Foley
Frank (MA)
Gilchrest
Gonzalez
Green, Al
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Holt
Hooley
Hoyer
Inglis (SC)
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kolbe
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Markey
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McNulty
Meehan
Meeks (NY)
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Rangel
Reyes
Rohrabacher
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shays
Sherman
Simmons
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tanner
Tauscher
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOES—241

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Beauprez
Berry
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Boozman
Boren
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Cleaver
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Manzullo
Marchant
Matheson
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Melancon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Porter
Price (GA)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Salazar
Saxton
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw

Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—8

Evans
Gutierrez
Honda
Inslee
Marshall
McKinney
Meek (FL)
Northup

□ 1622

Mr. PICKERING, Mr. HALL, Mrs. MYRICK, and Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Ms. SOLIS and Messrs. HINOJOSA, MACK, and FOLEY changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 384 on the Watt amendment, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall 384, the Watt amendment to H.R. 2389, I was recorded as a "no." I had intended to vote "yes" on the Watt amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. There being no further amendments, pursuant to House Resolution 920, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LINDER) having assumed the chair, Mr. SIMPSON, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2389) to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to the jurisdiction of Federal courts over certain cases and controversies involving the Pledge of Allegiance, pursuant to House Resolution 920, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted by the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on passage of H.R. 2389 will be followed by 5-minute votes on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 5683, and suspending the rules and agreeing to H. Res. 911.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 260, noes 167, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 385]

AYES—260

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Berry
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carnahan
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emerson
Etheridge
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Gene
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
Matheson
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Melancon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Salazar
Saxton
Schmidt
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Towns
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOES—167

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Biggert
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carson
Case
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Emanuel
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Frank (MA)
Gilchrest
Gonzalez
Green, Al
Grijalva
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Hinchey
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inglis (SC)
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kolbe
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rangel
Reyes
Rohrabacher
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shays
Sherman
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tauscher
Thompson (CA)
Tierney
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu

NOT VOTING—5

Evans
Gutierrez
Inslee
McKinney
Northup

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1640

Mr. BACA changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MT. SOLEDAD VETERANS MEMORIAL PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 5683, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5683, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 349, nays 74, answered ''present'' 3, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 386]

YEAS—349

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (FL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
Delahunt
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
Matheson
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Napolitano
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sanders
Saxton
Schmidt
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Souder
Spratt
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Upton
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—74

Ackerman
Baldwin
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Blumenauer
Capps
Cardin
Clay
Conyers
Crowley
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeGette
DeLauro
Emanuel
Eshoo
Filner
Frank (MA)
Grijalva
Harman
Hinchey
Holt
Honda
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Kanjorski
Kennedy (RI)
Kucinich
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Markey
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
Meehan
Millender-McDonald
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Nadler
Neal (MA)
Olver
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Price (NC)
Rangel
Rothman
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Slaughter
Solis
Stark
Tauscher
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Wexler
Woolsey

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—3

Engel
Kind
Obey

NOT VOTING—6

Bachus
Evans
Gutierrez
Inslee
McKinney
Northup

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1649

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. McGOVERN changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR THE PEOPLE OF INDIA IN AFTERMATH OF THE DEADLY TERRORIST ATTACKS ON JULY 11, 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 911, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 911, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 425, nays 0, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 387]

YEAS—425

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Israel
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur

Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
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Pastor
Paul
Payne
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Pelosi
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Peterson (MN)
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Pickering
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Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
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Taylor (MS)
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Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
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Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—8

Davis (FL)
Evans
Gutierrez
Inslee
Issa
McHugh
McKinney
Northup

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1657

Mr. LEVIN changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: ''Resolution condemning in the strongest possible terms the July 11, 2006, terrorist attacks in India and expressing condolences to the families of the victims and sympathy to the people of India.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 109–127)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York) laid before the House the following veto message from the President of the United States:

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 810, the ''Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005.''

Like all Americans, I believe our Nation must vigorously pursue the tremendous possibilities that science offers to cure disease and improve the lives of millions. Yet, as science brings us ever closer to unlocking the secrets of human biology, it also offers temptations to manipulate human life and violate human dignity. Our conscience and history as a Nation demand that we resist this temptation. With the right scientific techniques and the right policies, we can achieve scientific progress while living up to our ethical responsibilities.

In 2001, I set forth a new policy on stem cell research that struck a balance between the needs of science and the demands of conscience. When I took office, there was no Federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research. Under the policy I announced 5 years ago, my Administration became the first to make Federal funds available for this research, but only on embryonic stem cell lines derived from embryos that had already been destroyed. My Administration has made available more than $90 million for research of these lines. This policy has allowed important research to go forward and has allowed America to continue to lead the world in embryonic stem cell research without encouraging the further destruction of living human embryos.

H.R. 810 would overturn my Administration's balanced policy on embryonic stem cell research. If this bill were to become law, American taxpayers for the first time in our history would be compelled to fund the deliberate destruction of human embryos. Crossing this line would be a grave mistake and would needlessly encourage a conflict between science and ethics that can only do damage to both and harm our Nation as a whole.

Advances in research show that stem cell science can progress in an ethical way. Since I announced my policy in 2001, my Administration has expanded funding of research into stem cells that can be drawn from children, adults, and the blood in umbilical cords with no harm to the donor, and these stem cells are currently being used in medical treatments. Science also offers the hope that we may one day enjoy the potential benefits of embryonic stem cells without destroying human life. Researchers are investigating new techniques that might allow doctors and scientists to produce stem cells just as versatile as those derived from human embryos without harming life. We must continue to explore these hopeful alternatives, so we can advance the cause of scientific research while staying true to the ideals of a decent and humane society.

I hold to the principle that we can harness the promise of technology without becoming slaves to technology and ensure that science serves the cause of humanity. If we are to find the right ways to advance ethical medical research, we must also be willing when necessary to reject the wrong ways. For that reason, I must veto this bill.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *July 19, 2006*.

□ 1700

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The objections of the President will be spread at large upon the Journal, and the veto message and the bill will be printed as a House document.

The question is, Will the House, on reconsideration, pass the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding?

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The President today used the veto authority for the first time in his Presidency. Yesterday Congress sent him two bills relating to emerging medical research involving the use of so-called stem cells. Today the President signed one of those bills while vetoing a second. A third bill was supported by a majority of House Members last night, but did not capture the necessary two-thirds vote to be passed under the suspension of the rules.

The bill signed into law by the President today is a positive step forward, and I remain hopeful that we can reconsider the other measure at some point in the future. Our colleagues, ROSCOE BARTLETT, PHIL GINGREY, NATHAN DEAL, and DAVE WELDON, deserve great credit for their hard work on these two measures. Their work brings

new hope in the struggle to find cures that have eluded medical researchers for decades as they search for ways to defeat serious disease.

The President's decision to veto the legislation offered by my friend from Delaware Mr. CASTLE should come as no surprise to anyone. More than a year ago President Bush warned the bill would take us across a critical ethical line by creating new incentives for the ongoing destruction of emerging human life. Crossing this line, the President said, would be a great mistake.

As the President also noted a year ago, there really is no such thing as a ''spare embryo.'' Every man and woman in this Chamber began life as an embryo identical to those destroyed through the process known as embryonic stem cell research. The embryos at issue in this debate are fully capable of growing and being born as healthy babies with loving parents. The notion that embryonic stem cell research relies on ''spare embryos'' that have no value beyond the possibilities for medical research is tragically and deceptively wrong.

Many opponents of the President's decision today are driven by a passion for the preservation of human life and the desire to see developments of cures to chronic diseases. I have great respect for their commitment to this goal, and I think it is a goal that we all share. The passion for the preservation of human life is incomplete if that passion does not extend to the most vulnerable form of human life.

It is wrong to force Americans to allow their tax dollars to subsidize medical research that depends on this destruction of human embryos. The Congress sent the President a bill that would expand the use of Federal tax dollars for this practice, and the President rightly used his veto power to reject it.

Because the vetoed bill originated in the House, the Constitution gives us the duty of receiving the President's veto message and initiating any legislative response. Having now been notified of the President's action, the House will now immediately consider the question of whether to override the President's veto, which would require a two-thirds vote, or to sustain it.

For the reasons I have just articulated, I would urge my colleagues to join me in voting against the motion to override. No just society should condone the destruction of innocent life, even in the name of medical research. The President was right to veto this bill. It would be wrong for this House to overrule the President's decision by voting to override.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, today the President of the United States has snuffed out the candle of hope for 110 million Americans who suffer from debilitating diseases like diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, nerve damage and many, many more. He snuffed out this candle of hope because he used the first veto of his 6-year Presidency to veto H.R. 810, the embryonic stem cell legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this is the President's first veto in over 1,100 bills. The President issued veto warnings in nearly 150 bills, but he signed all of those bills. The President has signed bills to increase the national debt. He has signed bills to increase tax cuts for wealthy corporations and oil companies. He signed hundreds of post office naming bills, but he decided he would veto this one bill. This is not some minor legislation. This is legislation that would foster the only research that has shown hope for millions of Americans.

He said in his veto message that he was vetoing this legislation because ''American taxpayers would be compelled to fund the deliberate destruction of human embryos.'' One might think that the President would read this bill, his first veto, before he said that, because if he had read that bill, he would know that H.R. 810 specifically does not allow Federal funds to be used for the destruction of embryos. Rather, H.R. 810 says that Federal dollars can be used for the research on embryonic stem cell lines which have already been created with private dollars.

This policy is the same as the policy President Bush looked at in 2001 when he issued an executive order restricting the number of stem cell lines used. What he said at that time was embryonic stem cell research was okay, but he limited it to embryonic stem cell lines in existence as of that day.

So I ask the President, why is it wrong to simply expend Federal money for stem cell lines that have been created by private researchers since that date? It seems wrong, and it is certainly not what this bill is intended to do.

The President wants it both ways. He wants to say that he supports embryonic stem cell research, but he doesn't want to do it in a way that will actually effect cures.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the President is confused about his role as chief executive of this country. We don't live in a theocracy. We live in a constitutional democracy in this country where we form a consensus about ethics and medical research. There is a widespread consensus. The public supports this almost three-quarters. Prolife, prochoice, Democrat, Republican, Independent, all of them share the same concern that we protect lives, but that we expand research in a way that will benefit millions and millions of Americans.

I urge this House to take this very seriously. Don't make a political vote. Think about the lives that could be saved. Think about what H.R. 810 actually does, and vote ''yes'' to override this veto.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the sponsor of the underlying bill, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished majority leader very much for yielding.

I would just ask everybody, be they at home or here, look to your left and look to your right. There is one of those three people who probably has some form of illness which could be helped by good medical research, and we believe that is embryonic stem cell research.

It is ironic that the President is vetoing a piece of legislation that many of us here on this floor believe is the most significant piece of legislation that he could have signed in the course of time that he has been President of the United States of America. I am disappointed in that, but I would rather look at the bright side of things in the sense that we have advanced, I believe, the cause of medical research in this country.

We have had alternative proposals in terms of embryonic stem cell research. We have had a focus on it. There is a greater education about stem cell research than we ever had in this Congress before and certainly across the United States of America. Hopefully this will end up with greater research being done as far as the NIH and Federal medical involvement in that research is concerned.

The debate has sort of shifted. Back in May of 2005 when we had this debate, we talked about adult stem cells and how they could be better than embryonic stem cells. I think we all should recognize that there is some very good research on adult stem cells, which has been around for a long time, but we should realize now that the debate has turned to how are we going to obtain these pluripotent embryonic stem cells which can help research so much more than anything else we could possibly do. So there had been some progress as far as that is concerned.

A couple of points I want to make, and one is that everybody knows this research is about embryos. What is an embryo? It is a 5-day-old blastocyst no bigger than the point of a pencil. The ones that we are dealing with would never be implanted in a woman and are slated for medical waste. That is very important to understand. The decision has been made by the individuals who created that embryo to have it go into medical waste; and then they make the decision instead of doing that, it will be used for medical research. So these will never become people because that is a decision that has already been made and is behind us at that particular point in time.

It is also very important to point out that this legislation does not fund derivation or the so-called killing of the embryo to obtain the embryonic stem cells. That has nothing to do with this.

This simply funds the research, the potentially life-saving research, for the one in three, the 110 million Americans who have been referred to.

We are not going to stop here. I would just like to address those 110 million people and their families. We are not going to stop here. We are going to continue to advance research. We have offered alternatives to the White House before. They did not want those alternatives. They did not want this legislation. We will go back to that process. We will do everything in our power to help the patients nationwide who might need help.

I think there is more commonality of opinion on this than there was before. Hopefully there will be more openings than we have had heretofore as well.

I know that embryonic stem cell research will progress and eventually be a benefit to mankind. My concern is delay. It is going to happen at some point. It is a time issue. It is a temporal issue, but we are going to have this research. We are going to improve medical research opportunities for everybody.

I just want to quote Ben Franklin at the 1787 Constitutional Convention: ''I have often in the course of the session looked at that sun behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting. But now at length I have the happiness to know it is a rising and not a setting sun.''

That is how I feel about stem cell research: One day the sun will rise on it, and people will be helped.

□ 1715

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO).

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I thank our distinguished colleague who has worked so hard to bring this legislation forward.

Today, I think, is really a sad day in our country with the President announcing the veto, the only veto that he has used in his entire Presidency, to strike down what I believe is very sound legislation. I think he has placed the dogmatic views of some of his supporters ahead of sound science, ahead of public health, ahead of research, and ahead of our country's best interest.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. Why? Because there are millions of Americans that are afflicted with so many diseases. I believe that this legislation not only gives them hope, it spells out, as a national policy, that we can indeed merge ethics, morality, and sound public policy to address what ails them.

We have all had constituents come to us, parents of children with juvenile diabetes, pleading that the research be able to go forward.

I have always thought that America was the best idea that has ever been born. Today, I think that light of what America represents not only to her own people, but to be the hope and the beacon of light for people around the world, has been diminished by this veto.

I believe that this legislation needs to move on. It should be the public policy and the guidepost in terms of ethics and morality for our country, which is the responsibility of the Congress to set forward, should move forward, and it will when the House of Representatives overrides the President's dubious veto.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the President has placed the dogmatic views of some of his supporters ahead of sound science, ahead of public health, and ahead of our country's best interests.

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act will not merely advance medical science. It will almost certainly save many thousands of lives and provide hope to millions of Americans afflicted with terrible, debilitating diseases and injuries, including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, spinal cord injuries, strokes, heart disease, diabetes, burns and arthritis.

I'm proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill and I'm deeply saddened that the President has seen fit to use the first veto of his presidency on this crucial legislation.

H.R. 810 will bring embryonic stem cell research under the National Institutes of Health, ensuring rigorous controls and ethical guidelines on this research that only the NIH can implement.

Congress has a moral imperative to frame these issues and establish a national policy that integrates the best of science and the highest ethical standards.

Without this legislation, much of the critical funding for stem-cell research will be available only from the States, from private sources, or from foreign governments who are investing billions in this field.

If we don't override the President's veto, stem cell research will be curtailed in the United States, but it will not end. Researchers and doctors in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Israel, China, Australia, South Korea, the Czech Republic, and elsewhere are moving full speed ahead on this vital research and will continue to do so.

If the President's veto of this bill is successful, he will only succeed in preventing life-saving cures from reaching American patients sooner, and prevent the establishment of national standards for this research.

Mr. Speaker, science and ethics can and indeed should be joined, and this legislation sets out a comprehensive national policy for this vital research.

The President's veto represents an exercise of political science over real science, and must not be allowed to stand.

Vote to override this veto.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that there has been so much confusion about the current state of embryonic stem cell research in our country. The choice is not between conducting the stem cell research or not conducting it. That is not the choice. Embryonic stem cell research is legal in America, and nothing in the administration's current policy affects that legality; 400 lines are currently being used to conduct embryonic stem cell research, both in the private sector and by the Federal Government. Indeed, the Federal Government spent $41 million last year on embryonic stem cell research.

The administration's policy simply provides that Federal taxpayer dollars are not used to destroy human embryos. It is false to suggest that medical breakthroughs come only through government research. In fact, the private sector has been responsible for such breakthroughs as the heart drug Sildenafil, Prozac and ibuprofen. Private researchers discovered penicillin and the polio vaccine, conducted the first kidney and lung transplants, and identified the role DNA plays in directing our biologic makeup, all without Federal dollars.

And where is the private sector spending its dollars now? The overwhelming portion of nongovernment money is going to adult and germ cell research, because that is where the promise is. There are over 72 known treatments using adult stem cells. A huge breakthrough with regard to juvenile diabetes has occurred just in the last 6 months. Ductal cells from the patient's own pancreas can be induced to become stem cells that then produce insulin-producing cells. This process was created in the U.S. and has cured eight people of diabetes in Europe using adult stem cells, not embryonic stem cells.

But, Mr. Speaker, no one can deny that this debate involves a profound ethical and moral question. This is a matter of conscience for millions of taxpayers who are deeply troubled by the idea that their resources are being used to destroy human life, and it is a vote of conscience for me.

The private sector can go forward, if it must, with destruction of embryos for questionable and ethically challenged science. But spend the people's money on proven blood cord, bone marrow, germ cell, and adult cell research.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), a leader on this issue.

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her exceptional leadership, along with Congressman MIKE CASTLE's leadership on this exceptional and important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express profound disappointment in the decision of the President to veto H.R. 810.

This legislation passed with strong bipartisan support in both Chambers of Congress. It enjoys the support of upwards of 70 percent of the American people and, most importantly, it offers hope and the promise of a cure to the millions of people who are living with the constant challenge and burdens of chronic disease and disability.

Mr. Speaker, when I was injured in an accidental shooting as a young police cadet almost 26 years ago, I was told that I would never walk again. The promise of embryonic stem cell research was at that time unheard of.

While I always held out hope that I would one day walk again, it was not until the tremendous potential and advances in the field of stem cell research that I truly understood how a cure might work. Today I am thrilled to be able to share this hope with millions of others.

We live in exciting times. Today, newly injured patients, many of them teenagers, as I was, are told about developing treatments and scientific progress. They face the world with many of the same challenges I faced in 1980, but they also face the world with the hope and real promise of a cure.

Under the current policy, however, that promise is limited. Embryonic stem cell research has been limited to the lines derived before August 9, 2001, the date of the President's policy announcement.

When the President announced his policy almost 5 years ago, even he acknowledged the tremendous potential of embryonic stem cell research. In fact, that policy allows the research to proceed but only in a very limited way. The resources that we had in 2001 have run out. This research cannot truly move forward without a change in policy. That is why I am disheartened by the President's decision today.

H.R. 810 was crafted according to the ethical guidelines outlined by the President, and it is why I will vote to override his veto today.

It authorizes research only on excess embryos originally created for in vitro fertilization but which are slated for destruction.

It requires informed, voluntary consent of the donor.

The only change to existing policy would be the lifting of the cutoff date of August 9. This is, in fact, not a debate about the ethics of stem cell research, or a debate about when life begins. It is a debate about a date.

H.R. 810 offers our nation's scientists the tools they need to proceed down this historic path. Stem cell research represents the most noble activity in which our government can engage: the protection, promotion, and, indeed, affirmation of the lives of our most vulnerable citizens.

With millions of American patients and their families in mind, I will proudly cast my vote today to override the President's veto. I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of the override.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a mother, as a Member of this body, and certainly as a concerned citizen who fears that the untapped potential of stem cell research may be falling by the wayside.

I was disheartened to learn that the President did veto H.R. 810 today because it passed the House by a very significant majority. It is because of my strong respect for and commitment to life that I supported this bill last year.

A sad fact of life is that many of our loved ones suffer from debilitating diseases such as Alzheimer's, diabetes and Parkinson's. But embryonic stem cell research holds promise to cure these illnesses. A visit to the Miami Project, where they are trying to find a cure for paralysis, certainly would convince anyone of the need for this research. They have shown very promising progress.

The bill brings forth hope from embryos that would otherwise be discarded, thrown in the trash. These are embryos that can be used for good and for substantial medical research.

Overriding the veto today will provide promise of hope and promise to millions of Americans suffering from diseases and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of life by voting ''yes'' to override the President's veto.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for a unanimous consent request.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman.

I rise strongly to support stem cell research and ask this House to vote ''yes'' to override the President's veto. I intend to vote ''yes'' to override the veto.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 810, the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005." We have an opportunity, and a responsibility, to save lives by supporting this bill, and to help Americans who are suffering.

In order to accelerate scientific progress toward the cures and treatments for a wide variety of diseases and debilitating health conditions, such as Parkinson's Disease, Diabetes, Alzheimer's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), cancer, and spinal cord injuries, it is necessary to expand the number of stem cell lines that can be used in federally funded research.

Our debate today is a historical achievement for two reasons. First, President Bush vetoed this bill, after it passed in both the House of Representatives (238–194) and the Senate (63–37). This was the first time in five and one-half years in office that President Bush has vetoed a bill. This speaks volumes about the failure of our system of checks and balances, the short-sightedness of our executive branch, and the lack of Congressional leadership.

Second, we must reassess and reaffirm the need and commitment of this nation to pursue medical research leadership and scientific innovation. We must do everything in our power to reduce human suffering and better understand human physiology. Today, we must make history. We must override this veto and pass H.R. 810 in order to preserve the ability of our scientists to pursue innovative research with stem cell lines and find effective treatments and cures for the diseases and conditions that plague humankind.

The miracles capable with stem cell research are mind boggling. It may be possible for neurons developed from embryonic stem cells to restore function to paralyzed individuals; breast cancer may be mitigated by embryonic stem cells that mimic and then slow the growth of cancer cells; an embryonic stem cell-aided kidney transplant can help a patient accept a donor organ with minimal dose of drugs; embryonic stem cells can transform and regenerate damaged liver tissue, offering renewed hope to the 1 out of 5 patients who die before they receive a liver transplant.

As a Member of the Science committee, I am dedicated to the advancement of science, to the exploration of creative initiatives, and the pursuit of sound research. When we demonize science, we only hurt ourselves, making it more likely that other countries will stand at the forefront of science and innovation.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), of more than 60 stem cell lines that were declared eligible for federal funding in 2001, only about 22 lines are actually available for study by and distribution to researchers. These NIH-approved lines lack the genetic diversity that researchers need in order to develop effective treatments for millions of Americans.

The policy debate that we have engaged in over the last year has focused on both scientific and moral arguments. This bill is precisely the measured, balanced, rational, and progressive law that we need to further the scope of medicine, while simultaneously defining precise moral guidelines.

At issue in particular is the use of embryonic stem cells, or pluripotent stem cells, versus adult stem cells. The difference is crucial in understanding the immense potential benefit.

Pluripotent stem cells are the most adaptable and unique of all of the stem cell varieties. As opposed to adult stem cells, which are limited to a genre, such as blood cells or bone cells, pluripotent stem cells can eventually specialize in any bodily tissue. Embryonic stem cells are clusters of cells, and cannot develop into a fetus or a human being. The possibilities are literally limitless, and only restricted by time and by funding.

The pluripotent stem cells were derived using non-Federal funds from early-stage embryos donated voluntarily by couples undergoing fertility treatment in an in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinic or from non-living fetuses obtained from terminated first trimester pregnancies. Informed consent was obtained from the donors in both cases. Women voluntarily donating fetal tissue for research did so only after making the decision to terminate the pregnancy.

It is estimated that more than 400,000 excess frozen embryos exist in the United States today and that tens of thousands, and perhaps as many as 100,000, are discarded every year.

When President Bush declared in 2001 that federal funding to stem cell research would be limited, an unprecedented 80 Nobel laureates opposed with this action. They included such notables as James Watson, who co-discovered the DNA double helix, and renowned economist Milton Friedman. In their letter to Mr. Bush, the laureates noted that the embryos to be used in the research were destined for destruction anyway. They wrote, "Under these circumstances, it would be tragic to waste this opportunity to pursue the work

that could potentially alleviate human suffering.''

I ask unanimous consent to submit a copy of this letter to the RECORD.

This bill provides a limited—yet significant—change in current policy that would result in making many more lines of stem cells available for research. If we limit the opportunities and resources our researchers have today, we only postpone the inevitable breakthrough. Our vote today may determine whether that breakthrough is made by Americans, or not.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill, to vote in favor of scientific innovation, and to vote in favor of a perfect compromise between the needs of science and the boundary of our principles.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS), another fine leader in this movement.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Colorado for yielding and for her leadership and, in fact, the bipartisan leadership that has brought us to this point today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill to override the President's veto of H.R. 810.

It is really unfortunate that this veto and other opposition of this bill are born out of misinformation about the issue at hand.

Under H.R. 810, the embryos from which stem cells are extracted for research come from in vitro fertilization only.

Each year thousands of embryos, no bigger than the head of a pin, are created in the process of in vitro fertilization, with the support of Congress, by the way.

A small percentage of these embryos are implanted and will, hopefully, grow into children. The rest will be frozen or discarded. They will not be used to create life. They will never become children. They will be lost without purpose.

But H.R. 810 gives them purpose, and this only with the express approval of the donors.

Now, the majority of Members in both the House and Senate affirmed their support for enhancing our use of stem cells in research because they understand that purpose.

Maybe it really isn't surprising that President Bush has vetoed this bill because he doesn't understand, and it is consistent with his signing into law other bills that have cut funding for medical research, denied proper funding for veterans health care, decreased our Nation's ability to confront true health crises.

This administration has ignored and twisted science in a variety of areas, everything from global warming to abstinence-only education.

The refusal to acknowledge the scientific value of embryonic stem cell research is one more tragic misstep. Let's not be the embarrassment of the world yet again. Let's affirm our commitment to saving lives by overriding this veto. Let's untie the hands of scientists on the verge of cures for the world's most devastating diseases.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT).

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of sustaining the President's veto of H.R. 810. I strongly oppose H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. An embryo is human life. H.R. 810 would use Federal tax dollars, our tax dollars, to fund the destruction of human life for scientific research. This misguided research is already permitted. What we are debating is who should pay for it. Should it be the taxpayers or private research?

To my colleagues who support this legislation, I share your concern for finding future medical treatments to improve lives. But let's be open in the process and look for ways that do not compromise life in any form, at its beginning, its middle, or end. There is no justification for the destruction of innocent life for the sake of another.

Congress has a moral obligation to protect women and the unborn, and I urge my colleagues to sustain the President's veto and vote ''no'' on this question.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the President's veto of embryonic stem cell legislation flies in the face of the American people's broad support for this bill. In vetoing this bill, the President has gone against more than 70 percent of Americans who support stem cell research using embryos that would otherwise be discarded.

□ 1730

Even worse, he has thumbed his nose at the millions of Americans suffering from incurable diseases. Americans have kept their hopes alive while this administration has played political games and thrown up roadblocks to the promising research that would offer them a cure.

As opposed to legislation we have passed to encourage research on cord blood and adult stem cells, only this bill, the Castle-DeGette bill, would expand research on the embryonic stem cells that have the unique ability to reproduce indefinitely and evolve into any cell type in our bodies.

I have personally seen the potential that this research holds and how it works. Last summer I visited the stem cell labs at the Baylor College of Medicine in my hometown of Houston, where researchers are looking at treatments for heart disease with just a few Federal lines. The message from the researchers I met with was clear. The current policy not only slows medical progress, but will force the world's brightest researchers to abandon the U.S. for countries without this restriction on lifesaving research.

My colleagues opposed to this bill have argued this on moral and religious grounds. They are absolutely right. Regardless of whether one practices Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, every religion in the world tells us to alleviate human suffering.

History has shown, however, that even the most devout have often strayed from this common religious and moral duty. According to the New Testament, religious leaders in Biblical times attacked Jesus for healing the sick on the Sabbath. History has apparently repeated itself, as we have religious leaders today casting similar judgments on the healers of our time. Just like the sick in Biblical times, American families suffering from incurable diseases do not have time for the Federal Government to restrict those who could heal them. To alleviate human suffering, that is the purpose of this bill, and that should be our purpose today.

Let us override this veto.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART).

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for allowing me some time to speak in favor of sustaining the President's veto.

It has been a year since this House passed the Castle-DeGette bill, and in that year science, not Hollywood, has helped us to debunk the myth of a promise for embryonic stem cell research. Hollywood supports it. Science created fraudulent experiments. Before last year's vote, they made arguments supporting embryonic stem cell research. They were coming fast and furious from our colleagues.

During the debate in the Senate, the same arguments came. They cited Dr. Hwang Wook Suk of South Korea and his research. Supporters of his research said that he had cloned a human embryo, that he had found a way to produce embryonic stem cell lines that could be done routinely and efficiently. What happened later? All of his research was debunked. The ethics of his research were called into question. It was revealed that his publications were faked, his experiments were unsuccessful, and the treatment of their egg donors was ethically grossly appalling.

Mr. Speaker, I urge us to reject embryonic stem cell research as the science is not there. Science is very successful in treating patients using adult stem cells and cord blood stem cells, which we agreed to fund and the President signed, and I believe we should support that.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, of course, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania refers to the South Korea experiment which was not embryonic stem cell research. Rather, it was somatic cell nuclear transfer, not at issue today. And, furthermore, it only points out why we need Federal oversight and ethics in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, no single action this Congress could take would have a more profound impact on life than increasing Federal funds for biomedical research, biomedical scientists to conduct that research with human embryonic stem cells. Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, brain and spinal cord disorders, diabetes, cancer, at least 58 diseases could potentially be cured through stem cell research, diseases that touch every family in America and in the world.

I stand here as someone who understands the promise of biomedical research all too well. Having been diagnosed with ovarian cancer by chance on a doctor's visit two decades ago, I know firsthand how medical research can save lives. It saved mine. It can quite literally mean the difference between life and death, between hope and despair.

Are there moral issues to consider with respect to stem cell research? Absolutely. But let us not confuse them with the ethical safeguards that this legislation does put in place, allowing research only on embryos that were originally created for fertility treatment purposes and that are in excess of clinical need. By permitting peer-reviewed Federal funds to be used with public oversight, we can have no doubt that this research will be performed with the utmost dignity and ethical responsibility.

The moral issue here is whether the United States Congress is going to stand in the way of science and preclude scientists from doing lifesaving research. We do not live in the Dark Ages. With this vote this Congress has an opportunity to tell the world that we are a country that believes science has the power to advance life. I believe we are. By allowing the President to stop this research from going forward, we risk something very precious.

Mr. Speaker, the world has always looked to America as a beacon of hope precisely because of our capacity to combine the best ideas in the world with abundant resources. Let us continue that tradition. Let us lead the way. Support the veto override.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, this House should override the President's veto of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act.

With regard to medical research, science should triumph over politics. Stem cell research offers the best promise of ending diabetes, Parkinson's, and cancer. Americans strongly support the treatment of disease, but we are passionate about finding cures.

America has won more Nobel Prizes in medicine than all European countries combined. This legislation is needed to maintain U.S. leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the leading candidates for President in our country of both the Republican and Democratic Parties support this bill. In the House the Republican chairmen of our most powerful committees, Rules, Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Energy, all support this bill. In the Senate the Republican majority leader and the Chairs of Armed Services, Commerce, Appropriations, Foreign Relations, and Rules all supported this bill.

At worst, the President's stem cell policy will last only 30 more months and be reversed on January 20, 2009, regardless of who wins the Presidency.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

(Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the effort to override this Presidential veto, of people's right to live a life where they can be free from the illness that they are suffering today, and of my colleague Jim Langevin's right to be able to get out of that wheelchair within his lifetime thanks to stem cell research.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. ENGEL.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Today President Bush has cast the first veto of his Presidency on legislation approved overwhelmingly by the House and Senate: the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. Frankly, to veto a bill that has the support of 72 percent of the American public is simply unconscionable and indefensible. The President speaks about ethics. I think it is totally unethical not to save lives.

Despite what the critics may say, H.R. 810 does not end life. It honors life. As anyone who suffers from diabetes, Parkinson's disease, ALS, or a whole host of other debilitating health conditions knows, scientists believe embryonic stems cells provide a real opportunity for devising unique treatments for these serious diseases.

Let me be absolutely clear. This is not about cloning. I oppose cloning of human beings. This is about the use of stem cells which would have been discarded anyway. It has been estimated that there are currently 400,000 frozen embryos created during fertility treatments which would be destroyed if they are not donated for research. I would never condone the donation of embryos to science without the informed written consent of donors and strict regulations prohibiting financial compensation for potential donors. Our Nation's scientific research must adhere to the highest critical and ethical standards, and H.R. 810 protects this.

The National Institutes of Health has admitted that U.S. scientists have fallen behind Europe and Asia in stem cell research because of President Bush's policy. While five States have committed significant funding, NIH Director Zerhouni has noted that a patchwork collection of different stem cell policies in States could inhibit critical collaborations. We need a national commitment, and the current stem cells that the President alludes to have been contaminated and are no longer useful.

We must not allow those standing in the way of health and science to compromise the future well-being of our families and loved ones. Simply put, that would not be ethical. Over 200 patient groups, universities, and scientific societies have urged the President to expand the Federal policy on stem cell research.

We must honor life by overriding President Bush's veto.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today proud to stand with our President to ensure that our society remains a people that values life. The President is a man of his word, and today he made good on his promise and he issued his first Presidential veto against H.R. 810, a move to protect the sanctity of human life.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few days, I have had the privilege to meet and visit with the families of the so-called ''snowflake babies.'' These are children who started out life at frozen embryos, indeed no larger than the point of a pen, whose parents, instead of discarding these precious little lives, allowed them to be adopted.

Each of these families has their own unique story. They are families who have longed for and prayed for children. They are families who now enjoy the blessings of these little ones' smiles and tears, laughter and heartbreak. These children represent what advocates of this bill see as unwanted leftovers, collateral damage on society's path to medical research called for in the Castle-DeGette bill.

Mr. Speaker, the interesting aspect of this debate is that embryonic stem cell research does not have to divide this House of Representatives. I am here today to tell the American people that science has delivered the solution to this ethical divide. Scientists have made extraordinary advances in research that now allow them access to embryoniclike stem cells without destroying the human embryo. The answer that science has given us is that our government can have both, and, most importantly, so can the American people.

Yesterday Members of this House, those who claim to be supporters of all types of embryonic stem cell research, stood in the way of a bill that would have funded these ethical and exciting new breakthroughs.

Mr. Speaker, we need to sustain the President's veto, and I call for my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do just that.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the distinguished Democratic whip, Mr. HOYER.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the time.

The choices before the Members of this House today are clear and straightforward. Will the Members of the Republican majority choose to stand with George W. Bush, who just minutes ago vetoed this legislation, ironically the very first veto of his Presidency, and, as a result, impede medical research into diseases that afflict millions of Americans? Or will the Members of this Republican majority choose to stand with more than 70 percent of the American people; the most respected members of America's medical research community; and 238 Members of this House and 63 United States Senators, including, of course, majority leader BILL FRIST, all of whom support embryonic stem cell research?

There is little question, Mr. Speaker, about the utility of such research. Scientists, including 80 Nobel Laureates, believe that embryonic stem cell research could lead to treatments and cures for diabetes; Parkinson's; Alzheimer's; multiple sclerosis; cancer; and, as the gentleman from Rhode Island indicated, the rehabilitation of nerves.

Dr. Zerhouni, director of the National Institutes of Health, chosen by George Bush, has stated: ''Embryonic stem cell research holds great promise for treating, curing, and improving our understanding and treatment of disease.''

□ 1745

The American Medical Association and 92 other organizations stated last week in a letter that ''only H.R. 810 will move stem cell research forward.''

Senate Majority Leader FRIST, a heart surgeon, has stated, ''Embryonic stem cells uniquely hold specific promise that adult stem cells cannot provide.''

Nor is there doubt about the need for more stem cell lines, since the lines designated by President Bush in 2001 have proven much less useful than hoped. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy And Infectious Diseases, has stated, ''Our institute believes that embryonic stem cell research could be advanced by the availability of additional cell lines. We may be limiting our ability to achieve the full range of potential therapeutic application of embryonic stem cells by restricting research to a relatively small number of lines currently available.'' This legislation seeks to do just what Dr. Fauci says ought to be done.

Mr. Speaker, the Castle-DeGette bill quite simply would authorize Federal funds for research on embryonic stem cell lines derived from surplus embryos at in vitro fertilization clinics that would otherwise be discarded. That would otherwise be discarded. That seems to me to be critical to every Member's decision.

Equally important, the bill would allow Federal funding of embryonic stem cell research only if strict ethical guidelines are followed. We do not pursue this irresponsibly.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most important votes that Members will cast in this Congress, and it will be long remembered by the American people. I implore my colleagues, vote to advance ethical embryonic stem cell research, not impede it. Vote to override the President's misguided veto, which will be looked upon years from now as a momentary victory for ideology over medical research and progress.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT).

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I attended the President's news conference with snowflake babies and their families at which the President announced his veto of H.R. 810. Snowflake babies were adopted as excess embryos. Excess embryos would be destroyed with taxpayers' dollars under H.R. 810 to produce pluripotent stem cells for science.

How can anyone look at these snowflake babies and hear their voices and say that it would be okay to kill them to provide materials for medical research?

President Bush transformed what could have been a day of tragedy into a day of triumph by vetoing H.R. 810 and by taking additional steps to support pluripotent stem cell research that does not destroy embryos.

To the proponents of H.R. 810, scientists, doctors and the public, pluripotent stem cells hold the most promise for understanding human diseases and treating devastating conditions. That is why pluripotent stem cells are coveted.

Yesterday, knowing that the President would veto H.R. 810, this body had the opportunity to approve a bill the President said he would sign to use taxpayer dollars to obtain pluripotent stem cells without destroying embryos. This opportunity is not lost to this Congress.

I urge everyone in this Chamber to sustain President Bush's veto and support bringing back for a vote the Bartlett-Santorum bill, S. 2754, which represents common ground into promising ways the Federal Government can support pluripotent stem cell research without sacrificing life for medicine.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, and especially appreciate the good work that she and Mr. CASTLE have done.

With the President's action today, and he always keeps his word, he condemned tens of millions of Americans and their families and everybody who loves them to suffer needlessly, and all the while they know their government, when given the opportunity to help, decided to do nothing.

I remember this kind of mugwumpery before. I remember when organ transplants came about. Everybody said, oh, no, we can't do that. If God didn't want you to have a good liver, you can't get one from somebody else. The same thing with blood transfusions, all the way through. Why in the world do we always have such a know-nothing, antiscientific government body that tells our scientists what they can do and can't do?

As one of the scientists in this House, I am appalled at the fact that my country is falling behind in scientific research. I am astonished that we are telling scientists what they can and cannot study. It bothers me that scientists in other countries don't want to come here to study anymore because of the way that this has happened.

If we fail to override this veto tonight, we are putting this country back another 200 years. Perhaps not that much. But any of you who believe that voting for that one bill yesterday and wanting to vote for the second will cover you at home, let me tell you that is not true. Science knows better. Science will bear out that we do not have the lines we need for research, and you will pay the price, I hope, in November.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) for the purpose of a unanimous consent request.

(Mr. SHAYS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of overriding the veto.

I urge my colleagues to join in voting to override the Presidential veto of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act.

I am disappointed the President used his first veto on legislation that has the potential to help millions of Americans affected by debilitating illnesses. I do not believe history will judge his decision kindly.

When the President first allowed this research to go forward in 2001, he could argue that he was setting up reasonable restrictions. I think today it is clear those restrictions are burdensome, ideologically driven and threaten our status as the preeminent country for medical research.

I appreciate that my Leadership has allowed fair debate on this bill and an up-or-down vote, and hope that in the future we will be successful in helping this research to advance.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON).

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of overriding the President's veto of the embryonic stem cell research bill.

Every time I go to a classroom in my district, I tell those kids, knowledge is power, and one of the reasons America is such a great Nation is because knowledge and freedom couple to drive the frontiers of knowledge forward, as they have in science and medicine. And here is another frontier. Yes, we will push forward. The President cannot fence in knowledge, the pursuit of knowledge, in a free society.

But as we push forward, that research will not be covered and guided by the ethical code developed by NIH. As we push forward, millions of dollars will be wasted on building a parallel infrastructure of expensive equipment so the State and Federal dollars and the private and Federal dollars can be kept separate.

It is a tragedy that our President has vetoed this important bill, and I will vote to override.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN).

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this landmark stem cell bill and in opposition to President Bush's unbelievable first-ever veto.

We reached an historic crossroad today in Washington. With the stroke of his pen, the President could have signed stem cell hope and ethical standards into law. But, sadly, the President has delayed medical advances for years.

H.R. 810 will provide the Federal resources necessary to unlock the door to lifesaving cures for millions. It was passed after extraordinary debate and historic bipartisan cooperation. It holds the promise of major advancements in science.

I am deeply disappointed by the President's veto, as are millions of Americans and thousands of my fellow Missourians that have been working, hoping and praying for the approval of this bill. We will not soon forget what happened today. We will not give up. This issue has united Americans into action with a powerful voice.

I strongly urge my colleagues to override the President's veto, to continue the work of embryonic stem cell research and to provide hope for those who need it most.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 45 seconds to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SCHWARZ).

Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, medical research in the United States has for decades been the envy of the world. That embryonic stem cell research holds the key to potential treatment for all manner of disease is already well documented in this debate.

As a physician, I am dismayed at the claims that adult stem cells and umbilical cord cells hold the true pluripotentiality of embryonic stem cells. This is simply not true.

I ask my colleagues to vote to override the veto of this bill. Embryonic stem cell research will continue apace in other parts of the world. It is sad that the great progress and potential in this field won't happen in the United States with our superb academic scientific facilities. It is sadder yet that those who oppose this bill don't recognize that embryonic stem cells represent the epitome, the ultimate, in those things prolife, that is, to save the lives of our fellow members of the human race.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, at issue here is the fundamental value of saving lives, a value that we all share regardless of race, culture or religion. Embryonic stem cells have the potential not just to treat some of the most devastating diseases and conditions, but to actually cure them.

The President's veto of this lifesaving legislation is a slap in the face of the millions of Americans suffering from diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or debilitating physical injuries, who found new hope for treatment and cures with the passage of H.R. 810. This hope will remain only if researchers have access to the science that holds the most potential and are free to explore, with appropriate ethical guidelines, medical advances never before imagined possible.

The 67 percent of the American public that supports embryonic stem cell research understands this. Why doesn't the President?

There is no question that scientific advancement often comes with moral dilemmas. That is why we have examined and debated difficult ethical and social questions before passing this legislation.

Like many of you, I believe that strong guidelines must be in place with vigorous oversight from the NIH and Congress before allowing federally-funded embryonic stem cell research.

H.R. 810 would strengthen the standards guiding embryonic stem cell research and would ensure that embryos originally created for the purpose of in vitro fertilization could be made available for research only with the consent of the donor.

So today I ask my colleagues to be as determined to find a cure as science allows us to be. We are closer than ever to remarkable discoveries and on the brink of providing hope to millions of individuals who otherwise have none. Congress must not allow the President to once again put ideology before science.

I urge my colleagues to vote to override of the President's veto of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 15 seconds to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to override the Presidential veto of H.R. 810. The Senate's 63–37 vote yesterday to loosen the stranglehold on federally conducted stem cell research and set strict ethical standards for performing that research and the strong showing of support by the House in May of last year marked a triumph of science over politics.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support the override of this veto.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT).

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for yielding me time, and thank you for your continued support on this issue.

I do rise today to voice my support for the President's veto of H.R. 810. With today's vote, the House will place itself alongside the millions of Americans who believe that all life is precious, even at its earliest stages.

This bill, H.R. 810, would make taxpayer dollars available for embryonic stem cell research using embryos remaining from in vitro fertilization procedures.

Mr. Speaker, that is the issue. Taxpayers should not be forced to fund what some consider morally wrong.

It is still questionable whether embryonic stem cell research will even yield results. I believe we should focus our resources on the proven, the successful adult stem cell research that is working to produce real, meaningful results. That we can all agree on.

Proponents of embryonic stem cell research point to their hope of potential lifesaving benefits from such research. I support the goal, but destroying a life to try to save another is not the way to accomplish it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a ''no'' vote on this legislation.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join many of my colleagues today in opposing the President's veto of H.R. 810. I do so reluctantly. I think the overriding of a veto of any President should be undertaken with caution, but in this case I believe it is necessary.

When the House considered this bill last year, our debate focused on the ethical dilemmas of embryonic stem cell research. Those dilemmas are real, and they've been thoroughly addressed in the bill we passed.

What hasn't been noted enough, however, is the importance this bill has for American innovation. The President himself has written—quote—''Through America's investments in science and technology, we have revolutionized our economy and changed the world for the better. Groundbreaking ideas generated by innovative minds in the private and public sectors have paid enormous dividends—improving the lives and livelihoods of generations of Americans.''

These words are true—and to his credit, the President has backed them up with his American Competitiveness Initiative, a set of proposals that every Member in this House has embraced.

So I ask my colleagues: what field will prove more crucial to American competitiveness, to human well-being, to economic growth, than the biological sciences? And what area of research holds more promise in the biological sciences than stem cells?

Over the past two decades, three-quarters of the researchers who have won the Nobel Prize in medicine have studied or taught in the United States. Can we really expect to retain the global leadership if we can't even pass a bill, a thoughtful, bipartisan bill, that assures the moral study of embryonic stem cells? ''Assures.'' I use the word deliberately, because no other nation will meet, let alone exceed, the ethical guidelines and constraints embodied in Castle-DeGette. Each of us knows that.

The sooner we pass this bill into law, the sooner America becomes the hub for this research, the sooner our ethical standards become the de facto standards governing stem cell science around the world.

So Castle-DeGette isn't just about taking the scientific lead on embryonic stem cells, it is about taking the moral lead, setting an ethical standard for research that will take place whether this bill becomes law or not. I urge my colleagues to override this veto.

□ 1800

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS).

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last May I voted in support of H.R. 810. I rise again today to override the veto of this legislation.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate why I believe that expanded Federal funding of stem cell research is good public policy. We are aware of the potential embryonic stem cells hold. They could hold the key to the greatest mysteries of medical science, offering cures for those afflicted with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, juvenile diabetes, spinal cord injuries and others. I hope they do.

On the other hand, they can be nothing but a source of false hope, another disappointment for those who wish for a return to health either for themselves or their loved ones. The only certainty is that we will never know the answer if our scientists are overly constrained in their efforts. Without the wherewithal of the National Institutes of Health, we face the prospect of numerous State agencies attempting to set up research protocols, something they are not well equipped to do.

Good science takes time. We must not throw caution to the wind at the hint of miraculous cures. Indeed, left unconstrained, this type of research could lead to dangerous outcomes.

H.R. 810 provides ethical guidelines by which federally funded researchers must comply. I believe it would be far preferable to have the Federal Government setting standards in this field rather than a hodgepodge of States and private entities. The Federal Government should lead the way.

I supported President Bush when he announced his plan to allow federally funded research on 60 preexisting lines. Now, though, we only have 22 lines with significant shortcomings that make them of dubious value.

Federally funded U.S. researchers are at a technical disadvantage as they lack access to newer stem cell lines. Our top stem cell biologists are moving into non-federally funded research or even going overseas to pursue their work. We should not allow this to happen.

There is no question that many difficult questions attend this debate, and many feel strongly that there are ethical reasons not to pursue embryonic stem cell research. But I strongly feel there are ethical reasons why we should. I cannot look at a couple whose child is suffering from a debilitating disease in the eye and tell them I am not doing everything as their elected official; I came to find a cure. I cannot look a researcher in the eyes and tell him I will not let him explore the promise.

I urge my colleagues to vote to override this veto.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS).

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for yielding. In her opening remarks, the chief Democratic sponsor of this bill told us that embryonic stem cell research will cure Alzheimer's. This is yet another example of the misinformation the bill's proponents have been spreading for the past year.

Let me read from a Washington Post article by Rick Weiss: ''Given the lack of any serious suggestion that stem cells themselves have practical potential to treat Alzheimer's, the Reagan-inspired tidal wave of enthusiasm stands as an example of how easily a modest line of scientific inquiry can grow in the public mind to mythological proportions. It is a distortion that some admit is not being aggressively corrected by scientists.''

Said Ronald D.G. McKay, stem cell researcher at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, ''Embryonic stem cell research may never cure any disease.''

However, ethical adult stem cell research has already resulted in nine FDA-approved therapies for major diseases. We should support ethical research that works.

In this binder I have information from established medical journals for over 70, 72 to be exact, successful treatments that have been discovered using ethical research of adult stem cells; not a single embryo has been destroyed in the process.

In this binder I have the successful treatments derived from embryo-destroying stem cell research. Not a single cure. The score is 72–0. All it has to show for itself are failed experiments, disgraced researchers, tumors and dead laboratory rats.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the President for doing the right thing and vetoing this unethical and unnecessary legislation. I urge all of my colleagues to sustain the President's veto. Reject H.R. 810.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, President Bush made history today by adding a major black mark to a Presidency that began on the comforting note of compassionate conservatism, but is ending with a jarring jab to the sick and the ill.

There have been 1,484 previous formal vetoes of legislation enacted by Congress in the history of this country, but this one may be the most damaging veto ever issued by any President. If the Congress does not override this veto of this bipartisan stem cell research act, this will be remembered as a Luddite moment in American history, when scientific progress was brought to a halt by those who put fear ahead of hope, and ideology ahead of science.

Research is medicine's field of dreams from which we harvest cures, cures which offer hope to millions of American families struggling with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, heart disease, juvenile diabetes and cancer. Hope is the most powerful four-letter word in the English language. But if we allow this Bush veto to stand, we will snuff out this flickering candle of hope just as the candle was lit.

Vote for the override of this historic veto of scientific progress. Vote to give the American people a reason to believe.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN).

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I have heard it said that the President's veto is a political game. There are no political games being played here, except yesterday when the authors of this bill that is before us argued that people should vote against H.R. 5526, the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act. Why would they do that? A bill that would allow a neutral, that is neutral with respect to ethics, opportunity to develop pluripotent stem cell therapies. And yet we are told here that we are allowing ideology to get in the way of science.

What was yesterday's request by those who authored this bill? You know, we have to consider ethics. Science cannot tell us what to do. It tells us what we can do, but it does not tell us what it is ethically appropriate to do.

This country leads the world in medical research, but it also leads the world in ethical action. We should not be losers in either side. Support the President's veto.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER).

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, like millions of Americans, I, too, am disappointed with the President's veto. In Kansas City, Missouri, a man by the name of Jim and his wife Virginia Stowers started a company called American Centuries. It became one of the most successful companies in this country. A few years ago they decided that they would give back. Both of them are cancer survivors, and so they founded the Stowers Institute. It is an institution in Kansas City, Missouri, designed and funded by this great couple to research all kinds of medical cures. I will tell them later today that no Federal funds can be used.

Behind all of the opposition to stem cell research, there seems to be a subliminal religious tone. I am a fundamentalist in that I believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired and interminable word of God. But I am baffled by my fellow fundamentalists who seem to be utterly opposed to and terror-stricken by the advancement of science, including stem cell research.

The propagation of knowledge by some in our faith seems to be a foreboding foray toward undermining or diminishing the glory of the Creator. However, the opposite is true. When the human intellect makes strides that sets the world agog, it is God from whom all knowledge stems who is honored.

And keep in mind that scientific advancement is not an enemy of faith, but rather a bold statement that God is still active in this universe.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by just saying that it is a great testament to God if we are able to advance science. It means that His power is supreme.

Because I accept the Bible as the inspired and interminable Word of God, I consider myself to be a Christian fundamentalist. I accept, as an inseparable component of my faith, the omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of God. Therefore, I am baffled by my fellow fundamentalists who seem to be utterly opposed to and terror-stricken by the advancement of science, including stem cell research. The propagation of knowledge and the dismantling of the boundless awe-inspiring mysteries of God's world are viewed by some in our faith as a foreboding foray toward undermining and diminishing the glory of the Creator. However, the opposite is true. When the human intellect makes strides that sets the world agog, it is God, from whom all knowledge stems, who is honored. Let us keep in mind that scientific advancement is not an enemy of faith, but rather a bold statement of Praise.

Contemporary men and women of faith, as always, stand at the crossroads. In a real sense, religion has always been impelled to wage war in some area or another. The pressing question is shall we march across the battlefields of faith with open arms toward the magnificent revelations of God's great truths, or, do we use our inherent power and influence to signal a retreat from the bright and simmering sunshine of expanding scientific scholarship. The potential life-saving issue of stem cell research is before us. The scepter is in the hands of the enlightened community of believers. Our failure to speak out on the medical need for stem cell research will allow earnest but erroneous or misguided souls who wish to constrain such study to force us back to a time when the faithful waged its fiery finger of scorn at the irreverence of scientific inquiry. Like the majority of people of faith, I totally reject the notion that today's community of believers are as troglodytic as our ancestors who refused to peer through the lens of Galileo's telescope. Nonetheless, this is a testing time.

Doctor Harry Emerson Fosdick, the legendary Baptist clergyman of the first half of the 20th century, profoundly addresses the issue of flowering faith in his wonderfully inspiring book, The Modern Use of the Bible: "If there are fresh things to learn concerning the physical universe, let us have them, that we may find deeper meaning when we say, 'The heavens declare the glory of God.'"

If there is a great possibility to uncover new cures for the beastly diseases which besiege the human body, the community of faith must implore the researchers to explore, seize, and use them. After all, the One we claim as the Imminent Source and Guide of the Universe is befitting of our very best.

Sure, the scientific research on stem cells must be moral. The institutions of scientific research must understand that there are moral mandates that cannot be infringed or ignored with impunity. When the sway of the intellect becomes extreme, the religious must repudiate and guide it back to equilibrium and reason. Additionally, when the community of faith clings to the debilitating conventionalism of a petrified past, some among us must push against that as well.

Should science succeed in fulfilling the much vaunted optimism expressed by advocates of stem cell therapy, much of the credit should go to the community of faith. Every experiment that leads to greater medical breakthroughs is a discernible display of the earthly presence of God and of the presence of particles of his divinity in us.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for yielding me time, and for his leadership today and every day.

Mr. Speaker, never in my 26 years as a Member of Congress have I seen so much hyperbole, misinformation and misattribution of success as in the embryonic stem cell debate.

Despite recent revelations of massive fraud by prominent stem cell researchers in South Korea, despite the fact that there hasn't been anything even close to success of any kind in treating any human being anywhere in the world with embryonic stem cells, despite all of this and so much more, embryonic stem cell proponents demand that tens of thousands of perfectly healthy human embryos be destroyed for taxpayer-funded research.

This is especially troubling in light of the stunning breakthroughs and successes announced almost daily of adult and cord blood stem cell therapies that are today helping men and women with leukemia, sickle cell anemia, and a myriad of other diseases. Ethical stem cell research, Mr. Speaker, has given not only hope, but it has given us real, durable therapies that work.

Arguments were made on this floor, Mr. Speaker, that we are just using spare or leftover embryos as if they exist as a subclass of surplus human beings that can be experimented on or slaughtered at will.

A few hours ago at the White House, several of us met with some of those snowflake children, all of whom were adopted while they were still in their embryonic stage and frozen in what we like to call frozen orphanages. Believe me, watching snowflakes children laugh, smile and act, well, like kids underscored the fact that they are every bit as human and alive and precious as any other child. Under the Castle bill, these so-called surplus humans are throwaways. Adopt them, don't destroy them.

Mr. Speaker, finally, make no mistake about it, those of us who oppose the Castle bill support aggressive stem cell research and judicious application of stem cells to mitigate and cure diseases. That is why I sponsored the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005. It provides $265 million for comprehensive cord blood and bone marrow stem cells. That is why we support the $609 million in FY 2006 currently been expended under the NIH for ethical stem cells.

Yesterday, Hannah Strege, the first known snowflake embryo adoption, told a small group of us: "Don't kill the embryos, we are kids and we want to grow up too." How come a 7-year-old gets it and we don't. Sustain the veto.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished Democratic leader (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time. I salute her for her outstanding leadership and stewardship of this bill and her leadership on this issue so important to America's families. I also commend Congressman CASTLE of Delaware for his courage and his leadership as well.

Mr. Speaker, every family in America, indeed every person in this room and in this gallery, is just one diagnosis or one phone call away from needing the benefits of the embryonic stem cell research. Today with his veto, President Bush dashed the hopes of so many Americans who were praying for this legislation and the cures that it can bring. Imagine, the first veto of this President, and it is for a bill vetoing a bill that has the miraculous power to cure.

The Latin root of veto, the Latin translation of veto means "I forbid." President Bush has said today, I forbid allowing the best and brightest minds

to pursue the science that they believe has the most promise and potential to cure.

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President Bush says, I forbid bringing embryonic stem cell research under NIH, ensuring the strict controls and stringent ethical guidelines that only NIH can ensure and impose. President Bush says, I forbid giving our scientists the opportunities they need to ensure that our Nation remains preeminent in science.

Today, I am hoping that the people's House will reflect the American people's will and overturn this short-sighted action, and instead of saying ''I forbid,'' say ''yes'' to the American people.

The opponents of this legislation believe that this is a struggle between faith and science. I believe that faith and science have at least one thing in common: Both are searches for truth. America has room for both faith and science, and thank God for that.

The Episcopal Church, in its letter in support of this legislation says, ''As stewards of creation, we are called to help mend and renew the world in many ways. The Episcopal Church celebrates medical research, and this research expands our knowledge of God's creation and empowers us to bring potential healing to those who suffer from disease and disability.'' It is our duty here in Congress to bring hope to the sick and the disabled, not to bind the hands of those who can bring them hope.

I believe, as Representative EMANUEL CLEAVER has said, I believe that God guided our researchers to discover the stem cell's power to heal. Overturning the President's cruel veto will enable science to live up to its potential to answer the prayers of America's families.

According to many scientists, including 80 Nobel Laureates, embryonic stem cell research has the potential to unlock the doors to treatments and cures to numerous diseases, and we have spoken about them all day, including diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, Lou Gehrig's disease, multiple sclerosis, cancer and spinal cord injuries, to name a few.

Many of our colleagues both here on the floor and other venues, have shared their personal stories, whether it is a condition of their children or an affliction of their parents. Their generosity of spirit and generosity to share those stories gives us testimony as to the need for this embryonic stem cell research, and it fills a void in science that we know can be filled. I believe that if we know a scientific opportunity for cure, we have a moral responsibility to support it.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will save lives and help us find the cures for diseases in a shorter time span. It is all about time, after all, how much time people have, the quality of their lives in that time frame.

This bill will enable science to live up to the biblical power to cure. I urge all of my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the override and override the President's cruel veto.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I thank the majority leader for yielding time. I rise in support of the President's veto. I applaud President Bush's courage in doing this, and I encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to sustain this veto.

This is not about whether we are going to fund more embryonic stem cell research. We are funding embryonic stem cell research. We funded $38 million of human embryonic stem cell research last year. This is not about whether it is legal or not. It is legal in the United States to do embryonic stem cell research. Indeed, this is really not about whether the United States is going to fall behind in this area of research.

The United States leads the world because of the President's program, publishing 46% of the published research articles on human embryonic stem cell research.

So what is this about, what are we debating today? We lead the world. We are funding it. What are we debating?

What we are debating today in this Chamber is whether or not we are going to use taxpayer dollars to kill more human embryos. That is really what this debate is all about. This business about cures being around the corner, jeepers, I have said this, and nobody has refuted it, they don't have an animal model that shows that embryonic stem cells work and they are safe.

Nobody has gotten an FDA approval to use human embryonic stem cells in a human trial. But we have each year 10, 15 or more clinical trials published in the literature showing adult stem cells and core blood stem cells work.

This is a debate about whether or not we are going to have the imprimatur of the United States Government to say that certain forms of human life can be discarded.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is recognized for 3 minutes.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, this is a sad day for America. But what is so sad is that our opponents would so distort the facts to stop research that would benefit so many. Many have talked today about the so-called snowflake babies, embryos which are donated to other couples. I don't oppose that. I think that is great.

But right now couples undergoing IVF treatment have three options for the spare embryos that are necessarily created. They can freeze them for future use by themselves. They can donate them to other couples, as several hundred have done, or they can say that the embryos that are left over should be destroyed as medical waste, and tens of thousands of those embryos have been destroyed.

All we say today, give those couples a fourth choice. Let those embryos that would thrown away as medical waste be donated for ethical embryonic stem cell research. The opponents of this bill also continue to claim that adult stem cell and core blood cells are just as good as embryonic stem cells. Shame on them. This is a bald lie.

Harold Varmus, the former director of the NIH, said just this week, compared to adult stem cells, embryonic stem cells have a much greater potential according to all existing scientific literature. Let's not distort the facts just for a political argument.

This Congress has been politicizing science in a way that the American public disagrees with. Earlier this year, we tried to assert our jurisdiction over end-of-life decisions with the terrible vote that we took in the Terry Schiavo case. Now, today, we are trying to stop ethical scientific research that could help tens of millions of people.

Many on the other side say, well, the taxpayers shouldn't fund this research. Excuse me, I thought we had a national consensus, 72 percent of Americans agree with this precept, people who are Democrats, Republicans, independents, prolife, prochoice. I don't know who decided that they were God and that Congress could not fund this research, because their religious thinking trumps the national consensus.

A majority of my constituents don't think we should fund the war. Does that mean we shouldn't fund the war? Of course not.

We need this ethical research. We need it for our colleague, JIM LANGEVIN, so he can walk again. We need it for our colleague, LANE EVANS, whose Parkinson's has made him so sick that he cannot be here today to vote to override this bill.

Let's give hope to millions of Americans. Let's give hope for ethical research. Let us override this veto.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) for a unanimous-consent request.

(Mr. MURPHY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MURPHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of sustaining the President's veto. This is not a vote for or against stem cell research. Many U.S. companies and universities are engaged in a great deal of embryonic stem cell research.

In fact, the President and the U.S. Congress have supported this research with over $90 million for embryonic stem cell lines derived from embryos that had already been destroyed with more than 700 shipments to researchers since 2001.

The question is whether to use federal money or U.S. taxpayer dollars to destroy human embryos for research?

The research bears out that several types of stem cell research have been successful. These are adult stem cells and umbilical cord blood stem cells.

However, no research has shown embryonic stem cell research to be fruitful. A year ago

when we debated this issue, a study at Seoul National University in Korea was brought up as an example of success to create the world's first embryonic stem cells from a cloned human embryo. Since then, we've learned that study was filled with erroneous data. The DNA studies on the two preserved stem cells did not match those from the published study and were not cloned human embryonic stem cells.

But, beyond this, we must keep in mind how we use human life and think about where we should draw the line.

Those who support destroying embryos for this research have stated these will be embryos that will be discarded. This is not true.

Many parents would love to adopt these embryos and raise these children as their own. According to the non-partisan RAND Corporation the ''vast majority'' or 88 percent of the 400,000 embryos that have been frozen since the late 1970s are not going to be discarded but are held for family building and not for medical research. In fact, over 21 families who visited the White House last year adopted these embryos in order to fulfill their own dreams of having a family.

Even to refer to these embryos as ones that are unwanted and will be destroyed raises the ultimate question: where do we and where will we draw the line?

If we say a human embryo is unwanted and discardable, we head down the road of asking ''what next?''

Do we view seriously disabled newborns as unwanted? Will it be acceptable to discard them?

This is a road down which we cannot afford to turn.

The research does not support it, morality does not condone it. U.S. taxpayer dollars must not support destroying a life to save a life.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, for a unanimous-consent request.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as a 22-year Congressman with a 100 percent prolife voting record, minus two votes, I rise in opposition of the Presidential veto and support the effort to override it.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 810 and overriding the President's earlier veto of this legislation. H.R. 810 would expand the number of sources of embryonic stem cell lines that may be used in federally funded scientific research. The bill would allow the limited use of human embryonic stem cells that are derived from embryos that would otherwise be discarded from fertility clinics.

This is not an issue where everyone agrees. There are deeply held views on both sides of the difficult question before us, and I want to emphasize that every one of my colleagues should vote in accordance with their own conscience. I support the bill, and I want to say why.

Stem cells are cells that can differentiate into many different kinds of cells used in the body. They can come from several sources, such as adult stem cells, but many scientists believe that the most potential for productive research lies in embryonic stem cells, which could have the capacity to differentiate into any cell in the body. If researchers can find such a perfect stem cell that can differentiate into any other cell type, we may be able to unlock the cures to hundreds of diseases that afflict us today.

This is more than a sterile, academic matter to me. Diseases like Parkinson's, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, have stricken millions of Americans and continue to take a heavy toll on all of us. I can tell you that it is a living nightmare to watch a loved one suffer from a terrible illness and know that there is nothing that you can do but be by their side. That was the experience I had when my father died of complications of diabetes at the age of 71. It was also the experience I had when my younger brother, Jon Kevin Barton, died of liver cancer at the age of 44.

When my brother was diagnosed, we tried everything. They found his liver cancer when he was just 41 years old. He and his wife, Jennifer, had two children, Jack and Jace. He was a state district judge in Texas. After they told Jon he had liver cancer, we did everything we could, and, in fact, his cancer went into remission for a year. But it came back, and Jon died just three months short of his 44th birthday. That was 6 years ago. Every time I see Jace and Jack and their Mom, I think of Jon and wonder if stem cell research could have allowed him to be alive today.

I do not know for sure, but my heart tells me that stem cell research might have led to treatments that could have helped my brother and my father. We cannot be certain, but maybe the answers for finding cures for many of the diseases that afflict us lie in stem cell research. Many scientists believe that once we can identify a perfect, undifferentiated stem cell line, it will lead to significant scientific breakthroughs and the discovery of cures for many diseases.

It is the hope of a cure for people suffering today and their families that led me to decide to support this legislation. I believe hope is what led President Bush to take the steps he did in August, 2001, when he permitted for the first time Federal taxpayer dollars to be spent on embryonic stem cell research. He recognized the profound benefits that were possible through embryonic research, and he wanted to let the research go forward in a way that respected life and the moral and ethical views of millions of Americans. The President's decision struck a delicate balance between respecting the life of human embryos and giving hope to the American families who are enduring the suffering and loss of debilitating diseases like diabetes and cancer.

But when the President made his announcement in 2001, it was believed that there were at least 60 viable lines of stem cells that could be used for this research. For a variety of reasons, this has turned out not to be the case; not all of these potential lines are now available for research. Currently, there are approximately 22 lines of embryonic stem cells that are available for federally funded research. None of those lines that are currently allowed for Federal research purposes have been shown to have that breakthrough stem cell—the one cell that can differentiate into all 220 cell types in the body.

The President's initial decision reflects the difficulty of this issue. However, when new facts arise on the one hand that tell us the embryonic stem cell lines already used for federal research do not hold the promise we once thought, it should require us to reevaluate that initial decision in light of the facts.

I continue to support the expansion of cord blood and bone marrow stem cell research, and perhaps the breakthrough we are all hoping for will come from adult stem cells. But at this point, we cannot know for sure where the breakthrough will come from, and it is my belief that we need to keep all of our options open while continuing to go forward in a moral and ethical way.

I fully understand that there are people of good conscience that will disagree with me. I completely respect their views and differences of opinion. Like many on the other side of this legislation, I am also strongly pro-life. For over two decades in the United States Congress, I have had a strong pro-life voting record. I remain pro-life, but for the reasons I have given, I intend to vote in favor of this legislation.

As my colleagues continue to debate the merits of this bill, I only ask that we try to respect one another's various points of view and that no one is ridiculed for their beliefs on either side of this complex and difficult issue.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

My colleagues, we have had a very good debate. This is an issue that has been very divisive in this House for the last year or so, and the President has made his position very clear.

But let me make the position very clear that embryonic research with regard to stem cells is occurring and is going to continue to occur. The issue here is whether Federal funds, taxpayer dollars ought to be used to destroy human life in the search for cures for other diseases. That is what the issue is, pure and simple. We all know that this research is going to continue in the private sector with private moneys.

But the debate that we have had is whether it is appropriate to take taxpayer funds to destroy human life to find embryonic stem cells. I believe that my colleagues, enough of my colleagues will stand up today to sustain the President's veto.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues, to vote ''no'' on overriding the President's veto.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, it is a momentous event when a president vetoes a bill. It is a pronouncement that the lawmaking body of our federal government is in error and that the difficult lawmaking process has produced legislation not worthy of enactment. For the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005, nothing could be further from the truth. I was proud to have voted for H.R. 810 when it first came to the House Floor for a vote in May 2005, and I am proud today to vote to override the President's veto—the first veto of his Administration.

A broad spectrum of lawmakers from both parties and all regions of the country recognize the extraordinary opportunity that stem cell research presents to treat and cure tragic diseases afflicting millions of Americans. Some of these potential treatments were only dreamt about a generation ago. Alzheimer's, paralysis, Parkinson's, diabetes—the list of possible applications for stem cell research

goes on and on. For some of the victims of these diseases, stem cell research provides the only present hope for a cure. To use the President's first and only veto to effectively deny these citizens of their best hope is as tragic as it is wrongheaded. H.R. 810 carefully ensures that this research is conducted in a manner consistent with the highest ethical standards.

There have been numerous times in history when a chief executive has denied the progress of science. We mark these times as setbacks for humanity, and we also recognize that in many cases, progress was only delayed, not curtailed. Despite the setback of this veto, the struggle will continue—both the struggle for Americans seeking to overcome disability and disease, and the struggle to support the scientific community in its quest to find the effective cures and treatments. I am confident that the American people will not allow this veto to forever impede the progress of science.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 810, the ''Stem Cell Research and Enhancement Act'', and urge my colleagues to reject President Bush's regrettable veto.

We are here to decide once again whether our Nation will move forward in the search for treatments and therapies that will cure a multitude of dreaded diseases that afflict an estimated 128 million Americans. These diseases include Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injuries or spinal dysfunction, and diabetes. Embryonic stem cell research holds the potential for treating these diseases, and many more.

H.R. 810 is a sensible and targeted path forward. It would impose strict ethical guidelines for embryonic stem cell research and would lift the arbitrary restriction limiting funds to only some embryonic stem cell lines created before August 10, 2001. By removing this arbitrary restriction, H.R. 810 will ensure that researchers can not only continue their work to prolong or save lives, but also conduct such research using newer, less contaminated, more diverse, and more numerous embryonic stem cells.

H.R. 810 does not allow Federal funding for the creation or destruction of embryos. This bill only allows for research on embryonic stem cell lines retrieved from embryos created for reproductive purposes that would otherwise be discarded. This point is critical: if these embryos are not used for stem cell research, they will be destroyed.

President Bush's rejection of this narrow and commonsense measure should be overridden by the people's House.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, every American has a very personal stake in today's discussion on stem cell research. Everyone knows people who would benefit from breakthrough research using stem cells. Indeed, with a hundred million Americans at risk from a variety of diseases ranging from Lou Gehrig's disease, to Alzheimer's, to Parkinson's, to cancer, to juvenile diabetes, it's almost impossible to not know somebody who could potentially be helped by stem cell research. For me, the most important beneficiaries are our children and grandchildren who have not yet shown any symptoms, but who may fall victim to one of these devastating diseases.

H.R. 810 is an opportunity for Congress to clarify the issues and exert leadership in a way that the federal government has in the past. Instead the President vetoed the bill after having passed through the House and Senate. This administration is out of touch with the 70% of the American public who supports stem cell research. We have inadequate access to stem cell lines for research purposes and we are putting forth neither money nor encouragement while we construct artificial boundaries. These misguided policies by the administration will not stop progress from stem cell research, but will delay the day we have these very important therapies to transform people's lives. Americans are losing ground on this vital research to other countries while relinquishing leadership to the states here in our country.

Stem cell research is not about cloning a human being or creating embryos for research purposes. We can maintain prohibitions against cloning of humans while supplying stem cells in an ethical manner from 400,000 embryos already accessible that will otherwise be destroyed.

Every American needs to watch this closely. The stakes in this debate are high both for the potential benefit to the physical condition of all humankind, as well as the establishment of the boundaries between public policy and personal theology.

For me the choice is clear. American families deserve an opportunity for embryonic stem cell research to be conducted in a reasonable, controlled manner, to hasten the day of vital life-saving, life-enriching therapy.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I am outraged that President Bush has single handedly stifled the advancement of medical research that could provide cures for millions of Americans who are suffering needlessly from a wide range of debilitating diseases. President Bush's decision to use his veto power for the first time in his Presidency on this historic piece of legislation is unconscionable and a misguided attempt to pander to the extreme base in his party. The tireless efforts made by the scientific community, stem cell advocates and supportive Members of Congress finally came to fruition when this body passed the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act (H.R. 810). This legislation, supported by a majority of Americans, expands the embryonic stem cell lines available for conducting research and allows the federal government to fund this type of undertaking.

Stem cell research (including embryonic stem cell research) offers incredible hope to the sufferers of diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, cancer and diabetes. Embryonic stem cells are derived from donated embryos that are not used during the process of in-vitro fertilization and would otherwise be discarded. Many scientists believe that embryonic stem cells have greater potential than adult stem cells because they can differentiate into any specialized cell in the body. Additionally, they can be administered to patients without fear of rejection or the need for expensive immunosuppressive drugs.

Unfortunately, in one fell swoop, President Bush has preemptively thwarted medical progress, destroying the hope of millions of Americans desperately waiting for a cure. Medical science is at a crossroads with incredible potential to save and improve the lives of chronic and fatal disease sufferers. At this time, our government should be doing everything possible to advance and explore all avenues of medical research. With polls showing 60 percent of the country supporting embryonic stem cell research, it is indefensible that President Bush chose to ignore the will of the American people by striking down this monumental measure.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the veto override of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. This bipartisan legislation would expand Federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.

The House approved this bill last year and it won U.S. Senate approval yesterday. However, despite the measure passing both chambers of Congress, the President has vetoed the legislation, the first of his presidency. I am disappointed the President chose this bill to be his first veto.

The American Medical Association and 92 other organizations, including scientists and researchers support H.R. 810. Federal funding would enable further research to examine many new lines of stem cells—increasing the potential for cures. Each year 8,000 to 10,000 embryos created for in-vitro fertilization are destroyed. H.R. 810 would allow Federally funded research of stem cells, which scientists believe can yield cures for diseases and injuries, to be harvested from surplus frozen embryos that are stored at fertility clinics and slated for destruction.

Human embryonic stem cells are prized because they can replicate themselves and become almost any type of human tissue. We all know someone who can benefit from the research. Science should prevail over politics.

President Bush's veto is standing in the way of hope and progress in curing many diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Lou Gehrig's disease, some cancers, and spinal cord injuries. This veto has ignored our country's healthcare needs and has slowed the potential to eradicate life threatening and chronic diseases.

The President did not make the right choice. This critical life saving bill is greatly needed. I urge my colleagues to support the veto override and reaffirm Congress's support of life saving medical research.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, President Bush unfortunately vetoed funding for life-saving research on stem cells from donated, surplus embryos because he maintains it's wrong to ''promote science which destroys life in order to save life.''

As the leading pro-life legislator in Washington, Sen. ORRIN HATCH put it, ''Since when does human life begin in a petri dish in a refrigerator?''

To reduce this issue to an abortion issue is a horrible injustice to 100 million Americans suffering the ravages of diabetes, spinal cord paralysis, heart disease, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Lou Gehrig's disease and other fatal, debilitating diseases.

I've met with medical researchers from the University of Minnesota Stem Cell Institute, the Mayo Clinic, the National Institutes of Health and Johns Hopkins University.

As one prominent researcher told me, ''The real irony of the President's policy is that at least 400,000 surplus frozen embryos could be used to produce stem cells for research to save lives. Instead, these surplus embryos are being thrown into the garbage and treated as medical waste.''

Only 22 of the 78 stem cell lines approved by the President in 2001 remain today. This limit on research has stunted progress on finding cures for a number of debilitating and fatal diseases according to scientists and patient advocacy groups.

Mr. Speaker, the scientific evidence is overwhelming that embryonic stem cells have great potential to regenerate specific types of human tissues, offering hope for millions of Americans suffering from debilitating diseases.

Mr. Speaker, it's too late for my beloved mother who was totally debilitated by Alzheimer's disease which led to her death. It's too late for my cousin who died a cruel, tragic death from diabetes in his 20s.

But it's not too late for 100 million other American people counting on us to support funding for life-saving research on stem cells derived from donated surplus embryos created through in vitro fertilization.

Let's not turn our backs on these people. Let's not take away their hope. Let's make it clear that abortion politics should not determine this critical medical research.

Embryonic stem cell research will prolong life, improve life and give hope for life to millions of people.

I urge members to override the President's veto of funding for life-saving and life-enhancing embryonic stem cell research.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, this institution is often called the people's House and today I ask my colleagues to stand in the shoes of the millions of people dealing with incurable or debilitating diseases. Diseases such as juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, or cancer. Diseases that impact them every day . . . their plans for the future.

Let us stand with them today and vote to override the President's veto of the medical research that holds the potential to find a treatment to improve their lives, or, over time, a cure.

The U.S. House has approved this legislation. The Senate has approved this legislation. The reason the American people—72 percent of them in public surveys—support the Federal Government proceeding with this legislation is because in virtually every family there is a life experience with the need for medical breakthroughs.

We can never guarantee the results of scientific research, but without it we guarantee there can be no results.

The President's stem cell policy is not working. Of the 78 existing stem cell lines permitted for use in federally funded research, only 22 of these lines are currently used for research, and many have raised concerns that these lines are genetically unstable, contaminated, and harder to work with than newer lines. Research is practically at a standstill in this country.

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act is a well-crafted, bipartisan approach. It is opposed with false arguments that divide Americans when what is involved is an expansion of research on embryonic stem cell lines derived from surplus embryos that were originally created for fertility treatments purposes, are in excess of clinical need and would otherwise be discarded, and have been donated by the individuals seeking fertility treatment through written consent and without any financial involvement.

Let us override the President's veto and take these vitals steps to tap into the promise of research that has the potential to change the face of modern medicine as we know it today. That is a human value that should not be undermined by the people's representatives.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last year, I was proud to cosponsor and vote in favor of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which will expand the Federal policy and implement stricter ethical guidelines for this research.

Embryonic stem cell research is necessary to discover the causes of a myriad of genetic diseases, to test new drug therapies more efficiently on laboratory tissue instead of human volunteers, and to staving off the ravages of disease with the regeneration of our bodies' essential organs.

President George W. Bush's policy on stem cell research limits Federal funding only to embryonic stem cell lines that were derived by August 9, 2001, the date of his policy announcement.

Of the 78 stem cell lines promised by President Bush, only 22 are available to researchers.

Unfortunately these stem cell lines are aged and contaminated with mouse feeder cells, making their therapeutic use for humans uncertain. According to the majority of scientists, if these stem cell lines were transplanted into people, they would provoke dangerous viruses in humans.

What is even more disturbing is the fact that there are at least 125 new stem cell lines, which are more pristine than the lines currently available on the National Institutes of Health registry, and which are ineligible for Federally-funded research because they were derived after August 9, 2001.

This restrictive embryonic stem cell research policy is making it increasingly more difficult to attract new scientists to this area of research because of concerns that funding restrictions will keep this research from being successful.

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which passed the House on May 25, 2005, simply seeks to lift the cutoff date for lines available for research.

H.R. 810 will also strengthen the ethical standards guiding the Federal research on stem cell lines and will ensure that embryos donated for stem cell research were created for the purposes of in vitro fertilization, were in excess of clinical need, would have otherwise been discarded and involved no financial inducement.

Contrary to what opponents have been saying, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act will not Federally fund the destruction of embryos.

This measure makes it clear that unused embryos will be used for embryonic stem cell research only by decision of the donor. No Federally-funded research will be supported by this measure on any embryos that had been created solely for research purposes.

In February 2005, the Civil Society Institute conducted a nationwide survey of 1,022 adults and found that 70 percent supported bipartisan federal legislation to promote embryonic stem cell research.

Let public interest triumph over ideological special interests. Public interest is best served when the medical and the scientific community is free to exercise its professional judgment in extending and enhancing human life.

I urge the Senate to pass the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act with overwhelming support, and for President Bush to sign it into law when it reaches his desk.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the argument that embryonic stem cell research can contribute to life-saving research is emotionally persuasive, but it is never justifiable to deliberately end one life, even to save others. There are alternative sources of stem cells without engaging in research that purposefully takes a life. We debated an alternative stem cell bill on this floor yesterday, and it is unfortunate it did not get the support of those Members here today crying aloud how we are denying vital lifesaving research.

Furthermore, we are already funding such research. In 2001, President Bush announced federal funding for the embryonic stem cell lines that had already been created. There are 78 of these approved lines and only 22 of them are currently being used in federally funded research. These lines are so useful that they are used in 85 percent of the published embryonic stem cell studies in the world.

In fact, President Bush's policy is generous. In 2005 NIH spent $38 million, up $13 million from 2004. Most importantly, the current ban on embryonic research does not prevent private funding for embryonic stem cell research. Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates and Newport Beach bond trader Bill Gross are among several private donors who have provided millions of dollars toward embryonic stem cell research.

Proponents also claim that the U.S. is lagging behind the rest of the world in embryonic stem cell research and that increased federal funding would close the gap. The fact is the United States leads the world in embryonic stem cell research. A recent Nature Journal publication states that U.S. scientists contributed 46 percent of all stem cell publications since 1998. Germany comes far second representing 10 percent of studies, and the remaining 44 percent derive from between 16 other countries.

It is unnecessary and morally offensive to use taxpayer money to expand embryonic stem cell research. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting President Bush's veto.

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this effort to override the President's veto of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation, which expands stem cell research and ensures that the federal government can implement ethical guidelines.

This bill will provide hope and opportunity for millions of Americans suffering from chronic and life threatening health conditions. This legislation will also ensure that the federal government can implement ethical guidelines over federally-funded research, which will help to set high standards for all research. To be clear, H.R. 810 only allows federal funding for embryonic stem cell research in cases where the cells were created for fertility treatment and will otherwise be discarded.

The expansion of funding to stem cell research has the power to make a real difference in the lives of Americans. Stem cells offer remarkable potential contributions to medical science and improve the lives of millions of people who suffer from incurable diseases such as juvenile diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, AIDS, and spinal cord injuries. It may also help us to understand abnormal cell

growth that occurs in cancer, as well as change the way we develop drugs and test them for safety and potential efficacy.

It is Imperative that we move our health care policy in a new direction and support efforts to improve the quality of life. This research is supported by 72 percent of Americans and the majority of the Congress. H.R. 810 is supported by over 200 patient groups, universities, and scientific societies, and has been endorsed by more than 75 national and local newspapers and 80 Nobel Laureates.

For President Bush to use his first veto to ignore this overwhelming support for stem cell research and at the same time extinguish the hopes of millions for cures to chronic and dangerous diseases is an outrage. This veto has made it clear that President Bush has chosen radical ideology over American lives. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to override this misguided veto.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of overriding the President's veto of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005.

I am extremely disappointed that the President exercised his first veto on a piece of bipartisan legislation that will provide countless number of Americans hope of finding cures for many life-threatening diseases. This Congress has passed many pieces of irresponsible legislation that benefit narrow special interests at the expense of the public good. The President did not veto any of those bills. Now the Congress has finally passed a bipartisan bill that will help find cures to diseases that strike virtually every American family. Yet the President has chosen to veto this landmark bill. In doing so, the President is playing to the extreme right of his own political party. Shame on the President for putting politics over the health of the American people.

We should allow the expansion of federally supported research of human embryonic stem cell lines. The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005 would provide federal funding for a wider range of stem cell research while establishing ethical guidelines. The bill also provides that embryos that are otherwise likely to be discarded can be used to develop treatments for debilitating diseases and life-saving cures.

I believe stem cell research holds the promise of scientific breakthroughs that could improve the lives of millions of Americans afflicted with a debilitating disease—such as Parkinson's, diabetes, spinal cord injuries, autoimmune diseases, cardiovascular disease, and cancer—for which there is currently no cure. While it is too late for those who have passed from these terrible diseases, it still not too late for the millions of other Americans hoping that the Congress will override the President's veto and support federally funded research of this potentially life-saving resource. For these patients and their families, stem cell research is the last hope for a cure.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that affects every family in America. I strongly urge my House colleagues to vote to override the President's veto on this bipartisan legislation.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, ethical, embryonic stem cell research is a reality. The federal government has two options. We can engage, by participating in the research and influencing the ethical debate within the global community. Or, we ignore the issue and let others lead.

America is the world leader in medical research and development. We cannot cede this ground.

That is why we must be unyielding in our support for the embryonic stem cell research made possible under H.R. 810. And why I would caution my colleagues against accepting any of the weak alternatives being debated.

Mr. Speaker, one of the great equalizers is disease. It ignores age, income and education level. Embryonic stem cell research has the potential to cure and maybe even prevent many debilitating conditions affecting the old and the young, the rich and the poor. Like Diabetes. Parkinson's disease. Alzheimer's. Spinal cord damage. And maybe even bone marrow failure. Families from all walks of life have first-hand experience with these tragedies.

Make no mistake, these potential breakthroughs lie at the end of a long and difficult road. But the research community is committed to this task. Just last week in my hometown of Sacramento, the UC Davis Medical Center hired a top national expert in regenerative medicine to direct the Center's new stem cell research facility.

But every stem cell researcher agrees that this research must use embryonic stem cells. These are the only cells with the flexibility and the potential to fix spinal cord injuries, or cure diabetes. And using the unused embryos from in vitro fertilization clinics gives us an ethical way to obtain them.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that this is a debate about what science tells about stem cell research. And equally, it is about the ethical constraints our democracy rightly agrees to impose on that science. But there is broad consensus on these two points. That consensus is enshrined in H.R. 810.

So the federal government must decide whether it will lend its tremendous weight to embryonic stem cell research. Or whether it will simply remain on the sidelines, pretending that ethical solutions don't exist.

Earlier today, President Bush chose the sidelines. He chose to ignore the issue and allow others to lead. Worse still, he is stifling the hopes of millions of Americans.

And fundamentally, this is a debate about hope. Hope is the light that keeps us going through a dark and torturous tunnel.

I urge my colleagues to think very hard before denying that hope to millions of people across America by supporting anything less than federally-funded embryonic stem cell research. I hope my colleagues will vote to override the President's veto. It is time to go in a new direction.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, This debate on H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, is really one of the most fundamentally important debates that this body can undertake.

H.R. 810 addresses the most basic, essential ethical issues—life, when does it begin, and when should life, including human embryos, be open to experimentation and scientific research.

It is society's ethical obligation to draw boundaries around the possibilities of science. I believe we must draw a boundary that says "no" to embryonic stem cell research that requires the killing of embryos that if left to grow would become children. Children who would grow up to become police officers, factory workers, soldiers, government employees, lawyers, doctors, and scientists.

I believe that embryos, as life, should be treated with as much respect as you and I, and I reject the view that embryos are mere medical waste, as some have suggested.

Where do we draw the line as a Nation, and say, we will not cross that line? These proponents of H.R. 810 would not have us draw a line. This legislation leaves too many questions unanswered.

When do embryos become human life? After 40 hours? After 2 days? H.R. 810 is silent on when embryos become human life—it doesn't specify how long these embryos are allowed to grow before they are killed—2 days, 5 days, 14 days, or more!

Proponents of H.R. 810 will claim that their legislation will address the "ethical manner" in which this research will be conducted, yet their legislation is silent on the ethics, other than a subsection that directs the secretary to create guidelines in 60 days or less.

As elected leaders, we should set basic guidelines, not leave the guidelines to an unelected and unnamed administration official.

This legislation is unethical and unnecessary. Human embryonic stem cell research is completely legal today in the private sector and eligible for state funding in several states, including California and New Jersey. Since August 2001, over 128 stem cell lines have been created.

Furthermore, human embryonic stem cell research is funded by the federal government today. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) spent an estimated $38 million on Embryonic Stem Cell research in Fiscal Year 2006. 22 human embryonic stem cell lines are currently receiving federal funds. These lines are sufficient for basic research according to NIH director, Dr. Zerhouni.

Finally, embryonic stem cell research remains unproven. Not a single therapy has been developed from embryonic stem cell research. Instead of cures, embryonic stem cell research has led to tumors and deaths in animal studies.

While the promise of embryonic stem cells is questionable, adult stem cells are being used today to save lives. Recognizing this, the National Institutes of Health spent $568 million in Fiscal Year 2006 on adult stem cell research.

Adult stem cells are being used today in clinical trials and in clinical practice to treat 72 diseases including, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, juvenile diabetes, brain cancer, breast cancer, lymphoma, heart damage, rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile arthritis, stroke, and sickle cell anemia.

Let me be clear, I am committed to funding ethical scientific research that will unlock the origins of diseases and develop cures that can help my constituents.

But we cannot let science leap-frog our ethics, our morals, and our legal system.

This is not a partisan issue, and it's bigger than a right to life issue.

I urge Members to vote against H.R. 810 and sustain the President's veto.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, the possibility is real that embryonic stem-cell research represents the greatest breakthrough in the history of science. It is, therefore, important that we understand the medical and moral issues at stake.

In 1998, University of Wisconsin scientists for the first time isolated embryonic stem cells in a laboratory. These cells, 30 to 34 in number, are derived from a blastocyst, which is a

group of 150 to 200 cells smaller than the dot at the end of this sentence. A blastocyst, in turn, is derived from a single cell known as a zygote, which comes into being after a sperm and an egg combine.

Blastocysts have been created outside of the body in cell cultures for decades in fertility clinics. More than 400,000 are known to exist in frozen form. Thousands are discarded as medical waste and millions are eliminated naturally every year.

The reason the scientific community is so excited about embryonic stem cells is that they are pluripotent. Unlike other stem cells, they are capable of continuously dividing and being coaxed into forming virtually any of several hundred types of body cells. Health research is conducted in stages—mice before people. At the moment, scientists are encouraged by the results they have obtained from the animal kingdom. Research on mice, pigs and monkeys is so promising that scientists can envision the possibility of creating ''cellular repair kits'' for the human body. If research is supported the regenerative power of embryonic stem cells may soon be harnessed to treat ailments as diverse as spinal-cord injury, diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis and heart disease.

Profound moral questions encompass embryonic stem-cell research. A blastocyst, which is subject to scientific engineering on a Petri dish, could, if implanted in a uterus, cause a life to form. ''Excess'' blastocysts also could be adopted. As the father of adopted children, I confess to personal enthusiasm for this option.

Nevertheless, the ethical question must be addressed: Is it more moral to throw away as medical waste blastocysts that exceed demand for implanting, or to allow them to be used by scientists to extract therapies for saving life?

More precisely, which is more pro-life: throwing a blastocyst away in a dumpster or placing it on a Petri dish to develop a remedy for heart disease?

The question today is about science and its promise. Tomorrow, a different set of questions may have to be addressed. Could a mother deny a child dying of cancer access to embryonic stem-cell therapy? Could a son or daughter deny a parent suffering from Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease access to such therapies? Is it not pro-life to save and prolong life?

On most political issues compromise is possible. On ethics, it is not so easy. Indeed, uncompromising approaches to ethics are generally considered admirable. The problem comes when values, as in this case, are in conflict.

Morality is about means as well as ends. For citizens who believe nothing is more important than to protect life at conception, embryonic stem-cell research may be intolerable. For citizens who believe that the prospect of meaningful life begins in a mother, not a Petri dish, the moral imperative of attending the sick and alleviating illness is compelling.

When one group of Americans considers embryonic stem-cell research immoral and another finds it ethically problematic to refuse to seek credible cures for life-threatening disease, the public goal can never be full agreement. But it can be mutual respect.

One approach which this legislation advances is the notion of authorizing federal support for stem cell research involving only those lines derived from blastocysts that would otherwise be thrown away and that were not initially created for the purpose of research.

I recognized that for some even this restrained approach amounts to hubris, to man tampering with nature. But this is what modern science is about: Care, to be sure, must be taken, particularly at this stage of scientific development, not to attempt to clone human life or toy with human reproduction. But careful, moral exploration into disease control is morally defendable. Indeed, for many of us it would be morally derelect to turn our backs on our ailing parents and sick children.

Hence, I am compelled to vote to override this veto.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Will the House, on reconsideration, pass the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding?

Under the Constitution, this vote must be by the yeas and nays.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 235, nays 193, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 388]

YEAS—235

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boehlert
Bono
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Butterfield
Calvert
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Case
Castle
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Dreier
Edwards
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Foley
Ford
Fossella
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gonzalez
Gordon
Granger
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kelly
Kennedy (RI)
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kirk
Kolbe
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McKeon
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Platts
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Reichert
Reyes
Rohrabacher
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Simmons
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Sweeney
Tanner
Tauscher
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (PA)
Wexler
Wilson (NM)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)

NAYS—193

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Beauprez
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Carter
Chabot
Chocola
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Costello
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Jo Ann
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Duncan
Ehlers
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Graves
Green (WI)
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy (MN)
Kildee
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McMorris
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Oberstar
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Poe
Pombo
Price (GA)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Rehberg
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Tancredo
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—5

Evans
Gutierrez
Lewis (GA)
McKinney
Northup

□ 1851

Mr. SULLIVAN changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. SHERMAN and Mr. MORAN of Virginia changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So, two-thirds not having voted in favor thereof, the veto of the President was sustained and the bill was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, on account of official business in my district, I missed votes in this Chamber today. I would like the RECORD to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 384, 387, and 388. I would have voted "no" on rollcall votes 382, 383, 385, and 386.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The message and the bill are referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The Clerk will notify the Senate of the action of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2830, PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, under rule XXII, clause 7(c), I hereby announce my intention to offer a motion to instruct on H.R. 2830, the pension conference report.

The form of the motion is as follows:

I move that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2830 be instructed—

(1) to agree to the provisions contained in subsections (a) through (d) of section 601 of the Senate amendment (relating to prospective application of age discrimination, conversion, and present value assumption rules with respect to cash balance and other hybrid defined benefit plans) and not to agree with the provisions contained in title VII of the bill as passed the House (relating to benefit accrual standards); and

(2) to agree to the provisions contained in section 413 of the Senate amendment (relating to computation of guaranteed benefits of airline pilots required to separate from service prior to attaining age 65), but only with respect to plan terminations occurring on or after September 11, 2001.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken tomorrow. The postponed vote on H. Con. Res. 448 will also be taken tomorrow.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 921) condemning the recent attacks against the State of Israel, holding terrorists and their state-sponsors accountable for such attacks, supporting Israel's right to defend itself, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 921

Whereas on September 12, 2005, Israel completed its unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, demonstrating its willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of peace;

Whereas more than 1,000 rockets have been launched from Gaza into Israel since Israel's disengagement;

Whereas in a completely unprovoked attack that occurred in undisputed Israeli territory on June 25, 2006, Israeli Defense Forces Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped and is being held hostage in Gaza by a Palestinian terrorist group which includes members of Hamas;

Whereas Hamas political leader Khaled Meshaal, in Damascus, Syria, has acknowledged the role of Hamas in holding Corporal Shalit hostage;

Whereas in a completely unprovoked attack that occurred in undisputed Israeli territory on July 12, 2006, operatives of the terrorist group Hezbollah operating out of southern Lebanon killed three Israeli soldiers and took two others hostage;

Whereas Israel fully complied with United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 (1978) by completely withdrawing its forces from Lebanon, as certified by the United Nations Security Council and affirmed by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan on June 16, 2000, when he said, ''Israel has withdrawn from [Lebanon] in full compliance with Security Council Resolution 425.'';

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004) calls for the complete withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon and the dismantlement of all independent militias in Lebanon;

Whereas despite the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, the Government of Lebanon has failed to disband and disarm Hezbollah, allowing Hezbollah instead to amass 13,000 rockets, including rockets that are more destructive, longer-range and more accurate than rockets previously used by Hezbollah, and has integrated Hezbollah into the Lebanese Government;

Whereas the Government of Israel has previously shown great restraint despite the fact that Hezbollah has launched at least four separate attacks into Israel using rockets and ground forces over the past year;

Whereas the failure of the Government of Lebanon to implement all aspects of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 and to extend its authority throughout its territory has enabled Hezbollah to launch armed attacks against Israel and recently to kidnap Israeli soldiers;

Whereas Hezbollah's strength derives significantly from the direct financial, military, and political support it receives from Syria and Iran, and Hezbollah also receives important support from sources within Lebanon;

Whereas Iranian Revolutionary Guards continue to operate in southern Lebanon, providing support to Hezbollah and reportedly controlling its operational activities;

Whereas the Government of the United States has enacted several laws, including the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–175) and the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172), which call for the imposition of sanctions on Syria and Iran for, among other things, their support for terrorism and terrorist organizations;

Whereas the House of Representatives has repeatedly called for full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559;

Whereas section 1224 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107–228) withholds certain assistance to Lebanon contingent on the deployment of the Lebanese armed forces to the internationally recognized border between Lebanon and Israel and its effective assertion of authority in the border area in order, among other reasons, to prevent cross-border infiltration by terrorists, precisely the criminal activity that has provoked the current crisis;

Whereas President George W. Bush stated on July 12, 2006, ''Hezbollah's terrorist operations threaten Lebanon's security and are an affront to the sovereignty of the Lebanese Government. Hezbollah's actions are not in the interest of the Lebanese people, whose welfare should not be held hostage to the interests of the Syrian and Iranian regimes.'', and has repeatedly affirmed that Syria and Iran must be held to account for their shared responsibility in the recent attacks;

Whereas the United States recognizes that some members of the democratically-elected Lebanese parliament are working to build an autonomous and sovereign Lebanon and supports their efforts; and

Whereas both Hezbollah and Hamas refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist and call for the destruction of Israel: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its steadfast support for the State of Israel;

(2) condemns Hamas and Hezbollah for engaging in unprovoked and reprehensible armed attacks against Israel on undisputed Israeli territory, for taking hostages, for killing Israeli soldiers, and for continuing to indiscriminately target Israeli civilian populations with their rockets and missiles;

(3) further condemns Hamas and Hezbollah for cynically exploiting civilian populations as shields, locating their equipment and bases of operation, including their rockets and other armaments, amidst civilian populations, including in homes and mosques;

(4) recognizes Israel's longstanding commitment to minimizing civilian loss and welcomes Israel's continued efforts to prevent civilian casualties;

(5) demands the Governments of Iran and Syria to direct Hamas and Hezbollah to immediately and unconditionally release Israeli soldiers which they hold captive;

(6) affirms that all governments that have provided continued support to Hamas or Hezbollah share responsibility for the hostage-taking and attacks against Israel and, as such, should be held accountable for their actions;

(7) condemns the Governments of Iran and Syria for their continued support for Hezbollah and Hamas in their armed attacks against Israelis and their other terrorist activities;

(8) supports Israel's right to take appropriate action to defend itself, including to conduct operations both in Israel and in the territory of nations which pose a threat to it, which is in accordance with international law, including Article 51 of the United Nations Charter;

(9) commends the President of the United States for fully supporting Israel as it responds to these armed attacks by terrorist organizations and their state sponsors;

(10) urges the President of the United States to bring the full force of political, diplomatic, and economic sanctions available to the Government of the United States against the Governments of Syria and Iran;

(11) demands the Government of Lebanon to do everything in its power to find and free the kidnapped Israeli soldiers being held in the territory of Lebanon;

(12) calls on the United Nations Security Council to condemn these unprovoked acts and to take action to ensure full and immediate implementation of United Nations Security Council 1559 (2004), which requires Hezbollah to be dismantled and the departure of all Syrian personnel and Iranian Revolutionary Guards from Lebanon;

(13) expresses its condolences to all families of innocent victims of recent violence; and

(14) declares its continued commitment to working with Israel and other United States allies in combating terrorism worldwide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, if neither gentlemen is opposed to the bill, I request the time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman from California opposed to the motion?

Mr. LANTOS. I strongly support this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman from Texas opposed to the motion?

Mr. PAUL. I am opposed to it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 1 of rule XV, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) will control 20 minutes in opposition.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the time for debate on this measure be extended for 80 additional minutes to be equally divided.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 minutes of my time to the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and I ask unanimous consent that he may be permitted to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the world is witnessing yet another violent episode in the global struggle between civilization and terror.

The cowardly and deadly attacks on Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah have resulted in a vigorous response by Israel. We shouldn't be surprised. A history of precarious existence in a violent region has persuaded most Israelis that wishful thinking carries deadly costs and has convinced them that their survival depends upon their own willingness to act. And so Israel has acted.

As a result, Israel is now the subject of criticism around the world. The standard condemnations will be uttered, the familiar demands expressed. Israel will once again be excoriated for self-defense by governments that cannot be bothered to assist others or which are even the sources of threats themselves.

Instead of offering help to halt these terrorist attacks, too many of the world's governments will yet again demonstrate their irrelevance to the region's problems or to any possible solution by restricting their contributions to making disparaging comments from the sidelines. We can be certain that terrorism writ large is likely to be verbally assaulted. But were verbal disapprovals as deadly a weapon as are missiles and bombs, the violence and slaughter that are the chosen instruments of the terrorists would be quickly eliminated.

At best, a moral equivalence between the terrorist attacks and Israel's response will be asserted. But it is profoundly immoral to equate assault with defense, to erase the bright line between the deliberate killing of innocents and a determination to protect those innocents.

Were we in the position of the Israelis, how would we ourselves react if missiles were launched from Cuba and rained down on Miami? Any government that would allow terrorists to attack its citizens and do nothing in response but protest or beg for mercy would betray its most sacred trust.

□ 1900

Instead, we should take encouragement from Israel's courageous example and hope that others sleeping in their protective cocoons awake and finally see that this conflict holds enormous stakes for us all. Israel must win its battle against terrorism, or we all will lose.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken the time in opposition to this resolution because I very sincerely believe that resolutions of this sort actually do more harm than good. I know that it is very good to condemn the violence, and I certainly do agree with that.

But I am convinced that when we get involved and send strong messages, such as this resolution will, that it ends up expanding the war rather than diminishing the conflict, and that ultimately it comes back to haunt us.

Generally speaking, I follow a policy in foreign affairs called noninterventionism. It is not generally acceptable in this current time that we do this, but I think there is every reason to consider it. It certainly was something that the founders talked about.

The Constitution really doesn't authorize us to be the policemen of the world. And for this reason, we should talk about it. And that is why I take this opportunity to do so, with the sincere belief that we would be better off with less intervention overseas.

The founders talked about that, about rejecting entangling alliances. And we have been involved in a lot of entangling alliances since World War I, especially after World War II, and we have been doing a lot of things, losing a lot of men and women and costing a lot of money; and too often, these events have come back to haunt us. There is blow-back from our policy.

The policy of interventionism, which I object to, really doesn't work. It is well intended, and we have these grandiose plans and schemes to solve the problems of the world, but if you are really honest with yourself and you look at the success and failure, it doesn't have a good record. I mean, are you going to defend the great victory in Korea, the great victory in Vietnam? And on and on. The great victory in Iraq?

And I see resolutions like this step in the wrong direction. Actually, I believe it is going to expand the war in the Middle East.

The other reason why I strongly object to interventionism is it costs a lot of money. And someday we will have to deal with that. Supplemental bills come up now to the tune of tens of billions, and next year, already, they are planning to come up with another $100 billion for our intervention overseas. But it is off the regular budgetary process, so it doesn't meet the budgetary restraints that we are supposed to follow. So it becomes emergency funding, although we have been in Iraq for 3 years, and with plans to stay endlessly. We are building permanent bases in Iraq. So there is a lot of cost, and eventually that will come home to haunt us, and it already has.

And then there is the problem of unintended consequences. We went into Iraq for all kinds of reasons, some disproven, and all well intended, and who knows what the real motivations were. But one thing was that we would gain access to oil, and oil would be produced and would help pay the bills. Yet oil, when we went into Iraq was $28 a barrel. Now it is $75 a barrel. That is an unintended consequence.

We have done more to fall into the trap of what Osama bin Laden wanted in Iraq than anything else. And actually we have helped Iran. Iran is stronger. They have probably already more influence with the grass roots, the democratic process in Iraq, than we do. Those are the kind of unintended consequences that, on principle, I strongly object to.

I believe that the founders were correct in advocating avoiding entangling alliances, to have a strong national defense, to defend this country, I believe that is just plain common sense. Most Americans, if you just flat-out put it to them, think we should not be the policemen of the world. Do you think we should be involved in the internal affairs of other nations? People say no. We shouldn't do this. The Constitution doesn't give us the authority to do it.

And we now are in the business of maintaining an empire. A noninterventionist foreign policy concedes up front that is not our goal. We are not supposed to be going overseas and building permanent bases and staying there endlessly. Even the election campaign of 2000 was won partially on the foreign policy issue that, you know, it was said that we shouldn't be the policemen of the world and we shouldn't be in nation building.

I think those are good ideas and the American people agree. They didn't object to it. But each step along the way we dig a deeper hole for ourselves. And that is the general philosophic reasons why I believe nonintervention is beneficial. Intervention is very, very dangerous. Later there will be a lot of specifics that I would like to mention.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. The conflict now raging in the Middle East is between a stable, pro-Western democracy and the terrorists who seek to destroy it. It is obviously in our country's interest and that of the civilized world as a whole to oppose and denounce the vicious war against Israel by Hezbollah and Hamas. We simply cannot accept a world in which terrorist bands can trigger cross-border conflicts in violation of international law. Even the 22 member states of the Arab League have recognized this fact. They unequivocally denounced Hezbollah for provoking the current crisis because they know that Hezbollah's nihilism threatens not just Lebanon but their own stability.

Hezbollah's contempt for human suffering is total, as it showed once again this morning when its rockets murdered two Israeli Arab children in Nazareth.

Mr. Speaker, Israel is doing all it can to limit the civilian suffering as any civilized, responsible, legitimate government would do. Its air bases, weapons and other military assets are located as far from population centers as they can be. But Hezbollah and Hamas have deliberately placed their weapons among the people, in their homes, in their schools, in their mosques. In a struggle between the two sides, the risk of civilian casualties is naturally disproportionate. The terrorists care nothing for human life, and care only to the extent that they can cynically leverage the damage in their favor in the court of public opinion.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, Israel is not facing just the terrorists Hamas and Hezbollah. Those criminal groups are merely proxies for the real masters of terror, Syria and Iran. If there was ever any doubt as to whether Hezbollah is a wholly owned subsidiary of Iran, it has now been put to rest. The unprovoked murder and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers on undisputed Israeli territory clearly served Tehran's interests. It occurred just days before the G–8 summit in St. Petersburg, which was set to focus on Iran's nuclear projects and transgressions. And, Mr. Speaker, the plot worked. The G–8 was indeed preoccupied with events in the Arab-Israeli arena, rather than with Iran's unrelenting march to secure nuclear weapons. But it is a mark of how alarmed the G–8 members were at the current situation that even Russia joined in the final communique condemning Hezbollah's actions.

Mr. Speaker, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, passed in 2004, declared that all foreign forces should be removed from Lebanon, all militias dismantled, and the Lebanese Armed Forces be deployed to the entire border with Israel. In fact, none of this happened. Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops roam freely. And thanks to Hezbollah, Iran has established, effectively, a base in southern Lebanon right on Israel's border.

This is the same Iran that has called for Israel to be wiped off the map, the same Iran that has armed Hezbollah with 13,000 deadly missiles.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, the Lebanese Government stands by, helplessly watching its sovereignty evaporate. Hezbollah and Iran are holding Lebanon hostage as surely as they are holding the two Israeli soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, there will never be real Lebanese democracy or real Lebanese sovereignty as long as Hezbollah is armed and occupies southern Lebanon.

We also know that Syria is the primary culprit behind the Hamas kidnapping of an Israeli soldier, which also took place, unprovoked, on undisputed Israeli territory. It strains credulity to believe that the Syrian regime is merely a passive host for the Damascus-based Hamas leader, Khaled Meshaal. Syria is his master.

Mr. Speaker, how often have we heard the complaint that there would be peace in the Middle East if only the Israelis ended their occupation?

The watchword of this school of thought was land for peace. But as events of the last week have shown, it should have been land for war. Israel ended its occupation of Lebanon and of Gaza. There was not one Israeli citizen in either Gaza or Lebanon when this murderous and cynical pair of attacks took place. And where did the murderers and kidnappers attack from when they invaded Israeli territory? The very places from which Israel withdrew.

How are we ever to establish peace?

How will decent people in the region ever believe in peace if Arab terrorists interpret every gesture of peace as a display of weakness and then act accordingly?

□ 1915

Israel has withdrawn from Lebanon and Gaza. But where is the goodwill on the other side? Since Israel evacuated Gaza, more than 1,000 Hamas rockets have been fired at Israeli homes and Israeli schools. Since Israel evacuated Lebanon, the terrorist gang Hezbollah that occupies south Lebanon has stockpiled 13,000 rockets. As we have learned in recent days, these rockets travel farther and are far more deadly than had been previously believed. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, that Israeli support for Prime Minister Olmert's plan to withdraw from large areas of the West Bank has been plummeting even while Olmert himself enjoys wide support among his people.

Given the stakes, I believe that the United States must support Israel in combating enemies who will not be mollified by anything less than Israel's total destruction. Any result of this fighting that leaves Hezbollah in occupation of southern Lebanon will be a victory for Iran and for Syria, for fanaticism and for terror, and the defeat for Lebanon and for Middle East peace.

That, in my view, is the message of the resolution before us today, Mr. Speaker. And that is why I strongly support this resolution, and that is why I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do likewise.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), our distinguished majority whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for recognition. And I am grateful to Chairman HYDE and Mr. LANTOS for the hard and thoughtful work they have done on this resolution, for the comments that they have already made, and many of those comments are not going to be better made this evening.

Clearly, we stand here understanding that no country in the world knows more about the importance of a safe society than Israel, knows more the need to protect its borders and citizens than Israel.

The conflict being waged is not one that Israel asked for. It is being fought out of necessity and out of self-defense. No country would tolerate the type of armed aggression that Israelis have witnessed in recent weeks. These deadly rocket attacks have been launched against civilians in Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah with the direct backing, as Mr. LANTOS has said, of Syria and Iran.

In fact, just last night word came out of the region that the Israelis had found and destroyed a truck convoy carrying new deadly rockets across the Syrian border into Lebanon. Those weapons, which reportedly were produced in Iran and transported through

Syria under the knowing eye of that country's government, are the instruments being used by Syria and Iran to wage a proxy war against Israel.

All responsible members of the international community must demand that Syria and Iran immediately cease their financial and military support for these terrorist organizations or face the kind of global isolation and action by the Security Council that they deserve.

Innocent citizens of Lebanon have also been the victims. The Lebanese Government has not been able to gain control over its own security and disarm Hezbollah, as demanded by the United Nations. I believe the Cedar Revolution was real, but democracy is still weak, and the Lebanese Government must resist terrorism or it does not govern.

As Israel engages in a two-front conflict to defend its borders, I am confident that its government is doing all it can to minimize the loss of civilian life. Unfortunately, Lebanese and Palestinian civilians are being caught in the middle. I talked today to friends of mine in Nazareth who were witnesses to the attacks on Nazareth today where innocent Arabs living in Israel have been killed by these terrorist factions. We must put a stop to this. We must stand strong. This is exactly the kind of Islamic totalitarian view of the world that we resist today in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 8 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me this time.

I would like to stipulate that in the 12 years I have been in the House, I have visited Lebanon on 10 occasions, and 2 years ago when I was there, I called upon the President of Lebanon, who has the same name as I do, although he is no relation, that he should not extend his term as President of the country, and that troops should be moved into the southern part of the country. I want to stipulate that now so people understand.

I believe this resolution does not go far enough, and I believe the resolution should stipulate some humanitarian interest in the Lebanese people who are the ones that are being injured and killed by the attacks on the country. But I do not believe the current President should be in office. He has extended his term, and that should not have been. They should have moved troops into the southern part of the country and gone after Hezbollah, but that has not happened.

But over the last 10 years, the country of Lebanon, in particular Beirut, has been rebuilt. It has been rebuilt primarily by the assassinated former Prime Minister, who did an extraordinary job and showed extraordinary leadership over the last several years in helping to rebuild the country and helping to rebuild, in particular, the city of Beirut.

Late last week I decried the capture of two Israeli soldiers, and I decried the Hezbollah for doing that. But I also decry the idea that the attacks that are being made are well beyond the boundaries of where Hezbollah is at, well beyond the boundaries of the southern part of Lebanon, to completely shut down the airport, to bomb every road so there is no way for peace-loving people who have no fight in this battle at all to exit the country.

Over 25,000 Americans are trapped in Lebanon, many students, many American students, who go to school at American University of Beirut. And also many peace-loving Americans who are there, many from my home community of Peoria, over 300, who traditionally go to the country in the summertime to visit their mothers and their fathers and their aunts and their uncles, are trapped there.

Now, I give the administration credit for allowing these cruise ships now to come to the Mediterranean and help them exit. But the point that I want to make here is there is nothing in the resolution about the innocent people that are being killed. Over 300 people have been killed in the last 7 days who have no fight in this. They do not live in the southern part of the country. And there are many people that are trapped there. And I wish the resolution would have allowed for some idea that you can go into the southern part, you can go after Hezbollah, you can run them out of the country, and we are well within our right to do that, but not to shut down every way and every means of people to escape the country, not to kill innocent people, not to go into neighborhoods where there are absolutely no Hezbollah.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, will my friend yield?

Mr. LAHOOD. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. LANTOS. I thank my friend for yielding.

First, let me react to your comment that the resolution does not deal with the loss of innocent life. The resolution expresses its condolences to all families of innocent victims of recent violence.

Secondly, it is critical to prevent the resupply of deadly rockets from Iran and Syria. Unless the airport is closed down, unless the border with Syria is closed down, these deadly weapons will be resupplied in no time. That is why the airport was attacked. That is why the border crossings with Syria were attacked.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would say the resolution is not specific to the Lebanese innocent people. It mentions innocent people, but there is no specificity about those Lebanese people, particularly Lebanese Americans who are there visiting their families and the students that are there.

The only road that was not bombed, the only road that was not closed, is the road that goes to Syria. And I know people and I have talked to them that have exited the country through Syria, and the Syrian Government is allowing them to go into Syria, go into Damascus, and take flights out to other parts in order to get back to the United States.

I have served on the Intelligence Committee now for 8 years. There is something I think I know. Hezbollah is well armed. They have all the ammunition they need, and we need to shut them down. We need to eliminate them from the southern part of Lebanon.

I do not buy this idea that they were going to be able to ship arms in through the airport. They have all they need. They have the kind of capability, and they have shown that.

So I have heard that argument that the airport was bombed. I believe it was bombed so you could close off a way for people to get out of there. And I do not quite buy the argument that it was bombed so that they could be resupplied. They do not need to be resupplied. They have got all they need.

Look, I have said pretty much what I wanted to. I know what the debate is going to be about. My obligation is to peace-loving people who live in Lebanon, who have made their homes there. My grandfather on my father's side came to this country in 1895 to Peoria, Illinois, from Lebanon. We have a large Lebanese population in Peoria. And I hope there are others, I think there will be, that will speak up for the common, ordinary, decent people of Lebanon who are suffering as a result.

They want Hezbollah out of the country, and there is no argument with that, but they do not want to see their own neighborhoods, where there is no presence of Hezbollah, to be bombed and innocent people killed.

If this were going on in Israel, which it is, the resolution stipulates that our hearts go out to those people. The innocent, peace-loving people of Lebanon in neighborhoods where Hezbollah does not exist, they get no recognition in this resolution. With all due respect, Mr. LANTOS, they simply do not. They did in a resolution that was prepared earlier on, but that language was taken out.

So I think the resolution is inadequate, and I want to stick up for the people of Lebanon. I want to also compliment the administration for waiving the fees that they were going to charge innocent people for getting outside of the country. Obviously, that was a no-brainer. For getting the cruise ships to come in, to allow helicopters to transport people from the embassy over to Cyprus, all of these things are good things.

I have talked to the administration. I have asked Secretary Rice and her team to talk more about restraint, particularly in the parts of Lebanon that do not deserve to be bombed, where innocent people do not deserve to be killed.

I am just going to wrap up. It is going to take millions of dollars to rebuild areas of Lebanon that have been damaged. I mean, it is going to take millions of dollars to rebuild bridges and roads and infrastructure that have been built over the last 10 years. Beirut was so well positioned. This year in the city of Beirut, they had more tourism. The economy was booming. And now when you see what is happening, not only the innocent life, but so much of the infrastructure has been destroyed. I hope our government is going to be willing to step up and provide some of the dollars to help rebuild the country.

So my objection is that I think the resolution is inadequate, and I want to speak up for the people of Lebanon.

I thank the gentleman from Texas very much for yielding me this time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before yielding to our distinguished whip, I would like to make a couple of observations. I first visited Lebanon in 1956, in the summer of 1956.

□ 1930

It was the jewel of the Middle East. And what has destroyed Lebanon during the course of the last half century were various terrorist groups, first Arafat's PLO and now Hezbollah.

No one is in favor of hurting a single innocent human being. The fact is that with Hezbollah placing its weaponry in the midst of population centers, collateral damage is unavoidable. Israel has gone to every length to minimize collateral damage.

As a matter of fact, the difference between the tragedies befalling the Lebanese people and the tragedies befalling the Israeli people is very simple: Hezbollah deliberately, deliberately, attacks civilians. Israel does its utmost not to attack innocent civilians.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LANTOS. I am glad to yield to my friend, the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I agree with everything you have said, Mr. LANTOS. My only problem is, why not give the same kind of consideration in the resolution to the common, ordinary, decent people of Lebanon who are being hurt by these attacks? That is really all we were asking earlier on when we presented a resolution to the majority leader's office.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished Democratic whip, my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, first let me say that, unfortunately, there wasn't as much bipartisan drafting of this resolution as I would have hoped.

Hopefully there is no one in this Chamber who does not empathize with those who want peace, those who work for peace, those who are caught in the environment of hate, those who are caught in the environment of attacks on innocent people, those who are harboring in their midst those who attack a nation because of the religion and ethnicity of their population. All of us have empathy for innocent people caught in the grip of terror and terrorism.

But all of us also ought to have the expectation that those people would exorcise from their societies those who undermine peace, security and safety, and the Lebanese people have not done that. They have either not done it because they are incapable of doing it, or they have not done it, as too often I hear verbalized, I tell my friend, because of their sympathy for Hezbollah.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution condemning the recent terrorist attacks against our Nation's staunchest democratic ally in the Middle East and supporting Israel's inherent right for self-defense, and I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to support this resolution as well.

Israel is absolutely justified in undertaking the defense of its territory and its people. As the Israeli columnist Ari Shavit recently wrote, Israel's actions are ''not a war of occupation, but rather a war of defense. Not a settlements war, but rather a green line war. A war over the validity of an international border that was drawn, defined and recognized by the United Nations.''

No one should be mistaken: The actions taken by Israel over the last 8 days have been a direct response to the premeditated, unprovoked attacks of Hamas and Hezbollah, terrorist organizations which are underwritten and encouraged by their sponsors, Syria and Iran.

Palestinian militants, including members of Hamas, dug a tunnel 300 yards inside of Israel territory. And when, on June 25th, militants emerged from that tunnel, they killed two Israeli soldiers, wounded three and kidnapped one.

Then last Wednesday, July 12, Hezbollah terrorists crossed Israel's internationally recognized northern border, and in a brazen daylight attack killed three Israeli soldiers and kidnapped two. Another five Israeli soldiers were killed by Hezbollah terrorists when they tried to retrieve the bodies of their fallen comrades.

Mr. Speaker, these premeditated, unprovoked terrorist attacks on Israel are indefensible. One can only imagine the American response if a terrorist group attacked and killed American citizens from just across our border.

It also must be noted that Israel has exercised great restraint over the last year, during which Palestinian militants, as has been referenced on this floor, have launched over 1,000 rockets from Gaza into Israel and Hezbollah has launched four separate attacks on Israel.

While I am convinced that Israel is using every possible effort to avoid civilian casualties, it is clear that the terrorists in Hamas and Hezbollah purposely, purposely, staged their actions from within civilian communities, thereby putting civilians at grave risk.

Furthermore, while Israel makes every effort to minimize civilian casualties, it is clear that the terrorists of Hamas and Hezbollah deliberately attempt to maximize such casualties by indiscriminately firing rockets upon Israeli population centers.

Mr. Speaker, as a first step towards restoring calm, it is absolutely imperative that Israel's soldiers in Gaza and Lebanon be returned unconditionally and unharmed and that indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli civilians by Hamas and Hezbollah cease immediately.

It is also long past the time for the international community to facilitate the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559. If that U.N. resolution had been carried out, there would be no innocent citizens on either side being killed this day. The tragedy of our international community is the United Nations talks a much better game than it ever plays. That resolution, which was adopted in September of 2004, calls for the Lebanese army to control southern Lebanon's border, and for all militias, including Hezbollah, to be disabled and disbanded.

So long as the international community fails to ensure the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559, I believe Israel as a sovereign nation with an inherent right of self-defense has every right to strike armed terrorists which seek her destruction. Disarming and disbanding terrorist organizations is essential to Middle East peace.

We empathize, we sympathize, we have deep concern for those caught in this web of violence and terror, but that will not rationalize nor will it excuse the lack of action to exorcise those terrorists from the body politic of the Middle East. Until that happens, innocent civilians will ever be at risk.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am proud to yield 2 minutes to my colleague the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), who is a staunch supporter of Israel and who has been there many times.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to associate myself with the previous speaker and his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my steadfast support for Israel during this time of crisis and escalating violence. In the strongest possible terms, I condemn Hezbollah's unprovoked attack on Israel.

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah assaulted northern Israel. This attack killed eight soldiers and took two others hostage. The kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers symbolizes a clear act of war by Hezbollah, which the government of Lebanon has failed to take apart and has even included in its cabinet.

Hezbollah's continued violence against Israel is financed and supported by Syria and Iran. The United

States Department of State said that Iran supports Hezbollah with financial, political and organizational aid, while Syria provides diplomatic, political and logistic support. Syria and Iran should be held responsible for the violence that has ensued in the region as a result of their support of Hamas.

Like the United States and other sovereign nations, Israel has the right to defend itself and its people from the attacks by these terrorists. Hezbollah fired at least 100 rockets at Israel just yesterday, with an estimated 720 Hezbollah rockets reported fired since the current crisis began. Israel air strikes continue and Israel defense forces conducted cross-border raids overnight. Over 230 Lebanese and 25 Israelis have been reported killed since hostilities began. Estimates of Lebanese displaced by the violence vary widely, from tens of thousands to as many as 400,000.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the United States must continue our efforts to support the State of Israel. These are the same killers who blew up our Marine barracks in Lebanon and killed 260 of our finest United States Marines.

An Israeli win is a win for the United States. Our future, as well as Israel's future, is wrapped up in the future of this conflict. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment just briefly on the comments made by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), because I think his point is well taken about the emphasis on this legislation, and to deny that would be just trying to fool one's self.

It is very clear that if one were objective and read this resolution, all the terrorists are on one side and all the victims and the innocents are on the other side, which I, quite frankly, find unfair, especially coming from the position that I want to advocate, neutrality, rather than picking sides.

But he also mentioned the fact about trying to change the resolution. I would like to emphasize also that being on the International Relations Committee, I was anxious to see the resolution, but characteristically it was very difficult to get. We didn't hold hearings and we didn't debate it and we didn't get a chance to have amendments to it, and even last night I couldn't receive it. There were some news articles very early this morning. Lo and behold, they had copies of it. It took me until about 9 o'clock this morning to get it.

So I think it would be fairer within this Congress to allow us to have a chance to debate these in the committee, to bring them to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 8 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, it was 24 years ago almost to this very day that I led an official congressional delegation to the Middle East, appointed by then Speaker Tip O'Neill. This six-nation tour included meetings with heads of state in every one of the countries we visited, including the Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Began.

We were in Beirut those first days of August 1982 when Israeli bombs were falling all over the country and all over the city, as they are this very day. The Israeli aim at that time was to rid Lebanon of the PLO.

Then President Ronald Reagan got on the phone to then Prime Minister Menachem Began and said enough is enough. Stop the bombing. President Reagan had that courage, had that sense.

There immediately ensued negotiations and a peaceful evacuation of Americans in the area, and we initially sent over marines, maybe a month later, at which point in time we were considered peacekeepers and all the Lebanese were welcoming the American presence. That later turned sour. That is part of history and I shall not go there.

But I have written President Bush last Friday urging him to take this same action as President Ronald Reagan took 24 years ago.

□ 1945

I commend him for calling Arab leaders as he is and asking the Arab leaders to urge restraint upon Hezbollah and to urge the release of the hostages, which is a proper action. I also asked the President that should he not be calling the Israeli Prime Minister at the same time. What is wrong with this course of action?

The point where we are today is a point that is unfortunate. It was stupid of Hezbollah, Hamas to take the actions they took. I condemn the hostage taking.

Israel has a right to defend itself. It has the right to pursue to the nth degree those that abduct their soldiers. The Israeli action of current days, and as we speak in Lebanon, however, has other repercussions than just the stated agenda of destroying Hezbollah. That is not going to happen. We know that there is no military action that is going to wipe out every member of Hezbollah, that is going to wipe out every member of Hamas.

That is not the way this problem is going to be resolved. It is time for cooler heads to prevail if peace is to have a prayer. It is time for a cease-fire. It is time for Secretary Rice to go to the region. It is time for Hezbollah to, as the first step, simultaneously with the calling of a cease-fire release the hostages. That must be done, step number 1, with the calling of a cease-fire, and then negotiations should continue.

As to whether there will be future and sequential release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners held by the Israelis, many of whom have not even had the first charge read against them yet, but that is for later, Israel has done this in the past, to their credit. Yes, we do not negotiate with terrorists, but we do. We know the reality.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, that the current actions of Israelis have gone beyond going after Hezbollah. This resolution that is before us seems to hint at that pretty strongly. The Government of Lebanon is targeted in many different points in the resolution before us. The Government of Lebanon is demanded in this resolution to disarm Hezbollah. That is something that 18 years of Israeli occupation of Lebanon could not achieve. The Israelis cannot do that. But we are demanding now that a year-and-a-half-old Lebanese Government, prodemocracy, pro-American, so much hope after the Cedar Revolution of a year and a half ago, we are now demanding that they disarm Hezbollah in this resolution. Not realistic.

Who are the losers if a cease-fire is not immediately implemented? Who are the losers in this fighting and the loss of innocent lives and civilian infrastructure continues? The losers are the moderates. The losers are the Siniora government in Lebanon, a government that has not approved, has not condoned the taking of hostages, as a matter of fact has spoken against it; a government that cannot at this particular point in time control fully its borders, but was getting its act in order previous to the current invasion.

In the Palestinian territories, who are the losers? The moderate Palestinian leader Abu Mazen is the loser, an individual who was negotiating with Prime Minister Olmert, very close to a deal on prisoner exchange, when all of a sudden this kidnapping occurred, and that almost deal went down the tubes. So the moderates are the losers the longer the fighting goes on, the longer we are without a cease-fire.

The likely scenario, of course, is that the Israelis will continue. They did a massive hit just as we speak against a Hezbollah bunker in south Beirut. It remains to be seen whether they got the head of Hezbollah or not, but there will be some mopping-up operations in the next week or so, and then Secretary Rice will go to the region and be the big peacemaker. I hope that is the scenario and that it is over that quick. I hope indeed that is what will occur.

But we must request and we must demand that Hezbollah release the kidnapped soldiers as the first step with the simultaneous announcing of a cease-fire and let cooler heads prevail if we are going to give peace a chance.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 921.

Throughout its history, Israel has had to defend itself from groups that want to wipe it off

the map. Hamas and Hezbollah do not want to negotiate a two-state solution, they want to go back to before 1948. That is not going to happen. The United States first recognized Israel and will continue to help Israel defend herself.

The recent attacks, murders and seizure of soldiers by Hezbollah and Hamas are no different, and this House must affirm its commitment to Israel and stand behind that nation's right to defend itself.

Less than three weeks after the June 25 abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit by Hamas in undisputed Israeli territory, Hezbollah opened a second front against Israel by attacking, killing and abducting more Israeli soldiers in northern Israel.

Israel's response was no different than the U.S. response would have been if someone had attacked across our border.

Israel completely withdrew from southern Lebanon in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 425.

Despite this move to facilitate the peace process in the region, and despite U.N. Security Council resolution 1559—which required Lebanon to take control of this region and to disarm and disband any militias in the country—Lebanon allowed Hezbollah to operate in southern Lebanon, and receive material and funding from Iran and Syria

Hezbollah launched four separate attacks earlier this year against Israel.

Israel has been forced to defend itself from these terrorist groups to protect its borders and its people which have been targeted by Hezbollah rockets.

Unlike Israel, which has carefully targeted Hezbollah members who hide and operate among the civilian populations, Hezbollah has indiscriminately fired rockets at northern Israeli civilian populations in cities like Haifa, Nazareth, and Nahariya.

Mr. Speaker, these attacks by the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas on Israel's borders, military, and civilian population have forced Israel to respond.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution reaffirming our support for Israel's right to defend itself.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, before yielding to my friend from Massachusetts, I yield myself such time as I may consume to make a comment about Mr. PAUL's observation as he calls for neutrality.

Calling for neutrality between a democratic ally of the United States and a gang of terrorists is not worthy of this body. There is no neutrality between a gang of terrorists who indiscriminately kill and the democratic state.

May I also say that it was Hezbollah terrorists who killed the largest number of U.S. Marines in Beirut a quarter century ago. Some of us were there visiting with them just a couple of weeks before they were all killed. Lee Hamilton, a distinguished former Member of this body, and I visited with our marines just days before they were all killed by Hezbollah terrorist activity.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), the distinguished ranking member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, first, this Israeli retaliation did not come in the abstract. Let's be clear what happened. I speak here as someone who has been critical in the past of Israeli Governments that were, in my judgment, sufficiently willing to take risks for peace. I have been an advocate of giving up land in the interests of a comprehensive settlement.

What happened tragically in the last couple of weeks is that Israel was attacked by entities who do not think there should be any Israel at all. It was attacked by people dedicated to the abolition of the Jewish State in the Middle East from two territories from which it had withdrawn.

What was attacked was not just individual Israelis, but those in Israel within that democratic nation who have pushed for peace. In April, after the withdrawal from Gaza, very controversial, the people willing in Israel to withdraw from territory in pursuit of peace won an election. Those in Israel who would reject that approach lost. Sadly, the rejectionists then won in the Palestinian Authority. So you have people who had risked themselves in a democratic nation for peace now being undercut by those who use those very territories from which they withdrew for attacking them. And again these were not disputes over specifics.

Hamas and Hezbollah both agreed there should be no Israel. These are people who want to return not to the borders of 1967, but to the borders of 1947 when there was no Israel. Now, no democratic nation can be expected to not respond, and that is what we have, a response to attacks across the internationally recognized border of Israel by people committed to destroying its very existence from territories from which they withdrew. So the attacks were clearly justified.

Then the question is, well, how have they conducted the war? I think there were things that they should not have done. I wish they had not bombed the power plant in Gaza. But, you know, I look at what Israel is doing in Lebanon, and I must tell you what it most resembles in my recent memory, the American action in Yugoslavia when we bombed and bombed and bombed Belgrade and much of Yugoslavia, much of Serbia, to get them to withdraw from Kosovo. That was not a conventional military action. Now, I must note that Israel has not at this point taken out any embassies. We in the Yugoslav war took out the Chinese Embassy. We bombed convoys.

Sadly, when people go to war, innocent people die. That is why I am very reluctant to vote for war. But that happens. But what happened in Serbia was America punishing the Serbian territory to get them to withdraw from Kosovo, and it worked.

Now, I understand the pride of the Lebanese Government, but let me say this, first of all, in response to my friend from West Virginia. The resolution does not demand that the Lebanese Government disarm Hezbollah. It demands that the Lebanese do everything within its power, within its power, to change things.

In contrast, the resolution does make an unconditional demand of Syria and Iran that they do the right thing. So it does differentiate between Lebanon and Syria and Iran.

Now, let me say, with regard to Lebanon, I am struck by the pride of the Lebanese people, but I have to say this. Many of those who are now critical of Israel and say, what do you want from poor Lebanon, where were they when poor Lebanon needed them? Where were they when the Lebanese were unable to get Hezbollah to move? Why did they not get involved then?

In defense of the Israelis, what they are saying is this: Look, a U.N. resolution said get Hezbollah away from us, because if they keep this up, we will have to retaliate, and nothing happened until they started killing Israelis inside Israel, and then Israel retaliated.

So those who now say, well, you know what, do not blame the poor Government of Lebanon, I do not. I blame those in the Arab world and elsewhere who could have gone into that situation and avoided this.

So now the question is what do you do? A simple cease-fire that leaves Hezbollah on the Israeli border, in violation of a U.N. resolution, free to continue to kill across that international border in their pursuit of their effort to destroy the State is not good enough. I would like to see us be involved.

What the resolution says is have Syria and Iran be pressured by the rest of the world, including those great humanitarian nations of Russia and China and elsewhere that have expressed opinions here; let them intervene not simply to stop the shooting, but to get Hezbollah away from that border. Then it will be reasonable to ask Israel to stop, and I believe they want to.

So it is not simply release the soldiers today so four more can be captured and more people killed tomorrow. Let the international community show its real concern for the Government of Lebanon by providing them with the assistance they need to move Hezbollah away.

Let Hamas honor the fact that Israel withdrew at great political internal cost from Gaza and not use that as a lunching pad for their efforts to destroy Israel.

So I must say, I think it is justified in terms of the response, in terms of the way it is conducted. Yeah, it is messy and bloody, and innocent people die, and that is why you try to avoid those situations, and why Syria and Iran should be pressured to get Hezbollah to move back so we can put an end to it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, Hamas and Hezbollah attacks against one of our closest friends and best allies, Israel,

are acts of war, and they have Iran and Syria's fingerprints all over them.

As chairman of the National Security Subcommittee with direct focus on the Middle East and the Islamist terrorists that breed there, I am grateful we are promptly considering this bipartisan resolution to say to Israel, to the international community, and, most importantly, to the terrorists and the nations who support them that this Congress unequivocally stands by Israel.

We condemn the terror attacks against it, and we pray for the peaceful resolution of this crisis and to the end to the loss of innocent lives on both sides.

The prisoner exchange called for by some must be put off the table. Doing so legitimizes Hamas and Hezbollah's actions and will only embolden them and the Syrian and Iranian Governments that back them to launch similar attacks in the future. The resolution of this crisis must include the nonnegotiable safe return of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers, and the guarantee of the security of Israel's borders, including the full implementation of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) derogatorily said there is no room to talk about neutrality, as if it were a crime. I would suggest there is room for an open mind to another type of policy that may save American lives.

I was in the Congress in the early 1980s, and then I left Congress, and I just come back recently. But I was here when the Marines were sent in to Lebanon, and I strenuously came to the floor before they went, when they went, and before they were killed, arguing my case. And then they were killed. Ronald Reagan, when he sent the troops in, said he would never turn tail and run.

□ 2000

Then, after the marines were killed, he had a reassessment of the policy. When he wrote his autobiography a few years later after leaving the Presidency, he wrote this.

He says, ''Perhaps we didn't appreciate fully enough the depth of the hatred and the complexity of the problems that made the Middle East such a jungle. Perhaps the idea of a suicide car bomber committing mass murder to gain instant entry to Paradise was so foreign to our own values and consciousness that it did not create in us the concern for the marines' safety that it should have.''

In the weeks immediately after the bombing, I believe the last thing that we should do was turn tail and leave. Yet the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics forced us to rethink our policy there. If there would be some rethinking of policy before our men die, we would be a lot better off. If that policy had changed towards more of a neutral position and neutrality, those 241 marines would be alive today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, let me start by commending the esteemed chairman of the International Relations Committee and the distinguished gentleman, the ranking member, for bringing this very powerful resolution to the floor.

I agree with this resolution. I vehemently, vehemently condemn the violence and terrorist activity of Hamas and Hezbollah. I also vigorously support the right of Israel to defend itself against these terrorist acts and to do what is necessary under these dire circumstances.

But let me also say that this resolution is incomplete, and I don't think it is fully reflective of what U.S. policy should be. Much has been said about Resolution 1559. Much has been said about Lebanon, that poor small country that has been victimized time and time again.

What of Lebanon? There is a nascent democracy there, despite the challenges, despite the years of conflict, a nascent democracy that is budding. I think this resolution should give lip service to those Lebanese patriots who are trying to build this democracy. The Siniora government, we should not do anything that would undermine this nascent democracy and Prime Minister Siniora's attempt to build an economic country, a country that is going to have opportunity.

Security Council Resolution 1559, whose fault is it? We know that this nascent democracy in Lebanon doesn't have the capability to defend itself. It doesn't have a very well-formed armed services. We know that Israel could not drive Hezbollah out.

How can the small force that Lebanon has do such? Whose fault is it? The international community, the U.S.? This has been a failure of policy. One thing that is clear is that this Security Council Resolution 1559 has to be enforced unequivocally, and Hezbollah must be disarmed in any way that is possible. This is going to take an international effort. Once there is international consensus that this resolution will be enforced, then we need to put together the coalition to enforce it.

I am going to conclude. I am not going to take the full time, but I am going to say that America should not turn its back on any of its allies, and that certainly includes Israel. But it should also include that vulnerable State of Lebanon.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my good friend from Louisiana for his very thoughtful statement, and let me just add that if Hezbollah is, in fact, defanged, the primary beneficiary will be the people and the State of Lebanon.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3⅓ minutes to my distinguished friend from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

Mr. EMANUEL. I thank my colleague from California, and I strongly support this resolution. Mr. Speaker, on June 25, Palestinian militants from Hamas kidnapped and later executed an Israeli soldier. On July 12, Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers.

In both cases, terrorist militias affiliated with democratically elected governments, violated internationally recognized borders and seized three soldiers. In both cases, they were acts of wars. These acts turned on its head 25 years of agreement that if Israel would leave territories to internationally recognized borders, there would be peace.

It is this turning on its head the reason for the reaction by both Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan because it has violated what happened in 1978 with the giving of the Sinai. It violated what happened in 1993 with the Oslo Agreement, and it violated what happened in 1994 with Jordan.

What happened here, and nobody should underestimate the consequences, is it totally violates not only the internationally recognized border but the bipartisan effort, internationalized effort, to bring peace to the Middle East, and specifically to the Arab and Israeli conflict. That is, Israel would move to internationally recognized borders. Those borders would be recognized and peace would happen.

That effort, if it doesn't end here, and this doesn't get upturned with the return of soldiers, that effort of giving up peace by giving up real estate, recognizing internationally recognized borders, will come to an end. That is why three Arab governments, allies of the United States, have acted the way they have acted and recognized the consequences and the deep meaning of what happened here.

That being said, nobody should lose sight for one moment also of what has happened here. The so-called democratically elected governments on the West Bank and in Lebanon have militias affiliated with those governments. So those are democracies. They are not truly democracies, they are totalitarian entities with militias and terrorists acting as democracies.

As we talk about bringing democracy to the Mideast, understand that that button should be paused for a second and understand the consequences here. That what has happened is Saudi Arabia, most importantly, Egypt and Jordan, have brought peace and have come to a peace agreement with Israel. Those who have violated that peace are, quote-unquote, democracies, as we spread democracy in the Mideast.

Understand what that means here, and the consequences of what has happened here, is that you cannot allow this violation of internationally recognized borders, three soldiers to be seized, and think there will be no act of war. That is what has broadened, and yes, many of its citizens will be hurt.

I want to see an end to the violence that is engulfing Israel and Lebanon,

but it will not end this violence at the ballot box. It will only end with the emergence of true partners who recognize the importance of peace and the end of terrorist regimes founded on hate.

I strongly support this resolution, its spirit, as well as its letter.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in strong support of the resolution before us, introduced by our distinguished majority leader and two foreign policy giants, our International Relations chairman, HENRY HYDE and our ranking member, TOM LANTOS. We wish that circumstances were different in the Middle East, and we regret the loss of innocent human life.

However, silence on our part in the face of these outrageous attacks against Israel would only serve to embolden these Islamic terrorists and their neighbors. Our stance, therefore, must be clear, Mr. Speaker; we condemned these armed attacks against Israel.

We fully support Israel's right to take appropriate action to defend itself in the face of these existential threats, and we must hold not just Hamas and Hezbollah but also Iran and Syria accountable.

Mr. Speaker, the current conflict in the Middle East is not simply the result of these most recent developments. Rather, it results from the efforts of the chain of interrelated extremist entities and their state sponsors who threaten not just Israel but our own security interests as well.

It stems from a deep-seated desire to destroy the State of Israel, or, as the Iranian leader has said, to wipe Israel off the map. It stems from Iran's desire to export its revolution and to exert regional domination. It is based on a world view that led to the taking of American hostages in 1979, who were held for 444 days, and that hatred against the U.S. as not gone unabated.

The events of the recent weeks find their roots in an alliance between Iran and Syria and their terrorist proxies, which, throughout the years, have caused the deaths and injuries of countless Israelis and Americans alike. Current developments are also linked to the failure of the United Nations to ensure full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559 requiring Hezbollah to dismantle and disarm.

Over the past year, Israel has shown tremendous restraint in the face of continued assault from Islamic extremists. Despite Israel's withdrawal from Gaza last year, terror attacks targeting innocent Israeli civilians continued and, in fact, have increased.

In the last year extremists in Gaza have launched over 1,000 rockets at Israelis. Weapons, money and manpower were smuggled to Gaza through tunnels, enabling continued terrorism and transforming the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority into havens for international terror groups like al Qaeda.

Hamas and other jihadist groups use such underground tunnels to sneak into Israel, to kill two soldiers and kidnap Corporal Shalit in order to exchange him for imprisoned, condemned, Palestinian terrorists. The situation intensified on July 12 when members of Hezbollah, without a hint of provocation, went into Israel and killed three Israeli soldiers and took two others hostages.

Again, this was not an isolated incident by Hezbollah. In the past year these extremists launched at least four attacks into Israel. One of these took place on November 2005 when Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel while a large number of its jihadists infiltrated and attacked an Israeli village.

The enemy should not and must not be underestimated. Iran and Syria and other terrorist enablers are engaged in a never-ending struggle to improve their relative power position. They have declared war on freedom and democracy, and will use any means available to them to achieve their ends.

They not only present a threat to Israel and to the U.S., but also to moderate reforming Arab governments in the region. In turn, we must resolve, as this resolution clearly states, to work with Israel and other U.S. allies to fight these extremists worldwide.

As Robert Satloff of the Washington Institute for Near East Policies recently said, defeat for Israel is a defeat for U.S. interests. It will inspire radicals of every stripe. It will release Iran and Syria to spread more mayhem inside Iraq, and make more likely our own eventual confrontation with this emboldened alliance of extremists.

By contrast, Satloff adds, victory in the form of Hezbollah disarmament, the expulsion of Iran's military presence from Lebanon, the eviction of Meshal and friends from Damascus, and the demise of the Hamas government in Gaza is, by the same token, also a victory for the U.S. and for Western interests.

Mr. Speaker, this says it all. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

□ 2015

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, and I also ask unanimous consent that the time for debate on this measure be extended for 40 minutes, to be equally divided between the proponent and opponent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL of California). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, further, I yield 10 minutes of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, and ask unanimous consent that he be permitted to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to make a couple of comments before yielding. It has been well advertised about the three prisoners that have been taken, the three Israeli prisoners. Everybody in the country knows about it. What I find a bit interesting is that some people estimate between 8,000 and 10,000 Palestinians and Lebanese are in prisons and under the authority of the Israeli police and government.

It is also known that one-third of the Cabinet of Palestine have been arrested and held hostage by the Israeli Government, and once again, I think this is a distortion of what is going on. It is hard to get the information out to find out exactly what is happening in this area.

Also, I would like to make one additional point that it is very easy to criticize the Government of Lebanon for not doing more about Hezbollah. I object to everything Hezbollah does because I am a strong opponent to all violence on both sides. So I object, too, but I also object to the unreasonable accusations that the Government of Lebanon has not done enough, when we realize that Israel was there for 18 years, and Hezbollah did not get any weaker, and they are stronger than ever. So I think, again, a little bit of balance is worth considering.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA).

(Mr. ISSA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding, and yielding, I note, time in opposition.

I will be voting for this important resolution, not because it is perfect. As a matter of fact, I think the one consistent thing that, Mr. Speaker, you are going to see tonight is not one, not two, not three, but all four of the Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle whose families emigrated from Lebanon basically 100 years ago or more are finding that this resolution does not say enough.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention and will be including in my remarks H. Res. 926, which was submitted as a draft to the Committee on International Relations and to the Subcommittee on the Middle East on which I serve on both.

For those who think that Members of Congress who come from Lebanese ancestry would somehow think differently than many of the rest, I would like to share just a few short portions.

First of all, the opening of the resolution: ''Condemning the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by Hamas and Hezbollah, affirming the right of Israel to conduct operations to secure the kidnapped soldiers, urging all parties to protect innocent life and civilian infrastructure, and for other purposes.''

Many of the passages are similar, but some notably are different than the

resolution being considered tonight. It goes on to blame directly Nasrallah, the Secretary General of Hezbollah, responsible for these attacks and responsible for taking hostages.

It further, in its whereases: ''Whereas Iran, Syria, and elements of the Government of Lebanon have a well-documented history of supporting the terrorist groups responsible for these kidnappings.''

And, Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the Lebanese Americans were the first to come out and say in no uncertain terms that the elements in Lebanese society, including those who were elected from the occupied south, not occupied by Israel any longer, but occupied by Hezbollah, did send representatives sympathetic to Hezbollah.

But I think what is not said in this resolution and has not been said well enough here tonight, in my opinion, is that the Cedar Revolution clearly denounced that direction. It went against the illegally reelected or illegally extended Presidency of Emile Lahoud, and it made very clear by backing the so-called Saad Hariri bloc, the bloc of the assassinated former Prime Minister in securing a multidenominational, across-the-board, including Shi'a, government that wants a sovereign, independent and peaceful Lebanon.

Unfortunately, the resolution we are considering tonight does talk about the failure of the Lebanese Government. I think that is fair, but it is only fair if we also include the failure of the United States Government.

We have provided nothing to the Lebanese since they bravely stood up to Syria, demanded their withdrawal, rioted in the street, were bombed and killed for their attempt to give themselves that freedom and liberty. We have not provided them any kind of capability of going to the south and enforcing. We have talked about it. We have planned to do it. The administration has prepared to do it. Our committees have explored it, but today, as of yet, we have not yet done what we must do.

Mr. Speaker, I call on this committee that is here today on this floor to dedicate itself to immediately upon us coming back to work in the morning begin the process of providing the lawful Government of Lebanon the ability to, in fact, send those troops to the south to, in fact, displace Hezbollah. It is going to take time, energy, money and training.

We are spending billions of dollars every month arming the Iraqi people so, in fact, they can replace a government that we had to topple. The Lebanese already toppled a government that had been a puppet of Syria and Iran for a long time, and they, in fact, were the movement that led to Syria being forced out after decades of occupation.

The Lebanese have earned the right, and this resolution in part says that, they have earned the right to have that ability, and we have to give them that ability.

So I go further than simply say I hope we will. I demand that if we care enough about the words we say in our resolution tonight and in H. Res. 926, which is the underlying document submitted by four Lebanese Americans, if we care enough to denounce Hezbollah for what they have, and Iran and Syria for what they have done, then we have to be willing to confront them in Lebanon, something we have not been willing to do.

So, tonight I stand with Israel's right to get its kidnapped soldiers back. I stand with Israel's right to reduce the ability of Hezbollah to rain rockets down on Israel, but I also stand with the people of Lebanon who have been traded like pawns again and again and say, yes, let us pass this resolution, but let us also start in the morning to do the job so that the next resolution, when it says the Lebanese Government has failed to do something, it will not also have the right to say the Lebanese Government did not have a snowball's chance in a summer in Hades of actually doing it.

A government with armored personnel carriers donated by the U.S. Government in the 1970s made of aluminum is not going to take on Hezbollah, not if tanks from Israel could not do it in 18 years.

So, yes, I am voting for this resolution. I appreciate the gentleman giving me time from the opposition, but I want to include H. Res. 926 in this debate, and I want to include the statement by the four Lebanese Americans that, yes, we will support Israel, but we want to support Lebanon's ability to be free and independent, and that will take a commitment starting tomorrow morning.

H. RES. 926

Whereas on June 25, 2006, Israeli Defense Forces Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped and taken hostage by a Palestinian militant group that included members of the military wing of Hamas;

Whereas Hamas political leader Khaled Meshaal, in Damascus, Syria, has acknowledged the role of Hamas in holding Corporal Shalit hostage;

Whereas on July 12, 2006, operatives of the terrorist group Hezbollah carried out an attack in Israel, killing three Israeli soldiers and taking two others hostage;

Whereas Hezbollah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has acknowledged Hezbollah's responsibility for the attack and taking hostages;

Whereas Iran, Syria, and elements of the Government of Lebanon have a well-documented history of supporting the terrorist groups responsible for these kidnappings;

Whereas President George W. Bush stated on July 13, 2006, ''[t]he democracy of Lebanon is an important part of laying a foundation of peace'', that the government of Lebanese Prime Minister Faoud Sinoria must not be undermined during the current crisis, and that Syria and Iran must be held to account for their shared responsibility in the recent hostage taking; and

Whereas Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated on July 12, 2006, ''All sides must act with restraint to resolve this incident peacefully and to protect innocent life and civilian infrastructure.'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns Hamas and Hezbollah for engaging in the reprehensible terrorist act of taking hostages;

(2) affirms the right of Israel to conduct operations, both inside and outside its own borders and in the territory of countries supporting the hostage takers, in pursuit of the release of hostages;

(3) notes that all governments that have provided continued support to Hamas or Hezbollah share responsibility for the hostage taking and urges these countries to use all efforts to secure the unconditional release of the hostages;

(4) urges all parties to protect innocent life and civilian infrastructure;

(5) declares its continued commitment to aiding Israel and the administration of President George W. Bush in battling terrorism and securing the unconditional release of hostages; and

(6) expresses its condolences to all innocent victims of recent violence in Israel, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories and their families, including those of the three Israeli hostages.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my friend from California for his very thoughtful observations, and I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the distinguished ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee, my very good friend.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for this opportunity.

I stand in strong support of this resolution. Some may say, well, how could you be against the war and supporting this? Well, I think it is good historic sense, it is good moral sense, that any sovereign nation that gets attacked should have the opportunity and be given support for defending herself.

Clearly, when we went into Iraq, we had no clue as to who the terrorists were. They certainly were not in Iraq. There were no weapons of mass destruction, no connection between Saddam Hussein and 9/11.

But here we have a nation that has been invaded. People have come into their country, killed their soldiers, kidnapped their soldiers, and rain rockets on them, and the surprising thing that we find here is that we find something to that. As an American, I cannot imagine the hostility I would feel and the support I would give in retaliation if something like that happened to our country.

What amazes me, however, is that for the first time people have recognized that the terrorists are not just after the United States and Israel. The terrorists are after every decent thing that we believe in, and at long last the Governments of Jordan and Egypt and Saudi Arabia has seen that these terrorists, that somehow we found out that they believe that not being at war with Israel is the same as being at peace with Israel, but recognize in that area some of the Arab countries that we give support to, economic and trade support, still held hostile the people in Israel and resented the right for Israel to exist.

I think this is a great opportunity to bring those Arab nations together, to

let them know that they are just as vulnerable for the people that they have supported, and even though the animosity seems to be going toward Israel, is toward them, is toward the United States, is toward everything that we believe.

So, if we do have crown princes and kings and Presidents unable to go to the ranch and discuss whatever they do, and if Israel does not come up as a place where they teach hatred and anti-Semitism, why not take advantage of this opportunity to tell the Arab countries in the region that this is the time for all of us to come together not just in a willing coalition, but in a coalition for peace, and to make certain that we cut this cancer out not just because of Israel, but because of the free world?

The Hamas and the Hezbollah have to really cut this cancer out of our society now, and it gives us an excellent opportunity to bring the friends of the United States and the so-called friends of Israel together to see whether or not we can make certain that these people are not a threat to Israel and not a threat to the neighboring countries and not a threat to the great United States of America.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) for a unanimous consent request.

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. I rise in support of H. Res. 921, condemning the recent attacks against the State of Israel.

On June 25th, Israeli soldier Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped and is still being held hostage in Gaza by Hamas.

On July 12th, Hezbollah in southern Lebanon killed three Israeli soldiers and took two others hostage and began bombarding Israel with rockets.

In the past week, over 700 rockets and mortars from Gaza and Southern Lebanon have hit Haifa (Israel's 3rd largest city) and numerous other cities and towns.

These unprovoked attacks appear to be coordinated by Iran and Syria—probably to take the issue of Iran's nuclear development off the front burner.

When Israel withdrew from Southern Lebanon several years ago, it did so with the understanding that the Lebanese Army would secure the area from Hezbollah. To this date, the Army has yet to move into the area and take control.

Some have suggested that the U.S. urge Israel to restrain itself—that it should negotiate and stop their attacks. The problem is, as Amb. Bolton said today, there isn't anyone to talk to. The Palestinians are being governed by Hamas and Lebanon is still being controlled by Syria—both terrorist regimes.

Israel must take any action it sees fit to defend themselves and prevent the abducted soldiers from being taken to Damascus or Tehran.

Iran needs to be put on notice. We know what you are doing and it is not going to work.

I know that the Palestinian and Israeli people are committed to peace. The Hezbollah and Hamas scourge, who are the only ones undermining a long-term peace, must be wiped off this earth.

I pray that this situation resolves itself quickly and that we can continue to move forward with the Middle East peace process.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the events in Lebanon during the past week are yet another wake-up call to those who have perhaps complacently thought or believed that the global war on terrorism has somehow abated. It has not. Israel is, in fact, on the front lines of this war as we meet.

Mr. Speaker, we all know there is nothing whatsoever benign or noble or praiseworthy about the terrorist groups such as Hamas or Hezbollah and their state sponsors Syria and Iran. They not only refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist, they want Israel wiped off the face of the map.

They actively seek Israel's demise, its destruction, by both their words and their deeds. Their hate-filled, fanatic, perhaps even psychotic, suicide bombers bomb, shoot and wreak havoc on the lives of countless unarmed innocent men, women and children through the terrorist intifada campaign.

It is abundantly clear that Hezbollah has violated the sovereign territory of Israel by launching unprovoked rocket attacks and ground forces incursions into undisputed Israeli territory, resulting in the death and hostage-taking of Israeli soldiers.

□ 2030

While Israel has withdrawn from Lebanon, in full compliance with U.N. Security Resolution 425 in June of 2000, and unilaterally withdrawn from Gaza in September of last year, the Government of Lebanon has been unable or unwilling to disband and disarm Hezbollah in implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559.

I want to thank Dr. Boustany for his comments earlier. And I think it was important that he injected it into the debate that there is this inability, perhaps, on the part of the government. And I think we need to do more ourselves to help them to rid themselves of this cancer called Hezbollah. Hezbollah clearly is not only a grave threat to Israel, as we all know, but it is a grave threat to the freedom-loving people of Lebanon as well.

This resolution puts us clearly on the record stating where we stand, and I am so glad that I think there will be great support for it.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of accusations made about who precipitated the crisis, the charges made that it all occurred because three prisoners were taken, and that Hezbollah and Hamas deliberately provoked the situation. And it may well be true. I have no idea exactly what is true.

But there are others who have indicated that they believe that it was precipitated mainly with the intent of our foreign policy, along with Israel's foreign policy, as an initial step to go into Iran. We have talked about Iran around the House and around Washington, and there are a lot of people very, very concerned. Our administration talks about it all the time; taking out Iran, taking out the nuclear sites. But to do that, the theory is that these missiles had to be removed and, in a practical military sense, that seems very reasonable. So there could be the deliberateness of Hamas and Hezbollah precipitating the crisis for whatever gain they think, or deliberately precipitated by both the United States and Israel with the intent to follow up with bombing in Iran. And I am frightened about that. I think that may well occur.

I have talked to a lot of military people, a lot of CIA people, who actually believe this is a possibility within months. And this is the reason I have such great concern about what is happening in this area of the country, because if us going into Iraq didn't go so well, can anybody imagine what is going to happen when the bombs start to fall on Iran? I think it is going to be catastrophic. And there has been talk on television this past weekend, the beginning of World War III. And this war is about to spread, and this is the reason that I oppose this resolution, because, deep down in my heart, I believe that what we do here helps to provoke things and agitate things and bring us closer to a greater conflict. And I am just arguing that there is an alternative other than violence to settle some of these problems.

Now, a lot of bombs have fallen on both sides, and of course, if they are coming from Lebanon, Syria and Iran are blamed, and they may well deserve the blame. But we haven't talked about who gets the blame for the other side. More people are getting killed on the other side. And as we mentioned before, innocent people are killed, and a lot of nonmilitary targets have been hit, farms and buildings and electrical plants and airports that have nothing to do with the military.

And yet the reason I believe this is going to be worse is because we see it in this country the way we want to see it. And we have no willingness to think about how it might be seen elsewhere, like how is it going to be seen by 1 billion Muslims around the world? And you know, quite frankly, every single bomb that is dropped by Israel, by their calculation, and they have reason to believe so, those are U.S. bombs. Those are our airplanes. We paid for them. And they get the money to buy these weapons. So whether it is deliberate or whatever, it doesn't matter. It is the perception by the Muslims who are radicalized by this.

You can't deny it. There are more radicals today than there were 2 or 3 years ago. And the reason why I am worried about this is we are now getting the information about the reaction to 9/11. 9/11 occurred, and the immediate response by many of our leaders and the administration said, let's go to Iraq. People would say, well, why Iraq? Well, we have been planning on it all along. This is the opportunity.

As soon as this crisis built, we heard very similar comments. Let's go to Iran, you know, to go forward.

There are others who suggest that this crisis has come about not out of our strength, but out of our weakness. If Hezbollah and Hamas has deliberately done this, they might have calculated we have been stretched fairly thin around the world and with Iraq, and know that a lot of the American people and the taxpayers are getting tired of the war, so they may have seen this as a sign of weakness on our part. But then the ''neocons'' say, yeah, that may well be true, that is why we have to be tougher than ever. We have got to unleash the bombs. We have got to consider nuclear weapons, and back and forth and back and forth, until one day we are going to get ourselves in such a fix that World War III will be here and it will be irrevocable.

And there are some people who sort of like this idea. There are some ''neocons'' who thrive on chaos, because their theory is they want regime change. They want regime change in Syria, and they want regime change in Iran. They wanted it in Iraq. And we are, by gosh, we are going to have regime change, and they are going to be our friends and they are going to be democrats. We are going to have democratic elections.

So we go to war and our men and women die. We spend all this money, and we have elections. And then sometimes we don't like the results of the elections, so we ignore them.

What if we had elections in Saudi Arabia? What if we had elections in Egypt? And then what if their radicals were elected?

So we are fighting and dying to spread democracy. And it is probably one of the most dangerous things for us with our current foreign policy, is that when they do vote and elect Hezbollah and Hamas, then we have to reject the principle of democracy.

Self-determination is a great principle, and we should permit it and encourage self-determination. But encouraging elections under these circumstances, and by force, in hopes that we get our man in charge just doesn't work.

I think we are going to have regime changes, a lot more regime changes than most people want around here. I think the regime changes are coming in Saudi Arabia, and I think there will be a regime change maybe in Egypt. Who knows? In Libya. And you are going to be very unhappy with those regime changes.

So, yes, it was well intended to have regime change in Iraq. But what has it gotten us?

And now we want to spread that philosophy and have more regime changes, and who knows what the results are going to be? They are not going to be good. They are going to backfire on us.

You know, when Osama bin Laden responded to why, he had a list of reasons on why he encouraged or directed the attack on 9/11. And the one thing that he listed we shouldn't ignore, because as bad as that individual is, and as violent as he is, nobody has ever proven he tells lies. Nobody has ever proven this. Nobody says he is a liar. So we ought to listen to what he says.

And one of the reasons that he listed for this was back in 1982, back to the problems we had in Lebanon, there were 18,000 Lebanese and Palestinians killed. And who knows whose bombs and who was doing it? But you know, we were in there, although our troops weren't fighting and we left, but Israel was involved, 18,000. But regardless of whether or not we directed it or wanted it is irrelevant. The conclusion was that we were participants, and it rallied his troops and helped him organize to get people so hateful that they were willing to commit suicide terrorism and come here.

Now, we can ignore it and say, well, he is a liar. That is not the reason they did it. But we do that at our own peril.

Now, one of the reasons why I believe that it wouldn't be difficult to put the label USA on these weapons, obviously the airplanes have been built here. But what about the money? How much money have we given for weapons?

Between 1997 and 2004, and that doesn't even count the last 2 years, we gave over $7 billion in weapons grants. It wasn't a loan. It was a weapons grant.

Now, the neat thing about this, this was an economic deal because it was beneficial because under the foreign military financing program that we have, Israel is required to spend 74 percent of that back here. So you are talking about a military-industrial complex, a pretty good deal. You know, we subsidize them, send the money over here, it comes over here, and our arms manufacturers make even more money and then dig a bigger hole for us in foreign policy and contribute to the many problems that we have. And that amount of money, they get $2.3 billion of these military grants, and they automatically increase it $60 million per year. So it is locked in place.

Now, you say, well, that is money for our ally. And fine, if it was used for defense, maybe. But if it is used to antagonize 1 billion Muslims and there is no willingness to even consider the fact that we should look at it in a balanced way, and instead it is ridiculed and said, oh, this is ridiculous to think of neutrality or balance and think about both sides, and the innocent people dying on both sides should be considered.

So we are moving toward a major crisis, a major crisis financially and a major crisis in our foreign policy. I don't believe we can maintain this.

So even if you totally disagree with our aggressive empire building and policing the world, let me tell you, I am going to win the argument, because we are running out of money. We are in big debt, and we are borrowing it. We borrowed $3 billion a day from countries like China and Japan and Saudi Arabia to finance this horrendous debt. And it won't be, it can't be continued. The dollar will eventually weaken. You are going to have horrendous inflation. Interest rates are going to go up, and it is going to be worse than the stagflation of the 1970s.

And domestic spending is never curtailed. We have been in charge of the Congress and the Presidency for several years now, and the government gets bigger, probably faster than it was getting before.

So we are facing a crisis that is liable to escalate and get out of control in the Middle East. At the same time, it has a bearing on our finances, because when it contributes to the deficit, there is a limit to how much foreigners will loan to us. We have to print the money. We have to go to the Fed, create new money. That is the inflation.

And what does it do to the cost of oil? Inflation pushes the cost of oil up. That should be a concern to everybody. And at the same time, the production of the oil didn't work. I mean, the oil production went down in Iraq.

What happens if this happens to be true? I actually pray that I am completely wrong about this. And you can say, well, you are, so don't sweat it. But what if I am right? It is frightening, because if this leads to bombing in Iran, look for oil at $150 a barrel. Then the American people will wake up. They will say, hey, what's going on here? Why is gasoline so expensive? It is expensive because we have less production out of Iraq, and it is expensive because the value of the dollar is going down. And it is expensive because they are anticipating that this crisis is not going away, and what we do are antagonizing the world.

So, once again, I come to this from a slightly different viewpoint than those who like to pick sides. There is nothing wrong with considering the fact that we don't have to be involved in every single fight. That was the conclusion that Ronald Reagan came to, and he was not an enemy of Israel. He was a friend of Israel. But he concluded that that is a mess over there. Let me just repeat those words that he used. He said, he came to the conclusion, ''The irrationality of Middle Eastern politics forced us to rethink our policy there.''

I would like you to rethink our policy, not only there, but the kind of policy that led to 60,000 people dying in Vietnam and then walking away. And what happened after we walked away? We are better off than ever. We had a naval ship going into Vietnam just recently. We trade with them. We do

deals with them. Yet it was a total fiasco and a total loss because of the way we went to war.

And this is also the reason that I am determined to persist that if we take our country to war, that we ought to be responsible. We should never send these kids and young people to war without a declaration, win the war, and get it over with. When we don't declare it, it goes on and on and on. We don't win them.

And literally, this Persian Gulf War, and this Iraqi war, it has been going on since 1990. We never stopped bombing Iraq, never stopped bugging them, and antagonizing them and inciting them.

So it is not a sign of weakness to talk about neutrality. It is a sign of strength that you have a little bit of courage and you believe in your own system. If we want to spread our values, it is a good way to do it. Set a good example. Put our financial house in order. Treat people evenly, and trade with people, and talk to people and travel.

But don't think that we can force our values at the point of a gun, and think they are all going to be democratic elected governments that we are going to be pleased with. It is not going to happen.

So there is reason to reconsider the total policy that has been followed in this country essentially for 100 years. And it hasn't been productive for us. Essentially, Woodrow Wilson started it. We are going to make the world safe for democracy. And look how safe the world has been since Woodrow Wilson introduced that. We are less safe than ever. And our financial condition is worse than ever.

And we are running our program, whether it is our domestic welfare program or our foreign policy, it is being run on borrowed money. It is borrowed money from overseas, and it is also from inflated currency. And we can get away with it for a while longer, but let me tell you, there is a crisis coming, and it is going to be dealing with the dollar and it is going to involve our foreign policy. And then we will, as a sign of weakness, we will have to come home. We will have to come home because we can't afford the empire. It is not wise to have it, and we should have more confidence and more belief that what we have in this country, and what America used to stand for, that we should spread that message more by setting an example and through a voluntary approach. And when that time comes, I think that maybe more people will reconsider it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), ranking member of the International Relations Committee.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, imagine for a moment that there was a gang, an organization of Mexican nationals who believed zealously and fanatically that the Southwest of the United States had been stolen from them; and that this group of people committed to murdering in order to right that wrong, was funded and controlled by countries that were dedicated to the destruction of the United States; that this group had stockpiled thousands of offensive weapons that could be unleashed on our citizens with little or no warning; that it launched an unprovoked, cross-border attack from Baja, California, kidnapped two of our border patrol agents and killed several others. And it then unleashed a massive barrage of missiles on San Diego with the sole intent of killing innocent civilians. The American people would demand immediate and decisive action. The Congress would overwhelmingly approve a resolution authorizing the President to use force, just as we did after 9/11. And none of us would be satisfied with a cease-fire that allowed the terrorists to regroup and rebuild their weapons stockpile. For America at this point, this is just a fantasy. But for Israel, this is daily reality.

For years Israel has lived with Hezbollah's sword of Damocles hanging over its head, and it has shown extraordinary restraint in the face of repeated attacks. But this latest attack and the kidnapping of its two soldiers is a naked act of aggression. Israel did not seek this conflict, but it is compelled to take forceful action to defend itself, just as the United States or any other sovereign nation would do in this situation.

The loss of innocent lives on both sides is tragic. When I hear Mr. RAHALL and Mr. LAHOOD and I watch the images on television, one cannot help but want to cry for the damage and the death and the carnage that that conflict brings. But there can't be any moral equivalence between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel goes to extraordinary lengths to minimize civilian loss, while Hezbollah deliberately targets the innocent.

When we talk of disproportionate response, I would like for someone to tell me what the proportionate response is in this particular situation.

Once again, what this does is highlight the central role played by Iran and Syria in promoting terrorism throughout the Middle East.

As Dennis Ross recently observed when Lebanon was withdrawn from, when Gaza was withdrawn from, what did Israel get? It wasn't land for peace, it was land for war.

□ 2045

I urge this body to speak strongly in support of expressing its solidarity with Israel in these difficult times, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), the chief deputy whip.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I recognize her leadership and her staff as well as that of the gentleman from California in bringing this resolution forward, and congratulate them on that.

Very briefly in response to my good friend from Texas and his view and addressing so many different issues, I would just like to say this clearly is not a conflict, I think, that Israel finds itself in by its own making or its asking.

As the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) indicated, Israel was once again attacked. It was forced by its enemies, who wished to see it wiped off the map, to respond. The actions taken by Hezbollah and Hamas are tantamount to nothing less than an act of war against a sovereign country. Israel has the right to use every military tool in its arsenal to protect its citizens from this invasion and to incapacitate its enemy to prevent future attacks.

This latest conflict of the waging war against the terrorists in the Middle East is evidence again that we cannot hope to win that war against the Islamic fascists if we ignore their state sponsors. Make no mistake about it, Syria and Iran are to blame for the outbreak of war in the region, and they must be held accountable. They support Hezbollah and Hamas both financially and militarily. The line of terror and violence occurring in Israel today and in Lebanon today runs straight back to Damascus and Tehran. These state sponsors of terror must know that their actions are unacceptable and that the free world will no longer ignore or tolerate their actions.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution and stand beside our ally Israel as it fights the terrorists. This is a battle the free world cannot afford to lose.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield 3 minutes to Mr. RAHALL, but first I would ask how much time I have left after I yield the 3 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL of California). The gentleman from Texas has 25½ minutes remaining.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 25½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and ask unanimous consent that she be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Dr. Paul for yielding me that time, and I yield 12¾ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas and the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding me the time, and I commend him. The plethora of scenarios that he has just taken this body through, some of which are scary, are certainly scenarios of which we need to bring to the American people's attention.

We have seen the neocons have their way much too often in this administration. They got us into the war in Iraq, with some prodding from our allies in the region. And now those same individuals would have us strike at Iran. Yes, Iran, Syria are culprits in this recent kidnapping. There is no doubt in my mind, although there probably is not proof out there. Earlier I condemned Hezbollah and Hamas for these kidnappings. Were they taking their directions directly from Damascus, directly from Tehran? Probably, or at least some wink along the way. Or was Nasrallah going off on a tangent on his own? I am sure he did not expect the Israeli response that he got.

I am sure the Israelis have learned something from this latest fighting, just what is in the Hezbollah arsenal, missiles that perhaps both Israeli Army intelligence and our own did not forecast.

So perhaps this current scenario that will play out hopefully over another week or 2 is a learning experience, a feeling-out experience on both sides to determine just what other surprises are up one's sleeve.

But regardless of that, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) just accused, and it is a reality, that Hezbollah rockets have hit civilians in Israel. Unfortunate. Were they targeted? I hardly think the Hezbollah missiles are of the same guidance technology as Israel missiles. For the most part, these Hezbollah missiles have been landing in barren deserts. That does not seem to be a targeting of civilians. And when they do find a target, yes, unfortunately there have been civilians that have been hit. Israeli technology and Israeli IDF are certainly much more advanced, much more advanced in their guidance procedures and in their ability to target their targets.

The response is Hezbollah has their weapons, their missiles in civilian populations, in mosques, in innocent civilian homes. I have no doubt that that is accurate. And where that is proven to be, those targets are fair game and should be hit. But the Beirut airport, hardly a hideout for Hezbollah missiles, hardly a place that Hezbollah would use to receive arms, hardly a place that they would take their hostages for transportation elsewhere.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this debate, the tenor of the debate. The quality of the debate has been superb. The time that all sides have agreed for an extension is great. This is an important issue, and it should be debated as much as this body wishes to.

But the fact is that the country of Lebanon has never taken any hostages. Lebanon has never attacked anybody. Lebanon has been used as a chessboard upon which all other countries in the region play their games and seek their own motives, whatever those motives may be. The Iranians have their motives. The Syrians have their motives. The Israelis have their motives.

□ 2100

The other Arab countries in the region certainly have their motives. But Lebanon, the innocent bystander, is the one suffering the damage here. They have suffered an unmeasured response.

The gentleman from California, Mr. BERMAN, again asked what should a response be then if Israel, as I have said, does have the right to go after their kidnapped soldiers, and how do you measure what is appropriate and what is inappropriate?

I happen to believe that the Israeli intelligence, as I have said, and their technologies, are far superior to Hezbollah, are far superior to any country in the region, far superior, and they can use that ability, that superiority, to better track where their soldiers may be and where they are unlikely to be.

It is that type of response that they have the right to pursue to the fullest extent to go after their soldiers. Not in Christian suburbs of Beirut that were hit today. I hardly think that is a hiding point for Hezbollah rockets and missiles. I hardly think you are going to find Hezbollah there. There were none found there. Yet a very pro-Christian, previously thought safe section of Beirut was hit just this afternoon by Israeli missiles. So there can be a better consideration of the innocent civilians.

The resolution to which Mr. ISSA referred, which we Lebanese-Americans support, H.R. 926, mentions that protection of innocent life and civilian infrastructure in the very beginning up in the first paragraph, not the next to the last paragraph, as the current resolution before us does.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 7 minutes to the distinguished member of the International Relations Committee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN).

(Mr. ACKERMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is an old photograph, tattered and torn. Its color is sepia, indicating that it is over 90 years old, and it hung on the wall in my mom's apartment. She would point it out to me when I was a little boy and say, ''This was your grandmother, who you never knew. It is a picture of their wedding.'' And the little children who sat in front of this wedding portrait were 5, 6, 7, 8 years old, a lot of little kids, and she said, pointing to one of them, ''This is my Aunt Rachel,'' and to another she said, ''This is my Uncle Joseph.''

I was tiny. I didn't understand. I said, ''Mom, how can that be your aunt and uncle? They are only children.'' And she said, ''They will always be children.'' I didn't understand quite what she was getting at until I was quite a bit older.

When World War II broke out, there were 1.6 million Jewish children throughout Europe. At the end of the Holocaust, that number became under 100,000. The Jewish people were almost eradicated from the face of the Earth by the people of the National Socialist Party of Germany, the Nazis, who were intent on wiping the Jews from the face of the Earth, claiming they had no right to live, no right to exist, in their country or anyplace else, and set out on a pogrom. They were nearly successful.

Nobody came to the aid of the Jewish people. People were put in gas chambers, their bodies burnt in ovens by the millions throughout the world. Nobody came to their aid. Nobody cared. The annihilation of an entire people by people who were pure evil.

It wasn't until the end of the war when the Jewish people and others who were in these concentration camps saw their first Americans and America's allies when they were liberated from those camps, alive because of happenstance and circumstance.

Our good friend, TOM LANTOS, and his wife, Annette, a distinguished moral force in our Congress, is alive today along with his wife as the beneficiary of a noble act of Christian charity by somebody who was a stranger. The luck of the draw.

The Jewish people weren't even organized enough to fight. They weren't fighters. They didn't know any better. They had no country. They were scattered.

The world looked at them at the end of the war and said we have to do something about this, and they took the area of Transjordan and they divided it and created the country of Jordan and the country of Israel, a Jewish state, so Jews could have a place to be where they could live safely within secure borders. And I know many things have happened and part of those borders are disputed today, but that is beside the point.

Suddenly in this very day and age, what seems to be eons from the Nazis and that era, another people rise up and make claim to the world out loud, clearly and unambiguously, that the Jewish people have no right to be anywhere; that they will wipe them from the region, kill them, eradicate them, and drive them from the planet. No different than the Nazis.

Now, those of my friends with such good intentions, and there are some here and I have spoken to them and I have listened to them, who talk about proportionality, who talk treating everybody equal, who talk about measured response, who talk about a ceasefire and going back to the status quo, they are well-intentioned, but I want them to look me in the eye and tell me what a proportional response means.

How do you negotiate with somebody whose goal is your eradication? Take half my family? Kill every other one of us? What is there to negotiate? Do we tell the victim of a violent crime that they have no right to fight back as forcefully as they can? Do we tell the rape victim that she has no right to fight with all her strength against the accused rapist? Nonsense.

We don't tell that to any other country. And there is only one Jewish state on the planet. Don't tell that to Israel. People of the Jewish faith and everybody else living in Israel have the right to exist, the same right as anybody else, and they have that right to respond. How can you deny that?

Thank God Israel doesn't stand alone anymore. It has one good friend in this whole world, and that is this United States. And we are so thankful for that. I am very pleased with this resolution. It does have the right balance.

Innocent people die in wars. Not every German was a Nazi, and yet we had to fight them because they represented the Nazis. They put them in power. They elected them in a democratic election. Elections have consequences. Just because you participate in an electoral process doesn't absolve of you of your crimes or your sins, especially if you rededicate yourself to them. That is what we are facing right now.

I urge your serious consideration of this resolution and all that it implies. Justice demands no less.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. And let me note to my friend, Mr. ACKERMAN, that we understand that quite often throughout history, an accurate description of history and a look at history will show that there have been many sins committed against the Jewish people, and perhaps we can say the most recent one is the one that we are just now discussing with these rocket attacks.

But let us also realize that there have been sins committed against the Palestinian people as well. They are people, and they were there. And this is a dispute, this is a dispute between the Palestinians and the Israeli people that is being exploited by outsiders.

Let me say that in the past when Israel has been in the wrong I have not hesitated to criticize Israel. This is not one of those occasions. Israel is not in the wrong. And while we recognize there are people who have done good things and bad things, that there are heroes and sinners on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tonight we are talking about a situation that was created intentionally by those people who launched rockets on Israel and left the people of Israel with no other choice but to respond militarily.

Those people who launched those rockets on Israel knew exactly what they were doing. In fact, about a month ago the word was spread that Hamas was on the verge of cutting a deal with Israel. Then elements in Hamas and Hezbollah ratcheted up the violence specifically to undermine any opportunity for peace in the region.

Peace will not be achieved in the Middle East unless we are bold enough not just to condemn terrorism, the terrorism specifically that leads to the type of violence and bloodshed and chaos that is now evident in the Middle East, but we must also back those who act when confronted with this type of violence, and in this case it behooves us to back Israel in what they are doing today as a result of those rockets and those attacks that were made upon Israeli citizens.

Our sights, however, should not just be set on Hamas and Hezbollah. The rockets that slammed into Israel were made in China. They were provided to the terrorists who launched them by the mullah regime in Iran.

Long ago, we should have been supporting those pro-democratic elements in Iran which totally reject the corruption, repression, incompetence, and, yes, terrorist aggression of the feudalistic mullahs who rule over them. Now is the time for us to back those democratic elements in Iran and put the Iranians on the defensive, rather than letting them supply missiles to undermine peace in the Middle East.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to our distinguished colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, for 10 years I have come to this floor to explain Israel's peril and justify its action. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Hezbollah and Hamas for doing a far better job than I ever could, for they have announced that their policy is the destruction of Israel, the ethnic cleansing of the Middle East of all Jews. Ultimately it is a program of genocide. And they are now using the very territory from which Israel has withdrawn to kill as many Israeli civilians as possible.

If their efforts have not yet risen to the level of genocide, it is only because their rockets often fail to hit their targets. And let's not mince words, their targets are always Israeli civilians.

□ 2115

Israel withdrew from Gaza; kidnappers and missiles come from Gaza into Israel. Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon, and now kidnappers and missiles come into Israel from southern Lebanon, not just recently, but continuously over the last 6 years.

Five kidnapping raids, thousands of missiles, 6 years of attacks. If anyone is going to say that Israel's reaction is disproportionate, let them say that Israel is doing too little.

Let me speak to those who may be skeptical of this resolution. We all want peace, and peace can only come if Israel withdraws from certain territories. Yet the Israelis must know that when they vacate a territory, that territory will not be used as a rocket-launching pad against Israel, and that if it ever is, that Israel will have the full support of the United States and of this Congress. We cannot have peace, we cannot have any Israeli territorial concessions unless we show Israel that we will support them when they have made those concessions.

There are those who urge a cease-fire. I hope we get there soon. But this all started with rockets and kidnapping, and it would be a phony cease-fire unless the soldiers are returned, and unless Hezbollah is disarmed as required by U.N. Resolution 1559.

There are those who talk of prisoner exchanges, but we should not tell Israel to exchange the guilty for the innocent, nor should we tell them to release those who would resume their terror.

We in Congress should call every major ambassador from Europe and demand that Europe list Hezbollah as a terrorist entity and stop Europeans from sending money to Hezbollah.

And, finally, we all need to call the World Bank and say that it is time for the World Bank to stop making loans and giving aid to Iran, which, after all, is the source of the money and the missiles that Hezbollah is using. It is time for the World Bank to stop its loans to Iran, and to not disburse funds that have already been approved until that government changes its policy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the chairman of the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation.

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, as the chairman of the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, I rise in support of this vital resolution in support of democratic Israel, who is facing terrorist attacks on two fronts, from Hamas and Hezbollah.

It is important to have a clear focus on the threat posed by Hezbollah. Former Deputy Secretary of State Armitage testified Hezbollah may be the A team of terrorists, and maybe al Qaeda is actually the B team.

The former Director of Center Intelligence called Hezbollah a notch above al Qaeda organizationally, in part because of its deadly ties to Iran.

Hezbollah receives $100 million annually from Iran, including 13,000 rockets. These rockets, which have rained down on Israeli citizens, are hidden in homes of supporters and in small factories scattered across Lebanon. Hezbollah launches unmanned aerial vehicles.

Hezbollah's TV station, a vehicle for hate which the U.S. has placed on its terrorists exclusion list, has 10 million viewers around the world.

Hezbollah is no ordinary terrorist group. Indeed, Israel is confronting Islamist terrorism's A Team. Before

9/11, Hezbollah was the terrorist group that had killed more Americans than any other. It has support cells in Europe, Africa, South America, Asia and here in North America. Dismantling Hezbollah is critical for U.S. and Israel's security.

Iran no doubt hopes that the current crisis will distract the world's attention away from its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Yet today's crisis shows exactly why Iran's ambition must be thwarted, because an Iran with nuclear weapons will be even more aggressive in supporting terrorism in the Middle East and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, Israelis are suffering. Lebanese, some of whom, as this resolution points out, are being used as human shields, are suffering. Too many are suffering at the hands of the Hezbollah terrorists. Hezbollah must be disarmed.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished Democratic leader (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, Mr. LANTOS, it is very hard to capture the words to express the difficulty that Israel is facing now for all of us. But for you, it must be particularly difficult. I know that you are an idealist, I know that you are a realist. I thank you for your leadership. We could not be better served than by having you here at this very difficult time for the world really, especially difficult time for Israel. Thank you for your leadership.

And at this very difficult time for the State of Israel, this resolution reaffirms our unwavering support and commitment to Israel, and condemns the attacks by Hezbollah.

I support this resolution because I believe that the seizure of Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah terrorists was an unprovoked attack, and Israel has the right, indeed the obligation, to respond.

Hamas and Hezbollah are committed to the destruction of Israel. What more do you need to know? It is clear that Iran and Syria aid have helped the effort to achieve that goal.

The United Nations Security Council has already spoken on the issue of dismantling Hezbollah. The Security Council's resolution must be enforced by the international community. Syria has repeatedly demonstrated it is a rogue state, which is why we passed Mr. RANGEL's Syria Accountability Act more than 2 years ago. However, we must now fully implement all sanctions spelled out in that legislation.

In order to address the Iranian support of the terrorists, I urge the passage of the Iran Freedom Support Act.

We must ensure that Iran and Syria understand the depth of commitment of the United States to the State of Israel by using every diplomatic tool at our disposal. For a time in recent years, there was a hope that a corner had been turned in the Middle East. The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, the emergence of a democratic process in Lebanon, and the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza were hopeful signs that the future could be different from the past.

Those indications of progress, however, were seen as threats by Hezbollah and Hamas, organizations that have a greater interest in maintaining a state of hostility with Israel than improving the lives of the people they claim to represent. Now, the lives of those people and tens of thousands of others in the Middle East, including thousands of American citizens in Israel and Lebanon, have been put at risk by the aggression of Hamas and Hezbollah.

As the fighting rages, it is imperative that the combatants take whatever steps they can to lessen the risk to innocent civilians. The world knows too well the horrors of war. It also knows that there are ways to offer some degree of protection to civilians, and it is right to insist that those ways be chosen. Using civilians as shields by concealing weapons in civilian areas, as done by Hezbollah, is inconsistent with affording those protections. The resolution we are considering properly condemns that action.

Protecting civilians also means getting our citizens out of harm's way as quickly as possible. I urge the administration to expedite its efforts to bring to safety those Americans who want to leave Lebanon.

When the fighting ends, and I hope that that will be soon, the United States must engage in a concerted, sustained effort with other nations seeking a joint resolution of the differences between Israel and its neighbors. Israel's right to exist is the nonnegotiable starting point for that effort.

I thank again those who were responsible for bringing the resolution to the floor, and again commend Mr. LANTOS for his leadership, for his compassion, and for his wisdom.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, tonight I rise in strong support of this resolution and to condemn the recent attacks upon Israel by Hezbollah. All of us tonight have the earnest prayer that the current wave of violence can end quickly.

Innocent civilians are being lost in Lebanon and Israel, and the word ''tragic'' never does the situation justice. But peace can never be achieved by asking Israel to put at risk its security and the safety of its people. Let there be no doubt, this latest conflict began with Hezbollah. Rockets have now rained down upon Israel. Israel has been forced to defend her citizens and sovereign territory, and I believe that Israel has the moral, historical and legal right to do so.

Holding the keys to peace in this situation are Hezbollah's state sponsors in Damascus and Tehran. They can and must use their influence to convince Hezbollah to return the kidnapped Israeli soldiers. By doing so, Syria and Iran will finally demonstrate that they are prepared to join the world community. Should they not, however, the world community must hold them fully accountable for being state sponsors of a terrorist organization.

Also critical to achieving a lasting peace in the region is international support for the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559. Passed by the United Nations Security Council in 2004, the resolution calls on all foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon, and for all militias within Lebanon to be disbanded. Its full implementation, Madam Speaker, will promote greater independence for Lebanon and greater security for Israel, not to mention the rest of the world.

Since 1948, the United States has stood with and supported the State of Israel, as it has defended herself from these who seek her destruction and deny her very right to exist. In return, Israel has been our staunchest ally in the region as well as a full partner in the global war on terror. Let us pass this resolution and assure Israel that we will continue to stand by her side in the face of terror.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to my good friend from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

While I share a commitment to the survival of Israel and the right to security, I am not going to assert that I know more than my good friend Mr. LANTOS or my good friend Mr. ACKERMAN, that I know more about the suffering of the people of Israel.

But I can have compassion for those who have suffered and for not just Israelis, but the Lebanese and the Palestinians as well. And it is in that spirit that I share with the House my concerns that the situation in the Middle East is spiraling out of control, and this resolution may not diffuse this crisis.

I deplore the fact that in the past 8 days, 13 Israeli civilians have been killed, 2 Israelis soldiers have been captured, and many more killed in raids. I also deplore the fact that in the past 8 days, 300 Lebanese people have been killed, 1,000 have been wounded, and a half million have been displaced from their homes.

In the past 8 days, democracy in Lebanon has been attacked, perhaps grievously. The Prime Minister hinted today in a speech to foreign ambassadors that his government may not be able to survive. No government can survive in the ruins of a nation, he said.

The past 8 days of crisis in Lebanon and north Israel follow months of escalating violence in Gaza. Numerous innocent Palestinians have been killed. Between June 4 and June 13, 14 Palestinian civilians, including 5 children, were killed in Gaza.

On June 9 at a Gaza beach, a blast killed eight Palestinians, including an entire family of 7-year-old Huda Ghaliya. Numerous innocent Israelis have also been killed.

On Sunday, July 25, a group of Palestinian fighters, including members of Hamas's armed wing, attacked an Israeli post near the Kerem Shalom border, which resulted in four Israeli casualties and the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

□ 2130

Israel began an offensive in Gaza on June 28. Since then, Palestinian militants have fired 17 homemade rockets towards Israel. The Israeli Army has carried out 168 far strikes and fired more than 600 shells into Gaza.

The Government of the Palestinian Authority is breaking, as lawmakers, ministers and members of the police force have been arrested. In today's Washington Post, Harold Meyerson published an op-ed called, ''The Guns of July,'' comparing the past week's escalation of violence in the Middle East to the escalation of violence over the course of a month in Europe, that began with the assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand by a Serbian nationalist terrorist and led to World War I.

He said we are in the midst of what ''may be the brink of a cataclysmic regional war with ghastly global implications.'' He wrote, ''While the two crises and sets of conflicting forces are by no means parallel, in each the power of nationalism, the sense of national victimization, the need for revenge, the opportunity for miscalculation, the illusion of obtainable victory and all-around fear and rage loom large. More inexplicably, so does the American absence.''

The resolution before us today does not rein in the chaos in the Middle East. This resolution, it could be said, is limited in its ability to rein in war and destruction, which unfortunately may continue. Furthermore, by condemning Syria and Iran, this resolution threatens to bring the U.S. into a regional war in which everyone would lose, including Israel, a longtime friend and ally.

Moreover, condemning Syria and Iran closes the door for possible diplomacy that would be needed to end this conflict. President Bush himself acknowledged the value of Syria just yesterday, when he said that Syria has the potential to stop the ongoing crisis.

If the United States wants to help stabilize the region, as we should, we must act as an honest broker to all parties involved, the Israelis, the Palestinians and the Lebanese. We can do this without abandoning our affection and our commitment to the survival of Israel.

Moreover, the United States should bring in equipment, and Jordan to help to mediate this escalating conflict. Recently, Egypt's President Mubarak dispatched his intelligence chief to help calm the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The intelligence chief demanded that a doctor be allowed to see the captive Israeli soldier and is trying to mediate between the factions. The U.S. is in a good position to mediate as well between the Israelis, Palestinians, and Lebanese.

The U.S. has a history of trying to mediate between the Israelis, our longtime ally, and the Palestinians.

Regarding the Lebanese, it was just over a year ago that this House passed multiple bills supporting the people of Lebanon. One bill, House Resolution 91, condemned the attacks that killed former Prime Minister Hariri and killed and wounded other Lebanese victims.

The United States stood with the Lebanese people then. Today, nearly 300 Lebanese people have been killed. The government is on the verge of collapse. The Lebanese people need the support of the United States now, just as the Israelis need our support.

What they need and all parties need, what the region needs and what the world needs, is for the U.S. to call upon all sides to quickly stop the violence. But today's resolution fails to support the Lebanese people in their hour of need.

Today, I introduced a bill, H. Con. Res. 450, calling upon the President to appeal to all sides in the current crisis in the Middle East for an immediate cessation of violence and to commit U.S. diplomats to multiparty negotiations. Only by acting as an honest broker can the United States have any authority and success in bringing peace to the region, which is crucial at this critical time.

Remembering the lessons of World War I, if everyone has taken a side in a conflict and can't see the need for even-handedness, then cataclysm can follow. It is important to be a strong ally. It is fine to be a strong ally, but it is not fine to get pulled into a conflict because we lacked the vision to be more than one-sided.

This latest conflict in the Middle East will not be solved militarily. The solution will have to come back to diplomacy. The current violence makes a diplomatic solution even harder to achieve. Yet the resolution before the floor doesn't commit the United States to any diplomatic action that could quell the violence and resolve the conflict. This is a grave missed opportunity.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor my bill, H. Con. Res. 450 to bring about peace in the Middle East before the crisis spirals further out of control, further damaging the hopes of all people in the region and the world.

I again want to thank Mr. LANTOS for his unstinting and unwavering commitment to the survival and hopes and dreams of people of Israel, because I think that, Mr. LANTOS, you and everyone who has spoken in defense of Israel, I think all of us want the same thing. We want peace, and we want the survival of Israel and all the people.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH).

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, just a few short weeks ago, the Prime Minister of Israel addressed a joint session of Congress. He said, in part, and I quote, ''There has not been 1 year, 1 week, or even 1 day of peace in our tortured land.'' He went on to say, Madam Speaker, ''Over the past 6 years, more than 20,000 attempted terrorist attacks have been initiated against the people of Israel.''

Madam Speaker, less than 2 weeks ago, the war which has gone on for more than a half century was rekindled with the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, with the strategy manipulated by Iran and Syria, by a cynical, sick, cycle of violence that diplomacy has not cured.

I listened with great interest to my friend from Ohio who preceded me, who again said that diplomacy was the solution.

Madam Speaker, Israel was told by the international community, you must give up land for peace, land for peace. Israel gave up land, and there is no peace.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues, I rise in strong support of this resolution, not to embrace war or violence for its own sake, but instead to pursue a true peace and to reaffirm.

Madam Speaker, I stand in this well at this hour to reaffirm the basic truth of this resolution and the right of the sovereignty and existence of the State of Israel from a historical, from a legal and, yes, from a scriptural perspective. Let it be clear from this, the last best hope of mankind on Earth, that we stand foursquare with our allies in Israel, and we understand the nefarious misbegotten schemes of those who seek to spread Islamofascism and terror around the globe, and we categorically reject that behavior and those actions as we stand in solidarity with our ally, a democracy, an oasis of democracy in a desert of desolation.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join us in strong support of this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, how much time do we have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). The gentleman has 1½ minutes.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that this is one of the most substantive debates of the year, that colleagues have been waiting for a long time, I respectfully ask unanimous consent that we extend the debate by 40 minutes, equally divided between Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and myself.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. LANTOS. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my good friend, the distinguished member of the International Relations Committee, Mr. ENGEL.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I rise in strong support of his bipartisan resolution and strong support of the people of Israel in their fight against terrorism. It makes no difference where terrorism rears its ugly head, whether its planes going into the World Trade Center or the Pentagon, or innocent people being blown up on trains in India, England or Spain, or the bombs falling on Haifa or the innocent children being blown up on a bus in Tel Aviv. The fight against terrorism is our fight. Israel's fight is our fight.

Iran and Syria are fighting a proxy war against Israel using Hezbollah and Hamas. It has been pointed out that Israel withdrew from Lebanon 6 years ago, so the myth of any kind of occupation is not there. Simply speaking, Hezbollah and Hamas, as well as Iran and Syria, want to, as Iran's President has said, wipe Israel off the face of the Earth.

We should let Israel finish the job. There should be no precipitous calls to a cease-fire before Israel could rid itself of a terrorist threat. We should fully implement my bill, and I was happy that our Democratic leader mentioned it, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, and President Bush should implement those sanctions which are available to him against Syria.

I care very much about Lebanon. Our bill was called Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. The people of Lebanon are suffering. When this is over, we should do everything we can to help them rebuild their country.

But the people of Lebanon have suffered by having this terrorist group, this poison, in its midst, this poison, this militia that is a lawless militia, and that Security Council Resolution 1559, which called for the Syrians to leave Lebanon.

I thank my colleague who is my partner in the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. She knows that when the Syrians finally left Lebanon, the world community failed to implement the other part of Resolution 1559, which called for all militias to give up their arms. Hezbollah continued and, shamefully, even won some seats in the Government of Lebanon.

My friend and colleague, Mr. ACKERMAN, spoke before and reminded us that Israel was born out of the ashes of the Holocaust. The leader of Iran, while denying the Holocaust, threatens to unleash a new one on Israel. There is only one country that constantly stands with Israel, and that is the United States of America.

We ought to be proud of the bipartisan support that we have shown for Israel through the years. Israel's fight against terrorism is our fight. We need to support the brave people of Israel in their struggle. Terrorism over there and terrorism over here is the same thing. Support the resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, I appreciate, first, the leadership of Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. LANTOS on this important issue of leadership, not just this critical time, but throughout the years.

Yes, I strongly support the resolution, but listening tonight I think there has been some odd debate. To suggest, as some did, that Israel and America have somehow conspired to encourage this attack on Israel as an excuse to invade or attack Iran, to me, is absurd.

□ 2145

It is a dangerous claim, and at this important and critical time in history has no real place in this important debate on this floor in this Chamber in this democracy.

We reaffirm America's support for the State of Israel. We support Israel's right to take appropriate action to defend itself not only in Israel, but in the territories of those who would threaten it in accordance with the international law.

We condemn Hamas and Hezbollah for cynically exploiting civilian populations as shields, then locating their equipment and bases of operations in civilian areas.

We recognize Israel's long-standing commitment to minimizing civilian loss.

We demand the Governments of Iran and Syria to direct Hamas and Hezbollah to immediately and unconditionally release the Israeli soldiers which they hold captive.

And we condemn the Governments of Iran and Syria for their continued support of Hezbollah and Hamas in these armed attacks against Israel.

Make no mistake, an attack against Israel is an attack against the peace and security of America. Israel's fight is America's fight. America will stand with Israel.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), my good friend.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, let me first thank Mr. LANTOS for yielding; also just to say to him that I appreciate the respect and the space that you provide for all of us who may have a different point of view, but who all support peace and security and Israel's right to defend itself. I also have tremendous respect for Mr. LANTOS just in terms of your work and your long history as a champion of human rights not only on behalf of the State of Israel, but throughout the world, and so I thank Mr. LANTOS for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I join with those who condemn the recent kidnapping of Israeli soldiers and the rocket attacks into Israel, and also, I rise in support of Israel's right to protect and defend itself from attacks in accordance with international law, including Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

However, this resolution goes much further than that, and it also omits any mention, and I think this is so critical at this stage, it omits any mention of how and why the United States should exert its leadership in stopping the violence. Too many people, Israelis Lebanese and Palestinians, have been killed, and there is no end in sight. Very seldom do I cast a ''present'' vote, but in this instance I will, and let me explain why.

This resolution reaffirms our support for Israel, demands that the Government of Lebanon do everything in its power to find and free the kidnapped Israeli soldiers and to gain control of its borders in order to prevent future attacks. It also condemns Hamas and Hezbollah for killing Israeli soldiers and for indiscriminately targeting Israeli civilians, and it recognizes the plight of the families of the innocent victims. These provisions warrant our strong support and certainly sends a strong message in support of Israel, in behalf of Israel and on behalf of Israel.

But on the other hand, there are provisions in this resolution that are totally unfinished or missing and leave this resolution very much incomplete.

Such a course of action, I believe, ought to make it clear that in no uncertain terms will the United States support a strategy of the use of force against Iran or Syria. This resolution leaves the door open for this.

This resolution ought to make it clear that the only way to remove the threat to Israel and to the larger region is to resolve these issues through an immediate cease-fire and commit the United States, through the cease-fire, to high-level and sustained diplomacy. We need to be doing that right now in support of many of the initiatives such as the road map. This resolution does not really address how to end the escalating violence that really, quite frankly, does more violence and harm to Israel's long-term interests and living in peace and security with her neighbors.

This resolution should offer concrete steps on how to achieve peace and security for Israel and the region, and the resolution says nothing about the peace process.

The bottom line is there is absolutely no military resolution to the issues confronting the Middle East, notwithstanding the acts of self-defense to which Israel is entitled in accordance with international law.

If we do not put a stop to all of the hostilities today, what is to stop future violence with more technologically advanced weapons systems, rockets with even longer ranges? Where does it end? Is war the only answer?

Israel's security and a sustained peace that includes a two-state solution cannot be achieved militarily. The only option, and the only hope, is a political solution to this crisis and for a sustained peace.

That is why, Madam Speaker, it is imperative that all parties return to

internationally recognized borders and for all parties to resume urgent, multilateral diplomatic efforts, including a return to the road map and a full engagement by the quartet.

What we should be doing today is imploring all sides to agree to a ceasefire, insist on the return of the hostages, and agree to an international security force.

If we can reach the end of that road that we are walking down right now, then our ally, I believe, Israel will find the peace and security that she and her people rightfully deserve.

So, Madam Speaker, I intend to vote ''present'' on this resolution because, while I believe there are some provisions that warrant our support, I do not believe it goes far enough in addressing the immediate security needs and the violence that is taking place right now in the Middle East.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS).

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for allowing me the time to speak on behalf of this resolution, and I will be very brief.

Madam Speaker, whether we understand it or not, tonight the world faces an evil, poisonous ideology that threatens the peace and freedom of humankind. This ideology is not new, Madam Speaker. It is the same one that murdered Israeli athletes in 1972, that took American hostages in Iran, that murdered marines in their barracks in 1983, that bombed the World Trade Center in 1993, Riyadh in 1995, the Khobar Towers in 1996, the embassies in 1998, the U.S.S. *Cole* in 2000, and then, Madam Speaker, that same ideology massacred nearly 3,000 Americans on September 11.

And tonight, Madam Speaker, that same dark, insidious ideology is launching rockets into Israel to slaughter innocent, freedom-loving civilians. This is why Israel's war is our war.

If there is hope for peace and freedom in this world, free peoples across this planet must unite with Israel to defeat this hellish ideology. The battle Israel fights tonight is a battle to protect all of humanity. May the people of Israel take comfort knowing that America stands with you in these difficult days. May you come to victory, and may the light of God's peace shine down on the streets of Jerusalem forever.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY).

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, once again I thank my great friend from the State of California for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, I rise to speak out in strong support of a democratic nation under attack by terrorists, a nation that has been under attack every day for 58 years of its existence.

As we debate this bill, over a quarter of a million Israelis are in bomb shelters or awaiting to rush to safety from missiles being launched specifically at civilian targets. Think about that. As we are debating this evening, a quarter of a million Israelis are seeking cover, launched by a terrorist organization, funded by Syria and Iran waging a proxy war in Israel.

I take some exceptions to some comments made by a colleague earlier tonight, and that is about the accuracy of rockets being launched by Hezbollah. The goal of Hezbollah is to inflict as many civilian casualties as possible, end of story.

Yesterday I read a report from Human Rights Watch that called the missile strikes on Israel possible war crimes. The rockets launched against Israel, and specifically in Haifa, contained metal ball bearings that have limited use against military targets. They probably will not even destroy a building in and of themselves. They can do incredible damage to civilian populations, tearing people's bodies apart.

Hezbollah fires these inaccurate Katyusha rockets that do not differentiate between Jews, Arabs or Christians or whatever they may be in Israel. In fact, one of these missiles killed two Israeli Arab children today when it struck the city of Nazareth, an ancient Christian city with a majority of Arab inhabitants.

I am saddened by all loss of civilian and innocent life, but I strongly support Israel's right to defend itself by removing the threats against her, wherever they may be.

This conflict was preventable. Our allies in Europe and the Middle East must know that the operation in Lebanon is not an act of war, but an act of self-defense. Israel is not looking for this fight, but Hamas and Hezbollah created the events we have been watching by murdering and kidnapping members of the Israeli Defense Forces and launching over 800 deadly missiles into Israel over the past week.

Israel must do everything in its power to protect all of its citizens, and I am proud that this Congress stands with our friends and our allies in Israel by passing this worthy resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, before yielding to my colleague from Florida, I would like to thank Mr. Dan Freeman, our parliamentarian of the House International Relations Committee who has steered us correctly through this debate; and Dr. Yleen Boblete, who spent so many hours drafting this resolution; and, of course, our staff director for the committee Dr. Hillel Weinberg, who has been working so many hours as well.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON), who is ever patient.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I rise in support of this resolution, and I commend the authors, Mr. BOEHNER, Mr. HYDE and Mr. LANTOS, and the staff involved in drafting it.

I stand to urge our continued support for our ally Israel and to condemn the actions of terrorist organizations Hamas and Hezbollah, as well as the complicit Governments of Syria, Iran and Lebanon.

We must clearly understand what is really going on here, the motivations underneath the surface of these attacks.

As I stated last week in the House, the actions of Hamas and Hezbollah involve the kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers. This is an act of aggression against our ally Israel, and now they have widened their continued attacks on innocent civilians with their rocket attacks.

What is particularly troubling in the case of Hezbollah is that it is part of the Government of Lebanon, which not only failed to dismantle the terrorist group, but incorporated the terrorist group into the nation's official government.

Hezbollah has dragged all of Lebanon into its unfounded quarrels with Israel. Unfortunately for Lebanon's other factions, Hezbollah's attacks on Israel will cost the entire nation of Lebanon much, but they should have thought of that before allowing Hezbollah a seat at the governing table.

Hezbollah has launched hundreds of rockets at Israel since 2000. It also has thousands of Iranian- and Syrian-supplied rockets ready to launch against Israel in the future.

Israel is justly taking strong measures in response to Hezbollah's aggression, as they have done with Hamas' attacks, in order to deter further attacks against its soldiers and civilians.

A U.S.-designated terrorist organization, Hezbollah is fully backed by the Iranian and Syrian regimes. Not only have all of the G–8 countries condemned Hamas and Hezbollah and blamed them solely for the current crisis in the Middle East, but the Arab League, while characteristically condemning the Israeli attacks, noticeably failed to support Hezbollah in its attacks on Israel.

Why is this? Because the members of the Arab League, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and others, are increasingly concerned about the growing threat of Iran and the amount of influence that Iran has in Syria and Lebanon and in the region generally.

We should not look at this current crisis as just another page in the ongoing conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

□ 2200

This now involves an Iranian regime and the Syrians that are fomenting this, supporting this financially. I support this resolution and I again commend the authors of the resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, before yielding, I would like to offer an opportunity to Mrs. LOWEY to ask for a unanimous consent.

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. I thank the outstanding chairman for his leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. It is a powerful statement in support of Israel and the Israeli people during this difficult time.

Let us be clear about what is happening in the Middle East. Israel has been dragged into battle on two fronts to defend itself against terrorists who target Israeli civilians and seek the destruction of the Jewish State. The current hostilities were initiated, in both cases, by incursions of terrorists across recognized borders and the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers. As we know all too well, these battles are merely the latest chapter in a war that has been waged against Israel since its establishment in 1948.

I join all those who yearn for peace in praying for an end to the hostilities. I also recognize that the fighting can only be stopped by the terrorists who initiated it. I believe the U.N. should play a role in ending this conflict, but the deployment of another force with the same, weak mandate as UNIFIL will not get the job done. The U.N. and the international community need to unite to demand an end to this reign of terror and full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559. The Lebanese government must establish sovereignty over its own territory instead of allowing Hezbollah and Iranian Guards to operate freely. And we must keep the focus on Iran and Syria—the root causes of this conflict.

The last several weeks have demonstrated beyond all doubt why Israel must maintain its qualitative military edge in the region. Any action taken by the international community must respect Israel's right to protect its own citizens and must be aimed at disarming Hezbollah and Hamas and terminating their ability to attack Israel.

Israel seeks peace and has taken risks to achieve it time and time again. Sadly, its sacrifices have been met only with escalated threats and violence.

Israel withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000 in compliance with U.N. resolutions. In return, it has been continuously threatened by Hezbollah terrorists on its northern border, allowed free reign by a reckless Lebanese government with Syria and Iran calling the shots in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. In return, it is faced with a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority that supports attacks against civilians and competes with exiled Hamas members over who can be more extreme.

This latest violence confirms that Iran currently poses the single greatest threat to regional stability. It has the motivation and resources to stage a methodical campaign of terror and violence throughout the Middle East, concentrating on fomenting sectarian violence in Iraq and supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon. Syria continues to shelter Hamas leaders and is widely acknowledged to be complicit in the kidnapping of Corporal Shalit. Both countries are transit points and suppliers of weapons to terrorists. The current hostilities are mere symptoms of the disease Iran and Syria have brought on the region. And our policies and those of the international community must respond accordingly.

We have potent tools to deal with Iran and Syria that we have ignored. The Iran Freedom Support Act passed the House of Representatives overwhelmingly but has been held up by the Senate leadership and the Administration. The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act became law in 2003, but the Administration has largely ignored the instruments it provides to pressure Syria. Sending Secretary Rice to the region may indicate our concern, but developing a strategy to join with like-minded nations to force Iran and Syria to abandon their campaigns of terror should be our ultimate goal. Until we have such a strategy in place, a high-level visit will accomplish nothing.

I join my colleagues in Congress in standing in solidarity with Israel during this difficult time. The American people understand what it feels like to be targeted on our own soil. As children in Haifa, Safed, and Nahariya remain trapped in bomb shelters, we reaffirm our support for Israel's effort to defend itself against terrorists stationed on its borders.

I urge support for this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend, a distinguished member of the International Relations Committee, Mr. BLUMENAUER.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak and for his hard work on this resolution.

I attempt to carefully examine the terminology and the nuance in such efforts because I want to make sure the United States' policy is carefully reflected in terms of our long-term interests, the security of Israel, and those of peace. And I think this resolution meets that test.

The attacks on Israel by Hezbollah are both unjustified and unprovoked, particularly given Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon 6 years ago.

Since the initial raid across the Israeli-Lebanese border, in which Hezbollah killed eight Israeli soldiers, took two others hostage, they have continued indiscriminately targeting Israeli civilians with increasingly sophisticated weaponry.

It is in this context that Israel has exercised its right of self-defense, which I completely support. I am, of course, I hope we all are concerned about the impact on the actions that deal with innocent Lebanese civilians. But as I cringed a little bit when I saw one of my colleagues look at the minority, and talked about shortcomings in the resolution, because I know Mr. LANTOS had offered up on behalf of the minority specific language of concern for innocents which, sadly, is not in the resolution. But I do think it is a good starting point.

Even the Saudis and the Egyptians have recognized the responsibility for the current crisis lies with Hezbollah, Syria and Iran, as well as with Lebanon's inabilities to disarm Hezbollah as called for by Security Council Resolution 1559.

We should not seek to impose a cease-fire that returns the region to the status quo without ensuring that Hezbollah is no longer a threat to Israel or Lebanon.

This resolution is a strong signal of support for Israel. It is a signal to people who are playing their terrorist politics with innocent lives, of the United States' intentions. It is a signal to governments on the sidelines that they need to step up and help.

Nothing has been more vexing to me during my tenure in the House than this continuing conflict with Israel. I don't pretend to know the answers, but I do know it does start with support for Israel and this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, before yielding my time to Mr. LANTOS, I would also like to recognize the work of Jen Stuart, the foreign policy advisor to the majority leader, who has spent so many hours working on this resolution.

And with that, Madam Speaker, I will be glad to yield the remainder of our time, minus 1 minute, so we can close, to Mr. LANTOS.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized.

There was no objection.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my good friend for yielding.

I am delighted to recognize a distinguished member of the committee, my good friend from Nevada, Ms. SHELLEY BERKLEY.

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and a very special thank-you to my very good friend from California, Tom Lantos, for his leadership on this issue. I rest better at night knowing that he is our leader. And I am very proud of him and very delighted to be here today.

I am not going to take all of the time, which is uncharacteristic for me. I just couldn't have a resolution of this magnitude on the floor of the House without coming here and lending support. Two minutes could never be enough for me to speak on this issue, and I am afraid even 2 hours might not be long enough for me to express my feelings and my views.

I grew up in a family where the very existence of Israel changed our lives. I was born in my grandmother's apartment on the Lower East Side of New York, and grew up hearing stories of what their lives were like in Europe before they came to this country and how important Israel was to the survival of the Jewish people. And while the Jewish people were people of the diaspora and had managed to survive without a nation for 5,000 years, the very existence of Israel gave each of us a tremendous sense of confidence and well-being, knowing that we had a homeland of our own.

I was not alive in the 1948 war, or the 1956, when Israel was attacked again by its Arab neighbors. 1967, I was more

aware, and 1973, of course. What I find incomprehensible and something I simply cannot understand, that here we are, so many years after the creation of Israel, after the aftermath of the Holocaust and the very reasons that Israel was established, and we are still debating throughout the world whether Israel has a right to exist.

I am so proud of my colleagues for introducing this resolution. I think it strikes the exact right note at the exact right time in our world's history.

We cannot allow this to continue. Israel has a right to exist, have secure borders, and lead a life for its citizens. And I think the time has come for the world body, led by the United States of America, to step up to the plate and say enough is enough. And this resolution is a remarkably good start. I thank everybody for supporting it.

I am very proud of the speeches that my colleagues have made, and I look forward to voting for this, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support for the resolution.

The current crisis in the Middle East was caused by an unnecessary, ill advised, and unprovoked attack on Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah by terrorist organizations who have called for the elimination of Israel.

There are victims of these terrorist attacks innocent Israeli soldiers and citizens and there are perpetrators of these terrorist attacks—Hamas and Hezbollah. There is no moral equivalency in this struggle.

To those who incomprehensibly condemn Israel or who attempt to find some equivalency, let me state the obvious.

Every sovereign nation has a right and responsibility to protect and defend its people.

For those who think that Israel overreacted—If I was the mother of a 19-year-old soldier peacefully guarding my country's border and my son was kidnapped by a terrorist organization, I would expect my government to do everything in its power to bring my boy home. An Israeli mother should expect and get no less. If I was living on the border of my country and a terrorist group was continuously lobbing rockets into my town where I live, where my children play, I would demand that my country do whatever they had to to eliminate the threat—Israel should.

There should be no mistake about who is behind this crisis, Iran and Syria. Iran's president pledged to wipe Israel off the map and he refers to Israel as an "illegitimate nation." Syria's troops occupied southern Lebanon illegally until 2005.

This is a strictly defensive action on the part of Israel.

There is an internationally recognized border with Lebanon. Israel unilaterally completed its withdrawal from Lebanon over 6 years ago. For 6 years, the Lebanese government has done nothing to step-in and establish control over part of its country.

They did nothing, and left a power vacuum, filled by Hezbollah, in the southern third of Lebanon. Hezbollah uses southern Lebanon to lob katusha rockets into Israel with the hope of killing someone, killing anyone. They are not there to build a nation, protecting a people, laying a foundation for a better Lebanon—they are there to kill Israelis.

Israel did everything it could possibly do to avoid a conflict in Lebanon—asking time and again that the government of Lebanon take control and police their territory. Unfortunately, these requests went unanswered and the terrorism continued to grow.

On its border with Gaza, Israel also faces unrelenting terrorist attacks. After years of waiting, and praying, and hoping for a peace partner, Israel chose to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza.

It uprooted families who created beautiful settlements. These families built homes from nothing, farms from dirt. Three generations were removed, some focibly, from the only homes they had ever known.

I know. I was there.

I saw Israeli soldiers carrying Jewish settlers in their arms across the border out of Gaza.

There were tears in the eyes of the settlers and there were tears in the eyes of the soldiers.

One would have thought that the Palestinians would have used this opportunity to demonstrate to the world that they were capable of self-governance. Instead of building homes, schools, and infrastructure, they have used Gaza to launch thousands of Kassam Rockets at innocent Israelis.

The international community must ensure that Hamas and Hezbollah are disarmed.

The international community must ensure that Iran and Syria end their support for Hezbollah's and Hamas's terrorism.

Hamas must renounce its charter that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel or be cut off from the rest of the world.

Syria and Iran must be punished for their support of Hezbollah.

The 3 Israeli soldiers must be returned—alive and unharmed.

Congress must pass this resolution condemning the attacks on Israel—they are indefensible and unacceptable—and supporting its unconditional right to defend itself, which every nation on this planet has the right to do.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2½ minutes to a distinguished member of our committee, Mr. SCHIFF.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and of our friend and ally, the State of Israel.

In May of 2000, Israeli forces withdrew from southern Lebanon, ending an 18-year presence that was intended to stop guerilla attacks on civilians living in northern Israel. Last summer Israeli settlers and military personnel left Gaza and part of the West Bank and turned over administration of those areas to the Palestinian Authority.

The withdrawals were conciliatory gestures to Israel's Arab neighbors, and Israel and the international community expected the Lebanese Government and the Palestinian Authority to see them as opportunities to stabilize a region that has seen too much blood and tears over the last 60 years.

Instead, successive Lebanese governments, hobbled by the oppressive presence of Syrian troops and intelligence officers, never made a concerted effort to reassert control in the south, and effectively ceded this area to Hezbollah, a radical Shiite militia trained, supplied, and directed by Syria and Iran.

In Gaza, a corrupt and calcified Palestinian Authority would not make the necessary efforts to dismantle the infrastructure of terror that allowed terrorists to rain down Qassam rockets on Israeli civilians. When Hamas, a radical Islamist party that has never budged from its calls for Israel's destruction, swept into power in parliamentary elections in January of this year, it made no secret of the fact it would embrace a rejectionist policy towards Israel.

Nevertheless, the Government of Israel and a majority of her citizens were determined to continue efforts to withdraw from large parts of the West Bank. It was this plan that was the centerpiece of Ehud Olmert's campaign for Prime Minister and which the new Prime Minister was seeking to implement in the coming months. Instead, in what can only be seen as a coordinated effort, Hamas and Hezbollah crossed Israel's internationally recognized frontiers to murder and kidnap Israeli defense force personnel on Israeli territory.

□ 2210

At this stage four things are clear: First, these acts were not undertaken by rogue elements of Hamas and Hezbollah, but were the result of meticulous and lengthy planning.

Second, while the attacks were launched from Gaza and Lebanon, the Governments of Syria and Iran were involved in their planning and execution, especially in the case of the Lebanon attack.

Third, the murder and kidnapping of Israeli military personnel on Israeli territory by armed forces operating from a neighboring state or political entity is the root cause of the present violence.

And, fourth, Israel has the legitimate right to take military action necessary to defend its citizens and its territory from attack.

We mourn the loss of life. Lebanese, Israeli, and Palestinian, they are all the victims of Hezbollah and Hamas. I hope that Secretary Rice and her international counterparts will be able to pressure Iran and Syria to rein in these terrorist organizations and establish a legitimate Lebanese Army force to patrol the border with Israel.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from Kentucky, our distinguished colleague on the International Relations Committee, Mr. CHANDLER.

Mr. CHANDLER. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. LANTOS for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I am deeply troubled by the recent violent events in the Middle East. The United States must stand with Israel and recognize their right to defend their people and country from unprovoked acts of terrorism.

As we know, innocent civilians are losing their lives right now as a result of extremist religious terrorism. Take

the heartbreaking story of Monica Seidman as an example. Forty-two-year-old Monica, a mother of two, moved to the Israeli town of Naharia from Argentina 3 years ago. Last Wednesday as she was sitting on her porch having coffee, a Hezbollah-fired rocket made a direct hit on her building, instantly killing her.

Monica was the first civilian killed in this conflict. How can this be explained to her children? How will they ever understand the meaning of this attack?

I believe the United States must call on Syria and Iran to stop all support of Hezbollah. The Israeli people do not want violence. They want peace. They want to be able to go about life without causing harm to anyone else and without fearing for their own safety. Israel's voluntary withdrawal from southern Lebanon 6 years ago is proof of their desire for peace and stability in the region.

It is my hope that Israel will be able to secure its border quickly and facilitate a safe return for its soldiers captured by Hezbollah and Hamas, and that is why I fully support this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my friend from Florida, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, the first duty of the government is to protect its citizens, and I stand by Israel's right to defend herself against Hezbollah's aggression.

This bipartisan resolution sends a powerful message that the United States Congress and the American people support our friend Israel at this critical hour. Hezbollah's capture of Israeli soldiers was unprovoked. I call on the Governments of Iran, Lebanon, and Syria, who have influence over the fate of the captured Israeli soldiers, to secure their immediate and unconditional release.

Hezbollah must be disarmed to prevent a similar conflict in the future. A simple cease-fire will not accomplish this goal.

Any nation that refuses to act against terrorist networks simply stands as a willing accomplice. The actions of Hezbollah and the complicity of Syria and Iran demonstrate that former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir was right when she said, ''Peace will come when the Arabs love their children more than they hate us.''

I strongly support this resolution and stand by Israel in her pursuit of peace and security.

As an American mother, I wish that mothers around the world, Iranian, Syrian, and mothers universally, spend the time that I have spent talking to my twin 7-year-olds and will teach my almost 3-year-old girl, when she is old enough to understand, that we are all equal. We are all equal under the eyes of God.

My 7-year-old daughter is here with me this week, and she asked me about what we are debating here tonight. She asked me, ''Mommy, why don't some people like us?'' And that question broke my heart, Madam Speaker, because the only answer I could give her was because we are Jewish and because we have different beliefs.

Please let us not have another generation of our children grow up knowing hatred. Israel and her children need the world to stand with her in support of her right to defend herself and in support of peace.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, before yielding, I want to express my appreciation to the chief of staff on the Democratic side, Dr. Bob King; Mr. Alan Makovsky; and to all other members of our staff who worked so hard on this measure.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to my friend from Pennsylvania, Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz.

(Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution and in support of our friend and ally Israel.

September 11 was a defining moment for our country. It forced Americans to confront a new reality, that terrorists could cause massive destruction on our soil, and that all of us are at risk. Israelis have been living with this reality for decades. Well-armed, well-financed, and sophisticated terrorist organizations backed by Syria and Iran surround her. They have carried out thousands of attacks on Israeli soil, and they will stop at nothing to accomplish their one common goal: the destruction of Israel.

Just as America does, Israel has a right to defend herself. Israel has a right to better security for its borders and its security and its future. A secure Israel cannot exist with Hezbollah controlling the territory directly to the north, and a secure Israel cannot exist with Hamas in control of the Palestinian Authority.

Israel is at war with terrorists, and we must stand with her. We have a moral obligation to stand on the side of democracy and freedom against terror and radicalism, and we must do so because, left unchecked, these terrorist organizations will continue to destabilize the region and will use it as a base to foster global instability and to undermine our national security.

With passage of this resolution, we will send an unequivocal message to the world that terrorist organizations, Hezbollah and Hamas, backed by Iran and Syria are responsible for this violence; that Israel has a right to defend herself; and that the United States will stand with Israel in its fight against terror.

We must also do so because this conflict is not just about Israel, but it is about America's national security. Since the 1980's, Hizballah has been behind dozens of terrorist attacks targeting western nations, including the United States. In 1983, they killed 241 American servicemen in an attack on a military barracks in Lebanon. In 1994, they killed 86 civilians in a bombing in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 1996, they killed 19 U.S. airmen at a U.S. military barracks in Saudi Arabia. Left unchecked, Hizballah and these terrorist groups will continue to destabilize the region and use it as a base to foster global instability.

By passing this resolution with strong bipartisan support, we will send an unequivocal message to the world—Hizballah and Hamas are responsible for this violence, Israel has a right to defend itself, and the United States will stand with Israel in its fight against terror. I am confident that Israel will prevail in this fight. And, it is my hope that their strong actions against terror will ultimately lead to the peace and security that so many in the region desperately seek.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2½ minutes to my good friend from North Carolina, Congressman PRICE.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I address my colleagues tonight in support of H. Res. 921, but acutely aware of some of its shortcomings.

Let me stipulate two things from the beginning. First, Hezbollah attacked Israel without provocation, and it now threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent Israelis in the range of its rockets. Such a situation is intolerable for Israel. It would be intolerable for any country. And a robust response is necessary to protect Israel's sovereignty and its citizens.

Secondly, we must fully acknowledge the human toll of this conflict on innocent civilians in Lebanon and Israel and on our own citizens caught in the crossfire. As Israel meets the imperative of self-preservation by disabling Hezbollah, it must also do all it can to obey the moral imperative of protecting the innocent, though it is an imperative we know is wholly disregarded by Hezbollah.

The Lebanese people are not the enemy of Israel, nor is the Lebanese Government, which is led by a reform coalition that is fighting against Syria domination. Our ultimate need is for a stronger, not a weaker, Lebanese Government. And Israeli strategy should take that, too, into account. The real enemy here of both Israel and Lebanon is Hezbollah.

With those stipulations the question before us is how can our Nation play a productive role in bringing a swift and just end to this conflict? The resolution offers little insight into this; so I want to use the limited time I have here to urge my colleagues to consider this critical question.

I recently returned from a mission to Beirut with the House Democracy Assistance Commission, which is working with Lebanese parliamentarians as they seek to establish an independent and effective representative body. We met with many of the reformers who won a majority of seats in the Parliament in the 2005 Cedar Revolution.

Democracy has a foothold in Lebanon, and we must find a way to empower those Lebanese leaders who seek reform and democracy in their country.

To bring about such a resolution, the United States must dramatically increase its engagement in the region. Secretary Rice should go there sooner rather than later, work with the international community toward a resolution of the conflict. I am not talking about a settlement that leaves Hezbollah intact and merely postpones the fight. We must have a resolution that guarantees Israel security, that permanently disarms Hezbollah, and supports the development of democracy in Lebanon.

□ 2220

If we are truly to support Israel, we must do far more than the resolution before us suggests.

Madam Speaker, I address my colleagues in support of H. Res. 921 but acutely aware of its shortcomings.

Nearly two years ago, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the disarmament of all armed militias in Lebanon. As Lebanon's Cedar Revolution has brought new pro-democratic forces into power, one group has defied the world's mandate: Hezbollah. Hezbollah has justified its defiance by claiming to be a legitimate resistance against Israel's occupation of a small parcel of land in Syria, adjacent to Southern Lebanon, called Sheba Farms. It has tried to straddle the fence, claiming political legitimacy by participating in democratic elections and the Lebanese government, yet refusing to disarm and adding to its arsenal of rockets and other weapons.

Hezbollah's decision to kidnap two Israeli soldiers and kill three others—without provocation—and to launch rockets deep into Israel belie its claims to legitimacy and reveal its true mission: fighting not for Lebanon, but for its own interests and those of its patrons in Iran and Syria.

No nation should be expected to tolerate a situation in which a terrorist organization bent on its destruction has free rein to ignore established borders through ground attacks or air strikes. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis are living in constant fear of deadly rocket attacks. I join with my colleagues in strongly supporting Israel's right to defend its sovereignty and its citizens.

The human toll of this conflict has also been frightful on the Lebanese side of the border. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of innocent lives have already been lost. Hundreds of homes housing innocent Lebanese citizens have been destroyed, and tens of thousands of families have been displaced. The Lebanese people, like the Israelis, are living under a dense cloud of fear and danger.

Our own citizens, too, have suffered from this violence. Over the last few days, I have received calls from tearful fathers with young daughters stuck in the hills of Lebanon with no way out; from families stuck in Beirut on vacation; from relatives with Lebanese family members killed in the conflict. We must remember the suffering of these innocent citizens, caught by chance in the storm of war.

As Israel faces the imperative of disabling Hezbollah, it must do all it can to obey the moral imperative of protecting the innocent, though it is an imperative we know is wholly disregarded by Hezbollah. The enemy here is not the Lebanese people. And the enemy is not the Lebanese government, which is led by a reform coalition that continues to fight against Syrian domination. The real enemy here is Hezbollah.

Our ultimate need is for a stronger, not weaker, Lebanese government. What sense does it make, for example, to demand more vigorous action against terrorists by the Lebanese Army, and then proceed to destroy that Army's barracks?

Our country's role must be to work for an end to this conflict that is both swift and just. Let us harbor no illusions: a cease fire that allows Hezbollah to remain intact and merely postpones this fight until another day is not an acceptable option. We must require Hezbollah to disarm permanently and guarantee that Hezbollah will no longer threaten Israel or Lebanon. That will likely require the establishment of an international peacekeeping presence.

We must also work for a resolution that preserves the promise of the Cedar Revolution and empowers those Lebanese leaders who seek reform and democracy in their country. I recently returned from a mission to Beirut with the House Democracy Assistance Commission, which is working with Lebanese Parliamentarians as they seek to establish an independent and effective representative body. Our Commission met with many of the reformers who, in a stunning victory, won a majority of seats in the Parliament in the 2005 Cedar Revolution. While key positions in the government, including the Presidency, are still controlled by those who would do the bidding of Syria, democracy has a foothold in Lebanon—the most significant foothold for democracy in the entire Middle East, outside of Israel. We must not allow the current conflict to destroy that foothold.

To bring about such a resolution, the United States must dramatically increase its engagement in the region. As the conflict has unfolded, we have watched the international community react with promising diplomacy. The United Nations, our allies in Europe, and key actors in the region—Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia—have come forward with mediators, cease fire proposals, and calls for international peacekeepers. Even the Arab League, too often silent in the face of past attacks against Israel, is working to convene an emergency summit to deal with the crisis. But where has our own Administration been? As one commentator recently wrote, "the world's sole superpower is also its only no-show."

With so much at stake for our national security interests in the region, the Bush Administration's lack of engagement is troubling. But it is not surprising. This Administration has taken a hands-off approach to the area, at great cost to the prospects for peace. It has allowed the Road Map for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to wither on the vine. It has failed to sufficiently support the moderate Palestinian leader Abu Mazen, watching as Hamas capitalized on his political struggles. And, after trumpeting the gains of the Cedar Revolution, it has done too little to actually support the fledgling reform movement in Lebanon. With the Administration's gaze still fixed on Baghdad, the tensions that have led to the current conflict mounted unchecked.

Madam Speaker, the current crisis demands decisive leadership. Secretary Rice should go to the region sooner rather than later, working with the international community toward a resolution to the conflict that guarantees Israel's security, permanently disarms Hezbollah, and supports the development of democracy in Lebanon. If we are to truly support Israel, we must do far more than the resolution before us suggests.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, the recent unprovoked attacks on Israel are particularly notable because of the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005. Israel, as it has so often been urged to do, gave up land for the hope of peace. Yet what happened? From the day Israel withdrew, Hamas fired rockets at Israeli cities and villages every single day, followed more recently by Hezbollah rockets.

Can you imagine what the United States would do if terrorists rained down thousands of rockets on American cities from Canada? We would tell the Canadian government to stop it immediately. And if the reply was we don't want to stop it, as with Hamas, or we can't stop it, as the government of Lebanon says it cannot stop Hezbollah, we would not hesitate to bomb whatever targets were necessary and to invade whatever territory was necessary to stop the bombardment, and we would not cease until we had destroyed or disarmed the terrorists.

Similarly, we must not demand a cease-fire that leaves the Hezbollah or Hamas weapons and infrastructure intact.

This recent violence, this war, is the penalty we pay for looking away and urging restraint on Israel as Hamas and Hezbollah flouted peace agreements and built up terrorist infrastructures and arsenals of thousands of rockets as they openly proclaimed their intentions to destroy Israel and murder her people.

The Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, a Hamas leader, wrote in the Washington Post just last week that what matters are not the issues of 1967, but the issues of 1948, that is, the very existence of Israel. But the existence of Israel is not negotiable. But many seem not to have learned the lessons.

The European Union criticized Israel's response as disproportionate. What would the EU do if European cities were attacked as Safed, Haifa and Nazareth have been? How is Israel's response against strategic Hezbollah targets disproportionate to Hezbollah's intentional attacks against Israeli civilians? And since when do we demand that responses to naked aggression and intended genocide be proportionate? It was Colin Powell who said that military responses must be of "overwhelming force."

The violence can end only if Hamas and Hezbollah are disarmed. Otherwise,

Israel will have to defend itself against future terrorist attacks, and innocent Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese civilians will continue to die.

There is a role for diplomacy in the Middle East, but only when Hezbollah and Hamas are forced to stand down and Hezbollah forces are moved away from the Israeli border.

I extend my sympathy to the families of the victims of the attacks in Israel and in Lebanon, and I pray for the safe return of those captured. But I know that because the United Nations and the international community have failed to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure by diplomacy, Israel must be permitted to dismantle that infrastructure by force of arms if the killing is not to go on indefinitely. We must not stop her from doing so.

I strongly support the resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from California.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. Almost 1 year ago, in August, I stood on the border of Gaza. I watched a gate descend. I watched the last Israeli leave Gaza. Israel said to the Palestinians, we will take a risk for peace. Build something here. Provide security. We want peace.

And what did they do with that? What did the Palestinians do with that offer? They fired Kassam missiles on Israeli civilians. They elected a terrorist regime sworn to the liquidation of Israel. They dug a tunnel. They snuck through the tunnel, they showed up on Israeli soil, they kidnapped a 19-year-old soldier and snuck him back. Israel took a risk for peace, and this is how it was rewarded.

Israel took the same risk in Lebanon. They left Lebanon. They said provide security here. We will take a risk for peace, and let's have it together. What happened with that offer? Hezbollah was allowed to dominate southern Lebanon. And just last week, Hezbollah terrorists infiltrated a border, snuck across an undisputed border, murdered some Israelis, kidnapped others, murdered some more, and snuck back across.

Every time Israel has taken a risk for peace, that risk has been answered with violence, and that is not acceptable.

What would we have done? It is exactly what we did do on 9/11. When terrorists infiltrated our borders, we responded robustly to protect innocent civilians.

Israel has the right to do the same. There can be no double standard. There can be no moral relativism. This resolution simply says that Israel has taken risks for peace. Those risks ought to be answered with reciprocation, and not missiles; with good faith, security, and not kidnappings. Israel has done what we have done, and this resolution reaffirms that.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and of Israel's right to defend itself from terrorist attacks.

The world community has a responsibility to support Israel during these difficult times. Israel has complied with international demands by withdrawing from both the Gaza Strip and from Lebanon. Unfortunately, it seems like the governments in both of these areas are not interested in peace.

Lebanon in particular has failed to abide by UN Security Council Resolution 1559, which requires the disarmament of Hezbollah and other militias and the deployment of the Lebanese army along its southern border. Israel has simply requested that Lebanon comply with this resolution and that Hezbollah end its attacks and return of its kidnapped soldiers.

There has been little effort on the part of the Lebanese or Hezbollah to actually meet any of these requests however, and that is why it is critical that the United States and the world community stand behind Israel and condemn the actions of Hezbollah, the Lebanese government and Hamas.

As we condemn these acts we must recognize the connection between Hezbollah and its international backers, Iran and Syria. It is clear that both of these nations are aiding Hezbollah with funding, munitions and even direct military advice, which is why Israel felt compelled to impose the blockade on Lebanon.

We must ratchet up the pressure on Syria and Iran to give up their support for organized terrorist groups like Hezbollah. That is why I joined many of my other colleagues in calling on President Bush to fully implement all of the sanctions available under the Syria Accountability Act, which we passed during the last Congress. Syria is continuing its support for terrorism, and we must demonstrate the consequence of such actions.

Madam Speaker, as Israel continues to defend itself, we should stand in support of her by putting greater pressure on nations who support terrorist attacks against her. We should do nothing less and expect nothing less of our allies if we were in such a situation.

I urge my colleagues to pass this important resolution, and I urge the Bush administration to do more to hold accountable those countries who support terrorism against Israel.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to our distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. HYDE, the chairperson, and I thank my friend Mr. LANTOS, the ranking member.

Madam Speaker, I want peace for both Palestinians and Israelis. I want justice for both Palestinians and Israelis. And I support House Resolution 921 condemning the recent attacks on Israel and supporting Israel's right to defend herself.

Madam Speaker, Hezbollah has killed more Americans than any other terrorist group, save al Qaeda: 257 Americans killed in the 1983 bombings of the U.S. embassy and barracks in Beirut; 19 Americans killed in the 1996 bombings of the Khobar Towers.

Hezbollah has more than 13,000 rockets capable of hitting Israeli cities and towns and killing innocent persons. Does anybody think that these rockets will just go away? Hezbollah wasn't getting weaker. Hezbollah was getting stronger.

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Israel must defend herself or there will be no Israel to defend.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS).

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to support this resolution, and indeed in saying that I wish this resolution did not have to be. For surely I am also convinced that the people of Israel and many of the people in Lebanon and in the Palestinian Territories wish it had not to be, but it does.

Why does it? Because you cannot have peace if you are negotiating with yourself. If individuals will not even acknowledge the right for the State of Israel to exist, how can you have peace? And if you are put in that position, then you have no choice but to defend yourself.

The thing that we must not think that Israel is doing in having to defend itself and using the force that it has to use is they are doing it with glee. That is not what they want to do at all. They wish that there was peace. But when people do not acknowledge your right to exist, and there are 14,000 rockets aimed at you, I just ask you the question, I think of myself. Suppose you are in your home and you have got people that are outside, and they are pointing weapons at you and your family. What would you do? Would you just say, let them continue to point them and shoot them until there is damage to you or your family?

What we are talking about here is simply a matter of defense. And indeed, we would dream of having the day where we do not have to have these resolutions on the floor, dream of the day when there is no innocent people on any side of the lines in the Middle East who are dead or would be killed or anything of that nature, dream of having peace.

The only way to have it, though, is to have partners, to have somebody that is going to stand and say, we will fight, along with Israel, to make sure that all of its people are safe. We need to have the day when, in fact, we know that the terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, who is holding hostage an entire region for their bad reasons, are wiped out.

And if they will not go away, then Israel must defend itself.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I do thank Mr. LANTOS and his good leadership and his history. It is reflected in what I think is both a potent, important and very directed resolution. It draws upon all of the voices that we have heard this evening.

Might I acknowledge Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN for her patience and leadership, along with Chairman HYDE as well as and the leadership of this House.

This weekend I will go home and meet with members of the Jewish community, and as well meet with members of the Muslim and Arab community. I believe it is important for Members to be forthright, and in doing so, it is to understand that we stand here promoting peace, and to say to the Palestinians, those of good faith, and President Abbas, we will stand with you to rid yourself of those who believe that their basic existence is for the nonexistence of Israel.

And to Lebanon, we will stand with you, so that you will have the courage, the fortitude and the leadership to free your nation, for it to be the shining pearl, the financial site of the Middle East of which it has the potential to be.

I want to offer to those who have lost their lives, their families, my deepest sympathy. To the innocent civilians in the Gaza strip, in Palestinian, in Lebanon, in Israel, all who have lost their lives, we offer the deepest sympathy.

But, Madam Speaker, let me simply say, Israel fully complied with Resolution 425 in 1978, and wants us to know that they have removed themselves from Lebanon, and Secretary Kofi Annan said Israel has withdrawn, in full compliance with the Security Council resolution, as well it has withdrawn from the Gaza Strip.

And so today I am interested in a cease-fire. I am interested in engagement. But I am also interested in making sure that we have permanent peace in the region, that we do not allow those who would perpetrate terror against innocent individuals to be able to survive and to continue their violence.

I would ask Syria and Iran to be forthright with the world and to give away their continued intrusion into Lebanon and fueling the fires of those that would perpetrate terror in the region. I also ask that our refugees, if you will, Americans who are stuck in Lebanon, be fully brought home safely and quickly.

So as I close, Madam Speaker, might I just say this evening that I will be voting for this resolution, but I will be continuing to press for engagement. I will continue to press for resolution. And I will continue to ask that the Arab States become engaged, and that Syria and Iran stand down, and that there is peace, and that the existence of Israel is reaffirmed, and our Arab neighbors live freely and peacefully for all the world to see.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 921, condemning the recent violence in the Middle East. I remain dismayed at the fact that, once again, violence is poisoning and engulfing the Middle East.

This resolution condemns the recent attacks against Israel, holds terrorists and their state-sponsors accountable for such attacks, and supports Israel's right to defend itself.

This resolution is a very strong statement. While we must acknowledge the culpability of the perpetrators of violence, we must always stand for a solution that engages all parties.

The conflict is between those who wish to end the violence and those who do not. All involved have created a sense of victimization, and turned away from the most important goal: protecting their people, abating violence, and stabilizing the region.

With this bill, we denounce terrorist acts, and we recognize the right of all sovereign nations—including Israel—to exist, and to defend itself. In addition, if Hamas is going to lead the Palestinian Authority to participate in the international community, it must accept Israel's right to exist and eliminate its violence against Israel.

This past January, I visited Israel prior to the Palestinian elections, and visited with the emerging leadership of Kadima on the eve of a new era of Israeli diplomacy and security policy. I have traveled extensively in the region, and I have witnessed first-hand the promise of the Holy Land, as well as the devastation of long-term strife. Although Prime Minister Olmert has only held this position of leadership for a few short months, he has led his nation with strength and clarity.

We acknowledge Israel as a democratic and strategic ally, and we look to Israel for regional leadership. No cause should ever warrant aggressive terrorist acts against others who have not sought to initiate any acts against the offending party. It is an absolute necessity that kidnapped soldiers be returned, that soldiers stolen from their own country, from their own land, must be returned to their homeland. Israel was not the aggressor.

Hezbollah has committed acts of war, and Israel responded in kind. Hezbollah has yet again demonstrated its easy familiarity with terrorist tactics, and tensions continue to rise. Over the last several weeks, we have seen the situation crumble. Accusations of blame and responsibility fly like shrapnel.

Last week, the Lebanese government briefly called for a ceasefire after Israel blockaded the country by air and sea in an effort to distance itself from the Hezbollah faction. In a statement, the Lebanese government said that all means must be used to end this "open aggression."

When both aggressors are acting in defense, the only result is destruction.

We must immediately engage Israel, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, and any other stakeholder willing to take action to protect the people and cease this swift escalation. We must engage them in multi-party negotiations, and the United States must send a high-level delegation to meet with the leaders in the region. The desecration of life and the disrespect of boundaries in the last few weeks are offensive, yet must be surmounted, and the violence must end. The U.N. Resolution 1559 must be complied with by Lebanon—to fully disband and disarm Hezbollah.

I commend Israel for its willingness to unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza. I remain hopeful that the Palestinian Authority will soon be able to assert itself and secure the Gaza Strip for its citizens, and stop the invasion into Israeli territory.

I wish to relay to the Lebanon Government that America is their friend, we support their independence, and we need them to assert their independence and sovereign authority. Because of their independence, Lebanon is well positioned to be an integral part of long term negotiations and an eventual settlement to this terrible crises.

I urge decision-makers in Israel, Lebanon, and the PLO to observe a ceasefire, and that the terrorist be brought to justice.

I also urge neighboring nations, such as Syria, to stop harboring terrorists and to participate honestly in negotiations, to pursue a mutually beneficial resolution without violence, and to respect the sovereign Lebanon.

Violence is not the only thing to fear. We must do everything within our power to prevent further escalation. We must silence the rumbling of bombs and the screaming of missiles and restore at least the semblance of peace.

We must condemn the poor response that the Administration has exhibited in rescuing Americans. It is not befitting of the most powerful nation, and we must expedite the rescuing of American citizens. The President must also take to the airwaves to speak to Muslims and Arabs to assure them that America remains their friend, and the friend of all freedom-loving peaceful citizens of those nations. We do not condemn all because of the missteps of some individuals or governments in the region.

It is increasingly important that we immediately begin negotiations to resolve this aggression on the northern and southern border, observe ceasefire, and the United States must act urgently yet fairly, and remain steadfast to bringing peace to the region.

We must do everything we can to assuage the fear and devastation of the last two generations, and take decisive action to ensure that today's children, and their children's children, can live in peace and safety at last.

This past Saturday, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and several Persian Gulf states, chastised Hezbollah for "unexpected, inappropriate, and irresponsible acts" at an emergency Arab League summit meeting in Cairo. At last, perhaps we will see the larger international community—including the Arab League—denounce terrorism and terrorist tactics and commit to securing first calm, then peace, for the region and for the rest of the world.

The Middle East is at a crossroads, and Israel needs a partner for peace. The new governments of Israel and the Palestinian Authority must overcome the burden of history and begin writing the textbooks anew. Palestinian and Israeli children should begin to learn that their neighbors are good, peace-loving people, and that the region is capable of coexistence and friendship.

I hope that soon all people in the Middle East, Jewish or Muslim, Israeli or Arab, can

look to God with thankful, not pleading eyes. May the words of our tradition inspire our decisions, as it says in Proverbs 34:14: ''Seek peace, and pursue it.''

Before we can have peace, let us pray for calm.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my good friend from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I thank our leader Mr. LANTOS for his leadership on this issue, and so many others in this Congress. I rise, as did Ms. JACKSON-LEE and others, in support of the resolution.

I would like to cite an article by Charles Krauthammer, who gives some history that I think is useful as this debate draws nearer to a close, from the Washington Post this last Friday.

I quote. ''Israel withdrew from Lebanon completely in 2000. It was so scrupulous in making sure that not 1 square inch of Lebanon was left inadvertently occupied that it asked the United Nations to verify the exact frontier defining Lebanon's southern border and retreated behind it. This 'blue line' was approved by the Security Council, which declared that Israel had fully complied with resolutions demanding its withdrawal from Lebanon.

''Grievance satisfied. Yet what happens?'' Krauthammer writes, ''Hezbollah has done to South Lebanon exactly what Hamas has done to Gaza, turned it into a military base and terrorist operations center from which to continue the war against Israel.

''South Lebanon bristles with Hezbollah's 10,000 Katyusha rockets that put northern Israel under the gun. Fired in the first hours of fighting, just 85 of these killed 2 Israelis and wounded 120 in Israel's northern towns.''

Mr. Speaker, we should stand with Israel, we should vote for the resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I just want to thank you for your patience. I want to thank my dear friend from Florida for her extraordinary graciousness. And I want to thank all of my Republican and Democratic colleagues for a serious and substantive debate. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of our time.

Madam Speaker, I also would like to thank the gentleman from California, our ranking member of the International Relations Committee, for handling this debate in such a skillful manner. We want to thank our majority leader Mr. BOEHNER, who was one of the authors of this resolution; and, of course, our esteemed chairman of the International Relations Committee, Mr. HYDE.

I would like to thank all of the Members who participated in this debate, in this very civil debate on a very important topic.

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution. As we speak, the security situation in the Middle East continues to evolve.

The aggressive, unprovoked acts of violence against Israel by Hezbollah and Hamas are revealing. It is clear they don't want peace, but rather seek the ultimate destruction of Israel. This is why we must support Israel's right to defend itself against these armed attacks.

Each and every day, Israel's very existence is at stake. Since its first day as a nation, Israel has lived under a cloud of aggression from militant extremists and hostile neighboring governments. Most recently, terrorist forces have captured Israeli soldiers and fired rockets into Israeli cities—both unprovoked. These acts of aggression deserve the rapid and decisive response they received.

The United States and Israel have a unique relationship based on our mutual commitment to democracy, freedom, and peace. Therefore, just as our commitment to these principles must be steadfast, so must our support for Israel.

The enemies the United States and Israel face are the same. Their nature is brutal, oppressive, and inspired by hatred. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East has real security implications, not only for Israel, but also for the United States. The same ideologically malevolent forces working to destroy Israel are working to destroy our cherished political values.

The United States did not choose to fight Islamic extremists. These terrorists chose to fight our way of life. They chose to challenge our existence.

We as a Nation have endured heartbreak, tragedy, and occasional setbacks, but we are resolute in taking the fight to the enemy and winning. We cannot afford to lose. The stakes are too high; the price too great. And because we face the same enemy, we will not ask Israel to respond differently. The consequences of not responding are too great.

This resolution simply says Israel has the right to defend itself. This includes conducting operations both inside its borders and in the territory of nations that threaten it, which is in accordance with international law.

Furthermore, it is incumbent upon Lebanon, Syria, and Iran to rein in Hezbollah and Hamas. We know Iran and Syria are helping Hamas and Hezbollah. That is why this resolution reaffirms our support for President Bush as he seeks to use the most effective range of political, diplomatic, and economic sanctions available.

We are clear in our purpose and our resolve. We are committed to peace, democracy, freedom, and prosperity. We will work with those who want these values, and we will use all means at our disposal to stop those who seek to destroy them.

I urge my colleagues to join me in sending a strong message of support to Israel, and I urge all to support this resolution.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 921.

Let us be very clear from the outset of this debate: the current conflict was caused by the violent attacks of two terrorist organizations on Israel, in Israel. Israel has the sovereign right and responsibility to protect and defend itself from these terrorists.

The roots of this problem must be addressed if there is to be any true cessation of violence. Iran and Syria must cease their financial and military support of terrorist organizations. Hezbollah must be disarmed and no longer be allowed to operate. U.N. Resolution 1559 must be fully implemented. The government of Lebanon must be allowed to govern the whole of its territories. President Abbas must guarantee peace, exercise full control over the Palestinian-controlled territory and the Hamas terrorist attacks originating in Palestinian-controlled territory must be permanently stopped. This latest violence only confirms what we have known since 9/11: the forces of extremism and terrorism must no longer be allowed to terrorize peoples and countries who desire to live in peace and freedom.

The approach taken by President Bush has been appropriate. Without an end to terrorist operations by Hamas, Hezbollah, and other enemies of Israel, there will be no hope for peace.

The United States should not negotiate with terrorists and neither should Israel. Despite the recent set-backs, however, we should continue to try to promote peace in the Middle East because it is vitally important to the safety and security of America. We must continue to encourage peace, but all parties must be willing to truly accept Israel's existence and come to the table if peace is to have a chance. Unfortunately, without an end to terrorist operations against Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah, there is no hope for a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, the United States has a long history of supporting the state of Israel and the strong example of democratic values it has brought to the Middle East. The recent events that have enveloped the region will not waiver the resolve of our relationship.

Israel has found itself strained on two fronts. It is battling both Hamas and Hezbollah, backed by Iran and Syria, nations known to sponsor terrorism and dedicated to the destruction of Israel. While the ferocity of Israel's response to the kidnapping of its soldiers by these terrorist groups may be in question, Israel has only acted to defend its way of life and the intrinsic right for a nation to defend its very existence.

Easing tensions in the region will require that neighboring nations take an active role to stabilize the conflict. Egypt and Lebanon must have the fortitude to take a leadership role to pursue regional stabilization. They must grasp this opportunity to demand that immediate steps are taken to resolve the conflict and work to bring peace to the region.

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution.

For generations Hamas and Hezbollah, which are committed to the total destruction of Israel, have indiscriminately targeted Israeli civilian populations and military forces. In recent days, these terrorists organizations have kidnapped Israeli soldiers and singled out Israeli citizens for arbitrary relentless rocket fire.

Hamas and Hezbollah, as dangerous and destructive as their actions are in the current conflict, are mere puppets. Hamas and Hezbollah are supported by Iran and Syria. With their financial and military support—including providing the missiles that today are raining down on Israeli towns—the Iranian and Syrian governments are co-conspirators in the ongoing terrorist attacks against Israel.

The world community of nations must hold Iran and Syria accountable for their actions.

Their active support of terrorist nations not only threatens Israel but also all nations in the Middle East and those throughout the world who are waging the ongoing global war on terror.

In the face of these terrorist attacks, we must resolve that Israel has the absolute right to defend itself—just as the United States did following September 11, 2001.

The time has now come for Congress to reaffirm our commitment to Israel and the Israeli people, their absolute right to existence and their absolute right to defend themselves.

Israel is one of the United States' strongest allies. In the last 50 years, our two nations have forged strong economic, military and educational connections. Our bonds have never been more important than today in our shared fight against terrorism.

Today, let us stand in firm resolve against terrorism and with Israel.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 921 and specifically in support of Israel's right to defend itself against the murderous actions of Hamas and Hezbollah.

The terrorist attacks on Israel and India and the recent July 4th, 2006 ballistic missile launch by North Korea are stern reminders that the United States and world must remain vigilant against radical extremism. It is not enough that America and her allies guard against weapons of mass destruction, but we must also remain prepared to deal with acts of human destruction. Terrorist acts on any sovereign state can not and must not be tolerated.

I am pleased that the House of Representatives and our President has remained firm in support of the people of Israel. While I am hopeful that a stable peace in the Middle East will be established, no arbitrary time limit should be placed on Israel's actions to defend itself. Neither should a time line be imposed on bringing to justice those who commit unjust acts.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 921 and in strong support of our oldest ally in the Middle East, the State of Israel.

Today the Middle East is a region filled with contradictions. It is a place where progress and regress have both taken root and are thriving. Iraq is no longer ruled over by a tyrant named Saddam Hussein, who terrorized people inside and outside his country with unimaginable brutality. Today, a democratically elected government has been empowered by the Iraqi people to improve security, build infrastructure, and move forward. Admittedly, there is still turmoil in Iraq; but the progress there is undeniable.

In the countries that border Iraq to the east and northwest, one encounters a far different Middle East. It is in these two countries—Iran and Syria—where international terrorism has found all too willing hosts and official state sponsorship. And it is this state sponsorship of terrorism, fueled by the desire of the Tehran and Damascus regimes to project influence across a broader region in order to stifle democracy and freedom, which has led us to the current crisis in Lebanon and Israel.

This is not the first time that Israel has been forced to engage in military operations in Lebanon to secure its northern border and protect its citizens. As many of my colleagues will recall, Lebanon could not control its border with Israel in 1978, and after numerous terrorist attacks against Israel were launched from southern Lebanon, the Israeli Defense Forces intervened. The Israeli Defense Forces withdrew in June 1978, but were forced to return four years later due to further attacks from Lebanese territory. In 1985, Israel withdrew its forces from all of Lebanon, save for a security perimeter on their common border. In 2000, Israel withdrew its remaining forces from the security zone. Immediately thereafter, Hezbollah militia members moved into the former security zone, and claimed credit for the Israeli withdrawal.

Beginning in 2005, the Lebanese people have made significant progress in their mission to push their Syrian occupiers out of their country. In the midst of Lebanon's movement towards true freedom and independence from Syria, Hezbollah terrorists crossed the border into Israel, then killed eight Israelis and took two Israeli soldiers as hostages. This was likely done in coordination with Hamas terrorists in Gaza.

That was July 12, 2006; just one week ago, Madam Speaker. Since then, Israel initiated military operations to prevent further attacks and once again secure its border with Lebanon. Hezbollah's response has consisted of daily rocket attacks that have hit Haifa, Israel's third largest city. It is estimated that Hezbollah has an arsenal of at least 12,000 rockets some of which are Iranian weapons, and many of which have reached Lebanon via Syria.

The United States Department of State has designated Hezbollah as a foreign terrorist organization, and its main sponsors are Syria and Iran, both of which are state sponsors of terrorism. The Lebanese government may protest Israel's current military actions, but these actions are essential to Israel's national security, and essential to Lebanon's prospects for true sovereignty. Former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri spoke out against Syrian domination of Lebanon and was assassinated on orders from the highest levels of the Damascus government. Unless we allow Israel to destroy the terrorist network and infrastructure in Lebanon, and drive its agents back into Syria and Iran, neither the Lebanese people or Israeli people will have the opportunity to live in peace.

The Government of Lebanon cannot secure its own border, and has not prevented the terrorist organizations—sponsored by foreign agents—from using its soil to launch attacks into Israel. Israel has a right to her own national defense, and is exercising that right in striking terrorist targets inside Lebanon. On the other hand, Hezbollah is reigning down rockets on civilian targets in Haifa, Galilee, and Nazareth.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has laid out specific criteria for peace: the return of the abducted Israeli soldiers; cessation of the rocket attacks and other raids on Israel; expulsion of Hezbollah from southern Lebanon and the deployment of the Lebanese Army to that region, and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanese territory. Short of these criteria being fulfilled, Israel must take it upon herself to unilaterally provide security for her territory and people.

Madam Speaker, Israel is the oldest democracy in a region not known for liberty, and is our oldest ally in a region with many agents that are hostile to America and our interests. We must strongly support our old friend in this time of crisis. We also must condemn Hamas, Hezbollah, and their Iranian and Syrian sponsors in the strongest terms possible for their terrorist attacks on innocent Israelis. As we know all too well, we must hunt down and eradicate terrorists wherever they find sanctuary and assistance, and Israel is doing just that; Israel is taking the fight to the terrorists.

Madam Speaker, this situation proves that Syria and Iran are dangerous agents acting on behalf of and in concert with fundamentalists, extremists, and terrorists. Hezbollah and Hamas have absolutely no remorse for the damage they are inflicting on the Israeli people or the Lebanese people, and the clerics in Tehran and tyrants in Damascus are encouraging continued carnage.

In response, this Congress—as representatives of the American people—must set an example and stand on the side of freedom, democracy, and sovereignty in the face of this challenge. It is the latest confrontation in the Global War on Terror, and it is a battle that we as Americans cannot afford for Israel to lose. I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, it is a tragedy that we have come to this point today, watching the spiral of hostilities between Israel and its neighbors.

Although Israel withdrew completely from Lebanon in 2000, and the U.N. Security Council certified the withdrawal to internationally recognized borders, Hezbollah still refuses to accept peace.

Although Israel has removed all its settlers from Gaza and has been working with President Abbas to negotiate additional concessions, Hamas is still unwilling to lay down its weapons, accept Israel's legitimate existence, and come to the table to negotiate the creation of a peaceful Palestinian state.

When Hamas and Hezbollah leaders were elected to be part of the emerging democratic governments, some hoped they would focus on leading the Palestinian and Lebanese people to fulfill their aspirations of a stable and prosperous future.

Instead, the terrorists have pursued only their own aspirations of regional instability and the destruction of Israel.

Kidnapping soldiers does nothing to promote the welfare of the Lebanese and Palestinian people. Missile attacks don't develop the economy or expand freedom of movement or provide access to health care and education.

Terrorism has only brought suffering to the people of Gaza and Lebanon, and these attacks serve no one but the terrorists and their state sponsors.

We must recognize the role of Syria and Iran in this conflict, and the threat they pose to Israel, the United States, and the entire Middle East.

Though it has been unwilling or unable to do so, the world must insist that the Lebanese government take control of its borders and disarm the terrorists within them as required by the Road Map and the U.N. Security Council.

Israel has made every effort to avoid civilian casualties, and those that have occurred are tragic. But Israel's best efforts to spare civilians stand in sharp contrast to the terrorists' deliberate efforts to target Israeli civilians as they drink their morning coffee or head off to school and work.

Acts like these leave Israel no choice but to break down the terrorists' capacity to carry them out. Israel has targeted stockpiles of missiles procured from Syria and Iran and blocked the routes through which the terrorists would rearm. It is ramas and Hezbollah who have cruelly decided to place these stockpiles among civilians, again putting the political and strategic needs of terror above those of the people they claim to represent.

Israel is not the source of instability and danger. Israel withdrew from Lebanon and Gaza in pursuit of peace. The terrorist regimes in the region have pursued other ends. Israel has every right as a sovereign nation to defend its cities from unprovoked cross-border attacks and to seek the safe, swift, and unconditional return of its soldiers.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I am voting for this resolution because I absolutely condemn Hezbollah's senseless, unprovoked cross-border attacks on Israel, and the murderous rain of missiles it has unleashed on Haifa and other northern cities. Terrorist groups like Hezbollah, whose actions have caused the death and misery of hundreds of innocent Israelis and Lebanese, deserve no sympathy and no mercy. Hezbollah needs to be disarmed, for the sake of Israel's security and, indeed, for the stability of the entire region.

And I also join my colleagues in condemning the actions of Syria and Iran for their support and arming of Hezbollah. We see the true nature of these regimes when we see the tragic results of their support of terrorist groups like Hezbollah.

But I would have hoped for a different resolution to come before the House. I would have hoped for a more comprehensive resolution that respects the complexity of the issues unfolding in the area, and the necessity for direct U.S. involvement in the unfolding tragedy.

A more appropriate resolution would recognize the fundamental difference between Hamas and Hezbollah. Of course, Hamas should be condemned for its actions and the kidnapped Israeli soldier must be returned unharmed. But Gaza and Southern Lebanon are two separate situations and this resolution confuses that.

The Palestinian people have legitimate grievances and a solution to these grievances can and must be found through negotiations. Hamas exploits those grievances, but we must not allow Hamas's actions to delegitimize the aspirations of the Palestinian people. Hamas's actions do not negate the reality that we simply must resolve the humanitarian crisis now engulfing Gaza and the West Bank.

I believe Israel's security depends on forging a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians that will ensure the safety and security of both peoples. And while I respect Israel's right to defend itself, I am deeply concerned that Israel's response to Hamas' actions is only prolonging the suffering of the Palestinian people and putting off resolution of this decades long problem.

Conversely, Hezbollah has no legitimate grievances with Israel.

Hezbollah seeks nothing more than the destruction of Israel and there is no negotiating with it. Only through Hezbollah's complete disarmament will we be able to remove its threat to the region.

I am also troubled by the unqualified praise in this resolution for the President and his Administration. The President has done little to stop the meltdown of the Middle East that has occurred under his watch. Unlike previous Administrations, including that of his father and President Clinton, he simply hasn't been engaged. And his response here is tragically inadequate, again.

The U.S. must engage immediately to bring about a cease fire and help drive a long term solution for the area. Every major Arab-Israeli crisis over the years has ended with U.S. involvement—at the highest levels—because the players rely on intermediaries to broker agreements.

We may not like it, but that's the reality of the situation. And given that the stability of the region plays so large a role in our own national security interests, we must continue to engage forcefully if we are committed to bringing about peace in the region. Waiting another week before dispatching the Secretary of State is not a viable response.

Finally, I would note that every day this crisis continues brings a greater risk of direct involvement by Syria and Iran. As bad as this situation is now, direct involvement from either Syria or Iran would be much, much worse. Immediate, hands-on U.S. involvement is critical to keep the situation from spiraling even further out of control.

Madam Speaker, the situation in the Middle East grows graver every day. Dozens of Israelis and hundreds of innocent Palestinians and Lebanese civilians have already died. Beruit, which has only recently been restored to its historic splendor, is in ruins. A key ally in the area is threatened and our national security interests are as well.

I urge the Administration to help bring peace to the region.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 921, condemning recent terrorist attacks against the state of Israel.

Israel has the absolute right to defend itself against terrorist attacks. The United States stands in solidarity with Israel at this critical moment. I condemn the premeditated kidnapping and killing of Israel soldiers by Hezbollah and Hamas, which are both U.S. designated terrorist organizations. Israel has a right to launch operations to try to free its kidnapped soldiers that are being held hostage. Israel also has a right to defend itself and try to prevent ongoing rocket attacks by Hezbollah, which are being launched from Lebanese territory and which land in Israeli territory.

I also condemn the use of civilian populations as human shields by Hamas and Hezbollah, which only increase the suffering of innocent persons in this conflict. Israel, on the other hand, is taking significant steps to minimize and prevent additional civilian casualties in both Israel and Lebanon.

Even though Israel unilaterally withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, the Lebanese Government has permitted Hezbollah to operate at its border and to repeatedly launch attacks against Israel. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, passed in 2004, calls for all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon, directs that all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias should be disbanded and disarmed, and urges the Government of Lebanon to exercise control over all its territory. We need to fully implement this United Nations resolution.

Both Syria and Iran have continued to provide funds and weapons to the Hezbollah terrorists, which have resulted in numerous Israeli civilian casualties. All parties in the region must take immediate steps to prevent the operation of terrorist activities on their soil and to abide by previous peace agreements. The President should use his authority under the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 to impose additional sanctions on Iran.

I also call on the Bush Administration to take a more aggressive diplomatic role in the conflict in the Middle East, including the appointment of a high-level U.S. envoy to the Middle East as soon as possible. The Bush Administration should also put pressure on all parties in the region to stop terrorist attacks and prevent the flow of money and weapons to terrorist organizations.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and stand in solidarity with Israel at this critical moment.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, Palestinian militants in Gaza kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and later, Hezbollah agents crossed the border, killed seven Israeli soldiers, captured two others, and continue to hold them captive. Hamas, and Hezbollah, specifically, have long relied on Syrian and Iranian support and funding. Now, Iranian and Syrian made and purchased Katyusha rockets rain down on Israel from Lebanon in the north and Qassam rockets are launched from over the border from Gaza in the south. Despite having withdrawn from Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza last summer, Israel is under attack.

I stand by Israel during these troubled times and I strongly support H. Res. 921, to be voted on today, which pledges our solidarity with this nation under fire; I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

After the terrible attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush declared that we are engaged in a War on Terror and countries across the globe stood up in support of and behind the United States. Now we are called upon to stand with Israel during her time of need as she defends her borders and her citizens from unprovoked kidnappings and attacks.

Madam Speaker, the international community, led by the United States, must ensure the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, which passed unanimously in 2004, and calls for disarming Hezbollah, removing all foreign forces from Lebanon and deploying the Lebanese army to secure the border with Israel. What we are seeing today in the region is the consequence of the Lebanese government allowing Hezbollah to join its parliament and cabinet while the international community did little to exert pressure to force them out.

Israel, the Jewish state, is defending its citizens, much as this nation would if we were under attack. Any innocent civilian deaths—Israeli, Palestinian, Lebanese, or other—are awful and should be minimized in every possible way. But responsibility lies with Hezbollah and Hamas who brought Israel's retaliation upon not just themselves but the communities they live in by launching unprovoked attacks, and by purposefully planting themselves in civilian population centers where innocent men, women, and children are used as swords and shields.

We must continue to stand behind Israel and to show her our solidarity against those that continue to do her harm. Additionally, the international community, led by the United

States, should now ensure that Hezbollah is finally disarmed, that Iranian influence is forced out of the region, and that Hamas recognizes Israel so that we may finally put an end to the cycle of violence.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I have grave concerns about what the future holds for the Middle East. The violence in Israel and Lebanon, which began with Hezbollah rocket attacks on an Israeli town and a military incursion into Israel and abduction of Israeli soldiers, threatens to engulf the entire region. Unless swift action is taken by the international community, further escalation and bloodshed will soon be upon us.

As we consider this resolution, H. Res. 921, civilian lives hang in the balance. Hezbollah's rocket attacks against innocent Israelis are indiscriminate tools of terror against a civilian population. Reports indicate that Israeli retaliations have resulted in the loss of innocent lives.

It seems clear that Hezbollah has raised—or lowered—the suicide attack to a new level: they have dragged the entire nation of Lebanon and all its people into harm's way because of the group's attacks on Israel.

I wish that this resolution made more mention of these innocent Lebanese civilians and innocent Israeli civilians who are caught in the middle here. They are the ones paying the price.

I wish that this resolution made more mention of the urgent need for the U.S. to step forward, use its considerable influence, and take diplomatic action immediately to try to end the bloodshed affecting millions on both sides of the border.

The finding in paragraph 4 of this measure asserts that Israel is making every effort to prevent civilian casualties. And while I am a staunch supporter of Israel's right to defend itself, it is disturbing that some sources report that over 300 Lebanese civilians have been killed due to the violence. I hope that Israeli forces truly are making every effort to prevent civilian casualties, as indicated by this measure.

Finally, I want to tell you how deeply saddened I am that recent events have reduced the power of moderates in the region and dimmed prospects for long-term peace. The earlier abduction in Gaza came just as talks among Palestinian officials seemed to be reaching a point that may have allowed Hamas to open negotiations with Israel. And the attacks across the Israeli-Lebanese border will undoubtedly serve to diminish and muffle—now and in the immediate future—the voices of moderation who would otherwise call for peace.

It is my hope—no, my demand—that moderate voices in the international community, including the United States, will promptly work to quell this crisis. Clearly, Madam Speaker, right now we need solutions and not just condemnations.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in strong support for H. Res. 921, condemning the recent attacks against the State of Israel. With this resolution, the United States of America reaffirms its steadfast support for the State of Israel, denounces the use of terrorism as a tool of influence, and condemns those states that encourage its use. Iran and Syria's support for the terrorist organization, Hezbollah, does not go unnoticed. I urge the President of the United States to continue his support for Israel, as it responds to the armed attacks against it, and I support bringing the full force of sanctions: economic, political and diplomatic, against these state-sponsors of terrorism.

Madam Speaker, Israel, as a sovereign nation, has the right to defend itself and protect its citizens by deterring further attacks by the terrorist organization, Hezbollah. Since its founding, Hezbollah has been actively supported by both Syria and Iran. These two countries are estimated at providing Hezbollah with $100 million annually in addition to providing regular weapons shipments. These weapons range from rockets, mortars and small arms, to mines, explosives and anti-tank missiles. Hezbollah is by no means an innocent victim in an offensive war. Hezbollah is a terrorist organization, which has put the people of Israel, and the people of Lebanon, in harms way.

The United States of America knows all too well what drives this organization: the taking of innocent life. Before 9/11, Hezbollah single handedly killed more Americans than any other terrorist organization. In 1983, Hezbollah killed 257 Americans when it bombed the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut. Between 1982 and 1992, more than 30 Westerners were abducted by this organization, some tortured and killed. In 1996, 19 American servicemen were killed in the bombing of a U.S. military housing facility in Saudi Arabia.

Madam Speaker, this resolution sends an important message: the United States of America will not stand by and silently accept terrorism as a viable option with which to negotiate. Terrorism is not a viable option; it is not an option at all.

The United States must continue to lead in efforts not only to keep a check on the danger presented by Hezbollah and its sponsors, Syria and Iran, but also to help achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. I join my colleagues from both parties today in support of Israel's right to self-defense and in condemnation of Hezbollah's decision to put the people of Israel and Lebanon in danger. Madam Speaker, thank you for bringing this important resolution to the floor and I urge my colleagues to vote in its favor.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, in recent weeks, radical terrorist organizations have engaged in a number of unprovoked attacks on the State of Israel. I rise today in strong support of Israel's right to defend its citizens and its borders from acts of terrorism.

Most recently, Hezbollah military forces committed an act of war by crossing the border between Lebanon and Israel, attacking and killing several Israeli soldiers and kidnapping two Israeli soldiers. The integrity of the internationally recognized border between Lebanon and Israel must be respected in order for Israel to provide for its security. Hezbollah—a terrorist organization recognized by the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)—operates with impunity in many areas of southern Lebanon. Lebanon must accept responsibility for and bring an end to military attacks originating from within its territory. Iran and Syria also bear responsibility for the current crisis, because armaments used by Hezbollah have been traced to Iran and transferred through Syria for use by these Hezbollah forces.

This month, Hamas—another organization designated by the State Department as a FTO—also conducted an unprovoked military attack on Israel, killing and kidnapping Israeli soldiers. This military invasion represents a small part of the Palestinian violence emanating from Gaza into Israel. Last August, Israel withdrew every settler and soldier from Gaza in hopes that Palestinians would establish a democratic state capable of living side-by-side in peace with Israel. However, Palestinian terrorists took this historic opportunity to begin systematically firing Kassam rockets at Israeli towns. Over 1,000 have been fired since Israel's total withdrawal from Gaza—and it is important to note that the rockets are fired into territory belonging to Israel before 1967 and universally recognized as being Israeli territory.

Israel has the obligation and the right to defend its citizens against attacks emanating from both Lebanon and Gaza. I support Israel's right to take the appropriate military action necessary to deter future attacks, and hope that Israel's neighbors will take this opportunity to control future terrorism within their own borders.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 921, a resolution expressing support for the security of the State of Israel.

Over the last few days, it has been hard to turn on the television without seeing disturbing images of the current conflict in the Middle East.

Many of us share serious concerns about future of the Middle East. It seems unfair that this area—which has suffered so much conflict already—now is confronted with yet another period of escalating violence.

The long simmering tension in this region has finally come to a boiling point. The capturing of Israeli soldiers and the attacks on innocent civilians by the terrorist organization Hezbollah is absolutely unacceptable.

The President was correct when he stated that Israel has a right to defend itself against the aggressions by Hezbollah. The U.S. must stand side by side with our friends in the Middle East—especially Israel—as they fight terrorism in and around their borders. Israel must have our support and prayers as they continue to fight against those who murder innocent civilians just to advance their political agenda.

The loss of innocent life in this region over the last few days is heartbreaking. The people of Israel and Lebanon deserve to live in freedom and peace, safe from violence and terror.

Madam Speaker, the source of this current conflict does not lie within Israel or Lebanon. To put it plainly, the violence in the region is rooted in Iran. The support of Hezbollah by Iran in countries like Lebanon only serves to encourage violence, unfairly damage the region's fragile democracies, and undermine the rights of citizens in that region to fair and uncorrupted government.

Iran has created and supported terrorism and continues to funnel money and weapons to Hezbollah and Hamas. In fact, missiles that have targeted Israeli forces over the last few days have been traced to manufacturers in Iran.

It is clear that a nuclear Iran puts the Middle East and all countries around the world in grave peril. Iran has repeatedly defied the international community and has progressed in its development of nuclear capabilities. If Iran continues with its rogue nuclear programs, it will not be long before these weapons fall into

the hands of terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

If we want to address the future security and stability of the Middle East, the U.S. must work to curb extremism and violent political activism nurtured by the Iranian government. The U.S. and the international community must come together behind a united front and stand with unwavering strength against the Iran's state-sponsored terrorist organizations and activities.

Here at home, it is now more important than ever that we realize that our own safety and security depends on the destruction of terrorism in the Middle East. This isn't just a Middle East problem—the attacks in London, Madrid, Bali, and now India show us that this is world terror. And, as we saw first hand on 9/11, America is not immune to terrorists who seek to destroy freedom and democracy.

Although the conflict in the Middle East can seem distant and unrelated to our daily lives, it is vitally important that we remember our past, present and future is intrinsically linked with this region. As the situation continues to unfold over the next days and weeks, let our thoughts and prayers be for a true and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for H. Res. 921 to show solidarity with Israel in their quest for security and peace, and to show our commitment to defeating terrorism around the globe.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2240

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 921.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ACTION IS OVERDUE ON DRUG PRICING REFORM

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Recently, the United States Senate voted 68–32 to adopt an amendment that would stop the government from seizing safe, effective, affordable medicine imported from Canada. The House passed a responsible bipartisan prescription drug importation bill 3 years ago this month. I was pleased to lead the House Democrats in support of that bill.

We were not able to get it sent to the President's desk for only one reason: Senate Majority Leader FRIST never brought it to the Senate floor. His own Republican Caucus never demanded a vote. They never stood up. They never demanded action to break the drug industry stranglehold on the American market. They never demanded an end to the multibillion-dollar annual tax of skyrocketing drug prices it imposed on American business, and it imposed on American families.

At long last, the other body has begun to act. That vote should be the start, not the end, of this effort. I challenge the Republican leadership in both Chambers to give us an open debate, an honest vote on comprehensive drug importation legislation, before the anniversary of the House bill's passage 3 years ago. Three years is long enough to wait for independence from the drug industry.

ENERGY INDUSTRY OCCUPANCY PROTECTION ACT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I introduced the Energy Industry Occupancy Protection Act of 2006. Tomorrow in the House Judiciary Committee we will hold a hearing. We will have the opportunity to listen to a victim, victims who have been forgotten, victims who were engaged in America's warfare protecting America in the 1940s and 1950s, when they worked around nuclear radioactive material, and were not told by the contractors that they, in fact, were subjecting themselves to radioactive impact.

These families, these individuals, some of whom lost their lives, were never compensated. I know America can do better. Tomorrow in front of our committee, the Judiciary Committee, Immigration Claims Committee, we will have an opportunity to lay the record to establish that this government must respond to those brave Americans who stood on the front lines, providing the resources for our warriors in World War II and the Korean War, and yet were never compensated for their illness.

I do hope my colleagues will join me in cosponsoring this legislation, pushing it quickly through the committee, through the committee, and ensuring that Americans are protected against this devastating impact of working on behalf of Americans and fighting on the front lines by engaging and providing nuclear materials for the wars that we were engaged in.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina 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 gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

OMAN TRADE DEAL COMPROMISES SECURITY OF U.S. PORTS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to go out of place and replace Congressman MILLER.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Only a couple of weeks ago, during the same week when the Senate rejected an increase in the minimum wage, meaning that for 10 years there has not been a minimum wage increase in this country, but there have been six congressional pay raises, that same week the United States Senate voted to approve a free trade agreement with Oman.

This agreement compromises port security, just what the Bush administration had been prepared to do earlier this year, with the Dubai Ports World case. You see, the Oman FTA, Free Trade Agreement, includes provisions allowing companies from Oman to take over land, so-called land-side port operations, operating the piers, loading and unloading cargo, exactly the sorts of things Dubai Ports World had sought to do.

In the case of Dubai Ports World, concerned legislators on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, demanded that the Bush administration back down, demanded that the administration block the deal, and ultimately the foreign company gave up. But the Oman Free Trade Agreement would weaken our ability to protect port security and actually allow it to back-door its way into this country.

If we tried to block an Omani company's control over critical port infrastructure, the Omani Government could sue us, could sue the United States for violating this trade agreement, and that case would not be heard by a U.S. court with judges confirmed by U.S.-elected officials and charged with balancing the needs of trade and the imperative security under U.S. law. It would instead be heard by an unelected, unaccountable, international tribunal whose mission is trade promotion, not security enhancement.

If we lost, the foreign ports takeover would go ahead, despite our security

concerns, or we would face retaliatory sanctions. Even if we won, we would have spent, as a country, as taxpayers, millions and millions of taxpayer dollars, fighting in a foreign court for the right to protect our most basic security.

Worse yet, the agreement opens U.S. security decisions to suits not only from the Omani Government, but also from companies located in Oman. That means not only actually companies actually headquartered in Oman, but any companies with a branch in Oman.

For example, an Iranian company, we heard a lot about Iran tonight, an Iranian company with a branch in Oman might be able to sue us if we continue to block its efforts in a U.S. port. There is reason to be concerned about the Irani-Oman connection. Iran recently spent $45 million to expand a port with the objective of increasing trade with Iran.

We need to reject not only the Oman FTA, but the whole fundamentally flawed trade model, a model that puts the economic interests of multinational corporations ahead of the security interests of the American people. Imagine again what can happen. Dubai Ports World locates an office in Oman. We pass this trade agreement.

Oman then allows, and under the free trade agreement, Dubai Ports World could actually run a port in Baltimore, a port in New York. That company then, running the Baltimore port, allows cargo into the Baltimore port.

That cargo comes across I–70 to Bellaire and Zanesville and Columbus and Springfield and Dayton, or it comes down the Saint Lawrence Seaway through Ashtabula and Cleveland and Toledo, or it comes down the Ohio River to Steubenville and Marietta and Gallipolis and Cincinnati.

□ 2250

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 4812, to ensure that trade agreements do not undermine homeland security. My bill requires security reviews of trade agreements as soon as negotiations begin, then another round of reviews when the agreement's concluded.

Unlike the Dubai Ports World and the Oman Free Trade Agreement, this bill keeps Congress in the loop all the way. It creates a special security watchdog commission to make sure Congress has an independent voice on security issues. It is absurd that the Federal Government makes American citizens take off our shoes at the airport but refuses to conduct security reviews of multibillion-dollar trade deals.

We need to take our heads out of the sand. We need to reject the Oman Free Trade Agreement and its dangerous ports language. We need to insist on a responsible policy to ensure that trade agreements strengthen, not weaken, our national security.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). 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 gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

32ND ANNIVERSARY OF TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of Mr. EMANUEL.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, this week people all around the world are hearing about the small island of Cyprus. Today, Cyprus is serving as a safe haven for thousands of Americans and others who have fled the violence of the Middle East.

I would suspect, however, that most people around the world do not know that tomorrow Cyprus marks the 32nd anniversary of a very dark day in its history. That is the day Turkey illegally invaded the northern third of Cyprus. At a time when Cypriots are inviting thousands of people to their island as a way to leave behind violence, the actual island itself remains divided.

I commend the Cypriot government for its effective work in coordinating evacuation efforts with both the U.S. Government and the world community. According to a State Department official, ''Cypriots have met every helicopter and ship with sandwiches and water and juice. They're just being fantastic.'' And this is nothing new, Madam Speaker. Cyprus has always been a strong ally of the United States.

I hope Cyprus' actions of the last week will help the Bush administration reevaluate its relationship with the island Nation, a relationship that has cooled over the last couple of years.

Until 2 years ago, both Democratic and Republican administrations consistently condemned the Turkish government for this illegal occupation and pressured the government to come to the negotiating table in an attempt to finally reunite Cyprus.

Past administrations understood that the invading Nation of Turkey was to blame for the division and should, therefore, be punished accordingly. As a result, past administrations specifically forbid trade with the illegal government of the occupied north. Our government also prohibited directly flights into the occupied north. As long as Turkey continued its intransigence and refused to leave Cyprus, U.S. administrations correctly believed that they should not be rewarded.

While this has been consistent U.S. policy, I am deeply concerned that over the past 2 years we have witnessed a blatant shift in Cyprus policy from the Bush administration, specifically from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The U.S. State Department and Secretary Rice seem much more interested in rewarding those who illegally occupied the northern third of the Nation back in 1974 than actually reunifying the island.

Over the past year, our State Department decided to allow Americans to fly into the occupied north, in direct violation of international law and the law of the Republic of Cyprus. Last year, I joined many of my colleagues from the Congressional Hellenic Caucus in sending a letter expressing our deep concern regarding the legality of these flights.

In response, the State Department said that it was encouraging the elimination of unnecessary restrictions and barriers that isolate and impede the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Unfortunately, it did not end there. The State Department agreed to resume trade with the occupied north, a direct violation of both domestic law in law Cyprus and international law.

Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned that the State Department's new policy towards the government and the people of the occupied north will only delay reunification of the entire island. If the U.S. allows direct trade through routes in the north, what incentive do the illegal occupiers have to make any concessions?

It is as if the State Department had completely for gotten who is responsible for the division of Cyprus in the first place. I have repeatedly encouraged Secretary Rice to take a historic look at the Cyprus problem over the past 32 years.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the Bush administration remembers how helpful both the Cyprus government and the people of Cyprus have been over the last week. It is time that we return to the fair-minded policies enacted prior to 2005 so that we can finally bring about real negotiations that will finally reunify Cyprus. The 32 years of occupation must come to an end.

And so as we recognize this dark anniversary, I hope that the Bush administration rewards the actions of Cyprus over this last week by returning to the policies of the past. They were the right policies then, and they would be the best policies now to foster an environment to end this division of Cyprus.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear

hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICANS STRANDED AGAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I spoke of this earlier in the discussion of the resolution regarding the statement on Israel, but I think as a member of the Homeland Security Committee and having experienced just almost a year ago the watching of Americans in the gulf region, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi remain stranded for days upon days, as confusion continued in how to evacuate Americans who looked to the Federal Government as their umbrella on a rainy day, the images of Americans sitting on rooftops, floating in water, and the terrible stories that were told as many of them were evacuated to Houston is still very, very strong and very, very potent in our minds.

It bothers me that we stand here again watching the newsreels report over and over again of the 25,000 stranded Americans in Lebanon. The seemingly slow process of reaching those particular citizens, families, children, who are looking for relief from the Federal Government.

I think it is imperative that there be some briefing of the United States Congress immediately to detail how we can swiftly move up the throngs of Americans who are begging to be able to come home. It simply seems untenable that we do not have the resources necessary to evacuate our citizens more quickly than it has been done.

Many of them are in need of medical care, many of them with young families, and the stories are just heartbreaking. Children who are left on the pier. The 11-year-old girl who watched a ship go off and ultimately had to be redirected to a ship in the morning.

There is a conflict, there is a violent conflict going on. American lives are in jeopardy, and this administration needs to provide to the United States Congress their detailed plan of how they will evacuate Americans. We have their loved ones in our districts. They are pained to understand why the most powerful Nation in the world cannot even get its citizens out of Lebanon. There is no excuse.

We know the military, although it is stretched in Iraq and elsewhere, is well able to take orders and to move quickly, and if it is not the military, then we know that you can capture civilian commercial aircrafts and direct them to be able to secure those who need to get out because of medical emergencies and other needs that would warrant them getting out more swiftly than others.

Mr. President, the United States Senate and this Congress, this House, can do a far better job responding to this crisis while protecting the American people. It is a shame, simple shame that loved ones here in the United States are still facing this crisis without knowing whether their loved ones can be returned home safely and secure.

Hurricane Katrina was a dastardly, devastating experience for this country. In fact, there is no excuse. We cannot defend the incompetence of the departments that were responsible for evacuating those citizens from the gulf coast, a natural disaster. Now we have been at war in conflict and crisis for six, seven, eight days, and there are Americans still stranded in Lebanon. I hope that will be a wake-up call and that we will get a response immediately.

My door is open. My number is available, (202) 225–3816. We want to be of help to those families who are stranded, and we also want to be of help for a resolution of the conflict, of which all of us are looking for an immediate engagement and the opportunity for the U.N. and other bodies to be able to bring a solution to this terrible tragedy.

□ 2300

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS 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 gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE 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 gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia 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 gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GILCHREST 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 gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE 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 gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCDERMOTT 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 gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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 gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MEEHAN 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 gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS 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 gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ALLEN 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 gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHAYS 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 gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

TERRORISTS NO LONGER A THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER) is recognized for half of the time remaining before midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Madam Speaker, throughout this unsought struggle, which is the world war on terror, our Nation's citizen soldiers have expended their fullest measures of devotion to our defense. The cost of their heroic sacrifices, especially our fallen soldiers' ultimate sacrifices, upon themselves and their loved ones has rightly

been solemnly noted on the floor of this, the people's House.

The success of their heroic sacrifices in protecting our families and freedoms, however, has yet to be fully enunciated and honored, for as the men and women of the United States Armed Forces themselves, and their loved ones, have expressed to myself and my colleagues, their sacrifices have not been in vain.

Thus, tonight my colleagues and I will endeavor to emphasize but a portion of our noble military's and our Homeland Security personnel's victories in defending our lives and our liberties from our evil terrorist enemies.

To commence, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARRETT).

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mohammed Atef aka Abu Hafs Al-Masri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmed Homood Al-Khaldi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Abdul Fattah Mohammed Kiram, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hanan Abdullah Raqib, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hassan bin Hamid Hazimi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ali Kudhair Fahd Al-Khudhair, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ali Al-Khudair, no longer a threat to the United States.

Al-Iyadiyah Ahmed Mohammed Al-Sayyad, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hisham Mubarak Al-Hakami, no longer a threat to the United States. Hani Al-Sayegh, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdul Monim Ali Mahfouz Al-Ghamdi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Zubayr al-Rimi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khalid Jehani, no longer a threat to the United States.

Badr Al Sobeii, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ghaidah Ahmed Mohamed Souidah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Fayez bin Awad Juhaini, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdul Wahab Adel Abdul Wahab Al Sheridah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Qasim al-Raimi aka Qasim al-Taizi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ali Abd al-Rahman al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdullah Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Abdullah Al-Shabrami, no longer a threat to the United States.

Eid bin Dakhil Allah Juhaini, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khaled Ahmed Mohammed bin Sanan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Muhammad Atef, no longer a threat to the United States.

Narseal Batiste, no longer a threat to the United States.

Stanley Grant Phanor, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Ajmal Khan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Saif al-Adel, no longer a threat to the United States.

Major Khalid Hmood, no longer a threat to the United States.

Safwan al-Hasham, no longer a threat to the United States.

Saif Alwahid, no longer a threat to the United States.

Yasser al-Jaziri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammd Salah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Sheikh Ibn al-Liby, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Omar Abdel Rahman, no longer a threat to the United States.

Aso Hawleri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Omar Hadid, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ali Wali aka Abbas bin Farnas bin Qafqa, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hassan Ibrahim Farhan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abd al-Tahki al-Nissani, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdullah al-Janabi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Umar Baziyani, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Waleed Saudi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Faraj Ahmad Najmuddin aka Mullah Krekar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Muhammed Hila Hammed al-Ubaydi aka Abu Ayman, no longer a threat to the United States.

Nayef Abbas al-Zubaydi aka Abu Moawiy, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Tallah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Shahab Ahmed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Abdallah Suri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mo'ayed Ahmed Yassin aka Abu Ahmed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Mohammad Hamza, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Zubayr, no longer a threat to the United States.

Muhammad Khalid, no longer a threat to the United States.

□ 2310

Ridha Baziyani aka Fadil al-Kurdi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Reclaiming my time, Madam Speaker, I wish to yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART).

Ms. HART. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Omar Rahman, no longer a threat to the United States.

Syed Adnan Shah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Amjad Hussain Farooqi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Osama Nazir, no longer a threat to the United States.

Yousaf bin Yousaf, no longer a threat to the United States.

Wahid Khan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Omar Abdel Rahman, no longer a threat to the United States.

Shamshad Khan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Shafique, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammad Hassan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khalid Ansari, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mian Abdul Mannan Samejo, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Abdul Jalal, no longer a threat to the United States.

Nek Mohammed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Dost Mohammad, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Abdul Razaq, no longer a threat to the United States.

General Abdul Qadeer, no longer a threat to the United States.

Maulavi Abdul Razaq, no longer a threat to the United States.

Qari Ahmadulla, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Fazel M. Mazloom, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hazrat Ali, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Angar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Sattar Sadozai, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Badar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdul Kabir, no longer a threat to the United States.

Maulavi S. Ahmed Shahid Khel, no longer a threat to the United States.

Reza Khan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Toor Mullah Naqibullah Khan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdul Razzak, no longer a threat to the United States.

Maulavi Qalamuddin, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hilmi Tugluoglu, no longer a threat to the United States.

Zahir Salaamah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ziyad Dabdoob, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khalid al-Haajji, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hilal Altah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Imad ad-Deen an-Naqib, no longer a threat to the United States.

Jamil Dawud, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ibrahim Eid, no longer a threat to the United States.

Alauddin Hammad, no longer a threat to the United States.

Fuad Mubarak, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mazin al-Qasir, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mansor Hasnu, no longer a threat to the United States.

Saad bin Laden, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmed Zaoui, no longer a threat to the United States.

Qari Saifullah Akhtar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Mohsen Yahya Zayed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I wish to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER. Hazil Mohsen Shalesh, no longer a threat to the United States.

Amir Saleh Ismael, no longer a threat to the United States.

Moayad Ahmed Yasseen, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hamdi Tantawi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Majid Abdul Hameed Kazim, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmed Qumra Isaa, no longer a threat to the United States.

Arkan Jawad Jari, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdul Aziz Sa'dun Ahmed Hamduni aka Abu Ahmed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ammar Abu Bara, no longer a threat to the United States.

Muthana Kahdum Al Madawwere, no longer a threat to the United States.

Omar Sayel, no longer a threat to the United States.

Yasser Fathi Ibrahim, no longer a threat to the United States.

Muawiyah Muhanna, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmed Mohammed Ali Ayed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Jamil Mohammed Kutkut, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ibrahim Ahmed Abdel Majeed Al Reemy, no longer a threat to the United States.

Thamer Khamis Abdel Aziz Al Khamis, no longer a threat to the United States.

Salem Saad Salem bin Soued, no longer a threat to the United States.

Saud Abdullah Al Jadhii, no longer a threat to the United States.

Harbi Khudair Hamudi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abed Sattar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Karem Abed Ibrahim, no longer a threat to the United States.

Adel Mujtaba aka Abu Rim, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hazif Sattar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Haidar Abu Bawari, no longer a threat to the United States.

Salah Suleiman Loheibi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Anad Mohammed Qais, no longer a threat to the United States.

Sami Ali Faidy, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Omar al-Kurdi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Fares Younis, no longer a threat to the United States.

Sheikh Yusef, no longer a threat to the United States.

Nidal Arabiyat Agha Hamza, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mullah Noor Mohammed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Muhammad Hamza al-Zubadyi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Taha Yasin Ramadan al-Jizrawi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Zuhayr Talib Abd al-Sattar al-Naqib, no longer a threat to the United States.

Maulvi Abdul Ghaffar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abd al Tawab Mullah Huwaysh, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu-Musab Al-Zarqawi, no longer a threat to the United States.

□ 2320

Qusay Hussein, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khalid Shaikh Mohammad, no longer a threat to the United States.

Uday Hussein, no longer a threat to the United States.

Saddam Hussein, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Zubaydah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdel Basset Ali Al-Megrahi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ali Asad Chandia, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mr. McCOTTER. Abu Abbas, no longer a threat to the United States.

Atta Kumar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Saifullah alias Gori, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdullah of Parnot, no longer a threat to the United States.

Burez Begum, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mustaqim, no longer a threat to the United States.

Farouk Hijazi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Nasser Al-Fahd, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammad Salim Al-Ghamdi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Tariq Mikhail Aziz, no longer a threat to the United States.

Hassan Ghul, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khala Khadr Al-Salahat, no longer a threat to the United States.

Nayif Shindakh Thamir, no longer a threat to the United States.

Adil Abdallah Mahdi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Humam Abd al-Khaliq Abd al-Ghafur, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmad al-Ali, no longer a threat to the United States.

Lt. Colonel Khaled Rajab, no longer a threat to the United States.

Sabawi Ibrahim Hasan al-Tikriti, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdul Hadi Daghlas aka Abu Taisir, no longer a threat to the United States.

Shihab al-Sab'awi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed al Harahse, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdullah al-Shami, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ayoub Hawleri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Saeed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammad Salman Eisa aka Ibrah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Sultan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mo'ayed Ahmed Yassin aka Abu Ahmed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Husam al Yemeni, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Abdullah Hasan bin Mahmud, no longer a threat to the United States.

Didar Khalan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Anas Ahmad al-Issa, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Najm Ibrahim, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Zubair al-Haili, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mahmud Hameeda, no longer a threat to the United States.

Isa al-Millly, no longer a threat to the United States.

Kasir al-As'ad, no longer a threat to the United States.

Madam Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. BARRETT.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Bassim Mohammad Hazeem, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mahi Shami, no longer a threat to the United States.

Zain Abdallah Salah Khalaf al-Jib aka Abu Karam, no longer a threat to the United States.

Saleh Arugayan Kahlil, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ami Mohammed al-Jafi aka Abu Omar al-Kurdi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu al-Hasan, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abd al-Hafiz Shamma, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdel Karim Sayyid Sulayman, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abd al-Khaliq Hakimi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abd ar-Rahman as-Suways, no longer a threat to the United States.

Aamir Nawfal, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ihab Dafaa, no longer a threat to the United States.

Jamal Ba Khorsh, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmad al-Shinni, no longer a threat to the United States.

Fatha Abdul Rahman, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohsen Al Fadli, no longer a threat to the United States.

Juma Ibraham, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammad al-'Owhali, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Reclaiming my time, I yield to the gentlelady from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART).

Ms. HART. Yusus a-Balkhi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mohammed Saeed Kazim al-Saha, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ibrahim Bah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Munib Zahiragic, no longer a threat to the United States.

Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Tawfiz Attash Khallad, no longer a threat to the United States.

Aziz Nassour, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdallah Muhammed Rajab Abd al-Rahman, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Ubaida, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Yasir al-Jaziri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mosabir Aroochi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mamoun Darkazanli, no longer a threat to the United States.

Adil al-Jaziri, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ali Ahmed Hamdoosh, no longer a threat to the United States.

Taha Ahmed Kalif, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abdul Rahim Riyadh, no longer a threat to the United States.

Youssef Mustafa Nada, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Reclaiming my time, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER)

Mr. CARTER. Mulvi Nida Mohammed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmadullah, no longer a threat to the United States.

Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, no longer a threat to the United States.

Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, no longer a threat to the United States.

Abu Faraj al-Libbi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Patrick Abraham, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mir Aimal Kansi, no longer a threat to the United States.

Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, no longer a threat to the United States.

Jose Padilla, no longer a threat to the United States.

Rotschild Augustine, no longer a threat to the United States.

Naudimar Herrera, no longer a threat to the United States.

Lyglenson Lemorin, no longer a threat to the United States.

□ 2330

Mr. MCCOTTER. Reclaiming my time, Madam Speaker, as the hour is almost upon us.

Madam Speaker, these were but a random portion of the thousands of names which could have been read into the RECORD. But I trust we have proven our point of how honorably and effectively our citizen soldiers and our homeland security personnel have been defending and continue to defend our lives and liberties against our evil terrorist enemy.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for the remaining time before midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again. As you know, the 30-Something Working Group, we come to floor if not every other day, every day, to not only share with the Members but also the American people about many of the issues that we fight for for them here in this U.S. House of Representatives.

I must say that there are a number of things that we can talk about this evening. But I just want to start off, because I know that not only the Democratic leader, but also the entire Democratic Caucus is looking to hopefully put America in a new direction. We want to make sure that we provide the leadership on behalf of all Americans.

As you know, I want to start off tonight, but as you know, we have been sharing it with the Members so that hopefully it will have some sort of lift here in the House. It has not had thus far, but we are willing to provide the leadership, even in the minority, even though the majority is not willing to pick up the philosophy that we are pushing here on behalf of the American people, making sure that we have more affordable health care.

Madam Speaker, this is on housedemocrats.gov. Also lower gas prices to achieve energy independence, which we have our energy plan on housedemocrats.gov. And, Madam Speaker, our innovation plan that has been there for some time, and filed legislation here in the House that has not been heard.

We want to talk about homeland security. We have a Real Security Plan also on that website that is there for the Members. They have to have the will and the desire, Madam Speaker, to be able to take up these plans and these initiatives. And if we were able to work in a bipartisan way, these plans would already be passed, not only in the Appropriations Act, but also here on the floor.

The two other things that I want to mention, as it relates to cutting the cost of college cost. As you know, the cost to go to college has gone up. This Republican-led Congress last not helped in that area. They have not helped the every-day average American to be able to meet the increases that they have been asked to pay.

And also, Madam Speaker, in a new direction for America is making sure that we follow through with fiscal responsibility, pay as we go, not just on a credit card, not just saying because we can give tax cuts to millionaires, and we will just put it off on future generations, or we will go to foreign nations and borrow a record number of dollars.

These nations, Madam Speaker, that I am holding up here, they own a part of the American apple pie, not because of what the American people have done, it is what the Republican Congress has done, and allow these countries to buy our debt because we are not fiscally responsible.

I think it is also important to make sure that we encourage working families, people that are making minimum wage. Madam Speaker, I just want to make this point, then I am going to give it to my friend, Mr. RYAN from Youngstown, Ohio.

As you know, Madam Speaker, we have had, time after time again, three or four occasions in the 109th Congress that we have asked the Republican majority to join us in raising the minimum wage, to make sure that the American workers are able to keep up with the costs of not only living but inflation.

But it has been well said, and Mr. RYAN will point it out with his chart that he has there in a moment, that the Republican Congress is in no way and in no shape ready to give minimum wage workers an increase. Since 1997 they have not had an increase.

But here in the 30-Something Working Group, Madam Speaker, we actually take time to find out the facts, because we want to make sure that we are not telling the American people nor Members of this House something that is inaccurate.

I must say that in 1998, Madam Speaker, Members of Congress received $3,100 in a pay increase. And we are not minimum-wage workers. In 1998, minimum wage workers zero, Mr. RYAN.

In 2000, Members of Congress received a pay increase of $4,600. Guess what? Same year, minimum-wage workers, zero. 2001, Members of Congress received $3,800. Minimum-wage workers, zero. In 2002, Members of Congress received another pay increase, $4,900, almost $5,000 pay increase. Remember we just got one in 2002, I was not a Member yet but it happened. Minimum-wage workers, zero.

2003. Members of Congress, $4,700 pay increase. Just got one last year, getting another one in 2003. Of course, minimum-wage workers, zero. Punch in and punch out every day. They work a 40-hour work week, catch the early bus, trying to raise their children.

Members of Congress, 2004, $3,400 pay increase. Same year, minimum-wage workers, zero, Mr. RYAN, thanks to the Republican majority.

2005, it is great to be in Congress. Too bad every American cannot be and minimum-wage workers cannot be. 2005

Members of Congress, $4,000. Tell you, the Republican majority takes care of their own, and us too. 2005, zero for minimum-wage workers.

Proposed increase for Members of Congress, $3,100, Madam Speaker. And, of course, this year again, 2006, zero for minimum-wage workers.

Mr. RYAN, I think it is important for us to share that, not only with the Members so they will not go home and say, well, you know, I do not quite know what was going on. If you have a family member, which I know many Americans, because there are 7 million Americans that are working in minimum wage, we have middle class workers that are working that are not working for minimum wage, but as long as minimum-wage workers are making $5 and change, the American worker will got get what they deserve.

Madam Speaker, I guess it is okay, and I do not know if I have my chart here, the Republican Congress, Mr. RYAN, and quickly closing on this, I guess it is okay for big oil executives to have a $398 million retirement package and a $2 million tax break. I think that is where the priorities are.

I think also the priorities are making sure that oil companies are able to price-gouge Americans at the same time. We are talking about energy innovation, E–85, for them to not only to sell the old stuff that is keeping it alive and well in the Middle East instead of investing in the midwest, Madam Speaker, and E–85, saying that you cannot use a credit card, a Mobil card, to be able to buy gas, but better yet you can go into the store and buy a carton of cigarettes or 10 gallons of milk, but you cannot get this E–85, because we want to keep you there, and we are not encouraging them to do anything else.

Madam Speaker, I think it is important also to outline, if you are an oil company, you are in good, or if you are a Member of Congress you are in good shape, because you are going to get a pay raise, and we are going to make sure that you are able to make record profits.

As you know, Madam Speaker, and also, Mr. RYAN, almost nightly I read the Washington Post article that talked about the special meeting that took place in the west wing of the White House, in the complex, where oil executives met with Cheney's aides. Guess what? They got a pay raise and also a profit raise.

Look what happened after their 2001 meeting, that Washington Post article, I believe it is on our website, housedemocrats.gov/30something. $34 billion increase for 2002. 2003, $59 billion increase. Mr. RYAN, I think that was a good meeting. In 2004, $84 billion. And in 2005, $113 billion.

You want to know who is on your side, the bottom line is on this side of the aisle, we say we want to take this country in a new direction. We want to make sure that they receive the leadership that they deserve.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that, because exactly what you are saying fits into the overall economic picture. And there was a great column the other day in the New York Times by Paul Krugman, who kind of outlined, as the statistics finally came in from 2004, we now know how the economic pie was divided in 2004.

So what happened in 2004, which I find very interesting, this is inflation-adjusted income. The top 1 percent in 2004 had a real income increase of 17 percent. And the other 99 percent had an increase of 3 percent.

□ 2340

Basically what we are saying here, is over the past 5 or 6 years, where President Bush is in and the Republican Congress, Senate and House have all been in, the top 1 percent had an income growth of 17 percent on average. They received tax cuts from this administration. They are the same executives that represent the oil companies that get $400 million retirement packages. They are the same representatives on the boards of all the major multinational companies that have been going gangbusters.

When you move the jobs offshore, and you take them to China, and the profits go up, and they just go to a small group, that is the same group that is getting the tax cut. That is the same group that is getting the corporate welfare, on and on and on.

All we are trying to say is raise the minimum wage for the least among us, the 7 million people who need a little bump. For many people, this is irrelevant. I was having lunch today with a guy from Girard, Ohio, who owns a bunch of nursing homes. His people are at $8 or $9 an hour. He says, this has no benefit for me, one way or another. Why not raise it? Why not lift those 7 million people up, because you want to make an incentive for them to work and not create an incentive where they want to go on the government dole.

But if you look at what's happening here, while the top 1 percent had an income growth of 17 percent, while they got corporate welfare in the energy industry to the tune of $17 billion, this is what has been happening here at home.

Minimum wage has gone up 0 percent since 1997; whole milk, 24 percent. This is where the rubber meets the road. This is where you are going to the grocery store, and this is having an effect on you. Bread, up 25 percent; 4-year public college, 77 percent up; health insurance, up 97 percent; and regular gas, up 136 percent.

We have leaders in the Republican Party saying I don't believe in the minimum wage, I am never going to vote for the minimum wage. I am never going to vote for an increase in the minimum wage. I mean, come on, what are you thinking?

We need average Americans to be lifted up. I know, down in Florida, in Ohio, time and time again, we have people who need assistance. I want to make a point that the system right now is cutting against average people.

If you got a couple kids in college, and tuition has doubled in the last 5 years, and you have to take your kids to and from school, and gas is up 136 percent, and you own a small business and you are trying to cover your employees, and health insurance is up 97 percent, you are just an American trying to make ends meet, keep your family together, and hopefully give the next generation an opportunity to have a little bit better off than you had it.

People down here aren't doing anything to be helpful.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There is another chart behind that chart further that goes into what is happening as it relates to middle-class families.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, and the best part about this chart is again, really, college tuition up, gas prices up, health care up, this is since President Bush has been in; median household income, down 4 percent. When you have all of these increases, rapidly increasing, and the wages are increased by 4 percent, a terrible problem.

But here is the real problem, President Bush says, America's economy is strong and benefiting all Americans. Come to Youngstown, Ohio, Mr. President. Come to western Pennsylvania. Come to south Florida, come to the Midwest. The economy is not benefiting all Americans, and the President needs to realize that.

You know, I don't want to get into the whole international relations discussion here, because this is our focus, and I don't want to. But I am going to make one comment, because I know you want me to.

This administration has been totally disengaged from average American people, from the international community. This problem we have in the Middle East right now is because this President disengaged the peace process 5 years ago. He has not been engaged.

The number of terrorists are up from what they were in 2000, okay? Up. We have got problems now in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, North Korea, Iraq. We have got insurgency in Iraq, and we are spending $8 billion a month that needs to be going to address these problems, not building roads and bridges, health care centers and hospitals, and schools in Iraq, but building them here in the United States of America and lowering tuition costs.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Exactly what you are talking about, you say we are not going to talk about international affairs tonight, but you said a couple of words. And I need to say something.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Why do you have to always try to one-up me?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am not trying to one-up you. I am trying to provide information to the Members of the House and the American people. You know we come in that vein every evening.

I think it is very important that Members of Congress that have the

July 17 edition of Time magazine, it says, ''The end of cowboy democracy: What North Korea, Iran, Iraq, teaches us about limits on going it alone,'' okay? That is what it says, ''going it alone.''

The real issue here, when you open the page, looks like a very worried Commander in Chief. He doesn't look like he is jumping up and down about everything that is great in the world. Because the bottom line is, we have done a lot on our own. It goes on in further detail to talk about how the administration now is trying to reach out to these countries.

But meanwhile, as it relates to this majority rubber-stamp Congress, has allowed the President the ability to do anything and everything that he wants to do. I am so glad my rubber stamp has made it to the floor.

I want to put it here. Because, as you know, we like to make things visible, so that people can understand what is going on here. The reason why we are in the situation that we are in now is the fact that the Republican Congress has rubber-stamped everything that the administration has handed down.

This is not about the Commander in Chief. He is not going to run for election again. But you know what? In this Congress we run every 2 years for election. It doesn't matter if you are a Republican, a Democrat, or an independent, you are an American first. You have to have a problem in what is going on.

How many more indications do we need that the plan that has been set forth from the White House, has been handed to the Congress, and a Republican rubber-stamp Congress on partisan votes have voted for everything that this administration wants.

The American people want this Congress to play the rule constitutionally that it is supposed to play and the checks and balances in making sure that we have adequate oversight and action. I can tell you no other President in the history, I think, of the Republic, has celebrated such a rubber-stamp Congress.

Case in point: You want to talk about money? Let us talk about money for a second. Let us talk about commitment. Here is a chart. I pull it out almost every night, because I think it is just so revealing. I think in this time and this place and this moment, tonight, Eastern standard time, a little bit before midnight, 42 Presidents, 224 years. You saw the chart earlier.

I said, foreign nations have bought our debt. Not because of what the American people have done, not because they have misspent. It is because the Republican majority has rubber-stamped everything.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Republican House, Republican President, Republican Senate. Bottom line.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Exactly. This is not bottom line that relates to the Republican Party, Democrats, this and that. This has nothing to do with that. It has everything to do with this Republican majority not saying no to the President even once, even if he was on the right track.

Look at the numbers. This was from the U.S. Department of Treasury, this was a Secretary confirmed out of the Republican Senate and appointed by the President of the United States. These numbers are from the Republican Treasury, not the DNC, from the Republican Treasury, the United States Treasury, $1.01 trillion borrowed over 24 years from 1976 to 2000.

President Bush gets elected. Rubber-stamp Republican Congress. This is what happens: $1.05 trillion borrowed in 4 years from foreign nations. They have dethroned, I say they, we have to get the Gingrich chart out, because I don't want someone saying I am out of line here, I am only saying what the Republican past Speaker of the House is now saying, because the American spirit will rise above partisan politics at any time. That is why I feel that the American people are going to relook at their vote when it comes down to sending Members back here to the House that is willing to rubber-stamp this administration. I can tell you right now, it is sending us down a road that no one knows, down a tunnel that no one knows if it is sunlight or train.

□ 2350

$1.05 trillion borrowed from foreign Nations. The Republican Congress helped the President do this in 4 years alone. 224-years, Great Depression, World War I, World War II, other conflicts, Korea, you name it, Iraq, I can go on and on and on. There are too many names, hard times in America, challenges in America. They only borrowed $1.01 trillion. This President in 4-years and the Republican Congress has borrowed more than that.

Mr. RYAN, I am going to yield to you in just one second.

This is what Newt Gingrich says. This is the Speaker, Madam Speaker, that brought on this Republican revolution; we are going to turn the country around with the contract for America. This is what he says in Knight Ridder newspapers, Friday, March 31, 2006. They, not my colleagues, my Republican colleagues in the House, my good friends in the House, they.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. My old friends in the House.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. My old friends in the House. He is saying, ''they,'' so they means, Madam Speaker, that I guess he no longer associates himself and he has not said, oh, I was misquoted. He is standing by this. He continues, ''They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function.''

Now, I am going the tell you something. If I was in my office now or I picked up the paper and I read that from a former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in my party referring to me as ''they,'' that is why it it is important, Madam Speaker, that we come to the floor in the 30 Something Working Group, and speak with confidence and the facts and with great passion, because we love this country.

The bottom line is, if we were working in a bipartisan way, we could not come to this floor with a straight face saying, well, the Republican majority is working with us and we have shared ideas and issues that we are in right now and the trouble that we are in right now, we are in it because we are in it together. The Republican majority cannot say that. Bipartisanship is only allowed when the majority does so.

What have we said as Democrats? We are going to raise the minimum wage. We are going to implement all of the 9/11 recommendations, and you have a chart that is very revealing here, all of the 9/11 recommendations. We are going to make sure veterans are treated with dignity and respect and they have the health care they deserve.

We also said that we are going to look at these tax cuts to billionaires and make sure the middle class get their fair share. We are going to make sure there is dignity in health care and affordable, and if kids want to go to college, it is not about college kids, it is about those parents who have worked their entire lives to make sure their children and grandchildren have a better opportunity than what we have had.

That is a new direction for America, and we have the will and the desire, Madam Speaker, to stand up to the President and to those that are willing to take us back to the days of deficits as far as the eye can see, and we are working to work and pay as you go to balance the budget.

That is the reason why this rubber stamp, I want to retire this rubber stamp come this January if the American people see fit to say I am not going to vote for the individuals that have got us in this situation; I am going to vote for the folks that are going to adhere to the U.S. Constitution, stand up to the President of the United States and govern on behalf of this country and not just be a rubber stamp. This rubber stamp is, as far as I am concerned, we are going to have a session out in front of the Capitol, and we are going to drop it in the garbage can and burn it because this is not what this country is about.

Democracy is about discourse and balance and accountability to the American people, and it should not be a rubber stamp Congress, and this is exactly what it is because that is what the Republican Congress has brought about.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If you just look at what we would do once we get in, just in the first day or two, pass an increase in the minimum wage; reduce college tuition costs, interest on student loans by half for both parents and student loans, cut in half to save people about $5,000. Just those two things alone will

save average American families thousands of dollars. Implement 9/11.

Now, Mr. Gingrich brought up a great point. They are in charge of a government, Madam Speaker, that just cannot function. They do not know how to run government. They have had the opportunity over the past 5 years, and they have been incapable and unable to execute and administer government.

They run it down for years and then they expect it to work. They hire their buddies who know how to run ponies and administer horse shows, but then they cannot execute FEMA, Katrina, Iraq, Medicare, health care, gas prices, college education. They do not know how to administer government.

Everyone likes to say that the Democrats do not know how to administer an immigration policy. Well here's the statistics. From 1993 to 2000, the average number of border patrol agents added per year under Clinton, 642; under Bush, 411. Who is trying to protect the country from illegal immigrants coming into the country? It looks like to me that the Clinton administration did a heck of a lot better job than the Bush administration and the Republican Congress did.

INS fines for immigration enforcement, 1999, under President Clinton, 417 fines for immigration; only three in 2004 under President Bush. Seventy-eight percent fewer completed immigration fraud cases under President Bush. Under Clinton in 1995, fraud cases completed, 6,455; in 2003, under President Bush, 1,389.

It is not about ideology. It is not about what your rhetoric is. It is not about our little cute phrases that you may have and you may have worked on in some little interest group or some little building somewhere in D.C. and you just say the right things and it may sound like you know what you are doing.

These are facts. Gas prices are facts. College tuition numbers, they are facts. Health care costs, those are facts. Prescription drug costs, those are facts. Tax rates on small businesspeople, those are facts.

It is kind of funny because you go back home, you go back to the real world, and you get out from where the Potomac fever is, and you go back home and people are not saying things are going real good for them. But you come down here and our friends, many of them are our good friends, on the other side that stand in the well and they will try to convince everybody how great the economy is going. But when you go back to Ohio or Miami, it is not same.

We know how to do this and we want, Madam Speaker, an opportunity to take back over the House of Representatives that was created by Article I, Section 1 of the United States Constitution. We want an opportunity to govern, to lower tuition costs, increase the minimum wage, implement the 9/11 Commission report, provide for the common good, the common defense, and do it with some commonsense and get the country going in a new direction.

On www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something, all of our charts will be available. This was the 30 Something 2-minute drill today.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me say, I almost feel like a preacher of a Baptist church. I just wish I had time to preach this sermon. I wish I had time. The reason why I am saying that is by the House rules we have to end at 12:00.

I am going to I say this to my good friend Mr. Manatos, we need a chart that talks about what Congress has received since 1998 in pay increases and what the American people have received in the minimum wage. We need a chart that talks about that every year, so Mr. RYAN, when you talk about when folks come to the floor, the majority side talk about how great the economy is, you doggone they come and say it because they have gotten a pay increase every year.

Let me tell you, a lot of us here in Congress, including myself, are financially challenged. We have got to have a house here and a house there and kids and all of the things that goes with it. But do not vote for an increase for yourself and then turn around to someone that is making $5.15 an hour to say that you do not deserve it. Over my dead body. That is what the Republican majority is saying.

So I think it is important. If I had time tonight to carry this point further, I would, but with that, Madam Speaker, we want to thank the Democratic leader for allowing us to have this time. It was an honor to come before the House to address the American people.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GUTIERREZ (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in the district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MEEHAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ALLEN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. HART) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and July 24, 25, and 26.

Mr. MCCOTTER, for 5 minutes, July 20.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, July 24.

Mr. BILIRAKIS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHAYS, for 5 minutes, today, and July 24, 25, and 26.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and to include extraneous material, notwithstanding the fact that it exceeds two pages of the RECORD and is estimated by the Public Printer to cost $1,517.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 5117. An act to exempt persons with disabilities from the prohibition against providing section 8 rental assistance to college students.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on July 19, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 42. To ensure that the right of an individual to display the flag of the United States on residential property not be abridged.

H.R. 810. To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

H.R. 2872. To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at midnight), the House adjourned until today, Thursday, July 20, 2006, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

8668. A letter from the Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule — Debenture Interest Payment Changes [Docket No. FR-

4945-F-01] (RIN: 2502-AI41) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8669. A letter from the Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Financial Crimes Enforcement Network; Amendment to the Bank Secrecy Act Regulations — Imposition of Special Measure Against VEF Banka, as a Financial Institution of Primary Money Laundering Concern (RIN: 1506-AA82) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8670. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Board, transmitting the Board's final rule — Data Reporting Requirements for the Federal Home Loan Banks [No. 2006-10] (RIN: 3069-AB28) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8671. A letter from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Third-Party Servicing of Indirect Vehicle Loans—received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8672. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Division of Market Regulation, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Joint Final Rules; Application of the Definition of Narrow-Based Security Index to Debt Securities Indexes and Security Futures on Debt Securities [Release No. 34-54106; File No. S7-07-06] (RIN: 3235-AJ54) received July 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8673. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting notification that the national emergency with respect to Liberia is to continue in effect beyond July 22, 2006, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1622(d); (H. Doc. No. 109–125); to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed.

8674. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a letter notifying Congress, consistant with the War Powers Resolution, that on July 14,2006, due to the uncertain security situation and the possible threat to American citizens and the American Embassy in Lebanon, Department of Defense assistance has been requested to assist in the departure of American citizens in Lebanon; (H. Doc. No. 109–126); to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed.

8675. A letter from the Rules Administrator, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Classification and Program Review [BOP-1131-F] (RIN: 1120-AB32) received July 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

8676. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Local Regulations for Marine Events; Choptank River, Cambridge, MD [CGD05-06-065] (RIN: 1625-AA08] received July 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8677. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Local Regulations: Suncoast Offshore Grand Prix; Gulf of Mexico, Sarasota, FL [CGD 07-06-107] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received July 13, 206, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8678. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Local Regulation; Annual Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament; Jacksonville, Florida [CGD07-06-108] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received July 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8679. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Security Zone; Georgetown Channel, Potomac River, Washington, DC [CGD05-06-014] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8680. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulation: Beaufort (Gallants) Channel, NC [CGD05-06-047] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8681. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Pinellas Bayway Structure ''E'' (SR 679) Bridge, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, mile 113, St. Petersburg Beach, Pinellas County, FL. [CGD07-06-073] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8682. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Welch Causeway (SR 699) Bridge, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, mile 122.8, Madeira Beach, Pinellas County, FL [CGD07-06-074] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8683. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Security Zone; Severn River and College Creek, Annapolis, Maryland [CGD05-06-052] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8684. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; City Fireworks Celebration, Syracuse, NY [CGD09-06-063] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8685. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Village Fireworks, Sodus Point, NY [CGD09-06-052] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8686. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Brewerton Fireworks, Brewerton, NY [CGD09-06-051] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8687. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; 2006 Fireworks, St. Lawrence River, Clayton, NY [CGD09-06-050] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8688. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Mentor Power Boat Race, Lake Erie, Mentor, OH [CGD09-06-060] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8689. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Island Festival Fireworks Display [CGD09-06-049] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8690. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Clearwater Harbor, Florida [COTP St. Petersburg 06-104] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8691. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Fourth of July Fireworks, Heart Island, Alexandria Bay, NY [CGD09-06-053] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8692. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Seneca River Days, Baldwinsville, NY [CGD09-06-055] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8693. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Fireworks Safety Zone; Shelter Cove, Hilton Head, SC [COTP Charleston 06-110] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8694. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Seneca River Days Fireworks, Baldwinsville, NY [CGD09-06-054] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8695. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Rochester Harbor and Carousel Festival, Rochester, NY [CGD09-06-038] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8696. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Fireworks Safety Zone; Skull Creek, Hilton Head, SC [COTP Charleston 06-112] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8697. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department

of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Cooper River, River Front Park, North Charleston, South Carolina [COTP Charleston 06-113] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8698. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; St. Louis River/Duluth/Interlake Tar Remediation Site, Duluth, MN [CGD09-06-031] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8699. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Fireworks, Lower Colorado River, Laughlin, NV [COTP San Diego 06-025] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8700. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Clearwater Harbor, FL [COTP St. Petersburg 06-082] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8701. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Fort Story, Chesapeake Bay, Virginia Beach, VA [CGD05-06-055] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8702. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, USCG, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone: Lake Michigan, Milwaukee, WI [CGD09-06-035] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received June 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 925. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5684) to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement (Rept. 109–579). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. OXLEY: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 4804. A bill to modernize the manufactured housing loan insurance program under title I of the National Housing Act; with an amendment (Rept. 109–580). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEES

[Omitted from the Record of July 17, 2006]

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII the Committee on Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration. H. Con. Res. 145 referred to the House Calendar.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII the Committee on International Relations discharged from further consideration. H.R. 5337 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BACA:

H.R. 5831. A bill to authorize the Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office to extend a reissue patent for up to two years if the application for reissue is not processed within 10 years; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GUTKNECHT (for himself, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. AKIN):

H.R. 5832. A bill to establish the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, to provide funding for the support of fundamental agricultural research of the highest quality, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California:

H.R. 5833. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve retention of public elementary and secondary school teachers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. DINGELL (for himself, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. RUSH, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. ROSS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. WYNN, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. ALLEN, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. LEE, Mr. FILNER, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Mr. CARDIN):

H.R. 5834. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to improve requirements under the Medicaid Program for items and services furnished in or through an educational program or setting to children, including children with developmental, physical, or mental health needs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BUYER (for himself, Mr. FILNER, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. EVANS, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Ms. HERSETH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, Mr. REYES, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WALSH, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. DINGELL, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 5835. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve information management within the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BROWN of Ohio (for himself and Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico):

H.R. 5836. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to making progress toward the goal of eliminating tuberculosis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CASTLE (for himself and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts):

H.R. 5837. A bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide for a YouthBuild program; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia (for himself, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. BUYER, Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, and Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida):

H.R. 5838. A bill to amend title 44, United States Code, to strengthen requirements related to security breaches of data involving the disclosure of sensitive personal information; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. HEFLEY:

H.R. 5839. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit the establishment of leadership political action committees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (for herself, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. STRICKLAND, and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico):

H.R. 5840. A bill to amend the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the agencies and actors responsible for the administration of such compensation program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 5841. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from paroling into the United States an alien who falls ill while seeking admission at a port of entry or seeks emergency medical assistance by approaching an agent or official of the Department of Homeland Security at or near a border; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PEARCE (for himself, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico):

H.R. 5842. A bill to compromise and settle all claims in the case of Pueblo of Isleta v. United States, to restore, improve, and develop the valuable on-reservation land and natural resources of the Pueblo, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself and Mr. STRICKLAND):

H.R. 5843. A bill to amend the COBRA continuation Act provisions to extend COBRA continuation coverage from 18 months to 36 months, to provide a tax credit for the cost of such coverage, and to reduce the income tax rate reduction for families with incomes of more than a million dollars; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. STRICKLAND:

H.R. 5844. A bill to prohibit the importation for sale of foreign-made flags of the United States of America; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LATOURETTE (for himself, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. BOEHLERT, and Mr. LATHAM):

H. Con. Res. 449. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 60th anniversary of the historic 1946 season of Major League Baseball Hall of Fame member Bob Feller and his return from military service to the United States; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. KUCINICH (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. LEE, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. FILNER, Mr. STARK, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HONDA, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. WATERS, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. RUSH, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Ms. SOLIS, and Mr. MEEKS of New York):

H. Con. Res. 450. Concurrent resolution calling upon the President to appeal to all sides in the current crisis in the Middle East for an immediate cessation of violence and to commit United States diplomats to multiparty negotiations with no preconditions; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts (for himself, Mr. BOEHLERT, and Mr. CLEAVER):

H. Con. Res. 451. Concurrent resolution honoring John Jordan ''Buck'' O'Neil and urging his induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. ISSA:

H. Res. 926. A resolution condemning the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by Hamas and Hezbollah, affirming the right of Israel to conduct operations to secure the kidnapped soldiers, urging all parties to protect innocent life and civilian infrastructure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina):

H. Res. 927. A resolution commending William W. Wilkins, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, for his commitment and dedication to public service, the judicial system, and the rule of law, as he enters his 25th year of service as a member of the Federal judiciary; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (for herself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. HALL):

H. Res. 928. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week should be established; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mrs. MUSGRAVE:

H. Res. 929. A resolution to congratulate Fort Collins, Colorado, on being named the best place to live in the United States for 2006; to the Committee on Government Reform.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

383. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Memorial No. 12 urging American farmers, ranchers, and food producers be enabled to compete freely and trade fairly in foreign markets; to the Committee on Agriculture.

384. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Arizona, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 2001 urging the Congress of the United States to enact a 2007 Farm Bill that is supportive of the specialty crop industry; to the Committee on Agriculture.

385. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 109 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are encessary to adopt the Senate Appropriations Committee amendment for fishing industry recovery under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to H.R. 4939 making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Appropriations.

386. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Memorial No. 13 urging the Congress of the United States to support legislation that will enhance specified aspects of the ''No Child Left Behind Act''; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

387. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Memorial No. 22 supporting the participation of Taiwan in a meaningful and appropriate way in the World Health Organization; to the Committee on International Relations.

388. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Memorial No. 26 recognizing the Basque ETA organization; the governments of the Basque Autonomous Region; Spain, and all parties of Spain and France for their actions to promote and achieve lasting peace in the Basque Homeland; to the Committee on International Relations.

389. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Memorial No. 16 supporting the efforts of Senator Mike Crapo to reform and improve the Endangered Species Act through the enactment of the Collaboration for the Recovery of Endangered Species Act (CRESA), promoting species conservation and preservation within the State of Idaho and the United States; to the Committee on Resources.

390. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 25 encouraging the Congress of the United States to make the nation's Outer Continental Shelf available for energy development in an environmentally responsible manner; to the Committee on Resources.

391. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 235 memorializing the Congress of the United States, specifically Louisiana Senators Mary Landrieu and David Vitter, to take such actions as are necessary to support and vote for the Marriage Protection Amendment presently pending in the United States Senate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

392. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Michigan, relative to Senate Resolution No. 101 memorializing the Congress of the United States to provide funding to help states and local communities clean up and address the disastrous effects of clandestine methamphetamine labs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

393. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Arizona, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 2011 urging the Congress of the United States to permanently repeal the Death Tax, to dissolve United State membership in the United Nations and to remove specific areas relating to faith from the jurisdiction of the United States Supreme Court; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

394. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 23 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are necessary to pass the proposed consitutional amendment banning the desecration of the United States flag; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

395. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 107 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are necessary to facilitate the construction of a storm surge barrier at Port Fourchon; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

396. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 108 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are necessary to ensure that any United States Army Corps of Engineer project restoring barrier islands protecting Terrebonne and Timbalier Bays redefine and narrow Whiskey Pass, Little Pass, Wine Island Pass, and Cat Island Pass using hardened material; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

397. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 130 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are necessary to expedite the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) reimbursement process and to make the reimbursement of accrued interest on loans part of its public assistance grants; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

398. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 182 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are necessary to provide hurricane tidal flood protection to south Louisiana, including requiring the United States Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate both federal and nonfederal tidal levees in south Louisiana, to consider adding nonfederal tidal levees into the federal program, and to fully fund upgrading hurricane tidal flood protection in south Louisiana; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

399. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 urging and requesting the Social Security Administration to accept a notarized document to suffice as independent verification for evidence of age; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

400. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 212 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are necessary to support and establish a free trade agreement between the United States and Taiwan; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

401. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 116 memorializing the Congress of the United States to take such actions as are necessary to formulate a sound energy policy that will provide for the long-term economic and national security need of the United States of America; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

402. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Memorial No. 11 urging the United States Forest Service enter a decision granting a special use permit allowing Idaho Department of Fish and Game to land helicopters in the wilderness for the purpose of monitoring gray wolves; jointly to the Committees on Resources and Agriculture.

403. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 14 demanding that the Federal Lands Recreation Act be repealed and that no recreational fees authorized under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act be imposed to use federal public land in the state; jointly to the Committees on Resources and Agriculture.

404. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 20 declaring that should the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act be repealed, the authority for permitting outfitters and guides be replaced immediately to allow for operations to continue uninterrupted and special use fee currently assessed by reauthorized under a new authority; jointly to the Committees on Resources and Agriculture.

405. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Idaho, relative to House Joint Memorial No. 21 urging the Congress of the United States to support federal legislation transferring management of National Forest System lands within Idaho to the state of Idaho to be managed for the benefit of rural counties and schools; jointly to the Committees on Resources and Agriculture.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, private bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 5845. A bill for the relief of Zhen Xing Jiang; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 5846. A bill for the relief of Tian Xiao Zhang; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 115: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 615: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 772: Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan and Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 790: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 916: Mr. CALVERT and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 1128: Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 1227: Mrs. DRAKE and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 1384: Mr. POMBO and Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.

H.R. 1413: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois and Mr. BAIRD.

H.R. 1471: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. CASE, and Mr. ALEXANDER.

H.R. 1578: Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. BONNER, Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.

H.R. 1582: Mr. INSLEE.

H.R. 1632: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 1634: Mr. GOODE and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 1671: Mr. STUPAK.

H.R. 1688: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.

H.R. 1704: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1709: Mr. BOSWELL.

H.R. 1940: Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GONZALEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 1951: Mr. HOBSON, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. REICHERT, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 2323: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 2328: Mr. MELANCON.

H.R. 2356: Mr. STEARNS, Mr. JEFFERSON, and Mr. MELANCON.

H.R. 2498: Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 2794: Mr. BROWN of Ohio.

H.R. 2808: Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. OSBORNE, Mr. KOLBE, Mr. KELLER, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. BERRY, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. SHERWOOD, Mr. CASE, Mr. BACHUS, Ms. BERKLEY, and Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 2861: Mr. FERGUSON.

H.R. 2928: Mr. DELAHUNT.

H.R. 2943: Mr. CARNAHAN.

H.R. 3380: Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.R. 3436: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.

H.R. 3476: Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina.

H.R. 3511: Mr. SHAYS.

H.R. 3547: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 3628: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 3854: Mrs. MCCARTHY and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 3900: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 3902: Mr. CARNAHAN.

H.R. 3957: Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 4022: Mr. SNYDER.

H.R. 4042: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 4236: Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 4264: Mr. SPRATT.

H.R. 4341: Mrs. DRAKE.

H.R. 4357: Ms. HARRIS and Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 4381: Mr. MCCRERY.

H.R. 4384: Mr. ANDREWS.

H.R. 4479: Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 4480: Ms. GRANGER.

H.R. 4537: Mr. SPRATT.

H.R. 4547: Mr. LATHAM, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, and Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 4562: Mr. FOLEY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. CARTER, Mr. CRENSHAW, and Mr. RAMSTAD.

H.R. 4597: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H.R. 4800: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 4830: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 4838: Mr. STEARNS.

H.R. 4857: Mr. JONES of North Carolina.

H.R. 4922: Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. FORTUÑO, and Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 5005: Mr. POMBO, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, and Mr. RENZI.

H.R. 5011: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. GONZALEZ, and Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.R. 5013: Mr. FORTENBERRY and Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 5023: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 5099: Mr. CARNAHAN.

H.R. 5128: Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 5134: Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5139: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 5166: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 5185: Mr. GRIJALVA and Ms. SOLIS.

H.R. 5246: Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. REICHERT, and Mr. SHADEGG.

H.R. 5249: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.

H.R. 5280: Mr. ENGEL, Mr. INSLEE, and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 5309: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5321: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5371: Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 5390: Mr. STARK, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.R. 5405: Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 5424: Mr. CHOCOLA and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 5452: Mr. WALSH.

H.R. 5491: Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota.

H.R. 5513: Mr. ROSS and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.

H.R. 5524: Mr. CASE and Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 5555: Mr. ROSS, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. ENGEL, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 5608: Mr. PASTOR and Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 5635: Mr. MOLLOHAN.

H.R. 5650: Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 5656: Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5671: Mr. MCINTYRE.

H.R. 5674: Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.

H.R. 5682: Mr. KOLBE, Ms. GRANGER, and Mr. MARCHANT.

H.R. 5706: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 5731: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. MEEHAN, and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 5733: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. FORTUÑO.

H.R. 5744: Mr. CANTOR.

H.R. 5750: Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. JEFFERSON, and Mr. FARR.

H.R. 5755: Mr. BASS and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 5758: Mr. FORTUÑO.

H.R. 5766: Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. TERRY, Ms. GRANGER, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. FORTUÑO, and Mr. HASTINGS of Washington.

H.R. 5771: Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. HONDA, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. COSTA, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 5772: Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. SAXTON.

H.R. 5784: Ms. WATERS and Ms. WOOLSEY.

H.R. 5785: Mr. PICKERING.

H.R. 5791: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. LEACH.

H.R. 5797: Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.

H.R. 5815: Mr. FORTUÑO.

H.R. 5822: Mr. MCKEON, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. SHAYS, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.J. Res. 58: Mr. HASTINGS of Washington.

H.J. Res. 90: Mr. CARNAHAN.

H. Con. Res. 347: Ms. BERKLEY.

H. Con. Res. 384: Mr. CASTLE.

H. Con. Res. 434: Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. FATTAH, and Mr. BERMAN.

H. Res. 97: Ms. HART.

H. Res. 295: Mr. MANZULLO.

H. Res. 305: Mr. ALLEN.

H. Res. 373: Mr. FARR, Ms. MCKINNEY, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H. Res. 490: Mr. GUTIERREZ.

H. Res. 852: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H. Res. 863: Mr. WICKER.

H. Res. 911: Mr. WAXMAN and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.

H. Res. 912: Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. TERRY.

H. Res. 915: Mr. PITTS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. EMANUEL.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 3044: Mr. CONYERS.