

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am so glad this morning that our Chaplain spoke about religion as a human and civil right.

When U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently accepted his Nobel Peace Prize, he urged all nations to focus more on human rights in a quest to end poverty, end conflicts and foster democracy.

It is for those reasons that I am circulating a Dear Colleague letter requesting the Nobel Peace Prize Selection Committee nominate the Most Venerable Thich Quang Do and Father Nguyen Van Ly of Vietnam for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Most Venerable Thich Quang Do is the secretary-general of the banned Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam. He has been under house arrest since June of 2001, after announcing his intention to escort the ailing 83-year-old Buddhist patriarch Thich Huyen Quang to Ho Chi Minh City for urgently needed medical care.

Similarly, in May of last year, Father Ly was placed under house arrest and banned from running his church for providing testimony to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, which urged this Congress to delay ratification of the bilateral trade agreement until Vietnam eased its restrictions on religion.

In recognition of their courage, sacrifice and belief, I hope all Members will join me in signing that letter.

FAULTY LOGIC ON CAUSE OF RECESSION

(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, on January 4, one of the political leaders of the other body said President Bush's tax relief plan "probably made the recession worse."

Oh, really? Only \$41 billion of the President's \$1.35 trillion bipartisan tax relief plan went into effect last year. Of that amount, 93 percent, or \$38 billion, comprised the income tax rebates that were mailed to every tax-paying American last summer and early fall. So according to this illustrious political leader, the tax rebate proposal, widely hailed by Democrats at the time, caused "the most dramatic fiscal deterioration in our Nation's history."

Blaming the President's plan for the cause of the recession, when the bulk of tax relief will not occur until the year 2005, is faulty logic at best. To say that providing a \$300 tax rebate to working Americans during a recession probably made the recession worse does not make sense.

The real reason some political leaders want to repeal tax cuts is just so they have more money for government program spending.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ENRON CORPORATION AND REPUBLICAN TAX CUT

(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, there are some very disturbing similarities between the Enron Corporation's activities and the Republican tax cut.

Last year a young reporter told the Enron Corporation and the investment community that the Enron books had been cooked, it was not on the level, the revenues were not what they said they were. Ken Lay, the CEO, said not so, not so. In the meanwhile, he was selling his stock, leaving the shareholders holding the bag.

Last year we said that if you had the tax cut and you did what the President wanted to do, what the Republicans wanted to do, it was the end of surpluses. They said no, no, it is not so; it is not so.

Well, today we are told in the papers it is the end of surpluses. We have red ink, according to CBO, as far as the eye can see.

What did the Republicans do? The first thing they did was get a tax cut for the wealthy. The first thing they did was take care of their friends. And now the unemployed, those in need of prescription drugs, those on Social Security, are left holding the bag. Why? Because we are now into the Social Security Trust Fund \$700 billion. \$700 billion. The surpluses have disappeared; \$4 trillion this year.

There is a disturbing parallel of values here about taking care of the wealthy and letting everybody else hold the bag.

BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ON STIMULATING THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, listening to the previous speaker, my friend from California, I wonder, did he not take economics in school?

History has shown us over and over again, lowering taxes stimulates the economy; stimulating the economy gives more people jobs; more people working means more people paying taxes; more people paying taxes means more revenues coming into Washington. And that is the basic difference between the Republican Party and the Democrat Party and their allies in Big Government.

That is why TED KENNEDY, the leader of the Democrat Party, has called for a massive new tax increase. Hello.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will respond.

All Members must avoid improper references to the Senate or to Members thereof.

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the Speaker. I will not say anything more about the Democrat leader, who we all know now to be a prominent Democrat in the other body, who wants to increase taxes. And one can only assume that he has allies in the House over here, judging from the 1-minutes we are hearing, it seems just sort of calling for more tax increases.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe the way to turn the economy around is to still let people spend their own money, rather than having government bureaucracies in Washington in their command-and-control fashion spend tax dollars.

Let us create jobs by giving people back their hard-earned money.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are advised that using the terminology "in the other body" does not absolve them of the responsibility not to talk about the other body.

EFFECTS OF BUDGET DEFICITS ON GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND PROMISES

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the lead story in today's Wall Street Journal really tells it all: "Seeing Red: As Budget Deficits Loom, Many Promises, Programs Could Suffer. Social Security Is Vulnerable as Huge 10-year Surplus Contracts by \$4 Trillion."

Yes, an unprecedented 70 percent of the estimated surplus has evaporated in less than a year. It is true that the two Republican budget offices, one here in the House and one at the White House, cannot agree on exactly how deep a hole Republicans have dug.

But I can tell you, even using Arthur Andersen accounting, this hole is a whopper. Our Republican colleagues have "stimulated" little more than red ink with their huge tax breaks designed for certain privileged corporations and the wealthy few.

What a difference those huge tax breaks have made. They have not stimulated anything except red ink. Now when they have dug such a deep budgetary hole, it is time to stop digging, instead of offering more and more corporate tax breaks, as our Republican friends persist in doing this year.

Let us at least stop that digging downward, embrace some fiscal restraint and begin climbing out of this budgetary hole before Social Security is wrecked and we reach the point of economic "no return".

SUPPORT NATIONAL MENTORING ACT

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the filing of the National Mentoring Act legislation by myself, along with a broad group of bipartisan cosponsors. The mentor act would give tax credits to businesses that allow their employees 1 hour a week of paid time off to mentor children at risk of dropping out of school and getting involved with drugs. The reason for this bill is simple, to make it easier for mentoring organizations to recruit mentors.

Why is this important? Well, there was a recent study completed of 1,000 young people on the waiting list at Big Brother-Big Sisters. The list was divided into two groups: one group got a mentor; the other group did not get a mentor. Eighteen months later, the children with mentors were 46 percent less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to begin using alcohol, 53 percent less likely to skip school, and 33 percent less likely to engage in violence.

That is why this bill has been endorsed by every major mentoring organization in the United States, including Big Brothers-Big Sisters, America's Promise, and the National Mentoring Partnership Act.

I urge my colleagues today to call my office and sign up as cosponsors to this important legislation.

TREATMENT OF AFGHAN PRISONERS IN CUBA

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I have heard and read that some people in publications in Europe and some members of the European Union have been very critical of U.S. treatment of the Afghan prisoners in Cuba. I think they are scraping the bottom of the barrel in a vain attempt to make themselves feel superior to Americans.

I wonder how they would feel or how they would respond if they had been attacked the way we were on September 11. No country on the face of the Earth, Mr. Speaker, has done as much. No nation has even come close to doing as much for other countries, as has the United States of America.

These prisoners will live far better as prisoners of the U.S. military than they ever would have in the caves of Afghanistan. Even more importantly, Mr. Speaker, they will live far better as our prisoners than they deserve, after killing thousands of our citizens in one of the cruelest ways imaginable.

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CONTINUED FAILURE OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

(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, imagine if you were participating in an Olympic event and you were winning the race and suddenly the Olympic Committee came along and changed the rules because they did not want you to win. You would be outraged.

Well, yesterday the Nuclear Regulatory Commission notified Nevada of their plans to once again change the ground rules for judging Yucca Mountain. The NRC is proposing to eliminate rules governing what it calls the "unlikely event" of a volcanic eruption.

The NRC staff believes that there is less than a 1-in-10 chance of an eruption occurring within 10,000 years. A less than 10 percent chance? What does that mean? Does the term "1-in-10" or "less than" equate to "sound science"? There is a better chance of Yucca Mountain exploding than there is of winning the lottery.

We should ask the people of Africa. We should ask the people of Hawaii. We should ask the people of Mount Saint Helens in Oregon what they thought about that 1-in-10 chance.

I continue my outrage at the entire Yucca Mountain project. But by telling Nevadans that they have a less than 1-in-10 chance that Yucca Mountain could explode is downright astonishing.

The NRC should be ashamed of itself. It is time to put the safety of Nevadans and all Americans ahead of their own desire to win at any cost.

SCOTT GERMOSEN, A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

(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 January 9, America lost a true American hero, Staff Sergeant Scott Germosen.

After graduating from Centerreach High School in 1982, Scott answered the call to duty and enlisted in the Marine Corps. After serving our country, Scott and his family moved to California where he was exploring a career as a sheriff's deputy.

Like all of us, Scott was horrified by the attacks on America on September 11. Unfortunately, the tragedy was very close to home for Scott. Scott's second cousin was aboard the first plane that hit the World Trade Center. Hearing this tragic news spurred Scott to re-enlist in the Marines and help defend our Nation from evil.

While serving our country and fighting for freedom, Scott perished in the KC-130 tanker that crashed in Pakistan on January 9, 2001 while he was performing his duties as a loadmaster during missions in support of the War on Terrorism.

Scott Germosen has made the ultimate sacrifice so that all of us can live under the blanket of freedom that America provides. On behalf of the

First District of New York and the entire Nation, I thank Scott Germosen, a true American hero.

Scott is survived by his mother Myrna Washington, his wife Jennifer, and his 22-month-old daughter Alyssa. I ask my colleagues to join me in praying for and in paying respect to Scott Germosen and his family.

ESTABLISHING FIXED INTEREST RATES FOR STUDENT AND PARENT BORROWERS

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 334 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 334

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (S. 1762) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish fixed interest rates for student and parent borrowers, to extend current law with respect to special allowances for lenders, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce; and (2) one motion to commit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 334 makes in order the bill S. 1762 under a closed rule. The rule provides 1 hour of debate to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. Finally, the rule provides for one motion to commit.

Mr. Speaker, S. 1762 amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish fixed interest rates for student and parent borrowers and extends current law with respect to allowances for lenders. To put it simply, this legislation will allow for the continued availability of affordable student loans for students and their families by addressing a long-standing problem in the Federal student loan program about how interest rates are calculated. It will simplify loan terms, reduce confusion, and lock in low rates for the borrower. At the same time, it will provide stability for lenders, helping to avoid disruption in loan availability.

Mr. Speaker, more than 9 million United States students today need student loans to help pay for college, and the education of our Nation's children is a major concern of most Americans,