

Member MATSUI. I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor this measure.

PURSUE A MULTI NATIONAL
STRATEGY TO DISARM IRAQ

HON. RICK BOUCHER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2003

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge in the strongest terms that the administration pursue a multi national strategy as it takes the necessary steps to disarm Iraq.

I share the administration's view that Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction must be removed. In his present armed condition, he poses a significant threat to our Nation and to all peace loving nations around the world. I have no doubt that he possesses highly dangerous weapons, and based upon his past conduct, I also harbor no doubt that he would use those weapons against us or against our allied nations whenever he believes that doing so serves his interests.

It is clear that Saddam Hussein must be disarmed.

However, it is essential that the disarmament take place in the proper manner. The best opportunity for obtaining the disarmament of Iraq without the necessity of armed conflict lies in the assemblage of a large group of nations who collectively will insist that the disarmament occur. If, under the auspices of the United Nations, most nations of the world are facing Saddam Hussein united in the determination to remove his arms peacefully if possible but by force if necessary, the best chance is achieved for a peaceful disarmament to occur.

Then, if conflict is necessary, a broad assemblage of nations will share responsibility for taking the necessary steps. Moreover, that same large assembly of nations with United Nations participation, can then share both the cost and the responsibility for the administration and reconstruction of post-war Iraq.

Ten years ago, under a United Nations resolution, Iraq was expelled from Kuwait. The diplomatic offices of this nation were put to good use in persuading our allies to participate with us in the exercise.

That same course must be followed again, and I urge the administration in the strongest possible terms to take the time which is necessary to assure that broad international support underlies our efforts to ensure our security and the security of other nations through the disarmament of Iraq.

TRIBUTE TO JACLYN SOBOCIENSKI

HON. DAVID R. OBEY

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2003

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding efforts made by Ms. Jaclyn Sobocienski who is leaving the House Appropriations Committee this week.

Jaclyn is a native of New York. She is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Siena College, possessing a Bachelor of Arts degree in polit-

ical science and a Bachelor of Science degree in finance. That alone made her a natural for the Appropriations Committee. She served as an intern in the New York State Assembly, and also worked for the New York Mets during summers between school years. On those few occasions where we gave her some time off, Jaclyn was active in dance, Italian language study, and travel.

She has been an administrative aide to the minority staff of the House Appropriations Committee since October 5, 2001. Just after she joined the Committee, the anthrax incident in the Longworth House Office Building occurred. Jaclyn not only was instrumental in getting our temporary alternate office up and running for the period that our Longworth office was closed, but also she reacted to the stress in a very professional and helpful manner that allowed the Members and the staff to get on with conducting the nation's business.

Jaclyn put in many long evenings in behalf of the Members of the Appropriations Committee, with direct support to the Democratic professional staff of the Committee. She tirelessly served as the liaison between the Committee and all Democratic House offices, the press, and the public. She succeeded in every task she was given.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank her for her outstanding efforts to me and to the Committee, and to wish her well in her new career. We will miss her, and wish her nothing but success and happiness.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAMILY
TIME FLEXIBILITY ACT

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2003

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce The Family Time Flexibility Act, which allows employers to offer American workers the option of voluntarily taking compensatory time off in lieu of receiving overtime pay. I am pleased that 67 of my colleagues have joined me as original cosponsors of this pro-family, pro-worker, pro-women legislation.

One would think that providing working men and women with more control over their work schedules is a "no brainer", but private sector employees and employers alike are bound by the Fair Labor Standards Act of FLSA, which does not permit such flexibility. I think it's fair to say that this law, enacted during the depression, was designed for a very different workforce with very different needs.

Over the past 60-plus years, the American workplace has undergone a dramatic change in composition, character, and demands. What once was a static, agriculture- and manufacturing-based economy with a primarily male workforce has evolved into a fast-paced working environment based on global services and high technology with nearly equal numbers of women and men in the workforce.

Workers today, more than ever before, face a difficult dilemma: how to balance the demands of a job while having adequate time for family, friends and outside commitments. This situation has become even more pronounced because many American families now rely on two incomes to survive. And while this conflict weighs most heavily on women, all workers—

regardless of gender—experience conflict between work and family, between watching their child's baseball game or going through that stack of papers on their desk.

The Family Time Flexibility Act will help to ease these pressures by providing the flexibility that working parents need to spend quality time with their families. This legislation amends the FLSA to allow private sector employees to access something that their colleagues working in federal, state and local governments have had for many years—the option of choosing either cash wages or paid time off as compensation for working overtime hours.

Before I go any further, I want to stress that nothing in this legislation would require employees to take comp time instead of overtime pay. Nor could employers force employees to take comp time. Rather they now can be given the choice of compensatory time or overtime. This bill does not relieve employers of any obligation to pay overtime.

As a matter of fact, my bill contains explicit penalties if an employer "directly or indirectly intimidates, threatens or coerces" an employee into taking comp time in lieu of overtime, and the penalties are more severe than under current law. Employers who engage in such behavior will be liable for double damages plus attorney's fees and costs. In addition, the other remedies included under the FLSA—including civil and criminal penalties and injunctive relief—still will apply. The employee may respond through a private right of action, or the Labor Department may sue on behalf of the employee. I also want to stress that this bill in no way affects or changes the standard 40-hour workweek.

Here's how the bill works. If the employer and the employee agree—or in union shops, the union and the employer agree through their collective bargaining agreement—to allow the employee to start accruing overtime hours as compensatory or family time, the employee may bank overtime hours and use them at a later time as paid time off.

As is currently the case with overtime pay, comp time hours would accrue at a rate of one and one-half hours of comp time for each hour of overtime worked. Employees could accrue up to 160 hours of comp time within a 12-month period.

This legislation contains numerous safeguards to protect employees. Let me reiterate that employers are explicitly prohibited, under threat of civil and criminal penalties, from attempting to directly or indirectly intimidate, threaten, or coerce any employee to take comp-time instead of cash pay as pay for overtime.

In addition, employers must obtain prior written approval from each employee who chooses comp-time in lieu of cash pay for overtime. And employees can withdraw their request to receive comp-time and go back to receiving cash pay at any time.

The legislation requires an employer to annually pay cash wages for any unused comp time accrued by the employee. Employees may withdraw from a comp time agreement at any time and request a cash-out of any or all of his or her accrued, unused comp time. The employer has 30 days in which to comply with the request. The legislation also requires an employer to provide the employee with at least 30 days notice prior to cashing out any accrued time in excess of 80 hours or prior to discontinuing a policy of offering comp time.

Employees are able to use their accrued comp time at any time, so long as its use does not unduly disrupt the operations of the business—this is the same standard used in the public sector and under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Employers also would be prohibited from requiring employees to take accrued time solely at the convenience of the employer.

Again, I want to reiterate that this legislation has no effect on the traditional 40-hour workweek or the way in which overtime is calculated.

Mr. Speaker, comp time makes for good policy and it also has another benefit—it makes employees happy. There always will be working men and women who want and need the extra pay that comes from working overtime hours. But for many workers, having the additional time off is a far more attractive option, and that's an option they should have.

Comp time also is good for business because smart companies know how flexibility can help efforts to recruit and retain top-notch employees. Concerns over the well-being of the family often force parents to leave jobs that do not fit their family needs or forego jobs that would put stress on home lives.

In sum, Mr. Speaker, The Family Time Flexibility Act is good for workers, it is good for women, and it is especially good for families. The bill updates an outdated law designed for the 1930s workplace and makes it relevant for today's workforce.

Today's working men and women want increased flexibility and choices regarding scheduling and compensation, yet federal law prevents them from having such options. I trust my colleagues agree that employees and employers should not be prevented from making mutually agreeable arrangements that meet both personal and business needs.

I think the time and circumstances are right for us to pass this much-needed legislation. I urge my colleagues to join this effort to pass a strong "family time" bill that will be good for workers, businesses, the economy, and America's families.

In closing, let me take a moment to recognize Congressman CASS BALLENGER for his dedicated and untiring work on the comp time issue and to the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, Representative CHARLIE NORWOOD, for his strong commitment to this issue. Finally, let me thank the Chairman of the full Committee on Education and the Workforce, JOHN BOEHNER, for his support of America's working men and women.

I urge my colleagues to join us in cosponsoring the Family Time Flexibility Act.

COMMENDING MEMBERS OF
UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES
AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR SELF-
LESS SERVICE DURING GLOBAL-
WAR ON TERRORISM

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. J. Res 27. It is a privilege to take a few minutes to pay tribute

to the men and women responsible for our national defense.

More than 1.4 million men and women make up America's active and reserve forces. I join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in acknowledging the soldiers and sailors, airmen and marines in both the active and reserve components, who distinguish themselves daily in selfless service to this nation and bring great pride to us all.

Last month, I had an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of nineteen members of our armed forces. In observance of African American history month, I chose to acknowledge African Americans who have served with distinction in the U.S. Armed Forces. Each day of the month, I distributed brief biographies to my colleagues, which honored the accomplishments of generals and privates, paratroopers, cooks, and nurses, who have contributed to our rich history. Many fought for freedoms they did not fully enjoy themselves.

It was interesting to learn that despite a diversity of ethnicity and culture, today's military men and women are not very different from the doughboys that fought in World War I, or the GIs who stormed the beaches in Normandy, or the troops who fought in Korea and Vietnam. From generation to generation, they continue to embody the qualities we respect in all walks of life and in all fields of endeavor; a commitment to excellence, a vision of a better future, and a dedication to selfless service.

It is both fitting and timely that we commend the members of the United States Armed Services today. However, I'd like to add two things to this tribute. First, I'd like to acknowledge our nation's military veterans. Their sacrifices have helped make America the world's best hope for freedom and lasting peace. And second, I'd like to acknowledge the families of those who serve our nation. It is a sacrifice to send your son or daughter, your husband or wife, into harms way. Your contribution to our nation's freedom is deeply appreciated.

TARIFF RELIEF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on the one-year anniversary of the President's decision to impose temporary tariff relief on behalf of the domestic steel industry under Section 201 of the Trade Act, I speak in strong support of the tariffs and their continuation for the full three-year period ordered by the President.

Between 1997 and 2002, America's steel industry was under attack by foreign companies illegally dumping steel into the American economy, sending 35 steel companies into bankruptcy and costing 54,000 industry employees their jobs.

After a seven-month analysis, the International Trade Commission made a unanimous determination that the steel industry had suffered serious injury as a result of the surge of imports and voted to recommend a remedy.

One year later, this remedy is working and must be continued. Since the Section 201 relief was implemented, the industry is beginning to see signs of a recovery: domestic producers have experienced incremental improve-

ments in revenues, operating income, and capacity utilization.

The tariffs have also caused a modest price recovery in the industry. Prices for hot rolled steel rose from historic lows of only \$210 per ton in December 2001 to around \$300 per ton today. But even so, prices for all major flat rolled products are still below 20-year historical averages.

Additionally, the industry has made significant progress toward restructuring and consolidation. The International Steel Group (ISG), which came into existence following its purchase of LTV, has agreed to acquire the assets of Bethlehem Steel. US Steel announced plans to purchase National Steel. Section 201 relief, if allowed to run its course, will result in a more competitive domestic industry.

The tariffs were a good start, and they must be allowed to continue. The United States has finally made clear that it is no longer willing to serve as the World's Steel Dumping Ground. The United States has also made clear that the national security of our country requires a strong and viable domestic steel supplier base. Only the continuation of the 201 tariffs will mitigate the harm of unfairly traded imports and assist the industry in a critical recovery. Keep the steel tariffs working!

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MYRTLE GROVE
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2003

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Myrtle Grove Volunteer Fire Department. The Myrtle Grove Volunteer Fire Department, consisting of about two dozen men and women, made it first fire run on March 6, 1953.

The station was originally a single-bay building at the corner of 69th Avenue and Lillian Highway. The present building, at Lillian and 72nd Avenue, was completed in 1978. The community and volunteer firefighters raised the money together by knocking on doors.

Over 1,200 calls were taken last year by firefighters, both paid and volunteer, who work from the station to guard the Myrtle Grove area. This responsiveness has given the volunteer firefighters the credibility of professionals.

The Myrtle Grove company is a family-oriented group. Assistant Fire Chief Robert Jordan is the successor and grandson of the original fire chief John "Pap" Rolfs Sr. Carl Jordan, father of Robert, served as Assistant Chief for thirty years. Everyone, who serves in the station, is known to have close relationships with one another.

On behalf of the United States Congress and the people of Myrtle Grove, I would like to recognize this group of people for the standard of excellence and bravery that they have shown in their community. I offer my sincere thanks for all that they have done for Northwest Florida and this great Nation.