

stand, especially those heroes from south Texas: Kino Flores, Jim Solis, Rene Oliveira, Aaron Pena, Miguel Wise, Ryan Guillen and Juan Escobar. We support them.

ARMED FORCES DAY

(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. This weekend is Armed Forces Day, and are not our men and women in uniform doing a great job.

I hear all this talk about the Texas Legislature. We have got a lot of deserters down there, the guys that are afraid to stand and fight like our armed services do.

Fox TV said, and I thought it was pretty good, and I paraphrase, they said, Are you not a Texas legislator? The guy answered yes. He said, Well, what are you doing in Ardmore, Oklahoma? The legislature meets in Austin, Texas.

It is a shame that we cannot have formal debate in our capital in Texas. Thank God we did not have those Democrats at the Alamo. God bless them.

TEXANS STANDING UP FOR PRINCIPLE

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

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I had some prepared remarks, but in response to my colleague's remarks about these 53 individuals not being at the Alamo, I would say this. They are exhibiting the same type of courage and bravery that the defenders of the Alamo exhibited on that eventful day. They are standing up for principle. They are saying our voices will be heard.

We are duly elected representatives of equal status with every member of the majority party in that Texas Legislature, and what the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) has attempted to do is export a corrupt and unfair system that in which we engage in this House floor to the Texas floor, and we have 53 brave and courageous Democrats that are saying, no, we will not allow the gentleman to export that kind of divisive political game into our House of Representatives.

So I applaud and I commend these individuals, and it is time that someone would say something. After all, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) has indicated that Democrats are irrelevant. Each one of us in this Chamber represents the same number of people. Since when is anyone irrelevant in the Texas House of Representatives or the United States Congress?

CELEBRATING FUNNY CIDE'S RUN

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the accomplishments of a man from my hometown in Marion County, Florida, the Sixth Congressional District, because Tony Everard has been training horses in Marion County for over 35 years.

He purchased a remarkable horse, a gelding, in 2001 in Saratoga, New York, and he trained it, but on May 3, this horse became champion at the pinnacle of horse racing, the Kentucky Derby.

His horse, Funny Cide, beat the odds with a stunning victory over favored Empire Maker and Peace Rules before more than 140,000 people at Churchill Downs, and none could be cheering louder than Tony and Beth, who named the champion gelding.

Funny Cide became the fourth Derby winner since 1997 to emerge from the Marion County breeding and training industry. I am proud of the long-standing heritage of horse training in my district. Tony and his wife Beth deserve many accolades for their work with Funny Cide and many champions to come.

PENSION REFORM LEGISLATION

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, today the House will debate H.R. 1000, the Pension Security Act, and the bill has an appropriate number because it will make employees 1,000 times worse off than they are today.

We need real pension reform that protects the pensions of all the workers and gives more protections to employees with 401(k) accounts. Real pension reform must include independent investment advice for 401(k) investors, the ability to diversify company-matched stocks within a year, and a voice for employees on pension boards.

Real pension reform must also include language that would require companies that are converting to cash balance plans to ensure that older workers receive the same amount of benefits they would have received under their existing defined benefit plan.

As the President has said, what is good for the captain is good for the crew. The bill as it is currently written allows executives to sell off their stock while the ship is sinking, while the workers see their retirement savings disappear.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the pension insecurity act.

PRINCIPLE ABOVE PARTISANSHIP

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

Mr. TURNER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as a former member of the Texas Sen-

ate and the Texas House, I know the value that the 53 Texas Democrats who are in Ardmore, Oklahoma, today place on the proud tradition of placing principle above partisanship. When the Republican leader of the Texas House agreed to the political handiwork of the majority leader of the U.S. House, he abandoned a tradition that has served Texas well.

When Texas House Republicans drew a redistricting map without public hearings, behind closed doors, a map handed to them by Washington, they trampled on a tradition in Texas, and they trampled on bipartisanship, which has always been the hallmark of the Texas Legislature.

In Texas, the name Texan has always meant more than Democrat or Republican. The Texas Democrats from my area, Jim McReynolds, Chuck Hopson, Dan Ellis and Joe Deshotel, were denied the right to protect the interests of rural east Texas. They were shut out of the process, and they joined in breaking a quorum, a regular feature of American politics, practiced by none other than Abraham Lincoln as a member of the Illinois Legislature in 1840 when he had to do so when he was under the heavy hand of the majority.

All Texans who believe in fair play owe a debt of gratitude to our Texas legislators who have said to Washington today, Do not mess with Texas.

IS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION UNPATRIOTIC?

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

Mr. BELL. Mr. Speaker, I find it appalling that the majority leader of this body can in one breath suggest that our Texas heroes, the 53 men and women of conviction currently in Ardmore, Oklahoma, are unpatriotic and in the next breath suggest the Federal authorities be brought in to force them to pass someone's own political agenda, because what the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) suggested yesterday is unpatriotic is actually an impressive example of the very fabric that holds this Nation together. It is everything our fathers and grandfathers have fought and died for in two great wars.

Mr. Speaker, is freedom of expression unpatriotic? Is the freedom to take a stand against recklessness unpatriotic? Mr. Speaker, when Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of the bus, was that unpatriotic? The willingness to take a stand for what is right is what defines America.

I would like to applaud my Democratic colleagues in the Texas House from Houston for having the courage to stand up to the gentleman from Texas' (Mr. DELAY) political agenda: Garnett Coleman, Rick Noriega, Jessica Farrar, Scott Hochberg, Joe Deshotel, Kevin Bailey, Harold Dutton, Joe Moreno and Senfronia Thompson. They are heroes, and the people of Texas are with them.

COURAGE OF CONVICTION

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, because of the courage of conviction of 53 Texas legislators who broke a Texas House quorum on Monday morning, 20 million Texas citizens will have the right to have their voices heard in shaping the future of their hometown communities, to have their voices heard in our democracy.

I salute these 53 profiles in courage. They have unselfishly stood up for Texas citizens and open government in our State, members like David Farabee, Patrick Rose; from my district in Waco, John Mabry and Jim Dunnam; Joe Pickett and Pete Gallego.

Mr. Speaker, while most Americans were honoring their mothers on Sunday, Mother's Day, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and Tom Craddick in Austin were plotting and planning a secret map that would have destroyed, literally devastated, historic communities of interest all across Texas. This slick plan was to pass out of the Texas House at 10 a.m. on Monday morning after Mother's Day.

This Mother's Day massacre plan was only stopped because of the courage of these 53 legislators who said secret government in shaping the future of our State for the next decade was wrong. These Members were right. I salute these soldiers of democracy.

REMEMBER THE ALAMO

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

To those who say that these Texas State representatives essentially "took their marbles and went home," remember that this game was fixed by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) before these folks ever had a chance to play.

To our colleague who dared mention the heroes of the Alamo, (Mr. JOHNSON of Texas) it takes far more courage to put your political life on the line than to follow like sheep. And how ironic, it was William Barrett Travis who drew that line in the sand at the Alamo, and it is the county named for him that is being sliced and split apart like never before in the history of our great State.

Desertion, yes. The people of Texas were deserted when TOM's buddies refused to have redistricting hearings around the State and listen to the people and when my neighbors in Travis County were locked out of those hearings and then ignored. That is the real desertion that these brave Texans—Dawnna Dukes, Eddie Rodriguez, El-

liott Naishtat, and their colleagues are fighting in Ardmore, Oklahoma, this morning.

H.R. 919, HOMETOWN HEROES SURVIVORS BENEFITS ACT

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, as we pause to remember this week our law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice, I rise to pay tribute to our Nation's finest. These are our hometown heroes, and all they ask is that we provide them with quality equipment and for someone to care for their families should tragedy strike.

Too often the families of public safety officers killed by heart attacks or strokes while performing their duties are denied the public safety officers benefit that they so richly deserve.

I have introduced, H.R. 919, the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act, to right this wrong. This bipartisan piece of legislation will provide this benefit to the families of public safety officers who are killed by a heart attack or stroke in the line of duty. H.R. 919 has 163 cosponsors, and it is endorsed by a number of organizations.

Mr. Speaker, as we observe National Law Enforcement Memorial Week, I urge all my colleagues to join me in honoring our law enforcement officers and all of our hometown heroes by supporting H.R. 919.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION BENEFITS

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, come May 31, unemployment compensation benefits are going to run out or expire for over 1 million workers in America who have lost their jobs. Last week this House passed a whopping tax break for the wealthiest 5 percent in our country, but nothing for the unemployed.

If we really want to stimulate the economy, let us put some money in the pockets of laid-off workers. Let us put some milk in the baby's mouth and some bread on the table. Let us extend benefits for the unemployed.

CONGRATULATING THE 53 TEXAS STATE LEGISLATORS

(Ms. DEGETTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress from a State where last week the legislature, controlled by the Republican Party, suspended every rule in the legislature,

suspended the Colorado Constitution and without any public hearing whatsoever completely changed the congressional boundaries in Colorado, I think there are no more courageous people in this country right now than the 53 Texas State legislators who went to Ardmore, Oklahoma, and if there is anybody in this body who thinks that it is a fair process that they are contemplating in Texas, they should just look at what happened in Colorado last year.

After the last census in Colorado, the legislature was unable to come up with congressional lines, so the court drew the lines. The election was held. The election was fair, and there were seven representatives elected in Colorado. Now, with no warning in the last 3 days of the congressional session, the Colorado Legislature completely changed the lines. There were no public hearings. There was an hour of testimony taken. All of the rules were suspended, including the rule in the State senate for recorded votes so people would know how their senators voted.

If anybody thinks the Texas Legislature led by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) was thinking fairly, they are wrong.

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TEXAS LEGISLATURE

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

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of serving 14 years in the Texas House; and the Texas prisons were under the control of the Federal courts, the public school system there is under the control of the State courts, the mental health system is under the control of the courts. We have advocated in Texas control over too many functions of government to the courts. As a Member of the legislature, I fought tenaciously to regain control over those institutions.

This redistricting discussion is one that the legislature is constitutionally obligated to do. The legislature has held hearings, as they are supposed to do. Anyone with an idea on how to change boundaries can submit those suggestions to the legislature. For the Texas State legislators to have shut down the entire legislative process really shows utter desperation. Frankly, they have resorted to the political equivalent of suicide bombing and blowing up the entire legislative process rather than debating, as they should, on the floor.

I got out and voted in the 14 years I was there regularly, fighting an income tax the Democrats created. I was beat and defeated on that vote. Republicans were defeated on many, many votes throughout the years. We never walked out. We never left. They have a duty to do their job. They ought to be back in Austin taking care of the people's business.