

when right now I have 177,000 Texas children who have been dropped from the CHIPS program and they are crowding our emergency rooms because they have no health insurance. I want to help children in Iraq, but should we not be also addressing the problems here at home?

I see this funding going toward building roads and bridges in Iraq when this Congress cannot pass a highway spending bill because we simply do not have enough money to fix our own roads and bridges here at home. This administration has misplaced priorities that come at the expense of the American people.

In the name of free trade, we pushed our manufacturing companies and workers offshore. Our manufacturing sector is struggling to survive, and our economy has lost 3.2 million jobs over the last 3 years. For the second straight year now, more Americans are finding themselves in poverty. Our country has turned into a land of executives and service sector employees, creating an ever-widening gulf between the rich and poor that is extinguishing what is left of our middle class in America.

This administration's fiscal policies have come at the expense of the American people.

Oh, we will hear that we can have it all. They will tell us we can fight a war, rebuild a country, cut taxes, save Social Security, and provide our seniors with a prescription drug benefit which is less than half of what they really need. But what they do not tell us is that we cannot pay for it. We are going to incur the largest deficit in this Nation's history, and our children and grandchildren will be paying off the national debt for generations to come.

Tough decisions must be made to get this country back on track, and it takes courage and leadership to make the right decisions for our soldiers, for the American people, and for this country.

Putting the American people first. Now, that is what patriotism is.

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

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

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3146. An act to extend the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant program, and certain tax and trade programs, and for other purposes.

□ 2000

CELEBRATING FT. RILEY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Ft. Riley. For decades this military installation has played an important role in protecting our Nation and is now an essential component in the war on terror.

Founded in 1853, Ft. Riley was established as a strategic post for settlers heading west. It was located between the Oregon and Santa Fe trails to provide protection for traveler. Ft. Riley was responsible for protecting the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad through that area, and the post used troops to police the new territory because of fighting between pro- and anti-slavery settlers. During the Civil War, confederate prisoners were housed at Ft. Riley.

From the post's inception until the end of World War II, Ft. Riley was known for its cavalry units and was designated as the "Cavalry Headquarters of the Army." It was also during that time that the famed "Buffalo Soldiers," the all-African-American Cavalry units were stationed at Ft. Riley. The Cavalry School produced some of the finest mounted horsemen in the world.

However, it was also during World War I and II that the Nation began to see military warfare transition from cavalry to mechanized machinery. The invention of the tank, the machine gun, and the use of aviation shifted the focus of the military away from the horse and rider, towards mechanized warfare.

At the end of World War II the Army closed the Cavalry School, replacing it with the Ground General School. This school trained enlisted men in intelligence gathering techniques and newly commissioned officers in basic military subjects.

During the Cold War, the Army recognized Ft. Riley's strategic resources and designated it as the home base for the First Infantry Division, the "Big Red One." The security threat from the Soviet Union, the expansion of communism transformed the mission of Ft. Riley. No longer would Ft. Riley be only a training and education center, but became the home base for a major infantry division. In 1955, the Big Red One began arriving at Ft. Riley. The addition of the Big Red One caused an influx of troops and families to the area, especially in the neighboring community of Junction City, Kansas.

Through the Vietnam and Gulf War, Ft. Riley continued to actively support U.S. military missions abroad and continued to acquire land to train troops stationed at the installation. Today Ft. Riley consists of more than 100,000

acres. This allows troops to train in war-like conditions using live ammunition to prepare for situations such as those in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia.

The resilient prairie grasses are a perfect terrain for military maneuvers. In addition, the construction of a simulated combat center at the post brings the art of war from Kansas' prairie into the classroom. Soldiers are able to train in simulated Bradley fighting vehicles and Abrahms tanks to hone their combat skills.

Today Ft. Riley continues to play an important role in the war on terror. In the past 6 months more than 14,000 soldiers and 1,750 rail cars, containing over 5,500 pieces of equipment, have been deployed from Ft. Riley, representing 35 trains that have shipped equipment to ports in Charleston, South Carolina, Jacksonville, Florida, Beaumont and Corpus Christi, Texas, and Savannah Georgia.

Strategically located in the center of the country, Ft. Riley's soldiers can load 200 railcars in a 9-hour period, with the equipment arriving at the ports ahead of schedule. Ft. Riley has been able to transport equipment from Kansas to the coast faster than the Navy could get ships to those ports. Not once has Ft. Riley missed a port call. During Operation Desert Storm, it took 28 days to get equipment to the ports in the Gulf of Mexico. Now during the War on Terrorism, equipment was moved to the Gulf from Ft. Riley in 48 hours.

Madam Speaker, this Saturday the community of Junction City and Ft. Riley will celebrate the post's 150th anniversary. As the United States continues to fight the War on Terror, I ask my colleagues and my fellow Americans to join me in recognizing the contributions and sacrifices soldiers from Ft. Riley have made to protect this Nation and defend our way of life. Ft. Riley has evolved during the past 150 years from a post to assist westward expansion to become "America's Warfighting Center."

Ft. Riley is essential to Kansas, it is essential to the Army, and, most importantly, Madam Speaker, Ft. Riley is essential to the safety and security of the United States of America.

Happy 150th anniversary, Ft. Riley, Kansas. Thank you for your service to our Nation.

THE UNINSURED

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, according to new numbers released by the Census Bureau today, the number of uninsured Americans in 2002 rose to 43.6 million. This is a 5.7 percent increase in the number of Americans without health insurance, the single largest increase in a decade.

Moreover, these numbers exemplify President Bush and the Republican

party's hard record on health care. The total number of uninsured Americans has increased by 3.8 million since President Bush took office and now totals 15.2 percent of our population. In other words, 15 out of every 100 Americans lack health insurance.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that the increase in the number of uninsured is a direct result of our weak economy, but there are other contributing factors such as the rise in health care costs by double-digit percentage points, States dropping Medicaid beneficiaries due to financial constraints, and, most importantly, employers eliminating employer-sponsored health coverage due to ever-rising costs.

Employer-based coverage, which is, in fact, the largest source of coverage in the United States, has declined dramatically in the past few years. The census figures show that last year alone, loss of employer-sponsored coverage led to 1.3 million Americans joining the ranks of the uninsured.

Madam Speaker, this is particularly significant in the context of the Medicare bill that is currently being worked out in conference. As it currently stands, the Republican Medicare bill, which passed the House, encourages employers who are currently providing retiree health benefits to drop coverage. Unfortunately, the Republican bill states that any dollar an employer pays for an employee's prescription drug costs would not count towards the employee's out-of-pocket catastrophic cap. And this disadvantages 12 million out of 40 million seniors with employer-sponsored coverage because it would be almost impossible for them to reach the bill's catastrophic cap over which Medicaid would pay 100 percent of their drug costs. Without a doubt, many employers will stop offering retiree coverage if this Republican bill were to become law.

Now, the Republicans are also suggesting tax credits to the uninsured to purchase health insurance in the private market, but such offers simply do not work. And we need to immediately evaluate a number of proposals to alleviate the situation. For example, if everyone likes tax credits so much, then we should consider tax credits that can be credited by the individual towards employer-based health insurance that guarantees a basic package of benefits, or tax credits for hard-pressed small businesses to offer health insurance to its employees. Any of these type of initiatives that ensure a strong and stable system of employer-based health coverage really should be encouraged.

Madam Speaker, as Americans in private health insurance plans lost coverage, 3.2 million more Americans joined the Medicaid rolls. This is very problematic because, as we know, States continue to experience severe financial restraints and are not capable of maintaining their Medicaid or SCHIP programs for kids without a new infusion of Federal dollars. In fact,

with the weak economy and States cutting back their Medicaid programs, the number of uninsured is going to continue to rise.

Now, I think it is time for Congress to take responsibility and provide meaningful expansion of programs to once and for all reduce the number of uninsured Americans. And I know the Republicans have not bothered to deal with this effectively. The Democrats have had a number of proposals. We have rolled them out, but, of course, we have not been able to get support with the Republicans in the majority. But I think this information that came out today from the census, showing that the number of uninsured continues to rise so dramatically under President Bush's watch, is an indication that the Republican leadership here has to do something about it. We, as Democrats, are more than willing to join; but we cannot continue to have this situation where the number of uninsured continues to rise under President Bush and the Republican party's watch.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS: \$1,500 BONUS BILL

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

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, this week as the other body takes up the President's request for the \$87 billion in supplemental appropriations for Iraq, we must do more for our troops and their families who are under increasing duress.

Specifically, Congress should grant a \$1,500 bonus to all who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Not since Vietnam have such a large number of troops had such long deployments. The pressure this puts on our troops and their families is tremendous.

This summer, the Department of Defense increased deployments for troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan to 1 year, and not until last week, did the Department of Defense offer these troops who are living under highly primitive and stressful conditions a 2-week leave for rest and recuperation.

Tragically, this month our U.S. casualties in Iraq surpassed the number of those killed in the first Gulf War. We have now lost more than 308 servicemen and women.

Recognizing the increasing gravity of U.S. military involvement abroad, I have introduced H.R. 3051, to qualify all active-duty military personnel deployed for any length of time in Iraq and Afghanistan for a \$1,500 bonus. This \$1,500 bonus proposal should be part of the supplemental appropriations bill. Although, as Members of Congress, we may have different ideas about U.S. policy in Iraq, we can all agree our servicemen and women deserve our sincere recognition for their courageous efforts. Fifteen hundred

dollars will not only help boost morale, but will send a strong bipartisan message to our troops that Congress is unified behind them.

The Bush administration is actively lobbying Members of Congress to approve the \$21 billion in direct grants to support the infrastructure development in Iraq in this \$87 billion supplemental appropriations.

First of all, I see no reason why we cannot separate out these two items. The \$66 billion for defense, which we all support, should be made a separate bill. And the \$21 billion they want for reconstruction in Iraq should be placed in a separate bill, so we can have a debate on it. And then we should require Iraqi oil to be used as collateral for international loans to finance Iraqi infrastructure projects. And we should also ensure Iraq reconstruction contracts are competitively bid.

Either way, U.S. citizens should not be expected to support Iraqi development while many Americans face shortfalls in funding for health care, prescription drug coverage, school and road construction, and other critical infrastructure improvements.

Even to come up with this \$87 billion for the supplemental appropriations for Iraq, the U.S. must borrow the money base we are so far in debt thanks to the policies of this administration. We do not have the money. We have to borrow it. Yes, Congress must continue to work to help, but not at the expense of the Americans here at home and our troops abroad.

Some of my colleagues tonight have talked about waste, fraud and abuse; and I think it is shameful when we look at the waste, fraud and abuse being put forth by this administration when we look at reconstruction for Iraq.

Just take a look at some of these numbers they have provided us:

There is \$4 million to develop a set of telephone numbers and \$150 million for a national 911. In my district if you want 911, the local taxpayers have to do it.

How about \$100 million to build seven planned communities? Each community to have 3,258 houses.

Ten million dollars to finance 100 prison-building experts. We have to pay prison-building experts \$10 million to tell them how to do it in Iraq?

How about \$100 million for 2,000 garbage trucks?

And then they want \$20 million for Afghan consultants, whatever those are.

And we have \$850 million for health facility construction and medical equipment replacement. What about health care in this country?

How about \$900 million to import petroleum products such as kerosene and diesel? Remember, Iraq has the world's second largest oil reserves, and we have to import oil products to them?

The health care provisions alone provide a striking comparison between taxpayers' support of Iraqis health care