

on the floor of the House, I will tell you that is indicative of her work; that she was here for us in the morning, here for us late at night. And so I have no doubt that she will be carrying forth the torch in California, as all the others will be doing. Having just hosted the Attorney General from California, Ms. Harris, I know that you will be a great comfort and nurturer to her.

PARTISAN POLITICS TRUMPING PATRIOTISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, there are some days when I find myself completely baffled by the cynicism of many people who have the privilege to serve here in Washington. Last week, for example, the United States Senate did it again, staying true to its reputation as a graveyard for good legislation. Using the filibuster once again, a minority of Senators blocked the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. This bill, which the House passed in September, would be the greatest expression of our gratitude for the 9/11 first responders. It would provide health care for those workers who incurred health hazards in their efforts to save lives in the aftermath of that horrific tragedy. But apparently, Madam Speaker, some in Congress are unmoved by the plight of firefighters and emergency medical personnel who breathed in toxic fumes on 9/11.

The only way it appears the right wing in America knows to commemorate 9/11 is through exclusion and religious chauvinism—by insisting that a Muslim community center must not be built even a few blocks away from Ground Zero. They've got no interest whatsoever in lending a compassionate hand to those who answered the call on 9/11; no apparent interest in responding to 9/11 with healing rather than dividing.

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No wonder Mayor Bloomberg of New York calls the rejection of the bill “a devastating indictment of Washington politics, a tragic example of partisan politics trumping patriotism.”

If I had a dollar for every time a colleague on the other side of the aisle invoked the bravery of the 9/11 first responders, I'd probably have enough money to offset the cost of the bill. But talk is cheap, Madam Speaker; they want to play lip service to heroism. They just don't want to invest any actual money to help the heroes. Hundreds of billions in tax breaks for the very richest Americans, that's not only okay by them; it is the one thing that animates the Republican Party more than anything else, but funds for American heroes who got sick answering the call of duty—sorry, that's just too expensive.

Actually, there is one other thing that animates them, and that is the

support for endless military occupations halfway around the world. I have yet to hear any of the so-called “deficit hawks” ask questions about how we're going to pay for that.

I will not, Madam Speaker, take any claims of fiscal responsibility seriously from anyone who is not willing to put Afghanistan war spending on the table. Between Iraq and Afghanistan, we have now spent more than \$1.1 trillion in taxpayer money on wars that have undermined our national security goals, increasing rather than diminishing the terrorist threat.

But what about the folks who were there on that one day that the terrorists attacked? Who jumped right into the debris and now suffer from lung damage and devastating respiratory illnesses? They can't get a modest fund from the country whose values they so valiantly embodied that fall morning 9 years ago.

It is an appalling set of priorities. We ought to bring our troops home at once and reinvest the money in our people, including those who showed such courage and who sacrificed so much on 9/11.

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

(Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut 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. FATTAH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FATTAH 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

COURAGE OF CONVICTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As always, it is an honor and a privilege to address this House, especially when you know the history of this place.

I would like to comment about my friend across the aisle who was talking about the 9/11 first responders. Those were heroes. They are heroes. They are really true testaments to the good in America. So many first responders were going up the stairs to rescue people as most everyone else was fleeing. They are true heroes.

What is not as heroic—in fact, it isn't heroic at all—is to bring a bill before the floor and say, Here is a bunch of heroes we need to help. We're not going to cut spending in any other areas. We know there is massive waste, fraud and abuse all over the place. We know there are entities that really have not been able to show any real benefit to the American economy, to American freedom, to American security; but we are not going to cut those, because those are favored in our eyes, too. We want you to borrow more money from the Chinese and from whoever is willing to keep buying bonds; and apparently, some people aren't willing to buy bonds at all or aren't willing to finance our continued astronomic debt.

So, even though Chairman Bernanke had assured us in a private meeting that he wasn't doing it, whatever he wants to call it, it sure sounds like monetizing the debt when you print money and buy our own debt, whether you do it directly or buy it from a third party who has just bought our debt.

Those are the kinds of things we are doing. We are saying, We see these heroes who deserve to be cared for and who deserve to have their health needs met. We agree on that. There was total agreement on that as far as I know.

What we didn't agree on was saying, So, as to these little children being born now, these little babies who are in their cribs all over the country, we're going to load them down with tens of thousands of dollars of debt before they ever even get their first jobs. We are going to load them up with debt because we don't have the financial responsibility to carve out money that is being wasted and to say this is where we need to send it.

Had that been done, I know the people on my side of the aisle, who I know and talked to about that bill that was so noble in its intent, would have voted for it as well. It doesn't even have to be that heroic. Just carve out some of the waste, fraud and abuse that this government is involved in, and pay for these things.

That was another problem with the so-called “tax extender bill” that came before the House this week. There were 36 Republicans who voted against it—not terribly heroic even though most of us knew that there could be consequences. I hear there are those who want to further take away committees. Some of us have been told we won't be subcommittee chairmen in the new Congress. It is ironic to see that those who have the most affiliation with tea party groups and the most conservatism, except for a precious few, are