As winter approaches and deadlines for all displaced residents from Louisiana and Mississippi living in hotel rooms to be moved into temporary housing quickly approaching, this process must be streamlined. It is unacceptable for American citizens who lost everything they owned in the hurricane to still be sleeping in tents when FEMA has thousands of brand-new empty manufactured homes for occupancy.

Take a look here, Mr. Speaker. This is not in Hope, Arkansas. In fact, this is in my hometown of Prescott, Arkansas, some 16 miles away.

Mr. Speaker, I had the chance in January of this year to go to Iraq to visit the very first elections, and I, with our military, are proud of the accomplishments in their flight for freedom. You know, Mr. Speaker, freedom does have a price. Our troops are paying the very highest price.

I want to emphasize that sacrifice price for the Iraqi people and for world freedom. Unfortunately, the 133rd lost six members during their flight for freedom, and I extend my prayers and our condolences to the family and friends. They were making a difference in the world when they lost their lives.

Their bravery and dedication and patriotism shall not be forgotten. That success is evident with the successful election of a new government in Iraq yesterday. President John Kennedy once said: The cost of freedom is always high. But Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission.

Mr. Speaker, we have chosen the right path. The hard path. The freedom path. We will persevere with the freedom-loving people of Iraq until the journey down this path is successfully completed.

The citizens of America, the Texas Army National Guard, have been warriors on the long hard sacrificial path of liberty. The world should never underestimate the resolve of America, the brave and determined will of the American soldier. Regardless of their mission for freedom, they always get it done. That is just the way it is.

TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, a National Guard unit is coming back to Texas, because tomorrow, Saturday, December 17, the First Battalion, 133rd field artillery will be welcomed back to Beaumont, Texas, after serving the past year in Iraq.

In August 2004, the Texas Army National Guard deployed the 56th Brigade Combat Team of the 36th Infantry Division to go to Iraq. They trained for 4 months in Ft. Hood, Texas, and got to Iraq in December of 2004. The 133rd Field Artillery has a longstanding history in this country. This was the first and famous Texas Army National Guard unit that served in France in World War I.

General John J. Pershing, the commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I made this comment about those Texans in World War I: He said, the bearing of the American soldier. Regardless of their mission for freedom, they always get it done. That is just the way it is.

AMERICA’S IMMIGRATION POLICIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, sometime ago, Mr. Speaker, President John F. Kennedy, himself the grandson of Irish immigrants, summed up this blend of the old and the new when he called America a society of immigrants, each of whom had begun life anew on an equal footing.

This is the secret of America, a Nation of people with a fresh memory of old traditions who dare to explore new frontiers. He further said: Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the fabric of American life.

And then Franklin Delano Roosevelt reminded us, remember, remember always, that all of us are descended from immigrants. I had hoped as we began our journey on a very important task, as reflected in the work we have done over the last 2 years, on border security and immigration reform, that we would have returned to our values, recognizing that this Nation is a Nation of immigrants as well as a Nation of laws.

I would have hoped that we would have constructed a immigration reform that garnered the very essence of the instructions of the 9/11 Commission; that we would have taken this time to move from the Ds and Fs of which this Nation was graded some 10 days by the 9/11 Commission and actually incurred the resolve and determination to doing real border security, real border enforcement and real immigration reform.
But, unfortunately, the legislative initiative that has just passed, the Border Protection Act, really does not answer the question of the need for immigration reform.

In fact, unlike the words of President John F. Kennedy, where we recognize that immigration can enrich this country and where we recognize the contributions of immigrants, we seek now to shut the door for a pathway of earned access to legalization. We ignore the fact that immigrants who are working in a variety of jobs below homes and pay taxes, have children in school, and have the hopes and dreams of the immigrants of yesteryear.

I think it is important that we turn back the clock and start immigration reform again; that we remember that we cannot demonize or make criminal every single undocumented immigrant, that we must provide our border patrol resources what they need, the helicopters, power boats, laptop computers, night goggles in order to enforce the border.

We must enforce the laws that are already on the books. For example, it is a criminal act to enter the country without inspection. We have to have the tools to enforce those laws. But it does not make sense to deny those individuals within our borders due process.

And then I would have hoped that a real immigration reform bill would have had a singular piece of protecting American jobs, realizing that the heart of this country’s economy and the heart of America is in America’s working people.

And we could have taken this particular legislation and provided, as the Save America Comprehensive Legislation H.R. 2002, a vehicle to garner the fees that are paid by immigrants and invest them in the educational training of America and the protecting of American jobs. I believe there should be employer sanctions, but there cannot be effective employer sanctions unless we develop a singular database that is integrated, consistent and accurate.

Many of the amendments would suggest that an employer verify who he or she hired. That is the right thing to do. In fact, I voted for the Gonzalez amendment which would fine certain employers $50,000 so that those dollars could be used to reinvest in our community hospitals and schools to pay for some of the services that are used by those that may not be in status.

But, frankly, we cannot have that verification system without an even database. And so it is important to note that, if we do border enforcement or immigration reform, we must have the dollars and the commitment, and that is not here in the present administration and the present structure that we are in.

The legislation is, I think, falling on its own weight. As it makes its way to the United States Senate, it is clear that other body is not moving on such legislation at this time. And, in fact, there is great conflict between a pathway to legalization and the question of enforcement. We believe in enforcement, but not enforcement only.

And you can ask any American who looks at the question of immigration, Mr. Speaker, we want comprehensive immigration reform that understands that there are immigrants who come here for economic reasons, but we must keep those out that come here to do us harm.

And I would have hoped that we find pathways to legalization, and find a way to enforce the Nation’s borders.

IRAQ AND AMERICA’S IMMIGRATION POLICIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. King) is recognized for half the time until Mr. Gonzalez, the gentleman from Wisconsin (with apologies to the gentleman from Oregon), takes the floor.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, I appreciate the privilege to address you, Mr. Speaker, and in turn, address the House of Representatives.

This has been a huge week here on the floor of the House of Representatives. We processed a lot of legislation this week. Much of it has been legislation that has been in the works for a number of years. And I think what I will try to do is maybe unravel this coming backwards across the way we passed it and work my way back into the legislation a little bit.

But I want to take up first the immigration reform and point out that in this debate that we heard today in this resolution that came forward, which was H. Res. 612, the continuous message from the other side was about being anti-immigrant, anti-immigrant.

But it confuses the difference between an immigrant and an illegal immigrant. In fact, I know of no one in this Congress that is anti-immigrant. I know of many Members of this Congress that are pro the rule of law.

And that is the distinction that we need to draw the line with. And I take us back to where would be if we went back even 10 years, but say go back 25 years, in a time when we did not have very much illegal immigration. It was a smaller percentage of our overall population; it was smaller in numbers, smaller in percentage, and it was not a very significant problem. It was something that was somewhat manageable back then.

And back in that period of time, if we had been able to control our borders and watched as we needed more employees in certain sectors of the economy, we would have seen a number of things happen that would have resolved this need that we keep hearing from businesses.

They say that if we deported all of the illegals, our economy would collapse, and we cannot get along without them when perhaps 4 percent of our workforce in America is an illegal workforce. And if we lose 4 percent and retain 96 percent, I cannot believe that this resilient country could not find a way to bounce back from that and accommodate the difference.

Let’s take us back 10 years and ask, what would we do if we respected the rule of law? What would we do if we had borders that were controlled? How would we adjust to demands in a growing economy if illegal labor, cheap labor that pours in from overseas just when those American workers are here, good or ill if you come from another part of the world, or currency. It fluctuates in the marketplace according to supply and demand.