

world have been the Socialist and Communist countries.

Only free market systems generate the excess funds to do the good things for the environment that all of us want done. Anger and name-calling and biased hearings will not solve any serious or legitimate problems.

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.)

HONORING TERRY MILFRED

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Terry Milfred upon his retirement as superintendent of the Weston School District. Terry is a dedicated public servant who has earned the respect and admiration of the teachers, staff and over 300 students under his supervision.

Most recently, Terry is revered for his efforts in comforting and uniting the local community after a tragic shooting last fall at Weston High School that took the life of a dear friend to Terry, and the schools well-respected principal, John Klang.

One hundred twenty-five students were left stunned on September 29, 2006, when a fellow classmate opened fire on faculty members and peers. Fortunately for the students of Weston High School, Principal John Klang, in the most unselfish act one person can do for others, sacrificed himself to protect his students and his faculty.

Terry Milfred and the dedicated members of his staff took immediate action and displayed steadfast leadership, establishing a safe environment in consoling the students and the faculty. In an effort to recover from this tragedy and the loss of an incredible principal, others in the administration, such as Tom Andreas and Melissa Nigh, stepped forward to ensure that students and faculty received the support that they needed.

Together, Tom, Melissa and Terry summoned leaders from around the State, forming a crisis management team to address the specific needs of each individual impacted by this tragedy. The students of Weston High School should also be commended for the courage and selflessness they displayed in overcoming this hardship and uniting as a student body.

As a husband, father, grandfather, and role model to students, parents, and members of his staff, Terry has bettered the lives of numerous individuals. He has risen to the challenge of protecting those in his care and mentoring those dearest to him. Prior to

the unfortunate incident last fall, Terry served as an adviser to Principal Klang. While much of their time was spent conversing in school hallways and cafeterias, Terry and John had a relationship and respect for one another that extended beyond the classroom door.

Principal Klang was a dear friend to many and he will be greatly missed.

In memory of Principal Klang and in an effort to prepare others if such an unfortunate incident should occur in their community, Terry has dedicated countless hours addressing school groups and educators on methods to handle school violence.

Although Terry Milfred is retiring from the superintendent position, he will remain a visible actor in the lives of students and teachers at Weston School District. His advocacy and community work will leave a lasting legacy for the entire community, and the area will continue to benefit from all that he has done.

On behalf of the students and faculty of Weston School District, I would like to thank Terry for his many years of tireless service and for bringing hope in the shadows of tragedy and despair.

I wish Terry a very long and a very happy retirement.

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BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I rise on behalf of the 44-member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition.

Mr. Speaker, as you walk the Halls of Congress, you will notice these Blue Dog Coalition posters along the hallways which signify that you are walking by the door to an office of a fellow Blue Dog Member. And the reason you will find these posters scattered across the Cannon, Longworth and Rayburn House Office Buildings is because we are committed to restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government. And it is important to us, Mr. Speaker, that we remind every Member of Congress, as well as the general public that walk these Halls, that our Nation is in debt. In fact, the U.S. national debt, as of today, is \$3,721,415,192,294. And we ran out of room on the poster, Mr. Speaker, but 43 cents. Our national debt, \$3,721,415,192,294.43. That is a big number. What does it mean?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what it means. For every man, woman and child living in America, including those children being born today, their share of the national debt is \$29,093.20. It is what we refer to as the debt tax, D-E-B-T. That is one tax that cannot be cut, that cannot go away until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Why is it important? Because our Nation is borrowing about \$1 billion a day. But, Mr. Speaker, before we borrow \$1 billion a day, we are going to spend a half a billion dollars paying interest on the debt we have already got. And many of America's priorities in the area of education, veterans benefits, health care, roads, many of America's priorities continue to go unmet and they will until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

As members of the Blue Dog Coalition, which is just another name for fiscally conservative Democrats, we are concerned about this. But, Mr. Speaker, our concerns do not end with the debt and the deficit. We are also concerned about accountability, and this Democratic Congress is going to restore accountability to this Chamber, to this administration, and, yes, to the Government of the United States of America.

The Constitution clearly gives Congress, not only the power and the authority, but it is our constitutional duty to provide oversight of this administration. And yet this Republican Congress that we have had for the past 6 years has been nothing more than a rubber stamp for President Bush and his administration.

It is time that Congress did its job. It is time that Congress put the rubber stamp in the drawer and pull out the Constitution and read it and understand that we have a duty, a constitutional duty, to provide oversight to this administration and to this government. We are going to do that. And we are doing it in many areas, including providing for accountability for how the hardworking people of this country's tax money is being spent in places like Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, you ask a hundred different people what they think about this Iraq war policy, you will get about a hundred different answers. And by the way, very few or none of them are going to agree with the direction that President Bush is currently going. If you ask fellow Blue Dog members, you will get different answers as well. I, personally, am opposed to the surge. Others may not be. That is something that we believe each Member must make a decision on and speak from their heart and represent their constituency.

But one of the things that we are united on as Blue Dog members is restoring accountability for how this money is being spent in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I want to show here a couple of numbers that are very important. One is the cost of the Iraq war. They spent \$2.5 billion pre-invasion in 2001 and 2002. In 2003, \$51 billion was spent. In 2004, \$77.3 billion was spent. In 2005, \$87.3 billion was spent. In 2006, \$100.4 billion. 2007, to date, we are getting ready to vote on another supplemental appropriation bill for the war, but to date, \$60 billion. That puts the total cost to the taxpayers of America at nearly \$400 billion, \$378.5 billion.