

SUPPORTING AMERICAN PARITY
ACT

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I will introduce the American Parity Act which provides for American families, just as the supplemental appropriations which we approved last week provides for Iraqi families. It is simple, straightforward and fair. I already have 16 original cosponsors on the legislation.

Last week in the supplemental we provided \$1.7 billion for the reconstruction of Iraq. All we are asking for today is the same for America. The same goals that we establish for Iraq, we establish for American families here at home. I have gone and looked at some of the plans that the administration has for Iraq, post this war.

In Iraq, we are planning 20,000 units of housing to be reconstructed. Yet in the budget approved by this body, we have only 5,000 units of housing planned for America: 20,000 for Iraq and 5,000 for America. Under education, there will be 4 million Iraqi children guaranteed early childhood education. Yet in the budget approved by this body for American families, we are cutting 28,000 children from Head Start.

□ 2015

Twelve thousand and five hundred schools will be deprived of basic books and supplies; yet in America teachers have to take out of their wages the dollars to buy supplies for their kids. Twenty-five thousand schools will be reconstructed in Iraq; in America the budget provides not a single dollar for modernizing American schools, and 40 educational programs here in America have been zeroed out by the administration's budget.

Under the area of healthcare for Iraq, let us look at the agenda for Iraq's healthcare. Thirteen million Iraqis, half the Iraqi population, will be given universal healthcare. In America we have 50 million uninsured, not a single dollar dedicated to the working uninsured in America. Every major city in Iraq will get a hospital. We will have 100 percent maternity coverage for the Iraqi women; yet we are cutting \$100 billion from Medicaid where one out of three children are covered at birth. That is in the healthcare area.

Under infrastructure, 3,000 miles of roads for Iraq; yet we are cutting \$6 billion from our Highway Construction Budget and Trust Fund. We have

enough money to build a road from New York to California as it relates to Iraq; yet we are cutting our investment here in America. In the area of other infrastructure, there will be complete reconstruction, the only deep-water port in Iraq. In America our Corps of Engineers' budget will be cut by 10 percent under the administration's budget and under the budget passed by this Congress.

I support the reconstruction in Iraq. I think it is the right thing to do given what we have done there, what we need to do, the future we have to promise the Iraqi people; yet that should not come at the expense of the dreams of America's families.

This lays out every proposal that exists for Iraq versus what the budget the President and the Republican Congress proposed for America. I do not believe that the way we greet our soldiers when they come home is a smaller American dream, one that does not invest in healthcare, one that does not invest in America's schools, one that does not invest in America's roads, one that does not invest in America's housing.

In the last 3 years, the last 2 years, America has shed 2.5 million jobs, over 1 million manufacturing jobs. Four million more Americans have gone without healthcare who used to have healthcare. Nearly \$1 trillion worth of corporate assets have been foreclosed on, and 2 million Americans have gone from the middle class to poverty. That has been the economic agenda and the economic record of this administration. As Ronald Reagan used to say, facts are stubborn things, and those are our facts.

In my view maybe what we should do for Iraq is to cut their capital gains tax and see if they can grow their way out of this problem. If cutting taxes are so great for America, why do not we use that as the economic program for Iraq and bring all those investments home to America? Since it seems to be that the agenda and the strategy for Iraq is to invest in its schools, invest in its roads, invest in its housing, and invest in its healthcare which will give Iraqi families a better future than the past and in America we are going to get tax cuts on capital gains and tax cuts dedicated to the wealthy, why do we not give Iraq the tax cuts and get all these investments back here at home since it is supposed to be a promising future for the Iraqi people?

Again, I want to be clear. I am going to support the reconstruction of Iraq, but I will not support the two budgets, the supplemental and the budget the President has laid down for America, one that offers a brighter future for the Iraqi people than it does for the American people. Either America will be brought up to Iraq's standard or Iraq will come down to America's standard.

Ms. DELAUNO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman EMANUEL for his leadership on this important issue.

I think all of us can agree on the urgency with which we need to provide funding for both

the war in Iraq and the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. It is absolutely essential that Congress and the Administration provide our soldiers with the resources they need to see the Iraqi conflict through to its conclusion.

Equally indispensable is the United States' responsibility to play a key role in providing the funding necessary to the rebuilding of Iraq once the war is over. The goals outlined in President Bush's recently released reconstruction plan for Iraq—paying for Iraqis' health care services, education, transportation, and housing for millions of people—these are noble goals that will need to be met as soon as the last shot is fired.

But no less urgent are the needs we are facing today, right here at home. These are difficult times. More and more Americans are out of work—their families without health insurance. Many of our public schools are literally falling down. And we have homeland security and other serious infrastructure needs that we can no longer afford to ignore.

That is why Congressman EMANUEL's bill is so important. The American Parity Amendment would increase funding for urgent needs right here at home by \$1.7 billion. We are talking about critical investments in education, in first responders and health care. Investments in transportation and water infrastructure, in social services for seniors, and housing for low-income Americans—all of them crucial to rebuilding our country and revitalizing our economy.

What we are saying today is that it is important that we win the war and rebuild Iraq, but at a time when so many Americans are struggling, America is in need of a little post-war reconstruction, too.

Since passage of the President's tax bill two years ago, two and a half million more Americans have lost their jobs, with the number of Americans without health insurance rising by four million. A trillion dollars worth of corporate assets have been foreclosed on, and two million Americans have moved from the middle class into poverty.

And so in this legislation, states and localities would be eligible for funding according to their level of unemployment and how high it is compared to the national average, in addition to factors such as how long that state's unemployment rate has been that high, how large the state's population and what the average income is. This bill is designed to target the most vulnerable regions in the nation so that the funding is put to its best possible use.

Those localities are also under great pressure to meet their increasing homeland security needs. Cities and towns have already spent more than \$3 billion on homeland security improvements since September 11. But with states experiencing their worst fiscal crisis since World War II, it is altogether unlikely that these localities can count on their states to assist them with meeting these needs.

In fact, two weeks ago I met with first responders in my district to talk about their problems. Fire chiefs, police chiefs, and mayors, they all agreed on one thing—they are desperate for funding to upgrade equipment and to train volunteers on how to use that new equipment. The \$4.25 billion in homeland security funding in the supplemental this body passed last week is a good first step, but we need to do more, which is why this legislation is so sorely needed. It will get funds into the hands of the first responders who need them.

I am proud that we will take the lead in rebuilding Iraq, but like so many Americans, I think it is time that we rebuild America, too. We want our troops who are bravely serving our country abroad to come home to a revitalized economy—to an America that is stronger and more prepared to meet the many challenges before us.

None of us are under any illusions about the magnitude of those challenges. But we owe it to our troops and their families to be equally as realistic about the challenges that we face right here at home. Again, I would like to thank my colleague for his leadership on these issues.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my special order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the gentlewoman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

HONORING RANDY REHN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, this week I had to do the hardest thing that I have done since I have been in Congress. In our offices, in the rooms that we go into even for our hearings, the images of the war are on the TV. We have seen them now day after day. But this week those images became very personal to me. I received word that one of my constituents, Randy Rehn, from Longmont, Colorado, a young man serving his country in Iraq, lost his life. When I got the news, I wanted to call Randy's family and offer my sympathy. And when Randy's mother answered the phone, I got a lump in my throat that would not go away. I have a son about that age, and I thought of what his mother was feeling at that time, and as I talked to her, she told me that just 2 short years ago she lost Randy's father to cancer and so she was facing this crisis without him, but she said she was very thankful that her other children were there with her and were supporting her.

When we think about these losses, this war becomes very real to us. As I talked on to Randy's mother, she told me that he had a little daughter who is less than 1 year old. And tonight I would like to speak to little Megan, and I would like to say some things to her that will mean something to her when she is older and she can read this and she can understand. I would like to

say to little Megan tonight, the precious little girl that will have to grow up without her father, that your daddy was serving his country and he was doing what needed to be done for little children just like you, Megan.

I want Megan to know that her dad is a hero. I want her to know that he was doing a job that was extremely hard to do, and he was doing it willingly, and I am sure he was well aware that there were sacrifices to be made. So tonight, Megan, I want to say to you that your daddy laid down his life for others, especially little children like you.

The Scripture says that our God will be a Father to the fatherless, and I just pray a special blessing on your little life, Megan, that God will bless you and your family, and I want you to always remember that your daddy was a hero and we love our soldiers who serve this country, who lay down their lives.

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

(Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE AMERICAN PARITY ACT

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to join the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) and my other colleagues to talk about some of the choices that we now face in this country as illustrated by this chart. I know that all of us were pleased to see the reaction by the people of Baghdad today as the regime of Saddam Hussein crumbles. I know that all of us are so proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces who have conducted themselves with courage and character. And while it is certainly true that many difficult and dangerous days may lie ahead, it is important that as a Congress and as a country, we now begin to think about the future.

We have made a promise to the people of Iraq that we will not abandon them, that the United States will continue to provide security and help them to rebuild their country. We must and we will fulfill those promises. But, Mr. Speaker, what about the promises made to the American people? After all, American soldiers are fighting this war and the American taxpayers are funding it. Does it not make sense that the American people should not be forgotten in all of this?

Last week this Congress approved \$1.7 billion to fund the rebuilding of Iraq from schools to roads and bridges to hospitals to clean water, \$1.7 billion. Meanwhile, in the Republican budget for 2004, the American people are being shortchanged. While Iraq will receive hospitals, maternity care, and access

to health services, not one new dollar is spent on 42 million uninsured Americans. While Iraq will have nearly 3,000 miles of their major roads repaired, the Republicans cut the American Transportation budget by \$6 billion. And perhaps most outrageously, while we pay to rebuild or renovate 25,000 Iraqi schools, the Republican budget contains not one dime for school construction or modernization in the United States. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we do not even have a school construction and modernization program in this country. The Republicans keep voting it down. Meanwhile, here in the Alice in Wonderland House of Representatives, the Republicans are insisting, insisting, on keeping their \$750 billion tax giveaway to the wealthiest Americans. Tax cuts for the wealthy while our deficit is exploding, while veterans' benefits are slashed, while millions of Americans lose their jobs, while States are facing their worst fiscal crises since World War II, while millions of seniors struggle to pay for their prescription drugs, while local communities across the country are laying off police officers and teachers and firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, the priorities of the majority leadership of this House are just wrong. I am pleased to be an original co-sponsor of the gentleman from Illinois' (Mr. EMANUEL) bill, the American Parity Act, which attempts to restore some balance to our budgetary process, and I believe that this bill is a better expression of the priorities of the people I represent in Massachusetts. Indeed, I think it is a better expression of the priorities of the majority of people in this country.

It is important for us to live up to our promises to help the Iraqi people. America must be a Nation that keeps its word, and we will, as this chart points out, and as we voted last week by approving the supplemental appropriations billing. For example, also, as co-chair of the Congressional Hunger Center, I am especially concerned that the necessary food and other humanitarian assistance gets to the Iraqi people who need it as quickly as possible, and we need to be there to make sure that that happens. We must rebuild Iraq, but we must rebuild America as well, and I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure we do that.

Mr. Speaker, we can do much better for the people of this country than the Republican budget puts forward. Our people in this country deserve the same attention to the issues of education, healthcare, infrastructure, transportation that we are giving to the people of Iraq. Again, we support rebuilding Iraq. We support keeping our promises, but we are also insisting that we keep our promises to the American people.

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