

Mr. REHBERG. Madam Speaker, some of Saddam Hussein's paramilitary monsters hanged a teenage girl last week for waving at coalition troops. In the same week, Iraqi military, pretending to surrender, fired upon our people who had offered them safety. This week we learned Saddam's desperate soldiers have taken to shielding themselves with women and children when confronting our advancing troops. His paramilitary forces rule by terror, lodging military stockpiles in schools and hospitals, firing at villagers who try to flee, and exterminating townspeople who refuse to fight for Saddam's terrorist state.

Perhaps the signature statement of the abhorrent and despicable nature of the enemy is its treatment of our young people in uniform taken captive. Some have been humiliated and paraded in front of television cameras. Others, we now know, were brutally executed or, should I say murdered, by Iraqi soldiers.

Can there be any doubt about the vile and inhumane character of Saddam's dying regime?

As President Bush has correctly noted, "Given the nature of this regime, we expect such war crimes, but we will not excuse them." Our brave men and women in uniform deserve our support, both for what they are doing and for why they are there.

OPPOSING BUDGET CUTS FOR VETERANS

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the actions taken by the Republicans in this House to drastically cut the funding for veterans programs.

While thousands of brave men and women are fighting for our country and risking their lives every single day, the House majority party voted for the GOP budget resolution which would cut veterans programs by \$28.8 billion. This cut in programs includes money for health care, for disability compensation, pensions, and other benefits. The Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the American Legion have all issued statements opposing this budget.

We cannot in good conscience commit men and women to defend this Nation while at the same time reducing the benefits they are entitled to and deserve, because after all, what message, what message does this send to those that have and those that are serving our country?

I am appalled at the actions of the Republican House. While brave men and women are defending our freedom, we must defend their right to receive their benefits.

HONORING AND SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our brave military men and women fighting for our freedom here at home and to take the yoke of oppression off the Iraqi people.

I also want to thank the military families and let them know that these soldiers are doing the best job in the world.

Madam Speaker, there are some awful stories out there. Iraqis were shown on TV voicing support for Saddam Hussein. When asked why they were doing that, they replied that they were afraid if they did not show support for Saddam and he did win, then he would remember them as enemies, and he would kill or torture their family members. That is just wrong.

Now our servicemen and women are implementing a precise military plan that will put an end to Saddam Hussein's reign of terror and his ruthless regime forever. We in the Congress are going to do all in our power to make sure that our troops remain the best trained and equipped in the world and are paid as veterans. To the brave men and women in uniform, I thank you and we salute you.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL WALDEN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I am sad to report to the House today the passing of Paul Walden of Hood River, Oregon, the father of our colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

It was my pleasure to serve in the Oregon House of Representatives with Paul where he was a distinguished member in the 1970s. By the time he became a legislator, he was already an established community leader, active in his church and many civic organizations.

Paul was a successful businessman whose ready wit and deep melodious voice made him a natural for a career in radio. He served a half century in the broadcast industry, ultimately owning his own radio stations.

This Oregonian of pioneer stock made his community better as he brightened people's lives. He was the obvious choice for the community for major responsibilities, like serving as chair and master of ceremonies for the opening of the massive Dallas's Dam featuring Vice President Richard Nixon.

I will remember him as a friend who served his community with honor, with humor, and with insight.

Our thoughts are with our colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WAL-

DEN); his wife, Maylene; son, Anthony; and the entire Walden family.

APRIL IS THE MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, the Department of Defense has designated April as the Month of the Military Child.

Today, thousands of fathers and mothers are halfway around the world from their children making tremendous sacrifices to defend freedom and liberty. Some sons and daughters will see their parent come home wounded and, in some cases, the military parent will not return at all.

Military families make enormous sacrifices on a daily basis so that our soldiers have the support they need. It is up to Americans and communities throughout our great Nation to support these families, even by simple food, clothes and toy donations for the children.

I urge all Americans to reach out to military families in their communities by contacting their local military base, National Guard and Reserve armory, and public affairs offices to find out how they can best help.

In conclusion, God bless our troops.

OPPOSING BUDGET CUTS TO VETERANS PROGRAMS

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, I rise today out of deep concern about the budget that was passed last week. The Committee on the Budget resolution cut mandatory spending in many areas, but one of the most unconscionable cuts is the \$15 billion reduction for veterans programs like service disability compensation, pension for low-income wartime veterans, and veterans housing programs. At a time of war, how can we vote to neglect our veterans like this?

In recent days we have heard from the American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans of America, AMVETS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans, all strongly opposed to these cuts.

I will continue to stand with them and to oppose this dishonorable treatment of our most honorable men and women. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

HIGHER EDUCATION RELIEF OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS ACT OF 2003

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

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the Higher Education Relief Act, the HEROES Act, as it is called.

Since September 11 and now with the activities of the war in Iraq, this Nation is sending our men and women, our young sons and daughters, into harm's way, into a conflict the likes of which this Nation has never seen before. And they do so in the name of America, in the name of liberty, freedom and dignity, which the United States stands for.

But during this time, this legislation will now grant to the Secretary of Education the authority and the power to grant to the students who are overseas now the relief that they need. It does that in three ways. First of all, it provides to the Reservists who are leaving from their jobs to go overseas right now relief from making student loan payments for a period of time while they are away.

Secondly, it provides to the borrowers and to the families who are back here at home relief from receiving letters and phone calls from the lenders while they are in service. And, thirdly, this legislation provides relief through consecutive service requirements to be considered uninterrupted while they are overseas.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the HEROES Act and to support our troops as well.

TRIBUTE TO CESAR CHAVEZ

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

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, Cesar Chavez was a champion for the poor and underserved people in America. He did not care about politics, money, or votes; he cared about people and their children. He sacrificed so they may have a better life.

Cesar gave Latinos in this country a voice. He touched the lives of millions with nonviolent struggle for justice, education, equality, and hope.

His life is a testament to the notion that victory can be won without violent confrontation. He used boycotts, pickets, strikes, and fasts to achieve this goal. But he never raised his hand or encouraged his followers to raise their hands in anger or hate or violence. This is a lesson that the world should be reminded of right now.

Cesar was committed so that he would be willing to sacrifice his own life so that violence was not used. He fasted many times. He proved that his commitment through his persistence, hard work, faith, and willingness to sacrifice for La Causa.

The terrible suffering of the farm workers and their children by crushing farm workers' rights, the dangers of pesticides, the denial of fair and Federal elections, Cesar's fast was a heartfelt prayer for purification and strength for all of those who worked

beside him in this movement. His words will always be true in our lives that say: Si, se puede.

Yesterday was Cesar Chavez's birthday. This would be a great day to honor him in the Nation every year. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H. Res. 112 calling for a National Cesar Chavez holiday.

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IRAQ

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, our forces have been in action in Iraq for 2 weeks. In that time, they have achieved great success. They have moved hundreds of miles and are beginning to encircle Baghdad and the regime of Saddam Hussein.

They have begun to distribute humanitarian aid to the long-suffering people of Iraq. They have weakened the enemy forces significantly. They have fought off groups of Saddam's thugs who are desperate to hold on to power. In short, the plan is going forward in an undaunted fashion.

As President Bush had stated time and time again, we may not know the duration of this war, but we do know its outcome: Our forces will disarm Iraq and will force the tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein from power. The day of liberation for the people of Iraq is near, and they will be free. We will not tire, and we will not stop until we achieve our goals. I have no doubt that our forces are up to the task.

I urge every American to keep the men and women of our Armed Forces in their thoughts and in their prayers. We must support our troops as they fight to protect freedom and to defeat the forces of terror.

IN SUPPORT OF VETERANS

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

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ. Madam Speaker, I stand before Members today outraged at the disgraceful treatment of our Nation's veterans. While some may disagree with the United States' decision to lead the charge against Iraq, all would agree that the men and women putting their lives on the line deserve our unwavering support. These volunteers deserve respect not only during times of war, but also when they return home.

The administration has spent a great deal of time showcasing our proud troops, but that same administration is attempting to make cuts to health care and other benefits that impact our veterans. Unless this body takes action, many veterans will be financially responsible for paying for the injuries they receive as a direct result of their

sacrifice in defending us and our values.

This is hypocrisy at its best. What kind of message does this send to our troops? It says that we appreciate them putting their lives on the line when we need them, but we cannot offer them that same assistance when they need us.

House Concurrent Resolution 95, the budget resolution that recently passed the House, would require an across-the-board cut of 1 percent in mandatory appropriations for veterans programs. This budget would cut compensation for service-connected disabilities and education benefits and other health care funding by \$14 billion over the next 10 years.

In addition, while the Bush budget anticipates an increase in the number of veterans eligible for compensation due to service-connected disabilities, the budget does not add one dime for benefits for additional disabilities and deaths.

As an American, as a patriot, and as a Member of this esteemed body, I encourage all Members to support the efforts to restore the funding cuts in mandatory spending for veterans benefits. Our past and future veterans deserve the respect and gratitude of this Nation. The least we can do is take care of them when they return home from defending our American values.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CAPITO). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

HIGHER EDUCATION RELIEF OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS ACT OF 2003

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1412) to provide the Secretary of Education with specific waiver authority to respond to a war or other military operation or national emergency.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1412

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS; REFERENCE.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003".

(b) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) There is no more important cause than that of our nation's defense.

(2) The United States will protect the freedom and secure the safety of its citizens.

(3) The United States military is the finest in the world and its personnel are determined to lead the world in pursuit of peace.