

my master's commands and expertly trained to sniff out bombs and explosives. Where's my master, Dusty? Where's Dusty, my partner? No one can understand me but Dusty. Where's Dusty?

Iraq was to be my last combat tour before retirement. Dusty talked to me all the time about going home and adopting me. I sure do miss my Dusty. He is the best friend I've ever had. I love that crazy Marine from Mississippi!

No one can measure the love and unconditional loyalty I have for Dusty. I'd sacrifice my own life for him and he knows it. I just wish I could have stopped that RPG or pushed Dusty away from that powerful blast. It all happened in a blink of an eye and I didn't see it coming until it was too late. Now I sit alone in my kennel-run waiting for the day Dusty shows up.

The U.S. Marines are treating me very well. I get enough food and water and exercise each day. And the Veterinarian comes by to examine my wounds on a regular basis. I just can't sleep well at night. I wake up to every little noise and I think about Dusty. Where can that Marine be?

The nights are long. The days turn into weeks. Still no Dusty! My wounds are healing and the hair is growing back. The pain still resides in my back but I can walk okay. I have a piece of shrapnel near my spine that the Veterinarians avoided removing for fear of further health complications. I've been fortunate to be declared physically unable to perform in a combat zone.

One of the dog handlers gave me a real good bath and grooming. I felt so refreshed because I was on my way to meet Dusty's family. Maybe Dusty will be there waiting for me. When I arrived I sensed something was not quite right. Dusty wasn't there and everyone was sad, but very happy to greet me. I then realized that I was attending Dusty's funeral. Everyone showed up to pay their respects.

Dusty is a real American hero and he was buried with full military honors. I was so proud to have been his last best friend and partner. At one particular moment of total silence during the ceremony, I sniffed a slight scent in the air that was very familiar. It smelled like Dusty. I figured he sent me a signal that he knew I was there! I moaned a sigh of grief that he would only hear and understand.

I was greeted by the Lee family with joy in their hearts. The picture is of Dustin's mom, Rachel, and me in church. It felt so warm and comfortable to be with my partner's loving family. I wanted to stay but I was escorted away after the funeral and back to Albany, Georgia. What is going to happen to me now?

Wait a minute! I was due for retirement, right? Why did the military take me to see Dusty's family and not leave me there? I belong with them in Mississippi not here in Georgia. There is something very wrong with this picture!

The Lee family adopting me would not be too much to ask considering they will never again see their son, grandson, brother, nephew and friend. Adopting me will keep a big part of Dusty's life alive for them and for me too! I will enable Dusty's family to experience what he already knew about me. I loved and protected him everywhere we went and even on the battlefield in Iraq. It's time the U.S. Marine Corps allowed Dustin's family to adopt me. I'm not a young pup anymore, you know! I'm of retirement age and I want to spend the rest of my life with the Lee family. It's where I now belong!

After learning this story, I spoke with Corporal Lee's father, Jerome Lee, by phone on several occasions. Mr.

Lee continued to express the joy and comfort that caring for Lex would bring to him and his family, and he requested my assistance in securing the adoption of Lex.

After speaking with Mr. Lee, I began contacting the United States Marine Corps to communicate and endorse their request. Recently, the Marine Corps confirmed to me that the request would be granted and the Lee family would be able to retrieve Lex from Marine Corps Logistic Base Albany within the next 2 weeks.

Allowing the Lee family to adopt Lex will not only help lessen the family's ongoing grief, but also serve as a fitting thank you to parents who gave the ultimate gift of their son for this country.

I am so grateful to the United States Marine Corps and Commandant James Conway for the tremendous gift they have chosen to bestow upon Jerome and Rachel Lee.

I am also very grateful to Brigadier General Michael Regner and Major General Robert Dickerson for their role in enabling the adoption to proceed.

Although Lex will never replace their son, caring for Lex will bring such joy and comfort to the Lee family, as well as to the dog himself. Welcoming Lex into the Lee family will keep a big part of Corporal Lee's life alive for their family.

Lex loved and protected Corporal Lee on the battlefield, and now Corporal Lee's family will have the opportunity to love and protect Lex in the peaceful surroundings of their home in Mississippi.

The United States Marine Corps has demonstrated its tremendous compassion and understanding by making this adoption a reality for the parents of one of our Nation's fallen heroes.

I close, Madam Speaker, by asking God to please bless the United States Marine Corps and all of our men and women in uniform, and may God continue to bless America.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR. The Lee family is from Quitman, Mississippi. The dad is a State Trooper. The mom is a public school teacher. I want to thank you for doing this. I regret that the request was not made of my office. But it just once again proves what a decent Joe you are, WALTER. Thank you for doing that.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. I appreciate the gentleman. And I will tell the gentleman, before he sits down, when I read this story it brought tears to my eyes. And I asked Mr. Burnam, who had been in Vietnam himself as a dog handler, What should I do, what could I do. He said, Do what your heart tells you to do. And my dear friend from Mississippi, I didn't even know where this man was in Mississippi. I just picked up the phone because Camp Lejeune was in my district. But thank

you for what you said. And may God continue to bless America.

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.)

WHAT HAS NOT BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THIS CONGRESS

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. Madam Speaker, I am here tonight to talk about what has not been accomplished in this Congress, and what it looks like we may be facing in an omnibus bill.

Last week we were told that we would be here on Friday of this coming week, after we had been told about a month ago that we would be able to be in our districts on Friday. I know that I made many plans to be in the district, speak to school groups that had been asking me to speak, meet with chamber of commerce people to talk about concerns that they had, and to do lots of things in the district.

We have been denied many opportunities this year to be in our district to hear from the folks in the district the things that are on their minds and what's really important in the country, because the majority has insisted that we stay in session 5 days a week. But if you look at the bills that have been passed in those days that we've been here, you'd see that they were not things that primarily the Congress needs to be concerning itself with.

We do need to be concerning ourselves with the appropriations bills, funding the war on terror, taking care of tax relief for middle-income Americans, many, many things that we should be doing. But, instead, we are literally wasting our time on insignificant issues and not dealing with those things we should be dealing with.

It was announced last week that we would be dealing with an omnibus appropriations bill. Why an omnibus appropriations bill? Because the majority has been unable to pass 10 of the vital appropriations bills that our government relies for its funding on.

We have passed the Defense bill and the President has signed it. We've passed the Labor-HHS bill. The President vetoed it and the veto was upheld. So we are coming to the end of a continuing resolution that was passed that expires on Friday, and we're facing the prospect of lumping 11 appropriations bills together and passing them in one fell swoop. Well, we know that is just a recipe for disaster.

Last week we were given the Energy bill, 15 hours before we voted on it, a 1,000-plus page bill, and it had all kinds of problems with it. Buying Lexus hybrids for the Beverly Hills police,

many, many things in there that the American people would not approve of. And I fear that in the omnibus bill we're going to see a lot of those kinds of things.

Now, we don't know yet what's going to be in the omnibus bill, but in addition to a tremendous number of earmarks, we are probably going to see sanctions against Cuba weakened. We are probably going to see the Mexico City policy overturned. The House and Senate versions of the State Department appropriations bill permits grants and subsidies for organizations that perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning, overturning the Bush administration's Mexico City policy. We don't need to be doing that. The American people do not want us to take their hard-earned money to fund abortions.

It is probably going to provide federally funded benefits for domestic partners. Before being stripped from the House-passed Financial Services general government appropriations bill, a provision would have allowed unmarried cohabiting couples in the District of Columbia to qualify for Federal benefits on the same basis as legally married couples. That provision could be brought back to life in the majority's omnibus legislation.

Ending an IRS private debt collection program, the majority spending bill could limit funding to implement the Internal Revenue Service's use of private collection firms to collect unpaid taxes. The private debt collection initiative is expected to collect \$1.3 billion in taxes owed to the government that would otherwise go uncollected.

Undermining regulatory reform, a provision in the House-passed Financial Services general government appropriations bill, again, H.R. 2829, would kill efforts to increase the quality, accountability, and transparency of the Federal Government's regulatory review process. It would result in a fox guarding the hen house approach to approving Federal rules and regulations.

We don't need an omnibus bill. We need to vote on these bills one at a time, Madam Speaker.

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

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

BLOOD LEVELS OF MERCURY ARE RELATED TO DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM

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. Madam Speaker, it's late at night here in the

Capitol, and most of my colleagues are in their offices or have gone home. But I want to talk about an issue that's very, very important that we've been talking about now for the last 8 years.

I was chairman of the Government Reform Committee for 6 years, and during that time, my grandson became autistic; and we checked to find out what was the cause, trying to find out, because my daughter and her husband were just extremely upset about it, as we were as grandparents. And we found that he had received nine shots in one day, seven of which had a product called thimerosal, a preservative, in it. And the thimerosal was 50 percent ethylmercury. And so I decided to have hearings to try to find out if the ethylmercury in those vaccines had anything to do with the autistic problem my grandson had. And we found, by having many, many hearings over a 4-year period, we found that scientists from all over the world and leading doctors and educators here that work with autistic children, that the mercury in the vaccines did contribute to the autistic epidemic that we had.

We used to have one in 10,000 children that were diagnosed as being autistic. One in 10,000. Today the Centers for Disease Control will tell you it's one out of 150. It's an absolute epidemic in this country. And we have been fighting and fighting and fighting to make sure that those families who have been damaged and those children who have been damaged by autism get some kind of compensation. And that's why, and I think in 1986 we passed what was called the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund, and it took some of the money from the pharmaceutical companies when they sold their vaccine products to put into this fund to take care of people who are damaged by vaccines. And one of the reasons we did that was because of the issue of autism, although at that time I didn't know much about it.

In any event, the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund has about \$3 billion in it, and the people who's children have been adversely affected by mercury and have autism have not been able to get anything out of that. They have to go through a process and see a special master, and he has to judge whether or not the information that he has and the information they have lead them to believe that the mercury in the vaccines caused autism. And so far the special masters have not been able to ascertain, according to them, that the mercury in the vaccines does cause autism.

Well, last week, 2 years ago, let's see, 4 years ago there was a report, 2004, that said that there was definitely no connection between the mercury and the vaccinations and the children getting autism. Well, this past November, just last month, two doctors, Dr. Catherine DeSoto and Dr. Robert T. Hitlan, both very renowned doctors across this country, they have Ph.D.s in medicine, they wrote an article in the Journal of

Child Neurology. And you can't discount this. What they're saying is fact. I want to read to you the summary of what they said. They said: "The question of what is leading to the apparent increase in autism is of great importance. Like the link between aspirin and heart attack, even a small effect can have a major health implication. If there is any link between autism and mercury, it is absolutely crucial that the first reports of the question are not falsely stated and that no link occurs."

Now, get this: "We have reanalyzed the data set forth originally reported in 2004 and have found that the original P value was in error and that a significant relation does exist between the blood levels of mercury and diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder. Moreover, the hair sample analysis results offer some support for the idea that persons with autism may be less efficient and more variable at eliminating mercury from the blood."

The fact of the matter is the mercury in the vaccines has autism. It's not the only cause of autism. But now we have scientific evidence by two leading doctors in the Journal of Child Neurology that says without doubt, the mercury in the vaccines does cause autism, is a major contributing factor.

Well, I've written, contacted Congressman KUCINICH, who's chairman of the subcommittee that deals with this in the Capitol, and I've also contacted the special masters that decide these cases and have urged them to re-evaluate all of these cases where people who have autistic children have found that the mercury in the vaccines may have been a major cause.

Now we know that it is a cause of autism, and those people who have suffered, and those kids who have suffered need to be compensated out of the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund.

So I'd like to say to my colleagues, I hope you will join me in making sure that the information I just read gets out to everybody. These kids are going to live to be 50, 60, 70 years old, and unless there's some help for them, they're going to be a real burden on the taxpayers and on society. We have an obligation to make sure they're taken care of.

I hope all of my colleagues will read this statement tonight and help us to change the attitude of our health agencies and the special masters dealing with this problem.

In November 2007, the well-respected scientific journal, the Journal of Child Neurology, published an article authored by Drs. M. Catherine DeSoto and Robert T. Hitlan (PhDs), detailing their findings on the relationship between mercury and autism spectrum disorders. The article was entitled "Blood Levels of Mercury are Related to Diagnosis of Autism: A Reanalysis of an Important Data Set."

To summarize the article, Drs. DeSoto and Hitlan reanalyzed a data set the subject of a 2004 study that found no relationship between mercury and autism. By reexamining the data set, Drs. DeSoto and Hitlan determined that the conclusions of the 2004 study were wrong,