

uniform pay the price every day in Iraq for that failure.

Yes, we need to support; yes, we need to unify; yes, we need to indicate our appreciation for our troops; but more important, we need to learn from this experience. How do we improve our intelligence and our military execution so that our soldiers are not unnecessarily put in harm's way in the future? Our families at home and our troops overseas deserve for us to do it right.

#### THE TOTALITARIAN GULAG IN CUBA

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. Speaker, exactly 1 year ago, taking advantage of the attention of the world on the liberation of Iraq where U.S. Armed Forces and coalition forces eliminated a dangerous madman from power, that formerly oppressed country, the Cuban dictator 90 miles from the United States utilizing that cover of attention on Iraq, commenced a campaign to throw dozens of peaceful pro-democracy activists, librarians and economists and journalists and students and workers and others into the totalitarian gulag where they joined the thousands of others who languish as political prisoners in that enslaved island.

Mr. Speaker, each day we must remind the world of the existence of the totalitarian gulag 90 miles from the United States. We must demand the release of each and every political prisoner on that island. We must not rest until they are all free.

#### REGARDING IRAQ RESOLUTION

(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, I rise to talk about the Iraq resolution that I will vote "no" on today.

Republicans would like us to say America is safer. I wish that were true, but it is not. We have only to look at what happened in Spain to be reminded. Terrorism threatens America today just as much as terrorism threatened America before we invaded Iraq.

Make no mistake, I wholeheartedly support the U.S. soldiers. My support does not stop at the Iraq border, nor is my support bounded by political party. I regularly visit troops at Walter Reed Hospital, and I urge every Member to do so. They are the best soldiers and they make America proud.

I would like to pass a resolution praising our soldiers, but this Republican resolution is meant to legitimize a position the administration cannot defend at home or abroad. Look at the Spanish election. We have lost soldiers. We continue to lose them. We have lost credibility. And we have found nothing.

This is not worthy of a victory lap. I will not sing the praises of the Bush doctrine.

#### SHALLOWATER HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Shallowater High School State champion boys and girls basketball teams. Within the span of 1 week, the Shallowater boys teams followed the girls in an elite list of State basketball championships. This is an unprecedented victory for the school which can only be attributed to pure hard work and dedication.

In a rare moment in Texas State championships, both the girls and boys basketball teams won a State title. The Mustangs from Shallowater executed a 47-45 overtime victory over Argyle, thus winning the class 2A boys championship game. Just a week earlier, the Fillies, the girls team from Shallowater, triumphed over Aubrey with a dramatic 44-37 win and captured the girls 2A State championship game.

This is no small feat for a rural community high school like Shallowater to achieve what it has in this past week. These students have shown exemplary performance and proven what a commitment can do.

Shallowater is the home of champions. The players, Coach Chuck Darden, and Coach Ray Morris will go down in history as the folks who put their town in the spotlight through determination and hard work.

#### SALUTE TO THE GREY BERETS

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

Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to all of our men and women in harm's way in Iraq and our Operation Iraqi Freedom, but in particular to focus on the Grey Berets Special Operation Forces Weathermen.

Although the war had not commenced as of this date a year ago, already for weeks on the ground many brave soldiers from these forces had infiltrated Iraq, had set up meteorological operations and were communicating to our pilots, to our Air Force, to our Navy, our Marines and Army the critical weather information necessary for a safe, a death-free, as much as possible, and a successful invasion of Iraq and the liberation of the Iraqi people.

Tonight, the Weather Channel Network will feature a 1-hour special on these brave men and women who went into harm's way before battle began, who hid, who worked, who got the data, and made sure our pilots, our Navy, our Marines, and Air Force had the information they needed.

I commend these brave Grey Berets. I commend the Weather Channel Net-

work for paying special tribute to them on this day.

#### IRAQ'S INTERIM CONSTITUTION

(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, on the 1-year anniversary of the war in Iraq, I rise to applaud the Iraqi civil leaders who last Monday on March 8 signed the interim constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law. With the adoption of this law, the governing council has taken a historic step forward towards a democratic Iraq. It took only 12 months, Mr. Speaker, to defeat Saddam Hussein and transition to an interim constitution.

Now, my colleagues, it took 6 years for the first State in the Union, Delaware, to ratify our Constitution, and several more years before the original 13 finally ratified.

Iraq is moving at a much faster pace. One year ago, the naysayers said we did not have enough forces in place to defeat Iraq's military. Naysayers said we could never find Saddam Hussein; and naysayers doubted that we could get Kurds, Shia, and Sunni Muslims to agree on anything.

Mr. Speaker, 1 year later the naysayers are wrong.

#### IRAQ REPLACES NEW HAMPSHIRE IN PRIMARY

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

Mr. OBEY, Mr. Speaker, I am so excited by what I just heard that I expect that we will fully see Iraq replace New Hampshire on the Presidential primary circuit before long.

#### PERMISSION TO REVISE AND EXTEND ON HOUSE RESOLUTION H. RES. 557, RELATING TO LIBERATION OF IRAQI PEOPLE

Mr. OBEY, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to extend my remarks and include extraneous material during the House debate on the Iraqi resolution later today.

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

There was no objection.

#### CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE IN WESTERN IOWA

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

Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. Speaker, I rise today not only because of St. Patrick's Day but because it is also National Agriculture Week. Iowa ranks number one in the Nation in corn, soybean, pork and egg production, and second in total

agricultural exports. We have a fertile State with some of the richest and most productive soil in the world. And we use this resource to provide the safest food supply in the world.

This week I am asking Iowans to celebrate our rich heritage of agricultural production; but I also want us to look with anticipation to the future of agriculture, value-added agriculture, and our youth. Iowa agriculture is no longer just about growing commodities that we ship away by truck, train, or barge. Farmers in western Iowa have realized that if we do all of our business this way our small towns and cities will lose its youth, a very precious resource.

As I look at the youth of my district, I want them to have all the benefits of growing up in a farming community. And I want to see them in our communities making a difference, choosing to raise their families in western Iowa for years to come. There is no better place if we can continue to be innovative in agricultural development.

Our farmers and community leaders have led the charge to develop this new generation of agriculture because we think differently in Iowa. Let us use National Agriculture Week to thank them not only for rich heritage of agriculture production but for looking to the future and building a foundation for a new rural western Iowa.

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#### COMMEMORATING NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND STOP VIOLENCE WEEK

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand this morning to commemorate National Women's History Month and Stop Violence Week. This year's theme is Women Inspiring Hope and Possibility.

We are delighted, if you will, to reflect upon the history that women have made in the United States, but we also recognize that we must stand against violence and sexual assault. We know that both sexual and domestic violence and victims fear reporting is one of the greater challenges of women today in America.

In my State of Texas, nearly 2 million adult Texans, almost 13 percent of the State population, have been sexually assaulted. This is number one in the minds of many women. In Texas, every 2 minutes someone is sexually assaulted, and 2 women are killed each week by their intimate partner, and approximately 31 percent of sexual assault victims reported that a family member also had been sexually assaulted. An estimate of 82 percent of rapes and sexual assaults go unreported because of shame, fear, and hurt and anger, and nearly 80 percent of those raped know the person who raped them.

We realize in working with the Texans Against Sexual Assault and the Texas Council on Family Violence that we have a challenge before us.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saluting women for the progress they have made, but also reminding us as we work towards this very challenging problem, we must also include the women of Iraq who need to have their rights protected along with the children of Iraq as well.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, there are still some asking why Congress added a prescription drug benefit for seniors under Medicare. The reason is simple. Before we passed this law, the Medicare program operated like it was still back in 1965, when surgeries and hospital stays, rather than prescription drugs, were the primary means of treating and managing disease. Today, prescription medications not only treat illness, they can prevent them.

Prior to the changes in law, Medicare would pay an average of \$5,000 for a person's hospitalization for heart failure, for instance, but not pay the \$67 per month for Lipitor which is a cholesterol-lowering drug which can prevent heart failure. This is bad medicine and that is why we needed to add a prescription drug benefit.

Mr. Speaker, adding a benefit to Medicare was an important first step for providing seniors with quality and affordable health care. The benefit is entirely voluntary. The senior who does not want to take the benefit, they do not have to.

The prescription drug benefit is simple. It provides seniors relief from the high cost of prescription drugs, and it focuses that relief on those who need it most. Those who have low income, 12 million seniors get the benefit for the low-income seniors and those with high drug costs who can benefit from the new catastrophic insurance benefit.

Mr. Speaker, the new Medicare law provides seniors a choice and control with their drug plans, and it is good for our seniors.

#### PAYING THE DEBT OF HONOR

(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, we are told if you owe debts, pay debts; if honor, then honor; if respect, then respect. And today, appropriately, we will commend and pay the debt of honor that we owe to American forces, our allies, and the brave people of Iraq in the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom begun one year ago.

But, sadly, we do so against the backdrop of tragedy and retreat amidst an ally in Europe, and so as we cele-

brate the victory in Iraq today, let our enemies nonetheless hear this today, Mr. Speaker, that this President, this Congress, and the good people of the home of the brave will never cower, will never relent, and will never retreat in the war on terror until the threat of terrorism is lifted from our people and the people of the free world, so help us God.

#### HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

(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, in the historic Medicare prescription drug bill, Congress created health savings accounts to give individuals greater choice over their health care decisions, radically expand access to health care, and drive down rising costs.

According to the National Association of Health Underwriters, one of the most important ways to address the rising cost is through encouraging purchasers of health insurance to become better consumers. HSAs will do that.

HSAs are providing real savings. A family of four in my district used to pay \$532 a month for health care and now pays only \$245 a month after establishing a HSA plan.

HSAs will give Americans more choices, better access to health care, and empower them to save money.

#### QADDAFI WANTS TO BE ON THE WINNING SIDE

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

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, later today we are going to have a debate about a resolution of Iraq, and we will hear a lot of debate about whether America is safer because of our successes in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, there really is no debate, and I saw the proof with my own eyes when I recently traveled to Libya and met with Muammar Qaddafi, and I heard Muammar Qaddafi say with my own ears that he did not want to follow the path of Saddam Hussein and that is why he had decided to dismantle his weapons of mass destruction and abandon supporting terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle do not understand that we are winning the war on terror, but Muammar Qaddafi understands it perfectly clear, and he wants to be on the winning side.

#### SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, Columbus did not discover the trade route,