

are people that want to have jobs, that are looking for work. It is 50,000 workers. It is 50,000 families that lose their benefits in communities all over my State, all over this country.

The second thing the administration needs to do is allow for trade adjustment assistance. They have opposed that, even though all those jobs that have gone to Mexico and China and all over the world, those workers need help.

And, third, the administration needs to pass the Crane-Rangel bill, bipartisan legislation that will give tax breaks to those corporations that hire people in the United States.

The President, on the other hand, wants to give more tax cuts to the wealthiest individuals and more tax cuts to the largest corporations and rewarding those companies that are outsourcing, that are sending their jobs overseas. We need to reward those companies and give incentives to those companies that are hiring American workers and build back our manufacturing base. My State has lost one out of six manufacturing jobs in the last 3 years. My State has lost 205 jobs every single day of the Bush administration. These pleas continue to fall on deaf ears. The President tries the same tired solutions. They have not worked for 3 years. It is time we changed course.

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.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to assume the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

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

There was no objection.

TRADE DEFICIT AND GAS PRICES

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about two separate issues but both related to the economic well-being, the pocketbooks of the American people.

First, the trade deficit. The Washington Post reported on February 16 that our trade deficit reached a record \$489 billion in 2003. The story said that "while the trade report showed the robust growth in U.S. consumption, it also provided a stark reminder of problems on the economy's productive side. In particular, the lack of employment

growth which is attributable in part to the loss of jobs to foreign competition."

At a hearing before the subcommittee I chair, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, the head of the World Shipping Council said ships were coming to the U.S. full but leaving empty.

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We cannot sustain this type of deficit for many more years. By far the largest trade imbalance is with China and will probably be around \$150 billion this year. With a tiny bit less than 4 percent of the world's population, we buy 25 percent of the world's goods. This means that every other country desperately wants into our markets. We have tremendous trade leverage that we have not used as we should have. It has been used mainly to help large multinational companies which have had great influence, too much influence, in our government.

However, our trade agreements have been detrimental to the majority of American small and medium-sized businesses and to our workers. I believe other countries are probably amazed that we have not been tougher in trade negotiations.

We should tell any nation with which we have a large trade imbalance, starting with China, that we want to be friends, that we want cultural and educational exchanges, tourism, and especially trade; but we want that trade to be both free and fair. We should tell the Chinese and others to start looking for products they can buy from us because if they do not start bringing down the trade deficits within a reasonable time, we will have to renegotiate some of our trade agreements.

William Hawkins, Senior Fellow, at the U.S. Business and Industry Council, summed it up best in a recent column in the Washington Times: "Commerce is driven by competition, making trade rivalry a part of the larger struggle of nations for independence, security, and prosperity."

Mr. Speaker, I am sick and tired of seeing so many millions of American jobs going to other countries, and there is tremendous concern about this all across this Nation.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, gas prices. Gas prices have risen to some of their highest levels ever, primarily for two reasons: one, we are being robbed by foreign oil producers; and, two, extreme environmentalists oppose any oil production in the U.S. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a 19.8 million acre site, 35 times the size of the Great Smokey Mountains. Yet some left-wing extremists oppose drilling on some 2,000 acres in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, about 1/100 of 1 percent of the refuge, in a part that is a frozen tundra with no trees or bushes for many, many miles. We have not opened a new oil refinery since 1975, and something like 36 have been forced to close since 1980 due to too many rules and regulations. If

we do not, Mr. Speaker, we will become even more vulnerable to foreign nations and damage both our economy and our national security.

These environmental extremists almost always come from very wealthy or upper-income families, and perhaps they do not realize how much they are hurting the poor and the lower-income and the working people of this country, but we need to produce more U.S. oil to bring down these gas prices.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). 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.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the Special Order time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

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

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING AUGUST WILSON

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in tribute to August Wilson, the leading playwright of his generation and an icon of contemporary American theatre.

For more than 20 years, August Wilson's sometimes searing, but always provocative, dramas have flung theatregoers into the lives and circumstances of black Americans. Performed throughout the country, these works have amused and disquieted us. They have deepened our understanding of our history and our society.

In recognition of the unforgettable portraits he has created, Mr. Wilson has received repeatedly every award bestowed by the literary community, including two Pulitzer Prizes, and five Tony Awards. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

August Wilson has been a resident of Seattle since 1990. So it is quite appropriate that the Seattle's Rainier Club, one of the oldest entities in the city, has named him its laureate for 2004-2005. This occasion offers all of us a most welcome opportunity to salute Mr. Wilson for his transforming contributions to American theatre.

He joins the other laureates of Seattle, Jonathan Raban; Ernestine Anderson, the jazz artist; Dave Horsey, the Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist. He has been a real tribute to our city

and deserves the acknowledgment of the whole city. And we look forward to many more evenings in the theatre with August Wilson, gazing at America through his eyes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN 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 Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois 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 Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PORTMAN 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 Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, just recently the economic report of the President, which was sent to Congress under the President's signature, predicted that the economy would create some 2.6 million jobs this year. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the President has yet to create a single net job since his inauguration, not one.

Meanwhile, we have lost almost 9 million people in this country that are hopelessly out of work. Many of these intelligent, educated, and able-bodied Americans have given up on looking for work because our national unemployment situation is so grim. As a result, they are unable to provide the basic necessities for their families. Instead, they are watching President Bush on television traveling the country, touting his economic record that again has yet to create a single net job.

Mr. Speaker, we have got to get the employment situation in this Nation back on track. The phrase "jobless recovery" is of no consolation to the nearly 9 million Americans who are unemployed and the millions who are underemployed in our country.

Mr. Speaker, zero represents the amount of money nearly 9 million people are bringing home bi-weekly instead of a paycheck. Zero represents a degree to which the tax cuts being promoted by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have worked to achieve their goal. Zero also represents the amount of compassion American voters should give this administration in November since these numbers will not change without new leadership in Washington.

Today, Congress had an opportunity to enact legislation that is guaranteed to create jobs. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Democrats proposed \$37.8 billion of Federal highway/transit infrastructure investment. These funds would have created nearly 1.8 million jobs and about \$235 billion of economic activity. However, our recommendations were disregarded because the President threatened to veto the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it crystal clear to the American people that the President of the United States has threatened to veto a bill that has proven to create jobs; yet he is in favor of unlimited amounts of tax cuts that have debatable job creation effects. Mr. Speaker, it has been found that transportation construction contractors hire employees within 3 weeks of obtaining a project contract. Yet nearly 3 years after passage of the President's first package of tax cuts, the economy has yet to create a single net job. Not one.

Mr. Speaker, the unemployment numbers from March will be released tomorrow. For the good of the American people, I sincerely hope that these numbers reflect a positive change in the Nation's unemployment situation. But it will not be because of anything this administration has done. It will be in spite of the obstacles to job creation that this administration continues to advocate.

Lastly, I continue to hear the President and the Republicans blame all of their economic woes on September 11, corporate scandals, and the drumbeat of the Iraq War. Let me remind my friends that every President and every administration has had to overcome challenges. How about World War II, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, the Iran hostage situation, the Cold War, and the first Persian Gulf War?

I could continue on, but my point is that every President has faced these types of challenges and still managed to create jobs, except one, since the Great Depression, and that is George W. Bush and this Republican House and Senate.

Mr. Speaker, we either need to change policies or change the leader-

ship of this country. In the words of Tracy Chapman, "Either we change or we live and die this way." I say we must, we must change.

THE STATE OF ARMENIAN/ AZERBAIJAN RELATIONS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to address the decline in the state of affairs between Armenia and Azerbaijan brought about by Azeri President Ilham Aliyev and the members of his ministry. Including Namik Abbasov, Minister of National Security, through their encouragement of anti-Armenian propaganda that perpetrates anti-Armenian sentiments in the region.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I was disheartened to learn of the brutal murder of an Armenian soldier by an Azeri soldier. Both were attending a NATO Partnership for Peace English-language course in Hungary. But I am doubly concerned by additional information that has recently been reported that the Azeri government is actually providing financial awards to individuals and organizations with the "best" propaganda works towards Armenians.

Recent accounts report that the Azerbaijani Ministry of National Security, a successor to the Soviet-era KGB, has awarded monetary prizes up to \$2,000 for the "best" propaganda works targeting Armenians. The Azeri Ministry, for instance, presented a prize in the books category to the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences' Human Rights Institute for an "encyclopedia" entitled "Crimes Against Humanity Perpetrated by Armenian Terrorists and Bandit Formations," and the minister himself was honored for funding the publication of this book. The MNS also granted a top monetary prize to two anti-Armenian propaganda films.

I mention this because I believe it is a blatant effort by the Azeri government to undermine years of efforts undertaken to encourage a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by me and other Members of this body as well as the Minsk group and the former U.S. administration.

Three years ago, I was encouraged by developments in the Nagorno Karabakh peace process with the announcement of the Key West Agreement, reached in April 2001 by President Kocharian and former Azeri President Aliyev. I was hopeful that this agreement would lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a stabilization of peace in the region. However, it was clear that any implementation of the Key West Agreement would have to wait until after the various legislative and presidential elections in the region including Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh, and Azerbaijan and when they were complete.