

IMMEDIATE DISASTER RELIEF FOR AMERICA'S FARMERS

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

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, I again come to the well of this great Chamber to implore my colleagues to extend immediate and desperately needed disaster relief to tens of thousands of American farmers and ranchers now suffering from years of drought.

If Congress is to keep alive the American family farmer, we must act this year to provide immediate and necessary disaster assistance. Help is necessary for more than a dozen States crippled by the devastating one-two punch of adverse weather conditions and depressed commodity prices.

I ask my colleagues from ag-producing States and from ag-consuming States to join our fight to secure disaster assistance this year for our farm families before it is too late.

MAY IS ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

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

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

The theme of this year's celebration is unity and freedom, which is an appropriate reminder that America is strong when people of all cultures and backgrounds unite.

Asian Americans have proudly contributed to America's culture, its physical landscape, and to its defense. Along the way, Asian Americans have had to endure many hardships, including the unnecessary internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II and the exclusion of Chinese immigrants beginning in 1882.

The lessons we learned then and the challenges we now face show us that in order to maintain the freedoms we enjoy today, we must unite as a country and face our challenges together as a Nation.

As the proud representative of the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam, I salute my constituents and all Asian/Pacific Islander Americans during the month of May for their contributions and achievements that have helped to make America strong.

MEDICARE PHYSICIAN REIMBURSEMENTS

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, we are always being asked, what are you hearing out there? What are you hearing out there in your district? I will tell my colleagues what I am hearing. I am hearing, "I cannot find a doctor."

I receive countless calls and letters from people in Colorado regarding Medicare physician reimbursements and how it is affecting their access to doctors. Physicians have either decided to no longer accept any new Medicare patients or not see their current Medicare patients because they are losing money due to reimbursement payments not covering the costs. In Colorado Springs 2 months ago, one-third of all doctors under the Colorado Springs Health Partners program dropped all of their Medicare, Medicaid and Tricare patients.

So much focus over the last several years has been on preserving and strengthening the Medicare trust fund that we have lost sight of the fact that if a Medicare recipient cannot find a doctor, we have a program in name only. Unfortunately, in Colorado and many other parts of the country, that is what has happened. Reforms need to be implemented now to restore Medicare, the Medicare program, as it was intended to be.

I believe that reducing Medicare's physician payments will have a devastating impact on physician reimbursement and put at risk seniors' access to medical services.

PICTURES ON ENVELOPES

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, National Missing Children's Day is coming up on May 25. I want to remind my colleagues about what we can do in our offices to help find missing children.

According to the FBI's National Crime Information Center, nearly 2,000 children are reported missing every day in our Nation. One in 6 children is recovered as a result of their picture being distributed, and it is vital that we do more to bring missing children home and safeguard our youth.

Printing the pictures of missing children on our envelopes is a simple way we can get involved and help take a stand against child abduction and victimization, making our districts safer for our constituents. It is simple. For more information on how to get pictures printed on your envelopes, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 703-274-3900, and ask to speak to the Public Affairs Department.

By adding pictures to our office envelopes, we can help picture them home. Please, I say to my colleagues, let us not forget Ludwig Koons. He is being held in a compound in Italy where there is pornography and prostitution. We need to bring our children home, and we need help.

SEPTEMBER 11 PROGNOSTICATING

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, there are people in Washington who treat politics like a sport, and sometimes it gets rough. That should be no surprise. But some things should be off limits.

Mr. Speaker, for 8 months our country has been at war. It is a war that began when 19 evil men turned jumbo jets into missiles and killed 3,000 innocent people because they were Americans. Our President has led the world in a quest for justice. American soldiers are fighting and dying to keep the world safe, and President Bush has the awesome and heavy responsibility of commanding them.

But there is an election around the bend and some of our friends on the other side of the aisle have decided it is time to start attacking the President. They are attacking him for not making predictions he could not reasonably have made. They are attacking him for not connecting the dots between thousands of intelligence briefings that none of them could have connected either.

Mr. Speaker, this is wrong. When our fighting men and women are risking everything to keep us safe, the least we can do is to put partisanship aside.

SECRET PLAN FOR INCREASE IN DEFICIT SPENDING

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, rumor has it that the Republican leadership has a secret plan to allow an increase in deficit spending by \$750 billion without even requiring a vote on it in the House. To do so would be wrong, and for several reasons.

First, we have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to try to balance our budget and not break their backs with the burden of an ever-increasing national debt, which is already \$6 trillion, the interest on which cost taxpayers last year alone \$360 billion in taxes paid.

Second, deficit spending puts at risk Social Security and Medicare. We have a responsibility to our seniors to protect these 2 vital programs, but \$750 billion in deficit spending would certainly undermine them.

I can understand why the Republican leadership would want to allow an enormous increase in deficit spending in secret and without a public vote, but to do so would be wrong; wrong for our children, wrong for our seniors, and wrong for Americans who believe in an open democracy.

MEMORIAL DAY MEMORIAL

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well here to express my concerns that Memorial Day is losing its true meaning. It has degenerated into a day

where only token nods of the head toward our honored dead are given, if at all.

Many people do not know that at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, we should take a moment of silence in recognition for the lives lost for freedom's sake. But we cannot blame the American public. After all, it was Congress that made the day into a 3-day weekend in the early 1970s. By comparison, Mr. Speaker, Veterans' Day is celebrated on November 11, regardless of which day of the week it falls on, and Memorial Day should also be the same.

Mr. Speaker, in honor of the thousands of men and women who have given their lives fighting for the freedom we enjoy today, and those currently fighting for the freedom we will enjoy tomorrow, let us restore Memorial Day to its original date, May 30. We owe our loved ones and friends who died in service to our country a restored Memorial Day.

CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the chickens come home to roost for the Republicans. After destroying a \$5 trillion surplus and giving away \$4 trillion in tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country, tomorrow the Republicans must take the first step in authorizing an additional \$750 billion in deficit spending, Mr. Speaker; \$750 billion that this Nation does not have because of the Republican giveaways in the tax cut, and \$750 billion that unfortunately now must come directly out of the Social Security Trust Fund.

Remember all of those promises about a lock box, about a super lock box, how they would never use Social Security for any other purpose? All of those promises go by the wayside tomorrow, because tomorrow is the first step when the Republicans vote to increase by \$750 billion of spending that is taken directly from Social Security.

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What does that mean to Social Security recipients? It means that Social Security is less secure. Eventually, it means that the age limit is going to have to be raised, and then the Republicans will have to work on their plan to privatize Social Security. The last time they privatized something, it was the energy markets; and the next thing we saw was the Enron Corporation.

REPUBLICAN TAX CUT MEANS LOWER TAXES FOR THE POOR

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, before our tax cut, the top 50

percent of taxpayers paid 96 percent of all the taxes paid in the country. After this tax cut, the top 50 percent of taxpayers pay 97 percent of all the taxes paid in this country.

Let us say it another way, Mr. Speaker. Before the tax cut, the lower 50 percent of taxpayers paid 4 percent of all the taxes in the country. After the tax cut, they pay only 3 percent of all the taxes in the country.

Help me understand, Mr. Speaker, how this tax cut was a tax break for the rich. It seems to me it was a tax break for the poor, because the lower 50 percent of taxpayers now pay only 3 percent of the total taxes, rather than 4 percent. Mr. Speaker, that is a 25 percent decrease in the taxes paid by the lower 50 percent.

REPUBLICAN PLAN TO PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY

(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, the American people deserve to know what the Republican Congress and the President are going to do to Social Security. They have proposed a vague plan, a plan they say is voluntary, that would create individual accounts for those who choose to invest a portion of that money in the stock market. They say that these accounts will earn retirees a higher rate of return.

But what they do not tell the voters and they do not tell the American seniors about is that changing to this new system will result in cutting benefits, cutting benefits for Social Security retirees across the board.

So even though the accounts themselves may be technically voluntary, the benefit cuts are very much mandatory; and if a retiree does not want to risk his or her benefits in an increasingly shaky stock market, fine, but his or her guaranteed monthly check will not equal what it is today. If they have a higher rate of return on their account than the government will allow, what they do not tell us is that in fact the government is going to tax that rate of return at 100 percent.

Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is that the Republican plan cuts benefits for today's retirees, those in the future, and puts them at risk. Let us not let them do it.

COMMENDING THE 106TH RESCUE WING OF THE NEW YORK AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. GRUCCI. Mr. Speaker, on May 16 the 106th Rescue Wing of New York's Air National Guard completed their 292nd successful life-saving rescue. Based out of Gabreski Airport in West Hampton Beach on the East End of

Long Island, the 106th Rescue Wing was called to rescue three people whose sailboat mast had broken in the rough North Atlantic seas about 600 miles south of Long Island. The members of the 106th Rescue Wing are nothing short of heroes: 292 people owe their lives to the heroic efforts of the brave members of the 106th Rescue Wing, currently under the command of Colonel Robert J. Stack. The 106th Rescue Wing epitomizes the bravery and professionalism of our men and women in uniform.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the First District of New York, home to the 106th Rescue Wing, a grateful Nation and 292 people who would not be here today without the efforts of the 106th, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the 106th Rescue Wing of the Air National Guard.

PATRIOTISM REQUIRES OPPOSING PRIVATIZATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND AND INVESTIGATING SEPTEMBER 11 TRAGEDY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues with their concerns about the undermining of Social Security preservation and safety for our seniors; and we must fight against both the privatization and the invading of the trust fund, which will happen tomorrow, unfinished business that we must stand up and be counted for and be patriotic on behalf of our seniors.

Might I, Mr. Speaker, suggest that it would be unpatriotic as well if we stood by and did not understand what happened on September 11. It would be unpatriotic, not to talk about politics and who is in the White House and who is not, but to find out why the INS failed in its duty in giving two dead terrorists visas.

It would be derelict on the part of Congress not to find out what FBI Director Mueller is talking about when he speaks about the potential of a suicide bomber. What information does Congress need to have in a confidential and executive session manner to protect the American people? What happened with the August and July memo?

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Committee on the Judiciary, I would say it would be unpatriotic if we did not establish what happened so we could save lives and begin to have a road map that would make sure that we understood what happened here in America. It would be unpatriotic, Mr. Speaker; and we in Congress must do our job.

TOMORROW THE HOUSE WILL TAKE ONE MORE STEP TOWARDS UNDERMINING SOCIAL SECURITY

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