

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL

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

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, the Community Reinvestment Act was created by the Congress in 1977 to combat discrimination by encouraging federally insured financial institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities they serve. I am here today to report that the Community Reinvestment Act, or CRA, has been a tremendous success.

CRA's success results from the effective partnerships of municipal leaders, local development advocacy organizations, and community-minded financial institutions. Working together, the CRA has proven that local investment is not only good for business but critical to improving the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents in the communities financial institutions serve.

We will be hearing about other CRA success stories in the next few weeks, and I want to applaud the financial services industry for their extraordinary record of meeting their CRA obligations. At present, it is estimated that almost 98 percent of all financial institutions have achieved a satisfactory or better CRA compliance. We need to keep and strengthen CRA.

READINESS AND MORALE A PROBLEM WITH U.S. MILITARY

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton has created a national security emergency by spreading our troops all over the world while neglecting the defense budget.

From 1960 until 1991, American troops were deployed 10 times. Since the Cold War, our fighting forces have been called into action an astonishing 26 times. Strangely enough, this increased activity has occurred during a period in which our military has shrunk by 40 percent.

Mr. Speaker, the defense bill the House will consider later this week addresses the problems of troop readiness and troop morale by providing the resources to ensure that American troops are the best trained and best equipped in the world.

This important bill also provides funding to facilitate the deployment of a national missile defense system that will protect the American people from a ballistic missile attack launched by a rogue nation.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation replenishes our military, strengthens our national security, and enhances our ability to carry out foreign policy objectives. I urge all my colleagues to support it.

PEACE AGREEMENT IN KOSOVO

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, about 40 days ago an 11-member bipartisan congressional delegation, led by my good friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), went to Vienna in search of a structure of peace which could be put together with leaders of the Russian Duma, a peace plan which, hopefully, would lead to an end to the war in the Balkans. That was 40 days ago.

One of the principles in this plan was the following: Article 4. The humanitarian crisis will not be solved by bombing. A diplomatic solution to the problem is preferable to the alternative of military escalation.

Unfortunately, in the ensuing 40 days we saw an intense military escalation which resulted in the deaths of countless innocent civilians.

One of the articles in this plan that was put together called on the interested parties to find practical measures for a parallel solution to three tasks, without regard to sequence: the stopping of the bombing, the withdrawal of Serbian armed forces from Kosovo, and the cessation of the military activities of the KLA.

That is where the G-8 is headed now. But they should have stopped the bombing, and they should not today be threatening Belgrade with further bombing if there is not a signature on the dotted line today.

AMERICAN TAXPAYERS ARE NOT UNDERTAXED

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, every once in a while in politics the truth slips out. Sometimes the so-called political pros call it a gaffe. Well, we have a perfect example of a gaffe by the leader of the Democratic Party in this body in the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT).

The gentleman spoke to a group the other day and he said, and I quote, "You've got to have a combination of taking it out of the defense budget and raising revenue. We can argue about how to do that, closing loopholes or even raising taxes to do it."

Well, maybe the other side can argue about how they want to raise taxes, but Republicans in this House are arguing about how to cut taxes, not raise them. The American people are overtaxed, not undertaxed.

Let us get together and cut taxes across the board on all Americans, and let us get rid of this horrible tax, the death tax, where the Federal Government can take up to 55 percent of what Americans earn during the course of their lives, even though they have been

taxed for that over and over again over the course of their lives.

Let us cut taxes, not talk about raising them.

NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP WEEK

(Ms. SANCHEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to discuss homeownership in America. Buying a home is a dream for many Americans. People want a place where they can raise their children, where neighbors come together to form a safe community, and ultimately, where they can comfortably grow older.

A memory I have from when I was young was my grandmother. She came to this country. She worked 7 days a week, every day that I can remember, walking half a mile to get on the bus and go to work. She was a restaurant worker. She would come back late at night after dark. I lost her a few years ago. The last few things she said to me was she had two dreams she did not accomplish in the United States: one, to visit the Pope; and two, to own her own home.

This week is National Homeownership Week and it is a time that we can appreciate the growth our Nation has made in homeownership, and it is also when we realize how much more we have to do to help people own that little piece of the American dream, their own home.

I hope that this week we all gather together and work very hard to ensure that there are ways, like CRA and other ways, to help people become homeowners in the United States.

AMERICAN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY SECRETS STOLEN BY CHINA

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I say to Bill Richardson, tell the truth. He has been traveling around America and this city saying that when he found out, this administration, that China stole the secrets to our nuclear weapons, the W-88 and the W-87, that he took aggressive steps in 1995 to change that. Tell the truth, Bill Richardson.

U.S. News and World Report, special feature, July 31, 1995, Hazel O'Leary leaked the plans, which are in this magazine, for the W-87 nuclear warhead.

Tell the truth, Bill Richardson. It was this administration that publicly released the documented evidence relative to our W-87 warhead in U.S. News and World Report, July 31, 1995.

Tell the truth, Bill Richardson.

AMERICA SHOULD GUARD AMERICAN BORDERS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, 90 percent of all crime in America is drug related. Eighty percent of all heroin, 80 percent of all cocaine comes across the Mexican border. To boot, only three out of every 100 trucks coming from Mexico are even inspected.

It is so bad, experts now admit it is even possible for terrorists to smuggle nuclear weapons across our border. And after all this, the White House wants to send 7,000 American soldiers to guard the borders of Yugoslavia.

Beam me up here. Europe should be guarding the borders of Europe and Yugoslavia. America should be guarding the borders of America for the American people. Think about that.

I yield back this weak and foolish national security policy we have in place.

SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUS

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the challenge before this body this week and the next several weeks is passing 13 appropriation bills. The challenge is based on whether or not we are going to stick by the promise that we made in the balanced budget agreement of 1997. At that time most of the Democrats and most Republicans voted for that balanced budget agreement.

That balanced budget agreement included setting caps on future spending. Keeping that commitment means that for the next fiscal year we will not be spending any of the Social Security surplus.

Now the question is—can we keep that commitment? Can we keep that promise? Last week we passed what we called a lockbox, again stating that we are not going to spend the Social Security surplus dollars for other government spending programs. Let us keep our commitment. Let us keep our promise to the American people. Let us not jeopardize current and future Social Security recipients by caving in to the big spenders.

GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago the Republican leadership in this House told us that we could not vote on gun safety legislation before we left for the Memorial Day break because we needed to have a hearing in committee, needed to go through the proper legislative process.

Ah-ha. Well, now they are bringing this legislation to the floor with no hearings and with no markup. So what was the 2-week delay all about? It was about giving the NRA a head start. We

took the Republican leadership at their word that they would play it straight with gun safety legislation. But now it appears that they spent the last 2 weeks scheming with the NRA to bring down gun safety legislation.

With their 2-week head start, the NRA has launched a 2-week campaign of fear. They have spent more than a million dollars in the last several days to kill gun safety legislation.

I am here today to ask to plead with the Republican leadership in this body to stop playing games with gun safety. This debate is about protecting our children. Thirteen children a day are killed by gunfire in the United States of America. This is about saving kids' lives.

This vote on gun safety is deadly serious. There is no more room for political games. Let us stop the games. Let us pass gun safety legislation for our families and for our children.

U.S. MILITARY SHOWING SEVERE SIGNS OF STRAIN

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

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, American military success in Kosovo has shown once again that American forces are second to none in the world. Our brave pilots and many thousands who work around the clock to support them deserve our highest praise and our deep gratitude.

However, the military operation in Kosovo has also exposed the problem in our national defense structure that we need that needs immediate attention. Our military is undermanned, overextended, and showing severe signs of strain after having to do more with less for too long.

The defense appropriations bill on the House floor later this week is an excellent first step to reverse the trend and to end the damage to the short-changing of the U.S. military. I urge its support.

COMMEMORATING LIVES OF D.C. FIREFIGHTERS

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to commemorate the lives of two brave young firefighters who gave their lives in a fire in the District while Congress was out of session. Both firefighters were born and raised in the Nation's Capital.

The loss is not only to their families but to the Congress of the United States and to this city, where D.C. firefighters prepare every day to do what is necessary to protect both hometown Washington and official Washington, including the Members of this House.

Anthony Phillips of Engine Company No. 10 worked the busiest fire house in

the Nation. Only 30 years old, he was the father of two boys, one 21 months old, the other 6 years old. Firefighter Phillips married his childhood sweetheart, Lysa. They were a deeply loving couple and family.

Louis Matthews of Engine Company No. 26 was only 29 years old but served 7 years as a D.C. firefighter. He leaves a loving family, including his mother, Cassandra Shields, and two young children.

Members of this body have been mindful of the risks firefighters face and the sacrifices that their families could be called upon to make. I am grateful that the 105th Congress passed my bill, the Officer Brian Gibson Tax Free Pension Equity Act, that allows the families of firefighters killed in the line of duty to receive survivors' benefits tax free. They did their duty, and I am grateful that we did ours.

SPIRIT OF FREEDOM AWARD

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

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I presented to Mobile Meals of Spartanburg, South Carolina, the first Spirit of Freedom Award. Every day Mobile Meals volunteers deliver as well as prepare over 1,700 meals to needy people in my district, all without government funding. The people at Mobile Meals have shown me that freedom comes from the able hands of local people, people who take responsibility for themselves and their communities.

Here in Washington, we can either protect or take away those freedoms. I believe it is our role in Congress to be the guardians of freedom. That is why we are working to return dollars, decisions and freedoms to the hands of local people.

I thank Mobile Meals for showing us that freedom begins at home.

RAISING ELIGIBILITY AGE OF MEDICARE RECIPIENTS

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, this Nation already has the most unfair distribution of wealth and income in the entire industrialized world.

Given that reality, it is absurd that some in Congress are talking about giving huge tax breaks to some of the wealthiest people in this country while at the same time they are talking about raising the eligibility age of Medicare to 67, charging a 10-percent copayment fee for home health care, and voucherizing Medicare, which would mean more out-of-pocket expenses for seniors in this country.

Mr. Speaker, 111 members of Congress have written to the President. We have urged him, do not raise the eligibility age of Medicare to 67, do not