

you when you try and enforce the law; and also send the message to drug dealers that we are not going to work with you, we are not giving you a deal, we do not work backroom deals with drug dealers; we support our Border Patrol on the Texas-Mexico border.

So, Mr. Speaker, we hope that we get a response from the Federal Government on this pardon. So far, we have not received anything. I think the Federal Government is blissfully indifferent to the plight of these two border agents, and so we would hope that this gets some attention from folks across the country. Over 200,000 people have signed petitions asking that the President pardon both of these border agents; and we hope that that does occur because justice in this case did not occur, because our government chose to be on the wrong side of the border.

And that's just the way it is, Mr. Speaker.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME AND SOVEREIGNTY OF IRAQ RESTORATION ACT

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I joined with my good friends, distinguished colleagues and fellow Californians, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE and Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, in introducing landmark legislation that would bring our troops home from Iraq within a 6-month time frame.

The Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act is the first comprehensive legislative proposal to end the military occupation and provide a framework to help bring stability back to Iraq.

One week ago, when he addressed the Nation, President Bush demonstrated to the world that he continues to remain blind to the realities on the ground in Iraq. Instead of putting forth a plan that will withdraw our troops, the President is increasing our military presence, escalating the number of troops by over 20,000. What President Bush fails to grasp is that our military presence is only fueling the insurgency, plunging Iraq further into chaos and civil war.

Mr. Speaker, the November elections showed just exactly how fed up Americans are with the President's failed Iraq policy. It is time now to honor that mandate. It is now up to the Congress to catch up with the will of the people.

During his weekly radio address on Saturday, President Bush challenged those of us who disagree with him to offer a plan of our own. Today, we have taken up his challenge.

The Congress has already appropriated funding that will support our troops and keep this occupation going for at least another 6 months, possibly

longer. That funding, instead, should be used to finance an aggressive withdrawal plan that brings our troops home to their families; and our bill would do exactly that.

Our plan will also withdraw all U.S. troops and military contractors from Iraq within 6 months from date of enactment.

It will prohibit any further funding to deploy or continue to deploy U.S. troops in Iraq. The bill does, however, allow for funding to be used as needed to ensure safe withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel and contractors. Funding may also be used for the increased training and equipping of Iraqi and international security forces.

Thirdly, it accelerates during the 6-month transition training of a permanent Iraqi security force.

And fourth, it authorizes, if requested by the Iraqi government, U.S. support for an international stabilization force. Such a force could be funded for no longer than 2 years and be combined with economic and humanitarian assistance.

It guarantees full health care funding, including mental health for U.S. veterans and military operations in Iraq and other conflicts.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the bill would rescind the 2002 congressional authorization for the war in Iraq, prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in the country, and finally, ensure that the U.S. has no long-term control over Iraqi oil.

We believe that the oil in Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people, and we believe that when this oil goes into the world marketplace, the international marketplace, the U.S. will certainly have access to our share.

Mr. Speaker, excluding the veterans' benefits, our plan will cost the American people pennies on the dollar compared to continuing the occupation of 2 more years in Iraq. It will save lives, bodies and minds, and it will give Iraq back to the Iraqis.

The Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Act is an important step in regaining our country's credibility in the region and throughout the world, and it provides the President and Congress with a comprehensive strategy for responding to the majority of Americans who want our troops to come home.

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

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

HONORING THE LIFE OF BENNY PARSONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate a true inspiration whose perseverance showed the very best of the human spirit. Yesterday, Benny Parsons, a NASCAR legend, passed away after a difficult battle with lung cancer.

Parsons grew up in the foothills of North Carolina in Wilkes County, and his dedication and drive lifted him from poverty to national recognition. He became an inspiration to countless fans and individuals. He was a beloved character who brought passion to the sport. Today, we mourn and also celebrate the life of this beloved man in the 5th District of North Carolina.

The chairman of NASCAR, Brian France, said of Benny Parsons, who was affectionately referred to as BP, that "Benny Parsons was a true champion, both on the race track and in life. Benny loved our sport and the people that make it up and those people loved him. He will be remembered as being a great ambassador for the sport." Words such as these convey the deep admiration, respect and love of Benny and the effect he had on those with whom he connected.

After leaving Wilkes County, Benny first took a job as a cab driver in Detroit, Michigan, before he progressed to become a NASCAR champion. While faced with fame and admiration, Benny never forgot his roots and the importance of where he came from. He was often referred to as "The Professor" after he retired from racing in 1988 and began broadcasting and commenting on NASCAR races for NBC, ESPN and TNT. He had an uncanny ability to deliver information in a relaxed and informative way for the last 6 years, even when he was going through the rigorous treatment for cancer.

Michael Waltrip, who recently tested his car at the Daytona track, said of Benny, "When you talked to him, he brought out the human element. The cars are nuts and bolts, but he talked through that. He was able to deliver to people. He just tried to be passionate about what he believed, and he did a great job of explaining what people were seeing." To show his admiration of Benny, Waltrip painted on the side of his car, "We love you, BP."

Respect, admiration and inspiration among colleagues, fans and the public made Benny Parsons the amazing and inspirational figure that he was, but it was his personality that espoused all of these qualities so many came to admire. It was his passion and commitment to NASCAR and his love of the sport that made Benny such a lovable person and such a great inspiration. Even at his sickest moments, he had set up a Web blog for his fans, continually sharing his optimism that he would recover and that the will to fight is so important.

Besides the inspirational spirit and the continual drive to fight any obstacle in front of him, Benny Parsons was quite the accomplished NASCAR driver. He was a member of NASCAR's 50

greatest drivers. He was the 1973 NASCAR champion and won 21 races, including the race in 1957 at Daytona. In addition to those accomplishments, Benny was the first driver to be a Cup competitor, to qualify for a race over 200 miles per hour, driving 200.176 miles per hour at the Winston 500 at Talladega Superspeedway in 1982.

Benny Parsons made 526 starts from 1964 until his retirement in 1988. With such an outstanding record, Benny was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 1994 and continued his passion by broadcasting from the pit and won a Cable Ace Award for best sports analyst on his first season in the booth.

I think that NBC sports champion Dick Ebersol said it best about Benny, commenting, "Benny was a beloved and widely respected member of the NASCAR community. He was a great driver and a terrific broadcaster, but above anything else, he was a kind and generous human being. His character and spirit will define how he is remembered by all of us."

Benny fought cancer to the end with optimism and grace, inspiring countless people. His compassion, generosity and charming personality will be missed. Benny had made North Carolina and NASCAR proud, and his memory will be a lasting one of inspiration and dedication.

CONCLUDING OUR INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ AND BRINGING OUR TROOPS HOME

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, today Representative WOOLSEY, Representative LEE and I introduced a bill that would conclude our involvement in Iraq and bring our troops home. The bill, H.R. 508, is entitled, Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act of 2007. The bill has 16 original cosponsors. Representative WOOLSEY was on the floor a moment ago, and she shared with you some of the provisions of that bill.

I will reiterate, I will repeat, if enacted, the bill would repeal the use-of-force authorization passed by Congress in 2002 and requires a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and contractors hired by the U.S. Government within 6 months of the enactment of this bill.

The bill authorizes the President to support an international stabilization force in Iraq, if the Iraqi government requests such a force, but U.S. troops would not be permitted to participate in the international force.

It would turn security activities and military operations in Iraq over to the elected Iraqi government within 6 months of the date of enactment.

It would prohibit the U.S. from establishing permanent bases in Iraq.

It would cap the number of officers and employees of the United States as-

signed to the U.S. embassy in Iraq at 500.

It would accelerate the training and equipping of Iraq military and security forces, and pursue security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy.

It would provide assistance to the Iraqi government in recovering cultural and historical artifacts that have disappeared since the U.S. invaded in 2003.

It will do a number of other things, but let me wrap this up by saying it would fully fund veterans' health care, including mental health care, for our returning veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I am spending an inordinate amount of time on this issue, along with many of my other colleagues, and I have chosen to be a major cosponsor on this bill because I feel it is absolutely my responsibility to not only articulate what is wrong with this war, but to do everything that I can to encourage the President of the United States, the commander in chief, to bring our troops home.

I think it is important to do this because we have lost over 3,000 American soldiers. As a matter of fact, I think it is about 3,034.

I look at the continuing devastation in Iraq, and I see that just day before yesterday I believe over 100 Iraqis were killed and maybe twice as many was injured and we lost four more American soldiers.

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This has got to stop. We are in control. We can stop this. I am encouraging our Commander-in-Chief to bring our troops home, and to pursue diplomacy, save lives. Because I believe if they continue down the path that they are going, we are going to have a real blood bath in a short period of time.

This surge, this expansion of the war that has been advocated and pursued and pushed by this President is absolutely the wrong thing to do. I know that he has been advised and he has accepted the advice that he is to go into Sadr City and he is to confront al-Sadr, who is the head of a tremendous militia. They have over 50,000 signed up in that militia and more coming each day. I don't want our American soldiers to confront that militia. I don't want our American soldiers in the middle of this civil war. I don't want these young boys who come from our cities and our towns and these young girls who come from our villages and our hamlets of America to be caught in between Sunnis and Shiites and Kurds. They don't know a Sunni from a Shiite. We don't speak the language. We haven't trained people. Even the soldiers that are supposed to be embedded doing the training can't speak the language. They are depending on interpreters. And let me tell you, even some of the soldiers that we are training in Iraq are turning their backs on us. They desert our soldiers in the middle of a conflict, in a confrontation. These are the ones that we are training, that

we are depending on to take over the security of Iraq somehow. It is not going to happen.

We have to leave, and we should not be deterred from the mission of leaving because someone is going to accuse us of cutting and running. We know how these sound bites take place. We know what people do when they want to promote their position. They will mischaracterize what is being done. We have got to have the courage to stand up and stand up for our American soldiers.

I support and cosponsor this new bill. I would ask my colleagues to support it.

Today, Representative WOOLSEY, Representative LEE and I introduced a bill today that would conclude our involvement in Iraq and bring our troops home.

The bill, H.R. 508 is titled "Bring the Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2007."

The bill has 16 original cosponsors.

If enacted, the bill would:

Repeals the use of force authorization passed by Congress in 2002.

Requires the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and contractors hired by the U.S. government within 6 months of the enactment of this bill. The bill authorizes the President to support an international stabilization force in Iraq, if the Iraqi government requests such a force, but U.S. troops would not be permitted to participate in the international force;

Turn security activities and military operations in Iraq over to the elected Iraqi government within 6 months of the date of enactment.

Prohibit the U.S. from establishing permanent bases in Iraq;

Cap the number of officers and employees of the United States assigned to the U.S. embassy in Iraq at 500;

Accelerate the training and equipping of Iraqi military and security forces;

Pursue security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy;

Provide Iraqi government assistance in destroying/cleaning up land mines, unexploded ordnance and depleted uranium shells;

Provide assistance to the Iraqi government in recovering cultural and historic artifacts that have disappeared since the U.S. invaded in 2003;

Provide compensation for Iraqi noncombatant civilian casualties—except for those individuals that participated in the armed insurgency after May 1, 2003; and

Fully fund veterans healthcare, including mental health care, for our returning veterans.

This bill stands in stark contrast to President Bush's proposal to send more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq.

The President proposes more of the same, while we provide a way to remove our troops from the sectarian civil war in Iraq, return our troops to their loved ones and begin the process of restoring our credibility throughout the world.

EVEN THE SOLDIERS WILL TELL YOU: "NOTHING'S GOING TO HELP"

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARDOZA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.