

Maine's direction on this issue. While we may disagree and the parties may disagree on the policy issues, let me tell the Members I think we both have a love for this country, both are trying to do the right thing. We may have different approaches to it, but I know he has a good heart; and I appreciate his service here in Congress.

Let me point out that we care very much about working families and their children, so much so that in the last few years we have taken nearly 4 million families on the lower-income level and completely absolved them from the Federal income taxes, just said they do not have to pay Federal income taxes at all; so much so that now almost 30 percent of Americans fall into that category, which is a record high for those who do not have and do not owe Federal income tax. And in the tax relief plan for families that do pay Federal income taxes, we gave them a credit, helped them pay for raising children because things are so expensive. We reduced the marriage penalty because it simply was wrong to tax people more simply because they were married. This has been a great help for working families with children.

For those who pay income taxes, we said we want less of them to pay these taxes. So we expanded the 10 percent, the very lowest tax rate so more and more people would pay less of their Federal income taxes. And then for all the other working families, we said, look, Washington takes too much their money to pay for those \$900 toilet seats and those \$300 hammers and for those hundreds of programs that duplicate each other. We think the best way to get this economy going is to leave the money in their pockets, the best way to help small business hire new workers and keep them on is to put more money back into those small businesses. We knew that the best way to pay off this debt and get this budget balanced again is to get people back to work again by giving them the power of their own paycheck. So this Republican House and this President have bent over backward in record ways to make sure that working families with children can make ends meet better.

But make no mistake about our policy and principle. Our principle is income tax relief should go to those who pay income taxes. So the child tax credit is targeted to those who owe Federal income taxes. So much do we provide relief that for those who do not owe any Federal income taxes whatsoever, we already provide them tax credits, help, checks from their neighbors, from their paycheck to help them. We call it the earned income tax credit. We even provide some refundability, some more checks from their neighbors to help them with their children. So not only for those working families do we say they do not owe Federal income taxes but other neighbors say we will pay their payroll taxes, we will pay their share of Social Security, we will pay their share of Medicare, we will

pay their share of unemployment, we will pay for reduced and free school lunches because their kids do need to eat. We will pay for free health care. We think it is important that their children are healthy. We will pay for free public transportation because we want their children to have opportunities.

This is a very caring America. We care for families who are low income, but we care for working families who make a little more than that. For the cafeteria worker who provides the free school lunch, we care about their taxes. For the bus driver who helps provide the free public transportation, we care about their tax burden. For the nurse who provides the free health care, we care about their tax burden as well. So this child tax credit is for those who pay Federal income taxes.

This Democratic motion to instruct yanks that child tax credit, that steps away from these working families as soon as the next election is over. That is flat wrong. And on behalf of this Republican conference, we oppose this Democratic motion to instruct. It would reduce the child tax credit for millions of children, and that is not right.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As I mentioned earlier, the right thing for Congress to do is to pass this motion, to pass the child tax credit, and to give the working families a tax relief that they deserve. A lot of people out there are hurting. There are certain areas actually in the State of Maine, labor market areas, where the unemployment rate is over 38 percent. When we look at other labor market areas, they are in double-digit numbers. Working families do need this tax relief. So I hope this body would support the motion.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 2045

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and

under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ENHANCING THE WAR ON TERRORISM BY REDUCING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue a series of discussions I am having on the unforeseen and undesirable effects resulting from our Nation's current immigration policies.

There has been much talk in recent years about "holding the line" against the flood of illegal immigrants flowing across our Nation's borders. Unfortunately, as I mentioned in my comments last week, our recent attempts to control the border have not been a resounding success. I certainly do not believe that our Nation's borders should be left wide open. Especially today, in light of terrorist threats, we must know who is entering the country and leaving the country.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we currently have very little idea who is entering the country outside of the legal ports of entry on the border. Some have estimated that 700,000 illegal immigrants breach our borders every year.

We can try to tighten our border enforcement even more than we already have, but as long as the U.S. offers Mexicans more opportunity for work than Mexico does, for example, people risk their lives to cross the border.

According to Steven Camarota of the Center for Immigration Studies, "A real effort to control the border with Mexico would require perhaps 20,000 agents and the development of a system of formidable fences and other barriers along the parts of the borders used for illegal crossings."

I believe the wisdom of embarking on such a project is questionable, at best. Rather, I would submit that a program that allows these workers to enter the country legally is a smarter national security strategy.

Regularizing the flow of workers across the U.S.-Mexico border will give the Federal Government the opportunity to get a handle on who is present in the United States. It will also free up resources for border security and the war on terrorism.

While there are border crossers who have malicious intentions, locating them among the throngs of illegal immigrants is akin to finding a needle in a haystack. By drastically reducing the number of illegal immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, we can shrink that haystack and more easily target those entering the U.S. who wish to do us harm.

We in Arizona recently saw an example of the troubling violence that can occur when criminal aliens are not apprehended. A United States Park Ranger at Organ Pipe Cactus National

Monument, Kris Eggle, was shot and killed while chasing Mexican drug smugglers last summer. Eliminating the majority of illegal border traffic would make it easier to track down and prosecute criminals like Chris Eggle's killer.

The vast majority of those entering the country illegally are looking for the opportunity to work hard and improve their lot in life, not to commit terrorist acts. According to statistics provided by the Border Patrol, only 1 percent of those apprehended on the southwest border are come into the U.S. to commit crimes.

Permitting those already present in the United States to participate in the program would also encourage millions of currently undocumented workers to register with the government. Shrinking the undocumented population would provide less cover for terrorists who do enter the country and attempt to blend in.

A temporary worker program would deal a severe blow to the black market that currently supports illegal immigrants as well. The demand for people smugglers, fraudulent documents, and other enterprises that facilitate illegal immigration would be greatly reduced.

Mr. Speaker, regularizing the flow of undocumented migrants entering the country will greatly improve our Nation's border security, help us fight the war on terrorism, and redirect resources that have not been used effectively through our current immigration policy.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

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

There was no objection.

CONGRESS SHOULD SUPPORT AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S DISTORTION OF EVIDENCE OF IRAQ'S WMD PROGRAMS

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, a grass-roots organization called moveon.org has an online petition right now seeking an independent commission to investigate the Bush admin-

istration. I will read it. "Congress should support an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration's distorting of evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program."

They are supporting H.R. 2625, a bill sponsored by the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), that would create an independent commission that would look into the intelligence that led up to certain representations that the Bush administration has made.

People want answers to questions. So what we are doing for the next several nights, some of us, is reading some of these letters and comments that have come as a result of this on-line petition.

These are the ones that have come from Illinois. Out of 320,000 people who signed the petition, there were thousands of comments. These are the ones from Illinois, and I would like to read just a few of them.

I think my colleagues will find that what these letters do is question the intelligence that was provided, or question the representations that were made, but do not question the integrity. I think my colleagues will agree with that.

I am reading now. "My son is a reservist who has been called into active duty on account of the war on Iraq. This is the second time since 9/11 that he has had to put aside his college studies and go on the front line to serve our country. Considering his sacrifice alone, he and I need to know the truth about why he assisted in the war effort." That is from Patricia from Woodridge, Illinois.

"Two of my sons are in the military. They told me, 'Mom, we have to do what we are commanded. It is your responsibility to help make sure we are only asked to do what is morally and ethically right.' That is why I urge Congress to thoroughly investigate the events leading to the war in Iraq." That is from Marge in DeKalb, Illinois.

"Two of my best friends are sergeants in the U.S. Army. They signed up and put their lives on the line to protect and defend our country for people like me. We owe it to them to make sure that when we ask them to put their lives in danger the reasons are just, valid, and truthful. I cannot imagine how the families of the servicemen and women who died in Iraq must feel now, knowing that, perhaps, their sons, daughters, spouses, moms and dads died not because they were defending us against a true threat but because of political or financial reasons. Let us investigate this fully and give our service members the dignity they deserve," says Jennifer from Chicago.

"As the mother and mother-in-law of a son and son-in-law sent to Iraq to risk their lives, it is important to me that an independent commission investigate our actions in Iraq and the reasons presented for doing so. We may be the most powerful Nation the world has ever known, but we have acted like

cowards and weaklings. We have an obligation to be an uplifting role model to other nations. Instead, this government has chosen to reiterate the bully mentality. We raise our children to find positive ways to resolve disagreements and conflicts. Why? This government says that being the biggest and toughest guys gives you the right to stomp on whoever you want. Who will our children listen to?" From Marlena in Chicago.

"My father is a veteran," says Trisha from McHenry Illinois, "like his brother, his father, and his uncles. My mother's brothers are veterans, like their uncles. While many prominent members of this administration can claim no legitimate military service, it is terrible to think that they may have sent our men and women to Iraq for false reasons and that you would let them get away with it. Our servicemen and women are risking their lives for us, and it is our duty to make sure it is not for reasons other than what this administration has led us to believe. Your duty in this matter is not to your political party. Your duty is to the American people and to the Armed Forces who serve this country. An independent, bipartisan commission is warranted in this matter."

And Trisha adds, "Also, if you are going to keep passing resolutions supporting our Armed Forces, please stop cutting their benefits, give them a raise, and be nicer to veterans."

"My brother is a member of the Illinois National Guard," says Penny from Freeport, "and is currently serving our country in Iraq. I fear that he is risking his life under false pretenses. It is not only our right but our responsibility as American citizens to hold someone liable and seek the truth. We need to establish an investigative commission as soon as possible."

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1472

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1472.

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

There was no objection.

MISAPPROPRIATIONS OF TAXPAYER FUNDS

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

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, there are several gentlemen from Florida here tonight, including my cohort and friend MARIO DIAZ-BALART, along with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and a lot of the Republican freshman class. We have been very concerned, as we review the last 5 or 6 or 8 years' worth of Federal spending, about some, really, misappropriations that are going on. It is very both-