

have all warned that current fiscal policy is unsustainable over the long-term.

What is needed now is a clear commitment to address these issues in a straightforward, generationally equitable and bipartisan manner. Achieving consensus around the hard choices that must eventually be made will require open minds and bipartisan cooperation. Your legislation would establish a process to do just that.

Recently, The Concord Coalition organized a forum with experts from across the political spectrum to discuss the possibility of establishing a bipartisan commission to deal with our longterm fiscal outlook. Three conclusions from the forum stand out:

The commission must have meaningful participation and input from a broad range of views. Bipartisan support is essential to enacting and maintaining policies that will put the budget on a fiscally sustainable course.

The commission should have a broad mandate with no limitations on what policy options the commission can consider or preconditions on what must be included—or not included—in a proposal. Everything must be on the table, including revenues as well as entitlements and other spending.

The commission should engage the public in a dialogue about the long-term fiscal challenges and the tradeoffs that will be necessary to bring about a more secure and sustainable economic future.

The Concord Coalition commends your proposal because it recognizes each of these conclusions. The SAFE Act would establish a bipartisan commission of experts and legislators appointed by the President and Congressional leaders of both parties. The Commission would be directed to hold hearings across the country and incorporate the input from the public in its report. This is a very welcome provision. The public should be treated as if it were, in effect, a member of the commission. Doing so will enhance the commission's credibility and help build acceptance for its recommendations. Our experience hosting meetings around the nation on this issue has demonstrated that when the American people are armed with the facts and given the opportunity for honest dialogue, they are willing to set priorities and make the hard choices that often are not made in Washington.

Most importantly, the Commission would be allowed to consider all policy options to address the imbalance between long-term spending commitments and projected revenues, including reforms of entitlement programs and tax laws. In our view, this is an essential prerequisite for attracting well-respected individuals to serve on the commission and for finding solutions that are both substantive and politically viable.

We particularly commend you for your willingness to consider constructive suggestions for changes to achieve broader bipartisan support and increase the prospect that the commission will produce a balanced proposal that can be enacted into law. In that regard, we would suggest a few changes that we believe would strengthen the bill and help ensure the commission receives the bipartisan support essential to its success.

We believe the commission would have greater credibility if the appointees were more evenly divided between parties, potentially with some commission members appointed jointly or as a result of bipartisan consultation. Further, we would suggest that the commission have bipartisan co-chairs. We would also encourage you to consider a more expansive legislative process, which would allow for greater debate of policy tradeoffs by allowing the consideration of budget neutral amendments. Those who oppose the priorities and tradeoffs rec-

ommended by the commission should be challenged to say what they would do instead and given the opportunity to put forward alternative policies to address the problem.

A commission isn't a silver bullet that will solve our fiscal problems by itself. It will still take action by Members of Congress and the administration to adopt the tough choices. But a commission with credibility and bipartisan support could provide the leadership necessary to ensure that these issues receive the attention and serious consideration they deserve.

You deserve great credit for your willingness to undertake the difficult but absolutely essential task of focusing attention on the tough choices our nation faces. The Concord Coalition stands ready to assist in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. BIXBY,
Executive Director.

DEFEATING THE TERRORISTS ABROAD—NOT AT HOME

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, yesterday afternoon as I was reading *The Examiner*, a Washington daily, I came across an editorial that summed up my view of our current conflict in Iraq and the overall global war on terrorism. I applaud *The Examiner's* editorial staff for declaring what is largely an unpopular view among the mainstream media.

The editorial follows.

[Jan. 11, 2007]

DO WE DEFEAT THE TERRORISTS IN IRAQ NOW OR FIGHT THEM HERE TOMORROW?

WASHINGTON.—President Bush could not have been more frank or honest with the American people than he was last night. That said, the central issue remains today what it has been since the first plane crashed into the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001: Are we as a nation willing to do whatever is required to win the war on terrorism?

Iraq is today the central front in that war, and the president is doing all within his power to defeat the terrorists there now so that we don't have to fight them here in the future.

The president believes the war in Iraq can be won by increasing American troop strength for a period as the Iraqis themselves assume greater responsibilities for securing their country and by increasing U.S. economic aid to rebuild infrastructure and provide jobs.

Calling this troop movement a "surge" was unfortunate because it conveyed the idea of something that isn't going to happen—putting more U.S. soldiers on the ground than we have had heretofore. In fact, as *The Examiner's* Bill Sammon reported yesterday, even with the "surge" announced last night, we will still be a few thousand short of the high water mark of 160,000 U.S. troops a year ago.

More important than the raw numbers is how those troops are deployed.

The president acknowledged last night that mistakes were made in the days leading up to the U.S. action in Iraq and the first phases of building the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. Working with increased Iraqi military and police forces, our strengthened forces

will now be able to rectify the biggest of those mistakes: failing to eradicate the insurgents completely and not disarming private militias like that of Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. Special attention is to be devoted to Baghdad and Anbar province, with Iraqi army units in the lead.

There will be more U.S. casualties in coming months. But the only way to affirm the sacrifice of American blood and material resources in Iraq is persevering and winning. Iraq is not Vietnam unless congressional Democrats heed extremists like Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-MA, and withdraw funding for the American war effort in Iraq as they did in 1974, which led directly to the fall of Saigon in 1975.

The killing fields followed throughout Southeast Asia as the victors took revenge upon those who looked to America for protection and freedom. The killing fields will come again if America fails now because Iraq will dissolve into chaos and then a jihadist totalitarianism.

Many Rubicons are being crossed on Iraq. There will be no crossing back if we heed the ignoble call to retreat.

IN MEMORY OF DARRENT
WILLIAMS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember Darrent Williams, the Denver Bronco professional football player from Fort Worth, Texas, who passed away at 24 years of age on January 1, 2007.

Darrent Williams will forever be remembered as a talented and compassionate young man who not only loved his family and friends but also proved to be dedicated to his teammates and his adopted city of Denver.

Raised as an only child by his mother Rosalind Williams, Darrent grew up in Fort Worth where he attended O.D. Wyatt High School located in my congressional district. Excelling at three different sports, Mr. Williams received scholarship opportunities from multiple universities. Wanting to stay close to his home in north Texas, Mr. Williams decided to play football at Oklahoma State University. While at Oklahoma State, he was one of only four college players since 1996 to record double-figure interceptions while scoring at least five touchdowns. He was also a Jim Thorpe Award semifinalist, and in 2003 tied at 13th in the Nation with six interceptions. Due to his incredible performance at Oklahoma State, in 2005 Mr. Williams became the Denver Broncos' second-round draft pick and would soon be a starter.

Mr. Williams became known as the "Denver Bronco Kid," a nickname that would spread across the Nation as others recognized his energy, enthusiasm, and talent. As a young professional football player, he not only excelled at the game but also brought strength and cooperation to the team. He was a special person with unbelievable character, and he will continue to be admired by many across the country.

Throughout his life, Darrent Williams portrayed qualities that warmed the hearts of those around him. It was these traits that won