

During Black History Month, I thank Rev. Scipio for dedicating himself as a public and faith-based servant to protect our at-risk youth.

□ 1430

DEMOCRATS WORK EVEN WHEN HOUSE FLOOR NOT IN SESSION

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I had not intended to speak either, but after listening to some of my friends from the other side of the aisle discuss how the House has finished and we have concluded business, they may be going home for the day, but I want to share with America and my constituents what I am going to be doing. I am not leaving. I am going to continue to work.

At 2:30, I will be meeting with a constituent group from my district. I am going to return to a hearing of the Energy and Water Subcommittee. I will be meeting with another group from my district at 3. I am meeting with the adjutant general of the New York National Guard at 3:30. At 4, I am meeting with a member from the other side, Congresswoman EMERSON, to discuss the Center Aisle Caucus.

Then I have a 4:30 staff meeting, then a Humane Society meeting, then a U.S.-China Working Group meeting. Then I will be going to George Washington University to give a speech.

My friends, it is okay for you to go home at 2:00 when the legislative business is done, but many of us on this side, we are going to continue to do the work that the American people want.

DEMOCRATS WORKING HARD IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I had not intended to speak this afternoon either. Actually, I am late going to a military personnel subcommittee hearing where we are going to take a look at the changes that are going to happen to the Reserve Montgomery GI bill. It is running a little late because we had votes, but we are working here. I don't know where the other side is. They are in the minority now, and maybe they are going home; but we have a lot of things to get done for the American people.

When I finish with the military subcommittee, I will be going to the full Homeland Security Committee where we are going to receive a briefing on the SpyNet program. On this immigration issue that everybody in America thinks is so important, this is how we protect the borders and how we are using assets there, and we are going to

get a briefing on that. That should include Republicans. I don't know if they will show up for that meeting, but they should.

After that, Madam Speaker, I have a subcommittee on oversight and investigations with respect to the House Committee on Armed Services where I also serve. And then I will meet with constituents, credit unions, and people who are in town. So we on this side of the aisle are working very hard to keep the work going on here in Washington, D.C.

DEMOCRATS WORKING HARD

(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, I, too, would certainly like to share my schedule. I have been listening and passing on and was not going to speak, but I heard complaints about work not being done.

I have a 4:00 meeting with the Progressive Caucus.

I have a meeting where we are going to be discussing the Employer Free Choice Act later this afternoon.

We have the National Wildlife Federation that is coming around to talk about their issues.

We then will be talking about the whole question of North Korea which is going on right now in the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The county executive from Hudson County, Mr. Tom DeGise, is coming over to discuss problems of the county.

Later in the afternoon, the president of Monmouth University will be in my office discussing their 2008 agenda.

We will have the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs to talk about peace between the Palestinians and Israelis, something that is extremely important.

I have a meeting scheduled with Ambassador Olhaye, Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps.

I could go on and on. My time has run out, but I have still 8 or 10 or 12 issues to meet on.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, 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 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

CIVIL WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, finally, grudgingly, the administration has agreed to talk to Syria and Iran about the civil war that is raging in Iraq. This should have happened at least 2 years ago, so why now?

Has the President finally concluded what many of us have said for a long time: That you cannot shoot your way to a peace in Iraq? That would be a hopeful sign, but it is doubtful since he continues to escalate the U.S. presence in the middle of a civil war.

The apparent movement towards diplomacy comes at a curious time. The American people told their government last November to get their soldiers out of harm's way when they gave the Democrats a 2-year contract on the majority. And it didn't take long for this House to make a down payment on rebuilding trust with the American people.

Despite repeated Presidential claims that meant nothing, the overwhelming passage of Speaker PELOSI's first step in getting U.S. soldiers out of harm's way was the shot heard round the world.

No one wants to move faster than me in getting the soldiers out of Iraq. But every journey starts with a single step, and we have done it.

The American people and other nations welcomed the Speaker's leadership in getting this country to begin to set a new course in Iraq based on a reality, and not based on the same old rhetoric from the White House. They continue to bluster; so what else is new?

There are serious mainstream Middle East leaders who believe the U.S. policy has more to do with extraction than engagement. By extraction, they don't mean U.S. soldiers being extracted out of harm's way, they are referring to extracting Iraq's oil.

The Asia Times yesterday published two commentaries that are reverberating throughout the Middle East. One is called, "U.S.'s Iraq Oil Grab is a Done Deal." And the other is entitled: "Big Oil In, Stability Out Under New Iraqi Law." I will include the two articles for the RECORD.

As many articles in recent days have pointed out, the President's representatives in Iraq used intense pressure behind the scenes to get the Iraq government to take the first step in making production-sharing agreements, PSAs, the law of Iraq. There are scenarios in which investment and production will be a benefit to the Iraq people, but the Iraq people have to be solely in charge. As it stands, and as many fear, the