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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, You reveal Yourself to people through Your creation and even more so in Your word.

By Your grace, open the minds and hearts of Your people, especially leaders in government, business, and homes, that they may receive and take unto themselves Your good news, which can create peace and reconciliation in them and they in turn may bring peace, hope, and stability to this Nation and thereby to the entire world.

Because You are doing this, to You be all honor, glory, and thanksgiving, now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1200. An act to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to revise and extend that Act.

S. 2450. An act to amend the Federal Rules of Evidence to address the waiver of the attorney-client privilege and the work product doctrine.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PEACE CORPS WEEK

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, President Kennedy, 47 years ago at the establishment of the Peace Corps, said that reactions to the Peace Corps are proof that we have in America ''an immense reservoir of such men and women, anxious to sacrifice their energies and time and toil to the cause of world peace and human progress.''

What was true in 1961 as it is true today. Peace Corps volunteers are an outstanding group of men and women serving the cause of humanity across the globe.

This year, those words have even more meaning for me as my daughter Anne is serving in the Peace Corps in Mozambique.

During this National Peace Corps Week, I want to commend the service and commitment of the Peace Corps volunteers from my community and express our pride in fellow Oregonians who have chosen to devote 2 years or more of their lives in service to others.

In addition to Anne Blumenauer, I would like to recognize John Bento, serving in Georgia; Amanda Bickle-Eldridge, serving in Nicaragua; Stuart Chidester, serving in Paraguay; Melanie Edwards, serving in Azerbaijan; Ashley Hollenbeck, serving in Morocco; Andrea Lawrence, serving in Bolivia; James Lensen-Callas, serving in Peru; Erik Nelson, serving in Georgia; Sami Oeser, serving in Botswana; Sandra Stevens, serving in Jamaica; Paul Sylvester, serving in Samoa; Normand Tremblay, serving in Cameroon; and Natalie Wilson, serving in Botswana.

They are the foundation for creating a safer and more prosperous world, establishing a better future for people everywhere.

FISA REAUTHORIZATION

(Mr. HOEKSTRA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, today is day 12, day 12 of diminished capabilities of the U.S. intelligence community to go out and get the information that they need to collect to keep America safe.

Our National Director of Intelligence, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee all have said that with the failure of the House to act on restoring and approving a FISA modernization bill America's capabilities erode each and every day.

So what is the House going to do today? S. 2478, naming a post office; S. 2272, naming a post office. The third bill we'll consider today, naming a post office. The fourth bill, naming a post office. We'll do four other noncontroversial bills.

And then what we will do? Will we take up FISA modernization? No, we will do the same thing we did 2 weeks ago: we will go home.

The schedule for Friday? On Friday, no votes are expected. Our capabilities will diminish for 4 more days.

''House Democrats In a Perilous Game,'' is what The Republican of Springfield, Massachusetts, said. ''The House let a crucial deadline come and go without even taking a vote on this matter.''

America's at greater risk because this House continues to fail to act.

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DEMOCRATS FIGHT TO END SUBSIDIES FOR BIG OIL AND INSTEAD SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House eliminated wasteful and unnecessary taxpayer subsidies to some of the largest multinational oil companies and instead invested this money in subsidies for regular individuals and businesses who are investing in clean energy. This legislation will not only help ease the pain at the pump for many Americans, but it will also help us get us on the road toward energy independence.

This bill comes shortly after the big five oil companies reported their latest record profits. Earlier this month, for example, ExxonMobil reported earnings of $40.6 billion in 2007, the largest corporate profit in American history.

Now, why should the big oil companies receive billions of dollars in government welfare? Well, they shouldn't. It's simply a waste of taxpayer dollars at the expense of our very necessary drive towards energy independence.

Mr. Speaker, the House has acted on legislation that will lower energy costs, improve national security by making us more energy independent and ending wasteful taxpayer subsidies for companies that clearly do not need them.

CONGRESS CHOSE POORLY

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, if you tax something, you get less of it. If you subsidize it, you get more of it. So in this day of homegrown energy depletion, Congress made the absurd choice of putting more taxes on American oil companies and, instead, chose to subsidize the special interest groups of unproven, undeveloped, and even nonexistent sources of energy.

More taxes means the price of crude oil will rise, not diminish; thus, gasoline prices will rise. This tax will be passed on to us, the consumer. Taxes are always passed on to the consumer.

The tax will not encourage, but lessen, domestic oil production. The tax will encourage oil companies to go to some other country to drill for oil and encourage American refineries to move offshore to areas not hostile.

The tax will make us more dependent on Third World countries like Dictator Chavez for oil.

Congress should lower taxes on U.S. oil companies to encourage domestic production.

So Congress had the choice to encourage domestic oil production by opening up places to drill like ANWR and off the coast, or to tax the black gold and lifeblood of our energy—crude oil. Congress chose poorly.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING BRUCE BEYER

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Bruce Beyer, a remarkable constituent of mine from Davenport, Iowa, who was recently awarded the Army's Outstanding Individual with Disability Award. I'm proud that Bruce was one of 16 employees honored at the DOD Disability Awards ceremony in December for his contributions to the Army Sustainment Command at Rock Island Arsenal.

Bruce has been in a wheelchair since a bicycle accident in 1982 left him a quadriplegic without the use of his arms. According to his boss, Bruce Angus, who nominated him, Bruce is an inspiration to everyone around him and exemplifies the tenet that the only true disability in life is a bad attitude.

Bruce is active in raising awareness about people with disabilities by training managers through the arsenal's Windmill Program, by serving as a counselor in the Rock Island-Milan School District, and by conducting seminars in assistive technology and advocacy for disabled individuals.

Bruce is a model of perseverance and a source of pride for the First District of Iowa, and I join his family, friends, colleagues and community in congratulating him on receiving this honor, and I'm thanking and commending him for his incredible contributions to the arsenal and the Quad Cities community.

CONGRATULATING STUDENTS ON RECEIVING OFFERS TO U.S. SERVICE ACADEMIES

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, this year I had the opportunity to nominate several outstanding high school students in the Eighth District for our Service Academies. Five of these students won nominations.

Ms. Morgan Grohol, Central Cabarrus, varsity athletics, National Honor Society, Beta Club, will attend the Air Force Academy.

Mr. Milton Cantos, Concord High School, U.S. Naval Academy, Academic Honors Club, Key Club, varsity soccer.

Mr. Gabriel Whaley lives in Cabarrus County and attends the North Carolina School of Math and Science, National Honor Society, Academics Honor Club, varsity soccer. He will attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Mr. Andrew Chinlund graduated from Jack Britt High in Cumberland County. National Honor Society, Junior ROTC. He will attend the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Finally, Mr. Derek Graves is a senior at Hoke High School. Student Council, Academic Honors, cross-country. He will attend the U.S. Naval Academy.

These are five hardworking young people. I'd like to commend them for their extraordinary work and dedication and service to their country, and I wish these five students the best of luck in their future. I thank them for choosing to serve their country.

ON FISA, PRESIDENT AND REPUBLICANS PLAY POLITICS WITH NATIONAL SECURITY

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, President Bush is out of new ideas. Instead, all he has left is blatant fear-mongering, a strategy that his administration has elevated to an art form.

This time, it's the expiration of his Protect America Act that has the President warning of dire consequences, even though his own administration admits that our intelligence community continues to have every tool it needs. Fortunately, the American people are not buying into the administration's latest scare tactics.

It's pretty difficult for the President to now decry the act's expiration when he threatened to veto a 21-day extension earlier this month. If the law was so critical to national security, you would think that the President and congressional Republicans would have done everything in their power to ensure that it didn't expire.

If Washington Republicans were seriously concerned about the future of the FISA program, you would think they would want a seat at the table as important negotiations continue. Instead, both the administration and Republican leaders have refused to negotiate.

Mr. Speaker, no wonder the scare tactics aren't working.

□ 1015

SUPPORT PROTECT AMERICA ACT

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, when I go home and I talk to my constituents, they understand and appreciate that it is the primary responsibility of Congress to protect our Nation. All Americans believe we should be able to determine what terrorists are saying to terrorists overseas. Playing politics with our Nation's intelligence capabilities only serves to harm our national security. And despite proof of a bipartisan majority of support in the Senate which passed the FISA bill 68–29, House Democrat leadership allowed these protections to expire without a vote. To expire without a vote. Astounding, Mr. Speaker.

We're now 13 days into a unilateral disarmament on the part of our Nation.

The ability to obtain the right information at the right time is of critical importance in our struggle against radical terrorists who hide among civilian populations and quietly plot deadly attacks. The Protect America Act moved our intelligence capabilities in the right direction. The Senate understood that in a bipartisan way. The American people understand that. We hope and pray that the Speaker and the Democrat leadership will come to their senses and allow a vote on the Protect America Act.

OFFICERS SAY IRAQ WAR HAS STRETCHED MILITARY ''DANGEROUSLY THIN''

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, 5 years after the start of the war in Iraq, a new authoritative poll shows the growing concern of U.S. military officers about the impact of the war in Iraq on our Nation's security. The poll is based on the opinions of 3,400 present and former military officers. Eighty-eight percent of these officers believe that the demands of the Iraq war have ''stretched the U.S. military dangerously thin.'' Eighty percent of the military officers believe it is unreasonable to expect that the U.S. could respond to any new military threat in another part of the world. And nearly three-quarters of the officers believe civilian leaders set ''unreasonable goals for the military in post-Saddam Iraq.''

Clearly, the Bush administration is not listening to its own military officers. In fact, before the start of the Iraq war, not one single military officer believed that Iraq had anything to do with the war on terrorism. And yet President Bush is determined to continue this war irregardless of his military's own concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq has undermined our Nation's military strength and our readiness and, therefore, our national security.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

CAPTAIN JONATHAN D. GRASSBAUGH POST OFFICE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2478) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 59 Colby Corner in East Hampstead, New Hampshire, as the ''Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office''.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2478

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CAPTAIN JONATHAN D. GRASSBAUGH POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 59 Colby Corner in East Hampstead, New Hampshire, shall be known and designated as the ''Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of S. 2478 which names a postal facility in the town of East Hampstead, New Hampshire, after Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh.

S. 2478, which was introduced in the Senate by Senator JOHN SUNUNU on December 13, 2007, and passed by the Chamber under unanimous consent on December 19, 2007, has been considered and reported out of the Oversight Committee by voice vote as of January 29, 2008.

Like many of the postal naming measures in which this body has previously considered and passed over the past couple of years, S. 2478 seeks to honor the service and dedication of a heroic American serviceman, the Honorable Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh, by naming after him the post office in his hometown of East Hampstead, New Hampshire.

Born and raised in the fine city of East Hampstead, New Hampshire, Captain Grassbaugh is held in high esteem by friends and family alike who recall him as an exceptional student and active community volunteer. After graduating from high school with honors, Captain Grassbaugh attended Johns Hopkins University where he graduated in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in computer science. During his collegiate pursuits at Johns Hopkins, Captain Grassbaugh also served as the battalion commander for the school's ROTC program.

After completing U.S. Army Ranger School in April 2004, Captain Grassbaugh was assigned to the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Sadly, however, on April 7, 2007, while serving in Iraq, Captain Jonathan Grassbaugh was tragically killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his unit in Zaganiyah, Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, given Captain Grassbaugh's commitment to his community, his vocation and, of course, his country, I think it only fitting that we pass the underlying measure to designate the post office on Colby Corner in East Hampstead, New Hampshire, as the Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today to urge passage of this bill designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 59 Colby Corner in East Hampstead, New Hampshire, as the Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office. Described by his family as ''the epitome of an officer and a gentleman,'' Captain Jonathan Grassbaugh was a truly remarkable young man.

Born into a military family, Captain Grassbaugh moved to New Hampshire at the age of 3. After graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy, he attended Johns Hopkins University where he earned his degree in computer science. During his time at Hopkins, Jonathan rose quickly through the ranks of his Army ROTC class, selected as the cadet battalion commander his senior year. Jonathan's dedication and sense of honor served as a driving force behind the JHU Ranger Challenge team winning brigade competitions 2 years in a row and the battalion being rated third in the nation among 270 ROTC units.

In the words of one of his professors, ''In my 9 years of teaching ROTC, Jonathan Grassbaugh was by far one of the most energetic and conscientious young men that I have ever had the honor to teach.''

In 2005 during his first tour in Iraq, Captain Grassbaugh served as aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Michael Ferriter, a top adviser to the U.S. military commander in Iraq. Speaking at Jonathan's funeral, Ferriter commented on the young man he grew to know so well: ''He made me a better leader and a better man. He was simply as good as it gets. He was the best; a warrior, friend, comrade, loving husband, and caring son.''

In June of 2006, Jonathan married his college sweetheart, Jenna, just a few

days after her graduation from Hopkins. A few weeks later he was deployed to Iraq as a member of the 73rd Cavalry, 5th Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division. On April 7, 2007, the 25-year-old Grassbaugh was killed by an IED while conducting a combat logistic patrol in Zaganiyah, Iraq.

A loving husband, dedicated son, and accomplished soldier, Captain Grassbaugh was and will remain a shining example of America's best. Though we will never have the privilege of knowing the limits of his seemingly endless potential, the memory of his spirit, honor, and dedication should live on as an example to others. In the words of the Reverend Frederick Pennett at his funeral, ''He laid down his life for us and for his country. There is no greater love than this. Jonathan's story and his memory will go on forever.''

I urge that we help preserve the memory of Captain Jonathan Grassbaugh with passage of this bill, and I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this fitting tribute.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she might consume to Representative CAROL SHEA-PORTER from New Hampshire.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this bill and in honor of a great son of New Hampshire, Captain Jonathan Grassbaugh. I would like to thank my colleagues in the House for bringing this to the floor and my colleagues in the Senate for passing the original version.

Mr. Speaker, it is a special privilege for me to offer my remarks in support of this legislation and to have an opportunity to share with my colleagues in the House the story of an outstanding young man, a courageous leader, and a brave husband.

Jon was born on August 18, 1981. He and his family moved to Hampstead, New Hampshire, 8 years later and quickly grew roots in their community. His mother, Patricia, is the principal at Hampstead Middle School. Jon attended the elite Phillips Exeter Academy and graduated with honors in 1999. He attended Johns Hopkins University where he was commissioned through their ROTC program and graduated in 2003. That's also where Jon met his wife, Jenna, an Army officer in her own right. Tragically, they had only been married 10 months when an IED took Jon and three of his fellow Rangers on a combat logistics patrol in Diyala province.

When Jon finished school, he continued a strong family tradition of service to our country. His father was also a Ranger who served in Vietnam. Jon's brother is a West Point and Dartmouth graduate and an Army surgeon at Fort Lewis.

For Jon, it was not enough to serve. He excelled, the best of the best. A highly decorated officer, Jon was assigned to 5th Squad, 73rd Cavalry, 3rd BCT of the 82nd Airborne, Fort Bragg. As I said, the best of the best. Among more than a dozen of Jon's medals and honors are the Bronze Star he earned for combat heroism and a Purple Heart.

Jon was killed in action on April 7, 2007. He was only 25 years old. Our thoughts and prayers remain with his wife, Jenna. Jon was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery alongside three centuries of America's heroes, hallowed ground befitting a hero. We in New Hampshire are lucky to have had time with him and we have been blessed by the life of this wonderful man.

I urge my colleagues to join me today in continuing to honor his life by voting to memorialize his service, his dedication to his country and to his family, and his willingness to give his country his own life. Join me in passing S. 2478 for Army Ranger Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this resolution and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2478.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JOHN ''MARTY'' THIELS SOUTHPARK STATION

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2272) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service known as the Southpark Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, as the John ''Marty'' Thiels Southpark Station, in honor and memory of Thiels, a Louisiana postal worker who was killed in the line of duty on October 4, 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2272

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. JOHN "MARTY" THIELS SOUTHPARK STATION.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service known as the Southpark Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, shall be known and designated as the ''John 'Marty' Thiels Southpark Station''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''John 'Marty' Thiels Southpark Station''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

□ 1030

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of S. 2272, which names the postal facility in the town of Southpark Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, as the John ''Marty'' Thiels Southpark Station in honor and memory of Thiels, a Louisiana postal worker who was killed in the line of duty on October 4, 2007.

S. 2272, which was introduced on October 31, 2007, in the Senate by Senator DAVID VITTER of Louisiana and passed by the Chamber under unanimous consent on November 16, 2007, has been considered and reported out of the Oversight Committee by voice vote as of January 29, 2008.

S. 2272 comes to us today from our friends from the State of Louisiana as a way of acknowledging and honoring the work of one of the postal service's own, John Thiels. Affectionately referred to as Marty, Mr. Thiels spent a significant portion of his professional career working for the United States Postal Service. In fact, Thiels served as a letter carrier for nearly 30 years, and 24 years out of those 30 he spent delivering mail to the downtown section of Alexandria, Louisiana.

A devout husband and a loving father of four, Mr. Thiels' life was cut dramatically short when on October 4, 2007, a distraught 64-year-old gunman went on a shooting rampage near the Rapides Parish Courthouse in Alexandria, Louisiana, wounding three and killing two, one of whom was John Thiels, and the other was Camille Giordano, II, a 32-year-old assistant district attorney.

An obvious and heartbreaking misfortune, Mr. Thiels lost his life while doing something that he had done so diligently for so many years, delivering mail. John Marty Thiels will long be remembered by many in the Alexandria, Louisiana, area for his years of service and his virtuous reputation.

Mr. Speaker, let us pay tribute to the life of this gentleman by passing S. 2272 and renaming the Southpark Post Office Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, as the John ''Marty'' Thiels Southpark Station.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my fellow Members of Congress in lamenting the senseless murder of 50-year-old Alexandria, Louisiana, letter carrier, John Marty Thiels, on Thursday, October 4, 2007. Mr. Thiels was a 30-year veteran of the Alexandria post office.

For over 20 years of that time, he faithfully carried mail on the same route in downtown Alexandria and became well known in the community. On the fateful day of Mr. Thiels' death, a local deranged man went on a shooting spree, eventually taking the lives of five people, including Mr. Thiels, before police were able to take control of the situation. When Mr. Thiels' life was taken, he was simply going about his daily routine of delivering mail to a local law office in Alexandria, Louisiana.

This terrible event goes to demonstrate that public servants are not immune from harm. On the contrary, many of them brave unforeseen dangers every single day, including innocent letter carriers such as Mr. Thiels.

The death of Mr. Thiels was a senseless and heartbreaking tragedy for both his family and the community that he served so well for over three decades. Mr. Thiels' family and his community deserve our deepest sympathy and condolences for their loss. The naming of this post office is a fitting tribute to Mr. Thiels and his dedicated service to the postal service.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2272.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SGT. JASON HARKINS POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3936) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, as the ''Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3936

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SGT. JASON HARKINS POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, shall be known and designated as the ''Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues, particularly the gentleman from Georgia, in the consideration of H.R. 3936, which names a postal facility in Cleveland, Georgia, after a fallen hero, Sergeant Jason Harkins.

Introduced on October 23, 2007, H.R. 3936 is sponsored by Congressman NATHAN DEAL, the Representative from Georgia's Ninth Congressional District and cosponsored by the entire Georgia delegation. Mr. DEAL's measure, H.R. 3936, was reported from the Oversight Committee on January 29, 2008, by voice vote.

This morning's postal-naming bill honoring Sergeant Jason Harkins brings to light the special story of a staunch soldier who, along with five of his comrades from the Army's 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Lewis, Washington, were tragically killed while serving our country nobly in the Baqubah region of Iraq. Sadly, none of the six soldiers killed in one of the deadliest attacks on the Fort Lewis unit lived to see his 30th birthday. Yet, as soldiers, Sergeant Jason Harkins and his fellow servicemen, all of whom had entered active duty service within only the past 6 years, bravely placed their lives on the front line in allegiance and service to this great country of ours.

At the heart of this story is the subject of H.R. 3936, Sergeant Jason R. Harkins. Sergeant Harkins was only 25 years old and serving his second tour of duty in Iraq when he succumbed to wounds sustained from an improvised explosive device that detonated near his vehicle during combat operations.

A native of the northern Georgia town of Clarksville, Sergeant Harkins attended and graduated from the State's public school system before enlisting in the Army Reserve in 1999 and later volunteering for active duty service in December of 2002.

Described as a true God-fearing country boy, Sergeant Harkins proudly served over 3 years in the U.S. Army Reserves and is a recipient of the Bronze Star of Valor and the Purple Heart.

In addition to these honors, Mr. Speaker, let us also pay tribute to the life of Sergeant Harkins and pass H.R. 3936 and designate the Helen Highway Post Office Building in Cleveland, Georgia, in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to my distinguished colleague from the State of Georgia (Mr. DEAL).

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honor today to rise in support of the memory of Army Sergeant Jason Robert Harkins by dedicating the United States Post Office located in Cleveland, Georgia, as the Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building.

I want to thank Mr. DAVIS and the committee for bringing this bill to the floor. It is, indeed, a sad but true honor to be able to recognize Sergeant Harkins. He was a member of the United States Army 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division of Fort Lewis, Washington.

While serving his second tour of duty in Iraq, 25-year-old Sergeant Harkins was killed by a roadside bomb along with five other members of his platoon during combat operations in Baqubah, Iraq. For his valiant service to our country, Sergeant Harkins' family was presented the Bronze Star award and the Purple Heart.

Born in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Sergeant Harkins was a 1999 graduate of Habersham Central High School in Georgia, served 3 years in the United States Army Reserves and was currently serving with the Stryker Brigade located at Fort Lewis when the attack occurred.

Sergeant Jason Harkins is survived by his wife, Emily Renee Cook Harkins of Tacoma, Washington, formerly of Gadsden, Alabama; mother and stepfather, Nancy and Allen Fritchey; father and stepmother, Bobby and April Harkins; brothers Matthew and Daniel Harkins; as well as stepsisters Katie, Clara, Nicole, Jennifer and Emily; stepbrother Scott; and several nieces and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to pay tribute to Sergeant Harkins and to join my constituents of Cleveland, Georgia, in naming the Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building. This honor will serve as a lasting reminder of his courage, valor, and the ultimate sacrifice which he paid for our country.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to include for the RECORD a copy of a letter from Mayor Donald Stanley of the City of Cleveland, as well as a letter from the White County Board of Commissioners requesting and supporting this designation.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,
WHITE COUNTY, GEORGIA,
Cleveland, GA, September 26, 2007.

Hon. NATHAN DEAL,
Ninth District Representative,
Gainesville, GA.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN DEAL: As you are aware, recently our community suffered a tremendous loss. Sgt. Jason Harkins lost his life at 25 years of age by a roadside bomb while serving in Iraq. Weeks before his death, Sgt. Harkins went into a danger zone and saved the life of one of his soldiers. A bullet actually struck him in his helmet during the rescue. For this act of valor, his family was presented the Bronze Star Award and Purple Heart.

Jason gave the ultimate price for our community and nation. As a memorial to him, we support the Postmaster Louise S. Nix's request to pursue the act of having our postal facility in Cleveland renamed the Jason Harkins Postal Facility. As we understand it, this would in no way change the addresses of residents, but would show respect and memorialize a White County native who died for his country.

We would appreciate any assistance you could give to this action.

Sincerely,

CHRIS R. NONNEMAKER,
Chairman.
JOE CAMPBELL,
Post 1.
CRAIG BRYANT,
Post 2.

CITY OF CLEVELAND,
Cleveland, GA, October 9, 2007.

Hon. NATHAN DEAL,
Ninth District Representative,
Gainesville, GA.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN DEAL: As you are aware, recently our community suffered a tremendous loss. Sgt Jason Harkins lost his life while serving in Iraq, by a roadside bomb. Weeks before his death, Sgt Harkins went into a danger zone and saved the life of one of his soldiers. He actually was struck by a bullet in his helmet during the rescue. For this act of valor, his family was presented the Bronze Star Award and Purple Heart.

Jason gave the ultimate price for our community and nation. As a memorial to him, the City of Cleveland would like to ask you to pursue the act of having our postal facility in Cleveland renamed the Jason Harkins Postal Facility, understanding this would in no way change the addresses of residents but would show respect and memorialize a White County native who died for his country. Renaming a postal facility is a fairly common practice for military personnel who have lost their lives. The post office facility in most towns is the only federal building.

Jason entered into service on December 16, 2002. He was killed in action on May 6, 2007. Jason was 25 years old.

Jason attended White County Schools, Cleveland was his address of record, both Jason's mother, Nancy Fritchey, and father, Bobby Harkins, are residents of Cleveland and White County with roots going very deep and strong.

I would appreciate any assistance you could give to this action. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

DONALD STANLEY,
Mayor.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, born in Fort Campbell, Kentucky on September 29, 1981, SGT Jason Harkins was a 1999 graduate of Habersham Central High School. His commitment to military service began at an early age. When he was a young boy, he used to run around with toy guns and swords practicing to become the Army man his father was.

Sergeant Campbell served three years in the U.S. Army Reserve and was currently serving with the Striker Brigade, Second Infantry Division based out of Fort Lewis, Washington. He never wanted to be called a hero because he believed he was just an ordinary person doing extraordinary things. Campbell however, was a hero. He proved he was a hero when he survived a roadside bomb during his first tour in Iraq. He proved he was a hero when he rescued a wounded soldier while they were under fire during his second tour.

And sadly, he proved he was a hero on May 6, 2007, when he and five other men in his platoon were killed when a makeshift bomb exploded near their vehicle. Sergeant Harkins was only 25 years old.

His decorations include the Bronze Star of valor and the Purple Heart.

Sergeant Harkins leaves behind a large family and a wife who will always remember him as a "true country boy" who found the best in every situation and could always make those around him smile.

Let us pay our respects to Sergeant Jason Harkins and remember his commitment to serving this Nation by naming the post office located at 116 Helen Highway in Fort Lewis, Washington, in his honor.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and urge my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3936.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

JOHN HENRY WOOTEN, SR. POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3803) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the "John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3803

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. JOHN HENRY WOOTEN, SR. POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, shall be known and designated as the "John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to extend and revise their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H.R. 3803, which names a postal facility in Goldsboro, North Carolina, after John Henry Wooten, Sr.

H.R. 3803, which was introduced by Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina on October 10, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on December 12, 2007, by a voice vote.

□ 1045

This measure has the support of the entire North Carolina congressional delegation. A native of Goldsboro, North Carolina, John Henry Wooten, Sr. was a graduate of the city's Dillard High School where he would later serve as the last principal of the school before it closed after integration. Mr. Wooten's postsecondary educational pursuits took him to North Carolina A&T State University where he earned both his undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Beyond his educational accomplishments, Mr. Wooten also was a World War II veteran having served as surgical technician in the Pacific theater for the 2nd Infantry, 10th Army Division. A loyal servant to his community, Mr. Wooten held seats on the Board of Trustees of North Carolina A&T University, Wayne County Board of County Commissioners, and on President Lyndon B. Johnson's White House Commission for Education.

Mr. Speaker, for the years in which Mr. Wooten gave unselfishly of himself for the betterment of his community and our country, I wholeheartedly agree that he is worthy of the admiration and recognition of having the postal facility on Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, named in his honor. Therefore, I would urge swift passage of this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge passage of this bill designating the Cashwell Drive postal facility in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building.

As an educator, public servant, and devoted member of the community, Mr. Wooten selflessly dedicated his life to those around him.

A veteran of World War II, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from North Carolina A&T State University. Throughout his distinguished career as an educator, he served as a science teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent. He was also active in his alma mater, serving as a trustee and as the national president of the alumni association. He was one of two North Carolina educators chosen by President Lyndon B. Johnson to serve on the White House Commission for Education.

Beyond his responsibilities as an educator, Mr. Wooten, in 1986, became the first African American chairman of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners, a position he ultimately held for 12 years.

His community lost a tremendous citizen when Mr. Wooten passed away in January. His dedication to family, church and community will never be forgotten. And I urge our colleagues to pass this bill in honor of a deserving human being.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the chief deputy whip and sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from North Carolina, Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois, my friend, DANNY K. DAVIS, for yielding this time to me and thank him for his leadership on this great subcommittee. I also want to thank my friend and colleague, Congresswoman VIRGINIA FOXX, for her leadership and thank her for the kind words that she had to say a few moments ago about Mr. John Henry Wooten.

But Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor this great American, John Henry Wooten, Sr. by naming the post office at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building. John Wooten was a dedicated civic leader. He was a county commissioner in the County of Wayne. It is a fitting tribute to name this post office in his honor.

John Henry Wooten, Sr. was born and reared in Goldsboro, North Carolina, many years ago. The place that he saw grow from a small farming town to a small city. Mr. Wooten attended Goldsboro public schools, a school system to which he later dedicated his professional life. He received both his bachelor's of science and master's degrees from North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, and he was a doctoral candidate at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

John Henry Wooten, Sr. served the Goldsboro city school system as a science teacher and as a principal at historic Dillard High School. He was a supervisor of instruction and later an assistant superintendent for the entire school system. As a result of his leadership, the lives of countless students were positively impacted. His accomplished career in education also included teaching at Wayne County Community College. During his entire career as an educator, Mr. Wooten was selected by President Lyndon Baines Johnson to serve on the White House Commission for Education.

John Henry Wooten served on the Wayne County Board of County Commissioners for 12 years. First elected in 1986, he became the commission's first African American chairman. While serving as commissioner, Mr. Wooten was instrumental in helping Wayne County become the great city that it is today.

A lifelong member the First African Missionary Baptist Church in Goldsboro, where incidentally my grandfather was pastor some 90 years ago, he served as chairman of the deacon board, vice chairman of the finance committee, and was also a weekly Sunday school teacher. Additionally, Mr. Wooten served on the board of trustees for North Carolina A&T State University where he served as its secretary and later as vice chairman. He was also president of the university's vast alumni association.

Mr. Wooten was married to Ernestine Whitted who, herself, was the product of a substantial Wayne County family. The Wootens were married many years ago in 1946 and were together for more than 60 years. Together, Mr. Speaker, they raised two children, John Henry, Jr. and Pamela. Mr. And Mrs. Wooten have one granddaughter, Nancy Wooten Coor, and two great granddaughters, Alysse and Abrianne. Sadly, Mr. Wooten passed away in January of 2007 after giving his life to his community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues in the North Carolina delegation, including Ms. FOXX, who is managing the time for the minority, for their full and unanimous bipartisan support of this legislation. John Henry Wooten, Sr. was a great man. He was my friend. He was a civic leader. This tribute is long overdue.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''aye'' on H.R. 3803.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I also urge our colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers. I would urge passage of this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3803.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN FALLEN MILITARY HEROES OF LOUISVILLE MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4454) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building'', in honor of the service men and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4454

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN FALLEN MILITARY HEROES OF LOUISVILLE MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, shall be known and designated as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, now I would like to yield such time as he might consume to the sponsor of this legislation, Representative JOHN YARMUTH from Kentucky.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the eight American heroes from Louisville, Kentucky, who were taken from us in the prime of their lives these last 5 years.

While they did not serve together, they all shared a special bond of selfless dedication, love of country, and

immeasurable courage. Those noble qualities did not originate when they volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces, but their time serving greatly enhanced and magnified those attributes. In his service, each man proved the valor time and time again, readily meeting every challenge that confronted him with loyalty and devotion. Tragically, and long before we were ready to say good-bye, these brave souls made the ultimate sacrifice while fighting for the United States of America, seven in Operation Iraqi Freedom and one in Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Still, for all they shared, these men were also characterized by a wonderful individuality: an incredible athlete and officer, a great dad who would have been a great coach, a third generation warrior called to heaven before he could answer another call to preach the Word of God, a peacekeeper in Bosnia who wanted to come home to Louisville and continue to keep the peace in his hometown, an EMS worker known for empathy, an unflappable National Guardsman, a decorated military officer, and a poet and performer who could light up the stage and brighten your day.

Some of these men were known for their sense of humor, others by a sense of purpose, and with each of them, their fellow servicemembers knew they could be depended upon in the most dire circumstances. The men we honor today saved lives, and every one of them is an American hero.

Some of them spent a short time in the military; others spent half their lives in the service. And all gave their lives for this country, for our history, for our citizens, and most of all, for our future.

We are, each one of us, poorer for their loss but infinitely richer for the time they spent on this planet and the contributions that they made to our community and this Nation.

For the families who lost a son, a husband, a father, and for the many who lost a good friend, this is a wound that time can never fully heal. The grief we all share for their loss is not fleeting and demands a memorial of equal permanence. In recognition of these great heroes, I am proposing legislation to rename the Hikes Point Post Office the Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office in my congressional district, the Third District of Kentucky.

As our friends, neighbors, and I conduct our daily business in our community, this building will stand in testament for the tremendous sacrifice made by eight brave Louisvillians. When their families see the memorial, I hope they are reminded they are not alone in their grief, not alone in their appreciation for the deeds of these men, and not alone in the celebration of the lives of eight extraordinary individuals who gave us everything they had in their short time on Earth.

Sergeant Michael Acklin II, Captain Clayton Lee Adamkavicius, Lance Corporal Robert Lynch, Sergeant Darrin K. Potter, Sergeant First Class Christopher Phelps, Staff Sergeant George S. Rentschler, Petty Officer Third Class Jeffrey L. Wiener, and Sergeant David Neil Wimberg.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in offering these men this honor which will have the same permanence as their positive impact on our country, by renaming the Hikes Point Post Office the Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today to urge passage of this bill designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building.''

□ 1100

In the wake of the attacks of September 11, the United States struck back against those forces that wished to destroy not only this Nation, but all people that do not agree with their limited views on freedom, justice, and democracy. Every day across this great Nation, men and women answer the call to duty to combat these forces. Many have paid the ultimate price. Others have been wounded. But their sacrifice came so others may live safe and free. For that, we are eternally grateful.

Since the beginning of this conflict, eight heroic servicepeople from Louisville, Kentucky, have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. We honor their sacrifice with this postal designation. This also serves to honor those who may lose their lives in service to our country in the future.

These brave citizens of Louisville, like so many other Americans, lost their lives protecting us from those people who fight against the rights and privileges that we as Americans enjoy. I urge that we pass this bill so that their memory and sacrifice will not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I join Representative John Yarmuth and his fellow colleagues from the Bluegrass State of Kentucky in considering H.R. 4454, which renames the postal facility at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building.

As stated in the measure at hand, it was first introduced by Congressman John Yarmuth on December 11, 2007, and is cosponsored by all members of the Kentucky congressional delegation. The measure was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, where it was considered and passed by voice vote on January 29, 2008.

H.R. 4454 is intended to remember the lives, service, and legacy of dozens of military men and women from the Louisville, Kentucky, area, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. By renaming this particular Louisville, Kentucky, post office, H.R. 4454 would set into motion the creation of a living tribute to the sacrifices made by so many of Kentucky's sons and daughters who gave their lives abroad in order to ensure our protection here in the homeland, an honor befitting the thousands of military men and women, past and present, from every State of the Union, that have unselfishly given themselves in service and battle for America.

H.R. 4454 will help to memorialize for generations to come the memory of Louisville, Kentucky's fallen loved ones.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask that we too pay tribute to the sacrifices made by these great American heroes and sheroes and pass H.R. 4454.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the passage of H.R. 4454, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I would urge passage of this legislation, and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4454.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ESTABLISHING THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 67) establishing the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate concurrent resolution.

The text of the Senate concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 67

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT COMMITTEE.

There is established a Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (in this resolution referred to as the ''joint committee''), consisting of 3 Senators and 3 Members of the House of Representatives appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The joint committee is authorized to make the necessary arrangements for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States.

SEC. 2. SUPPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

The joint committee—

(1) is authorized to utilize appropriate equipment and the services of appropriate personnel of departments and agencies of the Federal Government, under arrangements between the joint committee and the heads of the departments and agencies, in connection with the inaugural proceedings and ceremonies; and

(2) may accept gifts and donations of goods and services to carry out its responsibilities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on this concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 67, which establishes the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies during the 110th Congress to begin work on preparations for the Presidential inaugural ceremonies at the Capitol on January 20, 2009.

The joint committee we are creating today expires on January 3, 2009, but will be renewed at the start of the 111th Congress to conclude its work. Congress routinely passes this concurrent resolution every 4 years. The Speaker, majority leader, and minority leader customarily represent the House on the joint committee.

I urge passage of the motion.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. Con. Res. 67, which will establish the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

As everyone in this Nation knows, we are in the midst of an election year. It is a particularly exciting election year because it is the first time since 1952 that we do not have a presumptive heir apparent, and we have had considerable activity and considerable citizen interest. We are now at the point where the public is in the process of deciding between Senator MCCAIN, Senator CLINTON, or Senator OBAMA; and we will continue to have considerable interest in November. In fact, I can almost guarantee that the public will be tired of the election process come next November.

But then we enter a new phase, a new phase of great excitement, and that is the inauguration of a new President of the United States of America. The inauguration of the President of the United States is not only an event that fills our own citizens with pride, but one that also demonstrates the power of democracy to the world.

As Chief Justice Roberts swears in our 44th President, the inaugural ceremony will once again prove that in a free society, no matter the size of its army or how mighty its leaders, a peaceful transfer of power is possible, a peaceful transfer engendered by the choice of the people.

Since 1901, all inaugural ceremonies at the U.S. Capitol have been organized by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. This committee was formed to ensure that the activities surrounding President William McKinley's second inauguration were carried out smoothly on the Capitol Grounds, and it has been re-formed every 4 years since.

The current reconstitution of the JCCIC with each Presidential cycle is integral to the success of one of the most powerful and humbling symbols of our Nation's commitment to freedom from tyranny. It is a marvelous occasion, and I am struck by it particularly this week as another great nation, Russia, is going through the presidential election process, almost without campaigns, because the winners have been pre-selected. I am proud to be part of a Nation that does not do that, but that encourages all citizens to consider the candidates and elect a citizen and a President of their choice.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the formation of this important joint committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution, S. Con. Res. 67.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING USE OF ROTUNDA BY JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 68) authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate concurrent resolution.

The text of the Senate concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 68

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL BY THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES.

The rotunda of the United States Capitol is authorized to be used on January 20, 2009, by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies in connection with the proceedings and ceremonies conducted for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on this concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 68 authorizes advanced planning for the use of the Capitol rotunda on January 20, 2009, for the proceedings and ceremonies conducted for the inauguration of the President and Vice President of the United States. Congress traditionally passes this measure in the year prior to the event in order to begin security planning and rehearsal for the inaugural, since the rotunda is routinely used for ceremonial purposes during the inauguration and could host the event, itself, depending on the weather at that time.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 68 does not formally authorize use of the rotunda for the inaugural events, themselves, since it will expire on January 3, 2009, like all concurrent resolutions which are not made part of permanent law, and must be renewed in the 111th Congress. However, action today will initiate the period of pre-event planning necessary to bring one of our democracy's most memorable and historic ceremonies to fruition smoothly and safely.

I urge passage of the Senate concurrent resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. Con. Res. 68, which will authorize use of the rotunda

for the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. Since the swearing in of Thomas Jefferson in March 1801, each inaugural address delivered by the President has been made in our Nation's Capitol. As we prepare for the next President of the United States to arrive in Washington to take the oath of office, the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies is charged with ensuring the success of inaugural activities, including securing those facilities necessary to honor this important occasion.

As a symbol of democracy throughout the world, the United States Capitol is a fitting place to acknowledge the peaceful transition of power that will take place on January 20, 2009, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the authorization of use of the rotunda by the committee and by the future President and Vice President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague has aptly stated, the eyes of the world are on us as we focus on our election in this year of 2008. We know that this planning and preparation for the inaugural ceremonies will move smoothly and very well for all of the world to view.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution, S. Con. Res. 68.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

S. 2272, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3936, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 4454, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

JOHN ''MARTY'' THIELS SOUTHPARK STATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2272, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2272.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 400, nays 0, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 85]

YEAS—400

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Buchanan
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—28

Aderholt
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Conaway
Cubin
Doggett
Everett
Gallegly
Gingrey
Hinchey
Honda
Hunter
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Keller
LaHood
Langevin
Lewis (KY)
Lofgren, Zoe
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
McCollum (MN)
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Peterson (PA)
Rush
Udall (CO)
Woolsey

□ 1139

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SGT. JASON HARKINS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3936, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3936.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 400, nays 0, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 86]

YEAS—400

Ackerman
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Buchanan
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett (NJ)
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—28

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Bilbray
Broun (GA)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Conaway
Cubin
Delahunt
Doggett
Everett
Gallegly
Gerlach
Gingrey
Hinchey
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Keller
LaHood
Langevin
Lewis (KY)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Miller, Gary
Peterson (PA)
Rush
Udall (CO)
Woolsey

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining on this vote.

□ 1147

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN FALLEN MILITARY HEROES OF LOUISVILLE MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4454, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4454.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 404, nays 0, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 87]

YEAS—404

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Buchanan
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamborn
Lampson
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts

Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—24

Aderholt
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Carter
Conaway
Cubin
Everett
Gallegly
Gilchrest
Gingrey
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Keller
LaHood
Langevin
Lewis (KY)
Manzullo
Miller, Gary
Peterson (PA)
Rush
Tancredo
Udall (CO)
Woolsey
Wynn

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining on this vote.

□ 1154

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 85 on S. 2272, I am not recorded because I was absent on the account of the birth of my granddaughter. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea." On rollcall No. 86 on H.R. 3936, had I been present, I would have voted "yea." On rollcall No. 87 on H.R. 4454, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 840

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered the first sponsor of H.R. 840, a bill originally introduced by Representative Julia Carson of Indiana, for the purposes of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COHEN). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS TO NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND DISASTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 605(a) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110–161), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the National Commission on Children and Disasters:

Dr. Irwin Redliner, New York, New York

Mr. Bruce A. Lockwood, Canton, Connecticut

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 67, 110th Congress, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies:

Ms. PELOSI, California

Mr. HOYER, Maryland

Mr. BOEHNER of Ohio

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. BLUNT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Maryland, the majority leader, for information about the schedule for next week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the Republican Whip.

On Monday, the House will meet in pro forma session at 2 p.m. On Tuesday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business, with votes postponed until 6:30 p.m. On Wednesday and Thursday the House will meet at 10 a.m. On Friday there will be no votes in the House.

We will consider several bills under suspension of the rules. A list of those bills will be announced by the close of business tomorrow. We will consider H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007. In addition, we hope to consider legislation regarding the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. There may well be other legislation as well.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the leader for that information.

On the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, I'm certainly hopeful we can do whatever is necessary to get that bill to the floor. I know that a majority of Members of the House, at least I believe a majority of the Members of the House, based on what I believe to be the case on this side and on the letter sent to the Speaker by Members from your side, a majority would be ready to pass a bill that met the standards of the Senate, in fact, the Senate bill.

I'm wondering if the gentleman has any idea if we would have that legislation or previous House-passed legislation, or what kind of product you think we may be moving toward as it relates to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. As the gentleman knows, this bill was passed in the Senate a little over 2 weeks ago. Since that time we have had an extensive number of meetings, discussions. I'm hopeful, as you know, to have discussions with the whip, with the distinguished Republican whip, my friend, on this issue as well. I think both of us are going to be here tomorrow. We'll take that time perhaps to do that.

□ 1200

As I said, and I've said repeatedly, I think every Member of this House wants to pass legislation which will facilitate the interception of particularly foreign-to-foreign communications which may pose a danger to this country.

All of us are aware of the fact that technological changes have resulted in some questions being raised because of the fact that we have many of the communications coming through the United States. I frankly think, as the gentleman knows, there is really not a great deal of controversy or difference between the two Houses or between our two sides of the aisle on this issue. There's some differences, but they're not major differences. I think they can be addressed.

There are major differences with respect to the second title of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act bill which comes from the Senate which deals with retroactive immunity, which has nothing about prospective security but is obviously important for us to consider. We're also working on that as well, but I will tell the gentleman that we don't have agreement. But, as I said, I'm very hopeful that we will have legislation on the floor next week. I do not expect it to be, as the gentleman asked, the same bill that passed the House.

Mr. BLUNT. Well, I would thank the gentleman for that. I hope we can work to resolve this. I do think the foreign individuals making calls in a foreign country, for that to work the way it needs to work, voluntary compliance is extremely important; and that's why working out this liability issue is, in my view, critical to that foreign-to-foreign, the only area where we say a foreign person in a foreign country, the only area where we don't believe a warrant would be required but that to not

have a warrant you have to have voluntary compliance. And the liability issue, I think, continues to endanger future voluntary compliance, and I hope we can work together in that regard to move forward.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

As the gentleman knows, both the RESTORE Act, which passed this House, and the Senate bill both are similar in giving prospective immunity to telecoms that voluntarily or pursuant to order cooperate with us in accomplishing that objective. We believe, of course, that FISA was established so that a court review on process would be appropriate to ensure, in fact, that the collection of information is on foreign-to-foreign.

We well understand that, as the DNI has indicated, prospectively you may not know so you need authorization. Our bill provides for that. The Senate bill provides for that. I really don't believe that is a major contention of the bill. That's prospectively.

A major contention is, which we believe has nothing to do with security, on what has been done, and, frankly, I'm not sure we know exactly what has been done. As you know, I've taken the opportunity to be up in the intelligence room, in the secure room, and go through the papers that have been provided. My own view is they're not dispositive of the issue; but irrespective of that, we're working on title II as well, and I look forward to having discussions on that with you as well.

Mr. BLUNT. I do, too. I do think this liability issue is important. We want to continue to have voluntary compliance. We also don't want to put these companies that have voluntarily complied in a situation where the only way to prove that what they did was appropriate is to produce documents that are at this point, we believe, in the national security of the country not producible; but maybe we can work through this.

I hope to see this bill on the floor next week. I think we've had 2 weeks that I and others feel that each day the process gets more cumbersome than the day before because of the way this process builds up, and I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. HOYER. If I might comment on that, as you know, from our perspective, this is one of the problems. This is a very serious, important bill. It's critical to the defense of our country. I want to see that facilitated. I think every Member on both sides of the aisle wants to see that facilitated, but there are serious issues. There are serious constitutional issues involved here.

That's why FISA was passed in 1978, very frankly, as a result of an administration that intercepted communications here domestically. You will recall that, I know, and a great concern about that. FISA was adopted by the Congress and signed by the President in an attempt to try to ensure that those kinds of things that happened in the early 1970s were not repeated by the intelligence community.

So these are serious issues. Unfortunately, the Senate which had our bill for 2½ months and had spent a lot of time considering a bill long before we passed our bill did not send us a bill until, as I said, about 14 days ago, and we have since that time, notwithstanding the fact we were on break, staff and Members have been working on that. As you know, we have invited the other side of the aisle, ranking members, to participate in that. Some have chosen not to, but we are hopeful that we can move ahead on this, and we hope there is room for positive resolution.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that. I do know that Senator ROCKEFELLER in the other body has said that our intelligence is being downgraded and has made the case that the people that voluntarily complied don't get paid for it. He said, in fact: ''What do they get for this? They get $40 billion worth of suits, grief, trashing, but they do it.'' Then he went on to say: ''They don't have to do it, because they do have shareholders to respond to, to answer to.''

I believe there is a way to address this issue. We need to find it, and I hope we can.

Last night, we had the Andean trade bill on the floor. This is a bill that allows access to our markets by Andean countries, including the country that we currently have a negotiated agreement with; and that country has changed dramatically since we put the first Andean bill in place 17 years ago. I'm wondering if the gentleman has any sense of where we might be on that outstanding agreement with Colombia. Certainly with the vote we took today they can continue to have the same kind of access to our markets that they've had for the last 17 years.

A trade agreement would give us substantially new access to their markets, and I'd like to hear any sense of when we may get to that bill and have a situation where the President would be encouraged to send a bill up to us so we could get to it.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

I've had discussions recently with Secretary Gutierrez, with Ambassador Schwab and others, and Secretary Paulson, who have also discussed this issue with me and I know with you and with many others. This is an issue of importance. We think the discussions are ongoing. Hopefully, they will result in some fruitful resolution. That has not been the case at this point in time.

We did have, as you well know, a very significant interface with the administration last year in which I think a very positive result in terms of workers' rights and environmental concerns were addressed by us and by the administration. Unfortunately, we have not moved forward from that point on the other three agreements that were pending at that time, but I think that we will continue to have those discussions, hopefully positive and hopefully have some result.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman. I do think since those discussions began the Colombian Government has made changes in the agreement in those areas, all of which have now been passed by the Colombian legislature, and I look forward to moving forward with that.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4, for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

RENEWAL OF FISA

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is with disappointment that I rise today. It is disappointment over the fact that this body still has not brought to the floor the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the Protect America Act.

We have heard the colloquy that has taken place on this floor this afternoon. We know that a bipartisan solution to this was passed in the Senate with 68 votes. We also know looking at our calendar that obviously the issue is not about time. The issue is about having the will to pass this bill.

The Protect America Act has expired. We are now under the old surveillance laws that were written in 1978. The intelligence community has expressed their desire to see this passed because they know that they are having to waste valuable time working on bureaucratic red tape and legal paperwork and dealing with trial lawyers, instead of spying on terrorists who seek to do us harm.

I would encourage the majority to bring forward the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Let's work to keep America safe.

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.

SUNSET MEMORIAL

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

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I stand once again before this body with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is February 28, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sunset today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand—just today. That is more than the number of innocent American lives that were lost on September 11th, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,820 days since the travesty called Roe v. Wade was handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of our own children.

Some of them, Mr. Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over their vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

All of them had at least four things in common.

They were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. Each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each of their mothers, whether she realizes it immediately or not, will never be the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever.

Yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims to date, those yet unborn.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government."

The phrase in the 14th amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says: "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is that clarion Declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And yet Mr. Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection we should have given them.

But perhaps tonight, Mr. Speaker, maybe someone new who hears this sunset memorial will finally realize that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,820 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough; and that the America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous and compassionate enough to find a better way for mothers and their babies than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are also numbered and that all too soon each of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time.

And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the cries of the innocent unborn. May that be the day we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

It is February 28, 2008—12,820 days since Roe v. Wade first stained the foundation of this Nation with the blood of its own children—this, in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

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.)

□ 1215

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MICHELLE H. PASCHAL, PRINCIPAL OF STEVENS CREEK ELEMENTARY

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and pay tribute to a faithful and innovative public school educator in my 10th Congressional District of Georgia. Michelle Paschal is the principal of Stevens Creek Elementary School in Columbia County, Georgia. Her school boasts the county's only foreign language department for elementary schools, and that program is extraordinary.

On January 10, I had the opportunity to observe a first grade class under the tutelage of Senora Olga Biancheri. The entire 30-minute session was conducted in Spanish, with the teacher doing her teaching through song and storytelling. I was utterly amazed to see the children comprehending and responding to what the teacher said.

According to Biancheri, upon completing the fifth grade, these students are more conversational than most high school students who have studied Spanish for 2 years in any school system. Many of these children are fluent.

Unfortunately, this remarkable foreign language program has fallen victim to State budget cuts. The 2007–2008 school year is the first year the school received no help from the State. Ms. Paschal kept the program alive by petitioning the Columbia County Board of Education and parent-teacher organizations for funding. She also used half the salary for an enrichment position, about $40,000, to pay for the Spanish teacher. Ms. Paschal and the Stevens Creek Elementary facility are to be commended for their innovative commitment to the students of Columbia County and their academic success.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise, also, to honor and pay tribute to an exceptional public school system in my 10th Congressional District in Georgia.

Like so many school systems in Georgia, over the past two decades the Habersham County schools have been home to a growing number of immigrant students. The State mandates that schools serve these students through a program known as ESOL, or English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Since the introduction of the first Laotian family to Habersham County schools in 1985, Superintendent Dr. Judy Forbes has been there from the very start, although at that time she served as instructional supervisor over the program.

Today, more than 22 percent of the school system's 6,800 students are enrolled in ESOL. With just 10 teachers serving 15 schools, the Habersham County school system is doing an outstanding job. Many of the kindergarten and first grade students are speaking fluent English by Thanksgiving and by Christmas.

For the sixth through 12th graders, Habersham County has a language intensive Newcomers Academy. Through innovative teaching techniques, including collaborating with North Georgia Technical Institute and the Cornelia-Habersham County Library, ESOL instructors report that students are learning with enthusiasm, and graduation rates are climbing. The message that teachers send to their students is that in the United States children have opportunities, and education will give them the biggest payoff.

These educators' dedication to all of their students, especially those for who English is their second language, is why at the beginning of this calendar year Habersham County schools became one of four Title 1 Distinguished Districts in Georgia.

I applaud their achievement and commend Habersham County and its educators on a job well done.

THE HOUSE HAS GONE HOME WITHOUT PASSING THE PROTECT AMERICA ACT

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is now 12:17 p.m. This House came into session today at 10 a.m., 2 hours and 17 minutes ago. Across this Nation, many folks at work are taking a lunch break, others are probably preparing to go to lunch. Those on the second shift

are getting ready to go to work. Those on the night shift are resting or sleeping so they can recover from last night's work and get back and do it again tonight. So, where's the House? Mr. Speaker, the House has gone home. The House has gone home.

Today, we dealt with seven resolutions, seven suspensions, seven bills that I think every person voted for completely, entirely. I don't mean to belittle these resolutions, five of them were to name post offices, United States Post Offices. And although that's not the most important thing we do, we honor individuals when we do so, and the individuals who were honored today were certainly deserving of that honor. Two other resolutions were to determine what the Congress will do with the United States Capitol during next year's Presidential inauguration.

Now, why is this important? Well, it's important because the Protect America Act, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, has been allowed to expire by this leadership, by the Democrat leadership of this House. Thirteen days now we've been blind, a unilateral disarmament of this Nation in our war on terror. You don't have to believe me, Mr. Speaker. A newspaper in Springfield, Massachusetts, yes, Springfield, Massachusetts, said, ''Led by Speaker NANCY PELOSI, the House let a crucial deadline come and go without even taking a vote on the matter. And it didn't have to be this way. Both parties in the Senate cooperated, setting aside their differences to try to keep the citizenry safe. The House should have done the same thing. Only our enemies gain from this kind of political gamesmanship.''

Mr. Speaker, many Members on our side of the aisle have come to this well and to the microphones over the last 5 or 6 days that we've been in session and talked about the extreme importance of making certain that the Protect America Act is passed. I was on a radio station this morning in our good State of Georgia, and people on the radio show couldn't believe that the House had let this opportunity, this responsibility go. The folks in my district in the 6th District in Georgia believe that the primary responsibility of every single Member who has the privilege of serving in this House is to protect our Nation.

Many Members of the House travel to Iraq, back and forth to Iraq, some who went just last week and were told by generals in Iraq that not passing the Protect America Act 13 days ago has led to a decrease in their actionable intelligence in Iraq already. Don't let anybody tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this hasn't put America at greater harm in the last 13 days because it has.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this House to act responsibly. It's time for this Speaker and this Democrat leadership to stand up and make certain that we pass the Protect America Act.

STATUS OF INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE BILL

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

Mr. HOYER. I was not planning to speak, but the previous speaker has done what this administration did a little earlier today and has been doing over the days. We call it fear-mongering, trying to stampede this Congress into doing something that is contrary to our oath of office to protect the Constitution of the United States as well as defend our Nation from those who would harm our citizens and our country.

The gentleman's assertion that the intelligence community is not able to intercept communications to protect our country is not true. Anybody who heard his words and was concerned by his representations ought to be disabused of the fact of the accuracy of his assertions. In fact, the administration said that in a letter, a six-page letter, and within hours sent out an e-mail saying, No, we're wrong. Telephone companies are cooperating with us. We are able to intercept communications.

But what he also did not mention is that we passed a bill 2½ months ago, now 3 months ago, which would have provided the full authority the administration needed to continue doing what they needed to do. Without exception. Secondly, what he failed to say is that when the Senate failed to act for those 3 months, it was because the Republican Party in the Senate precluded that bill from moving forward. But he didn't represent that. And then they sent us the bill 2 days before a break was to be scheduled. That was considered, in my opinion, to try to preclude any further discussion on the issue. They believed they could do that by then appealing to the concerns, rightful concerns, of the American public that we continued to do everything necessary to keep them safe. That's the commitment of all 435 Members of this House. It's my commitment. I speak on behalf of my party, as majority leader of my party, with respect to that issue. Every Member wants to ensure.

What he did not tell you, however, was because we only had some 48 hours of session, because we wanted to give it consideration, and because the normal process is to have a conference between the two Houses if there are differences as there are between the two pieces of legislation, we said to all of the Republicans and to all of the Democrats, let us extend by 21 days the Protect America Act so that there is no question.

What the gentleman from Georgia did not tell you is that every Republican person voted against that extension. They voted against the extension, and then when it did not pass, they said, Oh, America is at risk. It is like the child who killed both his parents and said, Have pity on me. I'm an orphan. They refused to pass the very legislation which would have kept the act that they say is necessary in full effect.

The good news is that we have a statute on the books called the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act which provides the administration with every authority it needs, but what it requires the administration to do is come to the FISA Court and get approval. There is no backlog in that court. Not a second's backlog in that court. And administration officials have said we would not miss a beat in terms of our interception of communications. Administration officials have said that within minutes approval could be granted, and under the FISA Act, the administration can act and then get approval after the fact. So I'm not sure what the generals were talking about.

What the gentleman from Georgia did not mention as well is that we have been working every day since we left session on trying to reach a compromise so that we could move forward on this bill. We had a meeting this day to do that very thing, a meeting which was bipartisan. We had the administration involved. We are hopeful that we can reach agreement.

So I want to assure the American public that the leadership of this House is going to do everything in our power to ensure that we protect this Nation and our people and to defeat those who fashion themselves to be radical Islamic jihadist terrorists and ensure that they will be stopped, they will be caught, and that we will prevail in this war on terrorism.

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina 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 gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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 California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF 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 New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey 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 Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

PEAK OIL

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is the 38th time that I've come to the floor to talk to my colleagues and, through the miracle of television, to the American people about a phenomenon that is becoming more and more apparent and more and more important to us.

This phenomenon is what we call peak oil. When I first started talking about this, I wasn't even sure what we were going to call it, the great rollover at that point in time when we've reached our maximum production to produce oil and we're rolling over to slip down the other side of that slope, or peak oil. We decided to call it peak oil, and now that is a pretty well-known terminology around the world.

□ 1230

When I first started talking about this, oil was $40 a barrel. Now oil is over $100 a barrel. In our Frederick News Post, a local paper, a headline today says: ''Oil Spikes Above $102 a Barrel for the First Time.'' As I left my office, oil was above $101 a barrel and going up. The euro was, I think, $1.51; gold was about $960.

And America doesn't seem to be responding. I asked one of my colleagues why, and he said, well, it's a problem of addiction. We're addicted to oil. The President appropriately said that in one of his State of the Union messages. He said, when you're addicted, what it costs really doesn't matter. If you're addicted to alcohol or cocaine, if it costs you your marriage, your job, your house, meeting the demands of the addiction is the important thing.

The chart that I have here I think shows the problem. The disgruntled citizen is down here saying, ''Gee, just why is gas so expensive?'' More than $3 a gallon. And there it is, a tiny little supply and a huge demand. It's a matter of supply and demand. In the time that I have been talking about peak oil, when it has risen from $40 a barrel to over $100 a barrel, the production of oil worldwide has remained essentially constant while the demand has been increasing. And when that happens, of course, there will be an increase in price; and we have seen that increase in price.

The next chart kind of places this in a perspective, and what it shows is the enormous importance of energy from fossil fuels, particularly the energy from gas and oil, enormous importance to the economies of the world. In 8,000 years of recorded history, I show here about the last 400 years. If I went back the rest of the 8,000, it would be the same. So near zero you couldn't see the difference. And here we show the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. It began with wood and then coal, and it was stuttering a little with coal, and then we discovered gas and oil, and, wow, it took off. Look at that slope. Incredibly, during the Carter years and up to that time, every decade we used as much oil as we had used in all of previous history.

Mr. Speaker, if you reflect for a moment on what that means, what that means is that when we had pumped half of all the oil that would be pumped in the world, we then would have 10 years left. Now, we have become much more efficient since then, and that was induced by the oil price spike hikes of the 1970s and the world-wide recession that followed that and an attention to efficiency, and your air conditioner and refrigerator are probably three times as efficient as they were back then.

If we had a population graph, you would see the population following this, now nearly 7 billion people in the world, most of us living incredibly well. Each person in our country has a life-style that if it were not for fossil fuels would require the work of 300 faithful people powering the industry and manning your household to permit you to live the quality of life that you're living.

That's the amount of energy that we get from these fossil fuels. One barrel of oil has the energy equivalent of 12 people working all year, 25,000 man hours of effort. When I first saw that, I thought that can't be true. Just 42 gallons of oil and has the energy equivalent of 12 people working all year? And then I thought about my Prius car and how far that gallon of gasoline, still cheaper than water in the grocery store if you buy it in the little bottles, how far that takes my Prius, 47 miles averaging now over the last 15,000, 20,000 miles.

Now, I could pull my Prius 47 miles, but it would take me quite a while with come-a-longs and using the guard rail and trees and so forth to pull my Prius 70 miles. So I thought maybe that is true. And that is true, that each barrel of oil contains the energy equivalent of 12 people working all year. So our use of this fossil fuel energy has produced for us an incredible quality of life.

The next chart is a history of how we got here, and this begins about 51 years ago, a speech given by M. King Hubbert to a group of oil people in San Antonio, Texas, on the 8th day of March, when he predicted in 1956 that we would be peaking in our country in oil production by 1970. Nobody believed that. We were then king of oil, producing more oil than any other country in the world, consuming more, exporting more. But right on schedule, in 1970, we peaked in oil production.

In spite of two things, in spite of finding a good deal more oil in Alaska and a good deal more oil in the Gulf of Mexico, this is the Alaska oil and this yellow is the Gulf of Mexico oil, and in spite of finding considerable oil in those two places, we now are producing about half the oil that we produced in 1970. And that's also in spite of drilling more oil wells than all the rest of the world put together. We have about 530,000 producing oil wells in our country, and that's more than all the rest of the world put together.

The next chart is an interesting one because it again shows what is referred to as Hubbert's Peak; and if you want to know a lot about this, you can do a Google search for Hubbert or Hubbert's Peak and a lot of this information will pop up for you.

The yellow triangles here represent M. King Hubbert's prediction of what oil production would be. The green is the actual production, and the red shows the total production from the United States including Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, because M. King Hubbert had not included Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico in his analysis. This chart is presented by CERA to convince you that you shouldn't be too concerned about M. King Hubbert's prediction that the world would be peaking about now because he was wrong about the United States, and I think this is a statistician's debate because they're making the point that those green squares are materially different than the yellow triangles.

Now, I've had a course, an advanced course, in statistics; and I might, using the magic of statistical math, prove to myself that there is a meaningful difference there; but, boy, just looking at that, I think that the green curve looks pretty much like the yellow curve, doesn't it? We produced a bit more with Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, but that was just a blip in sliding down the other side of Hubbert's Peak, and there we are today at about half of the production that we had in 1970.

The next graph shows us the reality of where we are. And if you had only one chart to look at, this would be that chart. It's said that a picture's worth a

thousand words, and this is worth more than a thousand words. The little bars here show when we found the oil. And you see we started to find a lot of it in the 1940s and the 1950s; and, boy, did we find it in the 1960s and another peak in the 1980s. And ever since the 1980s, in spite of ever better techniques for finding oil, it's been down, down, down.

The solid line here represents our consumption of oil. It's the same chart that you saw previously. And this shows what happened in the 1970s. And it shows here dramatically the difference in the slope. We were increasing our use of oil at this rate. And you see if we had continued that, by now it would be off the chart, wouldn't it? Just extrapolate from this curve and you're off the chart. But we really learned how to be more efficient in the 1970s; so now the growth rate is about 2 percent a year and much slower than that.

Now, what will the future look like? Ever since 1980 we have been using more oil than we found. And the difference between what we found and what we used is made up from reserves. We're now pumping some of these reserves from the past.

What will future discoveries be like? These forecasters have indicated slowly declining production. It won't be smooth like that, but will probably average about like that because most experts that I know believe that we have probably found about 95 percent of all of the really recoverable oil that we will find in the world unless the prices are very high and we have technologies that are now only conceptual.

So what the future will look like will depend upon how quickly you think we can and ought to use these reserves because the difference between what we use, and, of course, you can't use what's not pumped, but the difference between what we use and what is available to use is this space in here, and that's going to be filled up by the reserves back here. With enhanced recovery and aggressive techniques of pumping live steam down there and sequestering CO_2 down there and flooding it with seawater the way they're doing it in Saudi Arabia, we might get it more quickly and we might get a little more of it, but it won't dramatically change what the future looks like.

The next chart is a schematic, which I think shows where we are, and this is again what we've referred to as Hubbert's Peak. And it reflects a 2 percent growth and decline after that. Now, you can make this peak look sharp or flat. Here we have expanded the abscissa and compressed the ordinate so that it's kind of flat. You can make it a really sharp peak if you do the reverse, but that yellow area there represents 35 years because, you see, 2 percent growth, just 2 percent growth, which is so small that our market really doesn't like that, if it's only 2 percent growth, Wall Street doesn't do very well. But 2 percent growth doubles in 35 years. It's four times bigger in 70 years. It's eight times bigger in 105 years. It is 16 times bigger in 140 years.

Now, we've been here a long time, and I hope we're here another 140 years; and if we have only 2 percent growth, we would be using 16 times as much energy in 140 years from now. I will tell you categorically there will not be 16 times as much energy to use so things in the interim will need to change. I think we're about here, and I will present evidence from a number of sources that corroborate that.

And most people are now concentrating on how do we fill the peak. Because with our addiction to these fossil fuels, this is what we would like to use, but we're only going to have this much available; so we have got to somehow fill in that peak. I will tell you that as far as liquid fuels are concerned, I don't think there's a prayer that we can fill in that gap. I think that we will be more than lucky if we can continue with a plateau, that what we can get from oil will be this curve and we can now have some renewables which will fill in to give us a plateau. We can live very comfortably with that. A chart a little later will show that.

The next chart is an interesting one. It's by a major organization, CERA, and they're one of the few entities in the world now that still is kind of in denial on peak oil. Although they say that, undulating plateau versus peak oil, but what they're showing there is a peak. And what they're showing here is that if we don't find much more oil, because we've found roughly 2 trillion barrels of recoverable oil and we've used a trillion barrels of those and that's just 1.92 trillion, and so if we find oil as depicted in that earlier chart we showed, then peaking would occur about here, which is imminent, is it not?

Now, if we find as much more oil as all the recoverable oil that still remains to be pumped, then that moves the peak out to this point. That's my kids. That's not even my grandkids. That's my kids that will have to deal with that. Even if that is true, then there's some unconventional oil, and I have no idea how much of that we can exploit. There are huge reserves in the Canadian tar sands and our oil shales of the West, Utah and Colorado. Heroic attempts are being made to exploit those. We're getting about a million barrels a day. That seems big, but the world is using more than 84 million barrels a day, and I just don't know what the potential will be. It is very uncertain what that potential will be. They are huge potential amounts of energy, but so are there huge potential amounts of energy in the tides. Because it's in the tides doesn't mean it's in the gas tank of your car, and the same thing is relatively true of these alternative sources of unconventional oil. Now, that also includes the heavy sours, and those we are converting and can convert; so there's some of that there too.

The next chart is a very recent one and very informative.

□ 1245

There are two major entities in the world that track production and use. And, of course, the use and production are essentially the same thing because we have no big reserves of oil in the world. We are kind of using it as we produce it because we are hungry for oil in our economy. One of those is the IEA, the International Energy Agency, and El Baradei, and that is the one that is keeping track of what is going on with the nuclear thing in Iran, and you see them frequently in the news. And the other is our own Energy Information Administration, a part of our Department of Energy. And I would caution you to be kind of suspect on their predictions for the future because they are using what I think, and what a good many think, are highly speculative prognostications by USGS as to how much more oil we are going to find. But they do a very good job of tracking.

And look what they have found. Look what they have found. If you smooth out the ups and downs of the red and the green, the red for IEA and the green for the EIA, we have been essentially plateaued in oil production for the last 30 months. Now, in the same 30 months, that is about the time it took oil to go from $40 a barrel to $102 a barrel. And isn't that what happens when you have a static supply and an increasing demand? If there is inadequate supply for the demand, the price goes up. The little blue line here shows the cost of oil. And it is now above $100 a barrel there, and it shows how dramatically the cost of oil responds to the availability of oil. There are a number of experts.

The next chart shows a quote, a very recent quote from Shell Oil Company, ''By the year 2100, the world's energy system will be radically different from today.'' It will indeed be radically different from today's. The world's current predicament limits our maneuvering room. We are experiencing a step change in the growth rate of our energy demands. And Shell estimates that after 2015, that is just around the corner, supplies of easy-to-access oil and gas will no longer keep up with demand. That is Shell Oil Company saying that we are going to peak out in the very near future in the production of gas and oil. We will not be able to meet the world's demands.

The next chart is a quote from our Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, noting the incredible geopolitical consequences. ''Yes, we do have to do something about the energy problem. I can tell you that nothing has really taken me aback more as Secretary of the State than the way the politics of energy is. I will use the word warping diplomacy around the world. We have simply got to do something now about the warping now of diplomatic effort by the all-out rush for energy supply.'' In 2006. We are now nearly 2 years later, and I will submit this was a very appropriate warning. We have done little.

The next chart is a really illustrative one, and this chart shows what our world would look like if the size of the country was relative to the amount of oil reserves that it contained. And you see in this chart that Saudi Arabia dominates the landmass of the world. Indeed, 22 percent of all the oil reserves in the world we believe are in Saudi Arabia. And notice how large Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, just little dots on the map in the Middle East, and look how large they are in terms of how much oil they have. Venezuela, in our hemisphere, dwarfs the United States.

Here we are with 2 percent of the oil in the world, and the yellow indicates that we use a whole lot. Why, we are the only yellow one in the world, aren't we? We have 2 percent of the oil. We use 25 percent of the world's oil. This is a shocking picture.

The next chart shows the concerns of some of our leading thought people in our country on the implications of this for national security. Jim Woolsey, McFarland, and Boyden Gray and 27 other prominent Americans, several Four Star retired admirals and generals among them, about 3 years ago wrote a letter to the President saying, ''Mr. President, the fact that we have only 2 percent of the world's reserves of oil and we consume 25 percent of the world's oil and import almost two-thirds of what we use is a totally unacceptable national security exposure. We really have to do something about that.'' The President mentioned that in his State of the Union that we were addicted to oil, much of it coming from people, as he said, that don't even like us very much. And we really need to do something about that. Tragically, we have not done much about that.

We represent less than 5 percent of the world's population, one person out of 22 in the world. We use a fourth of the world's oil. That statistic is not lost on the rest of the world, by the way. They note that, that they're paying $8 a gallon for gasoline in France. We are still paying $3 in our country. Note that although we have only 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, we are using 8 percent of the world's oil. What that means, of course, is that we are pumping our oil four times faster than the average in the world. That is understandable since we have more oil wells in our country than all the rest of the world put together.

The next chart really is an illustrative one. It has two bars. And the bar on the right, the top ten oil and gas companies on the basis of oil reserves, and notice that 98 percent of all of the oil reserves, this is among the top ten, 98 percent of all the oil reserves are Middle East. Lukoil, Russia, has only 2 percent. So that is who has the oil.

Now, who pumps the oil? Gee, we think that ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch Shell, and BP and so forth are huge companies. They are huge companies. But look, 78 percent of the top ten producers of oil, again, are these countries in the Middle East that are big giants, produce only 22 percent of the oil.

The next chart is a quote from a speech given 51 years ago the 14th day of this May by Hyman Rickover to a group of physicians in St. Paul, Minnesota. And if you do a Google search for ''Rickover energy speech,'' it will pop up, an enormously prophetic speech. He noted that at that time we were about 100 years into the age of oil, and he had no idea how long the age of oil would last, but this is a quote. ''There is nothing man can do to rebuild exhausted fossil fuel reserves. They were created by solar energy a very long time ago and took eons to grow to their present volume.''

In the face of the basic fact that fossil fuel reserves are finite, they are indeed finite. They are not inexhaustible. The exact length of time these reserves will last is important in only one respect: The longer they last, the more time that we have to invent ways of living off renewable or substitute energy sources and to adjust our economy to the vast changes which we can expect from such a shift.

He had no idea how long the age of oil would last. We were then 100 years into it. Now we pretty much know. With some confidence, I can tell you that the age of oil out of 8,000 years of recorded history will occupy about 300 years. As Hyman Rickover noted, this is but a blip in the long history of man. He said, ''Fossil fuels resemble capital in the bank. A prudent and responsible parent will use this capital sparingly in order to pass on to his children as much as possible of his inheritance. A selfish and irresponsible parent will squander it in riotous living and care not one whit how his offspring will fare.'' I have 10 kids, 16 grandkids, and two great grandkids. I am really concerned about their future relative to energy.

Do you know what we should have done when we found this incredible wealth under the ground, a barrel of which equaled the work output of 12 people working all year? We should have stopped to ask ourselves, what can we do with this to provide the most good for the most people for the longest time? That clearly is not what we did. With no more responsibility than the kids who found the cookie jar or the hog who found the feed room door open, we have just been pigging out.

And incredibly, with all the evidences that we have been going through here and more, that we are either at or very near peak oil, we still want to rush to drill and pump the last little reserves that we know might be out there. If we could pump ANWR and the offshore oil tomorrow, what we would do the day after tomorrow? And that is the plea that Hyman Rickover makes in his speech. There will be a day after tomorrow.

The next chart is an interesting one, and it shows some of the misconceptions that are out there. These are projections by our Energy Information Administration as to what production will be in the future. And we don't have time to go through the interesting transformation from frequency to probability, but somehow from USGS data to EIA charts, we went from a frequency to a P, which is a probability, and there they are making the bizarre statement that a 50 percent probability is greater than a 95 percent probability. And of course that can't be true. And this is the 95 percent probability. This is the 50 percent probability.

And their projection is that world oil production, this is, by the way, a smoothing out that chart we saw before with a lot of discoveries around the 1970s and 1980s and they have just drawn a relatively smooth curve over that. They were projecting that we were going to find more and more, and we were going to follow the green line. But look what has been happening since they made this projection, what you would expect might be happening: 95 percent probable is more than 50 percent, and it has been following the 95 percent probability.

The next chart is an interesting observation from Jean Laherrere, who is an expert in this area. And he is looking at the prognostications that are used to project that green curve that we are going to find more and more, so don't worry about the future. He says that the USGS estimate implies a fivefold increase in discovery rate and reserve addition for which no evidence is presented. Such an improvement in performance is, in fact, utterly implausible, given the great technological achievements of the industry over the past 20 years, computer modeling and 3–D seismic, the worldwide search and the deliberative effort to find the largest remaining prospects. Indeed, it really is quite implausible.

The next chart shows that even if that happened, even if that happened, even if we found as much more oil as all the known recoverable reserves today, it still wouldn't make that much difference. Because here we are, and here is that recession in the 1970s and our slower rate of increase because we are now more efficient. And the red curve indicates that we will find another roughly trillion barrels of oil, as much more oil as all the oil that we now know can be reasonably recovered. And if that happens, it pushes the peak out to 2016. Big deal, 9 years from now. That is the power of compound growth.

When Albert Einstein was asked, after the discovery of nuclear energy, Dr. Einstein, what will be the next big force in the universe? He said that the most powerful force in the universe is the power of compound interest. And you see that here.

And by the way, if we now use heroic efforts with enhanced recovery and we get it out quicker and maybe a little more, then it follows this curve, but then you pretty much fall off a cliff. You can't pump what is not there.

There have been four studies. The next chart is a quote from one of those

studies. There have been four studies. The chart just up was a chart from that same study. There have been four studies paid for by your government, and pretty much ignored by your government. The first of these studies was the big study done by SAIC, known as the Hirsch report, published in 2005. And this is SAIC, a big prestigious organization of worldwide respect. He said that the world has never faced a problem like this. World oil peaking is going to happen. World production of conventional oil will reach a maximum and decline thereafter. That happened in our country in 1970.

□ 1300

The same man who predicted it would happen in our country in 1970 predicted it would be happening in the world about now. If he was right about our country, why shouldn't we have been concerned about the probability he might have been right about the world? The world has never faced a problem like this.

The next chart shows a couple of more quotes from the Hirsch Report. ''. . . will present the United States and world with unprecedented risk management problems, but the economic, social and political costs will be unprecedented.'' There is nothing in history to prepare us for this.

The three other reports, I mentioned that there were four, three other studies, actually, two reports from the Hirsch study, the second one was done by the Corps of Engineers, also in 2005. They said essentially the same thing in different words, that the peaking of oil is either present or imminent, with potentially devastating consequences.

The third one was by the Government Accountability Office in 2007, just last year, and they said essentially the same thing, in different words.

The last one was by the National Petroleum Council, again last year, saying essentially the same thing. ''The peaking of oil is either present or imminent with potentially devastating consequences.''

I have here I think a couple of more references to this very recent reference. Here is one. This is just out from the Deutsche Bank. There are several quotes in that, and you can pull this up and look at it. The 100 million barrels per day peak oil market, we are now somewhere 84 and 88 million barrels a day. We use about a fourth of that, 21–22 million barrels a day. I am not sure we will ever get to 100. But many people are prognosticating 120–150 million barrels a day. There is little probability that will happen.

Several CEOs are quoted in this of the large oil producing companies, and they are all saying essentially the same thing, that we are probably at peak oil.

Now, what do we do about that? I want to use the remaining time to talk about that.

The next chart is a chart of where we get our energy from today. Well, this was in 2000. That isn't quite today, and there have been some changes since then. But you can see we were getting, according to this chart, 24 percent of our energy from natural gas, 30 percent from petroleum, and from coal we got 23 percent. That adds up to 85 percent of all the energy that we are consuming comes from fossil fuels, and they are finite. They will not last forever.

Only 7 percent of that energy comes from true renewables, of the additional energy, to make up to 100, and 8 percent comes from nuclear electrical power. Now, that is 8 percent of the total energy in our country. That is almost 20 percent of our electricity is produced from nuclear power.

We are very much like the young couple whose grandparents have died and left them a big inheritance, and they now have established a really lavish lifestyle, where 85 percent of the money they are spending comes from their grandparents' inheritance and only 15 percent of it from their income. They look at what they are spending and how old they are and when they will retire, and, ''gee, the inheritance is going to run out before we retire, so we really got to do something. Either we got to spend less or make more.'' And that is precisely where we are.

This 85 percent, because we are reaching the maximum production of oil and gas, we will be tailing off, so there will be the necessity of replacing that. Just as this young couple would have to replace the limited resources in their grandparents' inheritance with more money or spend less money, that is where we are.

Now, these roughly represent the renewables. This was the picture in 2000. It has changed a little. But in terms of the big picture, the dramatic changes since 2000 are really pretty trifling.

At that time, solar represented 1 percent. Solar has been growing 20–25 percent a year. That is really big growth. But 1 percent of 7 percent is .07 percent. So it is five times bigger, 0.35 percent. Still trifling, isn't it? Still way down, kind of in the noise level.

Wood. This is the paper industry and timber industry wisely using what would otherwise be a waste product, waste to energy. You can do several things with your public waste, and burying it is probably the least productive thing you ought to do with it. You can recycle it, and that ought to be done, to the extent that it is rational. Or you can burn it to produce energy.

But be cautious. This is not a solution to our fossil fuel problem, because most of that waste stream represents the profligate use of fossil fuel energy, and in a fossil fuel deficient world, it just won't be there. So for the moment it makes imminently good sense to do that, but recognize that will be a diminishing resource. As the world has less and less fossil fuels, we are learn to live with less and less waste.

Wind. Boy, that one is growing, maybe 40 percent a year. Denmark is the world leader in that. They have now freed themselves from the need of imported oil. Their huge wind machines produce electricity at about 1.5 cents a kilowatt hour. We are doing it for about 2.5 cents a kilowatt hour. That is very competitive. And there is the potential for a lot of growth. Again, in 2000, that was only 1 percent of the 7 percent renewables, which is 0.07 percent. So to get to be a really meaningful percent of our total energy production, we have to have a long time and huge growth there, don't we.

Conventional hydro, you see that is a big part of the renewables. That is truly renewable. As long as the sun shines and the water evaporates and it is carried up to the clouds and it drops on the mountains and flows down to the rivers, we have conventional hydro. That probably can't grow much in our country. But we could grow micro hydro. The big macro hydro, we probably tapped out on it. But the rest of the world has some potential for growth in hydro.

Alcohol fuel, just spend a moment talking about that. This seems like such a great idea. Our farmers are so good at growing these grains, and you can ferment the sugar and corn to make alcohol. The first cars that Henry Ford built ran on alcohol, so we are kind of just going full cycle if we turn back to alcohol.

We produced a fair amount of alcohol, and it doubled the price of corn. So our farmers, recognizing they could make more money growing corn than they could soybeans and wheat, they diverted land from soybeans and wheat at the same time that the world population is growing and the demands for these things are increasing.

So now we have an increase, double the price of corn, and a huge increase in the price of wheat and soybeans. And what that means is that three of the world's staple foods for people, corn, wheat, soybeans and rice, three of those have gone up because of our corn ethanol program. A UN official, noting what we had done and the consequences of this and the world increase in corn, wheat and soybean prices, said what we have done is a crime against humanity.

The National Academy of Sciences, now, this isn't Roscoe Bartlett saying this, I am just repeating the National Academy of Sciences, although we did some back-of-the-envelope computations and came to essentially the same conclusion, the National Academy of Sciences says if we took all of our corn and converted it to ethanol, and discounted it for fossil fuel input, which you really have to do to be fair, you can't be using fossil fuel energy to produce ethanol and pretend you are displacing fossil fuels, that we would in that case displace 2.4 percent of our gasoline.

That is trifling. In fact, it is so trifling that they noted that if you tuned up your car and put air in the tires, you would save as much gas as converting all of our corn to ethanol.

They further said that if we converted all of our soybeans, no soybean oil for your salads, no soybean oil meal for your pigs and chickens and cows, converted all, but you still have the soybean meal left that you could use, but all the oil, convert all the oil to soy diesel, it would displace 2.9 percent of our diesel.

The reality is that these fossil fuels are incredibly rich in quality and quantity of energy. They have been easily exploitable. You put in our big oil fields one unit of energy and you get out 100 units of energy. It is the energy-profit ratio. In many of our wells today, we put in 1 and get out 1.5 or 1.2, but it is still profitable, so we still do it.

Geothermal. Now, that is true geothermal. That is not tying your heat pump to the ground temperature, which we really ought to do. When I got up this morning it was 18 degrees. If you had a heat pump, what you were trying to do to heat your house was to cool that 18 degrees outside. You had to take heat from out there and put it in your house.

Now, if you were tied to the ground, here it is 56 degrees. That looks really warm compared to 18, doesn't it? And the reverse in summer, of course. Your air conditioner in summer is trying to heat up that 102 air outside to cool your house. It would be a whole lot easier to work against a 56 degree ground temperature, wouldn't it? But this is talking about the true geothermal. That is where you are tapping into the heat produced in the molten core of the Earth.

Now, for all practical purposes, that is inexhaustible. It is not, of course, but you are talking in terms of millions and millions of years, so as far as we are concerned, it is inexhaustible. We have some real potential for that. There is not a chimney in Iceland that I saw, because they run everything there on geothermal. We have some places in our country where we can do that, and we can and should.

The next chart is a look at all of the potential substitutes, supplements, for fossil fuels. The first of these are some finite solutions, and that is the tar sands and the oil shales and coal. It is worth just spending a couple of minutes talking about those, because there are potentially huge, huge reserves there.

Conservatively, there are probably 1.5 trillion barrels of oil at both the tar sands and the oil shales, in each of those. There are potentially about 1.5 trillion barrels of oil in both the oil shales and tar sands. That is 3 trillion barrels between the two. And we have about 1 trillion barrels of recoverable oil in the known oil fields in the world. That is a huge amount, and some people will tell you, don't worry about the future, because we have all that oil there and we will get it out.

Well, they are working very heroically in Canada to exploit the tar sands. They have a shovel up there which lifts 100 tons at a time, they dump it into a truck which hauls 400 tons, and they haul it to a cooker that uses natural gas and cooks this really stiff oil so it will flow, and then they add some chemicals to it to keep it flowing when it cools.

They are producing about 1 million barrels a day. But they know what they are doing is not sustainable, because they are going to run out of the water it takes to do it, they are going to run out of the natural gas that they are using, and they are talking about building a nuclear power plant. And this seam, if you think of it as a seam, it is pretty much on top of the ground, but soon it ducks under an overlay and it would be prohibitively expensive to remove the overlay, so they will have to determine how to do it in situ, and they don't know how they can do that in situ. So because it is there doesn't mean it will be in your gas tank. But we really need to work at that.

But with these heroic methods, it is 1 million barrels a day. That is just a little over 1 percent of all the oil we use. So don't become too sanguine about the future because it is there, because there are huge engineering challenges in exploiting it.

The oil shales of our West, and conservatively there is 1.5 trillion barrels there, but to date nobody has found a way to competitively get that out, even with oil near $100 a barrel. There are several companies and consortiums working on some breakthrough technologies that may make exploitation of that possible. But there is still an enormous amount of uncertainty in that, and to bank on that solving your energy problems would be sort of the equivalent of banking on winning the lottery to solve your personal economic problems. It would be real nice if that happened.

□ 1315

But I wouldn't bet the ranch on it. You ought to have a plan B, so I think we ought to have a plan B here.

Whoa, some people will tell you, no problem about the future, because we have 500 years of coal. That isn't true. There is nobody I know who believes we have 500 years.

But for a long time the figure 250 years was tossed about. That's 250 years at present use rate. There may be a chart later that shows this, but I will just go through the numbers now because they are really simple to understand. That 250 years shrinks to 85 years if there is only 2 percent growth.

Again, that's the power of compound growth. Then if you convert that coal to a gas or liquid and use the energy from coal to do it, which is the only fair thing to do, you have now shrunk to 50 years. If you share it with the world, and if you think about it, you think about it, there is no way you can avoid sharing it with the world. Because if we use oil produced from coal, then the oil we might have bought from the Middle East is available to somebody else.

So the end result is just as if you had sold three-fourths of that oil to the rest of the world, the oil they would get from coal, because they will be buying that three-fourths you didn't use from the countries from which you would have bought it. In that case it lasts 12½ years.

But just recently, the National Academy of Sciences has said that we haven't really looked at coal reserves since the 1970s. And they have looked at coal reserves, and they say it's not 250 years of reserves, it's 100 years of reserves.

So if we use that same dynamic of compound growth, that 100 years shrinks to something probably less than 5 years if you convert it to a gas or liquid, use energy from coal to do that, and share it with the world.

Now, there is a lot of coal out there, and we are fortunate in being one of the major repositories of coal in the world, and you can convert it to a gas or a liquid. Germany did that during World War II. South Africa learned to do it when their trade was restricted with the rest the world. But this is not a panacea. It's there, and we will use it. But we need to use that as a bridge to get the true renewable, nuclear.

Now, nuclear is kind of in a class by itself. There are three basic types of nuclear power plants; two of them we have, one of them is a dream. The two that we have is the light water reactor using fissionable uranium. That's the only one used worldwide to produce electricity. France produces about 75 or 80 percent of their electricity from nuclear. We still produce more electricity with our 20 percent than the total amount they produce because we are so much bigger than them.

By the way, and that uses fissionable uranium, and there is a finite amount of that in the world. It is not infinite. I get wildly divergent estimates of how much remain, but it's not in hundreds of years. It's in decades, not in hundreds of years.

A second type of nuclear energy is the breeder reactor, which, as the name implies, produces more fuel than it uses. That has been used in producing nuclear weapons in our country and other places in the world. It has big problems in transporting weapons, potentially weapons-grade materiel to enrichment and so forth, and of storing away some products that will be hot for a quarter of a million years.

Now, just intuitively, something so energetic that I can't get near it for a quarter of a million years just ought to have enough energy in there to do something useful with it, and they now are working at that, and there are now some exciting new technologies that may permit us to get a whole lot more energy out of these fuels than we were getting in the past. So there is a real opportunity for nuclear to kind of take up the slack, but note that that produces electricity.

Unless you are going to go to electric cars, that doesn't help much in liquid

fuels, and the real crisis in the future, the real challenge for the future, is going to be liquid fuels. Now, the only silver bullet that I know of, and, again, this is not liquid fuels, but you can have electric cars, was some challenges in producing batteries and with the raw materials necessary for those and disposing of the batteries and so forth.

Fusion is inexhaustible, if we get to it. That's what the sun is doing. It's a huge nuclear fusion plant. We may get there. We spend about $250 million a year doing that, and we are always about 30 years away from a functioning fusion power plant.

I gladly support the $250 million, but I will tell you that I think the odds of getting there are relatively small. The rewards are so huge that it's worth the investment even if the chance of success is small, so I happily vote for this.

But please have a plan B. If we get there, wonderful. But the probability that we will get there is, I think, quite small, so we really need a plan B. You can't count on that as the future energy source for your kids and your grandkids.

Now, here are the renewables that we have been talking about. Let's see if there are some here. Ocean energy. Lots of potential from energy from the oceans, the ocean waves, the ocean tides. The Moon lifts the whole ocean, three-fourths of the Earth's surface, several feet a day.

I carry two 5-gallon buckets of water, that's heavy. When I think about the huge amount of potential energy in just those tides, it's more than we are using, but it's disbursed, very difficult to capture. There is an old axiom that says, energy, to be effective, must be concentrated when the tides are just so disbursed. Very difficult.

There is ocean thermal gradients. Some places the surface of the ocean is very warm, the deep waters are very cold, and you can, with the principle of the thermocouple, get energy from that divergent temperature difference. So there are a lot of opportunities, potential opportunities from energy from the ocean, and we ought to be exploiting all of those.

Methanol. Methanol is simply an alcohol made from wood rather than grain. Grain alcohol has two carbons, wood alcohol has one carbon, but it burns with roughly the same amount of energy.

A biomass, and a lot of talk about biomass today, and you look out there at all of that wasteland and those trees and that grass, and, gee, if we could just take that and convert it into alcohol. You can do that with some little organisms that we have bioengineered that mimic what the organisms do in the gut of the sheep or the goat or the cow or the cecum of the horse and the guinea pig. They can break down the cellulose molecule into the constituent glucose molecules. Then, of course, you can ferment those glucose molecules. But we have not yet perfected that technology so that it is amenable to huge, large-scale production, but maybe we can get there.

I have a major concern that Hyman Rickover talked about in his great speech, and again, I would urge that that's a very instructive speech. Hyman Rickover, energy speech, Google, search it. It will pop up for you.

He noted in that speech that we shouldn't be competing with food for energy. That's corn ethanol, biodiesel. We should be careful in competing with a humus for fuel, because, you see, the weeds that grow today in that vacant lot, that will grow this summer, are in at least some measure growing because last year's weeds died and are fertilizing them.

I remember back, I was born in 1926, so I lived during the Depression, and I remember farmers in the Depression which said, gee, I have now worn out my third farm. What they did was to go in and mine the farm simply by planting crops that drew from the soil far more energy than he or the plants put into the soil. So soon, the soils were nonproductive and there were few of us in a big country, and he just moved on.

You can't move on today, and so we have to have sustainable agriculture. I don't know the extent to which we can exploit what might be a huge potential from energy from biomass, but I would caution that we really need to look at sustainability.

If you have ever gone to the tropical rain forest that looks to be a hugely rich dynamic, and, gee, if I only could get all of that stuff off of there, I could grow tremendous crops on that soil.

But when they did that, there was bitter disappointment, because what they found was that essentially all of the nutrients in that ecosystem were involved in the growth, death, decay, regrowth. When they took that material off the soils, for what they called laterite soils, they baked like a brick. It would take a very long time by secondary succession to come back to a rain forest. We need to be very careful about sustainability.

I have been a big proponent of what we call ARPA–E, and we voted that. It's not been funded, and the administration is not recommending funding it, and I hope they reconsider.

ARPA–E kind of mimics our DARPA, which has been an enormously successful organization in exploiting leading-edge technologies, and the net out there is their creation. They have been the creator of a lot of really exciting technology, because what they do is to fund leading-edge things that are so far out there and so risky that business rationally can't do it, and probably in terms of fidelity to their stockholders should not be doing it.

We think the future demands very creative approaches to selecting which of these alternatives we invest our limited amount of time and money and energy in.

My wife tells me that I shouldn't be talking about this. She said that don't you remember that in ancient Greece they killed the messenger that brought bad news. I tell her this is really a good news story. It's a good news story in two respects. One is that the sooner we start, the less bumpy the ride will be.

Now, we should have started at least 28 years ago. I say that because by 1980 we knew absolutely that M. King Hubbert was right about the United States. We were already 10 years down the other side of Hubbert's peak. We have now blown 28 years when he should have been doing something, but if we start today, the ride will be smoother than if we start tomorrow.

But even more importantly, I think this challenge is just exhilarating. There is no exhilaration like the exhilaration of meeting and overcoming a huge challenge, and, boy, this is a big one.

A year ago, the holiday season, I was privileged to lead a codel of nine Members to China, and we went there to talk about energy. Incredibly, they began their discussion of energy by talking about post oil. Gee, you know, in our country, we tend to think in terms of the next quarterly report, and the next election. We are kind of dominated by what's called the tyranny of the urgent, which frequently sweeps the important off the table. But in that part of the world they seem to think in terms of generations and centuries. And so with that perspective, they were talking about a post-oil world, and they talked about post oil, and they had a five-point plan.

Number one, conservation. That's where it has got to begin is conservation. That will buy some time and free up some energy because we have run out of time. There is no surplus energy to invest in alternatives. Their oil wouldn't be $100 a barrel.

The second and third points of their five-point program was find alternatives, and as many of those as you can from their own country.

The fourth one will interest you, it's be kind to the environment, and they know that they are big polluters.

The fifth one is international cooperation. They are pleading for international cooperation.

What we need, and I will close with this brief statement, what we need is a program that has a total commitment of World War II, the technology focus of putting a man on the Moon, and the urgency of the Manhattan Project. We are the most creative, innovative society in the world. We are up to the challenge. We need leadership. We can do it.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3609

Mr. SHAYS (during the Special Order of Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw as a cosponsor from H.R. 3609, the Emergency Homeownership and Mortgage Protection Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GINGREY (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of the birth of his granddaughter.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of family reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FARR) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PRICE of Georgia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HOYER, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 1200. An act to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to revise and extend that Act; to the Committee on Natural Resources and to the Committee on Ways and Means in addition, to the Committee on Energy and Commerce for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

S. 2450. An act to amend the Federal Rules of Evidence to address the waiver of the attorney-client privilege and the work product doctrine; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, March 3, 2008, at 2 p.m.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Speaker-authorized official travel during the second and fourth quarters of 2007 and the first quarter of 2008, pursuant to Public Law 95–384 are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, PATRICK ALWINE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN NOV. 21 AND NOV. 26, 2007

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Patrick Alwine	11/21	11/24	Kuwait		1,000.50						1,000.50
	11/24	11/25	Turkey		357.00						357.00
	11/25	11/26	Belgium		871.78						871.78
Committee total					2,229.28						2,229.28

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

PATRICK ALWINE, Feb. 6, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, JERRY HARTZ, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN DEC. 31, 2007 AND JAN. 8, 2008.

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Jerry Hartz	12/31	1/2	New Zealand		300.00		(3)				300.00
	1/2	1/4	Antarctica				(3)				
	1/4	1/5	New Zealand		150.00		(3)				150.00
	1/5	1/7	Australia		350.00		(3)				350.00
Committee total											800.00

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Military air transportation.

JERRY HARTZ, Feb. 8, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, KAY A. KING, PH.D., HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 4 AND JAN. 15, 2008

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Kay A. King, Ph.D	1/5	1/7	Egypt		556.00		(3)				556.00
	1/7	1/9	Ghana		578.00						578.00
	1/9	1/12	South Africa		972.00						972.00
	1/12	1/15	Morocco		940.00		(3)				940.00
Committee total					3,046.00						3,046.00

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Military air transportation.

KAY A. KING, PH.D., Feb. 5, 2008.

(AMENDED) REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, CATLIN O'NEILL, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN NOV. 25 AND DEC. 2, 2007

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Catlin O'Neill	11/25	11/27	Italy	Euro	292.00		(3)				272.00
	11/27	11/28	Chad	FCFA	230.00		(3)				230.00
	11/28	11/30	Ethiopia	ETB	200.00		(3)				200.00
	11/30	12/1	Kenya	KES	268.00		(3)				268.00
	12/1	12/2	Belgium	Euro	167.00		(3)				167.00
Committee total					1,157.00						1,157.00

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Military air transportation.

CATLIN O'NEILL, Feb. 5, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, CATLIN O'NEILL, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 3 AND JAN. 10, 2008

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Catlin O'Neill	1/3	1/10	New Zealand		869.40		11,153.00				12,022.40
Committee total											12,022.40

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

CATLIN O'NEILL, Feb. 5, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, DELEGATION TO TBILISI, GEORGIA, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 1 AND JAN. 8, 2008

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. Lloyd Doggett		1/1	United States				10,215.68				10,215.68
	1/2	1/8	Georgia	Lari	2,006.47						2,006.47
Michael Mucchetti		1/8	United States				8,039.13				8,039.13
	1/2	1/8	Georgia	Lari	2,006.47						2,006.47
Committee total					4,012.94		18,254.81				[3] 22,267.75

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] This amount for travel is filed under protest. Despite my repeated requests, the U.S. State Department is not pursuing the refund to which it is entitled on a refundable ticket. If that refund had been properly obtained, this reported amount would and should be lower.

HON. LLOYD DOGGETT, Jan. 7, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, DELEGATION TO VIETNAM, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 2 AND JAN. 11, 2008

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. Steny Hoyer	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Roy Blunt	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Ray LaHood	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Jo Ann Emerson	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Bobby Etheridge	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Lynn Westmoreland	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Baron Hill	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Emanuel Cleaver	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. John Lewis	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Debbie Wasserman Schultz	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Madeleine Bordallo	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Kay Granger	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Ben Chandler	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Wilson Livingood	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Mariah Sixkiller	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Simone Litrenta	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Michael Collins	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Stacey Bernards	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Brian Diffell	1/2	1/4	Vietnam		722.00		(3)				722.00
Hon. Steny Hoyer	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Roy Blunt	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Ray LaHood	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		(3)				1,613.00
Hon. Jo Ann Emerson	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		(3)				1,613.00
Hon. Bobby Etheridge	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Lynn Westmoreland	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Baron Hill	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Emanuel Cleaver	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. John Lewis	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Debbie Wasserman Schultz	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Madeleine Bordallo	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		(3)				1,613.00
Hon. Kay Granger	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Ben Chandler	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Wilson Livingood	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Mariah Sixkiller	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Simone Litrenta	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Michael Collins	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Stacey Bernards	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Brian Diffell	1/5	1/8	Australia		1,613.00		[3] 483.00				2,096.00
Hon. Steny Hoyer	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00						870.00
Hon. Roy Blunt	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Ray LaHood	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, DELEGATION TO VIETNAM, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 2 AND JAN. 11, 2008—Continued

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. Jo Ann Emerson	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Bobby Etheridge	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Lynn Westmoreland	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Baron Hill	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Emanuel Cleaver	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. John Lewis	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Debbie Wasserman Schultz	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Madeleine Bordallo	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Kay Granger	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Hon. Ben Chandler	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Wilson Livingood	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Mariah Sixkiller	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Simone Litrenta	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Michael Collins	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Stacey Bernards	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Brian Diffell	1/8	1/10	New Zealand		870.00		(3)				870.00
Committee total					60,895.00		7,728.00				68,623.00

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Military air transportation.

HON. STENY H. HOYER, Feb. 5, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, DELEGATION TO CHINA, SINGAPORE, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 5 AND JAN. 14, 2008

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. James E. Clyburn	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		539.00		(3)				539.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,221.65		(3)				1,221.65
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Hon. Bennie Thompson	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,221.65		(3)				1,221.65
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Hon. Ed Pastor	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,221.65		(3)				1,221.65
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Hon. Zach Wamp	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,221.65		(3)				1,221.65
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Hon. Henry Brown	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.00
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,221.65		(3)				1,221.65
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Hon. G.K. Butterfield	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,140.33		(3)				1,140.33
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Sarah Birch	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,140.33		(3)				1,140.33
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Jaime Harrison	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,140.33		(3)				1,140.33
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Helen Hardin	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,140.33		(3)				1,140.33
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Todd Levett	1/7	1/8	China		639.80		(3)				639.80
	1/8	1/9	Singapore		398.00		(3)				398.00
	1/9	1/11	Australia		1,140.33		(3)				1,140.33
	1/11	1/13	New Zealand		700.50		(3)				700.50
Committee total					29,333.90						29,333.90

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Military air transportation.

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN, Feb. 12, 2008.

(AMENDED) REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2007

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. Rick Boucher	5/25	5/28	Denmark		1,275.00		(3)				1,275.00
	5/28	5/31	Germany		1,398.00		(3)				1,398.00
	5/31	6/3	England		1,704.00		(3)				1,704.00
Hon. Marsha Blackburn	5/25	5/28	Denmark		1,275.00		(3)				1,275.00
	5/28	5/31	Germany		1,398.00		(3)				1,398.00
	5/31	6/3	England		1,704.00		(3)				1,704.00
Hon. Fred Upton	5/25	5/28	Denmark		1,275.00		(3)				1,275.00
	5/28	5/31	Germany		1,398.00		(3)				1,398.00
	5/31	5/31	Belgium		364.00		(3)				364.00
	5/31	6/3	England		1,704.00		(3)				1,704.00

(AMENDED) REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN APR. 1 AND JUNE 30, 2007—Continued

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. Greg Walden	5/25	5/28	Denmark		1,275.00		(3)				1,275.00
	5/28	5/31	Germany		1,398.00		(3)				1,398.00
	5/31	5/31	Belgium				(3)				
	5/31	6/3	England		1,704.00		(3)				1,704.00
Christopher Treanor	5/25	5/28	Denmark		1,275.00		(3)				1,275.00
	5/28	5/31	Germany		1,398.00		(3)				1,398.00
	5/31	6/3	England		1,704.00		(3)				1,704.00
Laura Vaught	5/25	5/28	Denmark		1,275.00		(3)				1,275.00
	5/28	5/31	Germany		1,398.00		(3)				1,398.00
	5/31	6/3	England		1,704.00		(3)				1,704.00
Clarence Albright	5/25	5/28	Denmark		1,275.00		(3)				1,275.00
	5/28	5/31	Germany		1,398.00		(3)				1,398.00
	5/31	5/31	Belgium				(3)				
	5/31	6/3	England		1,704.00		(3)				1,704.00
Committee total					31,003.00						31,003.00

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Military air transportation.

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL, Chairman, Feb. 7, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2007

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. Melissa Bean	11/3	11/3	Kuwait				(3)				
	11/3	11/4	Iraq				(3)				
	11/4	11/5	Germany		348.00		(3)				348.00
Hon. John Campbell	11/2	11/5	Italy		2,425.00		(3)				2,425.00
David Smith	11/11	11/13	France		300.00		825.75				1,125.75
Eric Edwards	11/25	11/30	China		697.00		9,998.34				10,695.34
Michael Paese	11/26	12/1	China		697.00		10,018.34				10,715.34
Ricardo Delfin	11/26	12/1	China		697.00		10,018.34				10,715.34
Tallman Johnson	11/26	11/30	China		697.00		10,043.34				10,740.34
David Oxner	11/26	12/3	China		697.00		9,181.59				9,878.59
Peter Roberson	11/26	11/30	China		697.00		10,018.34				10,715.34
Scott Morris	11/26	11/30	China		697.00		10,018.34				10,715.34
Hon. Dennis Moore	11/27	11/29	Greece		396.00		(3)				396.00
	11/29	12/1	Cyprus		788.00		(3)				788.00
	12/1	12/2	France		228.00		(3)				228.00
Hon. Michele Bachmann	12/23	12/23	Ireland				(3)				
	12/23	12/24	Kuwait		155.00		(3)				155.00
	12/24	12/25	Iraq				(3)				
	12/25	12/26	Kuwait				4,042.15				4,042.15
Committee total					9,519.00		74,164.53				83,683.53

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Military air transportation.

HON. BARNEY FRANK, Chairman, Feb. 1, 2008.

(AMENDED) REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2007

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Jean Fruci	11/11	11/19	Spain		2,019.00		[4] 1,854.33				3,873.33
Dan Pearson	11/12	11/18	Spain		1,855.00		[4] 1,199.33				3,054.33
Tara Rothschild	11/12	11/17	Spain		1,620.00		[4] 5,354.24				6,974.24
Hon. Laura Richardson	11/23	11/24	Germany		170.00		(4)				170.00
	11/25	11/27	Oman		386.00		5,760.19				6,146.19
	11/27	11/29	UAEA		348.00		(4)				348.00
Hon. Brian Baird	11/30	12/2	Jordan		275.00		(3)				275.00
James Turner	12/16	12/22	India		970.00		[4] 8,358.98				9,328.98
Chris King	12/6	12/16	Indonesia		1,827.00		[4] 7,088.70				8,915.70
Tara Rothschild	12/6	12/15	Indonesia		1,827.00		[4] 7,785.70				9,612.70
Bart Forsyth	12/6	12/7	Singapore		254.00		[4] 10,172.70				10,426.70
	12/7	12/14	Indonesia		1,274.00						1,274.00
Committee total					12,825.00		47,574.17				60,399.17

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
[3] Commercial air transportation.
[4] Military air transportation.

HON. BART GORDON, Chairman, Feb. 5, 2008.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2007

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Ted Zegers	11/26	11/29	Haiti		692.00		1,756.20				2,448.20
Hon. Jim McDermott	11/28	12/1	Philippines		1,175.00		7,390.70				8,565.70
Hon. Earl Pomeroy	11/30	12/1	Jordan		104.00		6,837.13				6,941.13
	12/2	12/3	Iraq								
	12/3	12/3	Kuwait		155.00		3,758.67				3,913.67

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2007—Continued

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem [1]		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency [2]
Hon. Ron Kind	11/30	12/1	Jordan		104.00		6,791.13				6,895.13
	12/2	12/3	Iraq								
	12/3	12/3	Kuwait		155.00		5,375.67				5,530.67
Timothy Reif	12/9	12/12	Switzerland		414.00		8,738.57				9,152.57
Jennifer McCadney	12/8	12/12	Switzerland		621.00		7,637.90				8,258.90
Angela Ellard	12/8	12/12	Switzerland		621.00		9,088.36				9,709.36
William Thomas	12/8	12/12	Switzerland		621.00		7,627.36				8,248.36
Alexander Perkins	12/8	12/13	Switzerland		828.00		7,627.36				8,455.36
Evan Alexander	12/8	12/13	Switzerland		828.00		7,627.36				8,455.36
Hon. Phil English	12/15	12/16	Kuwait		278.00						278.00
	12/16	12/17	Iraq								
Committee total					6,596.00		80,256.41				86,852.41

[1] Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
[2] If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL, Chairman, Feb. 28, 2008.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5545. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting a copy of a report required by Section 202(a)(1)(C) of Pub. L. 107-273, the ''21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act,'' related to certain settlements and injunctive relief, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 530D Public Law 107-273, section 202; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5546. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Modification of Class D Airspace; Atwater, CA [Docket No. FAA-2007-28139; Airspace Docket No. 07-AWP-3] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5547. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Modification of Class D Airspace; Castle Airport, Atwater, CA [Docket No. FAA-2006-25671; Airspace Docket No. 07-AWP-3] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5548. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Springfield, CO [Docket No. FAA-2007-27430; Airspace Docket No. 07-ANM-4] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5549. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of VOR Federal Airways 363; CA [Docket No. FAA-2005-20551; Airspace Docket No. 04-AWP-8] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5550. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendments to Class E Airspace; Helena, MT [Docket No. FAA-2007-28400; Airspace Docket No. 07-ANM-11] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5551. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Mooresville, NC. [Docket No. FAA-2007-28366; Airspace Docket No. 07-ASO-11] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5552. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Modification of Class E Airspace; Poplar Bluff, MO. [Docket No. FAA-2007-28773; Airspace Docket No. 07-ACE-9] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5553. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class D and E Airspace, Revision of Class E Airspace; Easton, MD [Docket No. FAA-2007-28601; Airspace Docket No. 07-AEA-02] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5554. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Montrose, PA. [Docket No. FAA-2007-0165; Airspace Docket No. 07-AEA-11] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5555. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Honesdale, PA. [Docket No. FAA-2007-0153; Airspace Docket No. 07-AEA-12] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5556. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; McGrath, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-29012; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-15] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5557. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Soldotna, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-29100; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-16] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5558. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Lewiston, ME. [Docket No. FAA-2007-0245; Airspace Docket No. 07-ANE-95] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5559. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Skowhegan, ME [Docket No. FAA-2007-0244; Airspace Docket No. 07-ANE-94] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5560. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Farmington, ME [Docket No. FAA-2007-0243; Airspace Docket No. 07-ANE-93] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5561. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Selawik, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-27998; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-05] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5562. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Buckland, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-29009; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-12] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5563. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Chevak, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-29010; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-13] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5564. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class D and E Airspace; Kenai, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-29011; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-14] received February 15, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5565. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Annual Report On Child Welfare Outcomes 2002-2005, pursuant to Public Law 105-89, section 203(a); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5566. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program (RIN: 0970-xxxx) received January 30, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5567. A letter from the Chair, Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, transmitting the FY 2007 Annual Report of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, pursuant to Public Law 102-281, section 429(b) (106 Stat. 145); jointly to the Committees on

Financial Services and Science and Technology.

5568. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's report entitled, ''2007 Report to Congress on Foreign Direct Investment in the United States from Countries that Boycott Israel or That Do Not Ban U.S.-Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations,'' pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Foreign Investment and National Security Act of 2007; jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Financial Services, and Energy and Commerce.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BUYER:

H.R. 5509. A bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve and enhance procedures for the retirement of members of the Armed Forces for disability and to improve and enhance authorities for the rating and compensation of service-connected disabilities in veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WILSON of Ohio:

H.R. 5510. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five-month waiting period in the disability insurance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LAMBORN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado):

H.R. 5511. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to remedy problems caused by a collapsed drainage tunnel in Leadville, Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SPACE (for himself, Mr. GUTIERREZ, and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts):

H.R. 5512. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to prescribe the weights and the compositions of circulating coins, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. COBLE, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. MCHENRY):

H.R. 5513. A bill to reduce youth usage of tobacco products, to enhance State efforts to eliminate retail sales of tobacco products to minors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CANNON:

H.R. 5514. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to limit Federal court jurisdiction over State laws restricting pornography, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. BRADY of Texas, and Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin):

H.R. 5515. A bill to amend the Social Security Act to prevent unauthorized earnings from being credited toward benefits under title II of such Act and to make improvements in provisions governing totalization agreements, to amend the Social Security Act and the Immigration and Nationality Act to prevent unauthorized employment, and to improve coordination of the provisions of such Acts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Education and Labor, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. PLATTS):

H.R. 5516. A bill to increase Federal Pell Grants for the children of fallen police officers, firefighters, and other first responders; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. POE (for himself, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. HALL of Texas, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. CARTER, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. REYES, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas):

H.R. 5517. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7231 FM 1960 in Humble, Texas, as the ''Texas Military Veterans Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico:

H.R. 5518. A bill to amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to order the recall of meat and poultry that is adulterated, misbranded, or otherwise unsafe; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself and Mr. OBERSTAR):

H. Con. Res. 305. Concurrent resolution recognizing the importance of bicycling in transportation and recreation; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. RAHALL (for himself and Mr. MOLLOHAN):

H. Res. 1006. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of a National Miner's Day to celebrate and honor the contributions of miners and encouraging the people of the United States to participate in local and National activities celebrating and honoring the contributions of miners; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. MANZULLO (for himself, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. BEAN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. KIRK, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. HARE, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. WELLER, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. LAHOOD, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. HARMAN, and Ms. HARMAN):

H. Res. 1007. A resolution expressing the condolences of the House to those affected by the devastating shooting incident of February 14, 2008, at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. WOLF, Mr. CANTOR, and Mr. MCNULTY):

H. Res. 1008. A resolution condemning the persecution of Baha'is in Iran; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida (for herself, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. KELLER):

H. Res. 1009. A resolution recognizing school resource officers and their crucial role in keeping America's students, teachers, and administrators safe; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. FEENEY):

H. Res. 1010. A resolution recognizing the importance of manufactured housing in the United States; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WOLF (for himself and Mr. PAYNE):

H. Res. 1011. A resolution calling on the United States Government and the international community to promptly develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive regional strategy to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations, contain and reduce violence, and contribute to conditions for sustainable peace and good governance in Chad, as well as in the wider region that includes the northern region of the Central African Republic and the Darfur region of Sudan; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

239. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Senate of the State of Hawaii, relative to Senate Resolution No. 24 urging the President of the United States to agree to an economy-wide reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions and to commit the United States to a binding international treaty that would result in a significant and rapid global reduction in atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 41: Mr. SALI.
H.R. 197: Mr. THORNBERRY.
H.R. 211: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.
H.R. 370: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 706: Ms. WATERS.
H.R. 1014: Mr. CALVERT, Mr. SPACE, and Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 1076: Mrs. DRAKE and Mr. GRAVES.
H.R. 1283: Mr. CULBERSON and Mr. HILL.
H.R. 1419: Mr. COHEN and Mr. BURGESS.
H.R. 1422: Mr. SHAYS.
H.R. 1436: Mr. HAYES.
H.R. 1439: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.
H.R. 1552: Mr. SALI.
H.R. 1554: Mr. SHUSTER.
H.R. 1584: Mr. PETRI and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
H.R. 1589: Mr. ROHRABACHER.
H.R. 1610: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. GIFFORDS, Mr. SALI, and Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia.
H.R. 1629: Mr. WALBERG, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1761: Ms. GRANGER.
H.R. 1767: Mr. PLATTS, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. BOOZMAN.
H.R. 1820: Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 1845: Mrs. MYRICK and Mr. HAYES.
H.R. 1850: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 1954: Mr. MATHESON.
H.R. 2040: Mr. BOUCHER, Ms. GIFFORDS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. HOYER, and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
H.R. 2060: Mr. EHLERS.
H.R. 2221: Ms. RICHARDSON.
H.R. 2303: Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mrs. BONO MACK, and Mr. COBLE.
H.R. 2370: Mr. BARROW and Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 2549: Mr. KLEIN of Florida.
H.R. 2577: Ms. GRANGER.
H.R. 2588: Mr. FEENEY.
H.R. 2593: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 2677: Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 2991: Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. GUTIERREZ, and Mr. MEEKS of New York.
H.R. 3453: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 3457: Mr. GORDON.
H.R. 3563: Mr. GORDON and Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 3609: Mr. BERMAN, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, and Ms. SCHWARTZ.
H.R. 3646: Mrs. BONO MACK and Mr. POE.
H.R. 3652: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3713: Mr. WEXLER.
H.R. 3799: Mr. RUSH and Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 3817: Mr. KAGEN.
H.R. 4088: Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4105: Mr. WILSON of Ohio.
H.R. 4236: Mr. DONNELLY and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 4248: Mr. SESTAK, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. HILL, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. PLATTS.
H.R. 4251: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 4264: Ms. CASTOR.
H.R. 4296: Mr. EMANUEL and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 4541: Mr. WAMP.
H.R. 4688: Mr. ELLISON and Mr. UDALL of Colorado.
H.R. 4838: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 4897: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 5036: Mr. MATHESON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 5086: Mr. GONZALEZ.
H.R. 5110: Mr. ETHERIDGE and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 5148: Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. POE, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 5222: Mr. LATHAM, Mr. SALI, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. GOODE, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, and Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 5223: Mr. KAGEN, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. CARNAHAN, and Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 5440: Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. FORBES, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, and Mr. YOUNG of Florida.
H.R. 5443: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania and Mr. BURTON of Indiana.
H.R. 5454: Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. SOUDER.
H.R. 5475: Mr. FARR.
H.R. 5506: Mr. LOBIONDO.
H. Con. Res. 40: Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.
H. Con. Res. 138: Mr. CLAY.
H. Con. Res. 241: Mr. CLAY.
H. Con. Res. 302: Mr. ALLEN and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H. Res. 18: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.
H. Res. 105: Mrs. EMERSON and Mr. KIRK.
H. Res. 146: Mr. HIGGINS.
H. Res. 265: Mr. ABERCROMBIE and Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas.
H. Res. 353: Mr. GORDON and Mr. ALLEN.
H. Res. 356: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts and Mr. PORTER.
H. Res. 543: Mr. STARK.
H. Res. 821: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan.
H. Res. 896: Mr. LEWIS of California and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H. Res. 958: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
H. Res. 965: Mr. LATTA, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. MACK, Mr. LINDER, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. PENCE, and Mr. POE.
H. Res. 968: Mr. CARNAHAN.
H. Res. 973: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. KANJORSKI, Ms. WATERS, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. WATT, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. BEAN, Mr. CLAY, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HODES, Mr. HOLT, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. OLVER, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SUTTON, and Mrs. JONES of Ohio.
H. Res. 981: Mr. KAGEN, Mr. STARK, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. BARROW, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. WU.
H. Res. 995: Mr. MEEK of Florida, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. SALI, and Mr. WELLER.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rev. J. Wayne Pratt from the Wooddale & Paradise Valley Charge, Scotrun, PA.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

God, by whatever name we choose to call You, we thank You for this day and all its welcome opportunities to serve You in the conduct of this great Nation. We thank You for this assembled body of dedicated men and women in their quest for peace, justice, equality, and freedom for all.

You rejoice delightedly in our good intentions and honest deliberations and forgive us freely when we fail to see the common good or lose focus in our labors. We pray that You will continue to guide and direct our work, that it may bring glory to You and perhaps be a model for others to follow.

Send Your gracious blessing upon these Senators and all our leaders at every level. Share with them and with us Your gifts of diligence, integrity, and concern for the welfare of others so that injustice, divisiveness, and thoughtless or selfish acts may be vanquished. Help us to create a sense of peace and harmony that will prevail throughout this Nation and beyond its borders.

In all things, O God, we give You thanks. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, there will be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2634, a bill to require a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al-Qaida and its affiliates.

Mr. President, procedurally, we are in a situation where we have asked to be able to legislate on a piece of legislation dealing with the President and those in his Cabinet sending to us reports on what is happening in the global war on terror. What has happened is what has happened now for more than a year, where the minority is not allowing us to go to that legislation.

We have a situation where we want to move to a piece of legislation. Procedurally, there has been in the Senate for many decades a provision that if we want to move to a piece of legislation and someone objects, the only thing we can do is file cloture on it. We did that. Cloture has been invoked. But now we are leading up to 30 hours. We had 30 hours on the original matter calling for a timeline for changing the course of the war in Iraq, and that was 30 hours we used. Now we are going to do it on this legislation.

It is really too bad we are wasting time rather than getting to the legislation, but that is the way it is. And we, as a very slim majority, have come to accept that.

IRAQ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is another day in Iraq and another $400 million. One only need look at the Washington Post, as I did yesterday, to see what is happening in Iraq. Front page: ''Sunni Forces Losing Patience With U.S.'' And it goes on to say how hundreds and hundreds of these Sunnis, who were helping us, have gone home.

Now, Mr. President, the Sunnis, even before Saddam Hussein, controlled Iraq. They are a minority, but they have controlled Iraq for generations. Now the Shias control Iraq, and the Sunnis, as we all know, are trying to make a comeback. This should cause everyone some concern.

Also, if you look a little bit further in the newspaper, go over to page 12, you will see another story dealing with Iraq. ''Iraq Leaders Veto Law on Elections.'' We have been trying, and in fact it was the purpose of the surge, to bring about some ability in the Iraqis to take over the Government themselves, and they passed 4 pieces of legislation of the 18 that they were supposed to pass. Everyone said at the

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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time they passed they thought basically they were for show. And, obviously, the one calling for elections, which was one of the four, in fact, that has taken place; the Iraqi leaders vetoed the bill on elections. There still could be elections in the fall, but right now they are going to have to do new legislation. So now we are down to 3 out of the 18.

During the month of July, more than one American was being killed per day. We are now at 30 on the 28th day of February. Yesterday, one of my Republican friends, one of the leaders, said the Democrats are in denial. ''It's almost as if they are sorry things have gotten better.''

Mr. President, all Americans are glad for any American or Iraqi life saved. But unlike the minority, which spent 6 years ignoring the warning signs and following the President's policies in lockstep, Democrats are clear-headed about where this war has been, where it stands today, and what we must do to change course and make our country safer.

Mr. President, last night, I think it was about 7:30 or 8 o'clock, I went back to my office, and there was a man waiting there, one of the Capitol guides. As disabled and wounded Iraqi veterans come through, he brings them by, and if I am in my office, I am always happy to say hello to these wounded veterans. Burt is the tour guide, and my office is just off the Senate floor, so it is fairly easy for them to bring them by.

Last night was a remarkable night. I have met probably 50 of these veterans whom Burt brings around. Last night, a 22-year-old man from Missouri by the name of Matthew McGuire came by. He was there with his girlfriend, his wife to be.

I said: How are you doing?

He said: I'm OK.

He was standing. He was unstable. He had a cane that held him up.

I said: Why don't you sit down, and we will talk a bit.

I said: How long were you in Iraq before you got hurt?

He said: Well, I was there for 6 months.

Five times in that 6-month period, Mr. President, he suffered attacks. Once he was on foot patrol, and he was knocked down by a bomb. One time he was a gunner on a vehicle and was knocked off that. He has all of his limbs. But last month, in January, in one 24-hour period, he had 37 seizures. And I told him about Senator JOHNSON and said: I wish Senator JOHNSON were here.

I talked about Senator JOHNSON being in a coma for the period he was and how much he had improved and that he can now walk on his own and speak 95 percent of how he was able to. I had a picture taken with him; sat and gave them both a hug and kissed her on the cheek. It was really a dramatic night when this young man was telling me that in one 24-hour period he had 37 seizures.

It is one thing to talk about almost 4,000 Americans being killed and 30,000 being wounded, and another when you talk to one of these heroic young men and women. I told him I so appreciated his service to our country and that we are going to do everything we can to make sure the sacrifice he made is not in vain. But these are more than just statistics. These are people. And Matthew McGuire is a person who has been hurt extremely bad. His life will never be the same.

I said: Have you been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder? And he said, yes. But in addition to that, he has brain damage, as indicated by the 37 seizures he had in one 24-hour period. He is only 1 of the 30,000 who have been wounded in a war that is stretching our military to a breaking point.

There is going to be testimony in the Joint Economic Committee today by Nobel Prize winning economist Stiglitz. Mr. Stiglitz has written a book that will come out in about 10 days called ''The $3 Trillion War.'' This is a Nobel Prize winning economist who has had access to Pentagon records, and he has written how this war has cost and will cost at least $3 trillion.

General Powell said last year that the Army is about broken, and that is a quote. The day before yesterday, General Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army, confirmed what Powell said a year ago, when Casey said:

> The demand for our forces exceeds sustainable supply.

Admiral Fallen and Admiral Mullin agree that concerns about our troop commitment to Iraq may limit our ability to address other global challenges. So we have to take seriously the concerns of General Casey, General Powell, Admiral Fallen, Admiral Mullin, and countless other military leaders and foreign policy experts.

It is time that we understand the sacrifices made by our valiant, heroic military have come at a time when they have done what they needed to do, and we have to get them home. Four hundred million dollars a day. I repeat what I have said a couple times in the last 2 days, Mr. President. The Iraqis believe they have the most significant oil reserves in the world. Everybody recognizes they have the second largest oil reserves in the world. They think they have the largest oil reserves in the world. It is a wealthy nation, and they should take care of their own.

I think what we have talked about is that there should be a force left there of American troops to take care of any counterterrorism activities that need to go forth, and we should have limited training of Iraqis. We have trained almost a half million now, 430,000. And, of course, we have to protect whatever assets we have there. It is a situation that calls for a conclusion.

As I said yesterday, when is enough enough? I think this debate has been good. I think we need to have more in-depth discussions on a Federal program that is costing us more than $400 million a day. I think we have spent 2 days on this, and I believe that is not adequate, but we will be back. The President has asked for another, I think, about $120 billion more to the end of this fiscal year for the war in Iraq, and there will be more discussion at that time. I think we will wait until somewhere late in April to take that up. But the time is coming when we will discuss this in more detail.

I appreciate the good nature of the debate. We just disagree. The Republicans think everything is fine; we don't.

It has been a very positive, in my mind, debate. It has been a civilized debate. I think the American people have been served well by this debate we have had the last couple days.

I would say on the schedule, I am working with the Republican leader to find out when he feels it would be appropriate to have a vote. We are waiting for him. I will visit with him later today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

IRAQ AND FISA

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, for the benefit of our colleagues, I will summarize where we are this morning as well. The majority leader and the Senator from Wisconsin offered a resolution, a piece of legislation, and sought to proceed to consider it. Republicans agreed to that. We voted last night to invoke cloture, which means we agreed to proceed to the consideration of that resolution.

It has to do with developing a strategy to deal with al-Qaida. It is, as the majority leader said, a debate worth having. As a result, Republicans were happy to engage in that debate and we will throughout the day.

After the period of morning business, we are back on the resolution. I would urge my Republican colleagues to let us know, let the leadership staff know, when they wish to be here to speak on the matter so the schedules can be coordinated, that everyone can debate the issue as they see fit, and that the minority and majority leader a little later in the day can get together and decide when we might be able to schedule the next vote based upon everyone's desire to speak. So if our colleagues would let us know when they desire to come and make their presentations, that would be very helpful.

I would like to correct one thing the majority leader said, in saying Republicans think everything in Iraq is ''just fine.'' I know he did not mean to suggest Republicans believe the situation in Iraq is ''just fine.'' Because clearly it is not. If it were, we could bring our troops home today.

Unfortunately, it is not ''just fine,'' although it is steadily improving. And when it gets to the point when it is ''just fine,'' we will be able then to bring the remainder of our troops home. The primary difference between

the majority and minority is the majority would like to bring the troops home right now. ''Enough is enough,'' says the majority leader.

The Republicans, on the other hand, believe we have to finish the job. And while great progress has been made as a result of the surge implemented by General Petraeus several months ago, the job is not finished. And until the job is finished, there is a great danger that were we to pull out prematurely, al-Qaida, not totally defeated, would infiltrate right back in, reestablish its presence, begin the terrorism which has taken us so many months now to repress, and that we would have to then come right back in again, all at a greater cost than if we simply see the job through right now.

It is possible every day to have a headline from a newspaper revealing a suicide bomber attack or some other incident similar to that in Iraq. That is the unfortunate reality. Everything is not yet ''just fine'' in Iraq. But it is also true that because the surge has worked to essentially defeat al-Qaida, it has now resorted to the most reprehensible tactics of all: using women, children, the disabled as suicide bombers to go into places where those people are not suspects and they can blow up innocent people in Iraq.

That is the situation we need to help stop, not turn our back and walk away from. It is also true many Iraqis have now been trained by our forces. That is the good news that will enable us eventually, hopefully sooner rather than later, to withdraw our troops from Iraq. We are withdrawing them now.

We will, by June as I recall, be down to a level that is very close to the level that existed prior to the surge. We will be able to do that because the surge has worked. What happens after that, we will await a report from General Petraeus when he comes back to the Capitol and briefs us on the situation in Iraq.

In the meantime, Ambassador Crocker and others have noted significant progress on the political and diplomatic front as well as the economic front in Iraq. The Parliament there is now engaging in vigorous debate, passing resolutions. I note that one was vetoed yesterday. It kind of reminds me of the process in Washington, where we do not always agree on everything and we have a robust debate about it.

We should not be critical of the Iraqis because they cannot agree always on everything, but we should continue to push them to move forward with alacrity, so the things that need to be done politically to enable us to eventually remove our troops can be done. I know we all, Republicans and Democrats, share that goal.

So the bottom line is, we will continue this debate today. I would conclude with this point: One of the important reasons for having this debate today about a strategy for dealing with al-Qaida is because there is a difference of opinion between the House of Representatives' leadership and the Senate on this issue.

The Senate voted with 68 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, to reinstitute FISA, the law that enables us to gather intelligence on these terrorists abroad. That law had to be reauthorized because it expired 6 months after we first passed it.

So we had to reauthorize it and make one additional change; that is, to make sure the telecommunications companies that are cooperating with us are protected from lawsuits that have been filed against them simply for their participation with the U.S. Government in collecting this foreign intelligence.

Without that liability protection, they are not likely to continue to help us. So we made that change. It was recommended by the Intelligence Committee on a vote of 13 to 2, a very bipartisan recommendation. The Senate then passed it with 68 affirmative votes. It went to the House of Representatives and there it sits. It sits without a law in force today that enables us to begin new intelligence surveillance activities against terrorists abroad.

This represents a deficiency in our intelligence gathering at a time when as both Admiral McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence, and Attorney General Mukasey have noted that we are losing intelligence every day that would help us in the war against these terrorists.

Every day that goes past that we cannot intercept a communication because the law has not been reauthorized is a day of lost intelligence, intelligence we will never get back. The terrorists are not going to make the phone call a second or third time to accommodate us so we can finally collect the intelligence we need, so we can find out who he is calling and what they are planning. We cannot do that.

So phone calls that occurred yesterday or the day before or the day before that, they are gone, they are lost forever. It is critical we reestablish this capability for collecting foreign intelligence on terrorists.

The legislation passed by the Senate will do that. The President says he will sign it into law, and it is critical that the House of Representatives' leadership allow the House of Representatives to vote on it. If they do, it will pass and it can be sent to the President and it will be signed.

The reason, I gather, it has not been brought forth is because the leadership of the House knows it will pass and, for whatever reason, they do not want this Senate-passed bill to become law.

It is critical the Congress fulfill its responsibility to ensure that our intelligence-gathering capabilities continue on. I would urge again that the best strategy for dealing with al-Qaida starts with authorizing the kind of intelligence collection that we understand is critical to understanding al-Qaida's intentions and thus being able to defeat them.

So in developing a strategy for al-Qaida, No. 1, the House of Representatives' leadership should bring this legislation up for a vote, allow those who support it to send it to the President for his signature, and we can get on with this important collection.

I urge my colleagues to come to the floor and let us know when they wish to speak so we can organize the debate today with an eye toward the minority and majority leader being able to get together and work out a time schedule that would be acceptable to all of us.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

VETERANS CARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, our servicemembers in Iraq are fighting under incredibly stressful conditions each and every day. We are on the floor today talking about an Iraq resolution. We are focused on the war or the surge. I wish to talk today about the soldiers themselves who are called on. Many of them, as we know, have come home with terrible injuries that need specialized care. Yet there are too many examples that show today the Bush administration was caught unprepared to take care of these men and women when they have come home.

So as we continue to talk about Iraq, I think it is important we also talk about the toll that this war is taking on our troops and our veterans. I wish to focus today on the need to ensure that our injured servicemembers and veterans can get the care they need and deserve by reminding all of us what happened in the last year and how much we still have to do.

A year ago this month, the Washington Post published a story that uncovered the depth of the problems facing our servicemembers who were being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The Post reported then that servicemembers were living in rooms with moldy walls and broken ceilings while they waited, waited to get care. The Post found that many of our servicemembers and their families felt trapped at the time in a bureaucratic catch-22 as they fought to get the disability benefits they had earned.

The news of the extent of the squalid conditions was a watershed moment in

the care of our military men and women. It focused the attention of the American people on the needs and treatment of our injured servicemembers and veterans. It put a spotlight on the frustrating redtape that was facing servicemembers as they transitioned out of the military and into the VA.

I am very proud that Congress, led by the Democratic majority, moved quickly to investigate the problems, not just at Walter Reed but throughout the military and VA systems to take that action.

Shortly after the Washington Post story ran, the Democratic leaders went to Walter Reed and met with our injured servicemembers. The Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Armed Services Committee joined in a historic partnership to address the problems we saw there and at military and VA facilities across the entire country.

Many of us have continued to go to Walter Reed and other facilities on a regular basis, as we had even before those stories ran. In fact, I was up at Walter Reed a short time ago to tour the mental health ward and learn about what efforts are being made to decrease the stigma attached to mental health care and to help improve care.

As a result of the action we took, our country has made a lot of changes in its care for our servicemembers and our veterans. One of the most significant was the Wounded Warriors Act, which was included in last year's Defense authorization bill.

With the Wounded Warriors Act, we laid out a clear path, directing the Defense Department and the VA to address the shortfalls in the care of our injured servicemembers. So a year after the Walter Reed report, we required the Defense Department and the VA to work together to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent, treat, and diagnose traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress syndrome, and we directed the Defense Department to create Centers of Excellence for TBI and PTSD to improve our understanding of these devastating injuries that were impacting our soldiers.

We are addressing the frustrating bureaucracy with which our troops have struggled. We have now directed the VA and the Defense Department to develop a joint electronic health care record. And we are requiring the military and the VA to work together, finally, on disability ratings.

The Defense Department is investing in new technology, more equipment, and state-of-the-art treatment to better care for injured soldiers. Walter Reed and facilities across the entire country are making similar improvements. In fact, in my home State of Washington, Fort Lewis has taken great strides in its treatment of wounded servicemembers who are recovering there. In one example, leaders there are working very hard now to help our servicemembers and, critically, their families understand the benefits available to them.

I am optimistic the action we took is changing the way our military and the VA operates. But as I stand on the floor today, I must tell you we have a lot of work left to be done. Yesterday, the GAO reported to Congress the Army has significantly improved its support for servicemembers at Walter Reed and our military hospitals.

According to the Washington Post this morning, there is an article today: Army officials say they have transformed the way they care for soldiers and their families.

But the GAO also said, as has been reported this morning, there are still shortages of staff and other gaps we have to address. In fact, one-third of warrior transition units are still understaffed. And that, to me, raises concerns about the progress of a streamlined disability ranking system.

We still have a long ways to go to provide our servicemembers with the care they deserve. And some of these changes are actually going to require a cultural transformation within the military. We have to keep our eye on the ball.

I got a personal reminder of this when I reconnected recently with Army retired SPC Rory Dunn. He is an amazing young man who comes from my home State and lives in Renton, WA. Rory was horribly injured when his humvee was hit by a roadside bomb outside Fallujah in 2004. When I first saw Rory, he was in front of me with his entire skull crushed in, his head crushed from ear to ear. He lost an eye. He lost his sense of smell. He lost much of his hearing. He still today, in fact, has shrapnel in his brain. Rory, sitting in front of me, had visibly sacrificed for our country, nearly losing his life several times as he was moved from Fallujah to Germany and finally to Walter Reed. When he got to the United States, he was sent to Walter Reed, and there the Army tried to discharge him before he completely had recovered.

He and his mother have struggled to help make sure he gets the benefits he needs, not just that, the lack of medical care as he progressed. When I saw Rory at one time he was excited. He was being sent to Richmond, VA polytrauma center for treatment. Recently he told me about the horrific experience he had there. I hope much has improved since then, but he told me at the time, even though he could not get out of bed because of the tremendous extent of his injuries, he would wake up in the morning, ring his call bell, which apparently was not plugged in, and wait for a nurse to come and help him with basic restroom needs. No one came for hours. Rory was left there. A soldier who fought for his country in the Iraq war, had done everything his country asked of him, injured horribly, was left to sit in his own waste in a polytrauma center in Virginia.

Thankfully we have come a long way from there. Rory should never have had to go through that.

He was then sent on to Palo Alto for reconstructive surgery. They did an amazing job. In fact, when I first talked to Rory after his injuries, he asked me to pin his Purple Heart on him when he was awarded that. But he wanted to wait until he had his face reconstructed because he wanted the picture to look good. So he had to wait many months before I finally met him in Seattle and was so proud to pin that on his chest as his mother sat and watched with tears running down her face.

That was several years ago. Rory has continued to struggle every single day, a young man, barely out of his teenage years, injured dramatically in the war in Iraq, 4 years later, still struggling to do everything he can to be an American. What is Rory doing with his time? He and his mother, who has now spent 4 years helping Rory recover, are back at Walter Reed and other VA facilities to make sure no soldier goes through what Rory did, advocating for them, making sure they understand what they need, making sure they get the help and support and, importantly, making sure I continue to understand what is happening in the military in our VA system and making sure that no soldier goes through what he did when he came home. Rory told me a few weeks ago: There is much work left to be done. He still talks to soldiers who have been left behind, who are not getting the help they need, who feel like second-class citizens, who feel they are still fighting their Government when they come home.

For me, Rory is the face of this war. I think we have to ensure that the changes we are making to improve the conditions for all of our servicemembers and veterans such as Rory are not a flurry of action while the cameras are rolling. We have to work to ensure that action doesn't drop off once the media has moved on to the next story. I remain firmly convinced that we have to remain vigilant on three specific fronts if we are going to talk about real change for our troops and our veterans. I believe, first, we have to ensure that we cut through the bureaucracy between the military and the VA. It is simply unacceptable that after fighting for our country, our servicemembers have had to return and fight against the Government for the care they deserve. It isn't only from this war. Go back and talk to Vietnam-era, Korean-era veterans who have been fighting for years to get the disability benefits they deserve.

Thanks to the Wounded Warrior Act, we have now started a pilot project to work out ways to make the Defense Department and the VA disability rating systems compatible so our soldiers do not face this, but we do have to remember, this is the first step between bridging the gap between the VA and the Defense Department. It is only a pilot. We have a lot more work we need to do to ensure that those agencies don't do a pilot project and put it on

the shelf; that they look at how it is working, what is working, what is not, what are the challenges in front of us, are we making sure that we stay on them every day. Congress has to keep a close watch to make sure this isn't because the cameras were rolling a year ago or today but something that is effective far into the future. We have to work to make sure they meet those goals.

Secondly, we have to focus our attention on treating the new injuries to our servicemembers who are suffering in Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly traumatic brain injury. TBI is a significant wound of this war, but we have only just begun to understand how we treat it. We have to recognize that whenever there is an explosion in Iraq or Afghanistan or wherever we have soldiers on the ground, the effects of that, not just on the soldiers in the vehicle but even those close by and sometimes hundreds of yards away, can have a damaging impact on the brain, called traumatic brain injury. We still don't know all we need to about how to treat TBI, and we still have soldiers coming home every day, every month who have just been diagnosed with TBI or perhaps not diagnosed, and we need to make sure they get the correct diagnosis and treatment.

Congress has authorized millions of new dollars for research, but we have to ensure that we get the results from that research. Then we have to make sure we take action based on what we have learned.

I am extremely disappointed that the President seems to have lost sight of that already. He has proposed to this Congress an 8-percent cut for VA medical and prosthetic research in his fiscal year 2009 budget. That is incredibly shortsighted, and he can be sure—and every Member of this body can be sure—I am going to fight that every step of the way. We need to find out how to better treat TBI, how to diagnosis it, how to deal with PTSD and how to diagnose and treat it effectively. That takes research, and we have to stay on top of it.

Finally, and most difficult, we have to change a military culture in which servicemembers are told that mental illness is an excuse for their pain and which fails to recognize that psychological wounds can be more serious than some of their physical injuries. Congress again has given the military hundreds of millions of dollars to improve its mental health care system. We have pushed through legislation this past year requiring the military and the VA to destigmatize mental health treatment, to increase awareness of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome, and to do further research on traumatic brain injury. But recent reports show that the Army's suicide prevention efforts need a lot more work. The numbers of suicides have risen since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, and last year as many as 121 soldiers committed suicide. That is a 20-percent increase over the year before.

I was struck by a recent report by the Associated Press which was a stark reminder of how serious this issue is. That article reported on a VA study which found that more than half of the veterans who took their own lives from 2001 to 2005 were members of the National Guard or Reserve, even though the Guard and Reserve have made up less than a third of U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prolonged deployments are stretching our troops to the breaking point. Earlier this week General Casey acknowledged his concern about the strain on the military. He told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Army is under so much stress from extended deployments that we must reduce the length of combat tours as soon as possible. Many of our servicemembers have seen their best friends killed. They have seen other untold horrors. Yet somehow we expect them to come back from the battlefield, come back home unaffected by what they have seen, or their experience. We have to ensure that the military takes action to ensure that our troops are getting the psychological care they need. We need to see a change in the culture. That change has to be more than a talking point. Senior military leaders have pledged to do more, but they have to ensure that their words and their programs are being executed in the field. They have to work to break down the stigma that is, unfortunately, associated with seeking mental health treatment. They have to ensure that troops have psychiatrists and psychologists to talk to, and they have to ensure that those who seek help aren't then penalized. We have to find ways to reach out to servicemembers who are discharged and are not seeking care from the VA. This is especially important for our Guard and Reserves who oftentimes, when they come home, don't think of themselves as veterans. They return from the war and go back to their civilian jobs without ever getting help.

In my State of Washington, over 10,200 Guard and Reserve members have now served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our troops and veterans are heroes who are sacrificing for our Nation. It is time for our Government to wake up and provide them with the care they need.

I voted against going to war in Iraq. But I have said consistently that no matter how anyone feels about the war, we have an obligation as leaders to make sure our men and women who fight for us get the care they deserve. I am proud of the way this Congress, led by the Democratic majority, moved to address the problems facing our returning servicemembers, which clearly wasn't a priority for the Bush administration. Here in Congress, we said: Not on our watch, not anymore.

A year after the Walter Reed story drew attention to the treatment of servicemembers, we have made progress. But we cannot let this issue fade away. After examining the President's VA budget proposal, I have to tell my colleagues, I am disappointed that the administration still doesn't seem to get it. In his State of the Union Address this year, President Bush said he was dedicated to providing for our Nation's veterans. But at a time when thousands of new veterans are entering the VA system with serious medical needs as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the administration is underestimating the cost of medical care and is cutting funding for construction and medical and prosthetic research. At a time when our older veterans are seeking care in record numbers, the President is proposing fees for them and copays that are essentially going to shut the door of the VA to thousands of people who served our country. That is wrong. I am going to be working very hard this year to ensure that those misguided proposals do not become reality.

The same is true as we address the budget for caring for our troops. Our servicemembers risk their lives for our security every single day. They have done everything we have asked. We have to live up to our commitment to them.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we are advised by the Democratic cloakroom there will not be a member of the majority who will come in to use the remainder of their morning business time, so I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak during the remainder of that time as well as the 30 minutes allotted to the minority.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Chair.

IRAQ

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we are confronted with a piece of legislation introduced by the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. FEINGOLD, which calls for setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al-Qaida and its affiliates. The question I guess I would ask is: Where have those who propose a new strategy been? Have they been paying attention to the good news that has been coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan when it comes to our ability and

our successes to combat global terrorism and particularly the threat of al-Qaida?

I think the legislation that has been proposed is both misguided and unnecessarily duplicative of the efforts which I will describe here, which are ongoing, and would literally cause us to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

On a more basic level, I think this legislation misses the point. Every time I come back to work here in Washington, DC, I almost feel there is a parallel universe operating here in Washington where some have voluntarily suspended their powers of disbelief and ignored the facts that seem to me to be as plain as the nose on your face. But I think in light of the fact that this legislation has been introduced, we need to talk about it and provide the American people with the evidence with which they can make their own decisions about what is happening with regard to the fight against al-Qaida.

This bill would require the administration to set forth a strategy for fighting al-Qaida. I do not know what the proponents think we have been doing since 9/11 but fighting al-Qaida wherever we may find them, but that is what the bill calls for. Of course, the bill also conveniently neglects the various strategies we have in place, including some that are classified which we cannot talk about here on the floor of the Senate, but which the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin as a member of the Intelligence Committee knows—because he is on the Intelligence Committee; he has been briefed in a classified setting about these strategies—he knows we have a number of strategies in place, and this proposal seems to act as if nothing has happened, when that is not the case at all.

I would interject that overall in the operations against al-Qaida, in Iraq in 2007, we have seen the capture of 8,800 terrorists, while an additional 2,400 have been killed. Of those we captured or killed, 52 were senior emirs or commanders, 32 were leaders of improvised explosive device teams, 24 were cell leaders, and 92 were other facilitators. In other words, we have been effective in going after high-value targets in Iraq and literally decapitating the leadership of al-Qaida. That is the reason why al-Qaida is on the run in Iraq and, yes, even in Afghanistan.

But to recapitulate, the various strategies that are already in place would seem to be ignored by this legislation. These include the President's National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, which was revised by the administration in September of 2006, and which outlines in a clear and straightforward fashion the strategic vision for the global war on terror.

Also, there is the President's National Implementation Plan, which was completed in June of 2006. This document is a classified, comprehensive plan, so we are not going to talk about it on the floor in detail. But it provides for the execution of our national counterterrorism strategy, and it provides a detailed breakdown of which executive branch agencies are charged with carrying out the specific tasks and activities as part of that overall strategy.

Now, Congress, as I said, is aware of all these documents. We get classified briefings. Any Member of Congress who cares enough about it can go to room 407 here in the Capitol and gain access to them. Additionally, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is conducting his own review of the al-Qaida strategy, which will be finished later this year. So it is a disingenuous and hollow argument, indeed, to say the administration or this country, the U.S. Government, lacks a coherent plan to neutralize al-Qaida or that the current strategy for combating al-Qaida is not working and it needs to be replaced.

The numbers speak for themselves. I am going to go through these in rather quick order, but I think the numbers speak louder than words.

During the period of May to June 2007, as this chart demonstrates, we have seen 26 al-Qaida in Iraq leaders captured or killed. They include some pretty evil characters, people such as Khalil al-Mashhadani, a senior Iraqi in the al-Qaida-Iraq network. He was a principal intermediary between al-Qaida senior leadership and Abu Ayyub al-Masri. He ordered all Iraqi emirs to wear suicide vests—a trend we are still seeing today—and confirmed in interrogation that al-Qaida lost the al-Anbar safe havens due to coalition operations and tribal engagements by the Awakening Groups, which I will talk about in a minute. He was captured in July and sentenced to death by an Iraqi court this past September.

We have seen since that time, in July and August, senior terrorists captured or killed. It simply is not true to suggest that we are ineffective or not focused on capturing or killing al-Qaida's senior leadership in Iraq or wherever we may find them in Afghanistan or elsewhere.

For example, in August, we were successful in capturing the emir of greater Samarra, the mastermind behind the destruction of the Samarra mosque in February of 2006, generally credited with unleashing the ethnic conflict which nearly led to a civil war in Iraq. He operated the Samarra terrorist network responsible for improvised explosive devices and vehicle bomb attacks. He orchestrated the Kirkuk courthouse bombing in June of 2006 that killed 20 and injured more than 100. This emir of greater Samarra was killed in a targeted raid this past August.

But to remind my colleagues of the kinds of barbaric and evil attacks these al-Qaida leaders have perpetrated on their own people, by and large in Iraq, this individual orchestrated the Kirkuk courthouse bombing in June of 2006. He masterminded a vehicle bomb attack against the Iraqi Army checkpoint in Samarra in 2006, in which 29 Iraqi security forces were killed and another 66 injured.

So that is August of 2007. As you can see, the numbers even go up in September of 2007, with senior terrorists captured or killed. Each one of these pictures on this chart is a different story: the brown squares depicting those who have been captured; the red squares indicate those who have been killed.

Clearly, Iraqi, American, and coalition forces, along with our allies—the Iraqis who have basically turned state's evidence on al-Qaida in Iraq have allowed us the intelligence necessary to capture or kill some of the worst of the worst among al-Qaida in Iraq.

In October of 2007, as you can see, the pace remains a steady one and a strong one in terms of capturing or killing al-Qaida's leadership.

The fact of the matter is, we could put up a new chart for each month until this month and last month. The fact is, we are making enormous progress. So why in the world would this Senate want to change course and grab defeat from the jaws of victory, when it comes to putting al-Qaida on the run?

I have to say on a contentious subject such as this, where it seems as though people have their own version of reality, the best evidence—and one that is undeniable—is the fact we have not had another terrorist attack in the United States since September 11, 2001.

While al-Qaida is on the minds of my colleagues, though, this is a valuable opportunity for us to talk about the fight against al-Qaida as part of the overall global war on terror. Today, al-Qaida and other like-minded radical jihadist groups still pose a very real threat to the safety of America's vital national security interests, both here and abroad.

These Islamic extremists go under a lot of different names: Hezbollah, operating in Lebanon and in parts of Iran and Syria; Hamas; al-Qaida in Iraq; the Taliban—all of which have the common ideology which allows them somehow to celebrate the murder of innocent civilians as part of their twisted goals.

Al-Qaida remains active not only in Iraq but worldwide. This is literally a franchise operation which in an Internet age allows like-minded radicals to communicate with one another, and through the use of relatively cheap explosives and human bombs to basically commit terror all around the world.

It is the existence of this threat that warrants our continued vigilance and sustained efforts to neutralize them, and Congress must continue to support our military in defeating al-Qaida on every front. We have been successful. But it is important to recognize this threat is not only located in Iraq and Afghanistan, but it is a global threat.

Recently, ADM Mike McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence, outlined terror attacks prevented in New Jersey and Illinois—that is right, right

here in the United States of America. He also outlined attacks that have been prevented abroad in Denmark, Spain, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. In the opinion of those who know best—our intelligence professionals—this enemy and this threat is real. This enemy plans to attack us, and it is smart, adaptable, and ruthless.

Somehow, some Members of the Senate have been able to convince themselves against all the evidence that al-Qaida is not present in Iraq and that if we fought al-Qaida in Afghanistan we would be safe here at home. The fact is, it is true the Taliban provided safe havens for al-Qaida in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida has also found a safe haven in Iraq. But due to the great work of our young men and women in the military, due to our intelligence professionals, due to the intelligence we are able to gain from the cooperation of Iraqi citizens through the Awakening Councils, who have simply gotten fed up with the barbaric tactics of al-Qaida—the murder, the rape, the torture of their own people and thus have cooperated now with coalition forces to root out al-Qaida—we do have al-Qaida on the run in Iraq.

But that is a fragile condition, and a trend we must continue, not only through the use of allied and coalition forces but through the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force and military, and encouraging citizens, such as the Awakening Councils, to come forward and provide intelligence.

But the fact of the matter is, if the United States of America does not lead the fight in this global war on terror, more innocent people will die. There is no other country in the world that is capable as we are, that has the vital national security interests that we do, to fight this war.

Again, this parallel universe that some occupy here in Washington, DC, that allowed them somehow to convince themselves that this threat is not real, defies the facts. There are those who propose countless resolutions in the Senate and the Congress to withdraw from Iraq based on a political or arbitrary timetable, which makes no sense. As the Iraq Study Group said, we should leave Iraq as soon as possible and define it not in political terms but in terms of conditions on the ground, and that is once the Iraqis are able to govern and defend themselves.

We know that politicians here in Washington have declared the surge a failure before it even started, but they have had to come to grips with the fact that you are always in jeopardy when you bet against the men and women of the U.S. military and our leadership and under the leadership of people such as GEN David Petraeus and GEN Raymond Odierno.

We have seen the surge of American troops, along with the increased capacity of the Iraqis to defend themselves, meet with enormous success and reverse a trend that was dangerously cascading toward a civil war and ethnic cleansing. But the fact is that despite the repeated efforts by some here in Congress who have declared defeat before this new strategy was even allowed to take hold have now had to deal with the fact that almost without exception, everyone who goes to Iraq comes back with the report that our men and women in uniform are being successful and that the surge is working.

I went with a couple of my colleagues, Senator ISAKSON and Senator COLEMAN, to Iraq in January where we were able to ride, in armored vehicles, admittedly, to forward operating bases that previously had been lost to al-Qaida, where refugees had simply abandoned their shops and their homes given the threat posed to the Iraqi people themselves from this ruthless enemy. The fact is, people are moving back home. Shop owners are opening their shops. We were able to taste some of the bread cooked in a bakery in an area called Ghazaliya outside of Baghdad that previously could not operate. We went to a local department store that previously had to be closed and abandoned literally because of the threat of al-Qaida and looked at some of the wares for sale.

So this debate that continues here in Washington seems to me to be increasingly out of touch with the reality in Iraq and the clear evidence that this new tactic, this counterinsurgency tactic being deployed by General Odierno, General Petraeus, and our men and women in uniform in Iraq is succeeding. It is because of that success that we are able to bring back by this summer roughly 40,000 troops to the loving arms of their families and in answer to the prayers of many Americans who wish to bring them home but bring them home with honor and after they have been successful in accomplishing the goals they set out to do.

Now, because of the evidence of the military effort in Iraq, a combination of our coalition forces and Iraqis and local citizens cooperating to get al-Qaida on the run, there are those who said: Well, OK, the glass is not half full, it is still half empty. Where is the political reconciliation that is necessary for the Iraqis to govern themselves?

While progress on the political front has been slower than any of us might have wished for, we are seeing very positive signs of political reconciliation. The Iraqi Parliament recently met some major milestones for success, and these are very important because these are the evidence of the political reconciliation many of the skeptics have looked for and pointed out as not having been met. So it is important to acknowledge the facts.

First, they passed an accountability and justice law—the first major step in debaathification reform. We know that many of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party members were excluded from the new Iraq, and this is the first major step to allow people who do not have blood on their hands, who weren't part of the leadership of Saddam's Baath Party, responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, to allow them to take their first steps back into governing the new Iraq and participating in full civic life.

In addition, just a few short weeks ago the Iraq Parliament passed three other significant pieces of legislation. They set a date for provincial elections, recognizing, as we do here in Washington, that not all wisdom emanates from the Nation's Capital, that they believe in local governance and regional governance, and that is why the provincial elections are so important as well.

The Iraqi Government or Parliament allotted $48 billion for 2008 spending, meaning that because of increased oil revenue, they were able to take on more and more of the financial responsibilities of rebuilding and governing their own country.

Finally, they provided limited amnesty to certain detainees in Iraqi custody—an important, although difficult, step to try to make sure the reconciliation occurs on an individual level so that people need not be permanently cast as outsiders and given nothing but the opportunity to undermine reconstruction and reconciliation but actually be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

The passage of the provincial powers law is one of the 18 benchmarks for reconciliation in Iraq which were set by the Congress just this last year.

Despite this concrete evidence of improvement and of meeting benchmarks for political reconciliation, there are those here in Congress who have simply ignored those positive steps, not only on the security front but on the political reconciliation front. Unfortunately, it seems as if too often our partisan differences seem to overwhelm facts and common sense and the common interests of all of us in America in an Iraq that is able to govern and to defend itself because our shared goal—which is to bring home our troops—is one that could be met when conditions on the ground permit those troops to come home without squandering the blood and the treasure that have been spent in trying to restore democracy to a country that knew nothing other than the boot heel of a dictator for too many years.

There are so many wonderful stories of success and commitment and patriotism in Iraq, and I would like to just close on this. I see my distinguished colleague from Wyoming on the floor, and I want to defer to him after another few minutes. I want to recognize and honor the great sacrifice by Texans deployed in harm's way in support of the global war on terror.

Some of our troops serving in faraway battlefields since 9/11 have exhibited incredible bravery and heroism in the face of personal danger, and I wish to share one story of one Texan among

many who has served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I wish to tell the story of SGT Omar Hernandez, assigned to Bravo Company, the 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, TX.

Sergeant Hernandez has been awarded the Silver Star for exceptional bravery and gallantry in action against an enemy. He did this while serving as a team leader on a foot patrol in Baghdad. His patrol consisted of a squad of American soldiers, an interpreter, and eight Iraqi national policemen. Their mission, as is critical to the counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq, was to secure the population, to make them feel safe. They moved from house to house on crowded Baghdad streets interviewing the local population as part of their job.

During the course of one interview, though, Sergeant Hernandez and the Iraqi police accompanying him were moving to security positions on the outside of a home when they were suddenly engaged by several well-aimed bursts of machine gun fire from the south. Sergeant Hernandez immediately identified the enemy's location and returned fire, simultaneously instructing the Iraqi police to follow his lead. A second burst of well-aimed fire erupted from the enemy's position, wounding all three members of the team. Sergeant Hernandez himself sustained a gunshot wound to his right thigh. Both Iraqi police sustained serious injuries, immobilizing both of them.

Not realizing the severity of their wounds, Sergeant Hernandez ordered the Iraqi policemen to follow him to a covered position behind a cement wall. As he continued to engage the enemy, Sergeant Hernandez realized that the Iraqi police were too badly injured to reach cover on their own. Seeing that these Iraqi policemen were stuck in the enemy's direct line of fire, Sergeant Hernandez went above and beyond the call of duty, risking his own life by running under direct fire to pull these Iraqi policemen to safety. Without covering fire, Sergeant Hernandez left his covered position—not once but twice—to move these wounded Iraqi policemen to a safer position. He did all of this despite the danger to himself and having a gunshot wound to his leg. Despite his injuries and despite the continued barrage of enemy fire, Sergeant Hernandez continued to fire on the enemy position. It was only after he was certain that the threat was eliminated that he finally allowed a squad mate to treat his wounds.

Sergeant Hernandez is just one of many brave men and women who wear the uniform of the U.S. military who are serving nobly in Iraq and Afghanistan. While there is no doubt that his courage and strength were extraordinary, in some ways this is a typical sort of story of the bravery of our men and women in uniform. It should be clear that Sergeant Hernandez is representative of the quality and character of our military men and women.

I think this also tells a story of the relationship that exists between our soldiers and Iraq security forces. They fight shoulder to shoulder. They fight and sacrifice together to make their country a better place so that peace and stability might come to Iraq and so that the forces of terror and extremism that wish America and our allies harm will find no sanctuary in that country.

Sergeant Hernandez, thankfully, has now recovered from his wounds and is stationed at Fort Bliss out in El Paso, TX. He has a 17-month-old boy and has been married to his wife Jennifer Kay for 3 years.

Sergeant Hernandez, it is worth noting, was on his third tour in Iraq. These young men and women and their incredible families are our most precious national asset. The tremendous sacrifices they make and have made over these last years ought to leave us with awe-struck silence. Think of what these men and women have invested in this war in terms of their sweat, their blood, tears and effort. What message would we be sending to these brave men and women when we tell them to come home when victory sits on the horizon?

Sergeant Hernandez wouldn't abandon his colleagues in the Iraqi National Police force, but there are some here in Washington—a world away—who want to ask him and all of our troops to abandon the Iraqis and come home before the job is done.

Those who have been clamoring for troop withdrawals for months upon months, regardless of the news from Iraq, all the while extolling the virtues of our military, I think have been telling only half the story. Yet, at the same time, they refuse to pass the critical funding, intelligence capabilities such as the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act reauthorization bill which sits over in the House of Representatives and which, because of the failure to act by Speaker PELOSI and the leadership in the House, has left our intelligence authorities deaf to new terrorist targets that, if detected, would likely detour and defeat attacks against American citizens, both here and abroad.

Mr. President, the American people often accuse politicians of saying one thing and doing another. But this is a clear case. Servicemembers such as Sergeant Hernandez deserve not only our words but our unmitigated support.

I think our task is clear and that is to let our men and women in uniform do the job they have volunteered to do and which they are so ably performing. We ought to do nothing to deter or impede or obstruct their success, especially when success appears to be so much more clearly on the horizon than a few short months ago. But as these charts have indicated, we are having tremendous success in taking down al-Qaida—those who celebrate the murder of innocent civilians in pursuit of their own twisted goals. The last thing we need to do is to pass legislation that would literally draw defeat from the jaws of victory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I will make a few comments about what is going on around here. I am not sure what has gotten into the water around here, but something strange has happened over the last couple days. Well, maybe it is not so strange, or even unusual, and that is unfortunate. What I am talking about is a sort of snowstorm, a whiteout—the people in Wyoming will know what I am talking about—except this whiteout isn't made of snow.

Bear with me while I describe our last vote, the one we did last night. It was cloture on a motion to proceed to a measure that says we should have a plan to fight al-Qaida and that we should basically put that plan out for public comment. That might strike people outside Washington as a little odd, and it should. Doesn't our military already have a plan? Yes, it does. Why would we want to tell al-Qaida how we plan to defeat them? Good questions. Good points.

The fact that the motion to debate the proposal passed overwhelmingly might further leave people scratching their heads. Senators, the majority of whom, I would venture to say, do not want the proposal to become law, voted to waste the Senate's time debating this measure. Why? Is it because debating this will actually help us to defeat al-Qaida? Is it because debating this will make our Nation more secure? No, it would not.

This is all happening at a time when we have an urgent need to work on solutions to the problems just about every one of the American people worry about. Health care is at the top of the list. Congress needs to wrangle with spiraling health care costs. Medicare is going broke. Social Security is following suit a little bit later. There are education measures on the table right now that we need to finish. Our economy begs for positive action. We have a budget problem in Congress. But the Senate came to a decision. On a vote of 89 to 3 last night, this body decided that instead of working on these problems I mentioned, we needed to debate a bill few of us want to ultimately approve. That is wrong. The American people did not elect us to play ''gotcha'' politics. They want to see action on real problems. They want to see results—positive results.

I voted against debating on this ill-begotten proposal because Congress needs to be doing the work the people sent us here to do.

National defense is of utmost importance to our Nation. Without a strong national defense, we would not have the free country we have. I strongly support our troops. I thank them every day and pray for them and their families every night. I do all in my power to

see that they have the support and the resources to do their job. Their lives, and ultimately our way of life, depend on it; it depends on them. But this proposal we are debating now doesn't help them. Our military strategists, our leaders in the field, do not want this legislation.

Of course we need a plan to defeat al-Qaida in every corner of the world where this wretched terrorist group hides. We need to focus on the terrorists and defeat them at every turn. But is it Congress's role to insist on a plan and then share the plan with al-Qaida? That is ultimately what this legislation would do. If Congress forces the administration and our military to write this plan according to Congress's specification, then Congress is going to want to see the plan to ensure it meets Congress's requirements. We all know Congress cannot keep a secret. If you tell the enemy your strategy, then your strategy will not work. This is a bill that is fundamentally flawed at the outset. I voted not to debate the bill. I was one of three, but a bill not worth doing is a bill not worth debating.

Just before September 11, 2001, I was given the opportunity to serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I was the ranking member of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Antiterrorism. It was during August that I was assigned to that. So in September, since I was the newest person on the committee and the least ranking, a lot of people said: How did he get on that committee? It wasn't important until after September 11, 2001—or at least we didn't place that kind of importance on it. Through that role, I was given the opportunity to work directly with other countries at the United Nations on ways to stop terrorism. I am an accountant, so I was delighted to be a part of the group that said one of the answers was to concentrate on following the money. It made a huge difference and it continues to make a difference. Countries that will never publicly admit to helping in the hunt for terrorists have helped. I know countries peer pressured other countries into helping with the fight against terrorism. Terrorists were caught, they were prosecuted, and some were executed. More sophisticated versions of this plan to fight terrorism are still in operation today. But we should not disclose the plan because that would make them worthless.

The Senate wants additional reports. Why? Congress has already mandated reports on the National Security Strategy of the United States, the National Defense Strategy of the United States, the National Homeland Security Strategy of the United States, the National Military Strategy of the United States, the Quadrennial Defense Review Report, the National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terror, the National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq. Does that sound like plenty of work for the Pentagon?

I want you to know the Pentagon is already doing what this bill wants us to do. We do need a plan. We have a plan. We cannot make that plan public without allowing the enemy to figure out how to combat every article in it. Why are we having this debate? Well, I know we are having this debate partly to place emphasis on the fact that we need to get the FISA legislation passed. Daily, we are missing opportunities to know what al-Qaida is doing and planning. We were able to do that until about a week ago. Congress could easily approve the FISA bill. It passed out of this body by a significant majority. The House needs to pass it and send it to the President. What does that bill do? One of the things it does is make terrorists almost as accountable as drug dealers. Yes, we have stronger laws in this country for drug dealers and the way to interdict that than we do for terrorists, without having the FISA bill.

What do the American people want Congress to do? They want us to improve their ability to access quality health care. They want us to have the capability under FISA, but they want us to concentrate on those areas that we have specific jurisdiction on, not just checking up on other people to see if they are getting their work done but checking up on ourselves to see if we are getting our work done. I think the economy, which includes health care, is the biggest issue the American people are interested in. Are we debating that? No. We are debating something I think we already have had 36 votes on in various forms, all of which failed. If you try something 36 times and it doesn't work, maybe you ought to move on to something else. I am suggesting health care is one of those issues we ought to be working on and that we could work on and that comes under our jurisdiction and we have direct responsibility for it. Or maybe education. I know the people of America want better education for their kids. They expect us to have as much as possible in place that will expedite that, that will work with the parents, the teachers, the administrators, and the communities to make sure our kids have the best job opportunities in the world. They want them to be able to have jobs and afford a home and have food for their family. They want a retirement system that helps them to be secure when they finish working.

That is why I voted against debating this bill. We are not here to be nonresponsive and nonproductive by taking nonactions. Let's act. Let's sit down together and come to an agreement on what we can do to make health care better for this country. Let's talk about what we can do to improve education in this country and then let's make it happen. Let's spend the Senate's time on real legislation of substance—ones we are supposed to solve and that we have the jurisdiction to solve and ones we have the ability to solve and ones we have the desire to solve. I have been working with people on both sides of the aisle on a number of bills that are solvable—maybe not to perfection, but hardly anything here winds up with perfection. They can be solved with 100 percent agreement across the aisle on the 80 percent of the issues that we agree on. That would be real progress for America.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business has expired.

Without objection, the Senator is recognized.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to speak briefly about one of the issues that has been debated over these 2 days, which is the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. This bill, which passed the Senate in a bipartisan way, is now sitting in the House. This bill is critical to our national security.

I know there are some who will argue that the bill represents a threat in some way to American civil liberties. From my standpoint, nothing is more important to me than protecting the rights of Americans under the terms of our Constitution.

One of the terms of our Constitution is that the Federal Government has the responsibility to protect the American citizens and America from attacks by enemies. That is what we swear an oath to, by the way, when we take this job, to protect and defend this Nation.

We know for a fact that the forces of Islamic fundamentalists, which are led by fanatical individuals, have committed themselves to attacking our Nation, destroying our culture, and killing Americans. We have already seen their actions take place in the 1990s when they attacked the warship USS *Cole*, when they attacked our Embassies in Africa, and, of course, on 9/11.

We also know for a fact that our best weapon of self-defense in this war is to be on the offense, to find them before they can harm us. That is one of the reasons we are in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

The great advantage we have in this war is the sophistication of our Nation. Obviously, the greatest advantage we have is we have the cause of right on our side—freedom, democracy, and liberty. But the great tactical advantage we have is the sophistication of our Nation and our capacity to use that sophistication in the area of our military

and in the area of our intelligence gathering to defeat these people before they attack us. At the essence of this, at the center of this is the ability to gather effective intelligence.

We cannot stop someone who wants to attack us if we wait until they commit the act. This is not like a criminal situation where somebody goes out and robs a bank and then we go and find them. This is a situation where people want to use every weapon at their disposal, and if they get a weapon of mass destruction, they will use it to try to kill hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of innocent civilians, and Americans specifically, in order to carry out their perverse purpose of promoting what they see as their Islamic faith, as they interpret it.

We cannot be so naive as to believe these people are not out there and intending to pursue these courses of action when they have made it absolutely clear that is what they intend to do, when they have said innumerable times that is what they intend to do, and when they have actually done it by attacking us on 9/11.

To stop them, we have to find them before they can harm us. And the way we find them is we use, in part, our great advantage in the area of tracking them through electronic surveillance. And that is what the FISA bill is all about—giving the legal tools necessary to totally dedicated American citizens who man agencies, such as the National Security Agency, the Defense Department, the CIA, the State Department, and the FBI—to give those individuals who are totally dedicated to finding the people who want to attack us the tools necessary to do that, and to do that in a way that protects Americans' rights and civil liberties. This law does accomplish exactly that. No American can have their calls intercepted or overheard intentionally unless there has been a court review of that decision and a court order approving that action.

This law is directed not at Americans, it is directed at foreigners—not Americans—whose purpose it is to do us harm, and they do not have the same rights as Americans. They should not. Their purpose is to destroy America. Why would we give them American rights? Yet for some reason the House of Representatives refuses to act on this critical issue in the area of giving our people who work for us, who work for the American people, and who are trying to protect America, the tools they need to accomplish that. It makes no sense to me at all.

Some argue the force behind denying this right and these authorities to the people who have responsibility to monitor these foreign activities and foreign individuals, these Islamic fundamentalists who wish to do us harm, the terrorists, the people who wish to limit that right wish to do so because they want to give the trial lawyers more capacity to bring lawsuits against the telephone companies, which are, obviously, an integral part of any electronic monitoring that is going to go on. I think that is unfortunate if that is the case.

We have asked these various groups, these corporations—remember, they are made up of American citizens. An American corporation is nothing more than a group of American citizens who have gotten together. Most of these corporations are pension funds which involve pensions of people who work at day-to-day jobs. Most Americans have some interest in stock through their pension funds, and these stocks are the companies that, basically, we are talking about, the telephone companies, in many instances.

These companies are being asked, and have been enlisted, and have been asked in the past to participate in protecting America. When the Government does something such as that, I think the Government also has a responsibility to say to those companies and their stockholders and their employees, many of whom are Americans, many of whom are working Americans, obviously, the ones who work for them and the stockholders who have pension funds who invest in them, that they should have protection from lawsuits which are basically inappropriately pursued because these companies are doing the bidding of the American Government as we try to protect the American people.

For some reason, the desire to energize those lawsuits has held up the ability to give the tools necessary to our intelligence community to pursue surveillance of very evil people who intend to do us harm.

It would be a great tragedy and a terrible outcome of this situation if America is attacked and that attack could have been thwarted or muted if we had the intelligence which would have been able to be gathered by electronic surveillance which would be made available through the authorities of FISA. It would be a true tragedy. I cannot imagine the recrimination that would occur in this country from the American people were we to be attacked and then discover that the information which might have thwarted that attack was unable to be obtained because the law which gave people the authority to pursue that type of information through electronic surveillance was being held up in the House of Representatives because the trial lawyers want a cause of action against the telephone companies.

It is incomprehensible to me that we have gotten to this point in the process of trying to develop our defense as a nation against people who clearly exist and who have expressed their intent so clearly and who have executed on that intent, as was shown on 9/11.

I cannot imagine that when a bill passes the Senate which has bipartisan support—this is not a partisan issue. It should not be a partisan issue. It has bipartisan support. It came out of the Senate, and it has been worked out between the leaders of the key committees in the Senate in a way that protects American civil liberties—that such a bill which gives the authority to those we ask to protect us, the authority they need to pursue the course of action they see is appropriate in electronic surveillance, that such a bill would be stopped in the House of Representatives out of what appears to be a tangential question of lawsuits—tangential in the sense that nothing is more critical to this whole exercise than protecting Americans from attack.

I join my colleagues who have risen over the last couple of days to express their frustration with the failure of the House of Representatives to act in this area. We need the House to act on the Senate bill, pass it, send it down to the President, and have it signed so that the people who we ask to protect us through electronic surveillance of terrorists who do not have the rights of Americans and who are not American, so that electronic surveillance can continue.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am sorry that the Senator from New Hampshire, who spoke relative to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, has left the floor. I was hoping he would be here. That is why I came down. Senator GREGG is a friend of mine, and I certainly wanted to make my remarks in front of him. I hope if he is nearby that he will come back to the floor.

He raised some serious questions about the security of the United States, and we have no greater responsibility under the Constitution than to protect this great Nation. The tragedy of 9/11 is still fresh in our memories, even though it was 6½ years ago. We know that when we work together on a bipartisan basis we can achieve the kind of results the American people expect, not only of the Congress but of our entire Government.

This Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act has been the source of some frustration. Understand how this started. This is a program where the Government listens to the communications of other people in the hopes that they can intercept information and with that information avoid another tragedy. That is time and money well spent. The best line of defense against terrorism is good intelligence. We want to stop the 9/11 events of the future from ever occurring. So we certainly are all on board for that effort.

Here is the problem: The administration started doing this without the authority of law. There was a provision in

the law which said that if this President, or any President, for purposes of national security and gathering of intelligence, wanted to reach out to find this information in the United States, there was a court that was established, a FISA Court, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, and this court would approve surveillance orders in secret, on an expedited basis, using a lower standard than a normal court. That was the standard in the law. It was a standard that was consistent with our Constitution.

If our intelligence agencies want to listen in on the conversation of an American citizen in this country, it is necessary to go for a court order. So, when it comes to the privacy of American people, you have another branch of Government looking at the executive branch of Government, saying: This is fair, this is constitutional, this is legal, you can do this. In the criminal justice process, there is reasonable cause to believe that a crime has been committed. Similarly, in the FISA area—the area of foreign intelligence surveillance—there is a reasonable belief that a suspected terrorist or spy is involved in the communication.

Now, the FISA court was very cooperative with every President. In fact, it overwhelmingly approved requests, and in only a tiny percentage of cases were questions ever raised. If the President, through his agencies, said, I need to listen in on a conversation, this court said, yes, do it, keep America safe, in the overwhelming majority of cases. So it wasn't a novel process. It was one well established in the law, but it was one that this administration avoided.

They started this surveillance program, the so-called warrantless wiretapping program, but didn't follow the existing law. They didn't go to the existing court. They did it on their own, and they did it for years. It wasn't until this program was disclosed to the American people by the New York Times that we had any personal knowledge that it was going on. There may have been a handful of Members of Congress at the highest levels of the Intelligence Committee who knew about it, but most of us did not and weren't given the information.

So the information becomes public that this warrantless wiretapping is going on after 9/11, a program not authorized by law, and it is challenged in court. When the court takes a look at it, the court says, as good as the reason may have been for this program, as good as its purpose may have been, this President, no President, is above the law. You need a law authorizing you to do what you are currently doing. So then the President came to Congress asking for changes in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act so the power of the President over the new technology that is available around the world would be consistent with the law. That is the legislation that is before us, a bill to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

We talked about changes in the law, and we made changes in the law. We were moving along on, I think, a positive track toward reforming, changing, amending this law to meet the current needs of keeping America safe. But there was one nagging issue out there, and it was the issue of telephone companies. Here is what it was all about.

Telephone companies doing business in America have a responsibility under the law. That responsibility is to protect the identity and the communications of their customers. If I sign up with my BlackBerry or my cell phone with a telephone company, it is with the confidence that the company that is transferring my communication and my conversation is going to protect my privacy unless—unless a court steps in and says, we have reason to believe a crime was committed or that a party to this conversation is a terrorist or a spy. We need to listen in to this conversation. That has been the standard in America. It was the standard facing the telephone companies.

So the President, through his intelligence agencies, during the period when this warrantless wiretapping program was going on—before it was made public; before it was authorized by law—went to the telephone companies and said, we want the conversations of certain people who are your customers. So the question is: Were the telephone companies doing their patriotic duty under the law by turning over this information, or did they go too far? Did the President misrepresent his authority at that time, or did he not?

These are legitimate questions. Some say, well, wouldn't we err on the side of caution and say to the telephone companies: Cooperate. We don't want another 9/11. Well, of course, we would. And you can understand in the heat of the moment, in the emotion after 9/11, why, when these telephone companies were asked to help, they did it.

I have seen the documentation presented to us in closed session. All I can say about it is, it was extremely limited. There was no legal brief given to the telephone companies saying, this is the authority of the President. It was a very scant document with very little information in it. But this program went on way beyond 2001, 2002. It went on for years. And for years the telephone companies were surrendering this private information about their customers and access to their customers' conversations in a questionable situation under the law.

Some people are testing that in court. They want to know if the telephone companies went too far, if they broke the law, if they violated the Constitution. The President's belief, and the belief of many, is they shouldn't be challenged in court. They shouldn't be held accountable in court. They shouldn't have to answer as to whether they lived up to the law. There are others, like myself, who believe neither a President nor a telephone company is above the law.

If a telephone company, I believe, goes into court facing one of these challenges, and faces any jury of Americans and says, immediately after 9/11 we did what we thought would keep America safe, I would put all my money on that telephone company winning that part of the lawsuit. I think the American people would come down on their side. But there are important questions still unresolved as to whether these telephone companies went too far and whether we should be careful in the future not to give any President, this one or any future President, powers beyond the law. That is really what this battle comes down to.

The reason I was hoping the Senator from New Hampshire would stay on the floor is that I wanted to ask him, as I have asked every Republican Senator who has brought up this issue, if they are arguing that somehow or another the current situation—debating this law on foreign intelligence surveillance—is making living in America more dangerous, then they have to answer a very simple question: Why, repeatedly, over the last several weeks, when the Democrats offered to extend the law so it would continue without any missing intelligence in terms of the surveillance efforts being made, why did the Republicans, the President's party, consistently object to extending the law?

They can't have it both ways. They can't argue we are in a more dangerous situation because the law is not in place, and then object to extending the law. This is exactly what they are doing. They cannot have it both ways.

We have tried repeatedly to extend the Protect America Act while we debate what to do with the lawsuits involving telephone companies, and they have said no, let it expire. Then, they have gone public with television ads and speeches on the floor saying, woe is me, it looks like this law is going to expire, but it is because they objected to extending the law.

They are trying to play both sides of this issue politically, and that doesn't work. It is totally inconsistent, illogical, and I don't believe it is the right thing to do for this country. Let's finish this debate between the House and the Senate as to the liability of telephone companies, whether there will be immunity or liability. Let's reach an end point in terms of that debate on a timely basis. But in the meantime, why do the Republicans continue to object to extending this law so that there is no gap in coverage, so that there is no gap in the protection it offers to the people of this country? I think that is an important element that was missed in the earlier statement.

I wish to read, if I can, from what the USA Today recently said in an editorial.

> Bush is pressing the House to accept the Senate bill and refusing to temporarily extend the current law, which recently expired.

According to the USA Today, they say:

That's irresponsible. The House and Senate need time to negotiate their differences because the House has no telecom immunity provision. Bush's implication that expiration of the law would expose the Nation to terrorist dangers is worse than disingenuous: The eavesdropping authorizations under the law continue for a year. Crucial decisions about civil liberties in an age of terror shouldn't be driven by fear-mongering.

That was from the USA editorial.

I think this President, unfortunately, is manufacturing a crisis. This is the same thing we heard from this President and this administration in the lead-up to our invasion of Iraq. They painted the most frightening picture of Iraq and Saddam Hussein—weapons of mass destruction which could be aimed at our allies in the Middle East, such as Israel, and aimed at the United States; Condoleezza Rice talking about mushroom-shaped clouds and nuclear weapons striking the United States; drawing linkage between Saddam Hussein and 9/11, when no linkage existed. That was the climate of fear this administration created before they asked this Senate to vote on whether we should authorize the invasion of Iraq.

They are trying to create a new climate of fear on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. That is fundamentally unfair to the American people. I must warn this President, and every President: The American people will only be frightened by red alerts, orange alerts, and all this rhetoric for so long before they turn it off. We don't ever want to reach that point. We want to make certain when we tell the American people a danger exists, it truly does exist.

If any danger exists now from the expiration of the Protect America Act, it is a danger created by the President's party in objecting to our efforts to extend this law. They cannot have it both ways. They cannot object to extending this law and then say to the American people: Be afraid. Be really afraid, because this law hasn't been extended. That is exactly what has happened.

Time and again this administration's allies have pressured Congress to consider controversial proposals immediately before an election. Now we see them raising another security issue in the run-up to an election. This comes from a playbook written by former adviser Karl Rove that the administration has used over and over again. Think about that vote for the authorization of war in the climate of fear the administration created, and then think of the reality of what we found on the ground when we went into Iraq. Despite heroic efforts by our men and women in uniform, despite their successes in deposing Saddam Hussein, despite the expenditure of billions of dollars, we have never, ever uncovered one shred of evidence of weapons of mass destruction that this administration warned us about. Not one shred of evidence of nuclear devices aimed at the United States or any other country, not one shred of evidence linking Saddam Hussein to 9/11. All of the fear generated by this administration before that vote has not been substantiated.

But the invasion of Iraq has been substantiated in another way, in almost 4,000 Americans' lives that have been lost, 25,000 seriously wounded, and at a cost to the United States and our Treasury—record amounts. By the end of this year, it is estimated we will have spent $1 trillion on this war that this President created on a foreign policy decision which I think may be the worst in my lifetime and sadly endangering so many brave, courageous soldiers who serve our country in uniform and risk their lives when called to duty. It is unfortunate.

Yesterday, at the insistence of the Republicans, we ground to a halt the debate on the war policy in Iraq. It means we will have to wait several months. When we return to it, there will be more than 4,000 American casualties in this war, there will be more injured soldiers, and there will be more money spent.

This President is trying to run out the clock. He wants to leave that White House on January 20, 2009, turn the keys over to his successor, and say: Good luck in Iraq—to leave two wars behind and to leave the United States in turmoil in terms of our foreign policy around the world.

Well, it is imperative now that we have the truth on the floor, and the truth is that we have tried to extend this in law despite the objections of Republican Senators. The truth is that we can work out our differences, and we should do so in a bipartisan way. We all have the same goal here: Keep America safe.

We also want to make sure that when it comes to the use of military commissions for the trials of would-be terrorists, we have a commission or at least some form of justice that will stand up to the test of our Constitution.

I do not want a single person released from our detention, wherever they may be, who can endanger the United States. I want them all held responsible for what they have done to endanger us. But the fact is, there has been only one conviction in the 6 years, 6½ years since 9/11. The fact is, what has happened in Guantanamo has been the securing and detention of hundreds of prisoners for years at a time, many of whom have been released without a charge, to return back to their families and back to their countries with a bitter taste in their mouth about justice under this administration.

The American people will take a hard look at this issue in this election, as they should. One would hope the administration would have learned a lesson from what has occurred with the invasion of Iraq and what has occurred every time they have heightened fears before an election campaign.

The American people have the final word. Now the President is claiming our security is at risk because this Protect America Act has expired. But at the same time, his party, the Republican Party, has time and again objected to extending this law. The American people have heard this song before. They are not going to buy it.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

REQUIRING A REPORT SETTING FORTH THE GLOBAL STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES TO COMBAT AND DEFEAT AL QAEDA AND ITS AFFILIATES—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2634, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to consider calendar No. 576, S. 2634, a bill requiring a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to make a number of points on the two Feingold bills which are before us. I will be happy, after I conclude my remarks, if my neighbor from Illinois, the majority whip, wants to come back and discuss some of the points he made. I believe I disagree strongly with them. But I wish to take the time to lay out my views of what is happening in Iraq and in our battle against al-Qaida and why the two measures before us make absolutely no sense.

On the second Feingold bill, he asks for a strategy dealing with al-Qaida. Let me assure you, as the ranking Republican, the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I know one of the most important elements we have in dealing with al-Qaida is to be able to listen in on their electronic communications. That is covered by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

On February 16, 2008, after being extended for an additional 15 days—and we agreed, the Republicans agreed, the President agreed to give an additional 15-day extension on the Protect America Act, but it expired. The Protect America Act which I was pleased to sponsor passed in Congress in August 2007 to provide a short-term legislative solution to intelligence gaps that were occurring because of the outdated Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, which put a 6-month sunset on the PAA to give Congress ample time to work on permanent changes to FISA.

Our Intelligence Committee, in September, immediately answered the call. We went to work, and after many discussions among staff on both sides, members on both sides, visits to NSA, and in close collaboration with the intelligence community, we passed out a

bill that was a strong bipartisan bill that would, with a few modifications, ultimately become the bill the Senate passed. The majority leader, however, did not act on this bill until the final days of the session in December. Even though it was passed out in October, on December 17 several Democrats led a filibuster preventing the Senate from considering this vital intelligence legislation.

I find it ironic that the assistant majority leader is now accusing Republicans of taking up postcloture time on S. 2633, the troop withdrawal bill, when it was one of his own members who filibustered even bringing FISA to the floor last December by demanding postcloture time that killed moving to the FISA legislation in 2007. And it aided in jamming us with a deadline of the expiration of the PAA. That was the Senate Democrats, not Republicans, who jammed this body on the FISA deadline.

Again, when Congress returned from its recess in January, the PAA was set to expire in a few short weeks. The majority leader did not take up this important legislation, however, but he went to a debate on the Indian health bill. With the original PAA deadline looming, a short 15-day extension of the PAA was agreed to with the understanding that both House and Senate would be able to act within that time.

Why the majority leader wanted to put the Senate up against this deadline, I have no idea. He claimed the Senate Republicans did that. Well, I can assure you that it is not the Senate Republicans who filibustered moving the bill in December and insisted on bringing up Indian health before FISA in January. Why was that done? We just passed Indian health recently. It was an important bill, but there was no deadline requiring us to bring up that bill before we went to FISA. Unfortunately, once we did get on the FISA bill, more time was wasted trying to come up with a bipartisan agreement on how to handle amendments.

Ultimately, the Senate passed its bill on Tuesday, February 12—5 days before the expiration of the Protect America Act. The Intelligence Committee bill has been available for review by both Houses since its passage in October. As I said, there are a few modifications in the bill passed by the Senate, but the authorities and concepts remained unchanged.

Additionally, Senate and House majority staff were in close coordination during the deliberation of our bill in the Senate. And it happened more than once, when we were trying to move forward on the Senate floor, that Democrats had to pull their staff out of meetings with our House counterparts to talk to us so we could move forward in passing the bill out of the Senate.

After we passed our bill, the House Speaker refused to allow the Senate's bill to come up for a vote, even after she failed to get agreement from her own body to extend the PAA a second time. The House refused to grant an extension. The Speaker spent the remaining period of time before the recess considering censure resolutions against current and former administration officials and debating and listening to the potential steroid abuse by Major League Baseball players. She had been assured by the majority of her colleagues in the House, Republican and Democrat, that they would pass the Senate bill were she to allow it to come up for a vote. Nonetheless, she allowed the Protect America Act to expire on February 16, and the House went home on recess, as we did in the Senate.

We all know the Senate's bill was passed by a strong, bipartisan 68-to-29 vote. As we all know, this bill goes further than ever before in providing a role for the FISA Court in foreign intelligence collection. It requires, for the first time in history, that the Government obtain a court order to target a U.S. person overseas. And let me be clear, this is not even a requirement in criminal matters, but it is for intercepting terrorist communications. We have gone further in protecting civil liberties than ever intended by Congress previously in FISA or other measures, permitting law enforcement authorities to listen in on conversations or intercepted communications of people engaged in criminal activities.

Finally, of the utmost importance, the Senate bill afforded civil liberties to those companies that aided us with the President's terrorist surveillance program following the September 11 terrorist attack. Why is this last point so important? Well, the events of this past week should make it clear that we need the voluntary cooperation of our private partners in order to collect timely intelligence. The PAA did not provide any civil liberty protections for those providers that assisted with the terrorist surveillance program. It did, however, give prospective liability protection to companies that complied with the directives while the PAA was in existence.

Let me address one point that has been brought up on the floor. The President authorized the use of the terrorist surveillance program under his constitutional article II authorities, which have been used consistently by many Presidents throughout history.

I understand—and I was not involved at the time—that the administration talked with the top leaders on the intelligence committees in both bodies, the Senate and the House, on a bipartisan basis, about trying to get the FISA law changed before they instituted collection. It was the advice of those leaders that the President not try to wait until we could amend and change FISA.

It is a good thing they gave that advice because, as we have seen, trying to get a long-term FISA amendment passed has taken an inordinate amount of time since we first were advised of the need to amend FISA last April when one of the courts involved in this issued an order saying that because technology had changed, we could no longer intercept communications of foreign terrorists whose communications, because of modern technology, came through the United States. That is what shut us down, and that is what still continues to bother us today. That still continues to limit us today, with the expiration of the Protect America Act.

Once the PAA expired, the liability protections as well as the Government's ability to compel assistance were thrown into doubt. Providers that were being threatened with hundreds of millions of dollars in damages from frivolous lawsuits because they helped their country after 9/11 began to delay or refuse assistance with directives under the now expired PAA. And who can blame them? These providers have a fiduciary obligation to their shareholders, and if the law becomes uncertain, as it now does with the expiration of the PAA, it becomes harder to satisfy those obligations, especially when they are faced with the ongoing frivolous litigation that was described here a few moments ago.

There is a very real difference between having the authorization to make the collections and being able to collect. Being able to exercise those authorities requires that the intelligence community have the full cooperation of the intelligence community and that the intelligence community have the full cooperation of the private telecom carriers.

Based on the opinions and legal documents I have read, they were required by law, by the Constitution, to participate. Yet having participated, now they are being faced with frivolous lawsuits which will, I am confident, never show any wrongdoing by the telecommunications companies. The purpose of these lawsuits is not to collect intelligence but, rather, to destroy the ability of the intelligence community to collect information by imposing unbearable public costs on the companies, threatening not only their reputations and potentially a very large amount of their shareholder value but also exposing their personnel and facilities here and abroad to retaliation by terrorist groups.

Finally, the lawsuits, which were applauded recently, have the very real potential of providing more information to terrorists on how we collect their electronic communications. The more we tell them about what we do to collect against them, the better off they are in being able to avoid those collections.

The Director of National Intelligence has told us that now, after a lag, the surveillance under existing directives has resumed. That is good news. But what this means for collection tomorrow, next week, or next month is simply unknown, especially if, for example, the need arises to issue a new directive to a new provider, if some new terrorist group, some new target comes

up not covered by previous orders. It is this uncertainty due to Congress's inaction that the DNI and the Attorney General have said is their greatest concern. Let me assure you, the providers share this concern. It is only because of the heroic around-the-clock efforts of the men and women of the intelligence community and the Department of Justice that the providers have agreed to cooperate for the time being, but it is only for the time being. We should not be lulled into thinking we have time, certainly not time for another extension of the 15 days after the 6-month sunsetting bill, to get this legislation to the President for signature. Just as easily, any one provider could decide at any one time that it is no longer in its business's best interest to comply with the Government's lawful request for assistance when the legal authority has expired. Losing the cooperation of just one provider could mean losing thousands of pieces of intelligence on a daily basis. Moreover, because we have already lost cooperation for several days, we lost the foreign intelligence information that will likely never be within our ability to recall.

What terrorist communications we have missed or will miss in the future because of this 1-week gap we cannot calculate. We do not know. I for one believe we were elected in Congress to establish the framework for protecting our national security and for encouraging assistance from our citizens to serve their country rather than encouraging or allowing a state of fear to fall upon our citizens and companies that would dare to assist their Government in a time of need.

Is this really the message we want to send? Do we really want to send the message: Don't help your country or you will get sued and your elected officials will condemn you? Isn't that really the main issue and the heart of the message here? I am afraid it is. I deeply regret that is what we are seeing on this floor.

Some in Congress, particularly in the House Democratic leadership, have asserted that even though the PAA has expired, the country is just as safe as we were after the PAA was enacted. They claim the procedures under FISA are more than adequate to allow the intelligence community to do its job. They point out that the certifications already issued under PAA do not expire until at least August. These arguments simply do not carry water. Those who claim we can revert simply to emergency FISA orders demonstrate they really don't understand how the FISA process works. The intelligence gaps that led to the need for PAA were caused not by backlogs in processing FISA warrants but because of the way FISA was being applied to foreign intelligence collection, and seeking emergency authorization is not simply a solution, as though the intelligence community could just tell the Attorney General they are intercepting terrorist communications and then build a case for probable cause. Rather, the intelligence community must first establish probable cause on each target before they go to the Attorney General for emergency authorization.

The problem prior to PAA—and it is the same problem that exists now that the PAA has expired—is that the probable cause standard cannot always be satisfied easily when we are talking about foreign terrorists, foreign terrorists who are not entitled to constitutional protections. Analysts who should be spending their time tracking the terrorists will be forced to expend countless hours, hundreds of hours, to develop enough information to support the FISA probable cause standard. We all understand the merits of a probable cause determination when we are talking about U.S. citizens. That is what the fourth amendment is all about. But when we are talking about foreign terrorists, applying such a standard absolutely makes no sense.

Is the House Democratic leadership really advocating a system that imposes unreasonable burdens on our intelligence analysts at the expense of our ability to track terrorists and affords foreign terrorists the same fourth amendment protections our own citizens have? I would hope not. The people I talk to back home don't think that makes sense. There is a lot of common sense around the country. When you go out and talk to people and you listen to them, you hear that common sense. They say: What are we doing, giving our constitutional rights to foreign terrorists who seek to harm us?

These points were reiterated this past week by the DNI and the Attorney General in their letter to House Intelligence Committee chairman SILVESTRE REYES. The DNI and AG disagreed that FISA could be employed in place of the PAA, pointing out that it was ''the very framework that created intelligence gaps in the past.''

Further, just because existing authorities will continue in effect at least until August doesn't mean the intelligence community has the flexibility and authorities it needs to address future unknown threats or technologies. Having the authorization doesn't necessarily mean you have the ability, particularly in the situation in which we have placed our vital private sector partners who must cooperate with us.

As the DNI noted this weekend in an interview:

> A new personality, a new phone number, a new location—we now have to put it into the system to be able to collect that information. That's the question, because the private sector partners said nothing new. So we had to negotiate that because what it created was uncertainty, and the position from the private sector point of view, ''Am I protected? Does the law allow you to compel me to comply?'' And when the act expired last week, that's in question. And that's why we feel that we are less capable of doing our job.

The immediate problem for the intelligence community is how to address this uncertainty so that new threats not covered under current certifications or directives may be pursued. And the DNI has told us this is no longer a hypothetical concern. While I cannot discuss details publicly, any Member may come to the Intelligence Committee's spaces for a classified briefing on this issue.

Simply to sum up on the second Feingold amendment—for the safety of our country, the safety of our troops abroad, the safety of our allies, the House must bring up and pass our bipartisan FISA bill now.

Turning to the first Feingold amendment, that is another one seeking to renew and rejuvenate a measure that we have voted down more than 40 times in this body: that we cut and run, that we declare defeat and retreat from Iraq. I thought it was interesting; this morning I saw a Presidential candidate on the trail stating that al-Qaida was not even in Iraq before we went in to take out Saddam Hussein. If you take time to get informed about what was going on in Iraq, as we have in the Intelligence Committee, you will know there was a very vibrant group, a very vibrant Islamic terrorist group called Ansar al-Islam. Its leader was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. We got to know him well because he was that vicious villain who beheaded his enemies on television. Innocent citizens, American troops, journalists, he took great delight in lopping off their heads in front of television.

And, yes, his group, Ansar al-Islam, picked up the major franchise. He joined officially what he had been unofficially, and that was an ally of al-Qaida. His group is now called al-Qaida in Iraq. They may have changed the name, but the people were there. The terrorists were there. David Kay went into Iraq after we deposed Saddam Hussein. He was sent there with a group called the Iraqi Survey Group to find out why we got the information wrong. There were wrong things in our intelligence. We made assumptions that weren't correct. But we missed other dangers, such as his ballistic missile program, the fact that he found Iraq to have been a very dangerous place in which terrorist groups were running loose and where Saddam's government had the ability to start a just-in-time inventory production of weapons of mass destruction.

The conclusion of the Iraqi Survey Group, which was discussed with us many times in the Intelligence Committee and was then stated publicly: Iraq was a far more dangerous place ever than we knew. That is what the best intelligence post-fall of Saddam Hussein had to say for those who question why we went in. We didn't get it all right. But we had enough right to make the right decisions. From the intelligence we know now, al-Qaida was not only in Iraq before we went in, it is the primary danger we fight there now, and its leaders have said repeatedly

that they want to make their headquarters for their worldwide caliphate in Iraq.

Fortunately, our military leaders have developed a strategy that is working against them: General Petraeus, the surge and, most importantly, the counterinsurgency strategy, COIN, to go in, clear, hold, and build.

We can't just knock out a terrorist activity. We have to go in and make sure al-Qaida doesn't come back. We have to go in with Iraqi security forces to make sure the area can be safe so they don't come in and retaliate against citizens who cooperate with us.

We have been hearing on the floor some very compelling testimony by my colleagues who have recently returned from Iraq about the tremendous progress that has been made there. My last trip to Iraq was in May of 2007. We saw, when our Intelligence Committee was there, the beginning of a turnaround that showed that the COIN strategy of General Petraeus was working. But last night, I had an opportunity for an extensive conversation with a Marine combat platoon commander who went back to Al Anbar province in March of 2007, having left there 1 year previously after spending 13 months there on his first tour in Fallujah.

In March of last year, it was a very difficult situation, and al-Qaida was still hanging on to control in Al Anbar. The Marine platoon commander had left there in February 2006. We were working toward progress, but then al-Qaida bombed the Golden Mosque at Samarra and the ensuing chaos allowed al-Qaida to establish a firm foothold in Al Anbar and served up grave sectarian stress.

Things began to change in the spring with the COIN strategy. American and Iraqi forces were clearing, holding, and building, embedded in the communities they had cleared. As of May of last year, Marine outposts and Iraqi Army outposts were still being bombarded with mortars, threatened by IEDs, and continually harassed by small arms fire, a deadly combination of attacks on them. But when the American troops demonstrated they came in to clear and help Iraqis hold a secure area, things started changing dramatically. Iraqi security forces began working better among themselves and with their forces. There was much greater civilian cooperation, and Iraqi civilians became our most vital source of intelligence. That intelligence, combined with the good work of the Iraqi security forces and Marine action, essentially eliminated most of the kinetic threats, the killing threats.

By the end of July 2007, the Iraqi Army was no longer needed in Al Anbar and moved on to other areas to chase al-Qaida. They turned the security in Al Anbar back to the Iraqi police, backed up by the Marines.

This began a very positive trajectory that continued throughout the time the platoon commander was there. In the last 4 months he was there, he said the 2nd Battalion 6th Marines did not suffer any injuries from hostile kinetic attack—mortars, IEDs, small arms fire. But probably the most important thing was that al-Qaida lost its traction. It was denied the assistance and support of local populations. And for the Iraqis, the most significant thing was the Iraqis were much safer themselves, having less to fear from the terrorists who killed Muslims as freely as they killed Americans.

In my view, that is a military strategy for success. Al-Qaida forces must be driven out wherever they amass to mount attacks against us or our allies or peaceful Iraqis. Iraqis are taking over security with their Army and police. We must continue to train and support them and back them up when al-Qaida amasses forces against them. That is essential.

Al-Qaida will not go away anytime in the near future. But right now the military battle is in Iraq, and we must continue to strengthen the ISF to fight al-Qaida jointly with them and enable the ISF to do the basic job of assuring security and stability in Iraq. Al-Qaida will no doubt try to establish other beachheads, and we will attack them where we find them.

That is our military strategy. That depends upon good intelligence. That depends upon the passage of FISA. Our intelligence strategy is clear. We must have the FISA bill, and it is time for the House to act. It is the only way we can monitor top-level communications of al-Qaida leaders.

Working with our Pakistani allies, we have seen the death recently of Abu Laith al-Libi, the fifth-in-line operational chief of al-Qaida, who became eliminated. Fortunately for us, the operational leaders, the ones who give the orders, are taken out on a regular basis because we can get the information on them and we can work with our allies to take them out.

I would say, parenthetically, we need a clear, hold, and build strategy wherever terrorism threatens. That means before a radical group steps up and takes over a country. That means we must reject protectionist calls from those who would stop American economic ties and development activities, educational exchanges, with Islamic and Third World countries where terrorism seeks to gain a foothold.

What we call smart power is the essential element in maintaining long-term safety and security. The battle against terrorism is 20 percent kinetic. That is what our military does so well, and we are doing it well in Iraq. We need to be aggressive in going after their kinetic threats, against terrorists. We need strong intelligence activities. But 80 percent of the battle is economic development, personal contact, educational exchange, helping those countries know we are with them in partnership to assure their democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity through free markets in their countries. That strategy is working in Iraq, and we need to apply that strategy wherever the danger exists or where it may exist.

What is working in Iraq right now? We have seen the COIN strategy. Attacks by insurgents and rival militias have fallen by 80 percent in Baghdad. Our marines have returned from Al Anbar on success, having routed al-Qaida. Al-Qaida once controlled big chunks of Iraq and is now fighting to maintain its last stronghold in the country in Mosul. According to senior Iraqi military officials, concrete blast walls that divide the capital can soon be removed.

These dramatic security improvements and our COIN strategy have, as intended, created an environment in which Iraqi political leaders can reconcile. Everybody wanted to see them act quicker than this body, Congress, can act. They passed a debaathification law, a provincial election law, an amnesty law, a $50 billion budget. These things are going to go through the political process. One of them was vetoed. But they are making the process work, and that is what we can expect, not that they will move more efficiently and effectively than we do.

Despite all the progress, some on the other side remain unwavering in their commitment to withdrawal. The artificial deadlines, timelines would jeopardize Iraq's very real chances that it will emerge as a secure and stable state.

Are the Democrats so intent on denying President Bush a victory for a war they insist is his that they would deny their own country a now achievable victory—a secure and stable Iraq? Trying to blame the Iraq war on Karl Rove is a political shot that has to be dismissed as nothing more.

The Iraqi Government has its problems, and there is too much sectarianism in the Government and the Iraqi Security Forces. But saying the benchmarks have not been met—and damning the war to failure on that basis—is shortsighted, defeatist, and yesterday's sound bite. We do not need any more sound bites. We do not need any more political campaigning on keeping our country safe. It is time we got serious about assuring our troops they have the support they need and that our intelligence agencies have the ability to use their full capabilities, technical capabilities in partnership with the private companies, to make sure we get the best intelligence available.

No responsible Iraqi official thinks we can leave now, nor do our U.S. commanders, and nor do any responsible world leaders, regardless of whether they felt we were right to go into Iraq in the first place.

If you think our world standing has gone down as a result of Iraq, watch it take a nosedive if we pull out precipitously and irresponsibly, leaving a mess in our wake: Chaos, widespread killing, potential regionwide sectarian

wars, and the reestablishment of an al-Qaida safe haven, a caliphate.

The same people who were wrong about the surge a year ago are determined to remain wrong about it now. We must defeat the retreat-and-defeat resolution. We must defeat an effort to establish our al-Qaida fighting strategy in public. We have a strategy. Anybody who wants to learn about it can learn about it. Some of it is classified. We are not going to talk about it publicly. But I join with my colleagues in urging defeat of both the Feingold amendments.

Now, Mr. President, I yield the floor for my colleague from Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Missouri for his steadfast direction on this very important issue to the national security of our country and for the great work he does in our Intelligence Committee. But I also know he is someone who not only looks at this issue as it relates to the safety of the American people, but he also has had, as you might say, a little skin in the game. He has had his son over there on more than one occasion. So he is someone who speaks not only as a terrific Senator but as a father of someone who has been on the frontlines of this battle.

So I, too, rise in opposition to both Feingold proposals. I believe this is a time when anything other than retreat is the order of the day. It is odd we should come to this point at this point in time. Why, once again, after now repeated and repeated attempts without success to insist on a withdrawal and a retreat and a defeat, do we come back to revisit this very subject?

So I rise in opposition to the Feingold measure. The measure requires that the administration develop a strategy ensuring the deployments do not undermine military readiness or homeland security—which that is what they are about; they are about homeland security—and that Reserve units are not deployed more than once every 4 years and regular units not more than once every 2 years.

The fact of the matter is much of what this Feingold proposal—the current one—suggests or asks is information that the sponsors of this legislation, if they truly just seek to obtain that information, would find in very comprehensive documents that are already available.

There is something called a Quadrennial Defense Review, something else called the National Military Strategy. Also, there is the National Security Strategy. And there are many other documents such as these that are already available. These documents exist so we can have a fuller view of the challenges we face and the assets and plans we have in place to defeat the enemies of America.

I would further suggest that one of the key tools in the fight against al-Qaida is FISA, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. That is something both the military and nonmilitary intelligence agencies use to track terror suspects. It is probably the single most effective tool we have in making arrests and disrupting terrorist operations.

The Protect America Act, nearly 2 weeks ago—which updated FISA—expired because the Congress failed to act. The Senate acted, the House did not. As a result, we run a serious risk of losing the cooperation of the partners we rely on for gathering intelligence. As the 9/11 Commission and others have pointed out, small gaps in intelligence or the inability to connect the dots can have catastrophic consequences.

Because of the uncertainty this Congress has helped to create, we are running the risk of losing these partners and missing out on information that could be vital to securing this Nation. It is imperative for our intelligence community to have every tool they need to collect intelligence at their disposal.

The core authorities provided by the Protect America Act have helped us to obtain exactly the type of information we need to keep America safe, and it is essential Congress reauthorize the act's core authorities, while also extending liability protection to those companies that assisted our Nation following 9/11.

As a member of the President's Cabinet on the fateful day of September 11, 2001, I can readily recall what this city was like on September 12. We could still see the smoke rising from the Pentagon building—that unbelievable sight of destruction, of death. It was a time when the Nation was assured we were about to be hit again. The decision was made that we needed to act, that we needed to move forward to try to protect our Nation. And thank the Good Lord, until today our Nation has been kept safe. That has not been by accident. That has not been just by fate. It has been because we have been aggressive in intelligence gathering, and we have been aggressive in taking the fight to the enemies of America.

Some in this body have argued the expiration of the Protect America Act has not weakened the intelligence community's ability to conduct surveillance and have cited an Executive order as a legitimate substitute for the act. I do not agree with that. I disagree.

An Executive order is not always as effective, efficient or safe for our intelligence professionals as the conditions accorded to them under the Protect America Act. In fact, this Executive order failed to aid our intelligence community in a particular case prior to 9/11. One of the September 11 hijackers communicated with a known overseas terrorist while living in the United States. But because that collection was conducted under an Executive order, the intelligence community could not identify the domestic end of the communication and, further, were unable to collect the information that may have given greater insight into the planning of the 9/11 attacks.

In fact, this was cited as one of the central criticisms to the congressional joint inquiry that examined the intelligence failures leading up to the September 11 attacks.

In the absence of the Protect America Act, others have argued employing the outdated provisions of FISA would be sufficient to ensure there is no drop-off in the way we gather foreign and domestic intelligence. Unfortunately, using these particular provisions accorded under the FISA Act—unlike the Protect America Act—would impair our ability to collect information on foreign intelligence targets located overseas.

FISA was designed to govern intelligence surveillance of persons in the United States where the fourth amendment mandates that there must be probable cause before surveillance can begin. While this makes sense when targeting suspects in the United States for surveillance, it doesn't for surveillance of overseas targets and could result in the loss of potentially vital intelligence as our intelligence officials wait for the process to occur. It could also divert the attention of our linguists and analysts away from their core role, which is to protect the Nation from the task of providing detailed facts for FISA Court applications.

It is false to assume Congress's amendments to FISA are sufficient and that there is no longer a need to modernize the act. This past August, Congress amended the Protect America Act on a basis that runs counter to this particular statement. Since its inception in 1978, there have been many advancements to communications that have to be reflected, that have to be updated, and that have to be a part of FISA.

There has been an issue of concern also about Congress's failure to provide liability protection for private sector firms which helped the Federal Government in defending the Nation following the September 11 attacks. This was part of the Senate bill which had strong bipartisan support. Not providing liability protection, some have argued, will have no effect on our intelligence collection capabilities. The fact is that these companies acted in good faith, and they acted in good faith when they were called upon to assist our intelligence professionals in keeping our Nation safe after our Nation was attacked.

I once again want to remind us about September 12. What did we feel like? What were our thoughts at that time? What would we not have done to ensure that America was kept safe from another savage attack? By the way, our enemies are still at it. Nothing has changed in terms of their intentions. What has changed is their capabilities, because we have been on the offense.

What has changed is America's ability to defend itself because we have been protecting ourselves.

It was the right thing for these companies at the time to assist their Nation in need, and it was the right thing for us to do to provide them with immunity from the potential barrage of lawsuits they could face. It was the fair and the just thing to do. Private party assistance is necessary and critical to ensure that the intelligence community can collect the information needed to protect our country from attack.

In a report on S. 2248, the Senate Intelligence Committee agreed when stating:

> The Intelligence Committee cannot obtain the intelligence it needs without assistance—

from our telecommunications partners.

Exposing the private sector to potential billion dollar class action lawsuits would set a dangerous precedent after they worked admirably with the folks in our intelligence community to defend our country. If we are unable to count on their support in the future, we cannot continue to pursue terrorists who are still very much interested in attacking us again.

Yesterday, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Admiral McConnell was very clear. This is necessary. It is essential for Admiral McConnell and for our intelligence community to be able to do their work. We have a solemn obligation to keep to the American people, which is to keep them safe and to remain proactive in identifying threats before they materialize.

Through the benefit of hindsight, we have identified some areas where the bureaucracy has failed the American people, and we must work to fix them by ensuring our intelligence officials have everything they need to stay on the offense in the war against our enemies.

One thing I think we can agree on is that Iraq is the pivotal front on our global war on terror. That is where we are fighting al-Qaida. We fight them there so we don't have to fight them on our soil.

Osama bin Laden has called Iraq the ''central front'' against the war on America and the West, and al-Qaida in Iraq shares that goal. Our soldiers are on the front lines of this war on terror, and it is our duty to give them everything we can to help them achieve their objectives.

Admiral McConnell yesterday was talking about how this particular act could help in the case of kidnapped soldiers on the front and that this inability would be a tremendous detriment to our ability to keep our soldiers safe on the battlefield.

I understand the bill we are on today and the legislation we considered earlier this week are aimed at pulling United States troops out of Iraq immediately, precipitously, irresponsibly, and signaling defeat. If we are seeking conditions in Iraq today such as those we saw a year ago—presurge—then I could understand why we would be debating this. When we were here a year ago, many of my friends on the other side of the aisle were ready to admit defeat. The distinguished majority announced that the United States had ''lost'' the war in Iraq, there was no way to win, and that we should pull our troops out as soon as possible. Presidential candidates still continue to insist that an immediate pullout is the only logical answer that a Commander in Chief should take.

A lot has changed since a year ago. In February of 2007, ethnosectarian violence accounted for nearly 800 deaths in Baghdad. So far this month, ethnosectarian-related deaths number below 40, a 95-percent decrease. During the same period in Baghdad, suicide attacks went from 12 a month to 4 this past January, a 66-percent decrease. Attacks have decreased in 17 of 18 provinces in Iraq. IED detonations are down by 45 percent in Baghdad since February of 2007.

This is to say that the war wasn't lost. Admitting defeat was premature, if politically expedient, at the time. We did not lose the war. The surge is effective. Our troops, as we knew they would, did rise to the challenge. By the way, it is not only our troops, it is our commanders. It is General Petraeus. It is the brilliant strategies that have been followed.

No one wants to have our troops in Iraq any longer than necessary. I look forward to the day when young people I know who are paying this country's duty there can come home to their families and to their young children. We are there because our military presence is necessary. It is necessary for our national security.

The troop withdrawal measure, Feingold No. 1, was debated this week and would cut off funds for combat deployments in Iraq in 120 days. Not only would it cut off money for our troops, it would cut off any chance at continuing the political process that has begun to take hold in Iraq.

The atmosphere that the surge has created in Iraq has allowed political progress to take place. Sure, the voices of defeatism would say we have made no political progress. The fact is from time to time we get a little bogged down in the Senate, even after 200 years of meeting together and after 200 years of relative peace and tranquility. But progress is being made politically.

This month, on February 13, the Council of Representatives passed three key pieces of legislation: the amnesty law, the provincial powers law, and a fiscal budget.

The amnesty law: The Government of Iraq's general amnesty law represents a benchmark in facilitating political reconciliation and the rule of law of Iraq. It addresses the scope of eligibility for amnesty for Iraqis in Iraqi detention facilities, whether they have been brought to trial or not. The law exempts from this amnesty those who have committed specific serious crimes such as premeditated murder or kidnapping or those who are subject to the death penalty.

The provincial powers law: Along with the elections law, the provincial powers law provides the establishment of a new provincial election by October of 2008 and defines the authorities of the federal government in relation to the provinces.

The fiscal budget: The $48 billion Iraqi budget would represent a 17-percent increase in spending over last year's budget, with a 23-percent increase in security expenditures. They are beginning to pay for defending their country. Capital funds allocated to the 15 provinces will increase over 50 percent, from $2.1 billion to $3.3 billion, reflecting the improved budget execution performance by the provinces in 2007.

Democrats' proposals for a quick withdrawal of American forces without regard to consequences will leave America less safe and undermine our national interests. Moreover, disclosing to al-Qaida our plan for defeating them is a recipe for defeat of our own troops. General Petraeus tells us that the effective fight against al-Qaida begins in Iraq. General Petraeus says:

> We have an enormous national interest in Iraq, first of all, in helping the Iraqis achieve its objectives, our objectives of a secure, stable Iraq, connected into the region. Not a regional problem, not a base for al-Qaida from which to train and export terror. . . .

And, I would add further, one of the possibilities of a triumphant Iraq, of a triumphant United States in Iraq, of a state that could be a stable democracy in the heart of the region, and what a difference it could make as an example to other nations.

I am still hopeful enough to believe that this can be achieved, and certainly when we look to where we were a year or so ago to where we are today, a lot has changed and a lot has happened.

I see my colleague from Colorado patiently waiting.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I personally thank the Senator from Florida for a fine statement. I listened very carefully to what he had to say on FISA, and then his message of hope to the Iraqi people. I have had an opportunity to serve with the Senator from Florida in the Senate and I feel very honored to be able to do that. I also had an opportunity to interact with him when he was a member of the President's Cabinet. He is a leader whom I think has a future and I certainly appreciate his leadership here in the Senate as well as in the President's Cabinet. I thank him for his dedication to our country.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. I also want to recognize Senator BOND, the Senator from

Missouri. He spoke before Senator MARTINEZ. I thought he gave a very meaningful talk about the importance of FISA, along with Senator MARTINEZ. He has a personal interest in what happens, not only as a Senator from the State of Missouri, but he has a son who serves in Iraq. So he gets a firsthand report, and I know he spends a lot of time studying it. He certainly has become one of the more knowledgeable people in the Senate as far as intelligence matters are concerned. I think it behooves all of us to listen to his presentation and the message he is sending.

I rise today to discuss S. 2634 in light of the current situation regarding the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The bill we are discussing calls upon the Secretaries of Defense, State, and Homeland Security, along with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Director of National Intelligence, to jointly submit to Congress a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al-Qaida and its affiliates. I can't imagine that this proposal would have any effect—given, for instance, that the Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell has been calling for an extension of the Protect America Act, and the House refuses to listen. Director McConnell feels an extension is necessary to combat and defeat terrorists, including all al-Qaida, but that proposal doesn't seem to matter much.

As we all know, the existing authorities provided by the Protect America Act expired nearly 2 weeks ago. On February 16, the House Democratic leadership allowed these provisions to expire without a vote. So for the last 2 weeks, our intelligence community has lost out on opportunities to gather intelligence and to continue to keep our Nation safe.

As a majority of Senators know, the recently passed Senate version of FISA is a solid, workable, bipartisan bill that would greatly enhance the protection of this country. In addition, it would increase civil liberty protections and the protections of the privacy rights of Americans.

The Senate passed FISA modernization with bipartisan support. Since then, the House has failed to take up the provisions. What is most distressing, and quite frankly the most insulting factor in this situation, is that within the same week the House chose not to take up and make permanent essential provisions from the Protect America Act, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform found time to conduct a hearing on steroids in professional baseball that amounted to nothing more than a media circus. It is for reasons such as these that Congress has some of the lowest approval ratings in history. To top it off, the House promptly adjourned for a week of recess as the FISA provisions expired. If nothing else, this action—or more correctly inaction—presents the appearance that House leadership is prioritizing media-friendly events above the hard work of keeping our Nation safe and providing our intelligence agencies with the tools they need.

FISA in its current form is not sufficient to fight the war on terror. This issue, as much as any issue brought before Congress, needs to be clarified in a timely fashion. Time is most certainly not on our side, and continued delays in the passage of this bill will simply prolong our existing vulnerabilities.

Director of Intelligence Mike McConnell and Attorney General Michael Mukasey wrote on February 22 that:

> We have lost intelligence information this past week as a direct result of uncertainty created by Congress's failure to act.

Mr. President, is this a comment we simply want to disregard? Are House Democrats under the impression the DNI and Attorney General are bluffing? These claims need to be taken seriously, and political posturing simply will not suffice at this point.

Our intelligence community must act quickly in order to be successful. As lives literally depend on their expeditious decisions, it is not in our best interests to deprive our intelligence community of the ability to collect necessary foreign intelligence information. Having the ability to collect and obtain correct information at the right time is of critical importance to our struggle against radical Islamic terrorists who have grown increasingly brazen in their tactics. Additionally, our enemies have become more adept to changes in technology. The world moves quickly, and we have no choice but to keep up with the changes if we are to keep our country safe. The absence of a legislative framework creates an ambiguous environment that presents our enemies with opportunities to exploit our weakened defenses.

Nearly 2 weeks later, these provisions are still surrounded with uncertainty, as the House has failed to act on the bipartisan legislation put forth by the Senate. The information that has been lost in the last weeks is lost forever. We will never know what happened and, hopefully, we will never learn what we missed during this time the hard way. If we think the enemy is not watching the actions of Congress, we are simply fooling ourselves. Simply put, this is too critical an issue to be playing politics.

We are only hurting ourselves and insulting the men and women of our military and intelligence community who risk their lives every day while gathering and acquiring certain intelligence data, if we are going to waste their efforts by bogging down the collection of critical information. We know full well we must do a better job of connecting the dots in our enemies' communications, and the challenge is only increased with the Internet, cell phones, and other forms of communication. We don't need to unnecessarily place Americans in greater danger. To needlessly fail to detect a terrorist plot is one of the most egregious disservices that our Government could commit. The fact is, we are not on the same playing field as our enemies. As Americans, we have higher standards. We abide by laws and protocols which our enemies do not follow.

Protecting the civil liberties of Americans has always been one of the cornerstones of our democracy. However, a balance must be struck between protecting civil liberties and protecting our citizens from foreign threats. I believe this balance has been struck through the Senate bill. The legislation strikes this necessary balance. In changing times, revision of our surveillance laws needs to occur.

In the time between the court ruling requiring the Government to obtain FISA Court orders for foreign surveillance and passage of the Protect America Act, collection of foreign intelligence information decreased by 66 percent. We cannot ignore that fact. We are not making our Nation safer if our intelligence-gathering capabilities are functioning at one-third of their capacity. As such, Congress addressed these concerns through the Protect America Act. But now we have essentially taken a step back, and that is inexcusable.

As it stands today, there currently exists a legal uncertainty for the telecommunications companies assisting us in this critical task of gathering intelligence. This simply makes it more difficult to collect the vital information needed to keep Americans safe. I cannot emphasize enough how paramount it is to have the assistance of private telecommunications carriers to carry out intelligence gathering.

The Senate bill provides protective immunity to those carriers whose cooperation will be needed in the future. It also provides retroactive immunity to private carriers from civil lawsuits arising out of their alleged cooperation with the National Security Agency in their terrorist surveillance program between September 1, 2001, and January 17, 2007. Also, this immunity does not extend to Government officials or to any criminal proceedings that may arise in the future out of the terrorist surveillance program.

Thus far the House version does not offer immunity to the telecommunications companies. I hate to even allude to the fact that failure to offer this immunity stands to benefit only two groups—terrorists who exploit our system and trial lawyers who file class action suits—but I feel I must.

Mr. President, the U.S. Government owes these patriotic companies and their executives protections based on the good-faith effort they made in working with our intelligence community, assisting in their efforts to discover and thwart attacks against our Nation. The Senate Intelligence committee found and stated in its report that, without retroactive immunity, the private sector might be unwilling to cooperate with lawful Government

requests in the future, resulting in what the committee calls ''a possible reduction in intelligence.'' This is simply unacceptable for the safety of our Nation.

Because the companies stepped up to help their country in a time of war, they have been the subject of over 40 lawsuits, and counting. It doesn't take an accountant to realize these claims and the litigation involved could end up costing hundreds of billions of dollars. These companies could end up in bankruptcy, and the trial lawyers will continue to get richer.

The bottom line is the FISA temporary provisions need to be reauthorized as soon as possible. The temporary provisions expired on February 16, almost 2 weeks ago, and since then leaders in the intelligence community have stated that we have lost important information as a result of Congress's failure to act. It is unacceptable and irresponsible to ignore the needs of our intelligence community at this stage of the legislative process. The House owes it to America to accept the Senate bill or expeditiously work out changes in a conference so we can provide the protection the American people deserve and demand.

I see my colleague from the State of New Mexico is prepared to make his comments. I publicly thank him for his service over the years. He is a great leader. I appreciate what he has done for America.

I yield the floor.

ENERGY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to speak about our Nation's growing reliance on foreign oil, and to outline many of the ideas that can help reduce that dependence.

Ten years ago, I gave a speech at Harvard University entitled, ''A New Nuclear Paradigm.'' Its purpose was twofold: to shine a light on the substantial benefits of advancing nuclear power, and to outline specific policy initiatives needed for a nuclear renaissance in the United States. At the time, I stated that it was ''extraordinarily difficult to conduct a debate on nuclear issues.'' After all, it appeared that America had given up on nuclear power.

In my speech, I observed that an open discussion of nuclear energy issues produced only ''nasty political fallout.'' A lingering worry lay deep within me that as such critical issues retreated into the halls of the academy, rather than the Halls of Congress, we risked losing an opportunity to have a serious debate. Had that come to pass, the United States would have missed out on the vital contribution that nuclear energy offers to our national security, economic strength, and foreign policy objectives.

My remarks came in the midst of a stretch when nuclear energy was largely dismissed. Between 1978 and 2007, not a single application was filed for a new nuclear plant to be constructed in the United States. Internationally, the story was much different. During that same period of time, more than 250 nuclear reactors were brought on-line around the world. And, as President Carter took our Nation down the short sighted path of a once-through nuclear fuel cycle, Europe and Japan wisely chose to proceed with their reprocessing and plutonium-use programs. The poor decisions made here stood in stark contrast to those made abroad. Nations that chose to pursue nuclear power became more competitive in the global economy, and America's long-standing edge in innovation began to slip.

In the decade since my address at Harvard, we have changed the face of the debate on nuclear energy. We did this by ensuring that it was framed in the context of how to advance nuclear energy, not whether we should. It is now clear to serious thinkers that advancing nuclear power is essential to providing clean, safe, affordable, and reliable electricity. And, it should be equally clear that the advancement of nuclear power is the essential tool in confronting the challenge of global climate change.

The clearest evidence of this shift in thinking came with the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which included loan guarantees, tax incentives, risk insurance, and an extension of the Price-Anderson Act. All of these policies are important for the development of nuclear power. And to this day, the signing of that important legislation, in my home State of New Mexico, remains a watershed moment in America's nuclear renaissance. In the 30 months that have passed since the bill was signed into law, we have seen the planning stages begin for 33 new nuclear reactors in the United States. I was thrilled to take part in an event last fall celebrating the first operating license application in decades. Since then, six more applications for new nuclear reactors have been filed with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

To put the importance of these achievements in their proper perspective, one must appreciate the enormous global benefits of a nuclear renaissance in this country. Consider that today, there are 104 nuclear reactors in service around the Nation. Together, they displace the same amount of carbon dioxide as is emitted by nearly every passenger car on the road in America. A future for nuclear power in this country will truly mean a brighter tomorrow.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 has already had a positive impact on the advancement of other energy resources as well. The Federal Government has now approved seven new Liquefied Natural Gas terminals, which could bring an additional 15.1 billion cubic feet of natural gas to the U.S. marketplace. As a result of that bill, enough wind-power has been brought on-line to power 2½ million homes. Along with much-needed electricity capacity, this new wind production has generated $16 billion in economic activity, created new green jobs across the country, and displaced 16 billion tons of carbon dioxide.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 also included the first-ever ethanol mandate, a small but important step toward reducing our dependence on foreign oil. This standard has been so successful that since the bill's passage, 77 new ethanol plants have broken ground across the country. Last December, we voted to substantially expand this standard to continue to revitalize rural America and provide our Nation with home-grown energy.

In the years ahead, the benefits of this act will be even more apparent. Renewable fuel usage will increase. The decline in domestic oil production will slow. And if the 33 nuclear reactors now being planned are built, they will generate enough electricity to power 28 million American homes.

In the following year, 2006, Congress picked up where it left off and passed the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act. Staring down a more than two decades-old moratorium that prevented the discovery of our Nation's deep sea resources—we acted. By lifting a ban in the Gulf of Mexico, we allowed for the production of American resources in an area that covers more than 8 million acres.

This bill is already attracting great interest, and investment, in America's ocean energy resources. An estimated 1.26 billion barrels of oil and 5.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas were made available as a result of the decision to open this area. That is enough natural gas to heat and cool nearly 6 million homes for 15 years.

The 2006 bill is also delivering significant revenues to the Treasury. Last October, the Department of the Interior conducted a lease sale in the central Gulf of Mexico, part of the area covered by the new law. That sale attracted $2.9 billion in high bids, the second highest total in U.S. leasing history.

More important than the resources made available, and the revenues brought in, were changes to the prevailing mindset—that it is acceptable to lock up American resources as both foreign dependence and the costs of essential goods and services continue to rise. We must continue fighting against that type of outdated thinking.

Last December, after 12 full months of debate, Congress again responded to America's energy and environmental challenges by calling for greater efficiencies, a stronger energy supply, and a cleaner environment. With the enactment of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, we will see a 40-percent increase in fuel economy by 2020, a savings of several billion barrels of oil, and 36 billion gallons of biofuels introduced into our fuel mix by 2022. As a result of this new law, energy usage in Federal buildings will be reduced by 30 percent, and 6 billion tons of carbon dioxide will be displaced by 2030.

I begin with these examples to prove that progress on energy policy is not only possible—but that it has, in fact, become something of a pattern. While

conventional wisdom holds that Washington has been asleep in meeting our energy challenges, those of us in Congress have agreed on three pieces of landmark, bipartisan energy legislation in the past three years.

Despite this progress, the energy debate should, and must, continue. Today more than ever, policymakers are faced with a daunting task: how to meet America's growing energy needs efficiently, affordably, and responsibly. Congress's recent achievements have been years in the making. They are steps in the right direction. But in many ways, they are overshadowed by the enormity of the challenges that remain.

Americans now spend hundreds of billions of dollars to import oil each year. Over the course of decades, these billions will become trillions. A tremendous amount of American wealth, accumulated over generations, is being transferred to nations that are rich with oil. We are trading our American capital—a resource that can grow and multiply—for Middle East oil, a volatile and finite commodity. Just as oil and gas wells bore into the surface of the Earth, so too has the stable foundation of the American economy been penetrated by those who sell us the energy that we cannot, or will not, produce for ourselves.

Consider our current situation. In 2005, the United States consumed roughly 7.6 billion barrels of oil. More than 60 percent of this supply came from abroad, and it came at a cost of $230 billion. It is too early to calculate how much money we will send overseas this year, but at our current pace, this number could surpass $400 billion.

To put those numbers in perspective, it would cost less—$188 billion—to repair every structurally deficient bridge in America and $230 billion per year is more than enough to provide health care, not only for every American child but for every American. It is eight times more than the United States distributed in Federal foreign aid in 2005, and enough to reduce that year's Federal deficit by nearly three-quarters. In the wake of the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, $230 billion would have been enough to completely rebuild the gulf coast. And, $230 billion is well beyond the cost of the economic growth package that the Congress just passed to get our Nation's economy back on track.

With high prices, growing consumption, and decreasing production here at home, the amount of money Americans spend to import oil is set to accelerate dramatically. If oil prices remain high over the next 25 years—and there is little reason to believe that they will not—the Energy Information Administration projects that our reliance on foreign oil will cost as much as $8.5 trillion, even without taking inflation into account. This calculation assumes $89 trillion to be the average price of oil through 2030, a price that we surpassed for much of 2007 and nearly all of this year so far.

Here is one thing we can all agree on: $8.5 trillion is a staggering sum, especially when compared to spending on oil imports for the previous 25-year period. According to the EIA, we spent a total of $1.6 trillion to import oil from 1980 to 2004. This bears repeating: $1.6 trillion over the past 25 years, $8.5 trillion over the next 25 years, more than $10 trillion in half a century. These figures reveal America's dependence on imported oil for what it is—a great and growing burden that will require sustained action to resolve.

The dire consequences of this arrangement are already becoming evident. In the future, they will be felt even more acutely—rippling through our economy, decreasing household income, and siphoning away jobs. Left unchecked, this dependence will threaten our prosperity and our way of life. It has the potential to make us poor.

Unfortunately, these costs are merely the tip of the iceberg. No discussion of oil imports is complete without an examination of the broader implications for our economy, our national security, and our relationship with the rest of the world. The figures I have quoted account only for the transaction price that our refiners and marketers will pay to acquire oil from foreign countries. These costs reflect one, but not all, of the many consequences associated with our reliance on imported oil.

A good place to start is by looking at our economy, a main focus of the Presidential primary races, because oil imports will have a significant impact on its continued vitality. It is testament to the strength of our economy that high oil prices alone have not already thrust our country into a recession. As many experts have noted, our economic energy intensity has improved greatly over the past few decades. Energy consumption has leveled off on a per capita basis, and energy spending as a percentage of GDP dropped significantly between the 1970s and early 21st century.

Many now consider our economy less vulnerable to the price of oil, no matter the cost of each barrel. To be sure, some progress has been made. But the economy is certainly not immune to expensive crude, and we cannot ignore historical precedent, which has established a trend of economic downturn in the wake of high oil prices.

In 2001, the EIA reported that there have been ''observable, and dramatic changes in GDP growth as the world oil price has undergone dramatic change. The price shocks of 1973–74, the late 1970s/early 1980s, and early 1990s were all followed by recessions . . .'' Our present experience has been a gradual and sustained increase in prices, not a price shock. And yet the lesson here is the same: an economy so dependent on such a volatile commodity can only be so strong. As we continue to export capital in order to import oil, and as oil-exporting nations grow more competitive as a result, it will become increasingly difficult for our country's resilience to endure.

I will mark this, as per my request, and I will continue tomorrow with the second part.

I will stop at this point, yield the floor, and I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have two topics to address, the first on the bill that Senator GRASSLEY and I have on HGH, to keep it out of the hands of people who don't need it, but I will wait a few minutes on that. We are hoping that maybe we can get clearance on the other side of the aisle. I have talked to both of these Senators who have objections, but I will talk about housing first.

We are now on our housing stimulus bill. It is called the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008. It was offered by Senator REID, but Senator REID had consulted, of course, with all of the relevant committee chairmen—Senator DODD, chairman of the Banking Committee; I am chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing of the Banking Committee; Senator BAUCUS on the Finance Committee; Senator LEAHY on the Judiciary Committee—and this is a carefully thought-out, modest, balanced package that aims at the bull's eye of our economic crisis, which is housing.

Make no mistake about it, unless we address the housing crisis, we are not going to be able to clear up this economy. In fact, unfortunately, the inverse is true. If we don't address the housing crisis, the likelihood of this economy plummeting into a rather deep recession is large. So there is an urgency to addressing this housing crisis.

The voluntary measures President Bush has supported, that Secretary Paulson—a man I have great respect for—has tried to put together, have not worked. That is a general and broad consensus, that it has not worked at all. The need to do something is greater than ever. Over 2 million people are likely to have their homes foreclosed upon in the next few years. That, of course, damages them greatly, but it also damages the financial institutions that hold the mortgages, estimated at each foreclosure to cost the mortgagor, or mortgagee, the financial institution, over $60,000.

It hurts the people who live around them. Because what has been shown is that if there is a foreclosure within one-tenth mile of your home, your housing value goes down about .8 percent. And it hurts the overall economy,

because when people are not in their homes, or even people who are in their homes and who have fully paid their mortgage but they find their housing values declining, they spend less. The housing crisis is directly related to the fact that this Christmas season was the lowest spending Christmas season in about 7 years.

Then we have another problem also emanating from the housing crisis, and that is the credit crunch. We have a severe credit crunch occurring in our country today. All kinds of financial instruments are not being bought and sold. They do not have a market and there is a freeze. People are afraid to move. As a result of this credit crunch, our markets are frozen.

The Port Authority of New York, one of the most stable institutions in this country—it owns the airports, it owns a lot of the bridges—gets a steady, regular stream of income. No one believes it is ever not going to pay its bonds. Yet it had to pay 20 percent on temporary bonds because the markets are so frozen.

I heard from my roommate in that little house we live in, GEORGE MILLER of California, that the East Bay has a similar authority, and the East Bay of San Francisco had to pay about 17 or 18 percent. So this is a nationwide problem.

We have problems with student loans now. I read in today's paper that the Pennsylvania Student Loan Authority is no longer lending. So this is spreading way beyond housing, and it relates to a fear that we have not evaluated credit properly.

We have to do something about it. The package that has been put together and offered by the Democratic majority has five pieces—five easy pieces—that should be acceptable to everybody.

It includes two kinds of tax changes: raising the cap on mortgage revenue bonds, so that States can issue more of these bonds and help homeowners get refinanced; and it also includes what is called the loss carryforward, so home builders and others in the housing area, who are not able to actually go forward because they have losses, carry forward those losses and build homes again.

It also contains another $200 million for mortgage counselors. This is a provision I originated with Senator CASEY and Senator BROWN, because we need someone on the ground to help those about to go in foreclosure to avoid it, particularly those who have the financial means to do it. Over 60 percent of the people who will potentially be foreclosed upon have that ability. We did allocate $180 million in the omnibus bill, with Senator MURRAY's leadership. We went to her, and she was great, and put it right in. But of that 180, 130 has already been spent. It shows you the great need. We always predicted 180 wouldn't be enough. This is another modest amount—200.

The fourth provision is money for CDBG, Community Development Block Grants, to go to the cities so they can buy foreclosed homes, they can buy vacant lots, and prevent the whole neighborhood from going down the drain because of the foreclosure crisis.

And, finally, the bankruptcy provision which my friend and colleague Senator DURBIN has authored, which I support, would say that homeowners, when they go into bankruptcy, can use their primary residence as part of the workout, which now, for some arcane reason, they are not allowed to do.

These are five modest provisions that can do a lot. But, unfortunately, there are some on the other side, including the White House, who are sticking to the status quo. They say, don't do anything. The Government should not be involved. They have ideological handcuffs on. The Government not being involved? That is reminiscent of the 1920s or the 1890s. It sounds like William McKinley or Herbert Hoover. That is no longer the economics the vast majority of Americans live by today. No Government involvement when someone's house is about to be foreclosed upon?

Earlier this week we saw status quo on the war in Iraq. Now we are beginning to see status quo on the mortgage crisis. The American people are crying out for change on the war in Iraq and on housing. And it is so regrettable that so many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and it is so regrettable that the President, ensconced in the White House, is talking status quo when 75 percent of the people in America want a change in the direction in this country.

We can certainly debate that change. There are different prescriptions for it. But almost no one says status quo except, it seems, the minority in this body, the minority in the other body, and the President: The status quo, do not have the Government be involved, have these voluntary programs which do virtually nothing.

It is not going to work. So I would urge my colleagues to support us in this housing program. Senator REID has said he will allow amendments if we have changes in the housing program. I am not talking about whether we should debate the estate tax or debate Bush's tax cuts but real changes in these programs, modifications or additions. I heard my colleague from Georgia, Senator ISAKSON, who has a proposal for a $5,000 credit for new home buyers. That is something that I would look at seriously. We can come together and have what unfortunately now has become a good, old-fashioned debate on this issue that affects us and come up with a consensus piece of legislation.

So, please, do not block the bill. Do not stand there with your arms crossed and say: Do nothing. There are 2 million homeowners about to go into foreclosure. There are 50 million homeowners whose home values are declining. There are 300 million Americans who see the economy hurdling south, all of them crying out for us to do something.

The one thing on which there is a consensus, and there may be a broad consensus on what to do, that although I think there may be in our bill, but the one thing everyone agrees on is do not just stand there and do nothing. Yet my colleagues across the aisle, when we vote on this housing measure, who will try to block it with another filibuster, they are saying: Do nothing.

I don't think that is wise policy. Frankly, I don't think that is wise politics. I am sort of surprised because when we offered the package, we did it in the best of faith. And Senator REID has offered to allow amendments that are germane amendments to be debated to show that we do not want to say our way or the highway, but we did want to move forward on housing.

To repeat, the need to do something is real. Housing is the bull's eye of our economic problems. We can do things that almost everyone agrees will do some good. To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, please, please, please, join us. We want to work with you and come up with a package that will turn our economy around, and the housing market and the other markets as well.

I am going to briefly ask to put us into a quorum call so I can discuss with some of the folks on the other side of the aisle whether we can move forward on the HGH bill.

Mr. GRAHAM. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. SCHUMER. I will yield.

Mr. GRAHAM. I would request to be able to speak for 10 minutes and then go into a quorum call, if that is OK.

Mr. SCHUMER. I do not have a problem with that. I will come back to the floor. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from South Carolina be allowed to speak for 10 minutes, then we will come back and try to handle the HGH bill.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. I appreciate the ability to speak. And I wanted to talk about the pending business before the Senate, the bill by Senator FEINGOLD, with 30 hours of debate about whether we should have a requirement for different agencies to report back to the Congress about where al-Qaida exists and how to defeat them and how to deploy our forces to defeat them.

I would argue that you do not have to be a military expert to understand where al-Qaida exists. They exist in all corners of the globe. Their goal is to prey on poverty, to take smart people and convert them to their cause. And how do we beat them? Fight them. Understand what they are up to so we can hit them before they hit us.

And whatever problems we have with coming together over domestic problems and domestic agenda items, it is important that we try to find common ground to deal with the problems facing the country domestically, but surely we can come together to authorize

an intelligence tool called FISA to make sure we understand where al-Qaida is, what they are up to, and what their plans are vis-a-vis the United States.

And this body, to its credit, the Senate passed a reauthorization of FISA that I think is a great balance between intelligence needs, tracking an enemy that we are at war with, and making sure that American citizens are protected in terms of their constitutional rights and civil liberties.

This passed 68 to 27 or 28 and went to the House and here we are without a bill. The bill has expired. The FISA legislation that the Congress came up with last year is now expired, and there is a hole in our intelligence-gathering capabilities. So those of us who wanted to find out what the enemy is up to—and I think that is the vast majority of this body—those of us who want to have a balance between civil liberties and being at war with a vicious enemy, we need to push the Congress, particularly our colleagues in the House, to get this FISA legislation reauthorized.

Al-Qaida is in Iraq. They were not there before. That is probably true. They are there now. And the reason they came to Iraq is to make sure we lost. They came to Iraq to make sure this effort of moderation among Muslims in a Muslim country fails. It is their worst nightmare for a Muslim nation such as Iraq to come together and align themselves with the West, coalition forces, adopt democratic principles, allow a mother to have a say about the future of her child, and to live under the rule of law and not the rule of the gun, and to accept religious differences. That is al-Qaida's worst nightmare.

The reason they were not there under Saddam Hussein's regime is he was not the problem to them. You know, dictatorships are very nonthreatening to al-Qaida. Saudi Arabia has been a problem because Saudi Arabia has aligned itself with the West at times and allowed American troops to operate out of Saudi Arabia, such as when Saddam Hussein attacked its neighbor, Kuwait. So al-Qaida has gone after Saudi Arabia.

But they were indifferent to Iraq because Saddam Hussein vowed to destroy the State of Israel, it was an oppressive regime, and pretty much not their problem. Al-Qaida's biggest fear, again, is tolerance, moderation, the rule of law, a role for a woman in society, and the ability to worship God in more than one way. That is why they are in Iraq.

And to say they were not there before Saddam Hussein and think that is a clever answer to our problems and the justification to withdraw misses the point and shows a lack of understanding of why they chose to go to Iraq.

Why do the Taliban fight in Afghanistan? They would like power back. Why are we fighting them? To make sure they do not get power back. So if you really want to defeat al-Qaida and come up with a strategy to make sure they are diminished and defeated, do not leave Iraq before the job is done.

The greatest news of all from the surge is not the stunning political progress that has exceeded all of my expectations, it is not the economic vitality that is coming back to Iraq, not the reductions in casualties, not the reduction in sectarian deaths, the big picture, the big story line from the surge in Iraq is that Muslims aligned themselves with coalition forces to make sure that al-Qaida would be defeated in Iraq.

Sunnis in the Anbar province that were at this time last year very much living in fear of al-Qaida decided to take matters into their own hands, align themselves with us. And due to additional combat power and capability, we were able, along with the Sunni Arabs in Anbar province, to deal al-Qaida a devastating blow.

They have left Anbar for the most part. They are diminished in Anbar, still not completely defeated. And they are moving north. And we are right after them. They are up in the Mosul region. If we are patient and we are persistent and we keep the troop levels we need to keep them, along with the Iraqi security forces that have grown by 100,000 since last year, we will crush them. We will capture or kill them in large numbers as we have done over the past year.

The answer to the question of this legislation by Senator FEINGOLD: What do we do to defeat al-Qaida? We align ourselves with people in the region and throughout the world who will help us fight them. We do not leave them hanging. We do not withdraw because of the politics of the next election. We align ourselves with people who are willing to fight al-Qaida over there so we do not have to fight them here. And we do not withdraw in a way that would allow al-Qaida to get back off the mat, back into the fight. The first thing they would do is go to the moderates who have helped us and try to kill them.

So this whole idea of leaving Iraq because we need to fight al-Qaida is absurd. We need to fight al-Qaida wherever we find al-Qaida. And they are now in Iraq because they know this experiment in democratic principles and moderation that is going on in Iraq is a death blow to their agenda.

So if you want to defeat them, make sure Iraq succeeds. Their biggest nightmare, again, is a tolerant, moderate form of government in the Mideast. Iraq could be an ally to this country for years to come. It could be a place that denies al-Qaida a safe haven, that rejects Iranian expansion. The payoffs of winning in Iraq to our national security interests are enormous.

The question as to whether Iraq is part of a global struggle or a mere side adventure, I would give you some guidance there from Osama bin Laden himself. December 2004:

> I now address my speech to the whole Islamic Nation. Listen and understand. The most important and serious issue today for the world is this Third World War. It is raging in the land of Two Rivers. The world's milestone and pillar is Baghdad, the Capitol of the caliphate.

This is Osama bin Laden telling his would-be followers where to go and what to do. The Third World War he talks about raging is raging in Iraq. That is why he wants us to fail in Iraq because he would like to be able to have a place from which to operate in Iraq to perpetuate his agenda.

He understands very clearly if we are successful in Iraq, if the Iraqi people themselves are successful, it is dealing al-Qaida a great blow. So the good news from the surge is that after having tasted al-Qaida life in Anbar province, the people of Anbar said: No, thank you. They are now taking their fate in their own hands with our help. And the idea of withdrawing from Iraq as some way to better fight al-Qaida is absurd, naive, and dangerous. The way you beat al-Qaida is align yourself with people like we found in Iraq. You help them help themselves, and you make sure that when Iraq is said and done in terms of battle and a greater struggle that we have won and al-Qaida has lost.

To leave prematurely would put this enemy back into the fight. I cannot think of anything more heartening to al-Qaida operatives throughout the world than to hear that the Congress of the United States is going to precipitously withdraw from Iraq, giving them hope where they have none now. They know they cannot win in Baghdad, Mosul, Fallujah, Basra. They understand that. It is very demoralizing to them right now. The only place they are holding out hope is here in Washington. Can they do something spectacular to create a headline throughout the world that would break the will of the American Congress to stand behind the Iraqi people, who are stepping to the plate and making not only Iraq safer but the United States safer? I hope the answer is no.

I hope we will not let terrorists, murderers, some of the worst forces known to mankind in the form of al-Qaida dictate foreign policy in the United States because they are willing to murder and kill the innocent to break our will.

I hope we are smart enough to reauthorize FISA because this hole in our intelligence-gathering capability is incredibly dangerous. Everybody acknowledges that we live in a dangerous time. Well, do something about it, reauthorize FISA now before we pay a heavy price.

As to those who think we can leave Iraq, and it is going to make things better with al-Qaida, I do not think you understand what al-Qaida is after.

I do hope that the Congress will come together and reauthorize FISA in a way to make us safe. I hope we will understand that the outcome in Iraq is not yet guaranteed, but we are on the right path. Let's don't do anything

here in Washington because of the next election that will haunt this country for decades. Let's not put every moderate force at risk in the Middle East by pulling the plug in Iraq and undercutting General Petraeus. This man and those who serve with him deserve our respect, our gratitude and, more than anything else, our support.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator SCHUMER be recognized for 5 minutes; followed by Senator TESTER for 5 minutes; and then Senator MCCASKILL for 5 minutes; she wanted an opportunity to speak; and then I be given the remaining 15 minutes. That consumes the half hour between now and 2 o'clock.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will my colleague yield?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to.

Mr. SCHUMER. I think I might need 7 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Senator SCHUMER for 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New York.

HGH

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise in support of a very straightforward bill that will keep the dangerous human growth hormone, now known throughout the Nation as HGH, out of the hands of people who don't need it and toughen penalties on those who sell it illegally.

First, I thank my friend from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, for joining me in recognizing the importance of this issue. I also commend the district attorney in Albany, David Soares, for his hard work in uncovering a major multi-State HGH ring last year and helping to bring this issue the recognition it requires.

I was going to come to the floor originally and ask unanimous consent to move the bill because it had been blocked. A hold had been put on by my some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I have now come to an understanding as to whom the people are, the two. Each of them has said they want to work with us to try and get the bill moving by early next week. So I will not ask unanimous consent. I know it doesn't move the clock forward, which I would like to do in hopes that we can come to a negotiation and get this bill passed early next week.

There is widespread support for this legislation, people such as Major League Baseball, the NFL, the U.S. Olympic Committee, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. This bill is good for every parent, every coach, and every young athlete who cares about kicking drugs out of sports for good. The widespread growth of human growth hormone in Major League Baseball has put a cloud our national pastime. But if is there is a silver lining in that cloud, it is the opportunity that recent scandals have presented to do something positive about the problem. ''Dangerous opportunity,'' the Chinese say, and that is true in this case. That is what our bill does, change danger into opportunity. Change danger into something good, getting rid of HGH for those who should not have it.

No one disputes that HGH has some important medical uses—adults with AIDS, children with serious kidney disease can benefit from small, carefully administered doses of HGH. But in the wrong hands, HGH can lead to serious problems. Some of the worst side effects include cancer, heart disease, gigantism, impotence, menstrual problems, and arthritis.

As we remember, last year, former Senate majority leader George Mitchell did an excellent report on the use of drugs in professional baseball. One of the main themes was about the widespread abuse of HGH. The report says that because HGH is hard to detect through testing, it is very attractive to athletes. Kids look up to their heroes. They model their behavior after them. They want to be just like them. According to a Columbia University study cited in the report, athletes are second only to parents in the extent to which they are admired by children. So if a sports star says it is OK to illegally take steroids, HGH, or other performance drugs, it is almost certain children will follow. We have to make sure dangerous substances can only get to the small number of people who need them.

That is exactly what the bill Senator GRASSLEY and I have put together does. It adds HGH to the list of schedule III controlled substances, placing it alongside anabolic steroids in the eyes of the law. Congress did a similar thing with andro, another potentially dangerous performance enhancer in 2004. Adding a substance to schedule III creates a formal recognition that even though a drug has some medical use, it may lead to dependence. HGH fits this bill. Right now it is only illegal to distribute HGH to a person where there is no medical need for the person to get it. Adding HGH to schedule III adds in illegal manufacture and possession, along on with other serious crimes to the list. Penalties will be tougher. Someone could face up to 10 years in jail and serious fines for breaking the law. Most importantly, schedule III drugs must be regulated closely. This means that all legitimate manufacturers, distributors, and practitioners would have to register with the DEA. They would have to keep data and records on how they make, sell, and dispose of the drug.

HGH needs to be placed alongside other serious substances like it. One more youngster who starts using HGH and other performance-enhancing drugs is one too many. I welcome a debate with anyone who might want to disagree with that point. I hope we can come to agreement and pass by unanimous consent this important legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from Montana.

120TH FIGHTER WING, MONTANA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the brave men and women of the 120th Fighter Wing of the Montana Air National Guard. The 175 members of the unit will be deployed to the 332d Air Expeditionary Wing for 60 days, joining 50 of their brothers-in-arms already operating out of Balad Airbase, just north of Baghdad.

These airmen will join nearly 200 or so members of nearby Malmstrom Air Force Base's Red Horse Squadron in Iraq.

All together, nearly 500 airmen and Army Reserve component soldiers based in Montana are now serving in Iraq. Our State is small in population, but our sacrifice is significant.

The 120th Fighter Wing has a storied history in Great Falls, MT—a city chosen for its 300 good flying days a year and outstanding training airspace. During World War II, the 120th was tasked with flying aircraft to the eastern front to fight the Nazis. Over 60 years ago, two A–20 light bombers took off in order to help our allies fend off Operation Barbarossa, the German effort to take over Eastern Europe.

As members of the 332d, they will join with their colleagues from the Wisconsin and Iowa Air Guards to provide close air support missions.

As the pilots of the 120th Fighter Wing will tell you, it takes a core of dedicated maintainers to keep the squadron in the air. Keeping our F–16s flying in the harsh desert environment is a tough task, but the men and women of the 120th are up to the challenge.

It has been reported that the U.S. military conducted five times as many airstrikes in Iraq in 2007 as it did in 2006. This clearly underscores the fact that the Air Force is a vital part of the mission in Iraq.

I have no doubt that the members of the 120th Fighter Wing will be an excellent addition to the forces in Balad during their rotation.

I want each of them to know they have the support of every Montanan. We honor their sacrifice, especially those on their second, third, or even fourth tours. We pray for their safety and take great pride in knowing that the men and women of Montana's Air Guard are serving us proudly.

And when the 120th comes home, it is vitally important that our Nation keep its promise to them by providing all the resources that they need for job training, medical care, mental health counseling, family counseling, or any other services that they need to return successfully to civilian life.

I am fully committed to making sure that every member of the Armed Forces has these resources available to them when they return or if they are currently here.

I wish to address the debate on the Feingold amendment. When I was sitting in the chair, I heard several Members talk about the war in Iraq. We need a change of course in Iraq. We need to get our folks home, make no mistake about it. Things are not glorious in Iraq right now. It is true violence is subsiding some. It is true some of the folks who were shooting at us are now on our side, pushing al-Qaida out of the country. That is a good thing.

The fact is, Iraqis want their country back. We need to join with them as allies, but they need to be the major offensive standing alone in the world. It is no longer a coalition fight. Everybody else has pulled out. We need to support Iraq. We need to continue our war on terror wherever it is in the world. But the fact that we are spending so much resources in Iraq puts our fight on terror around the world at risk.

The debate has been good, but I look forward to changing the course in Iraq so we can start focusing on issues other than Iraq, the issues that revolve around our economy. Kids can't get loans to go to college because economic forces out there have decreased the ability of lending institutions, as well as the fact that people are potentially losing their homes and probably are losing their homes as we speak. There is a lot of big issues, infrastructure, highways, bridges, water systems that are worn out that we need to start addressing. Quite frankly, I am concerned this country cannot afford to address any of those kind of things with our current conditions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

HOUSING STIMULUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, later this afternoon the Senate will have an opportunity to vote on a procedural motion, a cloture motion, to end debate and to move to another issue. The issue we want to move to is the housing stimulus package. We are expecting resistance from the Republican side of the aisle. They don't want to debate the housing issue facing America. That is a serious mistake. I hope enough Republican Senators will step forward and join us to initiate this debate about housing in America. Our economy is in trouble. It is struggling. The first indication we had was in the housing market. We know we passed a stimulus bill recently, a bipartisan bill which the President signed. It is going to be a good bill, I hope, to help families across my State and across the Nation. But we all know intuitively that until the housing market gets well, our economy is not going to get well.

The housing market is very sick today. Last Friday, Moody's Economy.com reported that 1 out of 10 homeowners in America are holding mortgages on homes where their debt is larger than the value of their home; 8.8 million homes in America are so-called underwater, as they say. That is the greatest percentage of homes in such a state since the Great Depression. Goldman Sachs estimates that by the end of 2008, as many as 15 million homes will be in that situation, almost double the number we know today. The Center for Responsible Lending estimates 2 and a quarter million homes may be lost to foreclosure in the next couple of years. Fitch Ratings has recently estimated that for subprime loans originated in the years 2006 and 2007, 50 percent of them could end up in foreclosure.

But the crisis goes beyond the families who have their mortgages foreclosed. Forty million American families who are currently making their mortgage payments, through no fault of their own, will see the value of their homes go down because of this housing crisis. Why? Because the value of your home is based on comparable sales in the neighborhood. When that neighbor 2 blocks over has a distress sale, an auction, because his house is in foreclosure and the house sells for less than fair market value, that is a calculation that affects the value of your home. Make your mortgage payments and still lose value in your home; that is what is happening.

So when we hear from some people that this is a narrow problem for a narrow group of people, trust me, it goes, unfortunately, way beyond. A third of all residences in America will lose value because 2.2 million homes will face foreclosure at rates that we have not seen since the Great Depression.

When the President was asked today in his press conference what should we do about this, he said: Let's sit tight. We just passed one stimulus bill. The checks are going to go out in May or June. Let's wait and see what happens.

It is that kind of bold, innovative attitude that led Herbert Hoover to do nothing in the Great Depression and for the situation to go from bad to worse.

This housing crisis is our wake-up call. If we do not rally on a bipartisan basis and do something about it, the economy is going to get worse. I do not say that with any sense of pride—just disappointment. My home is going to go down in value, too, in Springfield, IL. That is a fact. Though my wife and I make our mortgage payments, we are facing that reality.

So we have to do something about this. In Illinois, the fourth worst hit State in the country, it is estimated that nearly 45,000 homes will be lost to foreclosure and over 2.5 million neighboring homes will see a loss in value. Our State will see $15 billion lost in housing values, and as property values go down, property tax receipts go down. That means that your city, your county, trying to raise money for schools, for police protection, is going to have less money coming in.

We should have seen this coming. I was on this floor sitting back there in the corner as a relatively new Member in 2001 when we considered the bankruptcy bill. I wanted to put in a provision, and here is what it said: If you are a lending institution and you are guilty of predatory practices—those are illegal practices, where you mislead people into debt—you will be limited, if not precluded, from foreclosing on that home because you do not have clean hands because you were guilty of predatory lending. You cannot take over the home of someone if you tricked them out of their money and tricked them out of their home. I lost. I lost by one vote in the year 2001.

Do you know what I said when I offered this amendment in 2005? And I thought this was a stunning statistic. I said: ''1 in 12 subprime predatory loans ends in foreclosure. And I said that is ''an astonishing statistic''—1 out of 12 subprime loans in 2005 ended up in foreclosure. Do you know what the number is today? One out of two. This is because we did not pass the kinds of laws we needed to pass to keep an eye on this industry, these mortgage bankers who are ripping people off.

Have you ever heard these stories in Colorado, in Alaska? Have you talked to these people? A lot of folks would have you believe they are people who are just smoothies, who think: We are going to make a little investment here, we are going to make this payment, and pretty soon we will have a big home, and we will not have to pay for it. Boy, those aren't the stories I am hearing. The stories I am hearing are of people, by and large elderly people, who are dragged into real estate closings, facing a stack of papers 10 times larger than this. The agent turns the pages and say: Keep signing. We will tell you when it is over. And they walk out the door with the understanding that everything is fine. Then they look at the fine print when things go bad. And what happens? There is a reset on their mortgage. The interest rate just went sky high. The monthly payment just went beyond their means.

That is the reality. There are provisions in some of those subprime mortgages where the interest rate can never go down—never—only go up.

I met a poor lady from Peoria, IL, 2 weeks ago, Carol Thomas, who is 70 years old, a widow, whose husband just died. She bought a single-level home because her husband was so sick he could not climb the stairs anymore in their old home. One of these business advisers came to her and said: Mrs. Thomas, what you ought to do is consolidate your debt. You hear that on TV all the time: Consolidate your debt. This poor lady did not know. She said: Fine. They took all her debts and consolidated them into her new home loan. They took a debt she had—a loan she received from her city for siding on her home that was a zero-percent interest loan—and threw it into the consolidation. She was now paying interest on the zero-percent loan. When did she realize it? When the mortgage reset and her monthly payment went from $500

to $900 a month. Four hundred dollars a month may not be a crisis for a Senator or a Congressman; it was a crisis for Carol Thomas. She was about to lose her home, getting the runaround day after day from the mortgage company: Well, don't make the payment this month. Now you are in default. It is a shame you are in default. Maybe you should have made the payment.

She was beside herself. Well, we got it worked out with a couple phone calls. They finally renegotiated the mortgage. But the problem Mrs. Thomas faced is shared by many others. Do you think Carol Thomas in Peoria, IL, thought she was pulling something over on people? Not at all. She thought she was taking good advice. Unfortunately, the advice was bad.

We met a family here. Senator SHERROD BROWN from Ohio and I had a press conference the other day with the Glicken family from Cleveland, OH. Nice folks. John Glicken came in and had his Cleveland Indians jacket on and told his story. The same thing happened to him.

Well, he decided he would try to take advantage of the Bush administration's plan for saving homes, to save his home. So they said: If you want to make an application for a loan modification under one of these new programs, it will cost you $425 to apply. John did not want to lose his home. He paid the $425. He was turned down. So not only is he facing foreclosure, he is out $425 for nothing.

In Ohio, the Center for Responsible Lending conservatively estimates that 85,000 families are at risk of losing their homes and almost 1.4 million families could lose nearly $3 billion in value in their homes. State after State—Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Indiana, Maine, North Carolina—the list goes on and on. In every one of these States, the same stories.

Well, the question is, what are we going to do about it? There is one thing we can do that can make a big difference. We need to change the bankruptcy law. Listen to this: If you are facing bankruptcy but you are not completely out in the cold—you have an income coming in—you go into something called chapter 13. You walk into bankruptcy court, and you say to the judge: I am in trouble. I cannot pay my debts. This is my income. These are my assets. Here are my debts. Is there a possibility we can work out and renegotiate these so I do not lose everything? Chapter 13.

So when you go in there, the judge takes a look at it and says: Well, let's bring in your creditors and sit down and see if we can work out some kind of payment arrangement so you don't lose everything and they don't lose everything through foreclosure.

One of the things they can do is take a look at your mortgages. Do you have a mortgage on a vacation home, a vacation condo, for example? Well, the bankruptcy court can take a look at that mortgage, bring in the creditor, modify the terms of the mortgage—change the length of the mortgage, for example—even change the amount paid on the mortgage, even change the interest rate on the mortgage. You can do that. You own a farm? Let's take the mortgage on the farm. The bankruptcy court can renegotiate the mortgage on the farm. The same thing with a ranch. But, wait a minute, what about your home? The law prohibits the bankruptcy court from modifying the terms of the mortgage on your primary home. All they can do is foreclose. That is it. Does that make any sense? A home is something that virtually everybody brings into that court. It is the most important asset we ever own, and the mortgage cannot be modified in the bankruptcy court for your home.

This provision of law in our housing stimulus package changes that. But we narrow it very strictly. It only applies if you live in the home. This puts the speculators out of business. We do not want the speculators to benefit from this.

Secondly, you have to qualify to get into bankruptcy court. You don't have any income, can't make it in there? You are not going to get into that court. They do a means test now to get you into bankruptcy court.

Third, it has to not only be an existing mortgage—not prospective, not for those 2 years from now, 3 years from now, but right now—but it has to be one of these subprime mortgages.

Then, what can the court do? The court cannot lower this new modified mortgage below the fair market value of the home. This protects the lender. Lenders are very lucky to get a fair market value out of a home that is sold at auction. But they are protected here. And judges can only reduce interest rates to the prime rate plus a reasonable premium for risk.

All of these things taken into consideration give the court the opportunity to modify the mortgage on your home so you can stay there. It is treated just like a vacation home, just like a farm, just like a ranch.

How many people will be affected by this? About a third of the people facing foreclosure. A third of those people will be eligible for this consideration. I think the good news is this: When we pass this bill, pass this change in the law, it is an incentive for these banks and lenders to sit down before you get into bankruptcy and work out terms that you can live with. That is not happening today. These lending institutions just are not doing that. They will if this provision in the law is included.

Now, who would oppose this? Think long and hard about it. It is a hard question, right? No. It is an obvious question. This change in the bankruptcy law is opposed by the Mortgage Bankers Association. Those same wonderful folks who brought us the subprime mortgage crisis oppose this change to allow people to stay in their homes—the same people.

Have you been listening to the Presidential campaign? I have. I have a colleague from Illinois who is involved in it. You know what it is about. It is about whether the special interests control this Chamber or we operate in the public interest.

Well, this will be a classic showdown when we have this cloture vote, and we need 60 votes to move forward on this housing stimulus package. The Mortgage Bankers Association is trying to stop this bill. They do not want this change in the Bankruptcy Code to give people a chance to stay in their homes, even though it has been narrowed and modified to the point where it is really strict. They do not want this. The same people who created this crisis in America by deceiving and misleading people into mortgages which were totally unfair and totally unrealistic do not want those people to have a chance to stay in their homes even if they can make a mortgage payment.

Well, it will be an interesting outcome. Let's see how this turns out. Let's see if the mortgage bankers are going to win or if the people whose homes are on the line will win this debate. It is just that simple, and it is just that straightforward. What a shame it would be—what an absolute shame it would be, if not scandalous—if at the end of the day the Mortgage Bankers Association, which created this mess in America, ends up winning on the Senate floor. If they do, I can understand the cynicism across this country about how this body works. People have a right to be cynical if at the end of the debate we cannot move to this housing stimulus bill. I think it is important we do.

Now, there is a Senator on the other side who wants to offer an amendment to give the mortgage bankers the last word in the bankruptcy court; in other words, that the mortgage bankers have to give permission before the court can modify the mortgage. Well, what is the point if they are going to have the last word? They have the last word right now. They can renegotiate a mortgage if they want to, but they are not doing it. They are not doing it on a voluntary basis. Unless and until those mortgage bankers know this mortgage can be modified, they are not going to sit down and negotiate.

Well, there is a big argument that comes back from the mortgage bankers: Oh, you know what is going to happen here. If you give a portion of these 600,000 people a chance to stay in their homes, we are just going to raise everybody's interest rate across America.

Well, let me tell you something. That is a vacant threat. The Georgetown University Law Center did a survey and study of this proposed change in the Bankruptcy Code and said it would have zero impact on the cost of credit across America—zero. So they can threaten all they want, but do they have any credibility? Does this industry have any credibility when we look at the mess we are in today?

Four years ago, we were dealing with 1 out of 12 subprime mortgages going belly up. And now half of them? When you hear those stories, State after State, family after family, of the way they were deceived into this situation, when our lack of law and lack of regulation led to this circumstance, does that tell you the mortgage bankers were the victims here? No way. It should be in their best interest to avoid foreclosure.

What happens when a property goes into foreclosure in court? Well, the lending institution spends a fortune in legal fees, and then they may end up with the property when it is all over. Then they have to cut the grass and pick up the newspapers and the mail and make sure the place is presentable, and then try to sell it at an auction, if they can. Most of them cannot, incidentally, now. They are lucky if they get a fair market value out of it. But they want to stick to their rights under the law.

The one part of it that I like the best is when the mortgage bankers come out and say this is about the sanctity of the contract. The sanctity of the contract? Sanctity suggests holiness. If you read any of these contracts I have read and hear the terms of the mortgages these people facing foreclosure had to deal with, there is nothing holy about it. It was an unholy attempt to rip these people off, to put them in homes they could not afford under terms they never understood and then let the market work. This is not about the sanctity of any contract. When that bankruptcy court modifies your vacation condo mortgage, your farm mortgage, your ranch mortgage, they are modifying a contract. What happened to the sanctity of the contract there? That basic standard should apply when it comes to a person's home.

When we get to this bill later today, it will be a procedural motion. We need 60 votes. It will be a face-off between the mortgage banking industry, the people who brought us this subprime mess and those on their side with the Herbert Hoover mentality that says: Don't get involved; let it work out; in a year or two, it will all be behind us—and those who think we ought to stand up to allow people to stay in their homes, giving them a chance in court to modify their mortgage terms so they have a fighting chance to stay in their homes. I think that is a basic American value.

I hope my colleagues in the Senate will come down on the side of those families and on the side of bringing this housing crisis to a resolution in a responsible way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

REPORT ON TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, in late November, Senator INOUYE and I traveled to the Middle East to assess the security situation there. I want to share some of the insights from our travels, especially as they relate to Iraq. We visited Tunisia, Iraq, and several other countries. We met with senior U.S. State Department, intelligence, and military leaders regarding U.S. policy in Iraq, in the Middle East, and in Europe.

Our first stop was in Tunisia where we met with U.S. Ambassador Robert Godec and his staff regarding political, economic, and social conditions in Tunisia. Tunisia is a moderate Muslim country which has strongly supported women's rights. The Tunisian economy has averaged 5.6 percent growth each year, with an 80-percent level of home ownership. It is a real democracy. The United States has a close working relationship with Tunisia, including strong military-to-military contacts. Tunisia straddles the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, creating a strong interest in regional security issues, particularly concerning Iraq. During our visit, we had many discussions about the situation in Iraq and the possible impacts on the rest of the region.

We have discussed many of these same issues with the Foreign Affairs Secretary of State Saida Chtioui and Minister of Defense Kamel Morjane. Tunisia is interested in strengthening the foreign military financing relationship with the United States. We call that FMF.

Before departing Tunisia, Senator INOUYE and I presented a wreath at the U.S. North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial in Tunis. There are 2,841 American servicemen who are buried in that cemetery. It was established in 1948 and covers 27 acres. It sits near the site of the ancient Carthaginian city destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. and lies over part of the Roman city of Carthage. The cemetery is located in the part of Tunis that was liberated from the Germans by the British 1st Army in May of 1943. We last visited that area with Senator Hollings, who is now retired from the Senate. He made the landing there in World War II. Many of the men who were interred there gave their lives in those landings and in the occupation of Morocco and Algeria, and the subsequent fighting which ultimately liberated Tunisia. Some have seen those scenes in the recent movies that were shown of World War II. Others involved there died as a result of accidents or sickness in North Africa or while serving in the Persian Gulf command in Iran. But I want to tell the Senate it is a very impressive sight and it is touching to see how well that cemetery staff takes care of the cemetery. It is a United States military cemetery, and our visit to that cemetery left Senator INOUYE and me very humbled since we were involved in World War II ourselves.

We then traveled to Iraq, where we spent 2 days meeting with senior U.S. and Iraqi Government officials. We arrived at the Baghdad International Airport, formerly known as Saddam International Airport, which is located approximately 16 kilometers west of Baghdad. It has both a civil international terminal and a smaller military ramp. The Baghdad International Airport is served by a class 1 runway of 13,000 feet, and the military side has almost 9,000 feet. The military runway was bombed by coalition aircraft and closed early in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group and the 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron helped repair the runway, and it is once again operational. It opened to commercial aircraft in 2003. It can handle 7.5 million passengers a year. I tell the Senate that because it is partially back. I think that is what I am trying to tell the Senate. Many things are returning to normal in various parts of Iraq.

Baghdad International Airport has been refurbished as part of a $17.5 million contract to rebuild Iraqi airports in Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. This project is administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Coalition forces began returning control of Baghdad International in June of 2004 with the turnover of the air traffic control tower and checkpoints. The process was concluded with the exchange of the main gate on August 25, 2004. Our major access to Baghdad is in civilian control of Iraq now.

Upon arriving in Iraq, we traveled to the international zone formerly known as the Green Zone. This area in central Baghdad houses most of the city's diplomatic and Government buildings. Part of this area was Saddam Hussein's family playground, including the Presidential palace, which is now the U.S. Embassy annex, numerous villas for Saddam's family, friends, and former Baath party loyalists, along with an underground bunker which reminds one of Hitler. We were informed it was also the home to Saddam's man-eating lions, which have since been moved to Iraq's national zoo, I am happy to say.

Most of our briefings took place in the Presidential palace, which, as I said, is now part of the American Embassy. We discussed the current situation in Iraq with U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and his key staff.

Let me tell the Senate a little bit about Ambassador Crocker. He is a most impressive individual. He grew up in an Air Force family, attended schools in Morocco, Canada, Turkey, and the United States, and joined the Foreign Service in 1971. Since those early years he has served in a variety of hot spots around the world. His assignments have included Iran, Qatar, Iraq, Egypt, as well as right here in Washington, DC. He also served as U.S. Ambassador in Pakistan, Kuwait, Syria, and Lebanon. This man has an impressive list of senior assignments during which he represented our country, and he is representing us very well now in Iraq.

In January of 2002, Ambassador Crocker reopened the American Embassy in Kabul. In 2003, he served as the

first Director of Governance for the Coalition's Provisional Authority in Baghdad. He was subsequently confirmed by this Senate as our Ambassador to Iraq on March 7, 2007. We have here a true Middle Eastern expert representing our Nation in this country.

Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus are a great team. Their partnership serves our country well.

I was very impressed by that team and by the Department of State officials working throughout Iraq. Whether serving in the Baghdad Embassy or in numerous provisional reconstruction teams that are now known as PRTs that are located throughout the country, they deserve much credit and they deserve our support. I was especially pleased with the progress the PRTs have made over this past year. Their efforts are important to achieving our counterinsurgency strategy by bolstering moderates, promoting reconciliation, fostering economic development, and building provincial capacity.

The PRT initiative is a civilian military interagency effort that serves as the primary interface between U.S. and coalition partners and provisional and local governments throughout Iraq. They are helping Iraq develop transparency and stable provisional governments by promoting increased security, the rule of law, political and economic development, and providing the provincial administration necessary to meet the basic needs of the Iraqi population. Twenty-five PRTs serve all the provinces in Iraq. Ten full-sized teams stretching from Mosul in the north to Basra in the far south serve the majority of Iraqis. Coalition participation includes the British-led PRT in Basra, the Italian-led team in Dakar, and the Korean-led team in Erbil. The PRTs work closely with U.S. and coalition military units to strengthen provisional governments.

Ten of the twenty-five teams are the new ''embedded'' PRTs, as they are called. These civilian-led teams work hand in glove with the brigade combat teams or the U.S. Marine regiments to support the surge in Anbar Province and in the greater Baghdad area.

Manning of these PRTs is diverse. Personnel represent our Department of State, USAID coalition, and the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the gulf region division of the Army Corps of Engineers, and our contract personnel. The office of Provincial Affairs within the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad provides the policy guidance and support to the overall PRT program. This program is one of the significant things we saw that has taken place in Iraq since the surge, and it has been very successful.

As part of the President's new way forward, PRT personnel doubled from 300 to over 600 team members countrywide by the end of last year. The PRT's financial support comes from a variety of sources, including coalition partners and donor nations, with the majority coming from the United States, of course. Principal programs associated with PRTs include the U.S.-funded community stabilization program, the provincial reconstruction development committee program, the local governance program, the civil society program, and the Inma agribusiness program,—by the way, Inma means growth in Arabic—amounts to progress. Progress has taken place as a result of the surge.

During our visit, it was announced that security conditions had improved enough to allow the drawdown of U.S. combat troops from Diyala Province. This was the first drawdown of combat forces since the surge began in 2007, and these forces will not be replaced. This redeployment without replacement reflects the overall improved security conditions within Iraq, improved capabilities of the Iraqi security forces, and the increased participation of concerned local citizens. Improved economic factors and declining tribal conflicts in the province have made the drawdown possible. I think General Petraeus's ability to reach out to the tribal leaders has contributed greatly to what we have seen in terms of the progress being made in Iraq.

Diyala Province has been plagued by rampant corruption in the past. Leaders placed their ambitions ahead of the needs of the constituency. There was a lack of food, water, electricity, and fuel, and residents viewed Iraqi security forces as sectarian. Tribal conflicts divided the population. We met with some of those forces. Iraqi security forces and the government of Diyala Province worked diligently over the past 18 months to bring stability and services to that province. Acts of violence have dropped in the past year by 50 percent alone. The surge enabled the coalition and Iraqi security forces to dominate the terrain and secure the population, allowing the government to function properly and to shift focus from defense to reconstruction and providing essential services. We saw progress. That is what I am trying to say. We saw with our own eyes the progress that is taking place in Iraq since the surge.

We met with Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih and his staff and personally stressed the importance of moving forward on the political reconciliation. The national Government must reconcile. We must keep in mind that Iraq's political system, though, is still in its early stages of development. Its leaders are trying to establish a government and resolve fundamental issues in the midst of continuing violence.

Iraqi leaders agree political progress can be improved. However, there have been steps forward during the past several months. While the so-called benchmark legislation has been slow in terms of the national legislature, I believe that actions will flow from the laws that have been passed and those that have already been enacted. Steps are already being taken. We were encouraged by the distribution of oil revenues despite the absence of an agreement on the overall revenue-sharing law.

I don't know if the Senate knows it, but many people went from Alaska to talk about our basic concept in Alaska of our system of a general fund, a basic fund where we put aside 25 percent of all of our oil revenue. That is our security for the future. We tried to convince Iraq to do something like that, and I am pleased to say they are going to do something like that. But they have a different circumstance, of course, since they have so many differences between their provinces. But the concept of working on a national basis to provide for a distribution of oil revenues throughout the provinces is still proceeding.

We received an extensive briefing from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker on the impact of the recent military surge and the declining level of violence throughout the country. General Petraeus highlighted the success our soldiers and their Iraqi partners have had in taking control of many sanctuaries from al-Qaida in Iraq and disrupting extremist networks throughout the country. Since the surge of offensives began in June of last year, attacks and civilian deaths, we were told, have decreased by 60 percent. I believe that is progress.

Iraqi security forces are having a greater impact on the battlefield. In the last year, they have added over 100,000 new soldiers and police and increased their capabilities. Senator INOUYE and I met with some of the leaders of the Iraqi Army in Iraq and with heads of the police from some of the areas. I am confident they were moving as quickly to eliminate conflicts between their people, between the Sunnis and Shiites, and between the various tribes. Most important was the new role of tribal leaders in trying to bring about a peaceful situation within Iraq. In 2008, the Iraqis will add 30 additional battalions to compensate for our reduction of about one-quarter of our combat forces by the end of July. In areas of Iraq, the atmosphere resembles the spring of 2003, where many communities were feeling liberated. This time, they are feeling liberated from al-Qaida and the extremist elements that have come in after the defeat of Saddam Hussein.

In many provinces Iraqis are completely in charge. In some areas, in fact, there are no coalition forces there at all.

The rejection of al-Qaida and the military extremists has led to the rise of concerned local citizen groups, more than 75,000 strong, and comprised of both Sunni and Shia volunteers. These groups are helping to secure their communities, provide intelligence on the enemy and report improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, and weapons caches. You should have heard some of the stories we heard about how citizens are

coming forward to say where these caches are located and where the weapons are, because they have confidence in their own people, that they are going to be in charge of their own security. This move has saved the lives of countless Iraqi civilians and coalition soldiers.

We discussed the overall security situation throughout the country with LTG Ray Odierno, Commander of the Multinational Corps, and his key staff. This is a photo of the meeting we had with that staff. It was an interesting briefing.

Since our visit, LTG Odierno has redeployed to Fort Hood, where he has reassumed his responsibilities as the Commander of the 3rd Corps. He is a very capable individual who I believe will be assigned to more senior positions, and we will hear a lot from this officer in the future.

We flew to forward operating base Kalsu, south of Baghdad, where we met with the commander of the 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division, COL Michael Garrett, and his senior staff. This is a photo the Senator and I had taken with him. Colonel Garret impressed us with his leadership and insights into the complexities of his mission. This 3,600-soldier brigade is home-stationed at Fort Richardson, AK. That also gave us a good reason for visiting with them. We were impressed with what they are doing.

This 4/25th brigade was preparing to rotate back to Alaska. They served in Iraq for 15 months, from September 2006 to December 2007.

Two years ago, there was no 4th Brigade Combat Team, Airborne, in the 25th Infantry Division, or in Alaska. Colonel Garrett and the corps of his paratroopers grew it from a battalion to a robust airborne brigade, and they deployed to Iraq after it had been literally put together in Alaska.

The brigade was headquartered at forward operation base Kalsu, in Al-Hillah Province, but also worked in Babil, Karbala, and Najaf Provinces. I am not sure I like the way my helmet looks in this photo. Senator INOUYE took his off before the photo. It was an interesting meeting under a tent with Army soldiers deployed in the field.

Unfortunately, 53 of the 4/25th made the ultimate sacrifice while valiantly serving America in Iraq. We in Alaska will always remember them. I can tell you that along with all Alaskans we have expressed our love, admiration, and honor for their service and are doing our best to make sure their survivors are well cared for.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, Stryker, of the 25th Infantry Division also spent 15 months serving in and around Mosul. They returned home to Fort Wainwright, AK, at the end of 2006. By all accounts, they did a tremendous job providing security in that region of Iraq. They were led by COL Mike Shields, a very capable and talented leader.

We also met with senior Iraqi military and police officials from Al-Hillah Province. They agreed the security situation in this province is much improved, with the number of attacks significantly down. The mayor, army, and police leaders had a close working relationship with the Alaskan-based brigade.

Before departing Iraq, we asked to see a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle, an MRAP. I had a photograph taken of it as I left this vehicle. It carries 6 passengers and weighs 16,000 pounds. It is the smaller and lighter version of MRAP variants and is designed for urban operations. This is the new protection for our forces. It is a category 1 vehicle used by our soldiers and marines in Iraq for mounted patrols, reconnaissance, and direct interaction with the civilian population. This is protecting our forces from the threat of IEDs, and this has saved many lives since its deployment. To date, we have fielded 2,317 of these MRAP vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are in the process of adding 9,000 or more by the end of this year, which I hope will be the end of the war. Anyway, these vehicles are good news and this shows what our country can do in a short period of time. Those other military vehicles did not have the level of protection as MRAPs. This is a survivable vehicle. I think the Senate should be congratulated for moving rapidly to get the money up and get the program up. I congratulate Senators WARNER and LEVIN for their support in this regard.

We have worked together with the Appropriations Committee and Armed Services to make sure these vehicles were supported and delivered in the shortest time in history. They were originally flown directly to Iraq. Now that significant numbers are coming off the production line, they are now going over by ship. These are the most successful vehicles for urban warfare we have ever had. We need them there. I think they will be largely responsible for completing the operations we have to finish in Iraq.

I have taken a little more time than I thought I would. But the reason for my report is that my personal conclusion, from what I saw and heard, was that the surge has worked. There is still work to be done and still support we have to give these people in the field. This is no time to consider a withdrawal from Iraq under the conditions such as the Russians withdrew from Afghanistan. I urge those who have any thought of such a withdrawal, a mandated withdrawal, to look at the history of the Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan. It was one of the most costly in history in terms of the deaths of the Russian soldiers who were trying to get out of that country. They turned around and literally fled from the country under difficult circumstances, where they were ordered out by their political masters without regard to the safety of the people involved. I will not participate in such a withdrawal. If we withdraw, it must be because we have finished the job and the Iraqi military and police forces can take responsibility for their own security.

As Israel has done for so many years, I believe Iraq will come to be able to defend itself. We have to stay the course in order to do that. The people who were lost there deserve for us to finish the job.

47TH ANNIVERSARY OF PEACE CORPS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, this week we mark the 47th anniversary of the U.S. Peace Corps and I ask the Senate to recognize the men and women who represent the best of America and volunteer to serve those less fortunate around the world.

Since its inception in 1961, 190,000 volunteers have served in 139 countries. You may be aware our colleague Senator DODD served in the Dominican Republic in 1968.

My good friend and associate in law practice, Jack Roderick, took his family to India to serve as the Peace Corps regional director in 1967 and 1968. Jack tells me that, like many volunteers, he feels he got more out his experience than he could have ever given.

His two daughters were 11 and 13 at the time and they attended Indian schools and learned to speak Hindi. The experience changed their lives.

The 1,000 volunteers Jack worked with in India faced many health risks due to the difficult living conditions. But they were committed to the mission of the Peace Corps and worked with the people of India to improve the country's agricultural production.

Today, 36 Peace Corps volunteers from Alaska are working in countries around the world including Mongolia, Uganda, Ecuador, Romania and Cambodia. They work directly with the people of these countries and help improve education and develop small businesses. They work with small farmers to increase food production and teach environmental conservation practices. They fight malnutrition and help provide safe drinking water. They fight the spread of HIV/AIDS and assist people affected by this disease which is devastating many developing nations.

When these volunteers return home to Alaska they share their unique experiences and perspectives with their communities and help expand our understanding of places which for many of us are just a name on a map.

A member of my staff, Ray Sorensen, spent 2 years in Haiti with the Peace Corps. Since he returned he has enjoyed visiting elementary schools and sharing stories, photos and Haitian music with students. This type of cultural exchange provides students with an understanding not available from their textbooks.

The objective of the Peace Corps is to eventually work itself out of a job. We all hope for the day when there is no need to fight against poverty and disease and all nations enjoy the prosperity with which we are blessed. Until that time, we should support the men and women of our Peace Corps and the good work they do around the world.

I congratulate the Peace Corps on its 47th anniversary and wish it continued success.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business and to take such time as required for myself, Senators HAGEL, WARNER, and LAUTENBERG to discuss the reintroduction of S. 22, the GI bill legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. President, my first day in office in the Senate, I introduced legislation that we had worked on from the time of my election through the interim period, before I was sworn in as a Senator, that would address a true inequity in terms of how we are rewarding military service.

The legislation was designed to provide a level of educational benefits for those who have been serving since 9/11 that would be equal to the service they have given. The way that would be measured would be for us to do the best we could to shape legislation that pretty much mirrored the benefits that those who came back from World War II received.

I am very pleased today to be reintroducing this legislation with refinements that we have been able to gain through 14 months of discussions with all people who work in this area, and to also mention that we have new and very important lead cosponsorship as well. As of today, we will now have 35 sponsors in the Senate for this piece of legislation, plus we will have the full national support of the major veterans organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, and other veterans groups. I will also point out that the combined veterans organizations, when they made their proposals to the Veterans' Committee about what the veterans budget should look like—the so-called independent budget that is put together every year—included a policy proposal for legislation that has all of these pieces in it.

I am very pleased and excited at where we are right now on this piece of legislation. I am very gratified to have with us on the floor today Senator CHUCK HAGEL who, in October, became the lead cosponsor on the Republican side, and Senator JOHN WARNER, who has agreed to be a lead cosponsor, both of whom I have known for many years. I wish to say a little bit about that and also ask that they join me in discussing where we need to go on this.

I have known Senator CHUCK HAGEL for 30 years. We both came up into Government together, working on veterans issues. We are the only two ground combat veterans from Vietnam to be serving in the Senate. We have worked on many issues over the years and have worked together on, I think, some very important efforts last year in trying to bring some sense into the rotational cycles that have been ongoing with respect to the occupation of Iraq and the war in Afghanistan.

I first was able to serve under Senator JOHN WARNER when I was a 25-year-old marine, my last year in the Marine Corps, when he was Under Secretary of the Navy, and then as Secretary of the Navy. He was instrumental in helping me as I left the Marine Corps, moving on to other parts of my life. I was privileged to follow Senator WARNER—not only into the Marine Corps, but also into the position of Secretary of the Navy during the Reagan administration, and I am very proud to be serving with him as the junior Senator from Virginia.

I think that Senator HAGEL, Senator WARNER, Senator LAUTENBERG, who is a World War II veteran who benefited from the GI bill, are all an indication of the will and the heart of the people who know what it is like to step forward and have to serve their country, when it comes to trying to reach a proper reward for service, and to assist those who have stepped forward to serve our country into the most meaningful future that they can obtain. This bill does that. We have listened to the veterans groups. We have listened to other colleagues about the different pieces of legislation they have. We have incorporated a provision in here at the suggestion of Senator LINCOLN of Arkansas that is a very good provision that will assist those in the National Guard and Reserve to have a meaningful GI bill for their service.

So this is legislation that I believe is ready to go and, as I said, we are reintroducing it today with 35 sponsors. I am very hopeful that our body and the other body can pass this legislation this year. This is the kind of bill where time really matters because educational benefits pursuant to military service are a transitional benefit. They are designed to assist people when they readjust from military life back into civilian life. Those who have been serving since 9/11 have been leaving the military as their enlistment expires, and they need this type of benefit.

I am hopeful, again, that we can move this bill forward swiftly.

I yield to the Senator from Nebraska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague, Senator WEBB, for his generous comments and for his leadership in writing and initially introducing this legislation. I also thank my friend and colleague, Senator WARNER from Virginia. As has been noted by the junior Senator from Virginia, the senior Senator from Virginia has had many years of important experience. He has contributed many years of service in many capacities to this country. When you take the service of the two Senators from Virginia together, it is a remarkable story. I am privileged to join them, as well as over 30 of our colleagues, and a distinguished Senator in his own right and World War II veteran, Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG of New Jersey.

We all share similar experiences in our service to our country, but most of the veterans in the Senate, and I suspect in the House of Representatives, also share the common experience of using the GI bill which was enacted after World War II to educate a generation of Americans who changed the world, who transformed the world.

I put the GI bill in the same universe of importance as the original Homestead Act enacted in the early 1860s which truly transformed this country. I think the original GI bill did much the same.

What Senator WEBB is talking about, what Senator WARNER, Senator LAUTENBERG, and others are committed to is a relevant new GI bill that addresses the challenges of the 21st century. We in this country not only appreciate, but revere, the service of our military, and that is as it should be. These are selfless men and women who have committed themselves to a higher cause than any other cause, and that is the defense of their Nation, defense of their fellow Americans. They ask nothing in return. Each generation of Americans who has fought for this country, who has served in uniform has never expected anything in return because they have considered it a privilege to serve this country in uniform.

But one of the reasons the GI bill was first enacted after World War II was to reinvest in our country, to reinvest using the loyalty, commitment, and resources of Americans to even go further and do even more for this country and society in the world. Education does that. An important foundational element in the history of the country over the last 200 years, as any other, has been public education. It has been public education. It is the tradition of our country, not just to reward service, to acknowledge service, but be smart about that service and reinvest in our society. That is essentially what this is. This is reinvesting in our society. It is assuring that those who have given so much to our country have an opportunity to develop skill sets in education to compete in the most competitive world history has ever known, to go beyond expectations, go beyond what is possible. This is not just a payback or reward.

I wish to make a couple of general comments about the bill that I think not only are appropriate but need to be addressed. I have noted that there have been some who have questioned the need for this bill when we have a current GI bill which was authored by a friend of everyone in this body, a distinguished American who left us last year, the late chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee with whom Senator WEBB worked, Congressman Sonny Montgomery from Mississippi.

On a personal note, it is because of Congressman Montgomery I met my

wife who was working for Congressman Montgomery at the time.

In the early 1980s, he took the reality and the need of our time and the relevancy of this bill, the GI bill in law, and made it appropriate to what the circumstances were 25 years ago. We are in a different place in the world today. We are engaged in two wars. We have 190,000 troops in those two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have new pressures, new challenges, and new opportunities. So it is appropriate to readdress this issue that has played such an important role in educating our veterans and investing and reinvesting in this country and in society.

This does not displace or replace any other educational program. Today, the largest grant aid program the Federal Government sponsors is the Pell Grant Program, an important program. I believe most all of us on the floor of the Senate support that program. I surely do. It is a program based on financial need, and it is appropriate. It is one area in which I happen to believe the Federal Government can play a role, a meaningful role. It gives these Pell grant awardees some options.

Just as what we are addressing today, we need to ensure that these people who have sacrificed for this country are given the same kind of options that other programs in the past have allowed.

Senator LAUTENBERG will talk about that issue. Senator WARNER will talk about that issue. This program needs to be updated and upgraded.

I mention the cost issue because it is an appropriate issue at a time when we are running $400 billion deficits. But I remind everyone here, Mr. President, that we are spending approximately $15 billion a month on war—two wars. We are getting to nearly $1 trillion spent on two wars over the last 7 years. Surely we can find the resources necessary to upgrade and update the requirements for a 21st-century country as it relates to our veterans.

I want to also address one other issue that I have heard from some who say: Senator, if we do this, if we go forward with this program and modernize the GI bill, wouldn't it undermine our recruitment and retention efforts? That is an interesting question, again, a relevant question. You recognize the fact that, first, we have an all-voluntary service, so people have choices. We want the finest, brightest, most capable young men and women we can find, and we have been able to do that over the last 25 years—build the best trained, best educated, best led, best equipped, most motivated force in the history of man. But we are on the edge of ruining that force structure.

Why do I say that? The Chief of Staff appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee for the last 2 days. In order for the Army to continue to recruit enough manpower to fight in two wars, as well as the other obligations, we have had to define down the standards of the U.S. Army—waiving criminal records, waiving drug records, waiving high school diplomas, and high school equivalence in order to attract enough people.

In addition to that, we have put hundreds of millions of dollars of large incentive bonuses on the table, $40,000 at a time, for reenlistment and for signup bonuses, plus the promise of down payments for houses. So we are already in the marketplace for competing with young men and women to serve this country.

Isn't it far better to invest in education? Isn't it far better to give these young men and women more educational opportunities if they decide or when they decide to leave the service after they have served this country in an honorable way? Isn't that more important in many ways to recycle that commitment and loyalty and talent into a new investment in education that will serve these young men and women far longer than a $40,000 bonus? Far more.

I think just the opposite. I think it enhances recruitment. I think this enhances the quality of our service. I think this helps us get back to defining our standards up. No institution can long survive when it defines its standards down. There will be a consequence for that, and we are seeing that consequence today, as I think General Casey made very clear in his comments before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

In conclusion, I am very proud to be part of this effort. I am, like my colleagues, hopeful the Senate and the House and the administration will act on this bill this year. It is, as Senator WEBB noted, a timely, important, and critical issue for our country and our force structure.

I will continue to do everything I can to be part of that effort and work hard to that end.

Again, I very much appreciate the leadership of Senators WEBB, WARNER, LAUTENBERG, and others who have brought this bill forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I am hopeful to join in the debate. I see my colleague from New Jersey. Does he have a pressing matter? I can wait until he completes his remarks, if that will help him.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, this is what happens when we get on the floor of the Senate and longtime friends meet. I defer to the distinguished Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. I thank my colleague.

Mr. President, I have looked forward to this moment. This is a special day for me in many respects. But, first and foremost, what a privilege it is to stand on this floor with three magnificent combat veterans—my colleague and dear friend of 35 years, JIM WEBB; FRANK LAUTENBERG of New Jersey, and my good friend from Nebraska, CHUCK HAGEL—all of these three gentlemen are combat veterans. Two were awarded the Purple Heart. My military career was far more modest.

I would also like to thank the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, particularly its chairman and ranking member Senator AKAKA and Senator BURR for their leadership on behalf of our veterans. I look forward to working with them on this initiative.

And finally I just want to say thank you to all who have been working on this bill, particularly to JIM WEBB, who led the effort, drawing on his experience as a young marine officer in Vietnam; as Assistant Secretary of Defense, explicitly assigned to the affairs of the Reserve and Guard units; and then in a position that we both shared as Secretary of the Navy. All of that experience he draws on to bring forth this bill and to lead this effort. Your career in the Senate, I think, will be marked by many successes, but this will be one of the foundations of that success. I say to my colleague that you will always look back upon this accomplishment with a humble sense of pride knowing that you ''led the charge.''

I am very optimistic that we will prevail with this legislation. There may be challenges, but we will prevail. We will prevail because it is the right thing to do.

I also want to say thank you to my country that gave me an education, for my modest periods of service in World War II in the Navy and service in the Marines during the Korean war. It was not as valorous as the careers of the sponsors and cosponsors joining in this debate.

Mr. President, I am grateful to have been the recipient of two GI bills and I wouldn't be standing here today—it is as simple as that, had it not been for the GI bill. Three months after I was discharged from the Navy, my father died. He was a very wonderful, successful medical doctor. He had served in World War I in the trenches in France as a medical doctor, caring for the wounded. I mention that only because I am not sure I would have had the means within our family structure to go on and receive higher education without the GI bill.

The original GI Bill of Rights was enacted in 1944, and in successive Congresses they made changes to it. But the key to the bill that the two of us from World War II—Senator LAUTENBERG and myself—is that our group of veterans could go to any college or university of his choice, subject to academic or admission requirements. I want to repeat that. There wasn't a college or university in the United States to which they could not attend, for the GI bill covered the full tuition costs of all institutions of higher education. Today's GI bill, largely through the efforts of Sonny Montgomery, a dear friend whom we all value, simply does not have the financial provisions to enable young men and women of this generation to go to any campus they desire. There are low caps on the

amount of tuition the current GI bill will cover. And so we have carefully structured in this bill the opportunity for institutions of higher learning to step up and share in this program.

I would like to briefly outline the sharing provision. Under this legislation, the full basic educational benefit will allow GIs who have honorably served to have the full cost of tuition covered at any public college or university in their home State of residence. Veterans will also be given a monthly stipend tied to the Department of Defense's geographic rate for housing, and a small stipend for books. For veterans who choose to attend a private college or university—or an out-of-State public college or university—admittedly, this basic benefit might not cover the full costs of tuition. Thus, this bill will provide an educational enhancement for veterans who complete at least 36 months of honorable active duty service. The Federal Government will match—dollar for dollar—any additional financial contributions private and public colleges and universities voluntarily contribute toward their respective tuition costs. We believe that many institutions of higher learning will participate in this concept, thus vastly increasing the educational choices for veterans, commensurate with the choices that World War II veterans received.

Mr. President, we talk a lot about academic freedom. It is one of the most cherished things we have in this country. It is a part of the fundamental system of higher education. With that academic freedom, from campuses all across this country, have come great ideas, great inspiration, and solutions which have helped this Nation structure itself as the strongest and most powerful in the world today. But that academic freedom comes at a price. And much of that price is borne by the young men and women today of the all-volunteer force who go forward, raise their right hand, and assume all the risks associated with military service and preserving our freedom.

Educators should stop to think about that. It is important that institutions of higher learning, when possible, have as a part of a student body, young men and women who have proudly worn the uniform of this generation. And this bill puts forward a financial structure for the sharing of tuition costs. I was privileged to go to two schools in my State: Washington and Lee University and the University of Virginia. One a private institution, the other a public institution. But most of the private institutions today, fortunately because of their extraordinary standing and achievements, have tuition rates which cannot be met by a GI completing honorable service and relying on the current GI bill tuition caps.

This bill enables a voluntary, I repeat voluntary, cost sharing between the U.S. Government and the academic institution. I think we owe no less to the preservation of academic freedom at these schools, that freedom being guarded by the young men and women who seek admission, and who have honorably served this Nation. Therefore, if a GI has the requisite academic credentials for admission—we are not asking that any special exception or deviation should be done by these schools.

These valiant men and women deserve nothing less than our full measure of support and unending gratitude for their service and sacrifice. A GI bill for the 21st century, to provide educational benefits for uniformed personnel who are sacrificing so much to preserve our freedom, is the least we can do.

So in closing, Mr. President, I say thank you. I have so much, individually, to be thankful for. Simply stated, I would not be a U.S. Senator today had it not been for the GI bill of World War II and Korea. I want the same opportunity for the current and future generations of ''fighters for our freedom.''

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, first, I wish to say how proud I am to be on the floor with my three colleagues who are sponsoring this, with Senator WEBB as the lead sponsor on this very important legislation. Senator WARNER and I kind of outrank the others in terms of when it is that we served. I point out that we have two commissioned officers here and we have two noncommissioned officers. Senator HAGEL, I think, outranked me. I was a corporal.

I am so pleased to be here with my colleagues. I got an undeserved credit because it was said I was a combat veteran. Well, I served in the combat theater, and my job was to climb telephone poles while the bombing was going on in Belgium. I would not say there were the same dangers as someone on the line, but people got hurt and worse doing what I was doing. But I want to clear the record because I didn't carry a rifle. I carried a carbine, which is a lot smaller weapon, and, fortunately, I didn't have a chance to fire it. But it wasn't fired at me either.

I look at what we are doing here and think about what it means to those who are serving and what it meant to me in my life. My parents were brought to America when they were infants, but they were people who would be classified as blue-collar people—no education but wanted to work hard. Honesty was constantly preached: Be mindful of your responsibility to others, do whatever you can, work as hard as you can.

When I got out of high school, I got a job loading milk trucks. Because going to war was imminent, I enlisted when I was 18. I served with 16 million other people in uniform at that time.

We used to talk about college around the dinner table, when we had dinner together, and my parents would say you have to get an education. My father took me into the mill he worked in when I was 12 years old. He said: I want you to see what it is like. It was a textile factory in Paterson, NJ, an industrial city. As we walked in the building, he said: Do you hear the noise? The whole building would vibrate. And I said: Yes, Dad. And he took me up to the machine he operated. It was a big old machine with a wheel that converted fibers into fabric. He said: You see how dirty it is here? Yes, Dad. He said: Do you see how dark it is? Yes, Dad. And he took my hand and he rubbed it across the silk fibers he was working on, and it left a film. He said: You see that? That is bad for you.

My father, when he did that with me, was 37 years old. Six years later, he was dead. Cancer that developed occupationally. My grandfather worked in the same place. And not unlike those who worked in the coal mine or some other place, my grandfather was 56 when he died.

So for me, being in the military was a responsibility that I willingly took on. My friends, my neighbors, we all did it. The future was not particularly bright. But then, when all of that was finished, I had a chance to go to a university. And Senator WARNER, with his usual grace, he said that you could go to any school you wanted. I don't know that it wasn't just the recognition that we needed financial help, but I think there might have been a little give also on the standards that you had to meet. I don't know that in today's world we would have fared quite as well. I was lucky enough to go to Columbia University. They welcomed me. And I stood there in amazement when I graduated because none other than GEN Dwight Eisenhower handed me my diploma. He was then the President of Columbia University. I was a little upset that he didn't recognize me. We had both served in Europe. I didn't understand why he didn't say: Hello, Frank.

It was exciting to be in a university—exciting to know that somehow or other I was not only going to be able to help myself, I was going to be able to help my widowed mother and my kid sister and be something different than still loading milk trucks in Clifton, NJ. I was excited because not only did I learn subjects—statistics and finance and the kinds of things one learns at business school, in particular—but also I learned there was a different way of life; that there was something you could do besides standing with my folks when they had to buy a store because the mills closed. I learned you didn't have to live in cramped quarters and that maybe there was something else out there you could do.

So when I look at what we are talking about today, I am particularly motivated to see that with the leadership of Senator WEBB and with the help of the three of us, that we get this legislation through. We know when there is a debate here and it gets to veterans'

support, usually that quiets the troubled waters and we talk to one another, almost civilly at times, and we gather support from one another and are encouraged. We might feel differently about which programs ought to get more funding, but we are all concerned about the medical care, the post-service conditions that come up like post-traumatic stress disorder. And when we read stories about service people who get so distraught that they destroy their lives, that is often a sign of the kind of stress and the kind of trauma that people have been left with after they serve. So when we look at this legislation's opportunity, it is consistent with our need to show our respect and gratitude to the people who serve and who served in a war that is far longer and more vicious than anyone ever dreamed it might be.

Because in previous wars, and the war that Senator WARNER and I served in, it was not the case that your enemy wanted to give their life and thusly would not be frightened off by anything you do. Their principle was to destroy the enemy. In the current war, the enemy is willing to destroy itself to destroy us. So the kind of violence that has been exhibited in this war is different than in any other war. Vietnam was the place where it was learned that people would die for a cause, but it was not like this war where people want to die. So conditions are different.

So here it is, very simply put: There are scholarship assistance programs like the Montgomery bill which provides 38,000 dollars' worth of support for education, for the cost of maintaining one's self, as well as room and board. But the average cost of a public education today is $51,000.

Well, it still is significant when someone graduates college with huge debt, and typically they are relatively young, wanting to start a family, wanting to get going in life. So it is simple math. Many of our veterans just cannot make up the difference and thusly are denied a college education. So this has real consequences.

People with a college degree earn nearly double the salary of those who do not have one. We have got to close the gap between the current cost of college and the amount that the GI bill pays for. Remember, America built something that was called and supported as the ''greatest generation.'' Now, why, with all the technology, with all of the richness this country has, with all of the talent this country has, can we not create another ''greatest generation''? We should move on that. There is only one way to get there, and that is to provide the ladder up to that success. You have got to take the first step. The first step is to make sure you get as much education as your mind and your body and your will can handle.

So when we look at what we owe to or can do for these veterans, to me, this is the ideal thing. I would hope that whatever party, however high the seniority is, that we all get together on this one and say: Veterans, we appreciate those of you who served, who left your families, in service. I was at Fort Dix, a major base in the State of New Jersey, for people who were going to deploy or be deployed back in Iraq. Many of them have served months already. These were not people who were living on a base where there was a culture to accompany their families, where there was a clinic, where there were schools, where there were libraries. They were in towns, they were paying their expenses, they have mortgages to deal with.

This is a time to say: We owe you something. We owe you something big. We are going to make it up to you. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation. Join us in giving something back to our veterans that really stands out, that shows a lasting bit of gratitude for the valiant service that all of them have put in to serve their country.

I congratulate my colleagues for their effort, and Senator WEBB for his leadership. And I hope we will see success.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES
PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS JEFFREY L. WIENER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to speak for a son of Kentucky who journeyed to Iraq to save the lives of his fighting brethren, only to tragically lose his own. On May 7, 2005, PO3 Jeffrey L. Wiener of Louisville, KY, died in combat operations near a hospital in western Iraq. The hospital corpsman was 32 years old.

''My son was a hero and died doing what he loved, helping people no matter who they were,'' says Jeffrey's mother, Diana Wiener. An emergency medical technician in civilian life, Petty Officer Third Class Wiener dedicated himself to healing others.

For his bravery in uniform, Petty Officer Third Class Wiener received numerous medals and awards, including the Purple Heart and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

Jeffrey moved to Kentucky later in life, after growing up in Lynbrook, NY. He settled on his life's calling at an early age and began volunteering with the local fire department at 13.

Always helpful, Jeffrey eagerly assisted everyone at the firehouse with any task. What little free time he had left when not volunteering went to the school wrestling team. Jeffrey graduated from Lynbrook High School.

As an adult, Jeffrey worked in New York's Nassau County EMS and served as captain of a volunteer fire department. Jeffrey was committed to his profession as a paramedic and constantly pursued the latest training activities.

Jeffrey eventually settled in Louisville, moving to help his mother raise his younger brother David. He got a job with Jefferson County EMS and made an immediate impact on his new friends and coworkers.

Jeffrey ''was always real gung-ho, straightforward, no beating around the bush,'' says John Cooney, a Louisville paramedic who partnered with Jeffrey. ''That was his demeanor.''

Jeffrey proved his value in short order when he suggested to his supervisor that the Louisville paramedics use something called a Reeves stretcher, which is more maneuverable in tight quarters than the standard carrying board. Jeffrey was familiar with it from his time in New York.

Jeffrey's supervisor agreed and put him in charge of training everyone on the new device. Major Rockey Johnson, Jeffrey's supervisor, told family and friends gathered at a memorial service for Jeffrey that to this day the Louisville paramedics call the device ''the Wiener board.''

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Jeffrey was moved to serve his country in uniform, and joined the U.S. Navy Reserve in 2002. He then underwent special training to become a hospital corpsman.

The Navy hospital corpsman is a respected and revered position in our Armed Forces, and the most decorated rating in the U.S. Navy. Hospital corpsmen are often attached to Marine units and are trained to handle emergency medical procedures near the front lines of battle. For the man who had been eager to heal since age 13, it was the perfect mission.

Jeffrey was assigned to the II Marine Expeditionary Force and deployed to Iraq. ''He took care of his troops,'' says LT John Rudd, a Navy chaplain who served with Jeffrey.

Jeffrey made friends with his fellow sailors as easily as he had with coworkers in Louisville or New York. One fellow corpsman, who hailed from Lexington, KY, knew Jeffrey but couldn't remember his name. Jeffrey told him to call him ''Louie,'' because he was from Louisville.

Hospital corpsmen are often affectionately called ''Doc'' by the Marines they serve alongside, and Jeffrey soon earned the nickname ''Doc Wiener.''

As much as Jeffrey relished the opportunity to serve, he dearly missed his family. Jeffrey married his high school sweetheart, Maria, in 1998, and together they raised two beautiful daughters, Mikayla and Theadora.

Jeffrey's older brother Joshua also served in Iraq and was there when Jeffrey arrived. Today, Joshua is in the Marine Forces Reserve and a fireman in New York City.

Jeffrey's younger brother David is also a marine and currently on his second deployment.

Jeffrey was looking forward to what life would hold for him and Maria when he left active service. He was considering continuing his EMS work, or going to the Department of Homeland Security. And many in his family believe his true calling was to become a doctor.

Jeffrey was buried in Calverton National Cemetery in Calverton, NY, on

May 16, 2005. Many friends from the Navy and the fire departments and EMS departments he had worked in over the years attended. Jeffrey was posthumously promoted to the rating of Hospital Corpsman Second Class.

I know I speak for all of my colleagues when I say our prayers go to the Wiener family for their terrible loss. We are thinking today of his wife Maria; his daughters Mikayla and Theadora; his mother Diana; his father Wayne; his brothers Joshua and David; his sisters Wendi, Jessica, and Delayne; the Barberio family; and many other beloved family members and dear friends.

''Jeffrey's desire to serve in the military was prompted by his desire to be a part of bringing peace,'' says his mother, Diana.

Mr. President, no one can doubt Jeffrey Wiener's compassion after he chose to dedicate himself from an early age to relieving the suffering of others.

And no one can doubt his bravery after he donned his uniform and volunteered to tend to our fighting forces in Iraq.

This Senate is humbled by PO3 Jeffrey L. Wiener's service and sacrifice. His family and friends are blessed for knowing him in life. And his State and Nation are stronger for his efforts in freedom's cause.

LOUISVILLE SCULPTOR ED HAMILTON

For more than 30 years, Americans have set aside one month every year to remember in a special way the contributions of African Americans to our national life. Black History Month has its roots in an old February tradition of celebrating the life and work of Frederick Douglass, the great writer and abolitionist. But its expansion over the years has given us an opportunity to recall the many other Black men and women whose personalities enliven our Nation's history but whose stories were often overlooked by those who recorded it.

Today, Black History Month is also an occasion to draw attention to outstanding African Americans of our own day—people like Ed Hamilton, one of America's great artists I and one of Kentucky's favorite sons.

As a boy growing up on Walnut Street in Louisville, Ed learned the value of hard work and the importance of family from his Dad, a businessman and a World War I vet. And from his Mom, he learned to think big. ''You can do anything,'' she always said. And so, roller-skating around the tight-knit neighborhood around the Hamilton family home at Walnut and 7th, Ed would learn to dream.

It is one of the ironies of history that so many great artists and thinkers barely ever left their hometowns. The whole world opened up to Shakespeare in a tiny town in England. Rembrandt saw all of history on the faces of merchants in Amsterdam. The Divine Comedy was written in exile. And for Ed Hamilton, Louisville has always been enough.

Ed and his family have lived in the same house on 43rd Street for decades. And all of his sculptures—from the Amistad memorial in New Haven to the African American Civil War Memorial monument here in Washington—were brought to life in the same Shelby Street studio. ''Louisville has been my lifeblood,'' he says.

Ed's memories of post-war Louisville are vivid—right down to the sharp smell of the stockyards and the sweet smell of hops that floated from the breweries. He remembers spending too much time at the Lyric Theater—and being fascinated as a young boy by a bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln at the public library on 4th and York. It was the seed of his life's calling. Next year, more than half a century after Ed gazed at that bronze statue of Lincoln outside the public library, Kentucky will celebrate the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth with a new statue of Lincoln, this one by Ed, at Waterfront Park in Louisville.

Ed's life didn't always follow a straight path. As a kid, his mom wanted him to be a doctor. But a teacher at Parkland Middle School saw his talent as an artist and decided she wasn't going to let him waste it. So she called his Mom at home. ''I think Ed's got something,'' she said, ''and I want to help him develop it.''

At Shawnee High School, other teachers did the same. Ed developed a love for sculpture—and for a pretty girl named Bernadette—during his time at the Art Center School. They got married. And for the last 40 years, Bernadette has been his confidante and special muse.

Early on in their marriage, Ed taught ceramics and sculpture at Iroquois High School. He enjoyed the work. It was a stable job. But everything changed after a chance encounter in 1973. That's when Ed met Barney Bright, the only man in Louisville who actually earned a living as a sculptor. ''Barney invited me into his studio,'' Ed later recalled, ''and my entire life changed.''

Channeling the entrepreneurial spirit of his parents, Ed decided to set out on his own. And after a few years of working on abstract pieces and some impressive but minor liturgical art, the big breakthrough came. It was a commission for a bust of Booker T. Washington at Hampton University in Virginia. Ed always told Bernadette they didn't need to move to a big city for his work. If he was good enough, he said, they would come to him. Now they were.

When the Hampton commission came, in the early 1980s, Ed had never been on a plane before. So when it came time to visit the school, he took a Greyhound bus. It stopped in every town and hamlet for 600 miles. When they told him he had the job, he called Bernadette to tell her the good news and to tell her he was coming home in a plane.

Other important commissions followed: a statue of Joe Louis in Detroit; the Amistad Memorial in New Haven; York, the slave who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their western expedition, in Louisville; and then, the Spirit of Freedom monument in Washington, an epic work that teaches thousands of Americans each year about the vital role the slaves played in the Union victory in the Civil War.

The movie ''Glory'' focused on a single regiment of Black soldiers. The Spirit of Freedom honors all 200,000 of them, including nearly 24,000 from Kentucky alone. This fighting force of former slaves made up about 10 percent of the Union Army. Twenty percent of these brave soldiers and sailors died in battle.

The Spirit of Freedom was 6 years in the making. Ed says he used to dream about it in his sleep. The final product features 3 soldiers and a sailor on one side. On the other side are the grandparents and parents of 3 children, one of whom is on his way to battle. Another child is an infant.

The message of the statue is clear: When the war began, everyone in the family it depicts was a slave. When the war ended, they were free. Some had lived their entire lives in bondage, but their children would not. Black men had helped secure a life of freedom for themselves, their families, and future generations and helped unite a country.

The Spirit of Freedom is a tribute to the soldiers who fought. It's also a special gift to their descendents. One woman, who came from Seattle to see it, sent a letter to the museum's director when she got back home. Here's what she wrote: ''I don't know what I expected when I came to see the memorial, but when I came up out of the escalator and this statue rose in front of me my eyes were filled with tears.''

Ed has two big binders of letters just like these at home. This one, from a woman in Louisville, is typical: ''Dear Ed: How wonderful for you to make history come alive for generations to come. Now you are making history yourself as a sculptor and an African American. It is all wonderfully earned and deserved.''

Ed's gotten a lot of awards. In 1996, he was given the Governor's Artists Award in the Arts. In 2000, he was made an honorary doctor of Humane Letters at Spalding University. In 2001, he was inducted into the Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians. In 2004, he was made an honorary doctor of arts at Western Kentucky University.

But he wears his fame lightly. Locals are surprised to see him walking down the aisles at Kroger. And he always answers his own phone. ''I don't believe my own press,'' he says. ''This is all fleeting.''

Speaking once about the Spirit of Freedom statue, Ed called it an ''honor'' for him to pay tribute to the thousands of Black men who gave their lives in the service of freedom but who were not allowed to march in the victory parades after the war was over.

In this Black History Month, it is an honor for me to pay tribute to Ed Hamilton on behalf of all Kentuckians and on behalf of the many thousands of people across the country who have been touched by his special gift.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes and that following my remarks, the Senator from South Dakota be recognized to speak as in morning business for 20 minutes, and following him, the Senator from Washington be recognized for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have a brief statement I want to make involving a police officer who was killed. I will come back and maybe you could allow me a couple minutes interspersed with all of this.

Mr. DODD. I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for 15 minutes after the Senator from Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Missouri.

CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, I rise to speak briefly about patriotism and common sense. Every once in a while you open the morning paper and you go, huh? I had one of those moments this morning. In our Constitution, there are certain legal requirements to run for President of the United States. One of those is to be a natural born citizen. The article in the morning paper I read raised legal questions about the definition of ''natural born citizen.''

Actually, it talked about an ambiguity that could be interpreted in a way that would mean a child of someone in the Active military, stationed somewhere around the world, could have a baby, and that baby could never be President of the United States. In fact, Senator MCCAIN was born in the Panama Canal Zone while his father was Active-Duty military in the Navy stationed in the Panama Canal Zone.

Clearly, that is a notion that defies common sense and certainly offends all of our patriotism. I can envision someone actually being misguided and trying to bring some kind of legal action to determine whether Senator MCCAIN should run for President. That would be a waste of public time and resources. We should quickly and without fanfare fix this ambiguity and make it clear that any child of anyone serving in the Active military should, in fact, be qualified to run for President.

I will offer legislation I am confident everyone can agree on. How refreshing that notion is. It very simply defines ''natural born citizen'' to include any child born to a member of our military regardless of where in the world they may be serving. In America, so many parents say to their young children: If you work hard and play by the rules, in America someday you could be President.

Our brave and respected military should never have to spend a minute worrying whether that saying is true for their child. I hope we can quickly, by unanimous consent, pass this into law so there is no question that those children of the men and women who give it all for us can someday grow up to lead this great Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

MASTER SERGEANT WOODROW WILSON ''WOODY'' KEEBLE

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I rise to honor MSG Woodrow Wilson ''Woody'' Keeble for earning the Medal of Honor for his heroic service to our country in World War II and the Korean war. Although President Bush won't present the medal to Master Sergeant Keeble's family until next Monday, this is indeed an historic event as he is the first member of the Great Sioux Nation to be awarded this honor.

Master Sergeant Keeble went beyond the call of duty not for a medal, but for the mission he believed in and the country he loved. His legacy is a great source of pride for his family, his fellow South Dakota Sioux, and all Americans. The example he set for the just cause of defending freedom and democracy is truly heroic.

Master Sergeant Keeble was born in Waubay, SD, in 1917 to parents from the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux tribe. Master Sergeant Keeble's mother died at a young age, forcing his father to enroll him in the Wahpeton Indian School so he could get an education and three meals a day.

After graduating, Master Sergeant Keeble worked at the school and became well known for his baseball pitching, a skill that would serve him well in combat. In fact, the Chicago White Sox were actively recruiting him to play professional baseball when he was called into action in World War II.

After basic training, Master Sergeant Keeble served with ''I'' Company of North Dakota's 164th Infantry Regiment. He trained in Louisiana and was soon deployed to Australia to prepare for operations in the Pacific Theater. There, Master Sergeant Keeble's regiment was assigned to the 23rd Infantry Division, better known as the Americal Division.

On October 13, 1942, Master Sergeant Keeble landed on Guadalcanal in support of the First Marine Division, which had suffered heavy losses from the relentless Japanese forces. This was the first offensive operation the U.S. Army had conducted against the enemy in any theater of World War II.

Fighting alongside Marines, Master Sergeant Keeble gained valuable experience in jungle warfare that would later prove valuable in future operations.

The campaign on Guadalcanal saw some of the most brutal combat of the war. Japanese troops adopted the ''banzai charge'' tactic of attacking in human waves and hand-to-hand combat would sometimes last through the night. During this operation, Master Sergeant Keeble developed expert control of his Browning automatic rifle. He also earned a reputation for bravery as one of the best fighters on the island because his pitching skills came in handy as he used his incredibly strong arm to effectively throw grenades into enemy bunkers. James Fenelon, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who fought beside Master Sergeant Keeble once said, ''The safest place to be was right next to Woody. I don't know how many rounds he carried, but he had bandoliers on each shoulder. His gun just never stopped—no matter where you were, there were Japanese. He was unbelievable.''

Master Sergeant Keeble was awarded his first Bronze Star and Purple Heart at Guadalcanal for his meritorious actions in ground operations against the Japanese. His division fought so valiantly that they received a Navy Presidential Unit Citation for their support of the Marines. After Japan surrendered, the 164th occupied the Yokohama region of Japan.

After the war, Master Sergeant Keeble returned to Wahpeton and resumed work at the Wahpeton Indian School. He married Nattie Abigail Owen-Robertson on November 14, 1947, and settled down to start a family.

However, Master Sergeant Keeble's rest would not be a long one as the 164th was reactivated in 1951 to serve in the Korean war. After training at Camp Rucker, Alabama, several of Master Sergeant Keeble's fellow sergeants were to be selected for deployment to the front lines in Korea. After agreeing to draw straws to decide who would take this unwanted duty, Master Sergeant Keeble volunteered to take a short straw saying, ''Somebody has to teach these kids how to fight.''

The leadership and bravery Master Sergeant Keeble displayed in volunteering continued through his time in Korea. He was assigned to George Company, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. His strong character, robust leadership, and jungle combat experience brought him several quick promotions to the level of Master Sergeant. The Regimental leadership saw his potential, and placed him in charge of the first platoon.

On October 15, 1951, in a particularly bloody battle near Kumsong, North Korea, all of the officers of G Company were either wounded or killed in combat. Master Sergeant Keeble was among the wounded, but demanded he be released after treatment and volunteered to lead the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoons in assaults against the enemy.

On October 17, Master Sergeant Keeble was again wounded, and again returned to battle after being treated. His actions on the following day, October 18, earned him the Silver Star for continuing to lead his men after being

hit by grenade shrapnel. During this battle, Master Sergeant Keeble suffered two bullet wounds to his left arm, a grenade blast near his face that nearly removed his nose, and a badly twisted knee. On October 19, doctors removed 83 pieces of shrapnel from Master Sergeant Keeble's wounds.

The following day, October 20, 1951, would prove to be Master Sergeant Keeble's most heroic. After insisting he be allowed back to combat, Master Sergeant Keeble cemented his place in history. While leading the 1st Platoon up a steep hill during this battle, he saw that machine gun fire from three enemy emplacements had pinned down the entire 2nd Platoon on the same hill. The steep, rocky terrain was of tactical importance and Master Sergeant Keeble took it upon himself to ensure the operation carried on.

Master Sergeant Keeble crawled ahead to the 2nd Platoon. He then continued to advance on the enemy by crawling forward on his own. Although the enemy began to train all of its fire on Master Sergeant Keeble, he continued to hug the ground and advance until he was close to the emplacements. He then activated a grenade and successfully destroyed one of the enemy positions. Continuing his assault, Master Sergeant Keeble moved towards the remaining two machine gun posts and single handedly destroyed both of them with grenades. After removing the last position, he was stunned with an enemy concussion grenade, but pressed on after he recovered. Master Sergeant Keeble then resumed his advance and neutralized the remaining enemy personnel with his rifle.

In all, Master Sergeant Keeble eliminated nine machine gunners and seven riflemen. His heroic determination to press on and endure enemy fire inspired his fellow servicemen to rally and continue advancing on the enemy. By the end of the campaign, Master Sergeant Keeble had received five separate wounds to his chest, both arms, and both legs. Despite all of these injuries, Master Sergeant Keeble only received one Purple Heart, with the Oak Leaf Cluster, bringing his total to two. He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Bronze Star First Oak Leaf Cluster.

Although he has been recommended twice for the Medal of Honor, it was never granted. That is why I rise today and honor Master Sergeant Keeble for finally being recognized for his truly remarkable heroism and valor. While he died in 1982 in part due to complications resulting from his war injuries, I am sure he would be proud to know that he has finally been given this honor he earned long ago.

Master Sergeant Keeble stood proudly for his country, his tribe and his family. He was strong, humble, compassionate, and committed to defending freedom. His actions were extraordinary and his bravery overcame the chaos that surrounded him. Master Sergeant Keeble once said, ''There were terrible moments that encompassed a lifetime, an endlessness, when terror was so strong in me, that I could feel idiocy replace reason. Yet, I have never left my position, nor have I shirked hazardous duty. Fear did not make a coward out of me.''

I am proud that next Monday, President Bush will be presenting this honor posthumously to Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson ''Woody'' Keeble. His bravery is undoubtedly deserving of the Medal of Honor he has finally been awarded after a 55-year wait. The legacy he has left is a source of pride for his family, the Great Sioux Nation, and the country he nobly served.

Madam President, I would like to, if I might, shift gears and speak for a moment to some of the debate that has been going on on the Senate floor this week dealing with, primarily, the resolution that has been offered by the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. FEINGOLD, dealing with the withdrawal from Iraq and also the more recent resolution which has been the subject of debate here today on the Senate floor. But I think it is important that we also, as we debate these issues, acknowledge the good work that has been done by our troops.

Make no mistake about it, we are making progress in Iraq. The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, GEN Michael Maples, who was this week here in Washington and testifying in front of the Armed Services Committee, commented that violence across Iraq has declined to its lowest level since April 2005 and violence against coalition troops is at the lowest level since March of 2004. Things are, indeed, trending in the right direction, especially compared to a year ago.

Although these trends are certainly reversible, the fact remains that the security situation in Iraq has improved significantly. The surge has and is working. The surge has worked despite relentless efforts to undermine it by several Members on the other side of the aisle.

At one point last year, we had people saying the surge had not accomplished anything. We heard a Democrat on the floor of the Senate saying that General Petraeus, our commander in Iraq who has so brilliantly led the surge, had been ''made the de facto spokesman for what many of us believe to be a failed policy'' and that ''the reports you provide to us really require the willing suspension of disbelief.'' Thankfully, they were wrong—utterly wrong. Nevertheless, the other side is continuing their wrongheaded approach by offering legislation again this week that would undo all of the progress our troops have made in Iraq. Once again, the extreme left in this country has demanded a vote on cutting off funds for our troops and near immediate withdrawal from Iraq. The leadership on the other side continues to make obligatory gestures to satisfy that extreme leftwing base.

The Senate voted four times last year on versions of this bill that we debated earlier this week to cut off funds for the troops in Iraq, and on four separate occasions the Senate rejected it. The legislation was defeated by overwhelming bipartisan margins. It never received more than 29 votes. Yet again this week, we went through the exercise of having yet another debate on this issue.

I think it was about a year ago this week, actually, we had a rare Saturday session where Members were called back in to make votes on an Iraq withdrawal resolution, again designed to score political points to undermine progress in Iraq rather than to get anything else done.

I think it is important to note—as we think about how we best combat the terrorist threat we face in this country and how we assist those young men and women who are carrying that fight overseas for us—we find today the House of Representatives has adjourned for the week after having acted on, I think, the naming of five post offices, when the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act has still yet to be voted on in the House of Representatives.

The Senate, before we took off for our last recess, voted by a margin of 68 to 29 to pass the terrorist surveillance bill through the Senate. It had broad bipartisan support in the Senate. If it had been taken up on the floor of the House, it would have passed there with broad bipartisan support as well. Yet we have the House today adjourning to go home, having acted on five resolutions to name post offices, without addressing what is one of the most important issues we all need to deal with here; that is, making sure our intelligence community and our law enforcement community and our men and women in uniform have the tools at their disposal to do the job we asked them to do.

It is critical that the intelligence community have that legislation passed so we can close gaps in our intelligence collection. We need that to get a better understanding of international al-Qaida networks and to gain insight into future terrorist plans and to disrupt potential terrorist attacks.

So I would hope cooler heads will prevail around here, that Congress will do the right thing for the protection of the American people, the right thing to aid those who are diligently working day in and day out—those in our intelligence community, those in our law enforcement community, those men and women in uniform who are fighting to keep this country safe—that they have the tools at their disposal to carry out the important responsibility we have given them to protect Americans. Acting on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and giving our intelligence community, under this terrorist surveillance bill, the authorities it needs to intercept communications that are being conducted by terrorists around the world would be an

important place to start. Right now, we have a gap in that intelligence collection because the House has failed to act on this very important piece of legislation. It is irresponsible.

It is important that we put the politics of this matter aside and we deal with the important issues that will keep America safe and ensure future generations of Americans are not subject to terrorist attacks. So I hope my colleagues will get the message, will come back into session, and take care of business, which is to get this important legislation passed, and act with the Senate in a broad bipartisan way to put a bill on the President's desk that he can sign into law that will make sure our intelligence community has the resources and the tools they need.

Madam President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have been talking often to my distinguished Republican colleague.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 3221

Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that at 4:45 p.m. today, the motion to proceed to S. 2634 be withdrawn, and the time until then be equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the leaders controlling the 20 minutes prior to the vote and the majority leader controlling the final 10 minutes; that at 4:45 p.m. the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. I thank the Chair.

Reserving the right to object, Madam President, I would ask the majority leader if he would modify his consent request that if cloture is invoked on the motion to proceed and the Senate does indeed proceed to the bill, there then be up to five amendments per side related to housing and economic growth.

Mr. REID. Five amendments per side?

Mr. McCONNELL. Related to housing and economic growth.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am anxious to try to work something out. We have Republicans who have indicated to me they have amendments to offer. I have Democrats who have come to me and actually given me the language of amendments they want to offer. So it is not as if Republicans are the only ones who want to offer amendments to the housing stimulus package.

So the answer to the question is yes, but I just cannot give carte blanche. I will be as fair and reasonable as I can be. That is pretty wide. It does not require germaneness. It does not require relevancy. All it requires is it be related to housing and something dealing with the economy. If cloture is invoked on this matter, I want to legislate. I think this bill, which I think is so essential to the American people, would be a much better piece of legislation if it were bipartisan in nature. So I don't know if that gives the Republicans enough comfort, but I will try to be fair. I want to try to work this out. I think the number of five is fine. They suggested three. I think five is fine. I am not going to be trying to micromanage what they do, but I think it is something that, in fairness, the Republican leader would want to see what amendments were going to be offered and he would have the ability to say no to that. I think I should have—I have an obligation, a right, to look at what they do.

I will repeat: I can't do any more than say I will try to be as fair as humanly possible. I acknowledge the legislation has some controversy, and that being the case, there should be amendments allowed on it and I will do my best.

Mr. McCONNELL. Consequently, I gather the majority leader is objecting to my request that he modify his consent.

Mr. REID. Yes. I think it was kind of a weak objection to his modification, but it is one.

While the distinguished Republican leader is on the floor, I ask that my request be modified for the vote to occur at 4:55.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to revise the previous consent order for the speakers on our side to be 5 minutes for the Senator from Washington, 5 minutes for the Senator from New York, 5 minutes for the Senator from North Dakota, and 5 minutes for the Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask to have the vote at 4:56, because I have a brief statement. A police officer was killed in Nevada, if I could make a brief statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO TROOPER KARA KELLY-BORGOGNONE

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to honor Nevada State Trooper Kara Kelly-Borgognone.

On Monday night, she was killed responding to a terribly difficult assignment, where there was a suspected bomb at a gas station in Spanish Springs, NV, which is a suburb of Reno-Sparks. While en route to the scene, her patrol car was struck by a driver headed in the wrong direction.

Trooper Borgognone was rushed to Renown Regional Medical Center in critical condition. She succumbed to her injuries and died.

Trooper Kelly-Borgognone gave her life protecting the people of Nevada, just as she did every day. Even in passing, she saved more lives by donating her organs.

In the final hours of her life, her brothers and sisters and the Nevada Highway Patrol stood guard by her side. They cared for and protected their fallen sister, just as they care for and protect us every day.

This is the way it is all over the country—not only in Nevada.

So today, as their solemn vigil—that is the police officers—comes to an end, standing with their fallen sister, we will try in some small way to share the burden of grief for police officers who fall all over America in the line of duty.

Our hearts and prayers are with the trooper's husband Dirk, and their two daughters, Blair and Ashlyn. I hope it is of some comfort for them to know the life of their mother and the life of Dirk's wife is a life that was given in service to the people of the State of Nevada.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I rise this afternoon in support of the Foreclosure Prevention Act because we have to take action now to help so many families in this country who have been hurt in the mortgage and credit crisis.

The bill that we will hopefully vote to move to shortly is going to help provide the resources to keep our families in their homes, help our communities recover from this foreclosure crisis, and help struggling businesses to weather this shaky economy. The bill we will consider going to will provide some commonsense solutions to help address the problems that are at the heart of our country's economic woes. It is an opportunity finally for us to invest in our communities now so we can prevent millions of families from going into foreclosure.

I wish to share with the body quickly a story of a constituent from my home State, a man named Clifford, who lives in Olympia and who let me know about what happened to him, which is happening to so many Americans. He thought he had achieved the American dream by owning a home. His home, he said, represented stability to him. It was his investment in his future. But he, similar to many Americans, lost his job in a factory. The bills started stacking up. The stress wore on him and his family. His wife, who had diabetes, got sick and she had to have surgery. Before he knew it he was several months behind in his mortgage.

Suddenly, all his dreams for a secure future evaporated.

He told me how he struggled to work with his mortgage company and he couldn't catch up. Eventually, he made a phone call to Consumer Counseling Northwest, and through the help of that counseling, he was able to get his payments reduced with his mortgage

company, get back on track, and keep his family home.

That is why in this bill we are going to vote on, we have included critical funding for housing counseling that will allow our families across the country to make a phone call—not to their mortgage company to say I can't pay my bill but to a housing counselor who can sit down with them and their family to get their finances back in order so they do not have to go to foreclosure.

We know the housing crisis is impacting millions of families. In fact, experts tell us it may impact as many as 2 million families in this coming year alone. We can help prevent that if we can give these families a place to go, a counselor to help them, and the ability to be able to manage their finances.

Why is it so important? Not just for those families who lose all their wealth and their home if they have to foreclose but for the neighborhood: So their home doesn't become a blight in the neighborhood, losing the value in the rest of the homes; so their community and neighborhood is safe and so we are strengthening the economy.

These and many other provisions we will hear about as my colleagues talk about this bill are critical. We cannot wait for another year. We can't wait and see what happens in June or September or December. We need to act now, and I urge my colleagues in the Senate to vote with us for cloture to move to the housing bill we are proposing today—the Foreclosure Prevention Act—so we can begin the process to help families stay in their homes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I, too, rise in support of this outstanding bill. The bottom line is, despite what the President said today, most Americans feel we are in an economically difficult times. The President says we are not in recession. The President doesn't think we are going in recession. For most, the debate is not whether we are or will be in recession but how deep it will be.

So the bottom line is very simple: We have to do something about this economy. There is no better way to turn the economy around, to prevent the recession from being long and deep, than dealing with the housing market because housing is at the center of the economic problems we have today. Housing is the bull's-eye at which we should aim if we want to rectify the economy.

The proposal before us is a good one. It has five important measures. They are modest, but they are thoughtful, and they are aimed right at where the problem is.

Now, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are probably going to block our proposal. They are becoming the ''Dr. No'' of this Congress. We have a crisis; everyone knows housing is at the heart of the crisis. No one believes the administration's voluntary ideas have worked. Yet we are hearing we shouldn't do anything that is governmental. That makes no sense.

Early this week we heard stay the course on the war in Iraq. Now we hear stay the course in terms of the economy. Don't you hear it? The American people want a change in course, a change in direction. We are trying to present that to them in a nonconfrontational way, in a way we had hoped and thought would be bipartisan. Because when we put this proposal together, we realized there were a couple of provisions—particularly the bankruptcy provision—that others objected to, but the rest of the provisions seemed quite unobjectionable. Yet here we are hearing, for instance, from the administration that we don't need more housing counselors because we have already allocated $180 million. That was our proposal. In fact, I originated it and had good help from Senator BROWN and Senator CASEY and then Senator MURRAY, who helped put it into the omnibus bill. But of that $180 million, $130 million is gone already. It shows you the need. Do we need some more mortgage revenue bonds? Many States are tapped out and cannot help mortgagors, even if they wanted to. Loss carry forwards will help those who build homes move forward for getting out of the housing recession. Yet the administration and most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem to just say no.

My colleague from Georgia has a very interesting proposal that I would certainly entertain. What we ought to be doing on this bill is having a debate, offering amendments relevant to housing—not the future of the country and not whether we should extend the President's tax cuts or the estate tax; that is irrelevant to this bill—but having a debate on provisions such as those in our bill, debate on the provisions such as the ones from the Senator from Georgia and come up with a product that can help move us forward. Instead, all we hear from the minority leader is no, no, no, no.

The economy is in a degree of serious trouble. The housing market is at the core of that trouble. There are 2 million homeowners who will be foreclosed upon, most of whom through no fault of their own. Those foreclosures will help bring the economy further down. Why don't we do something careful, targeted, modest, and not terribly expensive?

The only thing I hear from the President anyway is: Well, Government shouldn't be involved. That is the reasoning of maybe McKinley, maybe Hoover but certainly not Republicans in the post World War II era. All of a sudden, we are having a throwback to these earlier days. Unfortunately, if we adhere to that kind of thinking, the boom and bust cycles that have plagued the American family will continue.

So I urge this administration to change its mind. I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who seek a degree of bipartisanship to reach out to us and work with us. We will modify our provisions, change some, maybe even drop one or two to get a good product. Please don't just say no. Please don't say the only thing we should debate is the same thing we have debated before: whether we should extend the President's tax cuts. We have been there, done that. We have new problems and we need a new direction. This bill begins to provide it. I hope my colleagues will support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I wish to acknowledge the kind remarks of Senator SCHUMER with regard to a proposal I have made. For the public's edification and amplification, nobody over here is just saying no, except the majority leader just said no to offering our amendments to the stimulus package we want cloture on. What we are going through right now are some gymnastics and the gymnastics are this. Members on both sides of the aisle want to do something because we do recognize there is a housing problem, because there are ways we can help the American public. But you can't address all those ways if you don't allow all those ideas to be debated as a part of the amendment process on the legislation.

So I appreciate the kind remarks of the Senator regarding my proposal, but a favorable comment doesn't do us any good if you can't offer the amendment on the floor. I don't think I have all the good ideas. I don't think they have all the good ideas. I think, collectively, we probably do have all the good ideas. But this is not about just saying no. This is us saying yes to a process that is open, a process that is debatable, a process where we can reach out and try and help the American people, particularly those who are having great difficulty because of the housing market today.

So I wished to throw that in. My remarks were intended to be about Iraq, which I am going to close with, but I had to respond to the statements the Senator from New York made.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Madam President, would the Senator from Georgia yield for a moment before you go to the Iraq comments?

Mr. ISAKSON. I am happy to yield.

Mr. MARTINEZ. I wished to follow up on the Senator's comments because there are a number of amendments that would be worth considering when we look at the problem we are facing.

First, I heard the Senator from New York. He is wrong to suggest that the President and the Republicans do not understand there is a problem in America. People are being foreclosed on, and there are families sitting at the kitchen table to see how to save that precious piece of the American dream

they have—their home. We are trying to help in that regard as well.

The stimulus package we did a few days ago was a bipartisan measure. What we should do now with the housing package is work that as a bipartisan idea as well, coming together as both Republicans and Democrats to make it better. The Senator from Georgia has a terrific idea, one I support and I think would make a lot of sense in the current situation in Florida in the housing market, and there are a number of other ideas. One has to do with whether mortgage brokers—Senator FEINSTEIN and I bipartisanly have come together on this—whether there ought to be a national registry for mortgage brokers. Senator CARPER and I have worked together on a number of things that would improve the housing passage.

We cannot simply say or follow a pattern that seems to be the current pattern in the Senate, which is that it is put forward by the majority, which then forecloses the ability of the minority to have amendments. The minority leader proposed five amendments per side, and that was rejected. This bill will go down if all they want is a symbolic moment for the Senator from New York to tell the Republicans how they are heartless and don't care about the poor and don't understand that America has problems with housing, and then we will go about our business as usual. If they do that, cloture will not be invoked and nothing will be done. Five amendments to a side seems to be a reasonable way of doing it if we want to get something done.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Florida, and I acknowledge that he is a former Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, who has done tremendous work on the housing issue. I concur with each of his remarks.

I will close with this. When you talk about ''just say no,'' we ought to have been on the stimulus debate when we got back here on Tuesday. For some reason, and because the majority wanted to, we have been debating the Iraq situation while the stimulus and housing sit on the sidelines. I hope we can get through these gymnastics and get to a situation where we can debate good ideas on both sides and not preclude and leave people out. Instead of saying ''just say no'' to amendments and to a sincere effort, say yes to what this body is all about: deliberation, decisions, and doing what is right for the people of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I would not try to make a deal on behalf of the majority leader, but my guess is that if the other side is agreeable to amendments that deal with housing, we would probably have an agreement. Every time we put something on the floor, we get an abortion amendment or an amendment to provide tax breaks for wealthy people. I would guess that if there are housing amendments, Senator REID will want to visit with Senator MCCONNELL about this.

STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

Mr. President, I want to speak for a moment about what happened today. cnnmoney.com says:

> Pain in the pocketbook within a few weeks. Gas could cost $3.50 a gallon. By spring, the price could hit $4 a gallon.

While there are predictions of $3.50 and $4 a gallon for gasoline, we still have the U.S. Department of Energy putting oil underground in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. They have been putting 50,000 and 60,000 barrels a day. By the way, in the second half of the year, I have been told that they plan to put as much as 125,000 barrels a day.

When the price of oil is around $100 a barrel, as it was trading at $102 barrels earlier today, it is putting upward pressure on gas prices. Our Government is taking oil from the Gulf of Mexico in the form of oil-in-kind transfers and putting it into a reserve. Instead of putting that oil into the supply pipeline to reduce prices, they are sticking it underground. The Energy Information Administration indicates that, on average, the price of regular gasoline last February was $2.22; in August, $2.78; in February, $3.02; and it is headed north.

Yet, the U.S. Government takes royalty-in-kind oil, and our Department of Energy is sticking it underground in big salt caverns to save it for a rainy day. They are putting it in the SPR, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

I support the SPR, but it is about 97 percent full. Why on Earth would we put upward pressure on oil and gas prices to take $100-a-barrel oil and stick it underground? Here is where it is going: Bayou Choctaw, West Hackberry, Big Hill, and Bryan Mound. These are the locations where the Department of Energy is sticking it underground. It makes no sense at this time when prices are so high.

I have introduced bipartisan legislation and intend to try to move it on an appropriations bill, if I must, to stop this. There is no reason to take 50,000 or 60,000 barrels a day out of supply. This especially includes sweet light crude. This is a subset of all oil, sweet light crude, which is even more valuable. We have heard testimony at a hearing before the Energy Committee that indicates that this diversion of light sweet crude could add as much as $10 to a barrel of light sweet crude trading on the market. It is putting upward pressure on prices.

In addition to this, there is unbelievable speculation going on in the futures market. Fidel Gheit, with Oppenheimer & Company, testified:

> There is absolutely no shortage of oil. . . . I am convinced that oil prices should not be a dime over $55 a barrel. Oil speculators include the largest financial institutions in the world. I call it the world's largest gambling hall. It is open 24/7. Unfortunately, it is totally unregulated. This is like a highway with no cops and no speed limit and everybody going 120 miles per hour.

Investment banks are buying their own storage capability to keep the oil off the market. As he says, this is a 24/7 gambling hall. Who pays the price for this unbelievable speculation? It is the American consumer that pays with ever higher prices for oil and gasoline. There are experts who say the price of a barrel of oil is trading at least $30 above where it is justified in being, given all other issues between supply and demand.

In addition to this lack of regulation of hedge funds and other activities in this carnival of greed, there is excess speculation in the futures market. On top of that as I have indicated, our own Government is making it worse by taking oil and sticking it underground. It is not rocket science when oil is where it is and gasoline prices are where they are and headed north.

The President, when asked about that today in the news conference, said, ''I have not heard this $4 issue.'' Well, read the newspapers from time to time. Gas prices are going through the roof. This Government is sticking oil underground and putting upward pressure on prices. There is no justification for doing this. We ought to have a pause, and we ought to say to the Administration that the 50,000, 60,000, or 70,000 barrels a day being put in storage today is impacting prices. It may be 125,000 barrels in the second half of the year if the Administration gets its way. This oil needs to go into the supply stream, and that would put downward pressure on gas and oil prices.

Some say, well, it is a populist issue. You ought to produce more domestically. Here is where we should produce. Some of us were cosponsors of a bill that became law in 2006 to begin that production in what is known as the Lease Sale 181 area of the Gulf of Mexico. I agree with that. The Gulf of Mexico is our greatest resource asset. I think putting this oil in the ground at this point is nuts, and we need to stand up for consumers and for a decent price for oil and gas. We ought not have a government policy that makes things worse.

My understanding is that my 5 minutes is up. I will speak about this subject later.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I wanted to speak a little bit to the situation we find ourselves in. We have been here before. This is ''deja vu all over again,'' to quote Yogi Berra. We were under the same stricture when we were debating the agriculture bill a couple months ago. The Senate, by definition, is an institution that is supposed to work its will on legislation. The legislation doesn't come to the Senate under a closed rule as they have

in the House, where the House leadership says this amendment will be offered, and that amendment will be offered, and time will expire and we have to vote. The whole concept of the Senate is that you have an open and free-flowing debate, where people can bring their thoughts to the floor. You don't limit amendments and they can be on about anything. As a practical matter, the Senate then votes after it has fully digested the various ideas that have been put forward.

This approach the Senate has always taken was first defined and most effectively defined, ironically, by George Washington, when he said that the Senate is the saucer into which the hot coffee is poured—the coffee being the House ideas. Now, the majority leader seems to view the Senate as an adjunct of the House, that we should actually be a replication of the House, that the majority leader should have the unilateral right, first, to bring a bill to the floor, which he has done, but once he does that, he should not have the unilateral right to determine what the amendments will be, how many will occur, and how long the debate will be on those amendments.

This is not an autocratic institution. In fact, the Senate is about as far from an autocracy as you can get. Each Senator has the capacity to have a fairly strong impact around here. Each Senator has the right, under the rules of the Senate, to make their case. So the majority leader should not be surprised when he suggests he is going to immediately file cloture on a bill—which is fairly substantive—stimulus II, as it is called—in order to shut off amendments from our side, our side is going to say, no, that is not the way the Senate works. We want to be heard. We want to be able to have the capacity to have our amendments.

The package they are talking about bringing forward may not be a stimulus at all. In fact, it may be the antistimulus package. What they are suggesting is a change in bankruptcy laws that will raise the cost of mortgage insurance—and it is estimated by 1 percentage point—for all Americans who try to get a mortgage after this, if this law were to become effective. It is populist politics, no question about that. You can beat the desk and say we are going to give relief to mortgages by allowing people to go into bankruptcy court and write their mortgages down. But the practical effect of that will be that the market will react and mortgage prices will go up, because people who lend money will have to anticipate that risk. That is what interest rates on mortgages account for—the risk of repayment of that money.

So it is a terrible idea, the practical implications of which will be not to stimulate the housing market but to undermine the housing market. There are initiatives here that might stimulate the economy; some have to do with housing. The Senator from Georgia has a superb idea. But some are tangential to the housing issue but would have a significant impact on our economy. For example, we could begin the process of straightening out our health care system. That would certainly help the economy. We could extend the dividend and capital gains rates. That would have a huge impact on our economy, if people knew they were going to have an extension of the capital gains rates. We could address the issue of employing and attracting to America more smart people to work in America, so they could be individual engines for economic activity, by extending the H–1B program.

There are a lot of good ideas that could stimulate this economy. There is absolutely no reason that the majority leader should try to use his position as majority leader to shut down the opportunity of the minority to bring those ideas and amendments forward. Let's vote on them. I can understand that the majority leader wants to move things along, and he does not want to have his Members make any difficult votes. That is his responsibility, I suppose to some degree, as leader. That is not the way the Senate works. The Senate is designed to be a place where you can put forward challenging ideas, debate them, and then vote on them.

We can deal with this bill in a fairly prompt way, but we cannot deal with it in a prompt way if those of us on our side of the aisle who believe we have some good ideas that maybe the majority leader does not like are not allowed to bring those ideas forward as to how to stimulate this economy.

We went through this exercise on the Agriculture bill, and it did not work. The leadership of the Senate and the majority leader finally decided we better get to the amendment process after 2 weeks of basically trying to shut down the amendment process.

There is no reason to go through this process again. Let's have an open amendment process where we in the minority agree to a certain number of amendments, but we certainly are not going to agree to preclear those amendments with the majority leader because he does not have that authority under the way the Senate works.

Madam President, I will have to oppose cloture on this bill at this time, although I would certainly like to see us get to this bill and do some serious consideration of how we stimulate this economy because I would like to see us extend the capital gains rates, extend the dividend rates, bring more smart people into this country to energize our economy, and address our health care needs to energize our economy. Those are issues I would like to see debated and voted on as we move forward.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, what is the time agreement?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 11 minute 27 seconds for the minority and 8 minutes 18 seconds for the majority.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, my colleagues desire to do a colloquy. I am pleased to yield to them as long as there is some time left somewhere along the way. I yield the floor, and I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized after this colloquy concludes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I understand the time that has been allocated—I think 8 minutes left on our side—is leader time that has been allocated to Senator DODD, the chairman of the Banking Committee. He is not going to be here until after the vote to use that time. Our staff has been good to say that the time might be made available to me. I wish to enter into a colloquy, if I may, with Senator MARTINEZ, who is a former Secretary of HUD in a previous life and a valued member of the Senate Banking Committee.

We are going to have a vote in a few minutes on whether to proceed to a housing recovery package which has a number of positive elements in it. It is one that was largely put together by the Democratic side, but there is a willingness on our side to certainly accept amendments offered by our Republican friends.

As it turns out, the administration's top three priorities, as Senator MARTINEZ knows, in the housing recovery package that we might go to at this time would be GSE regulatory reform for Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks, FHA modernization, and it would also include the ability for State housing authorities to issue additional taxes and revenue bonds that can be used for helping refinance homes that are going or have gone into foreclosure. Those are the top three proposals of the administration. The third one is actually in our Democratic proposal on housing recovery. The other two, Chairman DODD and Senator SHELBY met, I am told last night, with the ranking Republican and the chairman on the House side on FHA modernization, and they have made good progress toward a final consensus, maybe a good preconference agreement. On GSE reform, the House has passed by a wide margin legislation to provide for that regulatory reform and also to provide for the creation of an affordable housing fund, something strongly pushed and supported by Senator JACK REED for a number of years.

There is a whole lot, frankly, that we have in common. We are going to vote in a few minutes on a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the proposal that was brought to the floor by our Democratic leader. My fear is we are not going to get consent to proceed to the bill, which, on the face of it, is unfortunate because I believe there is a whole lot more agreement here than one might imagine.

I yield to my friend from Florida to add to this discussion and take away

whatever he might wish. I actually believe there is more in common by far than there is in disharmony.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Madam President, I appreciate the Senator's efforts to move this process forward. He and I have been committed to the idea that there are problems the American people are facing as it relates to housing that are impacting the overall economy, and we need to act.

I agree with the ideas the Senator has put forward. There are a number of other good ideas out there. Senator FEINSTEIN and myself have cosponsored a bill regarding mortgage brokers. The proposal by Senator ISAKSON from Georgia, while perhaps a modification might be appropriate in terms of the cost of it, I think is a great idea. The idea is that we encourage families, through tax incentives, to buy homes, unoccupied homes, foreclosed homes, to try to lower the inventory of unoccupied homes; to do, frankly, part of what I don't believe is a terrific idea, which is to increase CDBG to deal with neighborhoods where there are foreclosures going on. I think a better idea is to put people in those homes through tax incentives. These are debatable points. They are good ideas that can be commonly shared.

The whole point is, we have to stick with it. This ought to not just be a symbolic act today to say: Oh, gee, we tried to do something on housing, and in a typical way, we each went to our respective corners and could not agree. We have to keep working on this issue. We are not that far apart. The ideas are mutually understood. GSE reform has been on the table a long time, and it has to be done. On FHA modernization, I know that Ranking Member SHELBY, Chairman DODD, and the House Members have been working diligently to get to something on that. We are close on that issue. That could be part of this package. Those things will help create more liquidity in the mortgage market, they will help put Americans back in the housing business.

The news today on the mortgage and housing starts was not good news. I was fortunate when I was at HUD that the news only got better every month. This month's news on housing starts, on the price of homes dropping, issues such as these, is not encouraging. We have to act. We have an obligation to act, not just make a political point.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARPER. Reclaiming my time, Madam President, I say in conclusion that the American people want us to get things done. They want us to address the mortgage crisis. There is a way to do that that involves some very good Democratic ideas and some very good Republican ideas. Frankly, there are a number of good ideas we share in common, and there is a whole lot more we share than we do not.

At the end of the day, I think Senator ISAKSON's tax credit idea could be accepted in some form to go with some increase in CDBGs, community development block grants. We could do both, maybe not as much of either as was originally proposed but a little of both. Let's see how they work and then, after a year or so, see if there is one or the other that makes more sense to do additionally.

I think what is going to happen today, unfortunately, is we are going to have this vote on a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed on the housing package. It is going to go down. My hope is that as soon as it goes down, if it does, my leader, Senator REID, and the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, will go through a finite list of amendments, maybe five or so on a side. We are not interested in nongermane amendments. We are interested in amendments that speak directly to the housing crisis on our side and the Republican side, and we ought to be able to define that list. Senator ISAKSON's idea is one. Senator MARTINEZ has a couple of good ideas, one he shares with Senator FEINSTEIN. Senator SPECTER has some ideas on bankruptcy provisions that I may not support, but they certainly deserve to be debated and heard. And we have some ideas on our side as well.

My hope is, again, if this goes down today, that it is just a hiccup and not a heart attack, that we are going to come back and actually go to work to develop a consensus package that I know is there. It is literally there within our grasp. We can have not just a Democratic or a Republican win or a win for the administration, but we are going to have a win for the hundreds of thousands of people who are in danger of losing their homes. We can do something about this in the next several days, and we need to. I am going to join hands and arms with my colleagues, Senator MARTINEZ, Senator DODD, Senator SHELBY, and others who care as passionately about this issue as we do, to join our leaders in making sure we do get the job done.

I yield back whatever time I have remaining. I thank my friend from Alabama for his graciousness in yielding time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, what is our time on this side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 8 minutes 8 seconds remaining. The majority has 3 minutes 40 seconds.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I understand the pending business has been the legislation by Senator FEINGOLD, Senator REID, and Senator MENENDEZ to require another report within 60 days involving the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Secretary of Homeland Security, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director of National Intelligence. All of them are supposed to drop the war on terrorism they are leading and have explained to us repeatedly and in meticulous detail and write another report.

They keep asking for reports. They asked for a report by General Petraeus when we sent him to Iraq last summer. We voted overwhelmingly, a bipartisan vote, to send him. We were worried at the time, I have to admit, about how things were going in Iraq. I remember asking him: General Petraeus, if things don't get better, if you believe we cannot be successful, will you tell us? He said that he would. He also said he believed we could be successful if we utilized the plans and ideas and programs he was going to execute and was executing. He went and he came back and gave us a report in September. GEN Jimmy Jones, a retired Marine general, and 12 other participants went to the region and returned to give us a report, as did the Government Accountability Office.

We heard all those reports, and we sent General Petraeus forward and we said, continue on, because we were beginning by September to see some substantial reduction in violence in the neighborhoods in Iraq. We didn't know if it was permanent, how far it would go, but the trends were beginning, for at least a few weeks prior to his report, to look considerably better.

As a result of all of that, we allowed General Petraeus to continue with the plan as he explained to us because we evaluated that the strategy he was implementing was working. Since then, we continue to see the most miraculous, one must say, reduction in violence—60, 80, 90 percent in some areas in the country, 60 percent nationwide reduction in violence. We have had circumstances where the local people have joined in awakening groups, or citizens groups, and have turned against al-Qaida. Some of the people had been working with al-Qaida, frankly, but they realized this was a violent, vicious, dominating group with whom they had no prospect of ever living peacefully.

General Conway, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, testified this morning before the Armed Services Committee, of which I am a member, and he discussed that issue. The marines met with these local tribal leaders and made an arrangement, and they turned on al-Qaida, attacked them and have killed them, and they have helped us kill them because they do not agree with them anymore and they have learned the true nature of this group.

The violence is dropping, and Shia groups and councils and awakening groups are forming in other areas of the country. In Al Anbar, a mostly Sunni province, remarkable progress toward stability and a decline in violence has been made. So why do we want to ask for another report?

I note that this bill, S. 2634, was dropped in the same day and by the same people who authored the bill to demand a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq. The Iraq Study Group, an independent group, said that such a withdrawal would be a ''victory of historic proportions'' for al-Qaida.

I want to be frank: The people who are proposing this report, the people who have called for the precipitous withdrawal from Iraq want us out of there and do not care about any of the consequences.

We are a great nation. We committed our military. We committed our Nation. We committed our resources. We committed the lives of our military by more than a three-fourths vote to this enterprise, and in recent months we have had a most dramatic turn for the better. Why now would we want to promote a precipitous withdrawal? Why now would we demand more and more reports that, if read carefully, have no potential to lead to a constructive benefit toward the mission we have undertaken? I don't think it would do anything other than make it more difficult for our military, more difficult for General Petraeus and our Defense Department to be successful.

So I urge my colleagues to oppose this. Let's be mature as a nation. Let's not snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. This matter is not over, don't get me wrong. I don't portend to suggest in any way that these better numbers and downward trends in violence and progress made politically is guaranteed to continue. We are going to have hiccups and problems, I am certain, but it is certainly going in the right direction today.

I would urge us not to destabilize that, not to pass resolutions that can only be interpreted by our allies, by the Iraqis, by our own soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines that are there in Iraq as an ambivalent attitude toward what they are doing, by placing their very lives at risk for this policy. Why in the world would we want to send such a message?

I think it would be a big mistake, and I ask my colleagues to join with me in opposing this legislation.

I thank the Chair and would ask how much time is left on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 27 seconds remaining.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield back the remaining time, and, Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the mortgage foreclosure crisis in Michigan is dire. Nearly 80,000 homes are expected to be lost to foreclosure by 2009. Michigan ranks third in the country in foreclosure rates, and fifth in the country in number of foreclosure filings. Michigan has seen an increase in the number of foreclosure filings of 282 percent since 2005.

My State is not alone in this crisis, nor are homeowners facing foreclosure the only ones being affected. The entire housing industry, and by many accounts our entire economy, is being dragged down by mounting mortgage woes. It is urgent that we move forward on this bill to address these problems and provide immediate help across the Nation. We need to keep families in their homes, and we need to keep this crisis from further weighing down our economy.

Recently, I convened a series of roundtable meetings in a number of Michigan communities. Leaders from local and State government, as well as organizations who are in the trenches working with families facing foreclosure, came together to discuss practical ways to help homeowners and protect our economy from further damage. When I asked for their feedback on this bill, they thought it would help address a number of the problems they highlighted.

Across Michigan, there are communities that would like to rehabilitate abandoned and foreclosed properties so that surrounding property values do not continue to fall. But currently the funds do not exist to do that. This bill provides $4 billion in Federal block grants to areas with the highest foreclosure rates to help rehabilitate abandoned or foreclosed properties and prevent further damage to local housing values.

Across Michigan, foreclosure prevention counselors are overwhelmed, and a lack of funds is tying the hands of local groups trying to help keep families on track. This bill would provide $200 million for this much needed preforeclosure counseling.

There are also many homeowners who are facing the financial pressures of owing more on their mortgages than the current dollar value of their houses, a situation known as being ''underwater.'' There is a critical need for more affordable loans to help these families refinance and stay in their current homes. Most homeowners do not want to uproot their children and leave their community behind, even if the balance of their mortgage is greater than the current market value of their home.

This bill would help address this problem by authorizing States to issue $10 billion in new tax-exempt bonds to help homeowners refinance adjustable rate mortgages. States will have the flexibility to use the proceeds of these bonds to refinance mortgages. This is a key component to turning the current mortgage market around.

Ameliorating our foreclosure crisis will require a team effort among Federal, State, and local governments, community and neighborhood organizations, and lenders, brokers, and borrowers. This bill recognizes that fact. It provides an opportunity to help keep struggling families in their homes. It provides an opportunity to help restore our housing markets so that families can own a home. It provides an opportunity to help keep declining property values stable. We need to take up this bill now, debate it, consider amendments, and then pass it. To not do so would be to sit idly by while a multitude of Americans needlessly suffer.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, momentarily we will be having a procedural vote, a cloture vote on a motion to proceed to what has been styled a housing bill. I will be urging my colleagues to oppose the cloture motion to proceed to the housing bill.

Having said that, it is my hope that at some point during the vote we will be able to negotiate between the majority and the minority a process for fairly considering alternatives, and I have had some discussions with the majority leader to that effect.

In fact, I offered a consent earlier this afternoon that there be up to five amendments per side permitted, if we turn to the bill. It is still my hope that at some point we will negotiate a process by which we can have fair consideration of alternatives.

Now, my colleagues and I just completed a news conference at which we laid out a comprehensive growth plan for America in a variety of different areas that most Republicans believe would advance the economic security of our country. Portions of that proposal might well be offered as an amendment to the underlying bill, were we to be permitted to do that.

It is my hope that the majority leader and I will have further discussions after this vote about a process by which we might be able to turn to the bill that would be fair to both sides. After all, I know there are some bipartisan discussions going on that will improve the bill. Senator CARPER has been in discussion with Senator MARTINEZ and others on both sides of the aisle with suggestions that might have bipartisan support that are not a part of the current proposal upon which we will have the procedural vote shortly.

So until such time as we can get an agreement that is fair to both sides, and gives other Senators who have ideas an opportunity to offer those ideas and have them voted on by the entire Senate, I urge my colleagues to oppose cloture on the motion to proceed to the proposal as it stands right now.

Hopefully, at some time in the near future we will have a chance to amend it, to modify it, to offer new suggestions to it to improve it, and maybe have the same kind of experience we had on the FISA earlier this year where we came together on a bipartisan basis and passed something overwhelmingly.

We had a similar experience at the end of the stimulus package in the Senate. We came together at the end and passed a package overwhelmingly. There is no good reason we cannot have an amalgam of both Democratic and Republican ideas added to this proposal that would strengthen it, make it more bipartisan, make it more likely that it would become law.

So for the short term, I would urge my Members to oppose cloture on the

motion to proceed. Hopefully, we will be able to work out some kind of process for handling this in a fair way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. The reason the rules of the Senate are set up as they are is to give Senators the ability to protect themselves.

However, the motion to proceed has been abused. Everything that we have tried to do, everything—we have had to file cloture on a motion to proceed—is unnecessary. I have stated publicly for the press, everyone who would listen to me, that this is a piece of legislation that we should work on.

The Republicans, all Republicans, should understand they lose nothing by moving forward on the motion to proceed. If they find after that that the Democrats are totally unreasonable, then we do not get cloture on the bill. That is the procedure. Why waste all of this time, 30 hours? Why make us go through this process?

If cloture is not invoked, who knows if we will ever get back to the bill again. I will try. We will not go off it right away. I told my distinguished Republican colleague that.

America is facing a foreclosure crisis, a dramatic economic slowdown. Today the Commerce Department declared such. Yet at a press conference the President held today, he said America is not heading toward a recession. Who agrees with that other than the President? Countless economists disagree with that.

The American people know that whatever you call it—a slowdown, a slump, a downturn, or recession—people in every 1 of our 50 States are struggling to make ends meet and looking to us to set things right again.

The housing crisis is the eye of the economic storm. Here are the facts: The number of homes being foreclosed upon across the country rose 57 percent in January, last month. Home prices experienced the steepest drop in 20 years, sagging 9 percent in the final quarter of 2007, and the worst had not come by then.

Foreclosures are expected to exceed 2 million in the coming years. Nationwide, that would wipe out $223 billion in home equity. Some of that is in neighboring homes. This does not include the lost value of homes that undergo the actual foreclosure process.

In Nevada, the numbers are worse: 95 percent increase in foreclosures last month, 61 percent in the Reno/Sparks area. The situation is bad and likely to get worse all over the country. But we have an opportunity today to make a responsible and necessary step to make things better.

My friends on the other side of the aisle are aware of these challenges. I think, and I respectfully say, it is a bad decision for Republicans to follow again the advice of the respected leader to not vote for cloture on a motion to proceed.

I repeat, if we get on the bill and you find that you do not like what is going on, there are 49 of you. Do not vote for cloture on the bill. My friends on the other side of the aisle are aware of all of the challenges we have. They read the same newspapers, attend the same hearings, live and visit the same neighborhoods around the country because all of the neighborhoods are the same, with rare exception.

They recognized the Nation's economic challenges by working with us to pass the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008. It did not have everything in it that I wanted passed. We passed something the President did not want. That is good. It was a bipartisan effort. That plan was a decent first step, but it was only a start, and I said so at the time.

Secretary Paulson, whom I admire, deserves credit, too, for helping to lead the mortgage industry to voluntarily respond. These efforts will help but, once again, they are just a step, a baby step. Less than 3 percent of the homes at risk would avoid foreclosure under the administration's plan; 97-plus percent would not.

This will help a little. I repeat, a baby step. Baby steps will not solve this crisis. A less than 3-percent improvement will not solve the crisis. We need more than baby steps, we need bolder steps. The bill now before us is a bolder step.

It will make a real tangible difference to homeowners, neighborhoods, and our economy. More than 700,000 families will benefit from this bill; 80,000 vacant foreclosed homes will be put back to productive use; 30,000 jobs and a $10 billion boost in economic activity will be created.

This bill could be a real bipartisan accomplishment. It would be a sign to the American people all across this country that we can help. I hope my colleagues will support this cloture motion.

One of my friends who is great at working both sides of the aisle—my friend is a Democrat. He worked with a number of my friends on the other side of the aisle. And he said: Here are some of the amendments they want to offer. ISAKSON wants to offer a piece of legislation which is a tax credit for housing purchases. I like it. I think it would be a nice addition to our bill, would improve the bill.

Appraiser oversight and independence: Senator MARTINEZ, who was formerly the HUD Director and Cabinet officer, thinks there should be appraiser oversight and independence. I like it. That is a good idea. That is something we should debate and see if it should be put on this bill and approved.

I was told that Senator SPECTER wants to make some changes on the home mortgage bankruptcy provision. I do not agree with Senator SPECTER, but that is something that is valid and should be able to be offered on this piece of legislation.

All I am saying to my friends is they are making a big mistake by objecting to our proceeding to this bill. There is no reasonable, rational reason for doing that other than to stall. I think that would be a shame.

I hope there would be an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote on this most important piece of legislation so that we can move forward on it and attempt to work something out on the amendment process. If we do not work anything out, I repeat for the third time in the last 10 minutes, they do not have to give us cloture on the bill. They have nothing to lose. There are 49 of them.

But I think they are sending the wrong message to the American people today, saying this bill we have, which calls for things the President says he wants done: revenue bonds—he called for that in the State of the Union—more money for mortgage counselors. That seems fairly reasonable to everybody. I think that is something we should do. The bankruptcy provision, which I think is such a step forward, the provision that we have dealing with community block grants is important to bring houses that are in foreclosure back to be a productive part of what we are doing.

Everything we have called for in this piece of legislation is reasonable and fair and sound. And we should do it. I would certainly hope that my friends on the other side of the aisle will stop doing what they are doing. I think it sends a terribly bad message to the American people: Republicans do not want to legislate on anything—anything, even the housing crisis.

I cannot imagine what they benefit from doing that other than slowing down the process. It will prevent us from doing something later on in the year. But we are going to continue to work on this legislation. If they defeat cloture, we are going to keep talking about it and talking about it because this is the eye of the storm. This is what is causing most of our problems in the economy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If all time is yielded back, under the previous order, the motion to proceed to S. 2634 is withdrawn.

NEW DIRECTION FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT AND THE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION TAX ACT OF 2007—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 340, H.R. 3221.

Harry Reid, John D. Rockefeller, IV, Russell D. Feingold, Max Baucus, Charles E. Schumer, Kent Conrad, Patty Murray, Amy Klobuchar, Jeff Bingaman, Richard Durbin, Mark L. Pryor, Carl Levin, Edward M. Kennedy, Patrick J. Leahy, Bernard Sanders, Debbie Stabenow, Byron L. Dorgan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call is waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that the debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221, a bill for the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act and the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2007, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD), and the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 48, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 35 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Akaka	Feinstein	Mikulski
Baucus	Harkin	Murray
Bayh	Inouye	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Johnson	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Kennedy	Pryor
Boxer	Kerry	Reed
Brown	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Kohl	Salazar
Cardin	Landrieu	Sanders
Carper	Lautenberg	Schumer
Casey	Leahy	Smith
Conrad	Levin	Stabenow
Dodd	Lieberman	Tester
Dorgan	Lincoln	Webb
Durbin	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Feingold	Menendez	Wyden

NAYS—46

Alexander	DeMint	Murkowski
Allard	Dole	Reid
Barrasso	Domenici	Roberts
Bennett	Ensign	Sessions
Bond	Enzi	Shelby
Brownback	Graham	Snowe
Bunning	Grassley	Specter
Burr	Gregg	Stevens
Chambliss	Hagel	Sununu
Cochran	Hatch	Thune
Coleman	Inhofe	Vitter
Collins	Isakson	Voinovich
Corker	Kyl	Warner
Cornyn	Lugar	Wicker
Craig	Martinez	
Crapo	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—6

Byrd	Coburn	McCain
Clinton	Hutchison	Obama

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). On this vote, the yeas are 48, the nays are 46. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now enter a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to H.R. 3221, the housing stimulus legislation.

This motion is debatable; is that right, Madam Chair?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

Mr. REID. Madam President, everyone here within the sound of my voice should understand a minute ago there was a big victory. The people on Wall Street are high-fiving. They won again. The big banks won again. Mortgage bankers won again.

There are a few losers out there, such as millions of consumers, millions of people whose homes are going into foreclosure or about to go into foreclosure. They lost. But there has been a victory. There has been a victory. Anyone within the sound of my voice who does not understand what took place should understand what took place.

I had one of my Democratic Senators walk over to me and say Well, they are doing that because you filled the tree. That is wrong. It is not true. In fact, it is quite the opposite. I said: What do my friends have to lose by allowing us to proceed to legislate on this most important piece of legislation, housing stimulus? If, in fact, they do not like what happens with the legislating aspect of this—there are 49 of them—they would not give us cloture on the bill. But why not attempt to legislate this?

I indicated I have been told there are Republicans who wish to offer amendments. I, before this vote took place, said I think it is a good idea what they want to offer. One of them was by JOHNNY ISAKSON—a tax credit for housing purchases, a pretty good idea. I may not agree on the $5,000 number; maybe it would be $4,000. But I think it is a pretty good idea he came up with.

I said MEL MARTINEZ, who before coming to the Senate was a member of the President's Cabinet as HUD Secretary, has an idea about appraisal oversight and independence. I think it is a pretty good idea. He should be able to offer that amendment.

I do not agree with what Senator SPECTER wants to do; that is, to change the bankruptcy provision. But he should be able to offer that.

So any guise of not feeling that they are going to be treated fairly is a misdirection. Again, as has happened for such a long time since we took the majority—I recognize we have a slim majority, and it makes it very difficult to legislate, especially on the other side, when virtually everything is stopped.

On the last stimulus package we had, we got something from the House that had a rebate to individuals. We thought that should be changed, so we added, out of the Finance Committee, a lot of good things in that legislation. We added 21.5 million seniors, 250,000 disabled American veterans, and many of the things that are in the housing stimulus package.

It was defeated, and there were editorials written—obviously, my Republican friends pay no attention to them—that said it was the wrong thing to do, that the Republicans stopping our vision of what the stimulus package should be was wrong and not good for the country.

Well, I hope all those editorial writers understand what took place here. This was a very narrow piece of legislation we have been trying to move forward on—very narrow. It had five provisions in it, one of which the President called for in his State of the Union Message—revenue bonds—and the water has been carried over here by Senator JOHN KERRY.

We had a provision in this stimulus package that called for more money for counselors to deal with people who are losing their homes. They are out of money again. I do not think it is too outlandish to have mortgage counselors be able to sit down and talk to people about their homes.

We had a provision in here for CDBG moneys to go back to communities to work on homes that are being foreclosed upon. I think that is a step in the right direction.

We had a provision in this legislation that dealt with having these documents people deal with when they are buying a home more transparent. That came from Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island—a very nice piece of legislation.

Finally, we had in this piece of legislation something that I think is extremely important; that is, a piece of legislation, which makes up part of this, which says that if you have a home that is being foreclosed upon, you should be able to go to bankruptcy and see if you can work something out on that. The bankruptcy judge would be able to work with you.

Right now it is against the law to do that. If you have a primary home, and you want to buy a ranch to go play with on weekends or someplace on the beach, and you decide you run out of money later, you can go in and work with the bankruptcy court to try to refinance and readjust those loans—but not your primary residence. So my friend, Senator DURBIN from Illinois, has been working on this for a long time—it did not come about in the last week or two—saying people who are about to lose their primary residence should be able to have the auspices of the bankruptcy court to try to work something out. It is limited in time and scope—a very good piece of legislation; not a shotgun, a rifle shot.

Georgetown University did a study, and they said DURBIN's provision would not raise the interest rates a fraction of a hundredth of a percent—nothing, it would not affect it at all.

So I am at a loss—well, that is not true because it is obvious why it is being done. The stall is still on. The stall is still on. There is no reason in the world we should not be moving forward to try to work something out on

a housing stimulus package. It is simply unfair what my colleagues have done. At the last count, there was one Republican who voted to move forward on this legislation. There could be more, but I saw one.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I listened with a certain level of incredulity to my good friend the majority leader discussing the vote we had a few moments ago. Of course, this was a measure not crafted by the Banking Committee led by Senator DODD and Senator SHELBY. I am not certain whether Senator DODD was consulted. I am fairly confident Senator SHELBY was not consulted.

We know there is widespread opposition to the so-called cram-down provision, and we know that almost everybody in America, apparently, with the exception of one study at Georgetown that I heard my good friend the majority leader quote, believes it will drive up interest rates for all Americans in order to presumably benefit some Americans. This is the kind of thing that happens when you have a hastily concocted political exercise, which it strikes me we just went through.

Now, the way to legislate in a body such as the Senate is to come up with a fair process for consideration. In fact, I offered it prior to the vote, I say to my good friend the majority leader, that we would go to the measure, take up five amendments on each side, and have a normal legislative process leading to actually making a law rather than trying to create an issue. So we are still very much interested in seeing what we can do in this area.

The majority leader mentioned the Isakson amendment. There is a lot of support on this side of the aisle for the Isakson amendment. I know there are conversations between Senator CARPER and Senator MARTINEZ that could conceivably lead to a bipartisan proposal that would enjoy support on both sides of the aisle. The way to achieve something such as that is through the consultative process that we frequently engage in around here when we are serious about legislating. So I would reiterate to my good friend the majority leader that I am open to any discussions for a unanimous consent agreement that gives both sides an opportunity to have their ideas considered.

We all know the Nation's economy is slowing. We all believe there is an appropriate role for the Government to play in trying to lessen that decline in the economy, and we are happy to try to work on a bipartisan basis to achieve a result, and that opportunity is still before us. Now that the box has been checked on the other side, maybe we can get serious now about trying to do something that will actually make a difference. I stand ready to talk to my good friend the majority leader about that at any time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I don't know how to say this other than say it the way I feel. It is an insult to me to say I would bring a bill to the floor without talking to my chairmen. One thing I pride myself on is that when I took this job, I gave every one of my ranking members then, now my chairs, the absolute authority to run their committees, and I would not interfere with their committees.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Would the majority leader yield?

Mr. REID. No. I want the record to reflect I would never consider putting a piece of legislation on the floor without talking to my chairmen. I talked to Senator DODD, I talked to Senator LEAHY, I talked to Senator BAUCUS about what was going to be in this. So that is so farfetched that it is hard for me to conceive of how my friend could say that.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I didn't say it. I did not say it. That is why I was trying to get the majority leader to yield. I said I don't know whether you consulted with your chairmen. I am fairly confident you didn't consult with the ranking member, so my remarks don't need to be corrected since I didn't say it.

Mr. REID. Well, we will get the remarks and let the record speak for itself.

I would also say this: Yes, we have Georgetown, and we have a friend of mine whom I served in the House of Representatives with who is former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, a Republican, and a card-carrying conservative—Jack Kemp—who thinks what we are doing is very good; in fact, he has written about it. This isn't something we threw together in 5 minutes. Most of this stuff was in the stimulus package they voted down before.

So the economists support what we are doing. It will not increase the bankruptcy provision of my friend, the senior Senator from Illinois; it will not increase the interest rates, this bankruptcy thing. We all know that. This piece of legislation is so important.

When my friend, the Republican leader, said he wanted five amendments—listen to the boundaries of the amendments—having to deal with housing and the economy, well, that is pretty wide-ranging. I told everybody who was within the sound of my voice, if we wanted to offer five amendments to this piece of legislation or any other piece of legislation, the Republican leader, rightfully so, would like to see what that amendment would say. I said the same applies to the Republicans. You can't have it both ways. If, in the process of trying to work something out it doesn't work out right, they have the ultimate big hammer here, and that is cloture. Two steps: One that we haven't used very much, except in the last year since we have gotten the majority, which is a motion to proceed and cloture on that. We didn't get that. It is too bad. But had we been able to do that, we would have gone immediately to legislating on some of the things that I think are important.

I am very troubled about the normal legislative process. We haven't been in the normal legislative process for some time now, and I am anxious to do everything I can to move forward on this piece of legislation. It is obvious that my friends do not want to. I am sorry about that. But anyone who said this has been a hastily concocted political exercise is wrong.

Mr. SCHUMER. Would my colleague from Nevada yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I am happy to yield.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I wish to ask my colleague from Nevada: Wouldn't it be true that the ambit the minority leader asked for would allow the other side to automatically have amendments on, say, renewing the President's tax cuts, or undoing what happened with the estate tax, and repealing the entire estate tax; nothing to do with this housing bill? That is my first question.

My second question is: If the minority leader showed the majority leader five amendments that were within the confines of this legislation—ideas such as the Isakson idea or the Martinez idea or others such as that—that he would willingly go along and we would come to the floor and debate the amendments and move the bill forward but that the parameters the minority leader has asked for would allow us to debate the whole—everything but the kitchen sink and bring up all these old saws that we have been through again; isn't that correct?

Mr. REID. I would say to my friend, I indicated I don't like what Senator SPECTER is trying to do with this bill. He has an absolute right to offer that, and he should be able to do that. What he wants to do basically is have a Durbin line—basically strike the provision on bankruptcy. I don't like that. But it is in keeping with what this legislation would be. The parameters I don't like have to do with housing and the economy. Now, try that one on.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, asking another question, that could mean renew the Bush tax cuts until 2025. That could be within the ambit of what the minority leader asked for; is that correct?

Mr. REID. That is true. I don't know how much more I can telegraph my punches. I said—you were present, Senator DURBIN was present, and Senator MURRAY was present when we met with scores of press people today. They said: Are you going to allow amendments? I said: Yes, happy to have amendments. Talk about telegraphing my punches.

One of my Democratic colleagues—I will mention his name because he would not care—Senator CARPER from Delaware, he said: Here are some amendments they might want to offer. How do you feel about that? Fine. I want to legislate to deal with the housing crisis. We have a housing crisis. I have one in Nevada, you have one in Illinois, you have one in New York, you

have a real big one in Michigan, and California has 25 percent of all the foreclosures in the country. Everyplace in America has a problem with that.

We could stimulate the economy. I defy anyone to say that what we are doing would not stimulate the economy.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, one more question to the leader: Has the minority leader shown the five amendments to us he wishes to offer, or he just sort of wants a carte blanche, more or less?

Mr. REID. I am the one who suggested the amendments that I have heard the Republicans want to offer. The answer is, no, I have not seen a single amendment. I didn't start talking about amendments this morning. When I moved to this piece of legislation, I told the distinguished Republican leader, let's work something out on amendments. The original number of five came from me.

Mr. SCHUMER. Is it a pretty fair assumption that what the minority leader is doing, maybe for himself, maybe for others in his caucus, is he wants an opportunity to get off the housing debate and go on to the old saws we always hear from them on, such as the estate tax, Bush tax cuts, and other things not relevant to this bill? Would that be a reasonable assumption, given the minority leader's actions?

Mr. REID. Yes. I say to my friend, things that have done so much good for our economy—so much good for our economy. We are upside down with red ink on everything.

So the answer is: Yes. We need more tax cuts, we need more money spent on wars around the country, around the world.

I don't know of anybody who thinks the economy is doing very well. Even today we had the President say things are not good, but we are not in a recession. I think the economists would totally disagree.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the majority leader yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I will yield.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to ask the majority leader to reflect on what has happened this week: the routine motion in the Senate the motion to proceed—in other words, to start considering a measure—we have tried to do that three times this week.

Is it not true that the Republican minority has engineered efforts to stop a vote on changing the policy on the war in Iraq, has stopped a vote on having accountability in a report on the war on terrorism; and through the Chair I would ask, now with this measure has stopped an effort to try to bring some relief to the 2.2 million Americans from States all over who face foreclosure on their mortgages?

I would ask the majority leader, reflecting on what has happened this week, is this not a continuation of what we went through all last year when the Senate Republicans broke the record in the Senate with 62 filibusters?

Mr. REID. In 1 year. They broke a 2-year record in 1 year, and this is ongoing.

This is an extremely perplexing situation in which we find ourselves. For my friend, the distinguished Republican leader, to stand and say that it was incredulous what I had done. Incredulous? I am trying to legislate. I have a piece of legislation out here which has five provisions in it. Everyone knows what those five provisions are. No tricks, no filling the tree, let's work something out on amendments, and that is incredulous?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, before the majority leader leaves and others leave, the majority whip, let me point out that just as these presentations were made, we had a long discussion, we had two caucuses, the Senate Democratic caucuses—not unlike when the Republicans have their conference every week—to talk about the various provisions. In fact, I made the presentation briefly before the caucus 2 weeks ago involving these various ideas. There were a lot of other ideas. There was an exclusive list in terms of what we could do in order to generate a new level of optimism in our economy mostly related to the housing crisis which is the epicenter of this problem.

So I want the record to reflect that as the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, I know the chairman of the Finance Committee and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY, were all involved in those discussions, as were others who had various other ideas as to whether to include them in a package, other amendments. This obviously was work in progress, but it is important that the record reflect that there was an ongoing conversation about this.

Mr. REID. Will my friend yield for a question?

Mr. DODD. I am happy to yield.

Mr. REID. I think the Senator would acknowledge there were things I wanted to put in this bill and he said it is not the right time to do it. I accepted his jurisdiction of the Banking Committee, and I called him and said, OK—I didn't say Mr. Chairman—I said OK, CHRIS, we will not put them in there. We had full consultation.

I am very proud of my chairs. The three whom I talked about are some of the best legislators this country has ever had. CHRIS DODD is certainly one of those. I feel this Senate and this country are in good hands with Senator DODD as chairman of that committee. I like his ranking member. Senator SHELBY and I served in the House together. He is a fine man. I say to my friend from Connecticut, to his credit—that is the Senator from Connecticut—he said: I don't have this thing or two worked out with DICK SHELBY yet. I think it would be better if we not do it. So I, harping on this—and perhaps it doesn't call for an answer, but I admire and respect the work this Senator does in the Foreign Relations Committee, in the Banking Committee now as chair. He is a top-notch Senator.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I thank the leader very much for that, and he is absolutely correct. In fact, he raised an issue, and I said I haven't talked with Senator SHELBY and that is the reason he graciously acquiesced to my desire to keep a certain matter out of the committee proposal until we had an understanding. That is the way this body functions well, so you have to have that kind of relationship. You can make two choices. You can propose things and throw them out there in the hopes that something may happen, but usually they don't because you haven't bothered to consult, or you can do it the other way, which is slower, more deliberate, more frustrating in some ways, but ultimately you produce products people can support.

I wish to point out that in the last year, the Banking Committee marked up some 17 pieces of legislation and had 35 hearings. Of those 17 pieces of legislation, 7 of them have become law. There were only two negative votes cast against all those provisions because RICHARD SHELBY, the Senator from Alabama, the former chairman of the committee, and I worked those matters out in a way so our colleagues, almost unanimously in every case, were able to support us.

I intended to actually speak before the cloture vote and was unable to do so with the time constraints.

I want to express, if I can, over the next few minutes, my concerns about where we are economically in this country, as chairman of the Banking Committee. Today we had, once again, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board in front of the Banking Committee. Chairman Bernanke was before the committee reporting, as the law requires, on monetary policy. The conversation was not limited to that, as you might imagine. It covered the housing issues, foreclosure issues, as well as other questions under the jurisdiction of the Federal Reserve Board, as well as matters of concern to both Democrats and Republicans. Several weeks ago, we had Chairman Bernanke, Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, as well as Christopher Cox, Chairman of the SEC, before the Committee to discuss with us a wide range of issues covering the economy of our Nation.

We have had hearings on a number of issues affecting the very question before us. A lot of this data has already been laid out by others, but it is worth repeating to give a sense of the magnitude of the problem. It is not exaggeration or hyperbole to suggest that we are in perilous times economically. This is not a normal downturn or sort of a problem that might go away in the next 6 or 8 months in the absence of us taking action.

Let me say, I am a great believer in market forces. Almost a year ago,

when this problem first emerged, as the new chairman of the Banking Committee, I convened the members of the committee along with the stakeholders involved in the housing crisis in the committee room of the Banking Committee. Senator RICHARD SHELBY, to his credit, was there as we listened to the stakeholders talking about what could be done absent legislation being passed, absent new regulations being formulated, in order to keep people in their homes who are facing foreclosure, and to minimize the problem of a growing number of economic dislocations as a result of this housing crisis.

We were urged back in May, absent any legislation, to let the marketplace work to develop a solution. For this Member, this is the ideal solution, when it can work. I don't believe you have to jump in with bills or regulations if the market can, in fact, provide answers. So we sat back and said, ''let the market work.''

To some extent, the market did work—it flushed out many of the bad operators. Unfortunately, what has not happened is that the stakeholders have not really done what I thought they were going to do, which is aggressively endeavor to help those people who are in trouble and facing delinquencies or are on the brink of foreclosure to keep people in their homes. This was not about helping investors. It was the owner-occupied homes we were concerned about.

Regrettably, I am here to tell you that a year later the number of people helped out by that request has been minimal. I will share the statistics of how small a number we are talking about. While the Secretary of the Treasury, Hank Paulson, whom I respect, still pursues and persists as he did again today, that this Hope Now Alliance effort may work, this Member is less than optimistic about that having watched the process fail to work for the past year, as the problem got larger. Today, the situation continues to deteriorate, and it is not limited to housing. That is the point I want to make at the outset.

There is a contagion effect that is spreading to other parts of the economy. So while I am disappointed that cloture was not invoked within the last hour, my hope is that the leaders would give us another opportunity in the coming days, before we go into that March recess, the Easter/Passover recess, to actually be able to put something together to present to our colleagues that might enjoy the bipartisan support that this issue deserves. So I appeal to them this evening, in addition to talking about the problem, to give Senators SHELBY, BAUCUS, LEAHY, SPECTER, and GRASSLEY, the ranking Republicans on the respective committees, a chance to pull some things together in the next several days and present that to our colleagues to see if we cannot do something about this issue. I make that plea this evening, and I am prepared to do whatever I can to try to accommodate many various ideas. That is not to suggest that everything will be adopted, but it is worthy of this body's time to address itself to this issue.

The statistics I am about to share with you, I think, make the case more eloquently than anything I could say this evening about the perilous circumstances in which we are operating today. The economy slowed to a crawl at the end of last year. Economic growth was six-tenths of 1 percent. The data that we have received so far this year indicates the problem is going to get worse in 2008. The country lost jobs in January. That is the first time in 4 years that happened. Credit card delinquencies are on the rise as consumers find themselves increasingly unable to tap into the equity of their homes to help pay down their credit cards and other bills.

To put that into perspective, the median income of Americans is around $48,000 a year, I believe. Consumer debt, revolving debt, on average, is $9,300 and growing. Savings rates are negative. So in addition to the Federal deficit, we should talk about consumer debt in this country, which is growing. People's ability to resolve that growing debt problem has been significantly affected as a result of the loss of value in homes.

Lastly, inflation increased by 4.1 percent last year, the largest increase in 17 years, driven mainly by the rising cost of energy, food, and health care as well. Industrial production is flat, and we have been hemorrhaging jobs in the manufacturing sector. Our national economy is clearly in deep trouble. I don't enjoy saying that. That worries me.

One of the things I admire about Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, is that he has been very clear about the problem. While we may not like to hear it, I am sure others would like him to paint a rosy picture about all of this. I think he is doing a good job as Chairman of the Federal Reserve in laying out clearly to the administration and Members of Congress the seriousness of this problem. He is judicious in his choice of words. He doesn't engage in alarmist language. If you listen carefully to what he is saying, it is not substantially different than what I am saying.

We are in perilous times economically, and we need to spend time on these issues in this body. We are charged with that by the American people. This issue demands our attention. I hope we can come back to it in the coming days.

The epicenter of this economic trouble is the housing crisis. In fact, the current housing market is the worst since the Great Depression. That is not hyperbole, Mr. President.

For example, this first chart is titled ''Annual Change in Home Value.'' It indicates what home values have done over the last 8 years, from 2000 to 2008. In 2000, home values increased by almost 5 percent; in 2001, another 7 or 8 percent; and then another 8 percent; and in 2005 in excess of 10 percent; and then the price increases slowed in 2006. Then, for the first time nationally—not regionally—in 2007 we see declining values. In 2008, we expect to see an even deeper decline—in excess of 10 percent.

Mr. President, this is the first time since the Great Depression that home values have declined nationally. All of us are familiar with regional declines. We saw that in the late 1980s. But this is the first time that we have seen an annual drop in home values on a national basis. It is worthwhile to note that. It is a major concern. While many of us have experienced home price drops in our regions or local markets, 2007 was the first year since data has been kept that the U.S. had an annual decline nationwide on housing prices.

Case-Shiller data, released earlier this week, showed a 20-percent decline in home prices from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007, the steepest decline ever recorded.

Mr. President, these words I am using ought to put this in perspective and give some indication of how serious this is. These are the steepest declines ever recorded by this data.

A recent Moody's report forecasts that home values will drop in 2008 by 10 to 15 percent.

In 2007, as a whole, single-family home sales fell 13 percent. New home sales fell in excess of 40 percent—actually, 40.7 percent year over year in December, the weakest performance in 27 years. In January, home sales fell to their lowest levels in 9 years.

The inventory for existing homes for sale jumped by 5.5 percent in January alone and stands at over 4 million units, almost double the number in January of 2005. This is equal to over 10 months of supply. The ongoing glut of unsold homes means that home prices will continue to fall into the future. These are record numbers, in the last number of years.

We have not seen the worst of it, unfortunately. There are over 1 million borrowers with subprime and other exotic mortgages who are over 60 days delinquent. With about 1.8 million subprime ARMs, valued at about $500 billion resetting to higher rates in the next 18 months, there is no doubt that this problem is going to deepen.

As a result, I will put up the second chart of official data. This says ''New Homes Entering into Foreclosure.'' These are important numbers. Already, when I gave you the title of this, you began to see, obviously, what is happening in the fourth quarter of 2007. These numbers begin in the second quarter of 2005. I know it is hard to see. The first number is the second quarter of 2005. The numbers run from then to the fourth quarter of 2007, just ending a few months ago. You can get some idea of the homes entering foreclosure in this country. Again, it is in record numbers.

We are experiencing historic highs in both the rate of new foreclosures and the percentage of all loans in foreclosure, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association.

Mark Zandi, an economist at Moodys.com, estimates that 3 million loans will default between 2007 and mid-2009, of which 2 million will end in foreclosure sale. Over 23 percent of subprime loans are now 60 days or more delinquent in foreclosure. Those are huge numbers.

In January alone, Mr. President, foreclosures were up 57 percent, and bank repossessions were up 90 percent from January 2007, according to RealtyTrac data. There are currently 1.4 million families in foreclosure.

The third chart I want to show you gives you some idea of the magnitude of this in terms of dollars and cents. It is called ''Foreclosures: Impacts on Families.'' At least 2.2 million families are losing their homes. That is a staggering number. We always see every year that there are some foreclosures. Now we are talking about numbers that are unprecedented. The loss in home equity in the neighborhoods is over $165 billion. There will be a net loss of home ownership and wealth especially for African-American and Latinos families. This is a significant problem.

The fourth chart says ''Adjustable Rate Mortgages Currently Scheduled to Have Interest Rate Reset.'' I think everybody knows what I am talking about here the reset under what is called an ARM is an adjustable rate mortgage.

As an aside, ARMs can be a very attractive and valuable product for certain consumers. Frankly, these mortgages were marketed to too many people who, could not handle ARMs. I don't want ARMs to become a bad word, because they can be valuable for certain consumers in certain economic categories. But for many people they are dangerous.

Mr. SALAZAR. Will my friend yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. DODD. Certainly.

Mr. SALAZAR. I thank my friend. I was trying to figure out a speaking order because a number of Senators want to speak. I ask my friend about how much longer he expects to go.

Mr. DODD. Another 10 minutes.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the Senator's remarks, he be followed by Senators ALEXANDER for 5 minutes, WYDEN and SMITH for 10 minutes, followed by Senator CASEY for 5 minutes, and followed by Senator SALAZAR for 10 minutes, and Senator CASEY following Senator SALAZAR for as much time as he may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, what happens under ARMs is that there is a teaser rate, which is very low. You lure people in with the teaser rate—and I am now talking about people who should not be in ARMs.

Then, after the teaser period ends, the rate rises to the much higher fully indexed rate. What happens, of course, at a teaser rate, many people may be more than capable of meeting that obligation. Many mortgage brokers are marketing these products without being honest and forthright about what the fully indexed rate will be, and what the borrower's financial responsibility will be.

It is also important to state that borrowers have a responsibility as well as lenders. But in too many cases, those borrowers were being lured into situations that the brokers fully well knew that the borrowers were never going to be able to meet.

What are we looking at in this chart is the number of loans facing an interest rate reset, which means, when these higher rates kick in. We talk about resets occurring along the way. This chart is specifically designed to describe the reset problem.

Adjustable rate mortgages are currently scheduled to have interest rate resets, and the dollar value of mortgages that will reset is in the billions of dollars, to give some sense of the magnitude of the problem. This problem will last far beyond 2008. As this chart shows, even after the current subprime wave washes over us, we will face serious problems with interest-only and option-ARM resets for the next 4 years. In short, the problem is growing; not going away, but growing.

The crisis affects more than the families who will lose their homes. There will be an increased demand for social services, police, fire, and other services that ameliorate the impact of increases in foreclosed and abandoned property. You don't have to have a Ph.D. in housing to know the negative ripple effects on the community of abandoned and foreclosed properties that are sitting on the market. The value of neighboring homes, even if the neighbor is currently doing everything right, you don't have to be an expert in real estate to know that if your next-door neighbor or people on your street have an abandoned property, that it causes the home that you have taken care of, that you have done everything right by, to decrease in value.

Beyond the obvious impact of the foreclosure problem, there is a domino effect that is growing. Yet State and local governments have fewer resources, as we know, because as we have property foreclosed and not paying taxes, we find again the property taxes which most communities rely on for social services, police, fire, and the like also decline. That is what I want to show on this chart, the foreclosure impact on neighborhoods beyond the individual home.

Property values for each home within one-eighth mile of a foreclosed house dropped by an average of $5,000. This was a study done in Chicago. I see my friend from Tennessee, LAMAR ALEXANDER. I was talking with him about this a day or so ago. If you take a square block, which is roughly one-eighth of a square mile, when one foreclosure occurs in that area, then the property value of every other home on that city block, even though every other home is current in its mortgage obligations, taxes and the rest, the home values decline almost immediately by $5,000. That is the study.

Again, it is bad enough to lose the one property, but what is happening to everyone else in that neighborhood is they are also suffering. That is what this number is designed to show.

The result of that is that somewhere between 44 and 50 million homes adjacent to subprime foreclosed property will lose value if the problem persists, and localities are going to lose—the estimates are somewhere from $4.5 billion and $5 billion in property taxes and other tax revenues as a result of foreclosed properties. The effects go far beyond the individual who is adversely affected by these issues.

Unfortunately, we are seeing the contagion spread beyond the mortgage markets to the capital markets as a whole, both in the United States and globally. Yet as the Federal Reserve chairman acknowledged at a Banking Committee hearing this morning, our country is in a worse position to deal with the fallout of the housing and financial market crisis we are experiencing than we were after the tech bubble burst that put us into the recession of 2001.

Former Federal Reserve Vice Chairman Alan Blinder puts it like this:

> . . . the mortgage foreclosure problem grows and new strains in the financial system keep popping up like a not-very-funny version of whack-a-mole.

That is from a New York Times story of last week.

Many economists call this a negative feedback loop. It works like this: Homeowners, saddled with abusive mortgages that never should have been made and which they cannot afford, are forced into foreclosure at historic rates, forcing new homes to be sold into a marketplace already glutted with unsold homes. The rising supply pushes down home prices further, putting more borrowers under water and at risk, even borrowers with prime mortgages. Homeowners who can afford to pay their mortgages are seeing the equity they have built over the years evaporate before their eyes. According to Martin Feldstein, the chairman of President Reagan's Council of Economic Advisors, every 10-percent fall in home prices cuts household wealth by $2 trillion and household spending by $100 billion.

Let me repeat that. According to Martin Feldstein, every 10-percent fall in home prices—and we are watching that this year already and the estimates are for next year maybe as high as 15 percent—every 10-percent decline cuts household wealth by $2 trillion and household spending by $100 billion.

So if Moody's current estimate is correct that home prices will drop by 10 to 15 percent this year, household spending will fall by $100 billion to $150 billion, and household wealth will fall by $2 trillion to $3 trillion this year alone.

These losses do not stop with families who have lost their home equity. The securities backed by these loans, both subprime and increasingly by other higher quality mortgages, get downgraded, as we know, forcing banks and securities firms who own these securities to set aside billions of dollars against real or potential losses.

These write-downs, as they are called, and increased loss reserves reduce the ability of these institutions to lend any money, whether for mortgages or commercial loans, even to hire quality borrowers. Worse, the uncertainty about what the future might bring and what the subprime mortgage-backed securities might be worth are forcing these banks to hoard their capital against potential future disaster.

As a result, as Paul Ashworth, an economist with Capital Economics, in London said:

> Rather ominously, borrowing costs for even most creditworthy of firms have started to rise.

As we know, homeowners who can still get mortgages have seen these rates rise. Banks are tightening their standards for both credit cards and commercial real estate loans, and home equity loans are being pulled as home prices declined, forcing families to find alternative means of financing their children's education, home repairs, and other activities.

Let me point out, we saw in this morning's newspapers that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—I see my good friend BOB CASEY from Pennsylvania—it was pointing out the difficulty that could occur this year with student loans. The State of Michigan last week reported a very similar situation.

So, once again, while we are talking about a housing crisis, we are already getting stories that student loans may not be as available for this year as they have been. This is now going beyond the issue of what happens with someone who gets their property foreclosed. It now could very well reach into the critical issue of student loans which are absolutely essential for middle-income working families so their children have an opportunity for higher education. That is how serious this problem is.

Businesses, universities, and public entities are finding it harder and harder and far more expensive to roll over their existing debt or to get credit at all. For example, we saw recently how the major Wall Street houses, from Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs to Citigroup and Merrill Lynch, have refused to commit capital to the auction rate market, a market that was supposed to allow investors to sell their debt each week via auction that sets interest rates. As a result, many auctions are failing, saddling high-quality entities with absurdly high interest rates.

Two weeks ago, for instance, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey was forced to pay 20-percent interest on its debt because their auction failed. Student loan programs, I mentioned a moment ago, in Michigan and Pennsylvania have also shut down—shut down, Mr. President.

Since last August, we have seen this negative feedback loop continue its downward spiral despite repeated rate cuts and other actions taken by the Federal Reserve and international central bankers intended to stem this tide. The result is a crisis of confidence that has serious implications for our country. Again, let me quote Professor Feldstein, who served as President Reagan's top economic adviser:

> The principal cause for concern today is the paralysis of the credit markets. The collapse of confidence in credit markets is now preventing that necessary extension of credit. The decline of credit creation includes not only the banks but also the bond markets, hedge funds, insurance companies and mutual funds. Securitization, leveraged buyouts and credit insurance have also atrophied.

The catalyst of this downward economic spiral is the housing crisis, and the face of this housing crisis is the historic increase in foreclosures. Therefore, in my view, any serious effort to address our economic woes must include an effort to take on the foreclosure crisis. We have to begin there. If we do not deal with that issue, then we are flirting around with disaster, in my view, and avoiding the central question. So we must do something to slow the tide of foreclosures overcoming many of our citizens, and we need to give our local officials the tools and resources to cope with the increases in foreclosed properties.

In doing so, we will help break the downward cycle that is pushing our economy toward a recession if we are not already in the middle of one.

By acting, we can bring some certainty where today only uncertainty exists. We can help restore the confidence of consumers and investors that is absolutely indispensable to economic progress in our Nation.

There are some steps we have taken in the housing sphere already. Working closely with my friend, Senator RICHARD SHELBY, the ranking member of the Banking Committee, and the administration, we were able to pass the FHA reform legislation. We have started working with the House to resolve our differences. My hope is that within a few days, Senator SHELBY and I will be able to present to you a package that has been passed by both Houses.

I am committed to work with Senator SHELBY and the administration to pass a government-sponsored enterprise regulatory reform bill so that Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks can expand their efforts to help people stay in their homes.

The committee has held extensive oversight hearings on the problems that plague the housing markets, including a hearing on January 31 to look at the foreclosure issue. And there will be more hearings to come.

I do not contend that S. 2636 will solve all the problems. The bill, unfortunately, did not receive the necessary cloture votes. But it is a start, and it will help in a number of ways that were talked about.

I see my colleagues are anxious to speak as well. We heard about the provision on bankruptcy reform, which I support, about some tax provisions that would have made some difference, and I will leave the record to describe what other proposals are included, including the counseling provision that Senator SCHUMER, myself, and others have championed for a long time to help consumers, as well as community development block grants for cities to acquire and rehabilitate foreclosed properties.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed for 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, obviously we are not going to get to this bill tonight. My hope would have been that, at this hour, we would have been debating amendments and ideas included in that package. That did not happen. That is no reason for this not to go forward in the future, however.

As I said at the outset of these remarks, I know all of my colleagues care about this issue. This is one of those moments when we have nothing less than the highest obligations to deal with this crisis. We ought to have enough ability to deal with this crisis, with the talent that exists in this Chamber, putting aside the ideological debates that go on here all the time. We will be indicted in the public's mind if we do not step up and address this issue. Ultimately if we do create the opportunity and ability to step in and do what needs to be done to address this situation, the blame will fall right here and the burden will fall on the taxpayers of America. We will be indicted, and should be, if we do not have the wisdom, the ability, the courage, the intestinal fortitude to step up to craft ideas that can make a difference.

My final plea this evening is to the leaders—and I know the majority leader feels as passionately about this as I do—and that is to set aside whatever else we are dealing with for a number of days to give those of us, as he has, and the responsibility of the committees involved to bring together a collection of these ideas to this Chamber and then set aside the necessary time over several days to debate them thoroughly as to how we ought to proceed and to present the American public with a series of notions and proposals that I think could make a difference on this issue.

I do not claim clairvoyance. I do not claim the result would be perfect. But I think the very act of acting has its benefits, putting aside whether we do all the things the American people would like us to do. The idea that the Senate, the Congress of the United States is stepping up to do something for the people who, at this very hour, are hanging by their collective fingernails wondering whether everything they saved and put aside for their lives is going to be lost in the coming days. There are millions and millions of people adversely affected.

It is not just the foreclosures. We are talking about 44 million to 50 million homes being adversely affected because we did not have the intestinal fortitude, wisdom, and desire to step up and make a difference, then we ought to be indicted.

So, Mr. President, I stand ready and prepared, as I know many others do, to sit down and work out a series of proposals to bring up before we depart here in 2 weeks for the Easter and Passover break to get this job done. And that is my offer this evening. I know I speak for Senator SHELBY and for the members of my committee, who care deeply about this issue as well, that we will do anything and everything we have to do to assist in this effort.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I stayed so that I could respond to not just the words but the spirit and the tone of the remarks of the Senator from Connecticut. He and Senator SHELBY, and their committee, are in the best position to help make sure we do our job between now and the upcoming recess, and on behalf of the Republican leader, I wish to say that is our goal.

Looking back just to the end of last year, this Senate was able to take up an energy bill, have a principled debate—including an argument about taxes—and come to a result. And we took a step—increasing fuel efficiency standards for the first time in 30 years—that, according to a top expert at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, will do more than anything else Congress could do to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Then we took up the economic stimulus legislation, and it was a smaller package than almost any of us would have preferred, because we had different points of view, but we agreed on it. We had a vote that kept out $40 billion in additional spending which that side wanted and this side largely didn't, but we came to a result, and the President signed it into law.

We did the same thing on intelligence, with a very difficult issue, liberty versus security, and how do we balance that. We had a Rockefeller-Bond proposal on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act that finally got 68 votes, and we sent it to the House.

That is three straight. Now here comes housing. There is no reason we can't have a result here. I think all that we are saying on this side is that while the Democratic proposal may be a good start, we think it needs a lot of work. We do not, for example, want to put into law a proposal that many feel might turn home mortgages into junk bonds. We have some ideas in addition to those which have been proposed that we would like considered.

There seems to be no reason in the world why the majority leader could not sit down with the Republican leader and say: Let's see if we can agree on a limited number of amendments. And we respect the fact that largely the Democratic side will want to pick its amendments, and we hope you will respect the fact that largely we would like to pick our amendments. Now, there is some negotiation there. It can't all be done out here tonight. But I think the point we would like to make is that there are 49 Republican Senators. We want to be a part of this solution, as we were in energy, as we were in with economic stimulus, as we were with intelligence, and we intend to be with housing as well. And we look to the chairman of the Banking Committee, Senator DODD, and to the ranking member, Senator SHELBY, and to Senators GRASSLEY and BAUCUS on the Finance Committee to help us get to that position early next week.

My colleagues will hear us on this side talking a lot about a pro-growth economic plan that goes beyond just housing—we believe in lower taxes, and we want lower health care costs and lower energy costs, and we want to implement the America COMPETES Act. We want a strong robust economy, and housing is a part of it. So there are some larger issues we might want to take up as part of the housing debate. Just which ones are appropriate ought to be something we could discuss and work out.

So I appreciate the spirit of the Senator's comments. Our spirit is that we have 49 Members on this side of the aisle, and we would like to have our ideas included. We don't like the idea of just sending a bill up and saying: OK, here it is, let's vote it up or down. The majority leader said that really wasn't his intention, so maybe there is a misunderstanding, and maybe that can be cleared up over the weekend and we can get back to doing our job on housing, as we have done with the energy, economic stimulus, and intelligence bills.

So I thank the Senator for his excellent remarks and his spirit, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield for a minute, I don't want to interrupt, because I know others want to be heard, but I listened very carefully to what the majority leader said earlier, and he did an eloquent job of explaining this himself, but I want the record to reflect this as well.

I think the only concern the majority leader had, and I say this respectfully to my friend from Tennessee, was that he asked what these other amendments might be, which is a very legitimate request—not to suggest he has the right to decide the outcome of them but merely what they would be. That is the job of the majority leader, obviously. To say we have five amendments and you have to wait until we get to them to tell you what they are obviously makes his job very difficult, if not impossible.

Just as the leader laid out what the bill was and what we would be offering, I think, in fairness, in order to move this along—and I don't want to get bogged down in this because this is how we can get lost in the weeds of all of this, but I think, in fairness to the majority leader, he felt as though it was not right to be denied the right to know what the various amendments would be. Not to say he would agree with them—as he said, he doesn't agree with the amendment being offered by Senator SPECTER—but he has the right to offer it, and he would respect that.

So if we are going to do this, it is important for the leaders—and I am not a leader here, but the leaders need to sit down and see how the place operates and how it is going to function.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, we have other Senators wanting to speak, and these will be my last comments. I don't disagree with that. I think we all know what needs to happen here. We don't want the majority leader picking all our amendments.

Mr. DODD. Of course not.

Mr. ALEXANDER. And you didn't say you wanted to. So apparently, somehow, it didn't get through as clearly as it might have. Maybe we didn't hear it well or maybe it wasn't said as clearly.

The Republican ideas, some of which we think are very strong, such as the Isakson amendment, for example, which has a lot of appeal, we want to make sure those ideas are included in the debate, and when that right is respected, we think we can have a good bill.

So hopefully the majority leader and the Republican leader will have a chance to discuss that, and the chairman of the Banking Committee and the ranking member will help with that process as well.

Mr. DODD. We hope so. And let me just say for the record, as someone who is familiar with the Isakson proposal, I think it has very meritorious qualities to it, and I think that might enjoy some very strong support.

Mr. President, I again yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

LEWIS AND CLARK MOUNT HOOD WILDERNESS AREA

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I was prepared to come to the floor tonight and ask unanimous consent that the

Senate proceed to take up and pass the Lewis and Clark Mount Hood wilderness legislation, and I am very pleased that my colleague from our State, Senator SMITH, was prepared to join me this evening. We were going to tackle this issue which is so important to the people of our State in a bipartisan fashion.

Oregon's Mount Hood is a cherished State treasure. There is statewide consensus in every corner of Oregon that this protection is essential, and Senator SMITH and I have worked for a great many years trying to move this legislation forward. It has passed the relevant Senate committee, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and the two of us had hoped tonight to pass this legislation by unanimous consent.

Regrettably, my colleague has been informed by the Senator from Oklahoma that he would not let us go forward with this legislation tonight. I greatly regret this. The people of our State are waiting. They have been waiting many years for this. They have understood that Senator SMITH and I have tried to approach this not just in a bipartisan way but in the most inclusive way we possibly could, working with environmental concerns, timber concerns, and the concerns of local officials and scientists. We have had scores and scores of citizens' groups involved in this effort.

Our constituents just don't understand how a piece of legislation that has all of this consensus behind it and all of the energy and passion that Oregonians have brought to it, cannot pass tonight and be done quickly so that this legislation could pass the Senate and go to the other body where our colleagues, particularly Congressman BLUMENAUER and Congressman WALDEN, have also put in many hours, in a bipartisan way, to try to get this legislation enacted and sent to the President.

The reality is that the people of our State want this State icon protected and not held hostage. I am very interested in working with our colleague from the State of Oklahoma. I want to try to address any concerns he may have. I am perplexed as to what those are because we can't get any specifics as to what they actually are.

I think that at this time I would like to yield to my colleague from the State of Oregon for his remarks and perhaps just wrap it up briefly afterward. But I think it is unfortunate tonight, when both of Oregon's Senators wanted to pass this much needed legislation, that we couldn't go forward when there is such strong bipartisan support.

Mr. President, with a reservation so I can wrap up briefly, let me yield to my colleague from Oregon, Senator SMITH, for his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, Senator WYDEN. Many may wonder why we are down here and talking about this piece of legislation, and it is, in short, because Mount Hood is more than just a mountain in our State, it is the icon of our State. It is a place of remarkable beauty. It is a place where a vast majority of our citizens wish to have the greatest legal protections for its preservation. For this generation and for all time to come, obviously wilderness is the highest form of legal protection for any piece of public land.

In the course of coming to this place, Senator WYDEN and I have had many meetings with constituents, received countless pieces of mail in support, and have appreciated the intensity of feeling about this from a whole range of interests. This bill is the work of compromise. This bill does not shortchange a vital industry of our State, which obviously I am speaking of timber. Timber production is vital to our country. Timber production is vital to the economy and the jobs of thousands of Oregonians.

So we, Senator WYDEN and I, have engaged in a lot of give-and-take. We worked with our colleagues in the House, who have similar legislation. We are anxious to get this to them so that this heartfelt demand from our citizens of Oregon can be realized.

In saying all of this, I don't expect the citizens of Oregon to understand the arcane rules of the Senate. The fact is, they are rules based upon honor and one's word, and it is a fact that Senator COBURN has indicated to me his objection to this piece of legislation. So out of respect for him, out of honoring both the letter and the rules of the Senate, we are not offering this even though we are disappointed that we cannot offer this. We would not do that with him being absent from the Senate, but we do commit to him to continue working on any substantive objection he may have to try to resolve what those may be.

I would note that the Republican side of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted unanimously for this piece of legislation. So this is nothing that is extreme. This is something completely unique to Oregon and certainly something within the range of values that Oregonians feel toward the environment. I also note that the Bush administration, as far as I know, is now on board with this piece of legislation. So this has broad support.

It is still a work in progress, obviously, with our House colleagues, but we do not offer it tonight out of respect for our colleague from Oklahoma. We simply want to talk about it, to let the people of Oregon know we are working on it, that we are on the job and anxious to get this to a final result so that Mount Hood, which is definitional of the beauty of our State and the values that we put on the environment, can enjoy the legal protection that comes with a wilderness designation.

Again, we have included the logging community, we have included the recreation community, we have included the environmental community. This is the work of compromise, which is the essential ingredient to getting anything through the Senate.

So we will continue the effort. We will continue to work with our colleague from Oklahoma. And I thank Senator WYDEN for his passion on this issue and the way he and I have worked together to resolve, it seems like 100 different little issues, to try and come to this point of compromise that does satisfy the demands of so large a swath of the people of Oregon and provide this level of protection to an icon which is the beauty of Mount Hood.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. I know colleagues are waiting. I am going to wrap up very briefly. I commend my colleague from Oregon for an excellent statement. The fact is, this legislation has been a labor of love for the people of Oregon. They have been involved in scores and scores of meetings in communities all across the State. And all they want to do is protect these scenic areas as Lewis and Clark first saw them.

The fact is, it has taken years longer to pass this legislation through the Senate than it took Lewis and Clark to get to Oregon. And that is why Senator SMITH and I have indicated we hope to get any further concerns that my colleague, the Senator from Oklahoma, or any other Member of the Senate has, because I certainly do not think this is a partisan issue.

When you have legislation like this that seeks to protect almost 126,000 acres and more than 79 miles of wild and scenic rivers on nine free-flowing rivers, including some of the most pristine and treasured areas of our State, all of the people who are going to visit this area, Oregonians and non-Oregonians alike, they are not going to see this as an exercise in partisan politics. They are going to see this as Lewis and Clerk saw this: in effect, protecting the very special parts of Oregon that are a treasure to our State, that are a treasure for the people of the country.

And as Senator SMITH indicated, our doors are open. We want to proceed with this legislation in the Senate just as quickly as we possibly can. Our colleagues in the other body are waiting for it. That is what it is going to take to get the Senate and the other body to work together, and get it sent to the President of the United States. I wish we were getting it done tonight. Senator SMITH has indicated so as well. I do not think there is any reason it did not get done tonight, for all practical purposes. But we are going to continue to work in good faith with all the Members of the Senate, and we hope to be back on this floor very soon to see this critically needed legislation advance and get passed by this body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

TRIBUTE TO MYRON COPE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, thank you very much. I rise tonight to speak

about a distinguished Pennsylvanian whom we lost this week. I will be speaking a little bit later about housing and the housing crisis in our economy.

I wanted to speak first tonight about a man who is known all across our State and indeed beyond the State but especially in Pittsburgh. I speak of Myron Cope who died this week at the age of 79. He was, in fact, a legendary Pittsburgher and the voice of the Pittsburgh Steelers for an unprecedented 35 years.

He died yesterday at the age of 79 in a nursing home in Pittsburgh where he was being treated for respiratory problems and heart failure.

He is known for so much. He is probably best known for his quirky catch phrases and creating the well-known, world-renowned ''terrible towel'' of the Pittsburgh Steelers, which so many people know was a symbol that was twirled at Steelers games as a good luck charm and has developed into an international symbol of Pittsburgh Steeler pride.

Steeler's president, Art Rooney, said it best in a story yesterday when he said:

> His memorable voice and unique broadcasting style became synonymous with Steeler football. They say imitation is the greatest form of flattery and no Pittsburgh broadcaster was impersonated more than Myron.

Art Rooney said it well. Not many people know that Myron Cope was an announcer by accident. He spent the first half of his professional career as one of the Nation's most widely read freelance sports writers, writing for Sports Illustrated, the Saturday Evening Post, on subjects and athletes as wide and as diverse as Muhammad Ali, Howard Cossell, and Roberto Clemente, the legendary Pittsburgh Pirate baseball player.

The Associated Press did a story about Myron's passing. And it talked about how he became so popular with the Steelers that they did not try to replace his unique perspective when he retired. Instead they downsized from a three-man announcing team to a two-man booth because of his unique perspective.

I will not try to imitate his voice. Many do; I will not try it because I cannot do it well. But the Associated Press said this about Myron:

> To Cope, an exceptional play rated a ''Yoi!'' A coach's doublespeak was ''garganzola.''

That is Myron Cope's language for various things. We could go on and on tonight about all of those terms that he came up with, ways he described winning and losing and the aspects of a football game. But I will leave it to others to try to imitate his voice.

But we are thinking of him tonight and thinking of his family and his legions of fans.

I ask unanimous consent that the Associated Press story by Alan Robinson be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Associated Press, Pittsburgh, Feb. 27, 2008]

STEELERS' FORMER RADIO ANNOUNCER MYRON COPE DIES

(By Alan Robinson, AP Sports Writer)

Myron Cope, the screechy-voiced announcer whose colorful catch phrases and twirling Terrible Towel became symbols of the Pittsburgh Steelers during an unrivaled 35 seasons in the broadcast booth, has died. He was 79.

Cope died Wednesday morning at a nursing home in Mount Lebanon, a Pittsburgh suburb, Joe Gordon, a former Steelers executive and a longtime friend of Cope's, told The Associated Press. Cope had been treated for respiratory problems and heart failure in recent months, Gordon said.

Cope's tenure from 1970–2004 as the color analyst on the Steelers' radio network is the longest in NFL history for a broadcaster with a single team and led to his induction into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 2005.

Even after retiring, Cope—a sports talk show host for 23 years—continued to appear in numerous radio, TV and print ads, emblematic of a local popularity that sometimes surpassed that of the stars he covered.

Beyond Pittsburgh's three rivers, Cope is best known for pioneering the Terrible Towel, the yellow cloth twirled by fans as a good luck charm at Steelers games since the mid-1970s. The towel is arguably the best-known fan symbol of any major pro sports team, has raised millions of dollars for charity and is displayed at the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

''You were really part of it,'' Steelers owner Dan Rooney told Cope in 2005. ''You were part of the team. The Terrible Towel many times got us over the goal line.''

An announcer by accident, Cope spent the first half of his professional career as one of the nation's most widely read freelance sports writers, writing for Sports Illustrated and the Saturday Evening Post on subjects that included Muhammad Ali, Howard Cosell and Roberto Clemente. He was hired by the Steelers at age 40, several years after he began doing TV sports commentary on the whim of a station manager, mostly to help increase attention and attendance as the Steelers moved into Three Rivers Stadium.

Neither the Steelers nor Cope had any idea how much impact he would make on a five-time Super Bowl champion franchise that, within two years of his hiring, would begin a string of home sellouts that continues to this day.

Cope became so popular that the Steelers didn't try to replace his unique perspective and top-of-the-lungs vocal histrionics when he retired, instead downsizing from a three-man announcing team to a two-man booth.

''He doesn't play, he doesn't put on a pair of pads, but he's revered probably as much or more in Pittsburgh than Franco (Harris), all the guys,'' running back Jerome Bettis said. ''Everybody probably remembers Myron more than the greatest players, and that's an incredible compliment.''

Cope and a rookie quarterback named Terry Bradshaw made their Steelers debuts on Sept. 20, 1970.

Just as Pirates fans once did with longtime broadcaster Bob Prince, Steelers fans began tuning in to hear what wacky stunt or colorful phrase Cope would come up with next. With a voice beyond imitation—a falsetto shrill that could pierce even the din of a touchdown celebration—Cope was a man of many words, some not in any dictionary.

To Cope, an exceptional play rated a ''Yoi!'' A coach's doublespeak was ''garganzola.'' The despised rival to the north was always the Cleve Brownies, never the Cleveland Browns.

He gave four-time Super Bowl champion coach Chuck Noll the only nickname that ever stuck, the Emperor Chaz. For years, he laughed off the downriver and often downtrodden Cincinnati Bengals as the Bungles, though never with a malice or nastiness that would create longstanding anger.

Many visiting players who, perhaps upset by what Cope had uttered during a broadcast, could only laugh when confronted by a 5-foot-4 man they often dwarfed by more than a foot.

During the years, it seemed every Steelers player or employee could tell an offbeat or humorous story about Cope.

He once jammed tight end Dave Smith, fully dressed in uniform and pads, into a cab for a hectic ride to the airport after Smith missed the team bus for an interview. He talked a then-retired Frank Sinatra into attending a 1972 practice in San Diego to make him an honorary general in Franco Harris's Italian Army fan club. He took a wintertime river swim in 1977 to celebrate an unexpected win, and was sick for days.

Cope's biggest regret was not being on the air during perhaps the most famous play in NFL history—Franco Harris's famed Immaculate Reception against Oakland in 1972, during the first postseason win in Steelers history.

Cope was on the field to grab guests for his postgame show when Harris, on what seemingly was the last play of the Steelers' season, grabbed the soaring rebound of a tipped Terry Bradshaw pass after it deflected off either the Raiders' Jack Tatum or the Steelers' Frenchy Fuqua and scored a game-winning 60-yard touchdown. As a result, play-by-play man Jack Fleming's voice is the only one heard on what has been countless replays over the years.

''He ran straight to me in the corner, and I'm yelling, 'C'mon Franco, c'mon on!,' '' said Cope, who, acting on a fan's advice, tagged the play ''The Immaculate Reception'' during a TV commentary that night.

Remarkably, Cope worked with only two play-by-play announcers, Fleming and Bill Hillgrove, and two head coaches, Noll and Bill Cowher, during his 35 seasons.

Cope began having health problems shortly before his retirement, and they continued after he left the booth. They included several bouts of pneumonia and bronchitis—he smoked throughout his career—a concussion and a leg problem that took months to properly diagnose. He also said he had a cancerous growth removed from his throat.

''Wherever I go, people sincerely ask me how my health is and almost always, they say 'Myron, you've given me so much joy over the years,' '' said Cope, who also found the time to write five sports books, none specifically about the Steelers. ''People also tell me it's the end of an era, that there will never be an announcer who lasts this long again with a team.''

Among those longtime listeners was a Pittsburgh high school star turned NFL player turned Steelers coach—Bill Cowher.

''My dad would listen to his talk show and I would think, 'Why would you listen to that?' '' Cowher said. ''Then I found myself listening to that. I (did) my show with him, and he makes ME feel young.''

Mr. CASEY. In conclusion, I want to say that Myron Cope was a familiar voice to every Pittsburgher and football fan alike, and his persona will live on in the hearts of Pittsburghers and Steelers fans for generations to come.

It is a sad day and really a sad week for Pittsburgh and for football. He will

be dearly missed. And today we honor his legacy. Tomorrow I will be honored to introduce a resolution honoring Myron Cope.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor of the Senate this evening to express my extreme disappointment that the Senate is not moving forward today to address the housing crisis which is causing so much pain for people all over this country, from the Presiding Officer's wonderful Sunshine State of Florida, to the western shores of California, to most of the States across the country.

We know there is a lot of pain because of the housing crisis that America finds itself in today. To be sure, I am proud of the work that this Chamber did a few weeks ago when we pushed through the economic stimulus package to provide tax rebates and to provide some incentives for businesses to invest in equipment to make sure that we are keeping our economy from going into the ditch.

But let there be no doubt, let there be no doubt anywhere in America today that the housing market is in crisis and American home ownership is becoming a nightmare to the homeowners of America. And so it is, in my view, incumbent upon this Chamber, incumbent upon the President of the United States, incumbent upon us, to try to move forward, to try to ease some of the pain and to make sure that what is the primary cause for us being in the kind of economic instability that we find ourselves in today, is something that we address, and that is the housing crisis that America faces.

On this chart, you will note that the statistics indicate what is happening across America that is bringing so much pain to the people who own homes in all of our States. This morning in one of our Finance Committee meetings where we had a hearing, we heard from the real estate industry, including those who are owners of commercial real estate and those who build our homes across this country. Those who are building our homes, the National Association of Home Builders, their vice president and a witness today at our Finance Committee hearing said what they are seeing in the housing market is the worst they have seen since the Great Depression.

Now, the Great Depression brought not only the economy of the United States, but the economy of the world, basically, to its knees, flat on its face. And it took that ''greatest generation'' to stand up this economy again.

So they are telling us, these people who build our homes in America, that this is worse than anything that they have seen since that Great Depression. But Moody's, the economic group, in testimony that they provided to one of our committees in the Senate not long ago, talked about how we have not yet reached the trough, the bottom of the housing crisis that we are going into. Yet we have a filibuster underway that is keeping us from moving forward and addressing this housing issue.

I do not get it. I do not understand it. If you look at where we are today in terms of what is projected to be the trough with respect to a number of these metrics that we have on this chart, the first of those is the decline in housing values across America.

What this chart shows is that it is projected that housing values will decline, on average across America, by over 15 percent. Now, when you talk about that kind of decline in home values, it is not just a pain that is affecting those homeowners whose houses are in foreclosure, it is a pain that is being felt by the neighborhood, by the communities, by millions of people who own homes. It is a significant decline in home value.

When you look at home sales projected, home sales will be down to a level of 40 percent across the country. So when we get down to the bottom of the trough in housing starts, there is no end to it. The blue line here shows what happened in the 1980s when we had a similar kind of drop in the housing industry, where housing starts went down to 55, 58 percent in that decline.

The economists now project that it is going to be a 60-percent decline with no end in sight. So we do have a housing crisis on our hands. We have a crisis, a housing crisis on our hands. It is important that this Senate do something about it. So I would appeal to the Republican leader, to our own leadership, that we figure out a way of moving forward.

I believe that the legislation that Senator REID introduced, the 2008 Mortgage Foreclosure Act, was a very good step in the right direction, and we should have had an opportunity to move forward with that legislation and to try to figure out ways of improving upon that legislation.

I am still hopeful that as this day goes on, as Friday goes on, as we come into next week, we will be able to pivot it over to address this very substantive and real issue that is causing so much pain to the people of America.

It is causing pain to the people of my State. When you look at this chart, produced by the Center for Responsible Lending, it tells you what is happening in my State of Colorado.

As to foreclosures which now are rampant across our State, 1 in 376 homes in Colorado is in foreclosure. We have not seen the end of it. By the time the teaser rates, the adjustable rate mortgages adjust themselves over the next 2 years, there is a projection that there will be 49,923 homes in foreclosure in the State of Colorado, 49,000 homes in foreclosure.

So, yes, people who are losing their homes obviously are going to go through a lot of pain. To go from a point where you are a homeowner to a place where you are in the street, obviously, is going to create a hospital of pain to those families that are part of these 50,000 people who are going to be affected by foreclosure.

This is not just a foreclosure issue. Because of what is happening, and every American homeowner is seeing this today, the pain spreads from those foreclosures to other homes in the area, and those people are also going to see significant declines in their values.

The spillover impact in the State of Colorado tells us that 748,652 homes are going to have values that decline because of the foreclosure situation. So this spillover impact is going to affect almost 40 percent of all of the homes in the State of Colorado. So it is a problem that is causing pain to, let's say, 3 million of the people who live in my State. So it is not just a foreclosure problem, but because of the spillover impact that we are going to see.

In my State of Colorado, when we look at the decrease in home values, when you accumulate that number, it is going to be a $3.2 billion impact. This is much more than about just foreclosure. It also is about the pain to homeowners who are seeing the price of their homes decline over time. It goes beyond those who are having their homes foreclosed upon and ending up in the streets. It goes beyond those people with the pride of home ownership who are seeing the values of their homes decline. It also goes to the industries and people who work in the home industry.

This article which came out of the Rocky Mountain News talks about what is happening with construction in the State of Colorado and Metropolitan Denver. The headline says it all, ''Metro Home Building Drops 34 Percent in '07 Permits and May Cost Up to 10,000 Jobs.'' We have hundreds of thousands of people who work in the home construction business, not only in my State but throughout the Nation. Many of those people who work in that industry are finding themselves today unemployed because of the housing crisis, a 34-percent drop in the number of housing starts, so there is lots of effects going on in our State.

My view is that Senator REID did exactly what he should have done as our majority leader. He said we had moved forward, worked closely with the President and the House of Representatives to pass an economic stimulus package which was significantly improved over what the President and the House of Representatives had proposed. He felt, correctly, that we should now pivot from that issue to working on some of the longer term economic issues affecting our Nation. Certainly one of those top priorities should be housing. I believe we also should move on and deal with another aspect of a major national agenda, to make sure we are putting more into developing a new energy future for America. But today the issue is housing. That is what the majority leader attempted to pivot to today with the Foreclosure Prevention

Act of 2008. That legislation had probably the support of most of the Members with respect to at least 90 percent of the substance included in the legislation, such as $10 billion over 3 years for mortgage revenue bonds to help families refinance their homes, $10 billion over 3 years. That was a bipartisan amendment that came out of the Finance Committee, sponsored by Senator KERRY and Senator SMITH, a bipartisan amendment where I don't think there would have been people in this Chamber who would have stood up and said no. We could have helped the families of America deal with the housing crisis by providing them the refinancing opportunities with that kind of investment.

There is $200 million for credit counseling. It seems to me that most people have said the best thing to do is to get the homeowner and the financial institutions together, find out for the homeowner what the options are, and then get them to do a modification of their loan so they can stay in their home. That is what this legislation would have provided, $200 million for credit counseling. I don't know who would have disagreed with that concept. This legislation would have allowed $4 billion for community development block grants, CDBG grants, because there are some places in our Nation where the number of foreclosures is affecting those communities in a very negative way. Just as in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, my good friend Senator CASEY will know those areas where you can drive down the street, and you can see homes that are in foreclosure, block by block by block. What this investment would have done, $4 billion in community development block grants, is helped those communities, those neighborhoods that are suffering the most.

This legislation also included other provisions that were good for the business community. Through the leadership of Senator CONRAD, an amendment I helped cosponsor in the Finance Committee, we would have included in here a net operating loss carryback provision so that losses from 2007, 2008, and 2009 could be carried back for 5 years. That is an important provision for those who have been involved in the home building industry or those who are in other industries who are suffering the economic tough times we are in today. It would have given those businesses a kind of shot in the arm to create a robustness and a new future for them as they try to weather the difficult times.

In addition, the legislation would have required simplicity and transparency in mortgage documents. It would be a furtherance of truth in disclosure documents so that consumers, in signing up for a loan, would know exactly what it was they were signing up for. Those provisions would have been relatively noncontroversial.

Then what is it that has been raised as a reason to oppose us moving to address the housing crisis here in the Senate? The provision that says we should allow homeowners to modify their loans under very limited conditions with respect to home ownership. There was a sense from some Members on the other side that maybe that was going too far, maybe there were ways in which we could have worked to deal with that issue and some modifications that would address some of their concerns. But as written, as proposed, we tried to put some rails around it. We tried to say that the only ones who could take advantage of that provision were those who were home occupants. You had to be occupying the home before you could avail yourself of those provisions. You had to meet certain strict financial conditions so that there would be a showing of need before you could take advantage of that provision. You would have to be approved by the bankruptcy court. At the end of the day, you would have had a modification of a loan that would probably have been agreed to between the lender and the homeowner, if the homeowner wanted to stay in the home.

I am not an expert in bankruptcy law. It seems to me that under chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Code, you can discharge almost any debt with certain limitations that are set forth in the code. There are other provisions of the Bankruptcy Code—as I recall, chapter 13—that say you can avail yourself of the bankruptcy court in order to modify your debt. If you want to pay back your debt in some way but you don't have the means, chapter 13 allows you to reorganize your debt by asking the bankruptcy court to allow you to pay your debt over a longer period under other terms that a bankruptcy court might impose with respect to the repayment of the debt. But it is not a debt forgiveness. If you are a homeowner today and you happen to own a vacation home and you have a debt on the vacation home, you can go to the bankruptcy court and modify your loan. If you happen to be a homeowner today and you own a recreational vehicle or some kind of a yacht and you owe a debt against that, you can go to the bankruptcy court and have the court modify your loan under a chapter 13 proceeding. You can do it with respect to any asset. But under the current Bankruptcy Code, you are not allowed to do that with respect to your home. It makes no sense to me in particular because of the kinds of rails and constraints that we put around this legislation as it was crafted.

I hope that we as a Senate, in addressing the pain that homeowners are feeling today, can move forward to provide a solution to help us weather these tough times. That is our duty and our responsibility. We as a Senate need to be judged by a very simple reality: Results matter. Stalling or looking away from a problem and pretending it doesn't exist doesn't work anymore. There needs to be a focus on dealing with the problems the American people are carrying on their backs today. Certainly the housing crisis is one of those burdens they are carrying with significant pain.

I hope the voices of the American public, the voices of those who are in home ownership, will rise so that tomorrow or on Monday we can figure out a way of moving forward to putting together a solution on the housing crisis that is affecting us in America today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I appreciate what the Senator from Colorado outlined for us, a great recitation of the challenges we have in the Senate on this issue of the housing crisis and our economy. It is important to point out where we are today. We are here tonight talking about legislation which did not move forward today for one very simple reason: because the other side of the aisle chose to stop it, as they have done on a number of fronts. I was thinking today about when we reflect upon the housing crisis that grips so many communities and families, a couple of weeks ago we were debating a stimulus package and a similar thing happened. We did get legislation passed and the President did sign it. That was largely a positive development. But what we didn't get done—because, again, the other side stopped us; they blocked, obstructed our ability to put unemployment insurance and food stamp assistance in there, which economists tell us are the best ways to stimulate the economy.

Here we are again on housing, at a time when we had a piece of legislation which would provide some light—in fact, I would argue substantial light—to the darkness that many families face with regard to foreclosure. It would provide some measure of relief to the pain families feel when they lose their home. It would provide some help and assistance with the trauma, the economic trauma that the loss of a house can visit upon a family. That is what we are talking about, doing our best in the Senate to provide some help for families.

We want to do a couple of things with this legislation which we know is the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008. Our majority leader, Senator REID, and the members of the Democratic Caucus set it out fairly specifically, a couple of basic things this legislation would have done. First, it would have continued what we started in the end of last year, foreclosure prevention counseling dollars to give money to organizations around the country that are certifiable experts at this, organizations such as La Raza, which the Presiding Officer knows. We know also of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, known by the acronym ACORN. They are headquartered in Philadelphia. These are organizations which understand what a lender has to deal with but, more importantly, deal

with borrowers when they are borrowing money, when they are dealing with the difficulty and the complexity of borrowing money. These organizations would have helped even more than they are helping now with $200 million more of counseling money. That is not going to happen because of what the other side did. They blocked that money by blocking this legislation.

One of the best vehicles on housing and on stimulating activity and also providing some measure of relief is to say to our housing finance agencies across the country, organizations at the State level that are expert at this, we are going to allow you to do what you do best, to get money into the system and to allow people to borrow money for the cost of a house. That won't happen now because of what the other side of the aisle did.

Another provision in this bill, as Senator SALAZAR mentioned in detail, was the bankruptcy provision which simply says that if a bankruptcy judge can deal with your second house or with all kinds of matters that come before that judge in bankruptcy, the bankruptcy judge ought to be able to help you restructure your mortgage in bankruptcy so you can dig yourself out of not just a foreclosure problem but can dig yourself out of bankruptcy. The other side said no to that.

Finally, they said no to communities across the country with regard to community development block grant money. They said no to them as well. For billions of dollars which were in this bill, they said no to those communities across the country. It is important to understand what they on the other side said no to today. We have to understand that when we talk about this issue, it is not just a house and a family, as important as that is. We are talking about keeping families in their homes, helping them with their foreclosure problem, their crisis that they could be in the middle of or about to enter into. We are also talking about communities, neighborhoods.

The chairman of the Banking Committee—I know the Presiding Officer is a member of the committee—outlined in detail what happens to a community when one house goes down or a number of houses go down. We know about the details.

What we should do is be very clear about our priorities: keeping people in homes, helping communities, and stimulating the economy, but also to make the record clear about why we are not moving forward. The other side stopped us, as they have done again and again.

Now we have to move forward. Now we have to figure out in a bipartisan way how best we can get some elements of this legislation to continue. We cannot sit back and say: Well, we are having a dispute here and we can just let this die. We cannot.

We have to do everything we can now, as Senator DODD said very well tonight, to move this forward, to make sure we are doing everything possible to keep people in their homes, to stimulate our economy, and to protect and nurture our communities and our neighborhoods. I think we can do that, but we have a long way to go. I hope it is a bipartisan effort. We have to make that hope into a realty.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A SENATE GIANT

• Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, while the Senate was in recess last week, the senior Senator from Massachusetts became a little bit more senior. On February 22, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY celebrated his 76th birthday.

Senator KENNEDY has been a special friend over the years and I thank him for his fellowship.

Everyone who knows us knows that Senator KENNEDY and I could not have come from more different economic and geographic backgrounds—he is the son of a wealthy New England family, while I am the son of the Appalachian coalfields. And people who know us know that over the years, Senator KENNEDY and I have had our political differences—at one point, our political differences compelled us to challenge each other for a Senate leadership position.

But those who know us both well, also know that we have many things in common. We share a love of history, of poetry, and of politics. Foremost, we share a love and understanding of the Senate and the important role it is intended to play in the life of this Republic.

Maybe it was our mutual interests that formed the basis of our friendship. Perhaps it was admiration. I certainly admire Senator KENNEDY's career and accomplishments for his State, as well as his keen intellect and fierce defense of his views and values. Senator KENNEDY is a member of the Massachusetts Senate class that has included giants of the Senate such as John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, Charles Sumner, Henry Cabot Lodge, and John F. Kennedy. Senator EDWARD KENNEDY has joined this august company for he, too, is a giant of the Senate.

Senator KENNEDY is one of three Senators in the history of this institution to have cast more than 15,000 votes.

He is the third longest serving Senator in U.S. history.

But, more important than the quantity of his Senate service is the quality of his service. Senator KENNEDY has been one of the most effective national legislators in the history of our Republic. His imprint is on a large stack of progressive legislation written during the past four decades. The Occupational Safety and Health Act, OSHA; the Voting Rights Act; the Age Discrimination Act; the Freedom of Information Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act; health care reform; increases in the Federal minimum wage—these are but a few of Senator KENNEDY's legislative monuments.

As his Senate record demonstrates, Senator KENNEDY is a man of remarkable compassion, who has labored mightily on behalf of his fellow citizens. A child of privilege, educated at Harvard and the University of Virginia, he could have taken an easier path in life. But, instead, Senator KENNEDY has worked tirelessly in the Senate becoming a powerful voice for the protection of our environment, the rights of American workers, and women's equality. Senator KENNEDY is the Senate's Mr. Health Care. He is the Senate's Mr. Civil Rights. He is the Senate's Mr. Human Rights.

What has really impressed me is that neither years of age nor years of political combat have diminished the idealism and energy of this talented, imaginative, and intelligent man. Throughout his career, Senator KENNEDY has believed in a simple premise: that our society's greatness lies in its ability and willingness to provide for its less fortunate members. Whether striving to increase the minimum wage, ensuring that all children have medical insurance, or securing better access to higher education, Senator KENNEDY has shown that he cares deeply for those whose needs exceed their political clout. Unbowed by personal setbacks, or by the terrible sorrows that have fallen upon his family, his spirit continues to soar, and he continues to work as hard as ever to make his dreams a reality.

I, personally, will always appreciate the support that Senator KENNEDY gave me during the years I served as the Senate Democratic leader. When times got tough, as they occasionally do for a Senate leader, I always knew that I could count on his assistance.

As the majority leader of the Senate during the incredibly productive 100th Congress, I worked closely with Senator KENNEDY, and he worked closely with me. His tenure as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources during that Congress

was extraordinary, both in the sheer volume of legislation that he sponsored and in the dedication that he displayed to improving the education and health of all Americans. Happy birthday to my friend and colleague, Senator TED KENNEDY. Because of you, so many millions of Americans are much better off.●

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to take a few minutes, during National Peace Corps Week, to salute the dedication and accomplishments of the hundreds of thousands of Peace Corps volunteers who have served our Nation and the world since President John F. Kennedy had the wisdom and foresight to establish the Peace Corps in 1961.

I want to recognize in particular the 309 current Peace Corps volunteers from Illinois who are today serving in every corner of the globe, as well as the more than 7,000 Illinoisans who have served since the Peace Corps' inception. These men and women come from big cities and small towns, urban centers and rural farming communities. Some are recent college graduates who fit our most common image of a Peace Corps volunteer, while others are older and bring to this new role a lifetime of skills and experience.

Diverse though their backgrounds might be, all Peace Corps volunteers share a common desire to improve the lives of people less fortunate than themselves, and to do so in a direct, hands-on fashion.

Americans are the most generous people in the world. We give from our wallets and we give of our time, donating both of these in large quantities on behalf of the poor, the hungry, and the disenfranchised. Volunteerism and altruism are among the most fundamental aspects of our national character, and all Americans should be proud of our contributions to meeting the world's development challenges.

Yet there is something different, something unique, about those of our fellow citizens who have chosen the Peace Corps path. They move to the other side of the planet, with few to no amenities, and immerse themselves in completely unfamiliar cultures and languages. That type of commitment changes the lives of the local communities in which the volunteers live and work, to be sure. But it also affects profoundly the volunteers themselves, who sacrifice material comforts and proximity to family and friends in exchange for the knowledge that they are having a positive impact.

Sometimes, a Peace Corps volunteer's sacrifice goes far beyond the mere material. This past December, 25-year-old Blythe Ann O'Sullivan of Bloomingdale, IL, died while serving in Suriname. Blythe was a graduate of Bradley University in Peoria and was in her second year volunteering as a small business adviser at the time of her death. I join her family, friends, the Peace Corps community and all the people whose lives Blythe touched, not only in mourning her loss but also in celebrating her memory.

I would also like to honor the many Illinois colleges and universities that turn out Peace Corps volunteers in large numbers. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ranked 16th in the Nation last year among large colleges and universities in the number of alumni volunteers. Northwestern University ranked 12th among medium-sized schools, and the University of Chicago, I am proud to say, was first in the country among smaller institutions. It is a testament to these universities, their faculties, and most of all their students that so many Illinois alumni choose to join the Peace Corps and serve their country and humanity in this way.

You know, most people hear the words ''Peace Corps'' and picture young American men and women helping the people of some remote village to dig a latrine or a well, or learn English, or access better health care. And of course, this sort of development work is the principal reason the Peace Corps was founded.

But Peace Corps volunteers also serve an equally important role as goodwill ambassadors. They are often the first Americans their overseas friends and neighbors have ever met, and first impressions count for a lot. Over the past several years, much of the world has questioned U.S. intentions and watched us warily until they've been sure of the real meaning behind our words, the real goals behind our actions. The pure altruism of Peace Corps volunteers, living and working every day with citizens the world over, goes a long way toward reassuring the world that Americans are a good and giving people.

The Peace Corps and its volunteers cannot do this alone. It is important that Congress continue to support the Peace Corps to the greatest possible extent. As a member of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on the State Department and Foreign Operations, I am proud that Chairman LEAHY was able to increase the Peace Corps' budget by $10 million for fiscal year 2008. And I am certain that together we will be able to continue supporting the Peace Corps to make it even more effective and to honor the dedication and sacrifice of the many thousands of volunteers who have served, are now serving, and will serve in the future.

WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I wish to speak briefly about an important issue in my State that involves one of our country's great natural treasures, the White Mountain National Forest. Encompassing nearly 800,000 acres and drawing more than 6 million visitors each year, the White Mountain National Forest is not just a place for skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, or timber harvesting it is a source of pride for New Hampshire. And considering its relatively large footprint in our State, how this special place is managed by the U.S. Forest Service matters a lot.

Fortunately, the Forest Service especially Forest Supervisor Tom Wagner has done a great job in overseeing the White Mountain National Forest. Starting in 1997 when the new forest management plan was being developed, the agency made a concerted effort to reach out to the public, welcomed outside comments, and was sensitive to the sometimes competing views of interested parties. This planning process was not an easy task. Forest management is about addressing multiple uses and priorities, and ultimately it should be about compromise. The White Mountain National Forest has long been utilized for a variety of purposes, and any management plan should carefully strike a balance among them while also protecting the forest for future generations.

To come up with a balanced plan, Supervisor Wagner went out of his way to listen to public input and worked closely with government officials, environmental organizations, businesses, and recreation clubs. I met with him during the planning process and was encouraged by his outreach and evenhanded approach.

After years of hard work, Supervisor Wagner and the Forest Service arrived at a forest management plan that achieved general consensus among the major stakeholders and was well received across New Hampshire. I was pleased to support it when the final plan was released in 2005, including working with Senator SUNUNU on legislation implementing its wilderness recommendations. Signed into law in December 2006, this bill designated nearly 35,000 acres of new wilderness in the White Mountain National Forest and was applauded by environmental groups from across the State. I should also note that even our State's logging industry, represented by the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association, supported the wilderness measure out of the spirit of compromise. Clearly, it was not in their business interest to support more wilderness designation, but they did it anyway since it was part of a balanced management plan that also included limited timber harvesting.

Unfortunately, this balance is now under attack, years after the plan was finalized and other elements have been implemented. A few environmental groups based outside New Hampshire have filed a lawsuit against two timber harvesting projects that were part of the 2005 Forest Management Plan. Encompassing less than 1,200 acres, the projects already have been subject to environmental review, would be very limited in scope, and would be carried out over existing road systems. By delaying these projects, this lawsuit is

not only blocking an economic boost for the State and additional revenues for local governments but also blocking the projects' environmental benefits since they would create habitats critical for wildlife management. Well respected environmental groups such as the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Appalachian Mountain Club, and Audubon Society have come out against this legal challenge, and I support their efforts to maintain the consensus approach underlying the 2005 Forest Management Plan.

The White Mountain National Forest can and should be accessible to a wide variety of users, and we have a carefully crafted plan to accommodate them. It is unfortunate that a few groups who had their chance to provide input during the planning process are resorting to litigation to take apart the 2005 Forest Management Plan. Of course, the Forest Service must follow the law and carry out certain environmental reviews, and I defer to the courts to resolve these legal questions. However, I strongly believe that this lawsuit runs counter to New Hampshire's interests and undermines the good will among our State's major stakeholders which has been critical for advancing sound environmental policies. I therefore hope that this legal challenge is resolved as soon as possible and that we can all support the Forest Service's management of the White Mountain National Forest, including its proposed timber harvesting projects.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, unfortunately, history will record February 2008 as a month in which contained six separate high-profile multiple murders by firearms occurred across the country. These shootings occurred in places normally considered safe, including Northern Illinois University, Louisiana Technical College, and a city council meeting inside Kirkwood City Hall. It appears there are few places where the dangers of gun violence can not reach. However, there are some actions we can take to help change this epidemic of gun violence.

In 1993, President Clinton signed the Brady bill into law. This law requires a waiting period for handgun sales until records are available to instantly check criminal background of prospective gun purchasers. After the National Instant Check System, NICS, became operational in 1998, the Justice Department maintained background check records on approved purchases for 6 months to ensure that felons and other prohibited buyers were not mistakenly approved. Under the Bush administration, however, Attorney General John Ashcroft sought to require the destruction of the records of approved purchasers within 24 hours. In July 2002, the Government Accountability Office, GAO, issued a report on the potential effects of next-day destruction of NICS background check records. They concluded that destroying these records within 24 hours would prevent the government from auditing the NICS system to ensure its accuracy and ''would have public safety implications.'' Despite these GAO warnings, Attorney General Ashcroft decided to implement the 24-hour record destruction provision.

The Brady bill only requires background checks for sales by licensed gun dealers. It does not require them for transfers between unlicensed persons. Approximately 40 percent of all gun sales involve those transfers, such as at gun shows. Only 6 States require background checks on all firearm sales. According to the ATF, almost one-third of trafficked guns are acquired at gun shows and flea markets. These gatherings present the perfect opportunity for unlicensed sellers to offer large numbers of guns for sale with no questions asked. Those who would not pass a background check in a licensed gun store are able to purchase as many guns as they wish at gun shows.

In 1994, President Clinton signed legislation into law that banned the production of certain semiautomatic assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. Among the banned items was a list of 19 specific weapons as well as a number of other weapons incorporating certain design characteristics such as pistol grips, folding stocks, bayonet mounts, and flash suppressors. The 1994 assault weapons ban prohibited the manufacture of semiautomatic weapons that incorporate at least two of these military features and accept a detachable magazine. In 2004, when the assault weapons ban expired, despite the overwhelming support of the law enforcement community, the ongoing threat of terrorism, and bipartisan support in the Senate. Sadly, the tragedies at both Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University were inflicted by someone using previously banned high capacity ammunition magazines.

On average, 32 people are murdered in this country by firearms every day. By instituting such simple changes in current law, addressing the gun show loophole and passing a new assault weapons ban, we could help reduce the likelihood of such tragedies occurring.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS INITIATIVE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I express my support for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, 21st CCLC, initiative, the only Federal funding source dedicated to supporting successful afterschool programs around the country. This program is critical to our children's and our economy's success.

For many American families, it is necessary for both parents to work outside the home, and these families face true challenges in finding affordable childcare services. This is a problem not only for parents of infants and toddlers too young to go to school, but also for parents of school-age children who would otherwise be left unsupervised in those critical hours between the end of the schoolday and the end of the workday. In Maryland, 25 percent of children in grades K–12 are responsible for taking care of themselves after school. Studies show that millions of children around our Nation are left on their own after school to devastating effects.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University have concluded that two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower and higher income youth can be explained by unequal access to out-of-school activities, especially during the summer months. This unequal access creates a gap that begins in elementary school and accumulates over the years. It results in unequal placements in college preparatory tracks and increases the chance that children from low-income families will drop out of high school.

The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex. Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to engage in risky and self-destructive behaviors.

Parents who have difficulty securing reliable afterschool care miss an average of 8 days of work per year, and studies have shown that decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about afterschool care costs businesses up to $300 billion each year.

Recognizing the benefits of quality afterschool activities, Congress created the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, which provides states with grant money to facilitate their efforts to provide children with quality afterschool social, academic, and other enrichment activities. The program's results have been dramatic.

In the 2004–2005 school year, 59 percent of regular attendees attained Federal proficiency levels or better in reading and language arts and 54 percent of regular attendees attained Federal proficiency levels or better in math. Teachers reported that a majority of participating students improved in every category of behavior. The categories with the highest percentages of student improvement were academic performance, completing homework to the teacher's satisfaction, class participation, and turning in homework on time.

A study conducted in Maryland's Anne Arundel County school district revealed that CCLC participants missed fewer days in school and achieved higher proficiency ratings in reading and math. Also, teachers perceived increases in students' overall achievement in school and their confidence in learning. Children attending

23 or more days of Maryland's After School Opportunity Fund Program showed greater gains on such measures as commitment to education and academic performance, and a reduction in delinquency.

According to a 2005 Manhattan Institute study, only one-third of American high school graduates are prepared for college. Our students are falling further behind in math, science, engineering, and other areas critical for success in the 21st century economy. The hours between 3 and 6 p.m. do not need to be peak hours for juvenile crime and dangerous experimentation. The afterschool hours can be and must be a time when our kids learn new skills, develop relationships with caring adults, and prepare for the future.

One program in Marriotsville, MD, is doing just that. In a reversal of roles, tech savvy students at Marriotts Ridge High School offer afterschool instruction in Photoshop, game design, Web design, Microsoft Office, and other programs to members of the community. The principal has raved about walking down his school's halls and seeing his students conduct workshops for individuals ranging from middle-schoolers through senior citizens. How impressive that these students are given the opportunity to master this technology and then develop the confidence and leadership necessary to teach it to others. What a benefit to these students and to that Maryland community!

So I was extremely disappointed, as were many of my colleagues, to see that President Bush's fiscal year 2009 budget proposal cuts funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers by $300 million next year. If his proposal were enacted, 300,000 students nationwide would lose access to afterschool programs. Maryland alone would lose one-third of its funding, which would translate to a loss of services for 5,000 children.

The President also wants to turn the grant program into a voucher program. Currently, States review programs in a thorough, competitive process and award multi-year funding to the best proposals. These long-term grants allow programs to plan, grow, develop partnerships, and hire quality staff. Parents are able to choose among various programs for their children. By contrast, a voucher program would give the money to parents rather than the States, eliminating the funding stability that is so critical to developing high-quality programs.

The President's proposal is unwise in two respects. In the short term, it would eliminate many parents' access to afterschool care. In the long term, it would undermine the quality of those programs that survive. David Kass, the president of a national nonprofit anticrime organization called Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, has said, ''Law enforcement leaders across the country agree: this [proposal] threatens public safety.''

Mr. President, I hope that my colleagues will reject the administration's proposal and continue to support the 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

JOHN SHATTUCK ON RESTORING THE RULE OF LAW IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to commend to my colleagues a very thoughtful and informational article in the current issue of the American Prospect by former Assistant Secretary of State and Ambassador to the Czech Republic, John Shattuck, who currently serves as CEO of the Kennedy Library Foundation.

In his article, ''Healing Our Self-Inflicted Wounds,'' Mr. Shattuck makes the point that in the past few years America has seriously wounded itself in the eyes of the wider world by failing to live up to our highest ideals. Our policies have made it more difficult to enlist the support of our traditional allies in accomplishing our foreign policy goals and have emboldened those who do not share our goals to work harder to undermine them.

Mr. Shattuck lays out several key steps for the next President to take to repair the damage done in the past 8 years and restore America's credibility—and strength—in the world. I believe his article will be of interest to all of us in Congress.

And I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The American Prospect, Jan.–Feb. 2008]

HEALING OUR SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS—HOW THE NEXT PRESIDENT CAN RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY—AND REBUILD AMERICAN CREDIBILITY AND POWER

(By John Shattuck)

There's a remarkable paradox in the relationship today between the United States and the rest of the world. Despite economic and military assets unparalleled in history, U.S. global influence and standing have hit rock bottom.

As an economic superpower, the U.S. has a defense budget that accounts for more than 40 percent of global military spending. But this ''hard power'' does not necessarily translate into real power. National-security failures abound, from the catastrophic events in Iraq to the resurgence of terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, from the growing threat of civil war throughout the Middle East to the deepening uncertainties of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, from the standoff with Iran to the genocide in Darfur.

The next president will have to address these crises by re-establishing America's capacity to lead. Doing so will involve working to regain international credibility and respect by reshaping American foreign policy to direct the use of power within a framework of the rule of law.

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

The United States may be strong economically and militarily, but the rest of the world sees it as ineffective and dangerous on the global stage. Less than a decade ago the situation was quite different. A 1999 survey published by the State Department Office of Research showed that large majorities in France (62 percent), Germany (78 percent), Indonesia (75 percent), Turkey (52 percent), among others, held favorable opinions of the U.S.

This positive climate of opinion fostered an outpouring of international support immediately following the September 11 attacks. The U.S. was able to assemble a broad coalition with U.N. approval to respond to the attacks and strike terrorist strongholds in Afghanistan.

Six years later global support for U.S. leadership has evaporated. In poll after poll, international opinion of the U.S. has turned sour. A January 2007 BBC survey found that 52 percent of the people polled in 18 countries around the world had a ''mainly negative'' view of the U.S., with only 29 percent having a ''mainly positive'' view. In nearly all the countries that had strong support for the U.S. in 1999 a big downward shift of opinion had occurred by the end of 2006. In France it was down to 39 percent, in Germany down to 37 percent, and in Indonesia down to 30 percent. A separate survey conducted in 2006 by the Pew Research Center revealed extremely hostile attitudes toward the U.S. throughout the Arab and Muslim world: Egypt polled 70 percent negative, Pakistan 73 percent, Jordan 85 percent, and Turkey 88 percent.

A major factor driving this negative global opinion is the way the U.S. has projected its power in the ''war on terror.'' Four years after the Iraq invasion, U.S. military presence in the Middle East was seen by 68 percent of those polled by the BBC ''to provoke more conflict than it prevents.'' Similarly, a poll published in April 2007 by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs showed that in 13 of 15 countries, including Argentina, France, Russia, Indonesia, India, and Australia, a majority of people agreed that ''the U.S. cannot be trusted to act responsibly in the world.''

The U.S. is now seen internationally to be a major violator of human rights. The BBC poll showed that 67 percent of those surveyed in 18 countries disapproved of the U.S. government's handling of detainees in Guantanamo. A survey conducted in June 2006 by coordinated polling organizations in Germany, Great Britain, Poland, and India found that majorities or pluralities in each country believed that the U.S. has tortured terrorist detainees and disregarded international treaties in its treatment of detainees, and that other governments are wrong to cooperate with the U.S. in the secret ''rendition'' of prisoners.

These global opinion trends have reduced the capacity of the United States to carry out its foreign policy and protect national security. The perception of a growing gap between the values the U.S. professes and the way it acts—particularly in regard to human rights and the rule of law—has eroded U.S. power and influence around the world.

In his book, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, Joseph Nye analyzes a nation's ''ability to get what [it] wants through attraction rather than coercion.'' Soft power derives from ''the attractiveness of a nation's culture, political ideals, and policies. When [its] policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, [its] soft power is enhanced.'' Today, American political ideals have lost much of their global attraction because their appeal has been undermined by U.S. policies and actions that lack legitimacy in the eyes of the world. American foreign policy will continue to fail until the U.S. regains the international respect it has lost.

Fortunately, history shows that the capacity to lead can be restored when U.S. values and policies are generally in synch. During

the first decade and a half of the Cold War, images of racism and segregation in the United States undercut the ability of the U.S. to project moral leadership. By the mid-1960s, however, the civil-rights movement and the leadership of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson had revived this vital capacity.

Similarly, following the disaster in Vietnam, a number of U.S. foreign-policy successes were achieved through bipartisan presidential leadership. President Ford signed the Helsinki Accords, which led to international recognition for the cause of human rights inside the Soviet bloc. President Carter mobilized democratic governments to press for the release of political prisoners held by repressive governments. President Reagan signed the Convention Against Torture and sent it to the Senate, where it was subsequently ratified. President George H.W. Bush joined with Western European governments to nurture the fledgling democracies of post–Cold War Central and Eastern Europe. President Clinton worked with NATO to end the human-rights catastrophe in Bosnia and prevent genocide in Kosovo. Each of these foreign-policy successes was achieved by linking American interests and values.

Three fundamental principles govern the exercise of soft power through the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. The first is practicing what you preach. The U.S. loses credibility when it charges others with violations it is committing itself. It reduces its ability to lead when it acts precipitously without international authority or the support of other nations. The second is obeying the law. Human rights are defined and protected by the U.S. Constitution and by conventions and treaties that have been ratified and incorporated into U.S. domestic law. The U.S. must adhere to these legal obligations if it is to project itself to other countries as a champion of human rights and the rule of law. The third is supporting international institutions. The U.S. should lead the way in reshaping existing international institutions and creating new ones, not attacking them, acting unilaterally, or turning its back whenever it disagrees with what they do.

The administration of President George W. Bush has repeatedly violated each of these principles. It has opened the U.S. to charges of hypocrisy by criticizing other governments for acting outside the rule of law and committing human-rights abuses it has committed itself. The annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices issued by the State Department cover official actions such as ''torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,'' ''detention without charge,'' ''denial of fair public trial,'' and ''arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, or correspondence.'' These are the very practices in which the Bush administration itself has systematically engaged, compelling readers of the State Department Country Reports to conclude that the U.S. does not practice what it preaches. The 2006 report on Egypt, for example, criticizes the fact that Egyptian police and security forces ''detained hundreds of individuals without charge,'' that ''abuse of prisoners and detainees by police, security personnel and prison guards remained common,'' and that ''the [Egyptian] Emergency Law empowers the government to place wiretaps—without warrants.'' These same criticisms apply to the United States.

The Bush administration has diminished a second source of soft power by flaunting basic requirements of international and domestic law. These include the Geneva Conventions, the Convention Against Torture, and the International Convent on Civil and Political Rights, and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The result has been the creation of ''law-free zones'' in which foreign detainees in U.S. custody overseas have been brutally abused, thousands of foreign citizens have been held indefinitely as ''unlawful combatants'' without being accorded the status of prisoners of war, and repressive regimes around the world have implicitly been given the green light to crack down on political dissidents and religious and ethnic minorities in the name of fighting terrorism.

The administration's history of disregard for the established framework of international law was made clear by a 2002 memorandum, prepared by the then-White House counsel, Alberto Gonzales, proclaiming that ''terrorism renders obsolete the Geneva Conventions' strict limitations on the questioning of prisoners.'' No recent president had questioned the basic rules of international humanitarian law in times of war. The administrations of Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford during the Vietnam War, and George H.W. Bush during the Gulf War, all adhered to the Geneva requirements. The reasons were spelled out in a 2002 memorandum by then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, challenging the Gonzales memo. Powell warned that the White House interpretation of the Geneva Conventions would ''reverse over a century of U.S. policy and practice, undermine the protections of the law of war for our troops, and [provoke] negative international reaction, with immediate adverse consequences for our conduct of foreign policy.''

A third source of soft power has been undermined by the Bush administration's attacks on and disengagement from international human-rights institutions. The U.S. has been a world leader in building these institutions since the time when Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the international committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The current administration has renounced that leadership by refusing to run for a seat on the new U.N. Human Rights Council and by undermining efforts to shape the new International Criminal Court (ICC). Both institutions are flawed, but as a result of the administration's disengagement the U.S. now has no influence over their future development.

UNDERCUTTING NATIONAL SECURITY

The Bush administration's record on human rights and the rule of law has undercut the capacity of the U.S. to achieve important foreign-policy goals. The erosion of America's soft power has made it more difficult for the U.S. to succeed in preventing or containing threats of terrorism, genocide, and nuclear proliferation. The denigration of American values has made the U.S. ineffective in promoting human rights and democracy. Indeed, the current administration's frequent disregard of the rule of law has jeopardized five frequently stated foreign-policy objectives.

The first is countering the threats posed by Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. For more than a decade these countries have topped the United States' list of dangers to international security. Strategies to reduce the violence and terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan and to prevent Iran from exporting terrorism and acquiring nuclear weapons require a mixture of hard and soft power. But reports of CIA and U.S. military torture and mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and other secret prisons in the region may have weakened the ability of the U.S. to counter the deterioration of human-rights conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Similarly, State Department criticism of the Iranian regime's political repression has been blunted by the U.S. record of detainee abuse and illegal electronic surveillance. Years after the U.S. military interventions, Iraq and Afghanistan remain major exporters of terrorism and centers of human-rights abuse. Iran is a major terrorist exporter and a human-rights disaster.

A second major stated objective of U.S. foreign policy is preventing genocide. The lesson of Rwanda was that the cost of failing to stop genocide is not only a massive killing of innocent civilians but also an ongoing humanitarian catastrophe and long-term regional instability. Following the Rwanda genocide, a doctrine of humanitarian intervention was developed under U.S. leadership and invoked, with broad international support and authority under the Genocide Convention, to end the genocide in Bosnia in 1995, and then to prevent a genocide in Kosovo in 1999. Today, that doctrine is in shambles, undermined and discredited by the Bush administration's intervention in Iraq. As a result, the U.S. has been unable to mobilize support to stop the ongoing genocide in Darfur and an entire region of Africa has been destabilized.

Addressing the challenges posed by geopolitical rivals such as China, Russia, and Cuba is a third long-standing concern of U.S. foreign policy. The Bush record has made already-complicated interactions with these countries even more difficult. China is leading the way in effectively exploiting the growing global perception that the U.S. is a human-rights violator. For several years the Chinese government has produced and publicized its own report on U.S. human-rights failings in an attempt to counter U.S. criticism of China's record. China's March 2007 report was particularly blunt: ''We urge the U.S. government to acknowledge its own human rights problems and stop interfering in other countries' internal affairs under the pretext of human rights.'' Russian President Vladimir Putin has been similarly direct in rejecting recent U.S. criticism of the Russian government's press censorship, and Cuba has been quick to point to the U.S. record of detainee abuse at Guantanamo whenever Cuban human-rights practices are challenged by the U.S. The Bush administration has provided China, Russia, and Cuba with a convenient excuse for cracking down on dissidents and minorities under the guise of fighting terrorism within their borders.

Creating and managing strategic alliances is a fourth major U.S. foreign-policy objective. The Bush administration's record on human rights and the rule of law has alienated traditional democratic allies and complicated relations with authoritarian countries. The Council of Europe, a parliamentary assembly of elected representatives from across the continent, has condemned European governments for cooperating with the U.S. in running secret detention centers, and has called for Europe to distance itself from the Bush administration's tactics in the ''war on terror.'' Negative European opinion about U.S. human-rights practices has made it politically difficult for European leaders to support U.S. positions on other issues. And by condoning torture, prisoner abuse, secret detention, illegal surveillance, and other violations of human rights, the administration has also undercut its ability to promote reform with authoritarian allies like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Uzbekistan.

Finally, holding accountable those who commit human-rights crimes has been a bedrock objective of U.S. foreign policy since the Nuremberg trials following World War II. The U.S. has long been at the forefront of efforts to create a system of international justice, most recently in the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. By opposing the International Criminal Court, the Bush administration has relinquished its leadership on these issues. The indispensability of

international justice to U.S. foreign policy is illustrated by the administration's retreat in 2006 from outright opposition to the ICC to reluctant acceptance of the U.N. Security Council's referral of the Darfur genocide case to ICC jurisdiction. But this begrudging exception unfortunately proves the rule.

REPAIRING THE DAMAGE

The next president must make repairing the damage to American values and moral authority a top priority. Acting within a framework of the rule of law and respect for human rights will be essential to restoring America's international leadership.

The U.S. must strengthen its alliances by demonstrating it adheres to international norms in pursuing its national-security objectives. The next president should immediately announce that the U.S. will close the detention center at Guantanamo and transfer detainees to the U.S. or detainees' home countries. In addition, the president should announce that the U.S. is bound by the Geneva Conventions as a matter of law and policy. Restoring the U.S. policy of providing individualized status hearings to detainees would demonstrate respect for international norms without restricting the government's capacity to conduct lawful interrogations to obtain intelligence information about terrorist activities. Fully applying the Geneva Conventions also would not preclude the U.S. from trying detainees in military commissions.

A second means of underscoring U.S. commitment to address national-security threats within the rule of law would be to provide assistance to other countries for counterterrorism operations that comply with basic human-rights standards. ''Fighting terror'' has become a convenient excuse for repressive regimes to engage in further repression, often inspiring further terrorism in an increasing cycle of violence. To break this cycle, the U.S. should provide assistance and training to foreign military and law enforcement personnel in methods of fighting terrorism within the rule of law.

The U.S. should take the lead in drafting a comprehensive treaty defining and condemning terrorism within a framework of human rights. Working toward a consensus on this global issue would help counter the claim that differences in cultural values, religious beliefs, political philosophies, or justifiable ends make it impossible to define the crime of terrorism.

The president should make clear that the U.S. is prepared once again to be an active participant in strengthening the system of international law it helped create over the last half century. Important treaties have lingered for years in the Senate and should now be ratified or renegotiated. Some were signed by Republican presidents and once enjoyed bipartisan support, but have been blocked for the last seven years by the current administration and its Senate supporters. The U.S. should also rejoin negotiations on such critical issues as human rights, international justice, climate change, and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. By doing so, the next president would demonstrate that globalization can be made to work within the rule of law.

The U.S. should support those seeking to promote the rule of law, democracy, and human rights in their own countries. Democracy and human-rights activists are the shock troops in the struggle against terrorism, genocide, and nuclear proliferation. But democracy can never be delivered through the barrel of a gun. Assistance to those who are working to build their own democratic societies must be carefully planned and targeted, sustained over time, and based on a thorough understanding of the unique circumstances and profound differences among cultures, religions, and countries. A new U.S. government must work within an international framework, not unilaterally and preemptively, to assist those struggling around the world to bring human rights to their own societies.

Finally, the U.S. should join with other countries, alliances, and international organizations to reassert America's role in working to prevent or stop genocide and crimes against humanity. The president should invoke the doctrine of humanitarian intervention that was applied in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s to address the genocide in Darfur. Extensive diplomatic and economic tools can be used to head off an impending genocide, but international military intervention remains available under international law if all other avenues have been exhausted.

By recommitting the U.S. to a foreign policy conducted within a framework of human rights and the rule of law, the next president can restore America's moral leadership in the world—and by so doing, enhance American power and security.

FAREWELL TO ALAN HOFFMAN

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to say farewell and thank you to my chief of staff, Alan Hoffman. As many of you know, I was fortunate enough to have had Alan leading my office from 1998 to 2003, and then had my fortunes upped when Alan made the tremendous personal sacrifice, at my request, to leave California and resume his position in 2006. While I am sorry to see him go, it is certainly understandable that Alan is now returning to the west coast, rejoining his wife in their home in Santa Monica, and taking on a major position in the University of California system.

I am indebted to Alan's invaluable leadership, wise counsel, and unwavering loyalty. The entire Biden family has come to respect and care for Alan. We all recognized right away that Alan is a thoroughly decent human being, and he quickly earned my trust. I never once doubted the judgment Alan exercised as my chief of staff. Never once.

Alan arrived at my office in 1998 having served as an assistant U.S. attorney in Philadelphia after having worked in the White House and the Department of Justice. Actually, the first time I met Alan was supposed to be for a courtesy interview as he was being considered for a high-level position with Attorney General Reno. I was so impressed with his intellect, his temperament, his passion, and his values that I thought, I want this guy to work for me. I felt it was quite the coup when he accepted my offer.

Alan brought the smarts and experience to quickly grasp the salient points of any issue, and a deft hand on how to advance policy initiatives. I have benefited enormously from Alan's excellent sensibilities. He has sharp political sense, a keen sense of timing, a sense of what makes people tick, and a sense of humor. Alan has tremendous awe and respect for the work being done by the United States Senate, and yet, at the same time, he has an underlying sense of humility. Alan never forgets that the work of the Congress is the people's business.

Alan oversaw many proud legislative achievements during his tenure in my office, ranging from improvements to port and rail security, to passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 to championing criminal justice reforms and strengthening the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. He has continued to work, until his last hour on my staff, for policies that further the well-being and security of all Americans. Alan's leadership and unwavering sense of justice have been the catalysts for alliances that have a real chance of remedying the disparity in sentences received by those convicted of crack cocaine, as opposed to powder cocaine, offenses.

Though young when he first arrived in 1998, Alan quickly proved able to manage my diverse staff, ranging from bookish lawyers, to foreign policy specialists to caseworkers in my Delaware office. Alan motivated, challenged, and inspired the staff. He always set the highest example for all who worked with him and has earned their unqualified respect and admiration. And Alan provided the solid leadership and needed guidance to staff when the nation was attacked on September 11, 2001, and again, when the Senate suffered the anthrax attack which forced my Judiciary Committee staff out of their Hart Building offices and landed Senator CARPER's staff in our own conference room.

Alan has unlimited patience to hear all sides of an issue whether from staff, divergent interest groups, or constituents. He understands complexity and yet is always ready with a commonsense and principled recommendation that was easily explainable to both people inside, and more importantly, outside the beltway. Importantly, he is also a trusted and respected ally to so many of my colleagues; they know they can call Alan when I am not reachable and they can always count on him to follow through.

Mr. President, this is one of those moments when saying thank you simply seems inadequate. Alan Hoffman left his then-fiancée, now wife, a high-level position at the RAND Corporation, and a settled life in California to return to my office in 2006. That kind of loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice are rare.

I understand completely that Alan is ready to go home. I wish him and his wife Lizzie all the best. I have no doubt that he will prove to be just as talented and invaluable in his new position. But the fact remains that Alan Hoffman will be deeply missed, and his work and leadership leave an enduring imprint both in Washington and in Delaware.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

A TRIBUTE TO SHANE STEWART

• Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I wish today to honor the service and sacrifice of CAPT Shane Stewart.

My wife Joan and I were deeply saddened to hear of the tragic death of CAPT Shane Stewart this past Saturday in Weld County, CO, as he was en route to render aid to a sick caller in the town of Ault.

It takes a person of great courage to become a firefighter. It takes a strong, hard-working, and considerate individual, who like in many small communities across America, volunteer their time and effort, at sometimes great risk to themselves, to become a volunteer firefighter. It takes a special someone who is willing to pay the ultimate price in protecting the safety of others.

Captain Stewart was just this person. And unfortunately, Captain Stewart paid the ultimate price on February 23. He was 33 years old. Shane is the first firefighter killed in the line of duty in the Ault-Pierce Fire Protection District.

The Colorado native was born in Sterling and grew up in Greeley. Shane was employed by the Colorado Department of Transportation and concurrently served as a volunteer firefighter when called to duty. Volunteer firefighters are the backbone of many of our small towns and communities. In fact there are a total of 15,000 firefighters in Colorado with 9,450 being volunteers in their respective communities. Shane joined the Ault-Pierce Fire Protection District as a volunteer firefighter in August 2004.

Shane came from a family steeped in firefighting tradition. Shane's father and brother are also volunteers with the 21-member department.

Captain Stewart was a father, brother, and a son. He is survived by his wife Cyndee, sons Blake and Logan, parents Paul and Jeanette, and his brother Sean. Shane was well liked by his peers and was someone you would like to have as a friend and colleague.

The Ault-Pierce Fire Protection District lost a valuable member of its community, as did the State of Colorado. We are all forever grateful for Captain Shane Stewart's service and dedication as a firefighter. His service to all of us is highly commendable, and his contributions will be remembered.

I extend my deepest sympathy to the family of CAPT Shane Stewart. May his bravery and unwavering sense of duty serve as a role model for the future generation of firefighters.•

HONORING DAVID WILLIAM SUMMERFIELD

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I honor the memory of David William Summerfield, a husband, father, soldier, pilot, and a beloved member of the Cumberland community. Dave died on February 21, piloting a small plane from Charleston, WV, to Cumberland. Also lost was his passenger, Rob Kessel of Bel Air, MD.

Dave Summerfield's death has been a blow to the entire community and to all who knew him. A graduate of Allegany High School, Dave dedicated himself to the service of our Nation by joining the U.S. Air Force in 1951. During his distinguished military career, he was awarded the Bronze Star Service Medal, Air Force Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with V for Valor, Vietnam Service Medal with four campaign stars, and RVN Honor Medal First Class with Gold Palm.

In 1972, he returned to his childhood home in Rawlings after retiring from the Air Force. There he and his wife, Jessie Marie, raised a family of five children and started an aviation business. His greatest joy in life was his family; his second greatest joy was flying.

Dave was a certified Airline Transport Pilot, ATP, the highest grade of pilot certification that the Federal Aviation Administration, FAA, can bestow. He and Jessie Marie founded Summerfield Aviation, an FAA-approved pilot school, Air Charter and Aerial Photography Service located at the Cumberland Regional Airport. During his 35 years as a pilot, he logged thousands of hours and provided flight instruction to hundreds of students. He was beloved by his students, many of whom joined the search for his plane when they learned it was missing.

He also understood the need to give back to the community. He served as a deacon and was on the board of directors of the Grace Bible Fellowship in Short Gap, WV. He also was a member of the Calvary Baptist Church in Cresaptown. During the last year of his life, he led a Bible study with prisoners at the Federal Correctional Institution in Cumberland.

On a personal note, Dave's youngest son, Robin, is a valuable member of my staff, as my field representative for the western part of Maryland.

Mr. President, on behalf of the citizens of Maryland and members of the U.S. Senate, I wish to extend our sincerest condolences to the family of Dave Summerfield. He was a great American who was an inspiration to all who knew him.•

HONORING JEFFREY LANE MILLER

• Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I recognize Jeffrey Lane Miller of Hendersonville, NC. Mr. Miller is the founder of HonorAir, an all-volunteer community group, which was organized to honor local World War II veterans by providing them with the opportunity to visit their National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, at no expense.

The National World War II Memorial, dedicated in 2004, honors the 16 million men and women who served in the Armed Forces of the United States, the more than 400,000 who died, and all who supported the war effort from home. Thousands of WWII veterans pass away every year without having a chance or ability to visit the monument recognizing their service.

Jeff's passion and commitment to America's ''greatest generation'' has galvanized the Henderson County community. Mr. Miller accomplished what was believed to be the impossible. He organized and obtained funding for chartering commercial aircraft to fly veterans from North Carolina to Washington, DC. His unwavering dedication, with the help of many in the community, has resulted in more than 630 World War II veterans participating in the Hendersonville HonorAir trips. Most of these heroes otherwise would not have been able to visit their monument due to physical or financial limitations.

In partnership with veterans advocates, Jeff created the Honor Flight Network. This network is in the process of honoring the service of World War II veterans from across the United States. As the result of Jeff's inspiration, leadership, and tireless efforts, Honor Flight has been established throughout communities in more than 25 States.

Today I ask that the Senate join with me in recognizing the remarkable public service of Jeff Miller. Jeff has worked so hard to make his dream, of recognizing World War II veterans, into reality. His selfless service has not only had a tremendous impact in his community but throughout our great Nation.•

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OZARK-ST. FRANCIS NATIONAL FORESTS

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I recognize one of the most beloved heritages in my home State of Arkansas, our national forests. Arkansas is blessed with two National Forest Systems, the Ouachita National Forest and the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. Last year, we recognized the 100th Anniversary of the Ouachita National Forest which stretches from western Arkansas to southeastern Oklahoma. On March 6, 2008, the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests will take their turn and celebrate their centennial anniversary.

For the last 100 years, the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests have protected our Nation's timber resources while also providing Americans with numerous outdoor and recreational opportunities. What is unique is that they are two completely separate and distinct forests but are managed together.

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt set aside lands that spanned the Ozark Mountains and named it the Ozark National Forest. His goal was to conserve and safeguard the hardwood

timberlands in our State, and it was one of the first efforts in our country's history to protect our Nation's valuable forests.

Today, the Ozark National Forest contains a little more than 1.2 million acres and runs across northern Arkansas to the Oklahoma border. It is a diverse forest that harbors more than 500 different types of trees and other woody plants. Moreover, it is home to the tallest mountain in the State of Arkansas, Mount Magazine, outside Paris, AR, and includes a living underground cave system, Blanchard Spring Caves, near Mountain View, AR.

A little more than 50 years after President Roosevelt created the Ozark National Forest, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued a proclamation to set aside 22,000 additional acres in Arkansas. Named the St. Francis National Forest, it is one of the smallest forests in the National Forest System. The St. Francis Forest begins in the hilly Crowley's Ridge section of eastern Arkansas and runs along the St. Francis River to the Mississippi River in the delta flatlands.

Each forest has its own unique character, geography, and topography, but together, they form the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests.

The headquarters is located in Russellville, AR, at the Henry R. Koen Forest Service Office Building. The building is named for the man who supervised the Ozark National Forest from 1922–1939. The Henry R. Koen Building is a landmark in and of itself. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal work relief program during the Great Depression, it was dedicated in 1939. In April 1979, the building was named in Mr. Koen's honor after legislation was introduced in Congress by my predecessor, Senator Dale Bumpers.

As we celebrate this milestone, I also want the forest supervisors in Arkansas to know that I am continuing to fight for them in the U.S. Senate. They oversee some of the largest national forests in the South. Traditionally, our forest management and conservation programs have been highly productive, efficient, and profitable, benefitting taxpayers, local economies, and the region. However, with limited resources, our forest supervisors face considerable challenges in accessing and managing all of the forests.

Earlier this year, I sent a letter with the entire Arkansas Congressional delegation to the Bush administration to express our support for greater resources for our State's national forests. Currently, our forest supervisors are only able to implement one half of their total forest management plan. Furthermore, damage from recent tornadoes has compounded the need for resources to access salvageable timber in the most efficient and timely manner possible.

It is my belief that additional investment in Arkansas's national forests will allow Arkansans to continue enjoying them for another 100 years and beyond.●

REPORT OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK ON SOCIAL SECURITY—PM 39

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95–216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)), I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Denmark on Social Security, which consists of two separate instruments: a principal agreement and an administrative arrangement. The agreement was signed at Copenhagen on June 13, 2007.

The United States-Denmark Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the loss of benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Denmark Agreement contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4).

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Agreement, along with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the principal agreement and the related administrative arrangement. Attached to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, which describes the effect of the Agreement on income and expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Agreement.

I commend to the Congress the United States-Denmark Social Security Agreement and related documents.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 28, 2008*.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD) announced that on today, February 28, 2008, he had signed the following enrolled bills, previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

S. 2571. An act to make technical corrections to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

H.R. 2082. An act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

At 1:55 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 2272. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service known as the Southpark Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, as the John ''Marty'' Thiels Southpark Station, in honor and memory of Thiels, a Louisiana postal worker who was killed in the line of duty on October 4, 2007.

S. 2478. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 59 Colby Comer in East Hampstead, New Hampshire, as the ''Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office''.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3803. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3936. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, as the ''Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building''.

H.R. 4454. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building'', in honor of the servicemen and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

H.R. 5351. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 67. Concurrent resolution establishing the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

S. Con. Res. 68. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 605(a) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–161), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Speaker appoints the following members on the part of the House of Representatives to the National Commission on Children and Disasters:

Dr. Irwin Redliner of New York, New York.

Mr. Bruce A. Lockwood of Canton, Connecticut.

The message also announced that pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 67, 110th Congress, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies:

Ms. PELOSI of California.

Mr. HOYER of Maryland.

Mr. BOEHNER of Ohio.

The message further announced that pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 6968(a), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy to fill the existing vacancy thereon:

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN of New Jersey.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 5 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 5264. An act to extend the Andean Trade Preference Act, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5478. An act to provide for the continued minting and insurance of certain $1 coins in 2008.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the acting President pro tempore (Mr. PRYOR).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3454. An act to provide for the conveyance of a small parcel of National Forest System land in the George Washington National Forest in Alleghany County, Virginia, that contains the cemetery of the Central Advent Christian Church and an adjoining tract of land located between the cemetery and road boundaries; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

H.R. 3803. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3936. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, as the ''Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4140. An act to designate the Port Angeles Federal Building in Port Angeles, Washington, as the ''Richard B. Anderson Federal Building''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 4454. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building'', in honor of the servicemen and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5351. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation; to the Committee on Finance.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 270. Concurrent resolution to make corrections in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1593; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–5290. A communication from the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule Designating the Northern Rocky Mountain Population of Gray Wolf as a Distinct Population Segment and Removing this Distinct Population Segment from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife'' (RIN1018–AU53) received on February 26, 2008; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5291. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Prior Determination Process for Certain Items and Services'' (RIN0938–AN10) received on February 22, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5292. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to overseas surplus property; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5293. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, weekly reports relative to progress in Iraq for the period of December 12, 2007, through February 13, 2008; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5294. A communication from the Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Chafee National Youth In Transition Database'' (RIN0970–AC21) received on February 26, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5295. A communication from the Comptroller General of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to employees who were assigned to congressional committees during fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5296. A communication from the Associate Deputy Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to grants streamlining and standardization; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5297. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, proposed legislation detailing the Department's request for funds for fiscal year 2009; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mrs. BOXER, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 2146. A bill to authorize the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to accept, as part of a settlement, diesel emission reduction Supplemental Environmental Projects, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-266).

By Mr. AKAKA, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, without amendment:

S. 2160. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a pain care initiative in health care facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-267).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. ALLARD:

S. 2673. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10799 West Alameda Avenue in Lakewood, Colorado, as the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BURR:

S. 2674. A bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve and enhance procedures for the retirement of members of the Armed Forces for disability and to improve and enhance authorities for the rating and compensation of service-connected disabilities in veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BROWNBACK:

S. 2675. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 West Greenway Street in Derby, Kansas, as the ''Sergeant Jamie O. Maugans Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 2676. A bill to make technical corrections to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs .

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. OBAMA):

S. 2677. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize the Secretary of Education to provide grants to institutions of higher education to establish programs for the provision of services and support to veterans who are students at such institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL:

S. 2678. A bill to clarify the law and ensure that children born to United States citizens while serving overseas in the military are eligible to become President; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2679. A bill to provide assistance for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Poland; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SALAZAR:

S. 2680. A bill to amend the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 to require the Secretary of the Interior to take certain actions to address environmental problems associated with the Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. Res. 463. A resolution congratulating Vivian Stringer on winning 800 games in women's college basketball; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 22

At the request of Mr. WEBB, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 22, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a program of educational assistance for members of the Armed Forces who serve in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 186

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 186, a bill to provide appropriate protection to attorney-client privileged communications and attorney work product.

S. 388

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a national standard in accordance with which nonresidents of a State may carry concealed firearms in the State.

S. 446

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 446, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize capitation grants to increase the number of nursing faculty and students, and for other purposes.

S. 573

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 573, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Public Health Service Act to improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases in women.

S. 799

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 799, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide individuals with disabilities and older Americans with equal access to community-based attendant services and supports, and for other purposes.

S. 1067

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1067, a bill to require Federal agencies to support health impact assessments and take other actions to improve health and the environmental quality of communities, and for other purposes.

S. 1070

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1070, a bill to amend the Social Security Act to enhance the social security of the Nation by ensuring adequate public-private infrastructure and to resolve to prevent, detect, treat, intervene in, and prosecute elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and for other purposes.

S. 1464

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1464, a bill to establish a Global Service Fellowship Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1795

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1795, a bill to improve access to workers' compensation programs for injured Federal employees.

S. 1809

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1809, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that distributions from an individual retirement plan, a section 401(k) plan, a section 403(b) contract, or a section 457 plan shall not be includible in gross income to the extent used to pay long-term care insurance premiums.

S. 1838

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1838, a bill to provide for the health care needs of veterans in far South Texas.

S. 2119

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2119, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who became disabled for life while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

S. 2191

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2191, a bill to direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a program to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases, and for other purposes.

S. 2262

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2262, a bill to authorize the Preserve America Program and Save America's Treasures Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2279

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2279, a bill to combat international violence against women and girls.

S. 2433

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2433, a bill to require the President to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to further the United States foreign policy objective of promoting the reduction of global poverty, the elimination of extreme global poverty, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, who live on less than $1 per day.

S. 2444

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2444, a bill to direct the Secretary of Education to provide grants to establish and evaluate sustainability programs, charged with developing and implementing integrated environmental, economic, and social sustainability initiatives, and to direct the Secretary of Education to convene a summit of higher education experts in the area of sustainability.

S. 2460

At the request of Mrs. DOLE, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2460, a bill to extend by one year the moratorium on implementation of a rule relating to the Federal-State financial partnership under Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program and on finalization of a rule regarding graduate medical education under Medicaid and to include a moratorium on the finalization of the outpatient Medicaid rule making similar changes.

S. 2510

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2510, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide revised standards for quality assurance in screening and evaluation of gynecologic cytology preparations, and for other purposes.

S. 2533

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2533, a bill to enact a safe, fair, and responsible state secrets privilege Act.

S. 2566

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2566, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a Federal income tax credit for certain home purchases.

S. 2579

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr.

MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2579, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition and celebration of the establishment of the United States Army in 1775, to honor the American soldier of both today and yesterday, in wartime and in peace, and to commemorate the traditions, history, and heritage of the United States Army and its role in American society, from the colonial period to today.

S. 2607

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2607, a bill to make a technical correction to section 3009 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

S. 2614

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2614, a bill to facilitate the development, demonstration, and implementation of technology for the use in removing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

S. 2618

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2618, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for research with respect to various forms of muscular dystrophy, including Becker, congenital, distal, Duchenne, Emery-Dreifuss Facioscapulohumeral, limb-girdle, myotonic, and oculopharyngeal muscular dystrophies.

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2618, supra.

S. 2636

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2636, a bill to provide needed housing reform.

S. 2639

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2639, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for an assured adequate level of funding for veterans health care.

S. 2663

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2663, a bill to reform the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide greater protection for children's products, to improve the screening of noncompliant consumer products, to improve the effectiveness of consumer product recall programs, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 449

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 449, a resolution condemning in the strongest possible terms President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statements regarding the State of Israel and the Holocaust and calling for all member States of the United Nations to do the same.

S. RES. 455

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 455, a resolution calling for peace in Darfur.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ALLARD:

S. 2673. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10799 West Alameda Avenue in Lakewood, Colorado, as the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, today I introduced legislation to designate the U.S. Postal Service facility located at 10799 West Alameda Avenue in Lakewood, CO, as the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building.'' This facility will bear the name of a great American, Brigadier General Felix Sparks. Sadly, Brigadier General Sparks passed away in September of last year, but this honor will serve as a lasting tribute to his life and service to his country, State, and community.

Brigadier General Felix Sparks led an exemplary life. His long and distinguished military and civilian career took him from the European theater of World War II to the chambers of the Colorado Supreme Court. General Sparks' enduring leadership, honesty and integrity serve as an inspiration to us all. I am honored to take this time to speak about General Sparks and to introduce this necessary piece of legislation.

Growing up in Arizona, the son of a rail worker, BG Sparks joined the U.S. Army during the Great Depression. After serving in Northern Africa, he went on to lead the Colorado-based 157th regiment in Italy, liberating the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau. During his military service, BG Sparks was awarded two Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit, the Combat Infantry Badge, a Commendation Medal, eight battle stars on his European/African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and the Croix de Guerre with the Silver Gilt Star.

Although Brigadier General Sparks' passion was practicing law, it paled in comparison when he was called to serve. As a liberator, decorated military officer, District Attorney for Delta, Colorado Supreme Court Justice, Commanding General of the Colorado Army National Guard, State Water Board member and University of Colorado graduate, BG Sparks' sense of duty prevailed.

As a lasting tribute to this incredible man, I cannot think of a more appropriate honor than to have this Lakewood Post Office bear the name of Felix Sparks. A post office is the point in every community that brings all people together, and there is no better way to symbolize the virtues BG Sparks demonstrated through his public and private life. I encourage the Senate to pass this legislation in recognition of BG Felix Sparks.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2673

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FELIX SPARKS POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10799 West Alameda Avenue in Lakewood, Colorado, shall be known and designated as the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building''.

By Mr. SALAZAR:

S. 2680. A bill to amend the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 to require the Secretary of the Interior to take certain actions to address environmental problems associated with the Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel Environmental Improvement Act of 2008. This legislation will direct the Bureau of Reclamation to take action to eliminate the grave environmental threat posed by a collapse of part of the Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel, or LMDT. Leadville sits at the headwaters of the Arkansas River, and thus the effluent into the river there is of paramount importance to millions of people.

The LMDT is just over 2 miles long, and was constructed during the 1940s and 1950s by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Mines to drain flooded mines in the Leadville mining district of Lake County in central Colorado. In 1959, the Bureau of Reclamation took ''full custody, accountability, and future responsibility'' of

the LMDT to obtain water rights and under the condition that the Bureau would not spend its own funds to maintain or repair the Tunnel. In the early 1990s, however, litigation compelled the Bureau to take responsibility for the quality of the water discharged by the Tunnel. The Bureau constructed a water treatment plant, and Congress authorized the Bureau under P.L. 102–575 to treat the water discharged from the LMDT.

In 1995, however, a major collapse of a segment of the tunnel was detected. Since that time, mine water has pooled behind the blockage. Today the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that close to 1 billion gallons of water contaminated with toxic levels of cadmium, zinc, and manganese, has collected. The citizens of Leadville, Lake County, and the area downstream of the LMDT are deeply worried that the building pressure from this voluminous quantity of water will cause the blockage to burst and flood the town, resulting in a public health and environmental disaster. This winter's heavy snowfall has some concerned that spring snowmelt will further balloon the quantity of toxic water and exacerbate the risk. Under intense scrutiny, this week the EPA and the Bureau have partnered to begin pumping some of the water to the treatment plant and I appreciate their response. But these actions are only a small piece of the puzzle in making sure the LMDT never becomes a disaster.

In recent years the Federal Government's implementation of a long-term fix for the mine has been jammed up as badly as the mine tunnel itself. My bill focuses on making sure the long term solution for the LMDT moves forward as expeditiously as possible. My bill gives the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation clear authority and responsibility to maintain the LMDT in a manner that protects human health and the environment. For many years the Bureau has maintained that it is not responsible for changed conditions within the LMDT. My bill eliminates any ambiguity on this point, and compels the Bureau to act.

Specifically, the legislation directs the Bureau to participate in the long-term remedy for the LMDT that has already been approved by the EPA, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and has been vetted through public meetings. The bill also authorizes the necessary funds for implementation of the long-term remedy. The long-term solution for the LMDT, specified under the fully approved and vetted EPA superfund Record of Decision, is much more extensive than the pumping and water treatment activity now underway. It will involve construction of a bulkhead in the tunnel to isolate the contaminated pool, backfilling the tunnel, as well as several other actions.

My bill also directs the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the State and the EPA, to conduct a study to determine whether any blockages in the LMDT have affected, or are affecting, water quality and aquatic life in the Arkansas River in the vicinity downstream of the LMDT. We must ensure that the problems with the LMDT blockage do not impact the water quality of the Arkansas River, which is the lifeblood of so many communities. This study will help improve our understanding of the conditions of the headwaters near the LMDT.

For too long the inaction on fixing the LMDT has been a case study in Federal paralysis, with the citizens of Leadville and Lake County caught in the middle. This legislation will establish the conditions and authority necessary to make the long-term fix at the Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel a reality as soon as possible.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 463—CONGRATULATING VIVIAN STRINGER ON WINNING 800 GAMES IN WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Mr. MENENDEZ submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 463

Whereas Vivian Stringer has coached women's college basketball for 36 seasons;

Whereas Vivian Stringer has coached the Rutgers University women's college basketball team for the past 13 seasons;

Whereas Vivian Stringer is the first coach in men's or women's college basketball to lead 3 different schools to the Final Four;

Whereas Vivian Stringer was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2001;

Whereas Vivian Stringer was named by Sports Illustrated as one of the 101 Most Influential Minorities in Sports in 2003;

Whereas Vivian Stringer was a recipient of the Black Coaches Association's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004;

Whereas Vivian Stringer helped lead Team USA to a gold medal as an assistant coach for the United States Olympic women's basketball team in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece;

Whereas Vivian Stringer was inducted into the New Jersey Sports Hall of Fame and the Sport in Society Hall of Fame in 2005;

Whereas Vivian Stringer has made significant contributions in advancing the popularity of and esteem for women's college basketball;

Whereas Vivian Stringer has been a role model for countless young women not only in the United States, but all over the world;

Whereas Vivian Stringer is only the third women's college basketball coach to win 800 games, joining only 5 men's coaches who reached the same milestone; and

Whereas Vivian Stringer broke the record for African-American coaches in either men's or women's college basketball by becoming the first to win 800 games: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate honors Vivian Stringer for the significant accomplishment of winning 800 games in women's college basketball and sends its sincere congratulations for this historic accomplishment.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that an oversight hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, March 13, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony regarding old-growth forest science, policy and management in the Pacific Northwest region.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by e-mail to rachel_pasternack@energy.senate.gov. For further information, please contact Rachel Pasternack at (202) 224–0883 or Kira Finkler at 202–224–5523.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 9:30 a.m., in open session, with a possibility of a closed session, to receive testimony on the Department of the Navy in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2009 and the Future Years Defense Program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 28, 2008, at 10 a.m., in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Semi-annual Monetary Policy Report To Congress.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building, in order to conduct a hearing. The purpose of this hearing is to review the President's proposed Department of Transportation budget for the 2009 fiscal year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. At this hearing, the Committee will hear testimony regarding the impact of increased minimum wages on the economies of American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Real Estate Market: Building a Strong Economy.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. in order to hold a hearing on U.S. policy options in post-election Pakistan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, in order to conduct an executive business meeting on Thursday, February 28, 2008 at 10 a.m. in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Agenda

I. Bills: S. 2304, Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2007, (DOMENICI, KENNEDY, SPECTER, LEAHY); S. 2449, Sunshine in Litigation Act of 2007, (KOHL, LEAHY, GRAHAM); S. 352, Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2007, (GRASSLEY, SCHUMER, LEAHY, SPECTER, GRAHAM, FEINGOLD, CORNYN, DURBIN); S. 2136, Helping Families Save Their Homes in Bankruptcy Act of 2007, (DURBIN, SCHUMER, WHITEHOUSE, BIDEN, FEINSTEIN); and S. 2133, Home Owners ''Mortgage and Equity Savings Act'', (SPECTER, COLEMAN).

II. Nominations: Kevin J. O'Connor to be Associate Attorney General, Department of Justice; Gregory G. Katsas to be Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division, Department of Justice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Joint Economic Committee be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''War at any cost? The total economic costs of the war beyond the Federal budget'' on Thursday, February 28, 2008. The hearing will commence at 9:30 a.m. in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 28, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in order to hold a closed hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works, Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 10 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in order to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Nuclear Regulatory Commission Oversight: Security of Our Nation's Nuclear Plants.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, TECHNOLOGY, AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Weaknesses in the Visa Waiver Program: Are the Needed Safeguards in Place to Protect America?'' on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Witness list

Paul Rosenzweig, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Policy, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC; Tony Edson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC; Jess Ford, Director, International Affairs and Trade, Government Accountability Office, Washington, DC; Susan Ginsburg, Director of Programs on Mobility and Security, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC; and Jessica Vaughan, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Immigration Studies, Washington, DC.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 2 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. At this hearing, the Committee will hear testimony regarding the following legislation:

S. 177/H.R. 2085, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the McGee Creek Authority certain facilities of the McGee Creek Project, Oklahoma, and for other purposes;

S. 1473/H.R. 1855, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Madera Irrigation District for purposes of supporting the Madera Water Supply Enhancement Project;

S. 1474/H.R. 1139, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to plan, design and construct facilities to provide water for irrigation, municipal, domestic, and other uses from the Bunker Hill Groundwater Basin, Santa Ana River, California, and for other purposes;

S. 1929, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, to conduct a feasibility study of water augmentation alternatives in the Sierra Vista Subwatershed;

S. 2370, to clear title to certain real property in New Mexico associated with the Middle Rio Grande Project, and for other purposes;

H.R. 2381, to promote Department of the Interior efforts to provide a scientific basis for the management of sediment and nutrient loss in the Upper Mississippi River Basin, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a member of my staff, Jon Abdnor, be granted the privileges of the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANDEAN TRADE PREFERENCE EXTENSION ACT

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5264, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5264) to extend the Andean Trade Preference Act, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, today, the Senate takes the important step of extending the Andean Trade Preferences Act for 10 months. This follows

action in the House yesterday on the same bill. We can now ensure continuation of this important program before it expires tomorrow.

I would have preferred a longer term extension of ATPA. But a 10-month extension is a sound compromise. It is good for America. And it is good for our Andean neighbors.

In recent weeks, we have had a lively debate over the value of this preference program. Opponents point to one-sided benefits. They warn against risky investments.

Proponents say that our Andean preferences complement drug eradication efforts. We say that they create jobs in both developing countries and here at home.

Today, as in the past, I support ATPA. ATPA is an investment in mutual prosperity and regional stability. It is good foreign policy. ATPA is a boon to the developing economies of Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador. It brings economic development where poverty persists. It encourages alternative crops where illegal drugs plague the landscape. It creates jobs where there have long been too few. And it can provide a platform for more comprehensive engagement, such as the free-trade agreements that Peru and Colombia have negotiated with the United States.

The economic benefits of ATPA are mutual. Flower exports from Colombia and Ecuador employ Andean agriculture workers in their countries. And they also create transportation and retail jobs here at home.

The United States sells its cotton to Andean buyers, who make it into fabric and apparel. And that creates jobs for American farmers and skilled Andean labor. It is precisely this mutual prosperity that has earned the Andean Trade Preferences Act the broad support it commands, even from sectors that have traditionally been wary of trade.

But as important, we must recognize that ATPA benefits are neither handouts nor freebies. To benefit from preferences, each ATPA partner must meet strict eligibility criteria. Beneficiaries must afford internationally recognized worker rights. They must protect and enforce intellectual property rights. They must cooperate in counter-narcotics efforts. And they must ensure the integrity of U.S. investments by, among other things, honoring contracts with U.S. investors and abiding by investment decisions made by arbitral panels.

These eligibility requirements are not optional. If a country does not comply, it should not receive ATPA benefits. Actions have consequences. The U.S. will notice and take into account actions in ATPA countries that unfairly hurt U.S. interests. Ecuador, in particular, has taken actions in recent years that call into question its intention to abide by the ATPA conditions related to investment. These developments are, at best, discouraging. At worst, they might be disqualifying.

In the next few months, I will work with Senator GRASSLEY and others to closely monitor whether our ATPA beneficiary countries meet these eligibility criteria. And I will work to monitor whether the administration is doing enough to enforce them.

ATPA is good policy. But, as with most policies, hard work can make it better. As in the past, I will continue to work with opponents and supporters to ensure that all of the elements of the program are upheld. I will work to see that not just the trade benefits, but the eligibility requirements as well, are upheld. When everyone is playing by the rules, we will have a comprehensive program that is as good for the United States as it is for Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this week the House passed a 10 month extension of our unilateral trade preferences for Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia, and today it is the Senate's turn to consider the issue. I want to take a moment to explain why I have decided to agree to support this 10 month extension.

As my colleagues know, I have been critical of the operation of these trade preferences for quite some time. Last year, reported developments in Ecuador and Bolivia led me to question the commitment of their respective Governments to upholding the democratic rule of law, honoring contracts and other legal obligations, protecting civic freedoms such as freedom of the press, and fully partnering with us in the fight against traffic in illicit narcotics. In that context, I have questioned why we should renew these particular trade preferences, which we provide in addition to the broad preferences that we give to developing countries under our separate Generalized System of Preferences program.

More generally, I have questioned why we should continue to extend unilateral trade preferences when our farmers and manufacturers deserve to enjoy reciprocal trade benefits. I realize that we advance our national interest by fostering the creation of legitimate economic opportunities in the four Andean beneficiary countries. There need to be viable alternatives in the region if we are going to succeed in the fight against illicit narcotics. And the Andean trade preferences have been a good start. But I continue to question how unilateral trade preferences provide a basis for truly sustainable economic development over the long term.

On the other hand, a permanent, reciprocal, open trading relationship would appropriately address each of those questions. That is what we should be aiming for. Not only would it provide a level playing field for both sides, it would facilitate the establishment of strong long-term economic relationships through mutually beneficial trade and investment. That is one of the reasons why implementation of our trade promotion agreement with Colombia is my top priority on the trade agenda this year.

On balance, I have concluded that this 10 month extension of Andean trade preferences will allow us to accomplish a number of things. It will allow for the smooth entry into force of our trade agreement with Peru. It will avoid economic disruption in Colombia as we strive to implement our trade agreement with that critical ally. And it will extend an opportunity for Ecuador and Bolivia to engage us in a deeper dialogue on the direction they want to see our bilateral economic and political relationships take going forward. But let me be clear. Today's extension should not be interpreted as a sign that Andean trade preferences are a de facto perpetuity. They are not. I intend to continue my oversight of this program in advance of its expiration at the end of the year. Whether this program is again extended, or in what form, or for which countries, remains an open question.

In the meantime, I will continue monitoring a number of important concerns. For example, the Government of Ecuador has indicated that the U.S. lease to the Eloy Alfaro airfield will not be renewed when it expires in 2009. That is, of course, Ecuador's sovereign right. But we should not wait until the lease expires to discuss how our cooperative efforts to combat traffic in illicit narcotics can be augmented in order to offset the loss of this access. I am also concerned about expanded cultivation of coca leaf. Just this past Saturday, the New York Times reported on how the rollback of restrictions on coca growing since President Morales took office in Bolivia has contributed to surging drug use in Argentina and Brazil. We need to focus on cultivation just as much as on eradication in the fight against drugs.

With respect to investment disputes, it is essential that legal obligations be fully honored. That includes honoring arbitral awards once they become final. It also includes honoring contracts and the mutual settlement of claims involving prior disputes. Separately, I am disappointed that we haven't been able to fully resolve some of our differences in agricultural trade. For example, with respect to beef, Colombia and Peru comply with the standards of the World Organization for Animal Health, which sets benchmark standards for the World Trade Organization, by permitting the importation of all U.S. beef. In contrast, Ecuador and Bolivia continue to reject these international standards. Ecuador restricts U.S. beef imports to only boneless beef from cattle under 30 months of age, while Bolivia prohibits imports of all U.S. beef. In addition, Ecuador committed to phase out its agricultural price-band system by 2001 as part of its World Trade Organization accession package, but the Government has yet to do so. Ecuador's price-band inhibits U.S. exports of wheat, rice, barley, corn, soybeans, poultry, pork, and powdered milk to Ecuador. Such failures to

live up to existing trade obligations undermine the case some make for an extension of trade preferences. I would also expect all four Andean beneficiary countries to actively support efforts to conclude an ambitious agreement in the Doha Development Round negotiations of the World Trade Organization. Finally, I will continue to assess our respective bilateral relations on a political level, as well as monitor the status of protections extended to civic freedoms such as freedom of the press.

In closing, I want to make clear that I am very much interested in strengthening our relations with each of the four Andean beneficiary countries. But it takes cooperation on all sides to make that happen. Colombia and Peru have certainly demonstrated a reciprocal interest in stronger relations. I hope to see a similar demonstration on the part of Ecuador and Bolivia in the months to come with actions that are commensurate with words. I am also going to call upon the administration to review conditions in Ecuador and Bolivia in order to help me evaluate the concerns that I have identified and determine whether changes are warranted if the program is to be extended beyond the end of this year.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today regarding the extension of the Andean Trade Preference Act, ATPA. This program, which has been in place for approaching two decades, has broadened economic opportunities in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru as an alternative to illegal drug production and trafficking. With the current extension of this program expiring tomorrow, it is important that Congress is acting this week to extend the program for an additional 10 months. The extension should allow necessary time for passage of the U.S.-Colombia FTA, implementation of the Peru FTA, and continued commerce for Andean producers and U.S. consumers and importers.

However, this extension does not minimize the continued need for the timely advancement of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, FTA, which would deepen our two nation's important relationship, broaden market opportunities for U.S. producers and companies, and provide longer term certainty for Colombian exporters and workers that short-term ATPA extensions do not provide. We must do all that we can to maintain and improve our Nation's global competitiveness and relations throughout the world, and the U.S.-Colombia FTA is a much needed step in the right direction for providing economic opportunities for Americans through reciprocal trade treatment for U.S. products. For example, the U.S.-Colombia FTA would provide immediate duty-free access for fresh potatoes and almost all processed potatoes. Currently, Colombia's WTO tariff bindings on potatoes and potato products range from 70 to 102 percent and applied tariff rates range from 5 to 20 percent. This is just one example of the areas where the U.S. stands to gain improved access into one of the region's fastest growing markets through this agreement.

Additionally, as with all trade preferences and agreements, the requirements must be fully enforced. The U.S. is providing special trade preferences to these countries through this program, and with that comes a responsibility to comply with the standards and obligations set forth in ATPA. Our ATPA partner countries must treat U.S. investors consistently with current ATPA eligibility.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is on the third reading and passage of the bill.

The bill (H.R. 5264) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

PROVIDING FOR THE CONTINUED MINTING AND ISSUANCE OF CERTAIN $1 COINS IN 2008

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5478 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5478) to provide for the continued minting and issuance of certain $1 coins in 2008.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and that any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 5478) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

EXPANDING PASSENGER FACILITY FEE ELIGIBILITY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Commerce Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 996 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 996) to amend title 49, United States Code, to expand passenger facility fee eligibility for certain noise compatibility projects.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 996) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 996

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXPANDED PASSENGER FACILITY FEE ELIGIBILITY FOR NOISE COMPATIBILITY PROJECTS.

Section 40117(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(7) NOISE MITIGATION FOR CERTAIN SCHOOLS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the uses specified in paragraphs (1), (4), and (6), the Secretary may authorize a passenger facility fee imposed under paragraph (1) or (4) at a large hub airport that is the subject of an amended judgment and final order in condemnation filed on January 7, 1980, by the Superior Court of the State of California for the county of Los Angeles, to be used for a project to carry out noise mitigation for a building, or for the replacement of a relocatable building with a permanent building, in the noise impacted area surrounding the airport at which such building is used primarily for educational purposes, notwithstanding the air easement granted or any terms to the contrary in such judgment and final order, if—

''(i) the Secretary determines that the building is adversely affected by airport noise;

''(ii) the building is owned or chartered by the school district that was the plaintiff in case number 986,442 or 986,446, which was resolved by such judgment and final order;

''(iii) the project is for a school identified in 1 of the settlement agreements effective February 16, 2005, between the airport and each of the school districts;

''(iv) in the case of a project to replace a relocatable building with a permanent building, the eligible project costs are limited to the actual structural construction costs necessary to mitigate aircraft noise in instructional classrooms to an interior noise level meeting current standards of the Federal Aviation Administration; and

''(v) the project otherwise meets the requirements of this section for authorization of a passenger facility fee.

''(B) ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS.—In subparagraph (A)(iv), the term 'eligible project costs' means the difference between the cost of standard school construction and the cost of construction necessary to mitigate classroom noise to the standards of the Federal Aviation Administration.''.

STAR PRINT—S. 22

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that S. 22 be star printed with the changes at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 81–754, as amended by Public Law 93–536 and Public Law 100–365, appoints the Senator from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN, to the National Historical Publications and Records commission, vice the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Dodd).

The Chair, on behalf of the Republican leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 110–161, appoints the following individuals to serve as members of the National Commission on Children and Disasters: Ernie Allen of Virginia and Mary Alneta Carlson of Alaska.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Republican leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 105, adopted April 13, 1989, as amended by S. Res. 149, adopted October 5, 1993, as amended by Public Law 105–275, adopted October 21, 1998, further amended by S. Res. 75, adopted March 25, 1999, amended by S. Res. 383, adopted October 27, 2000, and amended by S. Res. 355, adopted November 13, 2002, and further amended by S. Res. 480, adopted November 21, 2004, the appointment of the following Senators as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the 110th Congress: the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. COLEMAN, as cochairman and the Senator from Ohio, Mr. VOINOVICH.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2008

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, Friday, February 29; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221, the legislative vehicle to be used for the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, tomorrow the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to the housing legislation. There will be no rollcall votes during Friday's session of the Senate. The next vote is expected to occur at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:07 p.m., adjourned until 10 a.m. Friday, February 29, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE YOUNG SCIENTISTS FROM CLOUDCROFT MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize young scientists from the Cloudcroft Middle and High schools in my district who recently competed against over 3,000 students from across New Mexico in the New Mexico Science Olympiad. Each school placed third in the overall team awards. Leading to their third place finishes, these students from Cloudcroft were also recognized in almost all of the 40 different science categories. These categories range from those we are most familiar with like biology and chemistry, to the newer fields in science and technology like robotics and forensic science.

Just like the students before them who competed and raised the bar, these two teams from Cloudcroft have risen to the challenge, and in so doing, push future students to even greater success. As these teams continue to push the envelope and inspire other students, I have full confidence that future teams from Cloudcroft will soon find themselves at the national competition held each year in Washington, DC.

Among the highlights of Cloudcroft's showing at the NM Science Olympiad are the achievements of two seniors, Sean Henry and Ann Birch. These students received highly sought-after scholarships to the New Mexico Institute of Technology. Only 10 of these awards are set aside for top scoring students. I am pleased their talents have been recognized and wish them the best of luck as they continue their education.

New Mexico has a rich history of conducting cutting-edge science research and development, and these students embody the innovative spirit that we associate with science and technology in New Mexico. These talented students will play an increasingly important role in our society. They are the future of science and technology in our State and I am impressed with their accomplishments. On behalf of the people of the Second District of New Mexico, I congratulate these students, their teachers, and families for their tremendous achievement.

FREEDOM FOR JUAN BERMÚDEZ TORANZO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Juan Bermúdez Toranzo, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Juan Bermúdez Toranzo is vice president of the Cuban Foundation for Human Rights. On November 21, 2007, Mr. Bermúdez was participating in a peaceful fast at his home in support of the political prisoners kept in repressive and inhumane conditions in Cuba's gulags. That evening 30 police and state security thugs stormed Mr. Bermúdez's home and dragged him into a police car.

According to Amnesty International the arrest of Mr. Bermúdez was part of an increasingly arbitrary crackdown against dissidents because of their involvement in peaceful protests. The unjustified arrests by the totalitarian regime's goons were aimed at discouraging demonstrations against the government, particularly on December 10, International Human Rights Day. International Human Rights Day honors the day of the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first global declaration of human rights.

Just last month a sham regime court held proceedings in secret, "convicting" Mr. Bermúdez of "revealing state secrets," and sentencing him to 12 years in prison. But the regime hooligans were not content with the 12-year prison sentence. They wanted to send a message to future political dissidents by first putting Mr. Bermúdez in a punishment cell and denying him clothes and water. They also constantly subjected Mr. Bermúdez to psychological torture.

The inhumane conditions in the totalitarian regime's prisons took their toll on Mr. Bermúdez and he allegedly attempted to commit suicide.

This is not the first time Mr. Bermúdez has faced the brutality of the Cuban totalitarian-gangster regime. Last March while leaving the Rosa Parks Independent Library at the U.S. Interests Section, the regime's secret police arrested Mr. Bermúdez. After his release he said that he would continue his opposition to the dictatorship and his work for human rights.

After Mr. Bermúdez's arrest by regime thugs, known as the "National Revolutionary Police Unit," between 15 and 25 human rights activists carried out a sit-in in front of the "National Revolutionary Police Unit," demanding the release of Juan Bermúdez Toranzo. The sit-in included Ms. Nery Castillo, the wife of Mr. Bermúdez Toranzo. Because of her participation she has been subjected to harsh intimidation by regime goons. These goons warned her that if she did not leave the sit-in they would take away her children.

Madam Speaker, it is unconscionable that human beings are locked in a barbarously inhumane gulag because they believe that all men and women have a right to freedom and democracy. My colleagues, we must demand freedom and human rights for all people, including those who live under the darkness of totalitarian tyrannies. We must demand immediate and unconditional freedom for Juan Bermúdez Toranzo and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

TRIBUTE TO JOHNNIE L. ALBERTSON

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and achievements of Johnnie L. Albertson, a 32-year employee of the Small Business Administration who died on December 26, 2007, at the age of 83. She leaves behind a legacy of leadership, especially in her dedication to equal rights and the development of programs to improve the success rate of minority- and female-owned small businesses.

Following a career in business and advertising, Ms. Albertson served at the Small Business Administration from 1973 until her retirement in 2005. She was the first Associate Administrator for the Small Business Development Center program and proved instrumental in the success of the initiative, which assists more than 600,000 small businesses every year. In recognition of her outstanding service, Ms. Albertson was the first recipient of the SBA's Lifetime Achievement Awards, and was honored with the Silver Medal for Meritorious Service for her work developing a national training program for women entrepreneurs.

Johnnie Albertson broke through gender and class barriers at every stage of her life. During World War II, she served in the Women's Air Force Service Pilots corps as a pilot and ferried replacement aircraft across the Pacific. She later became the first female to sell advertising space for three major newspapers: The Washington Post, The New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune. At the Small Business Administration, she rose to become the first female Senior Executive—the highest rank possible for a civil servant without a congressional appointment.

Born in North Carolina, Ms. Albertson was self-educated and a voracious reader. She overcame many difficulties in her life, including the loss of her parents at a young age, to achieve great successes. Beloved by all who met her, she is remembered by her friends and family for her outrageous and irreverent sense of humor, owl glasses, love of jazz music, generosity, and fierce determination.

It is my honor, as chairwoman of the Small Business Committee, to acknowledge Johnnie Albertson's life accomplishments and celebrate her contributions to small business, entrepreneurship, and our nation as a whole. She was an inspiration to many and a friend to all. Her pioneering spirit, courage, and leadership will be missed, but her legacy will endure.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF LARKSPUR, CALIFORNIA

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today I rise with great pleasure to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of Larkspur, California, one of the most beautiful cities in my district, and one of only three cities whose distinctive character have gained them listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Larkspur received this official recognition because it typifies the smalltown look of turn-of-the-19th century California.

From its origins as part of a Mexican land grant through its logging days to its late 19th century status as a risqué resort, Larkspur became just a small town where the well-off came to escape the freezing San Francisco summers.

Larkspur, like many Marin County towns, evolved after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. "What really started Larkspur was the earthquake," explains Helen Heitkamp, member of the city's Heritage Preservation Board and a local historian who helped write the book Larkspur Past & Present, A History & Walking Guide. "After the earthquake, the people who had summer cottages came to stay and that started that first big push."

But becoming a city wasn't as easy as it sounds, says Mayor Kathy Hartzell.

"They held their vote in August, 1907 and in February 1908, the county said OK. On March 1, 1908 the city was incorporated." However, one of the town's leading residents, Jean Escalle, brought suit against the city on the grounds there was inadequate notification of the election and the polls closed too early! It wasn't until 1911 that the courts ruled in favor of Larkspur. Escalle, by the way, went on to serve as a city council member, the mayor notes.

Noted for its beautiful setting, the Larkspur of the early 20th century wasn't as pretty as it is today. Clear-cut logging had decimated the forests and denuded the hillsides. In fact, says Heitkamp, "when the city was first formed, you needed a permit to cut trees because the hills were bare and they were trying to grow trees."

At that time, too, the original highway was mapped so that the main street through downtown Larkspur—called Magnolia Avenue—served as the major access road for much of Marin. Its character now, through restrictions by the Historic Register, looks much the same as it did 100 years ago.

A walk along Magnolia Avenue—from Mission Revival-style City Hall to the 1930s Art Deco-style Lark Theater three blocks away—encompasses the history of Larkspur. Along the way is the false-front building where the Silver Peso, the town's only bar, now resides. Built in 1890 as a blacksmith's shop, its walls still show the original double doors where wagons and buggies came in and out. The building next to it—the one that now houses the pool table—was the city's first firehouse. On the corner down the street stands the Blue Rock Inn, built in 1895, whose rooms have since been converted to apartments. On the street level, celebrities can often be seen dining at the sidewalk tables of its French restaurant, the Left Bank Brasserie. Downtown Larkspur, also designated as a State historic site, spans more than a century of architecture.

Preservation efforts begun in the 1970s have not only kept the smalltown character but have controlled new development. Heitkamp notes that these efforts also helped Larkspur maintain its beautiful surroundings. No longer set among tree stumps, the city is now resplendent in oaks, redwoods, madrones and other trees. Larkspur citizen groups have bought up the hills, Heitkamp says, "so that our backdrop for the city has also been preserved."

Of course, a city is more than its architecture, its setting, or its natural environment. Most of all, a city is its people. I am proud to say that the people of Larkspur are as charming, diverse and beautiful as the city itself.

The year-long centennial celebration will kick-off on Saturday, March 1, with a gala birthday party and parade from City Hall to Hall Middle School. The "Meet Me in Larkspur" centennial activities will continue throughout the summer and culminate with the city's famous Rose Bowl Dance, a tradition that made Larkspur a romantic destination for many years.

I am proud to represent the people of Larkspur, Madam Speaker, and I ask that you join me in congratulating them on their accomplishments of the past 100 years and wishing them the best for the next century.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION TAX ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5351, the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008. With this legislation, we take another step forward in the fight to combat global warming and achieve energy independence.

It is critical to our Nation's future that we invest in the energy sources of the 21st century. H.R. 5351 does this by reforming the Tax Code to reflect America's energy priorities. The bill includes, extends, and expands tax incentives for biodiesel production, solar energy and fuel cell investment and energy efficiency improvements to existing homes. The bill also provides new incentives for plug-in hybrid vehicles and cellulosic ethanol production. These investments will help us achieve my goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60–80 percent by 2050 in order to limit the effects of global warming.

In the interest of fiscal responsibility, H.R. 5351 pays for these investments in the energy resources of the future by cutting subsidies for industries that clearly need no help. The bill saves $18 billion by ending tax loopholes and subsidies for multinational oil and gas companies which are already reaping huge, record profits. No longer will oil and gas companies be able to game the Tax Code by understating their income from foreign oil and gas extraction. These long overdue reforms send a clear message that oil and gas companies will no longer get privileged treatment while Americans pay higher fuel prices and home heating costs.

H.R. 5351 also demonstrates that clean energy investments can create new jobs in addition to benefiting the environment. By extending the renewable energy production tax credit for wind, biomass, geothermal, and other renewable energy sources, the bill provides new opportunities for job growth in these areas. With its stellar research institutions and wealth of experts on engine design, Michigan has the potential to reap significant benefits from this legislation. Governor Jennifer Granholm has made clear her commitment to creating green-collar jobs through a renewable energy mandate and other reforms. I look forward to building on the progress made in this bill. With future reforms we can continue to reduce greenhouse emissions, secure our energy independence, and create new green industry jobs for Michigan and America.

IN HONOR OF OFFICER TODD M. MYERS, PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER MEDAL OF VALOR RECIPIENT

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a hero. Heroism is a word we use a lot these days, and in a world beset by such real and mounting dangers, it's understandable that we're always in the market for a guardian angel or two. Still, I believe we could all learn something from the real-life heroism of Officer Todd M. Myers of Simsbury, Connecticut.

On July 29, 2005, Officer Myers was out of uniform and making his way to work when he witnessed a dump truck careen out of control and race down Avon Mountain, scattering cars and bursting into flames. Driven by little else than his impulse to help, Officer Myers plunged himself into the harrowing crash site, cutting a trapped woman from her car while exploding gas tanks left him with first- and second-degree burns. Rescuing several others, Officer Myers stayed at the scene with the injured until proper paramedic care could be administered. No one told him to help, and he certainly was under no obligation to do so as an out-of-uniform officer—but none the less, Officer Myers was compelled to place the welfare of others before his own.

This past December, to honor his courage and selfless sacrifice, the President of the United States will bestow the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor to Officer Myers—an honor which has been bestowed on only a few of the most heroic Americans. Just as countless men and women risk their lives overseas every day in our military, men and women like Todd Myers carry the equally solemn duty of protecting America here in our towns, neighborhoods, and communities. We are all deeply indebted to Officer Myers and the unsung public safety officers across the country just like him, and I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to him and his family.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION TAX ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see this legislation come to the floor today that will extend critical tax credits for renewable energy while not adding to the Federal deficit.

The Production Tax Credit, PTC, in particular, has been instrumental in promoting the creation of a renewable energy industry. An extended PTC will provide more market certainty, and expanding the PTC to include solar, open-loop biomass, geothermal, and small irrigation power will ensure that all renewable energy sources can benefit. We must have an extension of this key tax credit before the current credit expires at the end of 2008, and this bill will extend it to the end of 2011.

The bill also authorizes $2 billion of new clean renewable energy bonds, CREBS, for public power providers and electric cooperatives. This is a critical tool, especially for Colorado's rural co-ops and municipal utilities.

But this bill would also benefit families who want to invest in renewable energy. The bill would extend the credit for residential solar property for 6 years and increase the annual credit cap, currently capped at $2,000, to $4,000. And it would expand the definition to include residential small wind equipment and geothermal heat pumps so that consumers have more options.

Of course, the cheapest kilowatt of energy is the one you don't use, and energy efficiency also has a key role in addressing our energy needs. This bill will extend the tax credit for energy efficiency improvements to existing homes. It will also extend the energy efficient commercial buildings deduction for 5 years and the modification and extension of the energy efficient appliance credit for 3 years.

Rising gas prices are forcing many Coloradans to dip into their savings just to make ends meet. This bill will help families reduce their fuel bills by providing between $4,000 and $6,000 in tax credits toward the purchase of fuel-efficient, plug-in hybrid vehicles. It will also help address long-term fuel cost concerns by expanding production of homegrown fuels, including creating a new production tax credit for cellulosic ethanol produced from domestic, non-food feedstocks such as switchgrass, corn stover, sawdust, and paper pulp, as well as an extension of the tax credits for biodiesel and renewable diesel.

I supported the energy bill that the House passed last year, which included many of these important tax provisions. But, for the lack of just one more vote in the Senate, these provisions were not included in the final bill that the President signed into law.

I hope today we can move this bill forward and promote positive change that will benefit rural communities, save consumers money, reduce air pollution, and increase reliability and energy security.

I strongly encourage my colleagues in the House to vote for this needed legislation, and also encourage quick action in the Senate so that we may move it to the President's desk.

A TRIBUTE TO THE UNITED STATES PHARMACOPEIAL CONVENTION

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor the United States Pharmacopeial Convention on the inauguration of its expanded headquarters in Rockville, Maryland. Since 1820, the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention has established standards for drugs, both manufactured and compounded, and more recently for foods, including dietary supplements and food ingredients. These standards are developed by hundreds of volunteer experts from all over the Nation and the world.

The U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention plays a vital role in our Nation's efforts to promote public standards and help ensure the integrity of our Nation's food and drug supply. The organization's standards are widely recognized in the United States and around the world because they are authoritative, science-based, and developed through a transparent and credible process with established integrity. For this the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention's work is recognized truly as the ''standard of quality''.

Since the 19th century, Congress has continually enacted laws that bring United States consumers the best, the most beneficial and the safest food and drugs in the world. These laws tie the Food and Drug Administration and the United States Pharmacopeial Convention together as premier public health bodies. They support the enterprising spirit of our Nation's citizens who have brought forth an abundance of life-saving drugs.

Recent incidents at home and abroad demonstrate the continued importance of protecting the public and ensuring our drugs and food are safe. The U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention deserves our thanks for its efforts to protect the health of our families. From the medicines that heal our Nation's people to the food that nourishes us, the organization is working to ensure our safety.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention and recognize it for its commitment to public health. It is with great pride that I congratulate the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention for its work over 188 years and encourage its volunteers in continuing their exemplary standards-setting activities in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING ANNA NOVIKOVA FOR HER SERVICE AS A CONGRESSIONAL PAGE

HON. MELISSA L. BEAN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Anna Novikova, a young woman from Illinois' Eighth District who I was proud to sponsor as a Congressional Page for the 2007 fall session.

Anna, who currently lives with her family in Palatine, Illinois, stands as an example of what can be accomplished through a combination of hard work, enthusiasm, and determination.

Born in Russia as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Anna immigrated to America at age 5. Since that time she has taken full advantage of the myriad opportunities available to those of us who are lucky enough to come of age in America. She has excelled academically, mastering the English language at an early age, participating in her primary school's Gifted Child program, and winning the prestigious American Legion Award for writing.

At Palatine High School, she participates in the Foreign Language Honor Society and placed as top sophomore in the Illinois Math League contest. In addition to these intellectual accomplishments, Anna is a talented pianist, a member of her school's choir and newspaper, and a dedicated athlete, running on the varsity cross country and track teams. Appropriately, she was nominated to Palatine High School's A–Team for achieving excellence in Athletics, Activities, Arts and Attitude.

When Anna applied to come to the House of Representatives as a page, she told me that she wanted to do so not only because of the unique opportunity to take part in our democratic process, but also in order to give back to her country. She certainly held up her part of the bargain, serving honorably as a Congressional Page while excelling within the academic curriculum at the Page School.

At the Page Departure Ceremony at the end of her term, Anna received awards that demonstrate two of her most apparent attributes: intelligence and dedication. She was honored for her performance in the classroom—particularly her expertise in economics—with the Ronald Weitzel Award, which is awarded to one page each term who demonstrates excellence in social studies. She was also recognized as having perfect attendance this semester at the Page School.

At the close of her term as a page, Anna said that the firsthand view of Congress has not disillusioned her about our political process. Rather, she feels incredibly lucky to have spent her days on the floor of the House of Representatives, heard our impassioned debates over SCHIP in person, and been present when the Dalai Lama addressed Congress. She came to Washington interested in trade, immigration, and gay rights, and is leaving passionate about the same issues but with more nuanced views on them.

Anna said while she has loved her time as a Congressional Page, she is also excited to return to Illinois to resume her extracurriculars that benefit others, including leading her school's chapter of Students for Obama in an effort to engage her fellow students in the political process. In the future, she plans to work in the public sector either as a diplomat or in some aspect of domestic politics.

Upon completing her term as a Congressional Page, Anna added another impressive accomplishment to her record. Just as importantly, she did so while maintaining something that many Americans often take for granted—optimism, hope, and belief in the potential of our democratic system.

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember a founder of the modem conservative intellectual movement, William F. Buckley, Jr., who passed away yesterday morning.

Mr. Buckley was a man of all trades—author, soldier, musician, activist, editor, television personality, among others. Above all, he was a true patriot who believed in the ideals of limited government and the promotion of individual freedoms. Those goals were embodied in his extraordinary publication, National Review, which brought to light the mainstream conservative values that many Americans cherish and upon which our Nation was founded promoting victory in the Cold War.

Since high school, I have been an avid reader of National Review. I was inspired not only by the commonsense ideas that Mr. Buckley espoused, but just as much by his passion and dedication to those principles. He brought an uncanny wit and intellectual quality to his speeches and writings which endeared him to many—even those who disagreed with him.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Buckley family during this time. William F. Buckley, Jr., made a positive difference for America.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

HONORING CALVARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Calvary Christian School in Columbus, Georgia, for their recent ''Celebrate America'' presentation, and their patriotic commitment to their country.

In a critical time in our Nation's history, with a consistent threat against freedom being declared against the United States of America and our allies, it is vital that the citizens of the United States remember that freedom is not free. Men and women of the United States Armed Forces serve around the world in an attempt to keep the citizens of America free and safe. Our soldiers are willing to pay the ultimate price for the freedom that we enjoy each and every day, and as Americans, we must not ever forget their sacrifice. It is of the utomost necessity that we continue to recognize our freedom and those that continue to ensure that our liberty remains. Too often, we overlook our freedom as a common occurrence.

In early 2008, the faculty, staff, and students of Calvary Christian School demonstrated their patriotism on February 7, 2008, and February 15, 2008, in the presentation of ''Celebrate America'', which was a time of reflection on all things American, including music, free speech, veteran recognition, active-duty military appreciation, and other displays of nationalism. For this reason, I would like to recognize before the U.S. House of Representatives the commitment of Calvary Christian School, its faculty, staff, and students for their patriotism. I sincerely hope that these actions encourage other schools, organizations, and individuals to follow the example of nationalistic devotion displayed by the school in this presentation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, February 27, 2008. I was unavoidably detained and thus I missed rollcall votes No. 78 through 84. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

On rollcall vote No. 78, the motion to consider the resolution, I would have voted ''nay.'' On rollcall vote No. 79, on approving the Journal, I would have voted ''nay.'' On rollcall vote No. 80, on ordering the Previous Question, I would have noted ''nay.''

On rollcall vote No. 81, on agreeing to the rule for H.R. 5351, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act, I would have voted ''nay.'' On rollcall vote No. 82, on motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair, I would have voted ''nay.''

On rollcall vote No. 83, on the Motion to Recommit on H.R. 5351, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act, I would have voted ''nay.'' On rollcall vote No. 84, on passage of H.R. 5351, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act, I would have voted ''nay.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RIC KELLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I have remained in Orlando, Florida with my wife as she prepares to give birth to our second child. If I had been present yesterday, I would have voted in the following manner: rollcall 78: ''nay''; rollcall 79: ''nay''; rollcall 80: ''nay''; rollcall 81: ''nay''; rollcall 82: ''nay''; rollcall 83 ''nay''; and rollcall 84: ''nay.''

INTRODUCTION OF THE ''NEW EMPLOYEE VERIFICATION ACT''

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, the lure of employment opportunities in the United States has long been acknowledged as a major reason for immigration—both legal and illegal. Those in Congress know I'm for combating illegal immigration. As the ranking member on the Social Security Subcommittee, I, along with several of my subcommittee colleagues, offer an important new component in the immigration reform debate.

Employers want, need, and deserve a reliable employee verification system, and I want to give it to them. Every day, countless immigrants enter our country seeking the economic opportunities that a job in this country has to offer. Many play by the rules, wait their turn, and obtain the proper permission to work. That is called legal immigration, and I am all for it.

But when it comes to enforcing the law for those who do not play by the rules, it can't be done. That is because enforcement is based upon a failed system that is prone to both error and fraud. The result is an illegal immigrant population that has swelled by some estimates to over 12 million. This is a path our Nation cannot sustain, and the American people have rightly demanded action.

The bill we are introducing today is designed to achieve three important objectives: first, ensure a legal workforce; second, safeguard workers' identity; and finally, protect Social Security.

First, this legislation draws upon lessons learned from the past to help guarantee a legal U.S. workforce for the future. The current failed, paper-based I–9 screening process is replaced with an Electronic Employee Verification System, to be known as EEVS. This system would rely on the use of fewer, more secure identity documents and would be built upon the new hire reporting process already existing in each State. This reporting process is used by 90 percent of employers and was put in place a dozen years ago to track down deadbeat dads.

For Americans, work authorization would be confirmed only through the Social Security Administration. This ensures that there is no ''Big Brother'' law enforcement agency building new databases on law-abiding citizens. For noncitizens, work authorization would be confirmed through the Department of Homeland Security that has the databases on visa and immigration status.

Second, the legislation would help safeguard workers' identity. A voluntary system would be created using the latest technology to authenticate and protect a worker's identity. Private sector contractors, certified by the Federal Government, would authenticate the identity of employees by utilizing existing background-check and document screening tools and then safeguard the identity through a biometric identifier, such as a fingerprint or eye scan. The private sector provider would then verify work authorization in EEVS.

Think back to December 2006 and the now widely known Swift and Company raids. Nearly 1,300 workers in 6 States were arrested, including many in Cactus, Texas. A Swift and Company human resources official testified before a House panel that Swift had willingly participated in the government's voluntary verification program for Social Security numbers since 1997. This shows the system is broken and must be fixed.

Third, this legislation would protect the Social Security program by preventing wages earned through future unauthorized work from being used to determine benefits. Also the bill would protect the Social Security Administration's primary mission and trust funds by authorizing employment verification only through funds appropriated in advance.

So far, efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation have failed. Today we offer a new way forward for this Congress

to discourage unauthorized workers from entering this country illegally to seek work. Ensuring a legal workforce must be a key component of any immigration bill moving through Congress.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to build on this proposal to achieve a bipartisan solution to immigration reform.

HONORING BROOKE EDWARDS

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an essay written by Brooke Edwards, a fourth grader from Flippen Elementary School in McDonough, Georgia. Her school sponsored a writing contest in which students answered the ever patriotic question, "Why I'm Proud to be an American." It is stories like these that inspire all citizens. I am proud to report to the U.S. House of Representatives that Brooke won first place in the contest, I would like to submit her essay into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for all Americans to read.

WHY I'M PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN

My name is Brooke Edwards and I'm a fourth grader. I go to Flippen Elementary School in McDonough, Georgia. I'm proud to live in Georgia because it is in the United States and I'm proud to be an American. What do I like about America? I like our freedom, military, and our 4th of July.

My first reason why I'm proud to be an American is freedom. I like our freedom because we don't have kings or queens bossing us around. For example, England has a queen. We can vote for our presidents. In America we have a choice that other countries don't have.

My next reason is our military. Brave men and women fight everyday all around the world for our freedom. We wouldn't be free if we didn't have the military. We have men and women who are veterans. They served our country and made me feel proud.

My final reason is our 4th of July. On the 4th of July, we celebrate our freedom and have fun too. We also celebrate our flag on the 4th of July because it stands for America. I love the 4th of July!

There are many reasons I like being an American. I like our freedom, military, and our 4th of July. These are my favorite parts of America.

WILLIAM BARRETT TRAVIS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, it all started way back in 7th grade, Mrs. Wilson made Texas history come alive and my fascination with Texas legends like Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, James Bowie, and of course my personal favorite, William Barrett Travis, took root. It was this month, 172 years ago, that Travis, a 27-year-old lawyer, penned the most famous letter in Texas history from behind the walls of a besieged, rundown mission in San Antonio.

"To the people of Texas and all Americans in the world, fellow citizens and compatriots, I am besieged by a thousand or more of the enemy under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannon fire for over 24 hours, but I have not lost a man.

The enemy has demanded surrender at its discretion. Otherwise, the fort will be put to the sword. I have answered that demand with a cannon shot. And the flag still waves proudly over the north wall.

I shall never surrender or retreat. I call upon you, in the name of liberty and patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to my aid with all dispatch. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible, die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country. Victory or death.

As a child, I was so intrigued by this letter. I would always be the first in my class to volunteer to play Travis at any given opportunity, if only just to read his words aloud. To me, he was the ultimate hero. Travis and his rag-tag group of relentless freedom fighters, made up of men from nearly every State in the Union and 13 foreign countries, including Mexico, held off an entire army of several thousand for 13 days. Defeat was not an option. Retreat was never on the table. Victory or death. And the rest is—as they say—Texas history.

History teaches us everything we need to know, if we just look. This letter was written nearly 2 centuries ago and its message still rings true today. It's a story of "liberty and patriotism and everything dear to the American character." Freedom is still worth dying for. And to do so as a soldier, "is what is due his honor and that of his country."

Travis believed these words, believed that the cause for independence was his life. Our freedom fighters today understand these words as well, they know that America is worth fighting for and that defeat is not an option. We must not neglect the call.

Unfortunately, the call for help was not answered in time. Commander Travis and 187 volunteers sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom after 13 glorious days at the Alamo. The youngest to die for Texas was 15-year-old William Phillip King. The oldest to die was Gordon C. Jennings. He was 56. Their sacrifice would later be remembered along the banks of the San Jacinto as GEN Sam Houston led the Texans to victory and freedom. But their courage will never be forgotten.

Travis isn't just my favorite Texas war hero, he has intertwined himself throughout my life and even the lives of my children and grandchildren. He is the inspiration behind my profession. I always wanted to be a great lawyer like William Barrett Travis. My grandson, Barrett Houston, is even named after Travis. Inscribed along the bottom of my stationery are his words, "I shall never surrender or retreat," and for as long as I can remember, I end every letter with his famous words, "God and Texas." Because of men like William Barrett Travis, Texas is the great State that it is today. His legacy embodies the passion and loyalty that make Texans stand out around the world.

And that's just the way it is.

DEFENDERS OF THE ALAMO WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES

Alabama: James Buchanan, William Fishbaugh, Galba Fuqua, Issac White.

Arkansas: Issac G. Baker, Jesse G. Thompson, Henry Warnell,

Connecticut: Gordon C. Jennings.

Georgia: Albert (Alfred) Calvin Grimes, William T. Malone, Elice (Eliel) Melton, Manson Shied, William Wells, William Wills

Illinois: Jonathan L. Lindley.

Kentucky: Peter James Bailey III, James Bowie, Daniel William Cloud, Jacob C. Darst, John Davis, William H. Fauntleroy, John E. Gaston, John Harris, William Daniel Jackson, Green B. Jameson, John Benjamin Kellogg, Andrew Kent, Joseph Rutherford, B. Archer M. Thomas, Joseph G. Washington.

Louisiana: Charles Despallier, James W. Garrand, Joseph Kerr, Isaac Ryan.

Maryland: Charles S. Smith.

Massachusetts: John Flanders, William D. Howell, William Linn, Amos Pollard.

Mississippi: M.B. Clark, Isaac Millsaps, Willis A. Moore, George Pagan, Christopher Adams Parker.

Missouri: William Charles M. Baker, George D. Butler, Charles Henry Clark, George Washington Cottle, Jerry C. Day, George W. Tumlinson.

New Hampshire: Robert E. Cochran.

New Jersey: Richard Lucius Stockton.

New York: Robert W. Cunningham, Lewis Dewall, Samuel B. Evans, John Hubbard Forsyth, John Jones, James Tylee.

North Carolina: Micajah Autry, Dolphin Ward Floyd, William Parks, Mial Scurlock, Joshua G. Smith, John W. Thomson, Claiborne Wright.

Ohio: William B. Harrison, Tapely Holland, Robert Musselman, James M. Rose.

Pennsylvania: John J. Ballentine, James Murry Brown, John Cain (Cane), Robert Crossman, David P. Cummings, James Hannum, Samuel Holloway, William Johnson, George C. Kimble (Kimbell), William McDowell, John Purdy Reynolds, John M. Thurston, Hiram James Williamson, John Wilson.

Rhode Island: Albert Martin.

South Carolina: James Butler Bonham, Lemuel Crawford, George Neggan, Edward Nelson, George Nelson, Cleveland Kinloch Simmons, William Barrett Travis.

Tennessee: Joseph Bayliss, John Blair, Samuel C. Blair, Jesse B. Bowman, James (Robert) Campbell, David Crockett, Squire Daymon, William Dearduff, Almeron Dickerson (Dickinson), John Henry Dillard, James L. Ewing, James Girard Garret, Andrew Jackson Harrison, Charles M. Haskell, John M. Hays, William Marshall, Jesse McCoy, Robert McKinney, Thomas R. Miller, William Mills, Andrew M. Nelson, James Waters Robertson, Andrew H. Smith, A. Spain Summerlin, William E. Summers, Edward Taylor, George Taylor, James Taylor, William Taylor, Asa Walker, Jacob Walker.

Texas: Juan Abamillo, Juan Antonio Badillo, Carlos Espalier, Gregorio (Jose Maria Esparza, Antonio Fuentes, Damacio Jimenez, William Phillip King, William Irvine Lewis, William J. Lightfoot, Jose Toribio Losoya, Andres Nava, Richardson Perry.

Vermont: Miles Deforest Andross.

Virginia: Robert Allen, John J. Baugh, William R. Carey, William Garnett, John Camp Goodrich, Patrick Henry Herndon, James Kenny, George Washington Main, Edward F. Mitchasson, Robert B. Moore, James Northcross.

Denmark: Charles Zanco.

England: William Blazeby, Daniel Bourne, George Brown, Stephen (or Ireland) Dennison, James R. Dimpkins, James C. Gwynne, William Daniel Hersee, James Nowlan, Marcus L. Sewell, Richard Starr, James E. Stewart, Thomas Waters, Anthony (Avram) Wolfe, son age 12 Wolfe, son age 11 Wolfe.

Ireland: Samuel E. Burns, Andrew Duvalt, Robert Evans, Joseph M. Hawkins, Thomas Jackson, James McGee, Jackson J. Rusk, Burke Trammel, William B. Ward.

Germany: Henry Courtman, Henry Thomas.

Scotland: Richard W. Ballentine, John McGregor, Isaac Robinson, David L. Wilson.

Wales: Lewis Johnson.

Unknown Locale: Robert Brown, Freeman H.K. Day, John E. Garvin, James George, Edward McCafferty, William T. Mitchell, Napoleon B. Mitchell, Thomas H. Roberts, William H. Smith, William Depriest Sutherland, Robert White, John (Last Name Unknown).

TRIBUTE TO THE PEACE CORPS 47TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 47th anniversary of the Peace Corps.

Since 1961, when the Peace Corps was created by President John Kennedy in Executive Order 10924 and subsequently authorized by the Congress, 139 host countries have invited 190,000 Peace Corps volunteers into their territories and homes to serve those in need and build mutual understanding, cooperation and respect. Peace Corps volunteers have contributed to improving health, education and basic essential services for an inestimable number of persons in dire need.

I am proud to say that this year, nine Peace Corps Volunteers from the seventh district of Arizona have applied and been chosen to carry on this vital legacy, serving abroad over six continents on this ever-smaller planet.

Of course, the Peace Corps is a uniquely precious legacy of our martyred President, John F. Kennedy. The idea of the Peace Corps is forever linked in American hearts to the spirit of those one-thousand days that were inaugurated with the words, ''my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.''

This message still rings out strong and true in this new century. Love of country still has a powerful and appropriate role in motivating our young people to take up service, and the people of this Nation take proper pride in the noble mission carried out by these young women and men.

I also choose to believe that in this new century, we can also take a broader view of the challenges facing the global community of nations, in the face of global warming and environmental degradation, global health pandemics, and denial to billions of the rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration Human Rights. I choose to believe that we have today a greater capacity to think deeply and act vigorously in response to a new call to service: Ask what you can do for your neighbor, and for your planet.

I offer my deepest respect, gratitude and praise for those many courageous women and men who have answered this clarion call to service, and a special note of recognition to my colleagues, Mr. FARR and Mr. HONDA and their service to this Nation and to humanity.

HONORING THE 47TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 47th Anniversary of the Peace Corps and in doing so, join many others around the Nation in celebrating National Peace Corps Week. Their mission is to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women while helping to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, as well as, a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Since the establishment of the Peace Corps by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, more than 190,000 U.S. citizens have served their country in the cause of peace by living and working in 139 developing countries. As of September 30, 2007, 8,079 Peace Corps Volunteers are currently at 68 posts serving 74 countries.

I am proud to say that two of those volunteers currently serving their country are from my district in West Virginia. Daniel J. Beck will finish up his 2 year's of service in Guinea this June, while Amelia Dulee-Kinsolving will return from Peru in September.

Peace Corps volunteers have made significant and lasting contributions around the world in agriculture, business development, information technology, education, health and HIV/AIDS, youth and the environment.

The 190,000 citizens, who have volunteered to serve their country since 1961, came from all walks of life and represent the best of what the United States has to offer. The work they have done over the past 47 years has played an important role in developing nations and continues to provide opportunities for people of different backgrounds to come together to serve the cause of peace.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE A NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONDUCIVE TO BICYCLING: ''THE NATIONAL BIKE BILL''

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution which recognizes that a national transportation system conducive to bicycling produces enriched health, reduced traffic congestion and air pollution, greenhouse gas emission reductions, economic vitality, and an overall improved quality of life which is valuable for the Nation.

Communities across the Nation are seeking to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, save energy and enhance neighborhood safety. The Federal Government can assist in those efforts by promoting increased bicycle safety, supporting policies that establish national target levels for bicycle use, increase intermodal travel, provide incentives to State and local government, provide flexibility in Federal transportation law, and encourage partnerships with employers and executive agencies. These changes will benefit all Americans whether they ride their own bikes or benefit from those neighbors who do.

I have witnessed these positive impacts in my hometown of Portland, Oregon, as bike ridership has skyrocketed as modest investments in facilities have improved access and made biking safer. I have no doubt that communities nationwide can reap the benefits of bicycling if the Federal Government provides the right incentives and works with State and local officials on a balanced transportation system.

Ever since I started the Congressional Bike Caucus over 10 years ago, I have seen broad and bipartisan support for bicycling grow with over 170 members from both sides of the aisle standing up for the role bicycles play in our transportation system. I now call on my colleagues to support this legislation that gives bicycling its proper role for our Nation's mobility and health.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, due to events in my district I missed votes held on February 26 and 27. Had I been present the record would reflect the following votes: Tuesday, February 26, H. Res. 974—A resolution providing for consideration of H.R. 3521—''yea''; Wednesday, February 27, H.R. 5351—A bill to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy—''yea''; H.R. 5264—A bill to extend certain trade preference programs—''yea''.

CONGRATULATING MURPHEY CANDLER LITTLE LEAGUE

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Murphey Candler Little League on the celebration of its 50th anniversary. The league has enjoyed enormous success and growth since it was founded, as ''Brookhaven Baseball,'' way back in 1958. But most significantly, Murphey Candler has played a prominent role in the lives of generations of young athletes who learned to love our national pastime on their storied fields.

Currently, over 850 kids play on 71 different teams in 6 separate leagues. Bringing together the entire community, hundreds of parents and family members participate as board members, coaches, managers, scorekeepers, and most importantly, passionate fans. This association of players and parents, rallied around our beloved baseball and a desire to build a fun and positive environment in which to learn, has provided the means for 50 years worth of improvement, growth, and fun.

Instilling the values of determination, teamwork, and fair play, the members and supporters of Murphey Candler Little League have

created an enduring source of recreation and community for countless families. I join my colleagues in the United States Congress in offering a sincere congratulation on their 50th anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on February 27, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my votes for rollcall Nos. 78–84.

Had I been present I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 78—''yes''—Providing for the consideration of H.R. 5351, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act. Rollcall No. 79—''yes''—On Approving the Journal. Rollcall No. 80—''yes''—Providing for the consideration of H.R. 5351, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act. Rollcall No. 81—''yes''—Providing for the consideration of H.R. 5351, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act. Rollcall No. 82—''yes''—Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008. Rollcall No. 83—''no''—Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008. Rollcall No. 80—''yes''—Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL MINER'S DAY RESOLUTION

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, an old mining song contains the powerful, but truthful verse:

A miner's life is like a sailor, aboard a ship to cross the waves,
Every day his life's in danger, still he ventures, being brave,
Unlike you or me, a miner goes to work every day, knowing that he is placing his life in grave danger.

A miner goes underground and works with thousands of tons of dirt and rock above him. He works every day knowing that he is surrounded by dangerous, potentially fatal gases. He works in conditions that many of us would never want to have to endure, that many of us cannot even imagine.

I come from a coal mining State, where hardworking, God-fearing miners and their families have helped to forge a proud history and a culture guided by American values.

Every minute a miner is at work, he knows that he is a spark or a slip of a tool away from eternity. He knows that with a spark or slip of a tool, he will not return home that night and never see his family again.

Every minute a miner is at work, he faces gas explosions, equipment failure, roof falls, and fires. Still, as the song says, he ''ventures being brave.'' He must.

Fatality rates in our Nation's coal fields once resembled the casualty lists from the battlefields when our Nation was at war.

December 1907 is remembered in the coal fields as ''bloody December.'' On December 1, a gas explosion killed all 34 men in a mine in Fayette City, Pennsylvania. Five days later, 362 miners perished in the Monongah disaster in West Virginia—the worst industrial accident in American history. Ten days later, an explosion in Yolande, Alabama, killed 57 men. On December 19, Jacobs Creek, Pennsylvania, an explosion killed 239 miners.

Laws, safety inspections, and better, safer equipment, thank God, have helped to reduce the casualty rates among our Nation's miners. But the tragedies in 2006 at Sago and Aracoma in West Virginia reminded Americans that mining is a dangerous profession. That, ''every day his life's in danger, still he ventures, being brave.''

While facing these enormous dangers, these hard-working, patriotic Americans have continued to produce the raw materials that fueled the Industrial Revolution, the energy that heated our homes, and the resources that ensured our security. Today, miners continue to produce for the betterment of all Americans.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to join my colleague from West Virginia, ALAN MOLLOHAN, in offering this resolution that supports the goals and ideals of a National Miner's Day to celebrate and honor the contributions that miners have made to America throughout our history.

It is a simple, yet very important way a grateful Nation can acknowledge these men and women who have done so much for us, and will continue to do even more throughout our future.

HONORING THE BALTIMORE CITY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT CHOIR OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, today, I congratulate an exceptional high school choir in my district, the Baltimore City College High School Concert Choir of Baltimore, Maryland, which has been chosen to perform at New York City's legendary Carnegie Hall on March 10, 2008.

Baltimore City College High School Concert Choir was selected out of dozens of high school choirs across the country for this performance. The concert will feature 200 students from four states, and is the capstone of Carnegie Hall's yearlong National High School Choral Festival. The concert will be conducted by Dr. Craig Jessop, esteemed Music Director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, who has been working with the choirs and their conductors throughout the year. Apart from their world-renowned performances, Carnegie Hall brings innovative music education programs to students across the nation. I am delighted that these young constituents have been given this opportunity.

Led by Linda R. Hall, the Baltimore City College High School Concert Choir performs repertoire drawn from all periods and musical genres and has performed on television, radio, and stages all along the Eastern seaboard and in Canada. The choir has shared the stage with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Morgan State University Choir, and the Baltimore Choral Arts, and has participated in numerous competitions and adjudications at which they have consistently received superior ratings and numerous awards. The choir has also traveled abroad, performing in Italy, France, and Spain. Choir members adhere to the standards of commitment, consistency, conditioning, cooperation, communication, character, and confidence.

I am honored to have one of the four schools in the nation chosen for the Carnegie Hall National High School Choral Festival residing in the 7th Congressional District of Maryland, which I represent. They should be proud not only of their musical achievement, but their embodiment of the quality musical education the State of Maryland provides. I commend these students and their leaders for their success, and wish them the best of luck on March 10 when they perform at Carnegie Hall.

HONORING CHIEF I. D. SMITH FOR 16 YEARS OF SERVICE AT THE SEAGOVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize an outstanding citizen and public servant, Chief I. D. Smith, in honor of his retirement from 16 years of service with the Seagoville Police Department.

In 1971, Chief Smith began his law enforcement career as an officer with the West Tawakoni Police Department. Before coming to Seagoville, Chief Smith gained experience serving as a Deputy Chief, Captain, Investigator, and finally Chief for five different police departments.

Chief Smith will be remembered for bringing the police department into the 21st century by improving hiring standards and overseeing the implementation of contemporary law enforcement methods and technology. In addition, he achieved the always difficult, but highly admired, task of providing quality service and protection on a lean budget.

In addition to faithfully serving his community, Chief Smith is a husband to Shirley and proud father and grandfather.

I've been told that Chief Smith plans to spend a lot of time playing golf and fishing in retirement. I hope that he hits all the greens in regulation and that his livewell is always full.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Fifth District of Texas, I am honored to recognize Chief I. D. Smith for his courage in protecting and serving the citizens of Seagoville.

GREAT LAKES DAY

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise to welcome all of the advocates that have come to Washington today for Great Lakes Day. Their goal is to advocate on behalf

of the long-term health of our magnificent Great Lakes—a cause that has been a primary advocacy of mine throughout my career in public service.

The people who have come here today on behalf of the Lakes have dedicated themselves to ensuring that America's greatest natural resource is able to be enjoyed for generations to come—a cause near and dear to the heart of every Michiganian—and I commend them for their selfless service.

I am proud to be from the Great Lakes state of Michigan and prouder still that we have been able to do some significant work to improve conditions in these magical waters together.

Last year, Congress finally passed the Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA. WRDA authorized important projects aimed at improving the Lakes, including $20 million to implement the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River Management Plan and the construction of an electronic barrier to keep Asian carp out of the Lakes.

These are projects that I strongly support because of the benefits they will have on the health of the Great Lakes water.

While these projects are significant, much more needs to be done here in Congress to address the significant challenges facing this vital resource.

The Great Lakes are at historically low water levels which is effecting trade, tourism, and travel for everyone that uses the waters.

We are dealing with numerous invasive species—including phragmites and zebra mussels—which are having a terrible effect on the ecosystem of the lakes and the shoreline.

In fact, a new invasive species is being identified in the Great Lakes nearly every 8 months. This startling fact should prompt us all to act immediately to stop the spread of invasive species and the havoc they cause in our precious waters.

One other issue of concern is the algal blooms which we have recently seen flaring up in and around the Great Lakes. These blooms negatively impact fisheries, boating, tourism, and property values. The blooms may produce toxins which can be fatal to humans in certain cases. They are also causing botulism, which is creating a tremendous number of bird deaths. In the water, these blooms can produce "dead zones," resulting in the demise of aquatic life. Algal blooms are particular problem on the Saginaw Bay, Lake St. Clair and the western shore of Lake Erie.

Since the Great Lakes are a national treasure they deserve the full attention of the United States Congress. The federal government must be a partner with state and local governments, as well as the Lake advocates that have invested their time and talents in improving conditions and the overall outlook of the Great Lakes.

We must work together to protect and preserve them for the future.

I was very energized last week when it was announced that the House would be considering the Coast Guard Re-authorization bill which includes tough new standards for the discharge of ballast water in the Great Lakes which will help reduce the number of invasive species entering the lakes.

I was then very disappointed to see that bill pull from the agenda because of other issues.

This House must pass this ballast water legislation as soon as possible and help to stop invasive species from permanently damaging the fragile ecosystem in what remains wholly one-fifth of the world's surface fresh water supply.

The people of the Great Lakes States are demanding action and the time to act is now.

There is much more that we can do in addition to support the health of the Great Lakes. I will be honored to work closely with my colleagues to ensure that this national treasure is protected and preserved.

So I wish Happy Great Lakes Day to my colleagues, to those who have come to our Nation's Capitol to advocate on their behalf and everyone who shares my commitment to protecting and preserving our magnificent Great Lakes.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 930, and especially in support of Indiana Business College in Fort Wayne.

In my district, Mr. Speaker, there is a huge need for high-skilled workers, and Indiana Business College plays a critical role in helping our region meet this demand. Each year they provide thousands of students opportunities to "skill up," so that they can better contribute to local employers and better provide for their families.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the top 20 fastest-growing occupations in our country are supplied by career and technical education. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports that nearly three-quarters of employers struggle to hire qualified workers. Clearly the need for career and technical education is severe, and we in Congress must do what we can to encourage its growth.

In Northeast Indiana—as in the rest of the country—a high quality education is critical to obtaining a good, well-paying job. While Northeast Indiana is still a manufacturing center of the country, these jobs are becoming increasingly more high-tech and require higher levels of skills and training. Schools like Indiana Business College are helping prepare students for these changes.

Mr. Speaker, as competition in our global economy continues to grow more fierce, career and technical education is essential to preparing a well-educated, skilled workforce. I ask that my colleagues join with me in expressing support for Indiana Business College and schools like it. They are critical to the future of Northeast Indiana, and they are critical to the future of our country.

CELBRATING NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of National Peace Corps Week, in honor of the 47th anniversary of the Peace Corps on March 1, 2008.

Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961, more than 190,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served their country in 139 developing nations around the globe. Their undying efforts for the cause of peace are commendable and have made a lasting impact on the communities in which they have lived and worked.

Peace Corps volunteers range from recent college graduates to retirees with several decades of work experience, and represent the tremendous diversity of the American people. The issues they address cover HIV/AIDS education and outreach, environmental protection, and improving information technology in developing nations.

Three individuals from my congressional district in Brooklyn are presently serving as Peace Corps volunteers. Kimberly Joyce has been serving in Belize since the summer of 2006; Jame McCray has been serving in Samoa since the summer of 2006; and Caitlin Parish has been serving in Tanzania since the summer of 2007. Their tireless efforts for the greater cause of peace will profoundly affect these communities. I would like to applaud and commend these outstanding Brooklynites for committing themselves to such a worthwhile cause. They are role models for us all.

INTRODUCING A BILL TO AMEND THE FEDERAL MEAT INSPECTION ACT AND THE POULTRY PRODUCTS INSPECTION ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Unsafe Meat and Poultry Recall Act of 2008, a bill to amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and grant the Secretary of Agriculture the power to order the recall of meat and poultry that is adulterated, misbranded, or otherwise unsafe.

The USDA announcement last week requesting a recall of 143 million pounds of beef from a slaughterhouse that is being investigated for unsafe practices makes clear the importance of bolstering the ability of the USDA to keep citizens safe from tainted meat products. In this instance, like most, the recalled beef had been distributed throughout the country, including to my State of New Mexico where the United States Department of Agriculture's Commodity Foods Program had sent 3,000 cases of the questionable beef to the state's Human Services Department to be distributed to school lunch programs.

It is imperative to the health and welfare of the American public that we bolster the regulation of the meat and poultry industry. The number of people affected annually from ingesting tainted meat and poultry products illuminates this proposition: 5,000 people die from food-borne illnesses each year. Furthermore, nearly 76 million people get sick annually from eating tainted food, of which 325,000 require hospitalization. In 2007 alone, there were 91 major food recalls.

The Jack in the Box E. coli outbreak of 1993 prompted the imposition of a new regulatory system on the meat and poultry industry

designed to help eliminate future deadly foodborne illness outbreaks. The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) program shifted the responsibility for ensuring meat safety from USDA inspectors to the meat companies themselves and instituted microbial tests for harmful bacteria. Since the implementation of the HACCP regulations, however, controversy has erupted over whether the new rules place too much power in the hands of the meat industry to regulate itself.

Due to the huge political clout of the meatpacking industry, USDA does not have, nor seem to want, the power to issue mandatory recalls of tainted meat and poultry products. Complying with agency recalls, therefore, is at the industry's discretion. The meat industry says that it has never failed to cooperate with a recall request from the USDA, thus mandatory recalls of tainted meat are not needed. However, when USDA asks for a recall, a negotiation process ensues between the agency and the industry. Meanwhile, thousands of people could continue to eat potentially harmful meat. This is not a trivial matter. This is meat that is potentially contaminated and could result in death. From the time that contaminated meat or poultry is identified, there should not be a negotiating period. It should be recalled.

This is a question of accountability. Somebody must be held responsible for the quality and safety of the meat we consume. The government must ensure that the meatpacking industry produces only safe meat products. My bill will facilitate this need by amending the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act. My bill authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to order the recall of meat and poultry that is adulterated, misbranded, or otherwise unsafe or tainted from the market. The time has come for this necessary step.

HONORING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of myself and the Republican Leader Mr. BOEHNER to congratulate the Congressional Management Foundation on its 30th anniversary. CMF has had a widespread and positive impact on this institution, and we are proud to applaud its efforts over the decades in applying its motto, ''Good government through good management.''

Founded in 1977, the Congressional Management Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to serving the Members of the House and Senate, as well as the institutional offices of the Congress, through staff management training, office facilitation services, publications on best practices, and technology research.

The idea for CMF was born out of the rapid growth of congressional offices in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Offices no longer were comprised of a single Member with a few support staff. Citizens had come to rely on Congress for a vast array of constituent services and expected rapid responses to questions and opinions on pending legislation.

Tom Bedell came to Washington to work in Congress in the 1970's to work for his father, Congressman Berkley Bedell from Iowa. He saw that, while Members of Congress could be brilliant legislators and great communicators, they were often overwhelmed by the management challenges of running up to four offices and a staff of twenty. Along with Dr. Len Hirsch, an organizational development consultant, Tom founded CMF and they began offering programs on enhancing efficiencies in office budgeting, managing constituent correspondence, and hiring staff.

Working with staff organizations such as the House Chiefs of Staff Association, CMF expanded its programs in the 1980's and 1990's, training hundreds of senior managers on everything from how to perform high quality personnel reviews to how to conduct difficult conversations with their staff and their bosses. With the help of CMF's strategic planning services, scores of Members of Congress have clarified their goals, enhanced their effectiveness at serving constituents and improved staff morale.

CMF strives to help congressional offices get off on the right foot even before the swearing-in ceremony. In 1984, CMF wrote the first edition of Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide. This book, which is revised for every Congress and distributed within days of the election, is now a staple for freshmen Members and veterans alike. They also produced a companion, Frontline Management: A Guide for Running Congressional District/State Offices. Additionally, for 20 years CMF has been offering an orientation program to introduce new senior staff to the basics of hiring staff, creating a budget and setting up an office while their bosses are struggling to learn the nuances of parliamentary procedure and committee assignments.

CMF was also the first organization to create salary and employment studies for Capitol Hill, providing Members and senior managers with useful benchmarks to aid in the office budgeting process.

In the last few years CMF has been an invaluable resource as Congress has adopted new technology to respond to the dramatic increase in communications and citizen advocacy as a result of the Internet. It partnered with distinguished universities, such as George Washington University, Harvard University, Ohio State University and the University of California-Riverside, to offer guidance on how to design congressional Web sites and be more responsive to constituents online. Their Gold Mouse Awards for superior Web sites have become coveted commodities on Capitol Hill.

Also in the last few years CMF has helped respond to a House request for perhaps one of its most important projects in its 30-year history: helping to design a 10-year information technology roadmap for the House of Representatives.

Thanks in part to CMF, Congress has a more professionalized workforce with better morale and performance. And the American people get a better government when our democratic institutions are more efficient and effective.

We thank all of the current and past supporters, leaders, and staff of the Congressional Management Foundation who believe in the Congress and the people who work here, and who feel that we truly can achieve ''good government through good management.'' We congratulate them on 3 decades of outstanding service to the Congress and the Nation. And we wish them success in the decades to come.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 930 and especially in support of Brown Mackie College in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In my district, Mr. Speaker, there is a huge need for highly skilled workers, and Brown Mackie College plays a critical role in helping our region meet this demand. Each year they provide thousands of students opportunities to ''skill up,'' so that they can better contribute to local employers and better provide for their families.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the top 20 fastest growing occupations in our country are supplied by career and technical education. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports that nearly three-quarters of employers struggle to hire qualified workers. Clearly the need for career and technical education is severe, and we in Congress must do what we can to encourage its growth.

In northeast Indiana—as in the rest of the country—a high quality education is critical to obtaining a good, well-paying job. While northeast Indiana is still a manufacturing center of the country, these jobs are becoming increasingly more high-tech and require higher levels of skills and training. Schools like Brown Mackie College are helping prepare students for these changes.

Mr. Speaker, as competition in our global economy continues to grow more fierce, career and technical education is essential to preparing a well-educated, skilled workforce. I ask that my colleagues join with me in expressing support for Brown Mackie College and schools like it. They are critical to the future of northeast Indiana, and they are critical to the future of our country.

HONORING MR. PHIL DRAKE OF DRAKE ENTERPRISES FOR YEARS OF SELFLESS SERVICE TO WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Phil Drake, a constituent of North Carolina's 11th District and the owner of Drake Enterprises.

Drake Enterprises was founded in Franklin, NC, in 1954 by Mr. Drake's father. At the time, the business focused on helping individuals prepare their taxes. When Phil took over the family business in the 1970s, he shifted the company's focus to the development of tax preparation computer software.

Today, that small business started by one man employs more than 300 people in Western North Carolina and Drake software is used by over 20,000 tax professionals across the Nation. In 2006 alone, Drake software delivered over 6 million Federal returns and 5 million State returns.

But, Phil Drake's success extends far beyond his business savvy and entrepreneurial spirit.

Phil has implemented a set of core principles at Drake Enterprises that are an excellent model for all to follow. Those core principles include: a commitment to follow Biblical principles, motivating and helping employees achieve their maximum potential, and rewarding employees for excellence and loyalty.

Phil has not limited those principles to his business; he has shared them with the community. Whether working to bring high-speed Internet access to the mountains through Balsam West Fiber Net, in his church, or being the drive behind Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts, Phil Drake has been a leader in every sense of the word.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Phil Drake and thanking him for his service to his community and our country.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE KEATHLEY

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mrs. EMERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mike Keathley, of Dexter, Missouri, for his noble service to the people of Missouri. Because of Mike's expertise and leadership, Missouri State government works better and more effectively for all citizens.

Mike has always possessed a deep sense of community and true desire to improve the lives of his fellow citizens. As Commissioner of Office of Administration for the State of Missouri, Mike has done more than any other person to improve the State's budget situation and ensure government is delivered more responsibly and effectively to all citizens. I know Mike personally and can attest to the fact that his dedication and steadfast leadership are responsible for making these improvements possible.

Mike has played a crucial role in bettering lives in the private sector as well. He has served admirably on the Board of Directors of numerous companies and associations, including the Dexter Memorial Hospital and his church, the First United Methodist Church of Dexter. I am confident his successes have been closely observed and duplicated throughout our community and State. Mike serves as a tremendous role model for all Missourians, especially those among the younger generation beginning new careers, whether they be in the public sector or private sector.

Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege to honor Mike Keathley for his many achievements and the profound impact he has made on his community, State and Nation. I ask that you join me along with Mike's family, friends and the entire State of Missouri in paying tribute to his remarkable career.

BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IRAN'S PERSECUTION OF BAHA'IS

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today, along with my colleague ROB ANDREWS, I am introducing a bipartisan resolution to condemn Iran's continued persecution of its Baha'i minority.

In 2006, Iran's Armed Forces Command Headquarters ordered the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Police Force to identify members of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and monitor their activities.

In that same year, we saw the largest roundup of Baha'is since the 1980s. The Iranian Interior Ministry ordered provincial officials to ''cautiously and carefully monitor and manage'' all Baha'i social activities. The Central Security Office of Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology ordered 81 Iranian universities to expel any student discovered to be a Baha'i.

In 2007, the situation worsened. More than two-thirds of the Baha'is enrolled in universities were expelled once identified as Baha'is. Police entered Baha'i homes and businesses to collect details on family members.

Twenty-five industries were ordered to deny licenses to Baha'is. Employers were pressured to fire Baha'i employees and banks were instructed to refuse loans to Baha'i-owned businesses. Baha'i cemeteries were destroyed.

In November 2007, three Baha'i youths were detained for educating underprivileged children. The following month, the Iranian Parliament published a draft Islamic penal code, requiring the death penalty for all ''apostates''—a term applied to Baha'is and any convert away from Islam.

This government-sponsored persecution must end. The world cannot be silent as Iran prepares to ethnically cleanse its Baha'i minority.

I urge my colleagues to join us in cosponsoring this bipartisan resolution condemning Iran's persecution of the Baha'is, calling for the immediate release of three Baha'i youths and calling on Iran to reject a recent draft Islamic penal code requiring the death penalty for all ''apostates.''

TRIBUTE TO HAL BRUNO

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend of mine, Hal Bruno—an individual that most of you will know best for his 50-year career as a professional journalist whose integrity and trust earned him the respect and approbation of his peers and politicians alike. Today, however, I'd like to recognize another, perhaps lesser known, side of Hal—his more than 30-year commitment to the men and women of the fire service.

Recently, Hal Bruno announced that he was stepping down as Chairman of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, the organization established by the Congress to honor our fallen heroes and assist their families and coworkers. It was with deep regret that the board of directors accepted his resignation. Since 1993, Hal has served with distinction on the board of directors, the last seven as chairman. For Hal and his lovely wife, Meg, the Foundation is that ray of light that has guided family members of fallen firefighters through their dark journeys.

When a firefighter falls in the line of duty, Hal likens it to losing a family member. Long after the death, Hal has always been there to provide comfort and assistance to the family members, no matter how long it takes for them to regain their strength and move ahead with their lives. The Foundation and the fire service, itself, are fortunate to have had a leader with such compassion and dedication as my friend, Hal Bruno.

Always humble, Hal has always been one to credit the professional staff of the Foundation for the positive impact the Foundation has made on the people it serves—family members of our fallen heroes. But Hal, through his leadership, inspiration and selfless dedication—set the course of the Foundation in a new direction, resulting in a tremendous growth of the Foundation's programs during his years as chairman. Those of us involved with the fire service are pleased to hear that he will continue to serve as an active member of the board of directors.

To both Hal and Meg Bruno, I extend my personal thanks and the thanks and gratitude of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, for their dedication to our first responders, and, especially, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. I ask my colleagues to join with me in paying tribute to Hal and congratulating him upon his retirement and a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL COSTELLO

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring a very special person, Mr. Paul Costello, for his outstanding work with young men and women from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In organizing the Washington-Ireland Program for Service and Leadership, Paul has used his boundless energy, enthusiasm and passion for peace to bring together students from varying backgrounds to learn about one another as they also gain valuable work experience in our Nation's Capital. Promoting cultural understanding among the next generation has united students to face the challenges of the future together, in keeping with the spirit of the Northern Ireland peace process.

I have been fortunate to host young men and women from the Washington-Ireland Program in my Congressional office during the summer months. I have been impressed with their commitment to positive change as well as their strong desire to develop leadership skills they can put to use when they return home. As a result of Paul Costello's vision and dedication, more than 350 young graduates

are now engaged in prestigious and rewarding careers in diverse fields including law, business, politics, communications and education. In addition, all who have come to know him have enjoyed his delightful sense of humor and his talent as a most entertaining storyteller. He founded storywise.com, the Center for Narrative Studies, here in Washington and has shared his insight with audiences nationally and internationally.

On Friday, February 29, friends, supporters and alums from the Washington-Ireland Program will come together to toast Paul Costello for 10 years of remarkable success. I know my colleagues here in Congress join me in expressing appreciation for his service and in wishing him all the best for the future.

TRIBUTE TO CORONA CITIZEN OF THE YEAR BECKY GUNNOE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Corona, California, are exceptional. Corona has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. Becky Gunnoe is one of these individuals. On January 19, 2008, Becky received the city of Corona's top honor when the Corona Chamber of Commerce named her Citizen of the Year for 2007 at the organization's 93rd annual awards and installation dinner at the Eagle Glen Golf Club.

Becky Gunnoe exemplifies the word "volunteer." For more than 20 years, Becky has touched the lives of many people through her volunteer work in many programs and services in Corona. As a founding member in 1996, Becky was the catalyst for the Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) coming to Corona, including funding, training, and attracting volunteers. TIP is a group of specially trained citizen volunteers who provide "emotional first aid" to victims of traumatic events and their families in the first few hours following a tragedy. The volunteers are called to a crisis scene or to a local hospital by authorized police officers, firefighters or hospital personnel. Now in its 11th successful year, the program has a close working relationship with all the local emergency agencies because of Becky's continued efforts. She is responsible for training not only the volunteers, but also the emergency personnel.

Becky has also served on the Corona Fire Safety Foundation Board, CFSF, for the past 5 years, and currently is its president. She has also been with the Community Police Community Partnership, CPCP, since October 1997 and served as president from 1999 to 2001. A joint fundraiser of these two organizations called the Great Taste has enabled these partnerships between the community and the city to enhance and expand public safety for the benefit of residents.

Becky was one of the first volunteers trained and has been a trainer for the past five years for the City of Corona Fire Department Community Emergency Response Team program, CERT, which supplements city resources in the event of a disaster or other major emergency. CERT volunteers are trained in emergency procedures and are duly registered as disaster service workers in accordance with the California Government Code and the City of Corona Municipal Code. Becky has also been actively involved with the Advisory Board of Alternatives to Domestic Violence, ADV, and the Coalition of Family Preservation for almost 10 years. She has also served on the Riverside County Board of Alternatives to Domestic Violence, ADV, for 2 years and served as president in 2005. In addition to all her community activities, Becky also takes care of her husband, Dr. Charles E. Gunnoe, a former Chamber president and winner of the Citizen of the Year award in 1997.

In light of all Becky Gunnoe has done for the community of Corona, the City of Corona named Becky their Citizen of the Year. Becky's tireless passion for community service has contributed immensely to the betterment of the community of Corona, California. She has been the heart and soul of many community organizations and events and I am proud to call her a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for her service and salute her as she receives this prestigious award.

RECOGNIZING VERNA WEBBER

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Iowan Verna Webber on the celebration of her 105th birthday today.

Verna was born on February 27, 1903 in the Ames, Iowa area. She grew up with seven siblings. Verna married Henry Albert Webber, who was a professor at Iowa State University. They happily had three children, Marjorie, Richard, and Don. Verna currently lives at the Riverside Manor in Ames. She remains in excellent health, and I am told from a good source that she can kick higher than any other resident during morning exercises. Verna spends her days with her daughter, Marjorie, who lives along with her at Riverside, where they can be seen attached at the hip.

There have been many changes that have occurred since Verna was born. We have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television and the Internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of the Soviet Union, communism, and the birth of new democracies. Verna has lived to see the leadership of 18 United States Presidents and 24 Governors of Iowa. And, in her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

I am extremely honored to represent Verna in Congress, and I know that my colleagues will join me with warm birthday wishes for continued happiness and health in her future years.

TRIBUTE TO ARMY CORPORAL DUNCAN CHARLES CROOKSTON

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the courageous life and the ultimate sacrifice of Army CPL Duncan Charles Crookston. This exceptional soldier merits our recognition and esteem as his character and devotion to duty decreed that he put the needs of others before his own. Corporal Crookston possessed the virtues that define an honorable life.

Tragically, Corporal Crookston was taken from us as a result of complications arising from severe injuries received in an attack and roadside blast along one of Baghdad's deadliest roads. Three of his comrades were killed and one other was wounded when an explosively formed penetrator blasted through their vehicle. Corporal Crookston died on Friday, January 25, 2008, at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. This fine young man was only 20 years old and while many of us have been blessed to live a longer life, I believe that few of us will have lived one of such consequence in service of our Nation's cause.

Corporal Crookston was the son of Christopher and Lee Crookston. He enlisted in the United States Army after graduating from West High School in Denver, Colorado. He became an airborne infantryman and was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kansas. Prior to his deployment to Iraq, he married his high school sweetheart, Meaghun. Comrades in arms noted that he was very intelligent and "able to complete a Rubik's cube in under 56 seconds." He became his unit's resident expert in computers and other electronic devices. He is remembered as someone who "helped everyone out whenever they needed him" . . . (a person who was) "full of life" . . . "a kind guy (who) was very loving and selfless, one in a million . . . (a man) who was willing to give up his life for other people."

I never had the honor of meeting Corporal Crookston but it is clearly evident that he was raised by a good family to be a decent, responsible and honorable person. He loved our country and volunteered to take his place among those who put themselves in harms way because of a singular and abiding devotion to this nation. Corporal Crookston understood his obligations and, in the words of Abraham Lincoln on the battlefield at Gettysburg, he gave "his last full measure of devotion" . . . so that others may live a better life. All Americans are in his debt. His devotion to duty in the war against terrorism and his uncommon valor in the face of mortal danger leave us with a legacy of courage and honor to which very few can aspire. Among other awards including the Army Commendation Medal and the Purple Heart, the United States Army awarded Corporal Crookston the Bronze Star.

Please join me in paying tribute to the life and sacrifice of United States Army CPL Duncan Charles Crookston, a distinguished soldier. His life was exemplary and his contributions are rich in consequence. On behalf of the citizens of the 1st Congressional District of

Colorado, I wish to extend our admiration and profound gratitude for this most honorable American. Our thoughts and prayers are with his widow, Meaghan, his parents, Christopher and Lee, and his five brothers.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF THOMAS CARNEY

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a gentleman who has quietly spent the last twenty-five years making a difference in our community. Prior to 1983, Thomas Carney would never have described himself as, in his own words, a ''bunny hugger''. However, while out on a walk that year in our desert community, he came across two desert tortoises that had been badly damaged by heavy equipment on a construction site. One did not survive, but the other one did, due to the care and compassion of Mr. Carney.

This one day occurrence put Mr. Carney on a course in life he could never have imagined—tortoise advocate. He is now a member of the Arizona Chapter of the National Turtle and Tortoise Society. This group is dedicated to the study and conservation of these endangered animals.

I feel that it is important to recognize people like Thomas Carney. He saw a problem and educated himself about how to help these gentle creatures. He is now an advocate for desert tortoises and donates his time to educating others.

Too often, we overlook the little things in life that really make a difference. Mr. Carney, I want to recognize your efforts. I say congratulations and thank you very much for a job well done.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS OF THE 26TH DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the individuals from the 26th District of Texas who are currently serving with the Peace Corps in countries all across the globe. Elizabeth Bryant, Blake Childs, Genevieve Dozier, Justin Fleury, Philip Hernandez, Kareem Mansour, and Marianne Montalvo are among the 8,079 Peace Corps Volunteers currently serving 74 countries at 68 posts worldwide.

More than 190,000 citizens of all ages and backgrounds have worked for the cause of peace in 139 countries since the organization was founded in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy. Peace Corps Volunteers have made momentous and long-lasting contributions around the world in agriculture, business development, information technology, education, health and HIV/AIDS, youth, and the environment.

As we have all seen before, it is possible that a single person can be capable of changing the world. Therefore I know the impact made by these seven individuals is simply unimaginable. Elizabeth, Blake, Genevieve, Justin, Philip, Kareem, and Marianne are currently stationed in 7 different countries for two-year terms. Their commitment to world peace is a trait that is to be commended and their passion for service is something to be both appreciated and emulated.

One of my heroes, President Ronald Reagan, often spoke about the importance of voluntary service. He once said it is like ''a spirit that flows like a deep and mighty river through the history of our Nation.'' These selfless individuals exemplify the character and moral fiber of philanthropy.

The Peace Corps provides an invaluable service to the world and I believe it is important that we recognize that service. The admirable men and women who dedicate their time to serving others truly make this world a better place. It is an honor to represent seven of those individuals in the 26th District of Texas. I am proud that these exemplary citizens, who undoubtedly act as role models to those who wish to follow in their footsteps.

IN HONOR OF THE RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW YORK EYE AND EAR INFIRMARY'S EAR INSTITUTE

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise to ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the ribbon cutting for New York Eye and Ear Infirmary's Ear Institute. This spacious new facility, located on the 9th Floor of 380 Second Avenue, will provide hope to thousands of individuals who are suffering from hearing loss.

The Ear Institute is a state-of-the-art facility that brings together ear specialty services from the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, Beth Israel Medical Center and the Children's Hearing Institute. The $2.7 million renovation encompasses 15,150 square feet and will provide care to approximately 15,000 patients each year. A center of excellence in auditory health care, it includes a Hearing and Learning Center, the Cochlear Implant Center, a Hearing and Balance Disorders Center and a Vestibular Rehabilitation Center. The Institute's physicians will include specialists in otology and neurotology, as well as some of the world's most respected medical researchers in otolaryngology.

Hearing loss is America's number one birth defect and a leading cause of disability affecting 28 million Americans of all ages. Most adults over age 60 lose approximately 1 percent of their hearing annually, making hearing loss one of the most universal problems of aging. Hearing loss leaves people isolated from the community and unable to participate in many activities. Using innovative technology, the Ear Institute can literally transform the quality of people's lives. At the Ear Institute ribbon-cutting, I met profoundly deaf individuals who, thanks to innovative techniques used by the Infirmary's exceptional medical staff, were now able to hear, including children who could hear well enough to participate in mainstream classrooms, adults who who were able to return to their jobs, and seniors who were able to enjoy a better quality of life.

The Ear Institute will build on the excellent programs that the Infirmary has offered for many years. The Infirmary's Cochlear Implant Center is one of the largest in the United States, and participates in numerous national and international research protocols. The Infirmary pioneered innovative procedures that have restored hearing to thousands of profoundly deaf individuals, including infants as young as six months and adults.

The Infirmary also specializes in diagnostic services for people with hearing and balance disorders, and the new Ear Institute is equipped with some of the latest technology for helping diagnose problems, including rotational chair testing, dynamic Platform Posturography, pure tone and speech audiometry, advanced auditory brainstem and middle latency testing.

Founded in 1820, the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary is the oldest specialty hospital in the Western Hemisphere and was the first hospital to provide clinical training to medical students. The Infirmary is currently a teaching hospital affiliated with New York Medical College. With more than 20 residents and fellows graduating each year, it is considered one of the finest training programs for ophthalmologists and otolaryngologists in the world today.

With some of the most advanced diagnostic and treatment facilities available anywhere in the world, the Infirmary is often the first user of innovative technology, such as the first clinical high-resolution ultrasound biomicroscope in the United States. The Infirmary performs more than 23,000 surgical procedures and treats approximately 142,000 people on an outpatient basis each year. Its Eye Trauma Center treats more emergency eye cases than any other facility in New York.

Madam Speaker, I ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing the exceptional achievements of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary and in celebrating the opening day of its new state-of-the-art Ear Institute.

CONGRATULATING SHARON DOYLE ON HER OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sharon Doyle on receiving Tempe Leadership's Outstanding Community Leadership Award. I am especially pleased to recognize Sharon because she is not only a worthy recipient, but a long-time family friend from my home town, Tempe, Arizona. This award recognizes outstanding leadership achievements and service that contribute to improving the quality of life in Tempe.

Sharon is also a fellow educator, retiring after thirty years as a speech and language pathologist in the Tempe Union High School District. This award represents years of community service which at the present time involves service to sixteen different committees and organizations. Although Sharon is retired,

she continues to use her time to serve education-related organizations, proving that her advocacy for young people did not end with her retirement.

She is a graduate of Tempe Leadership Class XVI and is the president of the Tempe High School District Education Foundation, vice-president of the Tempe Impact Education Foundation and is active on the Tempe City Council's Education, Technology and Economic Development Committee.

A community's quality of life is determined by many factors, such as the policies set by city government and the programs available to its citizens. However, I believe that a community rises and falls on the shoulders of its citizens, and the contributions they make to that community. Sharon exemplifies this commitment and raises the bar for everyone around her. I am proud to call Sharon Doyle a friend, and I commend her on her continued service to the young people of our community.

Sharon, congratulations on a job well done. Keep up the good work!

IN HONOR OF FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE BY THE TWIN CITIES NORTH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mrs. BACHMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the members and leadership of the Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce. This weekend, the more than 500 corporate citizens of the Twin Cities North area that make up the Chamber, will celebrate their 50th anniversary at their Glitz & Glamour Gala.

The northern suburbs of the Twin Cities are vibrant, growing communities with state-of-the-art health care, high quality education, affordable housing, and an abundance of opportunities for recreational enjoyment. The Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce is a big part of what makes this region such an attractive place to live, work, and raise a family.

By helping local business and community leaders work together to fill gaps in community needs and grow the local economy, the chamber ensures that the area enjoys all the benefits of a bustling metropolis while maintaining its small-town feel. On a drive through the neighborhoods and business districts of Arden Hills, Blaine, Columbia Heights, Fridley, Little Canada, Mounds View, New Brighton, Roseville, Shoreview, and Spring Lake Park, one truly feels surrounded by the best of all worlds.

I commend the members of the Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce for their dedication to strengthening their local economy and improving their home communities. And I commend the leadership of the chamber under the guiding hand of Chairman of the Board Doug McNurlin for their dedication to their neighbors and their commitment to the core mission of the chamber of commerce.

RECOGNIZING PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS FROM MARYLAND'S THIRD DISTRICT

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Peace Corps volunteers from my district: Jessica Ayd, Laura Burke, Gwyneth Caverly, Christopher Chapman, Erin Dahan, Aaron Degraffenreidt, Colin Doyle, Craig Edmonds, Jennifer Forster, Mark Gormley, John Gudger, Jonathan Katz, Oluseyi Lawoyin, Anne Lilly, Robi Marbury, William Marbury, Martha Moiforay, Anna Moyer, Hannah Stocks, and Sheena Washington.

I'd like to thank them for their terrific work in countries far and wide, and for helping make America's image abroad stronger at a time when we need it most. Additionally, I'd like to congratulate the Peace Corps on its 47th anniversary. Our country has truly been enriched by the experiences of the Peace Corps volunteers.

CONGRATULATIONS FOR DR. MARWAN SABBAGH

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Marwan Sabbagh, a nationally renowned neurologist who has dedicated his career to finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease. As the founder and director of clinical research at Sun Health Research Institute's Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research, Dr. Sabbagh is working to develop new tools and treatment options for those who have been diagnosed with this tragic disease.

Dr. Sabbagh and the Sun Health Research Institute are partners in the Arizona Alzheimer's Consortium. This Consortium is a leading model for statewide research centers that build upon the strengths of participating institutions. As a member of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's disease, I am proud of the groundbreaking research and education that is being done in my home state of Arizona.

Later this week, I will join Dr. Sabbagh as he celebrates the release of his latest book, "The Alzheimer's Answer". This book provides readers with the latest facts about the disease, real tips for prevention, and information on current diagnosis and treatment options. As we continue to learn more about the crisis this disease presents, reducing our risk and promoting wellness is more important than ever.

Madam Speaker, in addition to Dr. Sabbagh's work with the Sun Health Research Institute, he is also a scientist in the Department of Neurology at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale and serves as an adjunct professor at Midwestern University and Arizona State University. Through his work at these leading research institutions, Dr. Sabbagh is a leading investigator for several national Alzheimer's treatment trials, including Alzheimer vaccine studies.

Dr. Sabbagh currently resides in Scottsdale with his wife Ida and their two sons, Habib and Elias. The work that Dr. Sabbagh has done, and continues to do, will greatly benefit our nation. I am proud of his accomplishments and congratulate him on his book release.

A TRIBUTE TO LOUIS B. BURGELIN

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today and invite my colleagues to join me in honoring Louis B. Burgelin, of Vallejo, California, for his many accomplishments and contributions to our community. Louis has provided remarkable leadership to countless organizations during his lifetime and the good citizens of our community have been the beneficiaries.

Louis Brosnahan Burgelin was born in Vallejo, California, on January 20, 1916, to Otto and Frances Burgelin. One of three children, Lou started his education at St. Vincent's Elementary School at the tender age of 4. During his years at Vallejo High School he studied hard but also spent a good deal of time playing football and tennis and perfecting his ability as a track sprinter. Following his high school graduation in 1932, Lou entered UC Berkeley for 2 years of study before transferring to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard Apprentice School. Lou graduated as a Marine Machinist and began an illustrious career. Quickly rising to management positions, Lou's leadership was instrumental in the success of several of our country's shipyards. At Hunter's Point in San Francisco, Lou served as both Head Progressman, and Labor Relations Superintendent. During his time at Mare Island in Vallejo, he served as Chief Progressman, Workload and Scheduling Manager, as well as the Production Equipment and Construction Manager. At Norfolk Naval Shipyard Lou was the Production Control Manager.

After retiring from the Federal Service in 1972, Lou served for 19 years as the Executive Secretary of the Armed Services Committee of the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce. He participated in the acquisition of more than $200 million in project authorizations for Mare Island. He was also instrumental in maintaining the dredging operations so necessary for shipyard operations.

Over the years, Lou Burgelin has also donated his time and talent to countless professional and community organizations. He is a Charter member of the Naval Civilian Manager's Association and served as both local and national President. He also served as President of the Navy Yard Association of Mare Island and the Council of Naval Employee Groups, representing all of the employees of the West Coast Naval Shipyards. He has been elected National Vice President of the Retirement Federation of Civil Service Employees, the first Chairman of the Combined Federal Campaign for Napa and Solano Counties, the first Chairman of the Vallejo Senior Citizens Council and the President of the Vallejo-Napa United Way. Lou has served as President of the Vallejo Chapter 16 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) and he is a long-standing member of the Vallejo Salvation Army.

Among his many civic activities, Lou is an active member of the Vallejo Elks Club having served as Exalted Ruler, a National Officer, and as the Elks National Ritual Judge, has served as Foreman of the Solano Grand Jury and is one of the founders of the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum.

Lou has received a Public Service Medal from the Navy's Chief of Naval Operations, the prestigious ''Others'' designation from the Salvation Army, and the Man of the Year award presented by the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce.

And it pleases me to report that Lou Burgelin is still active in the community. He serves on the Vallejo Council of the Navy League, he's Secretary of the Tobacco Fund Advisory Board for Solano County, Tresurer for the Salvation Army, volunteers at St. Vincent's Church, Past Big SIR and Chaplain for Branch 88 and he is National Legislative Chair for Vallejo NARFE. Lou has been happily married to Betty Greenwell Bergelin for almost 69 years. They have three children, three grandchildren and five great-grand children.

Madam Speaker, recognition of Mr. Burgelin's devotion to his family, his community, and his country, it is my honor to recognize him today.

TRIBUTE TO RACHEL BASSETTE NOEL

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker. I rise to honor the extraordinary life and exceptional accomplishments of Rachel Bassette Noel. This remarkable public servant merits our recognition and esteem as her leadership, service and lifelong devotion to civil liberty and equal opportunity has done much to advance the lives of our people.

Rachel Noel has been celebrated as ''a pioneer for equity,'' ''a woman of valor,'' and ''a magnificent rebel.'' She demanded the dignity due to all people. She sought to unfetter the great potential of our children and she did her part, in no small measure, to tear down the walls of segregation and remove the barriers to equal education. Although many individuals have made notable contributions to our community and state, few have left a legacy of progress as has Rachel Noel.

Rachel Noel was born 1918 in Hampton, Virginia—in the segregated South. Her father, A.W.E. Bassette, was a lawyer and her mother was a teacher. They instilled in her the value and importance of a good education and Rachel Noel went on to graduate with a bachelor's degree from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and earned a master's degree in sociology from Fisk University. After World War II, she and her husband, Dr. Edmond F. Noel, moved west and settled in Denver in 1950. As in the segregated South, they encountered discrimination and racial bias in Denver. Dr. Noel practiced medicine in the Five Points community and was the first African American surgeon in Colorado, yet he was denied operating room privileges in every city hospital except the Jewish hospital, General Rose (now Rose Medical Center). Rachel Noel also encountered many closed doors in Denver before taking a job with the Denver Human Rights Commission.

The couple persevered and by the time Rachel Noel won election to the Board of the Denver Public Schools (DPS) in 1965, she was already recognized for her work on behalf of children. She became the first African American to serve on the DPS Board and the first African American woman elected to public office in Colorado. Three years into her term, she introduced the famous Noel Resolution which called for the superintendent to develop a plan to integrate the Denver Public Schools. The resolution was precipitated by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Rachel Noel noted that ''when King died, rhetoric no longer seemed adequate.'' Her resolution brought death threats and after much community opposition, it passed in 1970. The United States Supreme Court eventually affirmed the intent of her resolution in its landmark decision of 1973, Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1, calling for mandatory desegregation of Denver's public schools, including busing for racial balance. The Denver Post noted that ''the citizenry at large would debate the best means for achieving equality and opportunity for all its students—but that goal itself would never again be called into question.'' I would simply add that Rachel Noel's endeavors raised the bar. She moved the public policy debate in our community and this country from simply opening segregated schools to achieving a new balance—a new equity—in public education that did not previously exist. But extending the benefits of equal education to those who had been denied it was more than just enforcing laws. It was about redeeming lost futures and creating opportunity so that all young people could make the most of their lives and share in our prosperity.

Rachel Noel joined the faculty of Metropolitan Sate College in 1969. She taught sociology and African American studies and served as chair of the African American Studies Department from 1971 to 1980. In 1976, Governor Richard Lamm appointed Rachel Noel to serve on the University of Colorado Board of Regents and she was subsequently elected statewide in1978 to become the first African American elected to the Board of Regents and serve as chair of the board. She also chaired Mayor Federico Pena's Black Advisory Council; served as a Commissioner of Denver Housing Authority; served on the Advisory Board of the United States Civil Rights Commission; served on Mayor Wellington Webb's Black Advisory Committee; and served as a member of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Health Sciences at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Denver. She was also an active member of Shorter Community African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Links and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

In 1981, Rachel Noel was honored with the establishment of the Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Professorship to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at Metropolitan State College. She was the recipient of numerous accolades and awards including: the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award in 1990; induction into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame in 1996; the Wiley A. Branton Award from the National Bar Association in 2001; the Anti-Defamation League's Civil Rights Award in 2004; and the Honorary Doctor of Public Service degree from the University of Denver. In 2002, the Denver Public Schools named a middle school in Northeast Denver in her honor, the Rachel B. Noel Middle School.

Rachel Noel was an unrelenting advocate for the causes that elevate the human condition and she served all of us with eminent distinction. She saw great opportunity for progress and seized it. She had the courage to tell us that we were not keeping faith with our nation's ideals and that we needed to move forward. Moreover, she knew that we as Americans have an enormous capacity to do better and that we have a moral obligation to do so. Truly, we are all diminished by the passing of this remarkable person.

Rachel Noel lived a life that is rich in consequence and we are better and stronger due to her labors on our behalf. Our thoughts and prayers are with her daughter Angie, her son Buddy and her entire family. Please join me in paying tribute to the life of Rachel B. Noel, a distinguished public servant and advocate for civil liberty.

CONGRATULATING FIRE CHIEF JOE FLORENTINO OF LITTLE ELM, TEXAS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Little Elm, Texas Fire Chief Joe Florentino. Chief Florentino was recently appointed to the position as the first-ever State Coordinator of the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System.

Chief Florentino was unanimously selected to fill the post for his work-related qualifications and his leadership abilities by representatives from fourteen fire-related statewide agencies. He originally applied to be one of the 24 regional coordinators, and was surprised by his appointment to State Coordinator. Although he recognizes the challenges that go hand in hand with being the first individual to hold this position, Chief Florentino is optimistic about the road that lies ahead.

The Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System, as an annex to Texas' emergency management plan, sets guidelines for responding to fire-related catastrophes that require more assistance than an area can provide. Chief Florentino will serve as the point of contact between those areas in need of support and the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System. Advocates of the program recognize the fact that Texas is on the forefront of this type of intrastate aid system, and hope that its successful implementation will lead to a similar nationwide system in the future.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to Chief Florentino on this appointment and commend his dedication and desire to help his community and state. It is an honor to represent such a service-oriented citizen in the 26th District of Texas, and I know his commitment will serve as an example to others.

A STATEMENT HONORING THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of America's most courageous groups of men who fought during World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen. These brave African American men refused to let discrimination topple their dreams as they fought to defend America during World War II and protect our freedom. They are nationally known for being the first group of black military airmen at a time when people believed all blacks lacked intelligence, skill, courage, and patriotism.

It was not until 1941 when the Tuskegee Airmen were given an opportunity to learn about aviation at Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, founded by Booker T. Washington. There is no greater story of freedom and American democracy than that of the Tuskegee Airmen, who with bravery and courage fought for the freedom of this country and the world, while at home African Americans were second-class citizens.

Coming out of the Tuskegee Institute as some of the best and brightest of their programs, they went on to fight against all odds. These men were a vital part of the battles against the Luftwaffe in Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Germany. They flew more than 15,000 sorties, escorted bombers in raids against enemies over Europe and North Africa, and destroyed enemy targets and supply lines in Germany. Their efforts and successes in the Air Force directly influenced President Truman's decision to desegregate the U.S. military. Due to their patriotism and valor in World War II, on March 27, 2007, they received one of the highest honors in the United States, the Congressional Gold Medal.

So when anyone talks about the Tuskegee Airmen, it is more than just their flying. It is their extraordinary stand for courage in the face of difficulty. This month I salute the Tuskegee Airmen.

TRIBUTE TO JACK B. WEIL

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker. I rise to honor the extraordinary life of Jack B. Weil. This exceptional citizen merits both our recognition and esteem as his impressive record of civic leadership and invaluable service has improved the lives of many Coloradans.

Sadly, Jack Weil was taken from us by esophageal cancer and he will be greatly missed. His passion for art, politics, business and his capacity for community service were immeasurable. He molded a life of genuine accomplishment and his passing is a great loss to our entire community.

Jack Weil was born November 13, 1928 at Denver's Mercy Hospital. He attended the University of Colorado and ultimately graduated from Tulane University in 1952. He joined the United States Army and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. After two years of service, he returned to Denver to join the family business, Rockmount Ranch Wear Manufacturing Company, a company founded by his father, the indomitable Jack A. Weil. Jack Weil was a businessman and a gifted artist whose vision and talent for textile designs helped expand the reach of the company beyond the Mississippi River. He created some of Rockmount's most iconic designs, including the shirt John Travolta wore in the movie ''Urban Cowboy.'' Rockmount shirts have been worn by Bob Dylan, President Reagan, Elvis Presley and Robert Redford, among others. Jack Weil was a major force at Rockmount for fifty years and it has grown from one of the original early mercantile businesses in lower downtown Denver to an international company with clothing sold throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia and Australia.

Jack Weil was also a well-known abstract impressionist painter and his son, Steven Weil, noted that ''There was nothing straight and narrow about him.'' He developed his own abstract style and he loved to share the art he created as well as the art he bought. In the 1960's, the Denver Art Museum hung one of Jack Weil's forward looking collages and his most recent exhibition was a twenty-canvas show at the Berkeley Park Art Gallery in northwest Denver last December.

Jack Weil was extremely active in politics and in the community. He was a party leader and held various posts in the Republican Central Committee and was a past secretary of the Colorado Republican Party. But Steven Weil noted that he ''could not be cast into the mold of a classic conservative'' as he served on the board of Colorado Republicans for Choice. In addition to being a leader in Western wear and equipment industry associations, Jack Weil was also very involved in education serving in various roles, including chair, of the Community College of Denver Foundation. Historic preservation was also an abiding interest and he served on the planning commissions for the Humboldt Island Historic District and Cheeseman Park. He also served on the board of the First Universalist Church and the membership committee of the Denver Athletic Club. In 2002, Jack Weil was the recipient of Tulane University's Alumni Recognition Award.

Please join me in paying tribute to Jack B. Weil, a distinguished citizen. His leadership has been exemplary and his contributions are rich in consequence. On behalf of the citizens of the 1st Congressional District, I wish to express our admiration and gratitude for the life of Jack Weil. Our thoughts are with Jack Weil Sr., Steven Weil, Jane Romberg, Judy Oksner and his three grandchildren.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT WALTER DEACON

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. MCCOTTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Robert Walter Deacon, a beloved coach and community leader, and mourn him upon his passing at age 78.

Robert Deacon was born in Brooklyn, NY, on May, 30 1929. An accomplished athlete, Robert earned nine varsity letters in high school before attending Georgetown University and playing quarterback for their football team. When Georgetown discontinued their football program in 1953, Robert transferred to the University of Vermont where he played football and baseball, eventually earning a place in the school's Sports Hall of Fame for football.

After school, Robert dedicated his life to teaching children the values he cherished including hard work, sportsmanship, and fair play. Mr. Deacon served as a city parks and recreation commissioner and became a fixture of the Livonia baseball fields and basketball courts for decades, where he often found time to heckle opposing players, like me. Robert coached his five sons in little league baseball and basketball from the 1960s through the 1980s. While very competitive, as a coach, Robert always made sure to stress sportsmanship among his players and helped them learn from their mistakes. Following his retirement Robert worked as a field manager for many years on Livonia's Ford Field baseball diamonds and on basketball courts at George N. Bentley High School and then the community recreation center.

Regrettably on February 13, 2008, after a battle with lung cancer, Robert passed away. He will be remembered as a kind supportive man who was devoted to his family, especially his grandchildren. To his wife, Marjorie; his children Bob (Julie), Bill (Christine), Tom (Patricia), Tim (Caroline), and Kevin (Sue); his grandchildren David, Michelle, Andy (Christine), Jimmy, Peter, Hannah, Jackie, Mitchell, Matt, Caileigh, Rachel, Laura, and Charlie; his sisters Dorothy MacNaughton and Eileen Hartke; and to everyone who knew and loved him, he was a dedicated member of his community who will be truly missed.

Madam Speaker, during his lifetime, Robert Walter Deacon enriched the lives of everyone around him by serving as an exemplary role model and teacher. As we bid farewell to this extraordinary individual, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning his passing and honoring his years of loyal service to our community and country.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1323–S1391

Measures Introduced: Eight bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 2673–2680, and S. Res. 463. **Pages S1384–85**

Measures Reported:

S. 2146, to authorize the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to accept, as part of a settlement, diesel emission reduction Supplemental Environmental Projects. (S. Rept. No. 110–266)

S. 2160, to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a pain care initiative in health care facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs. (S. Rept. No. 110–267) **Page S1384**

Measures Passed:

Andean Trade Preference Extension Act: Senate passed H.R. 5264, to extend the Andean Trade Preference Act, clearing the measure for the President. **Pages S1388–90**

Minting and Issuance of Certain $1 Coins: Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5478, to provide for the continued minting and issuance of certain $1 coins in 2008, and the bill was then passed, clearing the measure for the President. **Page S1390**

Noise Compatibility Projects: Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation was discharged from further consideration of S. 996, to amend title 49, United States Code, to expand passenger facility fee eligibility for certain noise compatibility projects, and the bill was then passed. **Page S1390**

Measures Considered:

Global Strategic Report: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 2634, to require a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates. **Pages S1334–64**

The motion to proceed was withdrawn. **Page S1364**

New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act and the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act: Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3221, moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation. **Pages S1364–76**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 48 yeas to 46 nays (Vote No. 35), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Page S1365**

Senator Reid entered a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Pages S1364–65**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill at approximately 10 a.m., on Friday, February 29, 2008. **Page S1391**

Appointments:

Senate National Security Working Group: The Chair announced, on behalf of the Republican Leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 105 (adopted April 13, 1989), as amended by S. Res. 149 (adopted October 5, 1993), as amended by Public Law 105–275 (adopted October 21, 1998), further amended by S. Res. 75 (adopted March 25, 1999), amended by S. Res. 383 (adopted October 27, 2000), and amended by S. Res. 355 (adopted November 13, 2002), and further amended by S. Res. 480 (adopted November 21, 2004), the appointment of the following Senators as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the 110th Congress: Senator Coleman as Co-Chairman vice Senator Lott, and Senator Voinovich vice Senator Coleman. **Page S1391**

National Historical Publications and Records Commission: The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 81–754, as amended by Public Law 93–536 and Public Law 100–365, appointed Senator Cardin to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, vice Senator Dodd. **Page S1391**

National Commission on Children and Disasters: The Chair, on behalf of the Republican Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 110–161, appointed the following individuals to serve as members of the National Commission on Children and Disasters: Ernie Allen of Virginia and Mary Alneta Carlson of Alaska. **Page S1391**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of an agreement between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark on Social Security; which was referred to the Committee on Finance. (PM–39) **Page S1383**

Messages from the House: **Pages S1383–84**

Measures Referred: **Page S1384**

Executive Communications: **Page S1384**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1385–86**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1386–87**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1382–83**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Page S1387**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S1387–88**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1388**

Record Votes: One recorded vote was taken today. (Total—35) **Page S1365**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 7:07 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Friday, February 29, 2008. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1391.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

HALLMARK/WESTLAND MEAT RECALL

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine the recent Hallmark/Westland Meat Company meat recall, after receiving testimony from Ed Schafer, Secretary of Agriculture; and Wayne Pacelle, Humane Society of the United States, and J. Patrick Boyle, American Meat Institute, both of Washington, D.C.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2009 for Department of the Navy, and the future years defense program, after receiving testimony from Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy, Admiral Gary Roughead, USN, Chief of Naval Operations, and General James T. Conway, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps, all of the Department of Defense.

SEMIANNUAL MONETARY POLICY REPORT

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the semiannual ''Monetary Policy Report to the Congress'', after receiving testimony from Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2009 for the Department of Transportation, after receiving testimony from Mary E. Peters, Secretary, and Robert Sturgell, Acting Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, both of the Department of Transportation.

AMERICAN SAMOA AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS ECONOMIES

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the impact of increased minimum wages on the economies of American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, after receiving testimony from Representative Faleomavaega; Jay Berman, Senior Economist, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Department of Labor; Nikolao I. Pula, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs; American Samoa Governor Togiola T.A. Tulafono, Pago Pago; and Governor Benigno R. Fitial, and Resident Representative Pedro A. Tenorio, both of Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

LAND BILLS

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water and Power concluded a hearing to examine S. 177 and H.R. 2085, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the McGee

Creek Authority certain facilities of the McGee Creek Project, Oklahoma, S. 1473 and H.R. 1855, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Madera Irrigation District for purposes of supporting the Madera Water Supply Enhancement Project, S. 1474 and H.R. 1139, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to plan, design and construct facilities to provide water for irrigation, municipal, domestic, and other uses from the Bunker Hill Groundwater Basin, Santa Ana River, California, S. 1929, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, to conduct a feasibility study of water augmentation alternatives in the Sierra Vista Subwatershed, S. 2370, to clear title to certain real property in New Mexico associated with the Middle Rio Grande Project, and H.R. 2381, to promote Department of the Interior efforts to provide a scientific basis for the management of sediment and nutrient loss in the Upper Mississippi River Basin, after receiving testimony from Representative Radanovich; Robert J. Quint, Director of Operations, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior; Mayor Mick Cornett, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; John Rossi, Western Municipal Water District, Riverside, California; Carl Janzen, Madera Irrigation District, Madera, California; and Charles Potucek, Upper San Pedro Partnership, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, focusing on the security of the nuclear power plants in the United States, after receiving testimony from Senators Specter and Casey; Dale E. Klein, Chairman, and Gregory B. Jaczko, and Peter B. Lyons, both Commissioners, all of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Christopher Crane, Exelon Corporation, Warrenville, Illinois; Eric F. Wilson, G4S Regulated Security Solutions, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida; David A. Lochbaum, Nuclear Safety Project, on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), and Marvin Fertel, Nuclear Energy Institute, both of Washington, D.C.

REAL ESTATE MARKET

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the real estate market, focusing on building a strong economy, after receiving testimony from Lawrence B. Lindsey, Lindsey Group, and David Seiders, National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), both of Washington, D.C.; Timothy H. Callahan, Callahan Capital Partners, Denver, Colorado, on behalf of the Real Estate Roundtable; and Jeffrey H. Schwartz, ProLogis, Chicago, Illinois, on behalf of the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts.

POST-ELECTION PAKISTAN

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the policy options of the United States in post-election Pakistan, after receiving testimony from John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State.

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security concluded a hearing to examine weaknesses in the visa waiver program, focusing on possible safeguards needed to protect the United States of America, including the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–53), after receiving testimony from Paul Rosenzweig, Acting Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Department of Homeland Security; Stephen A. Tony Edson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Visa Services; Jess T. Ford, Director, International Affairs and Trade, Government Accountability Office; Susan Ginsburg, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C.; and Jessica M. Vaughan, Center for Immigration Studies, Franklin, Massachusetts.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 10 public bills, H.R. 5509–5518; and 7 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 305; and H. Res. 1006–1011 were introduced. **Page H1183**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1183–84**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 816, to provide for the release of certain land from the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area in the State of Nevada and to grant a right-of-way across the released land for the construction and maintenance of a flood control project, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–531);

H.R. 1143, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to lease certain lands in Virgin Islands National Park, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–532);

H.R. 1311, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Alta-Hualapai Site to the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, for the development of a cancer treatment facility, with amendments (H. Rept. 110–533); and

H.R. 3473, to provide for a land exchange with the City of Bountiful, Utah, involving National Forest System land in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and to further land ownership consolidation in that national forest, with an amendment (H. Rept. 110–534).

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office Designation Act: S. 2478, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 59 Colby Corner in East Hampstead, New Hampshire, as the "Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office"—clearing the measure for the President; **Pages H1159–60**

John "Marty" Thiels Southpark Station Designation Act: S. 2272, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service known as the Southpark Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, as the John "Marty" Thiels Southpark Station, in honor and memory of Thiels, a Louisiana postal worker who was killed in the line of duty on October 4, 2007, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 400 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 85—clearing the measure for the President; **Pages H1160–61, H1166**

Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 3936, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, as the "Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building", by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 400 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 86; **Pages H1161–62, H1166–67**

John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 3803, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the "John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building"; **Pages H1162–63**

Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 4454, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the "Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building", in honor of the service men and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 404 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 87; **Pages H1163–64, H1167–68**

Establishing the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: S. Con. Res. 67, to establish the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies; and **Pages H1164–65**

Authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: S. Con. Res. 68, to authorize the use of the rotunda of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. **Pages H1165–66**

National Commission on Children and Disasters—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following members on the part of the House of Representatives to the National Commission on Children and Disasters: Dr. Irwin Redliner of New York, New York and Mr. Bruce A. Lockwood of Canton, Connecticut. **Page H1168**

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: Representatives Pelosi, Hoyer, and Boehner. **Page H1168**

Meeting Hour: Agreed that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, March 3rd and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30

p.m. on Tuesday, March 4th for morning hour debate. **Page H1178**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H1157.

Senate Referrals: S. 1200 was referred to the Committees on Natural Resources, Energy and Commerce, and Ways and Means; S. 2450 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. **Page H1178**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1166, H1167 and H1167–68. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Committee Meetings

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FDA APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Inspector General. Testimony was heard from Phyllis K. Fong, Inspector General, USDA.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a hearing on Defense Health Program. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Defense: S. Ward Casscells, Under Secretary, Health Affairs; LTG Eric Schoomaker, M.D., USA, Surgeon General/Commander, U.S. Army Medical Command; VADM Adam M. Robinson, Jr., USN, Chief of the Navy Medical Corps and LTG James Roudebush, M.D., USAF, Surgeon General of the Air Force.

The Subcommittee also held a hearing on National Guard and Reserve issues. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Defense: LTG Steven Blum, USA, Chief, National Guard; LTG Clyde Vaughn, USA, Vice Chief, Army National Guard; LTG Craig McKinley, USAF, Vice Chief, Air National Guard; LTG Jack Stultz, USA, Chief, Army Reserve; VADM John Cotton, USN, Chief, Navy Reserve; LTG John Bergman, USMC, Commander, Marine Forces Reserve; and LTG John Bradley, USAF, Chief, Air Force Reserve.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Department of Energy. Testimony was heard from Samuel Bodman, Secretary of Energy.

FINANCIAL SERVICES, GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a hearing on Consumer Protection in Financial Services. Testimony was heard from Donna Gambrell, Director, Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, Department of the Treasury; and Lydia Parnes, Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection, FTC.

HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a hearing on Improving the Efficiency of the Aviation Security System-TSA, GAO, American Airlines, and Washington Metropolitan Airport Authority. Testimony was heard from Kip Hawley, Assistant Secretary, Transportation Security Administration Administrator, Department of Homeland Security; Cathleen Berrick, Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, GAO; and public witnesses.

INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a hearing on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Interior: Dale Hall, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Mark D. Myers, Director, U.S. Geological Survey.

LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies held a hearing on Reducing the Disability Backlog at the Social Security Administration/Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Overview. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the SSA: Michael Astrue, Commissioner; and Patrick O'Carroll, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General; and public witnesses.

STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held a hearing on Fiscal Year 2009 Budget-State Operations, Embassy Bagdad. Testimony was heard from Patrick F. Kennedy, Under Secretary, Management, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

TRANSPORTATION, HUD APPROPRIATIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and

Related Agencies held a hearing on Housing Needs of Special Populations (Elderly; Disabled; Homeless; HOPWA). Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department Housing and Urban Development: Mark Johnston, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Special Need Assistance Programs; and John Garvin, Advisor, Housing Programs.

ARMY BUDGET

Committee on Armed Services: Held a hearing on Fiscal Year 2009 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Department of the Army. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Army: Pete Geren, Secretary; and GEN George W. Casey, Jr., USA, Chief of Staff.

MILITARY BUDGET

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness held a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2009 National Defense Authorization Budget Request on military construction. Testimony was heard from the Department of Defense: Wayne Arny, Deputy Under Secretary, Installations and Environment; Geoffrey G. Prosch, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Installations and Environment, Army; B.J. Penn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Installations and Environment; and William C. Anderson, Assistant Secretary, Air Force, Installations, Environment and Logistics.

MEMBERS' DAY

Committee on the Budget: Held a hearing on Members' Day. Testimony was heard from Representatives Murphy of California, Castor, Giffords, Poe, Loebsack, McCarthy of New York; Altmire, Braley, Ehlers, Shea-Porter, Hold Sutton, Davis of Illinois, Courtney; Hirono, Rodriguez, Honda; Welch of Vermont; Filner, Carney, Lewis of Georgia, Klein of Florida, Higgins, Kagen, Larsen of Washington, Christensen, Waltz of Minnesota, Wolf, and Fossella.

HHS BUDGET

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Held a hearing entitled ''A Review of the Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2009 Budget.'' Testimony was heard from Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary of Health and Human Services.

BAN ASBESTOS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials held a hearing on S. 742, Ban Asbestos in America Act of 2007 and on other proposals to Ban Asbestos in Products. Testimony was heard from the following officials of EPA: James B. Gulliford, Assistant Administrator, Office for Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances; and Aubrey Miller, Senior Medical Officer and Toxicologist; and Christopher Weis, Senior Toxicologist, Region 8; Gregory P. Meeker, Geologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior; public witnesses.

BUDGET VIEWS AND ESTIMATES

Committee on Financial Services: Approved, as amended, Committee Budget Views and Estimates for Fiscal Year 2009 for submission to the Committee on the Budget.

U.N. MANDATES AND FORCE AGREEMENTS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight held a hearing on Status of Forces in Agreements and U.N. Mandates: What Authorities and Protections Do They Provide to U.S. Personnel? Testimony was heard from following officials of the CRS, Library of Congress: Jennifer K. Elsea, Legislative Attorney, American Law Division; and R. Chuck Mason, Legislative Attorney; and public witnesses.

CYBER INITIATIVE

Committee on Homeland Security: Held a hearing entitled ''The Cyber Initiative.'' Testimony was heard from Karen Evans, Administrator, Electronic Government and Information Technology, OMB; and following officials of the National Protection and Programs Directorate, Department of Homeland Security: Robert Jamison, Under Secretary; and Scott Charbo, Deputy Under Secretary.

ENERGY/MINERAL RESOURCES BUDGET

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an oversight hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget for the Minerals Management Service, the Bureau of Land Management, Energy and Minerals programs, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, the Minerals programs, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, the Minerals and Geology Program of the Forest Service, and the United States Geological Survey, except for the activities and programs of the Water Resources Division. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Interior: Randall Luthi, Director, Minerals Management Service; Robert Doyle, Deputy Director, U.S. Geological Survey; Henri Bisson, Deputy Director, Bureau of Land Management; and Brent Wahlquist, Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement; and Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief, Forest Service, National Forest System, USDA.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans held a hearing on the

following bills: H.R. 3223, Keep Our Waterfronts Working Act of 2007; H.R. 5451, Coastal Zone Reauthorization Act of 2009; H.R. 5452, Coastal State Renewable Energy Promotion Act of 2008; and H.R. 5453, Coastal State Climate Change Planning Act of 2008. Testimony was heard from Representative Allen; David M. Kennedy, Director, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, NOAA, Department of Commerce; and public witnesses.

OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Insular Affairs held an oversight hearing on the fiscal Year 2009 budget request for the Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs. Testimony was heard from Nikolao Pula, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior.

TELEWORK IMPROVEMENTS ACT; IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POSTAL ACCOUNTABLITY ENHANCEMENT ACT

Committee on Oversight: Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia approved for full Committee action, as amended, H.R. 4106, Telework Improvements Act of 2007.

The Subcommittee also held a hearing on the Implementation of the Postal Accountability Enhancement Act of 2006. Testimony was heard from Katherine A. Siggerud, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, GAO; the following officials of the U.S. Postal Service: John E. Potter, Postmaster General/CEO; and James H. Bilbray, member, Board of Governors; Dan G. Blair, Chairman, Postal Regulatory Commission; and a public witness.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT IMPROVEMENT

Committee on Small Business: Held a hearing entitled "Improving the Paperwork Reduction Act for Small Businesses." Testimony was heard from Susan E. Dudley, Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES; GSA RESOLUTION; BUDGET VIEWS AND ESTIMATES

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Ordered reported the following measures: H.R. 5492, To authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to construct a greenhouse facility at its museum support facility in Suitland, Maryland; H. Res. 936, amended, Honoring the 200th anniversary of the Gallatin Report on Roads and Canals, celebrating the national unity the Gallatin Report engendered, and recognizing the vast contributions that national planning efforts have provided to the United States; and H. Res. 964, amended, To promote the safe operation of 15 passenger vans.

The Committee also approved the following: GSA Section 11(b) Resolution; and Committee Budget Views and Estimates for Fiscal Year 2009 for submission to the Committee on the Budget.

The Committee also approved Committee Budget Views and Estimates for Fiscal Year 2009 for submission to the Committee on the Budget.

VETERANS SUBPRIME MORTGAGES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing on Subprime Mortgage Crisis and America's Veterans, Testimony was heard from Judith Caden, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses

FAMILIES' MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on Mental Health Treatment for Families: Supporting Those Who Support our Veterans. Testimony was heard from Kristin Day, Chief Consultant, Care and Management and Social Work, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Linda Spoonster Schwartz, R.N., Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, State of Connecticut; representatives of veterans organizations; and public witnesses.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on Medicare Advantage. Testimony was heard from Kerry Weems, Acting Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services; James C. Cosgrove, Acting Director, Health Care Issues, GAO; and public witnesses.

BRIEFING—FISA

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Met in executive session to receive a briefing on FISA. The Committee was briefed by public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

ECONOMIC COSTS OF THE WAR

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the total economic costs of the Iraq war beyond the federal budget, after receiving testimony from Joesph E. Stiglitz, Columbia University, and Robert D. Hormats, Goldman Sachs (International), both of New York, New York; and Rand Beers, National Security Network, and Scott Wallsten, iGrowthGlobal, both of Washington, D.C.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D164)*

H.R. 1216, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations to reduce the incidence of child injury and death occurring inside or outside of light motor vehicles. Signed on February 28, 2008. (Public Law 110–189)

H.R. 5270, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. Signed on February 28, 2008. (Public Law 110–190)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2008

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, to hold hearings to examine government-wide intelligence community management reforms, focusing on ensuring effective Congressional oversight and the role of the Government Accountability Office, 10 a.m., SD–342.

House

No Committee meetings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Friday, February 29

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will continue consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3221, New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act, and the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 p.m., Monday, March 3

House Chamber

Program for Monday: The House will meet in pro forma session at 2:00 p.m.

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