

gentlewoman from California for her kind words. I have had so many people from the other side of the aisle speak so kindly to me on my decision to retire from Congress that I could not resist taking a moment to say that at last I finally have made a decision that is a source of great pleasure to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and I want to thank them for their generous acknowledgment of that.

ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2002, TO TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2002

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Friday, January 25, 2002, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 29, 2002 for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

REQUESTING IT BE THE WILL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA- TIVES THAT THE ST. LOUIS RAMS BE VICTORIOUS ON SUN- DAY NEXT

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be the will of this body that the St. Louis Rams have a glorious victory on Sunday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

WELCOME TO WASHINGTON, DC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, as the only Member who never has to leave Washington, I want to welcome my colleagues back to Washington, my hometown and your second home.

I was very gratified to note that the White House reopened White House tours to children just a few days ago. This follows a meeting I arranged between White House officials and D.C. leaders where I suggested that D.C. schoolchildren be allowed to view the White House Christmas tree decorations. Now the White House has seen to it that all children will be able to go into the White House.

I suggested at that time that the public could come in if they only left their Social Security numbers the way people have to anyway before they go into the White House. Now the children will leave their Social Security numbers. Let us hope the White House follows with the general public. I am very gratified for what they have already done for children.

These may seem small matters, but, my colleagues, what it does is to signal to the country that if the Capitol is open the country is open as well. The President has made an important ad to visit America, that Americans should do their business. It is important for people to travel, particularly now during a recession, and the more the District of Columbia seems open, the most visible city in the country, the more people will follow the President's advice and go out to their own places and help us get out of this recession by getting on planes.

Members and staff will soon receive a "Dear Colleague" from me about an event I am hosting on Tuesday, February 12, called "Ask Me About Washington," to acquaint them with tourist attractions and amenities in D.C. so they can advise their own constituents who come here.

□ 1130

Mr. Speaker, this is an election year. It is time to welcome our constituents back to Washington. Members need to transmit that the District is the safest city in the United States, precisely because it is the Nation's Capital.

The war is winding down. The President has said, absolutely correctly, terrorist threats will be with us for many years to come. It is time to get constituents used to traveling, particularly now, and coming back to Washington. Members and staff will learn how to advise constituents of where to go at my Ask Me About Washington event on Tuesday, February 12.

The economy is down. The way to get it up is for people to do what President Bush has indicated, go out and see the sites, but above all come and see Members of Congress. Look at the gallery. The galleries have been empty because Americans are not traveling. They are not traveling to Members' home States or the Capital.

That is bad news for people running for office, and it is bad news for our country when people are not flooding into the Capital to find out what to do about the issues that concern them most, especially during an election year. When constituents come, they

need to know what to see in Washington. When they come, they need to know that everything is still open to the public, notwithstanding the barricades. This is an open city because this is an open country.

CONGRESS BIDS FAREWELL TO SIX OUTSTANDING PAGES

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, as the delegate from the District of Columbia welcomes us back, she is also going to say good-bye to six residents. I would like to have Lindsey Beck, Matthew Dinusson, Ashley Gallo, Jennifer Hsieh, Gregory Hyde, and Zachary Stanton come on down here. Grab some seats in the front row.

Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of the House Page Board, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize these six outstanding pages that are departing today. This year's page class is a remarkable group of students. They came to Washington full of ambition and promise. Little did they know, nor did their friends and colleagues in the back, that they would be witness to such tragic events in history. Far from their families and friends, and so new to Washington that homesickness barely had a chance to ease, this page class refused to let fear chase them away from their dreams of working with Congress. They relied on each other, and on the day-to-day tasks before them; and they knew in their hearts they were working toward a common goal shared by all of us, to prove to our enemies that the American spirit cannot be extinguished. The courage, determination, and sense of purpose shown by this class and their colleagues in the back set an example for us all. They have proven that adversity does build strength and that the human spirit is resolute when it is tested.

Mr. Speaker, not only did this group carry on their work as pages, but they did so with enthusiasm, excitement, and as I found out, in good humor, which at such moments in history is kind of hard to do. There is no question that this class has made us very proud. This class is a credit to their families, their communities, and to the page program.

The six who are leaving today will be returning home on Saturday. They leave here with our thanks and congratulations. We share in their joy of being reunited with their families and share in their sadness of saying good-bye; but this group probably will not miss those 6:15 breakfasts we have all endured.

Mr. Speaker, these pages have left their own indelible mark on the page program, and I want them to know that their shoes will be hard to fill. As they return home with suitcases and boxes, memories and experiences, I

want them to take our sincere thanks. I thank Lindsey Beck, Matthew Dinusson, Ashley Gallo, Jennifer Hsieh, Gregory Hyde and Zachary Stanton. I thank them for having the courage and the strength to persevere when others would have given up. I thank them for approaching every day with curiosity and hope, and for encouraging others to do the same.

There is no doubt that these six pages will go on to do great things, and we hope they come back and share their accomplishments with us.

Mr. Speaker, I wish them a lifetime of success and happiness. And now my colleague on the House Page Board, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), would like to speak.

CONGRESS BIDS FAREWELL TO SIX OUTSTANDING PAGES

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I stand here as the ranking Democrat on the House Page Board, having been appointed to that position by Speaker Tip O'Neill 20-some years ago. I have seen many pages come here. There has been no class better than this class. This class has been outstanding pages, and I am very, very proud of them.

There is a very good program in the country called Close Up, and I always meet with my Close Up students; but no one, no one has seen this Congress as close up as this group of pages has. They have seen us at our best and at our worst, but this year they probably have seen us at our best. They witnessed history that no other generation will hopefully ever witness again, when this country was attacked by terrorists and thousands of people were killed.

I can recall walking with my staff away from the Capitol after the plane hit the Pentagon. I saw a group of pages coming towards the Capitol building. They were supposed to be here they thought, and I said get back to the dorm. Their sense of duty was enormous, although this building could very well have been the target.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of the pages, but particularly Lindsey Beck from Arizona; Matthew Dinusson from Minnesota; Ashley Gallo from Michigan, my home State; Jennifer Hsieh from Texas; Gregory Hyde, New York City; and Zachary Stanton from Michigan. They can be proud of themselves. They will leave here knowing more about government, being able to tell others government is an instrument of good; and hopefully they will always be involved in government, whether they run for office or are a voter. Make government work. They have seen government at work. I thank this group of pages very much, and God bless them.

RECOGNIZING THE BRAVE SAILORS OF THE USS "CARL VINSON"

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity with the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) to fly out on a helicopter and go aboard the *Carl Vinson* as it came through the Straits of Juan de Fuca into Puget Sound into the Bremerton shipyard in my hometown. It was a great honor for the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) and I to have an opportunity to address the crew of the *Carl Vinson*. They had let the air wing off in San Diego, but still over 3,000 sailors, 12 percent of which were women, were coming home to Bremerton, were coming home to meet their families. I believe that the *Carl Vinson*, which was the first aircraft carrier into the North Arabian Sea, performed heroically on behalf of our country in Operation Enduring Freedom.

In looking over their record over this last 111 days when they were fully operational, they conducted 4,200 sorties flying F-14s and F-18s into Afghanistan using the smart weapons like JDAMs and the satellite weapons to destroy Taliban and al Qaeda targets in the area, and helped to contribute to the quick demise of the Taliban government.

I was pleased to be aboard and talk to the crew. They were extremely excited about coming home; but they were very, very proud of the service that they had rendered on behalf of our country. I want Members to know that we assured them that this Congress, this administration, strongly supports what they have done. There was bipartisan support in the Congress for the President's operations in Afghanistan.

I think we should reiterate the importance of these large big-deck carriers, 4.5 acres of American sovereignty. As we all know, we do not always get the bases that we need in any area of the world where we have to have American actions. In this case, we were not able to use airfields, as we were in Desert Storm and Desert Shield, in the region so these aircraft carriers became paramount.

Mr. Speaker, there were 48 attack aircraft coming off these carriers, and those attack aircraft flew these missions, having to have several airline refuelings, which also points out the importance of why we have to have tankers in order to provide the fuel for these planes on their missions, also for the bombers, the B-1s, the B-52s and the B-2s that were all used successfully in this endeavor.

It was also exciting to see the crew of the ship reunite with their families. Seventy-six of the men on board were fathers during the time they were gone, 6 months of deployment. In fact, I saw one woman who had delivered her baby on the day of the deployment, the

first day, so the child was 6 months old. And to see all of them reunited on the pier in Bremerton, Washington, my hometown, is truly something I will never forget.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all should recognize the important contribution of the men and women who serve us daily in the military. This Congress has a responsibility to make certain that we give them the benefits, that we give them the support, that we give them the equipment so that they can conduct these operations in the future.

But those large aircraft carriers were crucial in giving us the ability to make these attacks early on and to win this war decisively with very minimal loss of American life. I also would say that while they were operational, they conducted 37 replenishments while they were underway. This is when another ship comes up and provides supplies to the aircraft carrier when it is operational and moving. I think that is rather remarkable. Over 16,000 airplanes landed and took off on the *Carl Vinson* during this deployment; and they went 51,000 miles, which is almost two times around the Earth.

I was proud to be there, proud as a member of the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, and to see the men and women serving on the *Carl Vinson*.

We also learned in this war, 90 percent of the weapons that were used were smart bombs like JDAMs, and we almost ran out of those weapons. So we have got a lot of work to do here in the Congress to support the President to make sure that we have the equipment for the future. But it was a great day in Bremerton, Washington, and I am proud of the work of these great sailors and of our United States Navy.

THERE IS NO CHOICE IN CHINA

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, a woman 4 months pregnant flees to her mother's village to avoid a forced abortion in China. Her brother, two sisters and three other relatives are arrested as bargaining chips to enforce China's brutal one-child-per-family policy.

□ 1145

Three of her families' homes are destroyed. A second woman, 19 years of age, is told that she is too young to have a baby. She does not meet the government's age requirements for pregnancy. Her friends who accompanied her to the local clinic for her mandatory abortion all nod vigorously when asked by an undercover investigator if the young lady would like to keep the baby. "But the law forbids it," they add. Sound barbaric?

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, on this week where millions of Americans on either side of the debate over abortion gathered in our Nation's capital,