

that position. He had seen something in me that I had not seen in myself. Our personal relationship became even closer when we traveled together to Israel in the 1980s. He became like a second father to me.

He later encouraged me to run for the second highest position in the State of Maryland House of Delegates, Speaker pro tempore. He was the first person to encourage me to run for Congress in 1996. I recount these personal influences because Clarence Blount's impact upon my life was not unique. He touched everybody he could. He never ceased being a teacher who found his greatest reward in the accomplishments of his students.

About a year and a half ago, Clarence Blount and I were both asked to speak at a neighborhood housing event in the Ashburton section of Baltimore. I thanked him for being such a magnificent and significant part of my life, for seeing qualities in me that I had not realized in myself. I also thanked him for fighting for our neighborhoods in Baltimore and for giving our communities a voice in Annapolis.

So, Mr. Speaker, I stand today to salute a great American who came up through difficult times, an ordinary man called to an extraordinary mission.

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

Mr. TIAHRT. addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### EXPANSION OF MANDATE OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE-VETERANS AFFAIRS JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill that would greatly expand the mandate of the Department of Defense-Veterans Affairs Joint Executive Committee. This committee would be tasked to oversee the realm of collaborative efforts of not just health, but also benefits and other areas to promote increased resource sharing between the two departments.

While statutory authority to allow resource sharing has existed for more than 20 years, the latest figures tell us that the level of sharing between the VA and DOD remains relatively low. The Federal Government can and must do more to increase resource sharing whenever and wherever feasible.

This bill would allow the Joint Executive Committee to identify changes in policies, to improve services, efficiencies and opportunities for collaboration in order to deliver benefits and services to beneficiaries of both departments. Inefficiencies and duplication

not only waste taxpayer dollars, they shortchange military personnel, retirees and veterans seeking the services offered by VA and DOD.

I believe the expansion of this Joint Executive Committee would facilitate necessary discussions and decisions that will ultimately lead to greater efficiencies within and between the two departments. I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) of the Veterans Affairs Committee for his cooperation in developing this very important piece of legislation. It is time that these departments seize the opportunity and take full advantage of the benefits that come from sharing their extensive resources.

#### EXTENDING THE TEMPORARY EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the many hard-working families in our country that cannot make ends meet as this economy slows and the job market continues to weaken.

□ 1615

These families are the main reason we must absolutely extend the temporary emergency unemployment compensation program, TEUC; and they are the reason we must do it now. With the current high unemployment rate of 5.8 percent, unemployment benefits are the same as when the TEUC program was first established in March of 2002, over a year ago, and reextended in January, 2003. Just last week the Department of Labor reported that new applications for unemployment insurance hit the high number of 455,000 applicants for the week ending April 19. This is the highest level in more than a year. And it does not count families who have exhausted their benefits and still are not working.

Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, millions of workers had exhausted their regular unemployment benefits which continues the pattern of the past 24 months, where the numbers of unemployed workers receiving aid is absolutely and actually increasing. Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there is a real need for unemployed worker relief in this Nation, but we do not need numbers and we do not need statistics to alert us to this growing problem. Just listen to the words from letters I have received from my constituents in the Sixth Congressional District of California. And when the Members hear their words, they will know that there is immediacy for additional unemployment insurance benefits, and they will know that it is important that people in districts like mine, Marin and Sonoma Counties, where the unemployment is not as dire

as some other areas in the country, still have needs as well as the rest of the Nation.

One constituent writes: "I have a master's degree and have not been able to find work. I also deal with a chronic illness. I find myself applying for food stamps and soon will be unable to pay any bills. I'm not sure I will have a roof over my head before long. A lot of people are having a very difficult time. Please try to make unemployment benefits a top priority."

Another writes: "I have been actively seeking work since the end of March, 2002, without success. I am a 55-year-old man who has never had a problem staying fully employed until this year. I have never before been affected by the reluctance of employers to hire older people. That, coupled with the stagnant economy, has made my ability to earn a living terrifyingly difficult. Unemployment compensation has kept food on my table for my family, but I worry what will happen next month."

These letters show how desperately workers need help. They need help just to keep their heads above water so their families can have the food and shelter they need to be healthy and safe, so their families can eat while their parents continue to search for work.

It is important that this Congress take action to make sure no family goes without basic needs like food or money for bills. That is why I support the gentleman from New York's (Congressman RANGEL) bill, H.R. 1652, the Unemployment Benefits Extension Act. This would provide 26 weeks of extended benefits through November, 2003. The consideration of this bill is critical as many unemployed workers once again find themselves reaching the end of unemployment benefits. If these benefits are not extended, in most States workers exhausting their regular benefits after May 31 of this year will receive no further assistance.

Extending these benefits would also give the economy a boost, Mr. Speaker, because unemployed workers would have money for purchases. Otherwise, without these benefits, these workers, unemployed workers, will have to curtail their spending, which would weaken the economy and continue the domino effect, causing even more job loss.

Economy.com analysis found that extension of the Federal unemployment insurance benefits would be the single most effective action that Congress could take now to boost the economy and protect jobs.

#### TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to comment on some recent developments in the Middle East.

Yesterday President Bush, the United States, and others in the so-called "quartet" presented a roadmap for Middle East peace. There has been a lot of talk about the roadmap, a lot of euphoria about a new Palestinian leadership with Abu Mazen; but I wanted to take some time just to backstep a little bit and, in this rush to euphoria, talk about some very, very serious things.

Everyone wants peace in the Middle East, and everyone knows that ultimately the key to peace is having two states side by side, Israel as a Jewish state and a Palestinian state side by side with security. The question is how do we get there? Oslo, which many of us supported, ultimately was a failure; and in my opinion it was a failure because Yasser Arafat's feet were never held to the fire. There were promises. There was empty rhetoric. There was saying one thing in English that sounded good and quite another thing in Arabic to the Palestinians that did not talk about peace; and we looked the other way because we so much wanted peace between Israelis and Palestinians that we never made Arafat's actions live up to his speech.

We should not make the same mistake again. Yes, there is a new Palestinian prime minister named Abu Mazen; and, yes, there is a modicum of hope that Abu Mazen will be a moderate. But the fact of the matter is as long as there is terrorism in the Middle East, as long as there is no Palestinian crackdown on suicide bombers or on terrorism, as long as terrorism is still attempted to be used as a negotiating tool by the Palestinian side, there can never really be peace.

At the end of the Oslo process, there was a proposal put forth. The proposal was two states side by side and the Palestinians were offered 100 percent of Gaza, 97 percent of the West Bank, a state of their own, billions of dollars of international aid; and Yasser Arafat turned down the deal. Not only did he turn it down and not offer a counterproposal, but he unleashed the Intifada and thought he could use terrorism as a negotiating tool. If that happens again, the roadmap will go the way of Oslo, which is nowhere.

So what needs to happen here is there needs to be a crackdown on terror. There needs to be a real visible, sustained antiterrorism effort on the part of Abu Mazen and the Palestinians. It is no coincidence that three hours after the roadmap was announced there was another suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, which killed three innocent people and injured 40-some-odd other innocents. This cannot be left to stand. We have to judge Abu Mazen by seeing if he really cracks down on terrorism. That has to be first.

I believe that the roadmap should be performance based, not time based. A Palestinian state projection is in 2004 and then in 2005 the final status. That should happen only if the Palestinians live up to their agreements, which they

had not done previously under Oslo. Once terrorism is stopped, then the Israelis can make the concessions that are also necessary in order to have a just and viable peace. But let me make it clear, there cannot be negotiations or Israeli concessions while terrorism is still being used as a negotiating tool.

Let me also talk a little bit about Syria. I am the author of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, and we call to the Syrians to stop their support for international terror. Hezbollah, which is in Lebanon's south/Israel's northern border, is used as a proxy by Syria to continue its support of terrorism. Hezbollah is the group which bombed U.S. Marines in 1983 and killed more than 200 of our Marines in Beirut. Syria must stop its support for international terrorism. Syria is on the list of countries of our State Department which supports international terrorism. Syria has been on that State Department list since the inception of the list in 1979, and yet it is the only country with which we have normal diplomatic relations on that list. That makes no sense. So the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 calls on Syria to stop its support for terrorism, to end its occupation of Lebanon, and to end the continuation of its production of weapons of mass destruction.

We also know that Syria is harboring some of the Saddam Hussein crowd which has fled Iraq and is in Syria, and we also know that during the war in Iraq the Syrians allowed all kinds of armaments and weapons and night goggles and other things to pass through Syria into Iraq to be used against U.S. forces.

President Bush has gotten tough with Syria. Colin Powell is visiting Syria. We hope he tells the Syrians to stop their support of terrorism.

#### WALL STREET ROBBER BARONS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I have never met New York's Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, but on behalf of the citizens of Ohio, I want to thank him. The people of New York should be very proud of their Attorney General, Mr. Spitzer, for he is bringing to justice the robber barons of Wall Street who stole the money in our 401(k)s, who lied to our shareholders about the worth of various investments, who issued fraudulent reports about the value of stocks, and frankly destroyed a great deal of the confidence of our people in our so-called free markets. In fact, some might say they have been a free-for-all market. Some might say what these Wall Street fellows have done is a big heist, a big heist right out of people's pocketbooks and a big heist right out of people's dividends. Because of work that he did, and our Securities and Ex-

change Commission following behind, the regulators found fault with every single investment banking firm on Wall Street.

I want to include in the RECORD much of what they said: "Analysts wittingly duped investors to curry favor with certain corporate clients. Investment houses received secret payments from companies they gave strong recommendations to buy. And for top executives whose companies were clients, stock underwriters offered special access to hot initial public offerings."

It really is staggering, when we think about the recession that we are in, about the malfunctioning of our own stock markets which lie at the heart of this free enterprise system that has been hijacked time and again.

□ 1630

It started with Enron. Then we saw WorldCom. Then it was Tyco. Now it is every single money manager on Wall Street that has your money.

So far, they have been fined as follows: \$400 million is to be paid by Citigroup; \$200 million each by Credit Suisse and Merrill Lynch, which included an earlier Merrill settlement of \$100 million in fines; \$100 million in fines by Goldman Sachs; \$80 million in fines by Bear Stearns; \$80 million by JP Morgan; and fines of the same amount to Lehman and to UBS Warburg; \$32.5 million in fines by Piper Jaffray. These are names we see advertised in our newspapers. They have got enough money to buy ads all over the country, yet they take your hard-earned money and they gamble it away.

I have to ask myself as a Member of Congress, I am not going to trust those folks with the Social Security funds of this country. Do not tell me to put our people's hard-earned dollars in that stock market that you cannot trust from one day to the next, and do not ask this Member of Congress to vote for a Bush administration tax scheme that rewards some of the same fellows that just ran away with our money in our own equity market. Why was not anybody watching? Why did it take so long?

Now, they tell you anything to get your money. That is what Mr. Spitzer found. And they did tell you anything to get your money. The news articles really say everything. What jumps off the page in the documents is the Wall Street firms' utter, utter disregard for the individual investor in pursuit of their own personal benefit. These are institutions that are supposed to be working for us, and they all, not one, not two, all, the major firms on Wall Street failed the American people.

One investor told a colleague he was trying to make the company look good with his questions. A few moments later he said, "We got paid for it, and I am going to Cancun tomorrow because of what I did." That is someone that took your money.