

to the floor of the House to acknowledge a valiant citizen of our community. All of us have been giving our praise and our commitment to the valiant troops who are now representing us, and we wish them well, we wish them a safe return, we wish for them the resources that they need to finish the job and to return to their families. But in our own communities we have valiant individuals who offer their lives so that we might be safe.

Today in Houston, Texas we laid to rest Charles Clark, Officer Charles Clark, an individual who was selfless in his commitment to our community, a member of the Houston Police Department who lost his life tragically in a brutal robbery that also saw the loss of Alfreda Jones, the mother of two children.

Officer Clark was born and raised in the community which he served: South Park, Texas. Married for 24 years, with a lovely wife by the name of Hilda, and he was almost about to see 20 years of service with the Houston Police department. He was known as the consummate police officer. He loved his job. We are told that he wanted to serve in the South Park community, where he did not live, because he had been born and raised there. The tragedy of his death is that he was rushing to the scene to help this young mother, a young mother who was working to support her children at a cash-checking place, when three or more brutal individuals who could find nothing in their life to do but to kill two innocent human beings on that day.

Mr. Speaker, we ask the question: Can we do better as Americans?

I believe this valiant soul should be laid to rest with our respect and admiration, Mr. Speaker. So I come to the floor today to pay tribute to Officer Charles Clark, to tell him that may he rest in peace and may he be considered forever and ever in the annals of the history of the Houston Police Department, our dear friend. I thank him for his service. May he rest with the angels.

HELPING FELLOW AMERICANS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to another subject, and that is a cry that has been amongst us for a long time, and that is helping fellow Americans. Just recently we provided a bailout for our airlines. I am gratified that today we enthusiastically, although I wish it had been unanimous, voted to instruct the conferees to assist the airline employees. These are our neighbors, hard-working neighbors who have been laid off because of the tragedy of 9/11 and the war. I hope that the conferees will not ignore helping fellow Americans by providing them with the 26 weeks of extended pay. These are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, some of them single parents who are supporting their children, some of them going to school and, frankly, they are suffering. We can bail out the airlines, we can cause them to pay off some of their

debt, but that does not deal with the human failure or the human need, and that is those who are not working because of where we find ourselves.

So to the appropriators who may be listening to the sound of our voices: We have been trying to do this since 9/11, and it has gotten worse. Let us do something that is gratifying in helping our fellow Americans.

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me simply close by saying that as we wish well for our troops, we have something to deal with: the aftermath of war, Mr. Speaker. I intend to engage in a vigorous discussion so that we as Americans can pull together, so that the aftermath of this war can be one of reconciliation, working with our world allies.

I will be dropping legislation that deals with the putting back together of this Nation, but also putting back together the world feelings, relationships. I hope that we will work with NATO and the United Nations in a working group, if you will, scenario where we work together with the United States involved and all of those who are with us or against us, because, Mr. Speaker, that is the right thing to do. We must ensure that we reignite the war against terrorism where all of us were working together. We must re-insure that we work on the Mideast peace process, giving humanitarian aid, rebuilding families, helping schools and hospitals being built, as well as recognizing the needs in this Nation. We cannot do it unless we do it together.

I will be looking forward to dropping that legislation and having my colleagues go forward and not go backwards.

Mr. Speaker, also, we will be looking to give a briefing or to present a briefing with several of the caucuses in this Congress to deal with the aftermath of war, the plight of the children. We have not looked to the damage and the danger of children, not only of those in Iraq, but the children of our soldiers. What has been the damage? What can we do to assist or to help their lives be better?

So I hope this Congress will join together in a bipartisan manner, Mr. Speaker, to address the questions of the aftermath of war. Peace still is a possibility, that we may live in peace in this world.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1036, PROTECTION OF LAWFUL COMMERCE IN ARMS ACT

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-64) on the resolution (H. Res. 181) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1036) to prohibit civil liability actions from being brought or continued against manufacturers, distributors, dealers, or importers of firearms or ammunition for damages re-

sulting from the misuse of their products by others, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

HONORING STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, democracy is the cornerstone of our government. True democracy allows room for dissent, discussion, and demonstration.

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Last week, students from around the country arrived in our Nation's capital to demonstrate in support of affirmative action in higher education. They actively participated in a peaceful way in our democracy. And I am sure that the founders of this Nation must have been as proud of them as I am of the students who participated.

Students marched, sang songs, prayed, and urged the Supreme Court to allow schools like the University of Michigan to continue the practice of allowing diversity in higher education. The students realize that in spite of the progress made over the last 40 years, minorities, women and people with disabilities, still face major barriers in education, business, and employment. They also realize that the prerequisite for change is struggle, and that without struggle there is indeed no progress.

Many people dismiss students because they are generally perceived as not actively engaged in the political process. In addition, others suggest that they are unwilling to sacrifice and do the things necessary for group liberation. The enlightened students I encountered at the Supreme Court represented America at its best. They represented America and its great diversity.

Their message was clear, strong, and compelling. It was a message that affirmative action is a powerful, proven, and effective tool for removing the remnants of prejudice and bias. It was a message that affirmative action capitalizes on the strength of our diversity and opens the doors for opportunities. I am proud of the students who sacrificed their sleep, their classroom work, to brave the cold weather and proclaim that affirmative action is relevant and needed in higher education. They realized that education is the great equalizer. It is the ladder to success.

The thousands of students who demonstrated came by train, car, bus and many on foot. The impressive gathering of college and high school students was reminiscent of some of the activities done to achieve fairness and equalities throughout the 1960's. Of course, the challenge for all of us now is to keep the momentum and the pressure on.

Again, I commend the students for standing for something as important as equal opportunity to higher education. I commend them for their efforts and remind them that the struggle must continue.

STRENGTHENING AMERICAN BORDERS AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PORTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight to discuss the issue of immigration and immigration reform. It is a topic that I often take this floor in order to advance, and I have over the last several weeks chosen to separate the topic up into various component parts. And we talked about immigration reform and how much it was needed because of the dangerous situations that exist on our borders. That was the first week.

We talked about, the next week, I tried to address the issue of immigration and open borders and what that meant to the importation of drugs into the country and the impact that that is having on our land.

Today I am going to talk about another aspect of this subject that is seldom discussed. It is one that a lot of people do not want to really focus on because they are not sure how to deal with it. I think specifically of the people in, say, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and a variety of other environmental organizations that are out there and that focus in on matters that harm the environment; and they have constantly come to us, come to this body in the form of lobbying activity to tell us that we have to do more to protect the land and the environment, the water, the air, because of what man is doing to it. And yet there is almost a deafening silence, if you will, from the same people, the same organizations, when it comes to the degradation of the land that is as a result of the massive numbers of people coming across our borders illegally, the millions of people that are crossing these borders.

There is a great quote from a gentleman who is the program manager of something called the National Parks Conservation Association. His name is Randall Rasmussen. Mr. Rasmussen said, "Organ Pipe National Monument is becoming Organ Pipe National Catastrophe." I call it the Organ Pipe Cactus National Dump.

I have been down there several times in Arizona. Of course, that part of the country is beautiful. Arizona has a 372-mile border with Mexico and it ranges from very sandy deserts and lava flows in the West, where you get about 3 or 4 inches of rainfall in a wet year, to oak-dotted grasslands and mountain-top forests in the East, where snowfall

may be measured in feet. Really, few areas of the North American continent boast such natural beauty and such a great amount of diversity. Yet, cutting across that landscape is one huge problem.

The entire region is getting hammered by wave after wave after wave of illegal border crossers, by horse, by foot, by bicycle, motorcycle, all-terrain vehicles, cars, trucks, even ultralight gliders. They stream across the border every day and every night. They dump tons of trash and human feces in places that are set aside for their scenic beauty. They blaze hundreds of new roads and trails through fragile desert soils. They ruin habitats for endangered species and they start forest fires that consume hundreds of thousands of acres of forest and brush.

When I was visiting the Coronado National Forest not too long ago, I left there on a Sunday morning and a fire started by an illegal alien campsite had been left unattended after starting a warming fire in the evening, and then they walk on, and they leave the fire often times burning, it caught the rest of the brush on fire, and before I got back to Denver on the plane, before I got back to Denver, it had consumed 35,000 acres in the Coronado National Forest. We did not hear much about that. Even if we did, we probably only heard about the fire, but no one wanted to talk about how it started because this is a delicate subject. This is because people get very antsy, even here in this body, when we start talking about immigration and the impact of illegal immigration especially on the Nation.

The reason why I have divided this subject up into various component parts is because it is an enormous subject. It has enormous, massive implications, immigration, that is, for our Nation. I have often said that it will determine not just what kind of a Nation we will be in the future, that is divided and balkanized, it will determine whether or not we will be a Nation at all. And there are, as I say, implications of massive immigration into this country which are absolutely incredible and need to be talked about, need to be debated, even if it makes people uncomfortable. And certainly this is one part of it. This is just one part. That is the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I have been down to the border several times. I have been both to the northern and southern borders of the country. And the sites that I see are sites I wish many of my colleagues here on the floor would also see. Sites like this on Department of Interior wildland where new trails, abandoned vehicles, trash, and human waste are strewn. These are trails that you see all over that particular part of country. Trails like this. When you look on a trail map, by the way, there is no trail there on the map, because these are not official trails. These are all made by people walking through by the hundreds, by the thousands; in fact, by

the millions. Once they start these trails, they will use them for a couple of weeks, and then they think that we put sensors on them, and sometimes we do, the Border Patrol puts a sensor on there, so therefore what will happen is they will move over a little bit.

When you fly over this area, you look down and it looks like cobwebs that spread out from a particular area coming across the border, but it is really just the number of people that have come across by foot, by horse, even, as I say, bicycles sometimes, and often times by cars. Vehicles will be driving along a highway that is adjacent to a national park or some sort of protected site, we will say a national forest, and at some point in time they just decide this is it, and they will peel right off of the highway and start right through the forest. And so as you drive along that road, it may be a blacktop road, as you drive along you can see on both sides where people have simply driven off the road into the desert and, of course, are trying to take people into this country and drugs into this country illegally, and they have caused enormous damage to that environment.

They leave cars. Again, once they abandon the vehicle, once they take the drugs that they were carrying in or the people that they are carrying in and move them to a driven form of transportation, they usually abandon the vehicle. So if you fly over this area you will see literally hundreds and hundreds of abandoned vehicles in the desert rotting away. They leave clothes. They leave trash, water bottles like this in areas sometimes that encompass 50 or 60 acres and are knee-deep in trash. These are called pick-up sites. These sites are areas where people will come to on foot. They will come across the border on foot into the United States, and then they have been told where they should gather. And it is often on private land. It is often, however, in the middle of a national park or a national forest area. They gather and they wait to be picked up to be taken into the interior of the United States.

Sometimes these groups will be as large as several hundred. And over the course of about a month, many thousands will have gathered in one place, waiting for their transportation into the United States. And they are told by the people who bring them here, and often times we refer to these people as "coyotes," these are people paid by Mexican immigrants, primarily Mexicans, but certainly not entirely by Mexicans, paid by the immigrant coming into the country, the illegal, sometimes \$1,500, sometimes if the case is more difficult it gets more expensive, where in fact we have cases today where we are looking very carefully at people coming into the country from places like Iraq and Iran and all over the Middle East. These folks have to pay upwards of \$30,000 to have to be smuggled into the United States. So it has become a very big business.