

Mr. Speaker, I serve a veterans hospital in southern Ohio, the Chillicothe VA Hospital. I have been told by administration there that the average veteran who gets prescription drugs at that facility will get 10 or more prescriptions per month. If we take a \$7 co-pay and multiply that by 10, it is \$70, a sizable amount of money for a veteran living on a fixed income. These veterans frequently get not 1-month supply, but a 3-month supply at a time. If we take \$70 times 3, it is \$210. Why is it that we talk so eloquently in this House about our concern for our military, we honor our veterans, and yet when it comes to taking action, we penalize them at the same time we are willing to give huge, huge tax cuts to profitable corporations, many of them multi-national corporations.

A 250 percent increase on our veterans for medicines they need to stay healthy or maybe even to stay alive, and we are doing it at a time when we are passing out money up here like drunken sailors. We have passed so many give-backs and pork barrel spending bills in this session of this House of Representatives, and yet we are penalizing our veterans. It is no wonder that veterans across this country have a right to say when it comes to the actions of this House, talk is cheap, but actions speak louder than words.

On February 4 when veterans go to our VA facilities to get their medicines, and they have been used to pay \$2 per prescription and they are asked to pay \$7 for that prescription, I hope they rebel. I hope they let those of us in this Chamber know how they feel about this outrageous action.

Mr. Speaker, I have introduced a bill to place a 5-year moratorium on any increase for veterans' prescription drugs. My bill is H.R. 2820. I currently have 42 cosponsors. I am hopeful that every Member of this Chamber will choose to cosponsor this legislation, and as soon as we get back here after the first of the year, we will pass this legislation so that we will not penalize our veterans and require them to pay more than they are currently paying for their needed prescription medications.

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 addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1400

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FIRST SESSION OF 107TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the accomplish-

ments of the first session of the 107th Congress. I am proud of this House of Representatives and how it has risen to the challenges of this very turbulent year.

We started this session after the closest Presidential election in our Nation's history, with an evenly divided Senate and a closely divided House. We conclude it with an admirable track record of accomplishments in the face of a Nation that has utterly changed in a time of war. The themes we focused on at the beginning—economic security, retirement security, national security, and education—still occupy our attention at the end.

We started this session debating economic security. Should we take the steps necessary to jump-start our economy? The Congress, amid great debate, considered the President's campaign pledge to return \$1.35 trillion of the taxpayers' money to the taxpayers themselves. We started in the House with the principle that it is wrong to penalize married people with a higher tax rate. We passed legislation to get rid of the marriage penalty. We believed it was wrong to tax people when they die, so we got rid of the death tax. We believed that all Americans deserved some tax relief, so we passed broad, across-the-board tax relief, which included a refund check for all Americans who pay income taxes.

We believed that families needed help to raise their kids and to send their kids to school. We doubled the child tax credit from \$500 to \$1,000 to give parents more money at home to take care of diapers and school supplies and braces and all the other things that kids need. We also passed tax-free education savings accounts to encourage parents to save money for their children's education. To improve retirement security, we included monumental IRA/401(k) reform so that people could save more money tax-free for their retirement.

Tax relief is the best remedy for a slowing economy, and there is no question in my mind that we did the right thing by passing the tax relief package early enough to soften what could have been an even greater economic blow to our country. The President signed this legislation on June 7. He kept his promise to the American people, and we kept our commitment to economic security. But tax relief was not our only accomplishment in this historic session of this Congress.

The President promised to work on a bipartisan basis to reform education, to improve our education system so that no child is left behind. As a former teacher and coach, I understand how important education is to our Nation's future and how complicated school reform truly is.

We worked on legislation that would do the following: children from the third to eighth grades would be tested annually in such important subjects as reading and mathematics so that we could make sure that they are learn-

ing. States and school districts will have more freedom to decide the most effective way to spend Federal dollars. And they will be held accountable for their decisions. Federal funds will be put in the programs that have the most positive impact on children, programs, for instance, that make sure that all our kids are reading by the third grade. Parents will be empowered with information about the quality of their children's schools and their teachers so that parents can make the best decisions for their kids' education. And parents with children in failing schools will be able to use Federal funds to pay for private, religious, or community-based after-school tutoring.

Last week, the House passed the conference report and the Senate completed its work and the President will sign this legislation in early January. From the beginning, we planned on tax relief and educational reform. But the Congress showed it was able to respond to an immediate crisis.

On September 11, the American people were deliberately and viciously attacked by terrorists who hijacked four airplanes, crashing two of them into the World Trade Towers, one of them into the Pentagon. The fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after a heroic struggle by crew and passengers that led to the crash of that airplane. Many of us believe that the terrorists planned to crash that plane into this very Capitol of the United States of America. Those people who stopped those terrorists from their dastardly deed did a great service not only to the people who work here, the people who serve here, but certainly to the American people themselves. We hold those deeds in the greatest and highest honor that I think this country can bestow.

This disaster changed the character of Congress and the face of this Nation. I am proud of how this House has reacted. From the moment we sang "God Bless America" on the steps of the Capitol building, we sent the message to the world that we are united in fighting this new war on terrorism. We immediately got to work on a series of initiatives to go after these murderers and safeguard our Nation from future attacks.

Three days after the attack, Congress passed a bill providing \$40 billion to fund September 11 recovery efforts and to combat terrorism. On the same day, we passed a resolution authorizing the President to use force against those who played a role in these attacks.

In the days that followed, we passed legislation vitally important to fighting this new war and in protecting America from further attack:

An airline recovery bill to help those airlines struggling after the attack on our Nation.

An antiterrorism bill to provide our law enforcement officials with the tools they need to track terrorists and bring them to justice.

An aviation security bill to improve safety at our country's airports for travelers and airport employees.

For bioterrorism, to protect our Nation from this growing threat, which we hope the Senate will complete this week.

The terrorist attacks pushed an already struggling economy into a recession. The House responded by passing an economic stimulus package. Unfortunately, the other body was unable to pass similar legislation. Our bill was a fair and balanced bill that would have helped workers who lost their jobs keep their health insurance. Most importantly, it would have helped those workers get back to work. It looks today that the other body will not complete work on our legislation. I think that is a shame.

One of the biggest frustrations this year has been the lack of production from our friends on the other side of the Rotunda. The House has led the way in implementing the President's agenda, but on too many occasions the Senate has dropped the ball.

Here is the long list of items that passed this House but that the Senate has left for next year:

We passed the President's faith-based initiative, to give religious organizations the same rights as other groups to use Federal funds to help America's less fortunate.

We passed a comprehensive energy bill to step up energy production here at home, reduce our reliance on foreign sources of energy, and make energy cleaner and cheaper and more dependable for years to come. Not only does this bill set us on a more secure road for the future, it helps our economy by creating another 700,000 American jobs.

We passed a bill that banned human cloning for reproduction and research to uphold the sanctity of life, as well as the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which makes it a Federal crime to harm or kill an unborn child during a violent attack against a pregnant woman.

We passed Trade Promotion Authority for our President so that he could open new world markets for American goods and services, grow our economy, and open up 1 million new jobs by the year 2006.

We passed election reform, to restore the American public's confidence in the democratic process and ensure that America's voting system is the very best in the world.

Clearly, the other body has much work to do in the next session of the 107th Congress. We also must complete action on the President's issue that he said in his election that he wanted every American to have access to health care. The Patients' Bill of Rights legislation was passed in this House earlier this year.

□ 1415

The bill has been stuck in conference since August. It is time to get that legislation finished. The bill we passed in August aims to improve care to expand patient protections, make health care more affordable for the many families

that lack coverage, and hold HMOs accountable, allowing patients to challenge their insurance plans if they fail to deliver quality coverage.

We will have other initiatives. We must authorize the historic Welfare Reform Act, first passed in 1996. We will consider proposals to strengthen retirement security, including making prescription drugs more affordable and available to America's seniors.

We must also help our President in this historic fight against terrorism. Whether it be providing more resources for homeland security and getting more money for our armed services, whether it be the effort to prepare our Nation for biological and chemical terrorism, or our efforts to reform our insurance laws so that our Nation will be adequately prepared for the consequences of terrorist attacks, this Congress will do the right things for the American people.

Looking over the events of this last year, I cannot help but note the passing of several important Members of Congress: Joe Moakley, a great American from Massachusetts; Norm Sisisky, a wonderful person who served this House from Virginia; Floyd Spence, from South Carolina; and Julian Dixon, from California, all served their country with distinction, in different ways, but with the same sense of patriotic duty. They will be sorely missed in this House of Representatives.

In conclusion, let me report to you, Mr. Speaker, that this House of Representatives has served the people in a year of turbulence and war with distinction. I am proud of our efforts, and I look forward to an equally successful year in the second session of the 107th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not thank the people who make this Congress work, who are here day in and day out, in the wee hours of the morning, who enroll our bills, who make this institution a great institution; and also those people who in the times of terror and terrorist attack spent countless hours and days and weeks making this place available to the American people so that this Congress could do its work. I thank you.

God bless America.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1088. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to reduce fees collected by the Securities and Exchange Commission, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 295. Concurrent resolution providing for the sine die adjournment of the first session of the One Hundred Seventh Congress.

The message also announced that the Senate agreed to the report of the com-

mittee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3061) "An Act making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes."

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1702

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 5 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment to House amendment to Senate amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2884. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for victims of the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001.

The message also announced that the Senate agreed to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3338) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes."

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the topic of the out-of-order speech of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today it adjourn to meet at 4 p.m. on Friday, December 21, 2001, unless it sooner has received a message from the Senate transmitting its passage without amendment of House Joint Resolution 79, in which case the House shall stand adjourned