

could be working so long for the other party in control, could that person be fair? And he convinced me over two meetings that his job was not to be fair or unfair, but to know the rules. He has proven that he does, with an even hand; and I join all my colleagues in thanking him in his service to his country.

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

I would like to close again by expressing appreciation on behalf of all of the many staff members here in this institution who work so closely with Charlie Johnson, all of those who are working for us here today and the members of committee staffs and personal staffs who have worked so closely with him.

And I would like to close by sharing with our colleagues a note that was handed to me a few minutes ago. It says: "Dear Charlie, thanks for your 40 years of service to the House and our country. I wish you all the best. Keep your arm loose. We may need to call you in from the bullpen." This is a handwritten note from the President of the United States, George W. Bush, which I will give to you, Charlie, as soon as we have the resolution.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate Parliamentarian Charles Johnson on four decades of service to the U.S. House of Representatives, and to wish him the very best for a well-earned retirement.

As all Members are aware, the job of House Parliamentarian is an exceedingly difficult one. One must have a scholarly grasp of the rules governing this institution, the integrity to be an honest and fair judge, and an ability to work with both sides of the aisle in contentious moments. Throughout my twenty-five years of service in the House, I have seen Charlie exhibit these qualities with the highest distinction.

Charlie began his service in the Parliamentarian's office in 1964, shortly after graduating from the University of Virginia School of Law. In 1994, he was appointed Parliamentarian by a Democratic Speaker, Tom Foley. In a testament to his character, he was then reappointed by two Republican Speakers, Newt Gingrich and Dennis Hastert. All Members of this body have relied on Charlie's keen intellect and sound judgment, day in and day out. He has served with the greatest integrity and will be missed. However, all Members welcome his respected successor John Sullivan, who Charlie has mentored.

Fittingly, Charlie will continue to serve our country in other ways when he retires from this institution. In collaboration with the Parliamentarian of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom, he plans to produce a book on parliamentary procedure that will be a welcome addition to the field. In addition, after an activity that is dear to my heart, he will lend his talents to the San Francisco Giants as a batting practice pitcher.

I want to thank Charlie for his wisdom, his commitment to being a nonpartisan advisor, and above all his forty years of service to the United States House of Representatives. We thank him for sharing his life with us these many years, and wish him the very best in his endeavors to come.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, as many have already stated, and as many more Members are eager to express, Charlie Johnson's departure will be a loss to this great institution we serve, and which Charlie has served so well for 22 years.

I am actually one of the few Members of the House who can say I was already here before Charlie was, although he arrived here within only a couple of short years after I did. Since that time, we've had the opportunity to grow older together.

Throughout his tenure, Charlie has been a wise counselor, a trusted confidant, and an impartial adjudicator who has served both parties without pride or prejudice.

For those who don't readily grasp the significance of the role of Parliamentarian, it is the Parliamentarian who makes sure that we can continue to conduct the House's business every hour of every day.

Those visiting, or watching at home on C-SPAN, may understand the importance of the House Parliamentarian as Members come and go from the Speaker's Chair. When they see Members in the Chair making procedural decisions, they also see the Parliamentarian's staff providing helpful advice on a timely basis.

For those of us who serve in the House, the Parliamentarian is an absolute lifeline. He's also the occasional judge, father confessor, and calm in the storm of the House floor as Members and parties seek to advance their own interests.

Although it seems that we increasingly can't find ourselves in agreement on many things, too many things for that matter, one thing that is beyond dispute is that Charlie has embodied the ideal of the civil servant who tirelessly has served the interests of the American people.

I, like so many others, am proud to have served with him.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with both gratitude and sadness that I rise to honor the Parliamentarian of the House, Charles W. Johnson, on his upcoming retirement. Charlie has long served the House, and he has done so with distinction, integrity, and honor. He has embodied the nonpartisan traditions that make the Parliamentarian's Office one of the most respected institutions in this House.

Through our constant debating of matters large and small, Charlie has remained a calm head guiding us through our differences with a quiet grace. His abiding love for the institution and his knowledge of the rules are unparalleled. He will be greatly missed. I deeply appreciate his service and wish him well. As he passes into retirement, we all bid a fond farewell to an unsung hero who kept the great wheels of this democracy turning.

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution, and to thank Mr. Charles Johnson, the Parliamentarian, for his service to this institution and its members. Those of us who have the privilege to serve as committee chairmen know first hand the good work done by Charlie and his team of professionals. In many ways, the Parliamentarian and his deputies are the grease which makes our legislative machine work a little more smoothly.

Charlie's dedication to this institution spans his 40-year career. Beginning his career fresh out of the University of Virginia law school in 1963, he guided members of both parties

through the shoals of the legislative process. Charlie was particularly helpful to those of us who were newly elected committee and subcommittee chairmen in 1995 and beyond. His advice and counsel have served us all well as we learned the sometimes difficult lessons of legislating in the 21st century.

As anyone who knows Charlie knows, his only greater love than this institution is his love of baseball. As he begins his retirement after 40 years of crouching behind home plate, we all hope he enjoys watching the rest of the game from the stands.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Mr. Johnson well in his retirement, and extend my heartfelt thanks for his service.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain five 1-minute speeches on each side.

ARE WE WINNING THE WAR ON TERROR?

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

Mr. TURNER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it has been almost 3 years since the September 11 attacks by a small, but deadly, network of terrorists; and America is asking, are we winning the war on terror? Are we better off today than we were 4 years ago?

To win the war on terror, we must succeed on three fronts simultaneously: we must attack the terrorists, we must protect the homeland, and we must prevent the rise of future terrorists.

Our protracted conflict in Iraq has overextended our military and limits our capacity to confront the emerging threats around the world. The terrorist threat is growing into an even larger network of loosely affiliated groups whose common thread is their hatred of America.

We have yet to pursue a strategy to strengthen the voices of moderation in the Muslim world that are our best hope for preventing the rise of future terrorists.

Serious security gaps remain at our ports, in the air, on our trains, at our borders. Chemical, biological, nuclear, and conventional threats are increasing.

We are fighting the war on terror, but are we winning? To make Americans safer, we must move faster and be stronger than we are today.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION HAVE BEEN FOUND IN IRAQ

(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, despite the national media's best efforts to minimize the news, I am here to report, as the United States military confirmed in Iraq on Monday, weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq in the form of two separate artillery shells containing sarin and mustard gas, shells that had been used by insurgents to create roadside bombs. A 155 millimeter shell found last week included nearly a gallon of a deadly gas, a drop of which would kill a human being. Not that we should be surprised. Saddam Hussein killed or injured over 70,000 Iraqi Kurds using sarin gas munitions in 1988.

Where are the WMDs? We have been asked again and again. Mr. Speaker, they are where they have always been, hidden in Iraq, within the reach of terrorists, a threat to the Iraqi people, U.S. soldiers, and the world.

THE HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP'S MISPLACED PRIORITIES

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, American military families will be disappointed to find out what the House Republican leadership is doing today. Unbelievably, during a time of war, they will pass this afternoon generous tax cuts for Members of Congress but put a freeze on military children's education funding and a freeze on the most important military housing improvement program in American history.

It is shameful that the House Republican leadership is saying that we can afford to give Members of Congress and families making up to \$250,000 a year a new \$1,000 tax credit per child, but we must freeze education funding for our military kids and put a 1-year hold on military housing improvements for 24,452 military families.

The House Republican leadership's misplaced and self-serving priorities make a mockery of the principle of shared sacrifice during time of war. Military families, and Americans who respect their sacrifices, have a right to be outraged.

□ 1145

TRIBUTE TO AGUSTIN VELASCO

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Agustin Velasco, a valued Member of our South Florida community. Agustin's contribution to our community dates back over 4 decades, serving as a leader, entrepreneur, and an example of determination to succeed.

Agustin is currently the president and original founder of the Inter-Amer-

ican Bank, a bank with humble beginnings, now proudly celebrating its 25th anniversary of service to the people of South Florida.

After fleeing Communist Cuba in 1961, Agustin sought refuge in Miami and quickly became a dynamic and flourishing member of our community. Joining the ranks of thousands of very hard-working Americans, Agustin became the realization of the American dream.

A father of two and a grandfather of five beautiful girls, I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Agustin Velasco and wishing him continued success.

Felicidades, Agustin.

CHANGE AND A NEW DIRECTION NEEDED FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last night the House passed a \$2.3 trillion budget, leaving a \$500 billion hole and deficit, and showing that it is impossible to finance three wars with three tax cuts and get a different result.

In the 2000 election, President Bush said he was against nation-building. Who knew it was America he was talking about?

Let us look at the results of their economic program. An additional 2.5 million Americans are now unemployed since he has taken office; 44 million Americans without health care; 2 million more middle-class families have entered the rolls of poverty from the middle-class; we have the worst and most anemic wage growth since World War II at this time; and nearly \$1 trillion worth of corporate individual assets have been foreclosed on.

We have spent nearly \$112 billion in Iraq at this point, and we will vote today on another \$25 billion. With this budget, the administration is telling the American people they have two values, two principles, two sets of books; one for Iraq and one for the United States.

Mr. Speaker, we need a change, a new direction, to balance our values and our budget priorities for America's future and our children.

WE WERE NOT AT WAR IN 2000?

(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, one of the distressing things about this partisan election year is to hear our friends on the other side politicizing national security. One of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle said that we were not at war when President Clinton was in office, suggesting that it was President Bush's fault that we are at war today.

I would like to ask, what would you call it then in the 1990s when terrorists

attacked our country, not once, but four times? In 1993, they killed innocent Americans at the World Trade Center; in 1996, they killed Americans at the Khobar Towers; in 1998, they attacked two U.S. embassies in Africa; in 2000, they attacked a U.S. Naval vessel, the USS *Cole*, again killing Americans.

Terrorists have been at war with us for years. We failed to admit it, despite the body bags.

Then in 2001, 9/11 happened.

We were at war long before President Bush came to Washington. All President Bush did was muster the courage and moral vision to admit it and fight back.

These political games only cloud the true issue that we are at war, and the more we hesitate to fight it, the more aggressive our enemies become.

CHALABI A CORRUPT ALLY

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned U.S. military personnel and Iraqi police raided the home and party headquarters of Iraqi Governing Council member Ahmed Chalabi.

I am not surprised. Chalabi's past is riddled with allegations and convictions for fraud and corruption. That he may now be under investigation in Iraq for corruption or other crimes is hardly unexpected. Chalabi has always been a favorite at the Pentagon, even though the State Department sees him as divisive and untrustworthy.

Under the Iraqi Liberation Act, the Pentagon has fed him a steady stream of money in return for information. It was Chalabi who was the principal source for the false intelligence about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. When Saddam fell and the U.S. flew Chalabi and his cronies to Iraq to take up positions of power, it was he who championed the plan to rid Iraq of all Baath Party influence, including civil servants, a policy that angered many an Iraqi and deprived the coalition of experienced workers.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to distance ourselves from this man once and for all. Cut off his money. The taxpayers deserve a refund.

BENEFIT OF HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AFTER JUST 6 MONTHS

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, this weekend we are going to mark the 6-month anniversary where we in this House passed the conference report to modernize Medicare. Since that time, in 6 months' time, we are now on the threshold of having the Medicare prescription drug discount card, which will come to us June 1, and that will