

the speech police. After all, heaven forbid, offensive or insult speech may hurt somebody's feelings.

In Germany, an insult to a religion can be a crime worthy of imprisonment. Recently, a 61-year-old German businessman was convicted and sent to jail for offending Islam. The same thing happened in Britain where Nick Griffin was prosecuted for describing Islam as a "vicious and wicked faith."

Free speech must be universal. If controversial issues like religion and politics cannot be debated in countries, the people are not free, even in Europe.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Free speech, exercised both individually and through a free press, is a necessity in any country where people are themselves free."

And that's just the way it is.

THE DOLLAR IS WEAKENING

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

Mr. KUCINICH. The great amount of borrowing this country is doing from nations like China, Japan and Korea is weakening our dollar. Many of us know that we're borrowing money from China to prosecute a war in Iraq.

So with a weakened dollar, we're seeing a contribution here to the increased cost of crude oil. The weaker the dollar, the higher the price of crude oil. Today, the price of crude oil is about \$130 a barrel. We're looking at gasoline this summer perhaps as much as \$5 a gallon.

We need to change our economic direction. We need to strengthen our dollar. We need to change our monetary policy and stop borrowing. We need to go after these oil companies, not only in international courts with antitrust action, but we need a windfall profits tax. And if that fails, we need to have an honest discussion in this country about why we let the oil companies control the economy anyway.

Why don't we start looking at ways to take back the power of the people so that we can have control of our own destiny?

COUNTY PAYMENTS: HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OREGON

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

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, by refusing to renew the county payments program, Congress has broken its promise to rural, timbered America.

I've told you in the past about Harney County, a county that has 78 percent of its land mass, the size of New Jersey, all Federally controlled, 70 percent of its road budget affected by this law that has not been reauthorized.

Let me tell you today about Hood River County, where Congress' failure

to act to renew the county timber payments program has forced this county to develop multiple county budgets because we don't know what's going to happen in my home county. One thing is for sure, though, the county annually uses up to \$130,000 of Federal forest payments to fund search and rescue operations in the Mount Hood National Forest and Mount Hood itself. You see, Hood River County is responsible for most of the search and rescue operations on that great mountain, and now those costs will be borne by the county because the Federal Government is shirking its responsibility.

That could change. We could pass H.R. 3058, a bill to reauthorize county timber payments. It has been on the Union Calendar for 127 days, held hostage by this leadership. The Democratic leadership refuses to bring it up for a vote.

Make good on the Federal promise. Let us vote on H.R. 3058.

THE HOUSING CRISIS

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

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, with nearly 8,000 foreclosures being filed daily, there is no question that Americans continue to fear losing their homes. In my home State of New Hampshire, it is predicted that nearly 4,300 families will lose their home by 2009.

This month, the House passed landmark housing legislation that will address the housing crisis directly, stabilize the housing market, and make a real difference for families at risk of losing their home. The bill will also help revitalize communities that have become vacant because of high housing foreclosure rates.

We are also working to provide relief to families struggling under the burden of higher gas prices and soaring costs for food and health care.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot fix our struggling economy until we address the housing crisis, but the Bush administration has ignored this growing problem for far too long.

I hope that President Bush and his allies will reconsider their opposition to our commonsense housing package so we can provide hope to the millions of Americans struggling in President Bush's recession.

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IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GEORGE KOON

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday I had the honor of attending a memorial service celebrating the life of Sergeant First Class George Walter Koon. Sergeant Koon

was a soldier of the United States Army Infantry during the Korean War. He was a POW murdered while in captivity in 1951, but his body remained unrecovered for over half a century. It was not until recently that the hard work of his family and the Department of Defense helped positively identify Sergeant Koon and return him from North Korea to his family in Leesville, South Carolina.

The life and story of Sergeant Koon is an example of tremendous courage and commitment. His brother Reverend Carl Koon correctly stated that "freedom isn't cheap and it isn't free." His sacrifice and that of his fellow American soldiers will never be forgotten to liberate dozens of countries so that more people today live in free market democracy than ever in the history of the world.

The memorial service was conducted by Reverend John McKeown and Reverend George A. Koon, nephew namesake of the deceased hero, at the Old Lexington Baptist Church of Leesville. He received full military honors.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

IN HONOR OF B'NAI ISRAEL AND THE TOWN OF SOUTHURBY, CONNECTICUT, FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, in 1937 the residents of Southbury, a small town in Connecticut, came together to prevent the German American Bund, a group of pro-Nazi German Americans, from establishing a paramilitary training facility in their town.

Led by Rev. Felix Manley of the Southbury Federated Church and Rev. M.E.N. Lindsay of the South Britain Congregational Church, the town of Southbury passed its first zoning law to ban the use of land in Southbury for paramilitary training.

As a great Jewish writer once said, "The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference." Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great sense of pride to represent the town of Southbury, where this May 31, 2008, the congregation of B'nai Israel will host the Human Rights Festival, honoring the courageous acts of those citizens some 71 years ago and renewing the town's commitment to justice. The proud legacy of the religious community in Southbury and the work of B'nai Israel to recognize that legacy serve as a reminder to all of us that change and progress must come from the bottom up.

NBC SHOWS BIAS

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week NBC News aired an interview with President Bush in which it removed key statements from the President's response to a question about diplomatic relations with Iran.

While some editing is to be expected, in this case NBC misrepresented the President's response so that it appeared he agreed with the premise of the question when, in fact, he explicitly disputed it.

The White House says NBC's "deceitful editing" was intended to perpetuate a "media-manufactured storyline" about Iran.

The American people deserve to know the President's complete statements on major foreign policy issues. We rely on journalists to provide this information through fair and impartial reporting. The American people rightfully expect the media to give them all the facts, not just a slanted version.

THE GI BILL

(Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, without the 1944 GI Bill, I would not be standing here today.

The GI Bill educated my dad after he came home from World War II. And today is his 86th birthday; so happy birthday, Dad.

The GI Bill paid for his tuition, his room, his books, some living expenses. It paid for his college degree. It helped him lift our family from the Depression into the middle class, and it offered my two brothers and me a brighter future.

Millions of Americans have stories that are just like mine. In all of the many ways that America shows gratitude to our veterans, the GI Bill has to be one of the greatest.

I was honored last week to vote to extend and to renew the GI Bill to the new generation of veterans that are coming home. The GI Bill was always meant to be a permanent promise, a contract with our soldiers, a bill of rights for our veterans. And I certainly urge the Senate and the President to pass this bill into law as soon as possible.

Happy birthday, Dad.

TRIBUTE TO ARMY SPECIALIST JEREMY R. GULLETT

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

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Army Specialist Jeremy R. Gullett from Greenup, Kentucky, a dedicated soldier who lost his life on May 7, 2008, in the Sabari District of Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division based out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

According to his mother, Cheryl, Jeremy had dreamed of joining the service

since he was 6 years old. While attending Greenup County High School, Specialist Gullett was a member of the school's Junior ROTC program. He joined the Army in 2003, shortly after graduating from high school. Jeremy was a model citizen. Not only did he serve our country abroad, he was also a volunteer fireman; a loving father to his two young daughters, Kaye and Katie; and a dedicated husband to his wife, Janeth.

Today, as we celebrate the life and accomplishments of this exceptional Kentuckian, my thoughts and prayers are with Jeremy Gullett's family and friends. We are all deeply indebted to Specialist Gullett for his service and sacrifice.

DEMOCRATS CONTINUE FIGHT TO LOWER GAS PRICES

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, with gas prices reaching a new record high every day, Congress took strong action last week to bring down the price at the pump by passing legislation to suspend filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve through the end of this year.

After initially opposing the proposal, President Bush signed the bill into law yesterday. He had the power all along to stop filling the SPR, but it took an act of Congress to push him to take this commonsense step, a step that could lower gas prices by up to 24 cents a gallon.

While the Bush administration has allowed crude oil to rise from \$25 a gallon when he first took office to \$130 a gallon today, the Democratic Congress is fighting to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, bring down record gas prices, and launch a cleaner, smarter energy future for America.

Today this House will consider legislation that will retain and create hundreds of thousands of green energy jobs and encourage the use of production of renewable energy. While President Bush continues to call for more of the same policies that have failed for the past 7 years, this Democratic Congress is working for an energy independence plan for America.

MAIN STREET USA ENERGY INDEPENDENCE SECURITY ACT

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am tired of the majority party talking about introducing a commonsense plan for our growing energy crisis. Common sense or not, I'd be happy to look at their plan if they had one. But they don't. They have demonstrated to families who are wasting their money on the price of gasoline that they have failed to come up with a plan.

I don't want to let those families down, Mr. Speaker, and I don't want

them to think that Members of Congress are sitting on their hands doing nothing that's affecting their cost of living. So last week I helped Congressman BUYER announce the Main Street USA Energy Independence Security Act of 2008.

This plan will help solve our national security problem and guide us away from being reliant on international energy sources. It will also open up domestic exploration on our own soil to find energy sources here at home.

The best thing about the Main Street Energy Act is that it is a plan. And let's put the plan to work now.

GAS PRICES

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the phones in my office have been ringing off the hook. Constituents are hopping mad about the skyrocketing price of gasoline.

In Dallas in just the last month, the price for a gallon of gas has jumped 30 cents. And that's in Texas, where we drill and explore on land and along the coast.

It's about time for the Congress to take action. In fact, it's past time.

Two-thirds of the oil we use comes from foreign countries. We have oil and gas in the United States, but we have to be willing to move forward with exploration. Congress should allow exploration in Alaska, along the eastern seaboard, the west coast, and allow more refineries to be built.

The answer to rising gas prices is right here in America. We have the technology. We have the resources. The time is now. Democrats in Congress need to step aside and let the ingenuity of Americans solve this problem today.

IN SUPPORT OF THE LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

LIHEAP, which provides crucial heating and cooling assistance to millions of hardworking, low-income families all across America, grows more important as fuel prices continue to skyrocket and we head toward another hot summer. Already families who qualify for LIHEAP spend, on average, a fifth of their income on energy costs. For hundreds of thousands of Americans, that figure will continue to rise until the electricity is simply shut off.

Still, rather than rising to the occasion, this government has backed away from our responsibilities to those families. Even as prices soar and LIHEAP applicants have increased by 20 percent, the average LIHEAP grant has