

the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives the case of Cuban political prisoner Jorge Luis Garcia Perez, known as Antunez.

This young man has been in Castro's gulag since 1990, since his high school days, for failing to keep silent. An extraordinary leader of unlimited courage, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez was sentenced to 18 years in prison for so-called "verbal enemy propaganda."

Antunez, Mr. Speaker, is the face of the real Cuba.

Those who visit Cuba to have a good time, to take advantage of the regime-encouraged child prostitution, or simply to dine with the tyrant, may avoid seeing Antunez these days. But, sooner or later, Antunez will be free, Cuba will be free, and those who collaborated with his jailers and torturers will have to face him and many others like him.

COVERUP ON IRAQ DAMAGING LEGITIMACY OF GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, protection of the truth and the constitutional role of Congress as a coequal branch should not be a partisan matter. Yet yesterday Republicans on the House Committee on International Relations participated in the cover-up of the Bush administration's false claims which sent America to war against Iraq.

The resolution of inquiry, backed by 40 Members of the House, sought to protect Congress' role in asking the administration where is the proof that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction; where was proof of an imminent threat.

Unfortunately, as panic sets in over the realization that this administration misled the American people in the cause of war, Republicans are refusing to hold public hearings, refusing serious oversight, open oversight. Republicans just will not make Republicans accountable. That is the problem with one-party rule.

Our democracy is in danger if we do not make this administration accountable. They sent this country into war based on lies and in doing so have damaged the legitimacy of their own government. Where are the weapons of mass destruction? Where was the imminent threat? Why did America go to war?

AMERICA, A LIBERATING NATION

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Popular representation, Mr. Speaker, in our constitutional Republic is a wonderful thing. It has led some to say that the preceding speaker in the well would make a good President. It has led others to say that the preceding speaker in the well would make a good President of France.

The fact remains, Mr. Speaker, that the United States of America rose up against a tyrant, not only because of weapons of mass destruction, but because the tyrant himself was a weapon of mass destruction. Take a look at the mass graves, the children buried with their dolls, the millions of people who were sacrificed by the regime of Saddam Hussein. And yet there are those, earnest in their intent, to tell us somehow that this Nation is evil, to go to sloganeering: "No blood for oil." The fact remains, historically it was that tyrant who invaded Kuwait for oil, it was that tyrant who went to war with Iran for oil.

The fact is, the United States of America is a liberating Nation, not a conquering Nation. We stand here unashamedly rejoicing in that fact.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.

REPEAL OF DEATH TAX TO LIVING AMERICANS

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

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, today this House will continue its discussion of the repeal of the estate tax, the so-called "death tax." But, in fact, this bill is a continuation of policies that will hurt living Americans.

Let me give one example. From this month's magazine back home, "Aging Arkansas," referring to the last tax cut passed by this House: "Tax cut bleeds seniors. Yet Republican leaders come forward once again to shrink, wither and dry up government."

And what is government? It is what this article talks about, programs that older Americans have taken for granted.

Today in Arkansas, a few of the wealthiest Americans will benefit from this repeal of the estate tax, but tens of thousands of other Arkansan seniors will be hurt.

REPEAL OF ESTATE TAX NECESSARY NOW

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

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, my constituent Mary Ann wrote me about the effect of the estate tax on her family's farm. Her mother's family owned that farm for five generations. Mary Ann promised her mother it

would stay in the family for generations to come. After her parents passed away, Mary Ann was faced with the high cost of the estate tax on the valuable family land she had inherited. Sadly, the family had to part with the farm in part due to the death tax.

Examples such as this have become far too common in my district and across this great Nation. The estate tax has devastated numerous family farms and businesses. It discourages entrepreneurship, thrift, and diligence.

We should not penalize an individual's efforts to make life better for their children. I am opposed to the government taxing anyone's property simply because the owner has died. The time has come to permanently repeal the estate tax.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in ending the death tax once and for all.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AND IRS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

(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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the Taxpayer Protection and IRS Accountability Act.

I was pleased to see the inclusion of language that abates interest on erroneous tax refunds. This is language nearly identical to my Erroneous Tax Refund Fairness Act.

I had to deal with this very issue a few years ago when I tried to return an erroneous refund. Actually the IRS put into my bank account \$66,000 more than I was supposed to get back, so my husband called and said we want to return this \$66,000. They would not take it. My CPA called and said we would like to return the \$66,000. They would not take it. I called them and said I need to return the \$66,000. They would not take it.

Four months later, they finally took it back. Two weeks later they sent us another check for \$66,000. A short time after that, after we finally got the \$66,000 back to the IRS, I was billed by the IRS for the interest on the money, even though I had not earned any. So I applaud this bill for including this language.

FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY IN IRAN

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, in the past week, in scenes reminiscent of Eastern Europe in the last days of the Soviet domination, students in Tehran took to the streets in protest against Iran's brutal, repressive government. They were a vivid reminder that a lot of Iranians want more freedom in how they live their lives.

But it was not just students demonstrating. On Sunday, several hundred intellectuals, including several clerics, issued a statement supporting the right of Iranians to criticize the government. These patriots do not want to be told what to think, what to wear, what to read, what to watch, how to behave; and they are frustrated at the slow pace of change.

The demonstrations are evidence enough that freedom-loving people in Iran are growing in numbers and boldness.

Instead of complaining about what we have not found in the Middle East countries, let us appreciate what we have found, people longing for the same freedoms that we enjoy.

REPEAL THE DEATH TAX

(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. Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a more unfair and immoral tax than the death tax.

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It is fundamentally wrong to tax a person their entire life and then, upon death, have the IRS take up to 60 percent of what they have saved. This is a cruel tax that punishes people for working hard and saving enough to pass something on to their children.

This tax has hit the Palmetto State very hard, as in South Carolina, 1,518 death tax returns were filed in 2001. As a former probate attorney, I have seen firsthand where those who inherit family businesses or farms are forced to lay off workers, cut salaries, liquidate assets, or even take out loans to keep the doors open.

Thanks to President Bush's leadership, we have passed legislation that would end the death tax, but only temporarily. I urge my colleagues to support the bill of the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN), H.R. 8, the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2003. We must make this repeal permanent and end this unfair tax.

In conclusion, God bless our troops.

SUPPORT H.R. 660, THE SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT

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

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House has a chance to help out over 20 million uninsured workers that are employed by small businesses across our Nation. H.R. 660, the Small Business Health Fairness Act, will allow small employers to band together to access more affordable, more efficient health insurance for their companies.

This bill will help small business owners like Kevin Maxwell from my

district in Midlothian, Virginia. Earlier this year, Mr. Maxwell wrote to me about the escalating health care costs for his employees. He is a partner in a small petroleum parts sales company, employing about 13 people. Mr. Maxwell told me that the health insurance costs will increase from \$1,100 to \$1,400 per month, per family. Two or three years of these types of increases will very quickly force Mr. Maxwell to stop offering health care to his employees.

As a small businessman, Kevin pays more because he does not have the insurance purchasing power that large companies have.

According to the National Federation of Independent Businesses, small businesses pay 17 percent more for health benefits than large companies. That price disparity forces small companies to make tough choices about the benefits they offer.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud people like Kevin Maxwell. It has not been easy, but help is on the way.

PRIVATIZING MEDICARE IS A BAD IDEA

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, last night the House began the process of privatizing Medicare. The Committee on Ways and Means put out a bill, and it has a provision in it that says, by the year 2010, we are going to take away the guaranteed benefit that people have under Medicare, and we are going to give them a defined contribution.

Now, that is a voucher under any other name. They call it premium support. They will try and confuse people. It is wrapped inside the drug bill so people will say, well, we want the prescription drug benefit. If you take it the way the Republicans are giving it to you in the House of Representatives, you have to accept that they are privatizing Medicare.

Now, that is a concept that people simply do not understand what that means. Give \$5,000 to every one of the 40 million old people in this country and send them out looking for a loving insurance company to take care of them. It is a bad idea. People should wake up and see what is happening in the next week.

This rubber stamp Congress is going to put that bill out of here so that they can go home over the 4th of July and say, we gave you prescription drugs. They are going to give you privatized Medicare with it.

MEDICARE REFORM IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE FOR SENIORS

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

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of a Medicare reform that will actually help our seniors.

The Republican House, along with the Senate, have worked on plans that will help provide prescription drug coverage to seniors. I have spent the last year in my district in western Pennsylvania in different forums with groups telling me what they need.

What we know in Pennsylvania is that prescription drug assistance is necessary. We have been giving it to low-income seniors for years. However, middle income seniors, those who one would think are fairly well off, are finding it very difficult to pay for these prescription drugs.

What I learned in those forums is we need to help them. Our plan does this. It makes sure that catastrophic expenses for prescription drugs are going to be covered for these senior citizens.

We also improve Medicare, making sure that it provides proper access to home health care, so that families can stay together in their later years.

Mr. Speaker, our goal is to make sure that the quality of life for our seniors is better, that they can have access to prescription drugs which they can pay for. That is our goal. That is what we are going to give in our plan.

SOME WILL NOT TAKE YES FOR AN ANSWER

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I was amazed to hear the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) speak in this Chamber just a few short moments ago and use the word "cover-up" to describe the action that we took in the House Committee on International Relations yesterday. The truth is that some Democrats just will not take yes for an answer.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) offered a resolution asking for the White House to turn over all information relative to the weapons of mass destruction for inspection by the Congress. The White House, at the urging of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, is doing just that. All documentation on the WMD program of Iraq will be available to every Member of Congress at the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

We rejected the Kucinich resolution because it was mute, as the ranking Democrat member of the Committee on International Relations says.

It is not a cover-up, Mr. Speaker. Some Democrats just will not take yes for an answer.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, lately there has been a stir, a desperate grasp for press attention, to form an inquiry into the Bush administration's knowledge of weapons of mass destruction.