

After September 11, we can no longer wait until threats fully materialize before we take action to protect American families.

We are truly winning the global war on terror with coalition victories in Iraq and Afghanistan, the dismantling of Libya's weapons programs, the killing of al Qaeda leaders in Saudi Arabia and Algeria, and the capture of terror cells in England, Spain, Turkey, Pakistan, and Jordan. Bin Laden terrorist leader Abu Makki surrendered yesterday in Saudi Arabia.

As President Bush said this week at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, "Three years ago, the world was very different. Terrorists planned attacks with little fear of discovery or reckoning. Outlaw regimes supported terrorists and defied the civilized world, without shame and with few consequences. The world changed on September the 11th, and since that day we have changed the world. We are leading a steady, confident, systematic campaign against the dangers of our time."

In conclusion, may God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON MEDICARE BILL

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, the world now knows that the Bush administration withheld reliable information regarding the true cost of the Medicare privatization bill they pushed through this House in the middle of the night.

According to The New York Times today, and I quote, "New government estimates suggest that employers will reduce or eliminate prescription drug benefits for 3.8 million retirees when the Medicare bill becomes operable in 2006." That represents one-third of all the retirees with employer-sponsored drug coverage, according to documents from the Department of Health and Human Services.

We know how that bill passed in the middle of the night, 6 o'clock in the morning, after the vote was held open for 3 hours, got the President out of bed at 4 o'clock in the morning to twist arms, and we have done this to Americans, especially America's retirees.

It reminds me of a verse from these scriptures that says "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

PROTECTING MARRIAGE IS A CRITICAL NATIONAL ISSUE

(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, today the Senate will vote on an issue of critical national importance: marriage. The issue is whether we will stand idly by

as a few unelected judges redefine the family for us or if we will take a stand and say "enough is enough."

The best home for kids is when their biological parents, mom and dad, live at home, are married, and are engaged in the lives of their children. Unfortunately, many claim this is an issue for the States. Indeed, it is, if that is what were happening, but it is not. Courts are circumventing the States in order to make this happen so that we will never debate it, so that States will never debate it, and the American people will never debate it. That is just how activists want it.

There is no way around it. We need to amend the Constitution. The Federal marriage amendment is supported by a very diverse coalition. Voting on it is hardly politics as usual. It is the least we can do to protect the stability of our communities and the best future for our children. The United States Congress should vote for the marriage protection amendment to the Constitution.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG IMPORTATION

(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, today's New York Times reports that almost 4 million senior citizens will lose their employer drug coverage and prescription drug coverage when the new Medicare law goes into effect in 2006. In most cases, this will result in beneficiaries getting worse drug coverage than they had before this bill was passed. My Republican colleagues sure have a funny way of implementing reform over there.

In addition to not only 4 million more seniors getting worse coverage than originally planned, this bill will cost the taxpayers \$150 billion more than Republicans originally said. If we had taken the steps to deal with prices originally in the Medicare bill, more employers would be able to afford the drug coverage they originally planned and senior citizens and taxpayers would save money.

Yesterday, the House affirmed for the third time this session a bipartisan support for prescription drug reimportation. We have employers dropping their drug coverage because they can no longer afford rising drug prices. We have a Medicare card that now gives seniors higher prices and a lot more confusion than buying drugs from Canada and Europe, and we have a Medicare bill not designed for seniors in mind.

Instead of a philosophy of the customer is always right, this bill says that special interests are always right.

MEDICAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

(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, there is no higher priority for us than the reform of the medical justice system. It costs the country \$230 billion a year, and right now we have never been closer to getting this ball across the goal line. We have passed the bill in this House, and we have a President in office who has said he will sign this bill. Our only problem is 400 feet away from us, on the other side of the Capitol.

Mr. Speaker, we have also never been further away. If we lose this election at the Presidential level, it will be nuclear winter as far as any type of meaningful medical liability reform in this country for easily the next 4 or 8 years time.

And it is important, Mr. Speaker, because \$230 billion is what it cost this country in the medical justice system in the year 2003. One-fifth of that went to compensate patients for their actual injuries, and one-fifth of it went to the trial bar.

The impact of the medical liability crisis is clear: Patients, doctors, and hospitals are put in jeopardy while the plaintiff bar continues to enrich itself.

FALSE POSITIVES ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot recently about the so-called improving economy, but I want to bring my colleagues' attention on both sides of the aisle to the fact that 90 percent of the new jobs created since August of 2003 are in industries that pay an average hourly wage that is less than the national average, or that many of these new jobs are part-time or temporary.

So the President says, look, I have only lost, with this upturn in the last 3 months, I have only lost 1.5 million jobs. If Clinton ever came before us and said that, we would all have booed him out of here, and my Republican colleagues know it.

They have never mentioned that since the tax cut took effect there are actually 2.3 million fewer jobs than the administration projected that would be created by the enactment of its tax cuts.

Merrill Lynch put it more aptly: The number of millionaires jumped 14 percent last year. There is a middle-class squeeze. The Bush tax cuts, which included a reduction in the top tax rate as well as reductions in taxes on estates, led the Wall Street Journal to report: This helped bolster the fortunes of the fortunate.

MISUSE OF INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

(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, last week was a dark day in the history of international law. By a vote of 14 to 1, the International Court of Justice at The Hague condemned Israel's right of self-defense in the construction of a security fence to protect innocent civilians from terrorist attacks.

During my visit to Israel in January, I saw firsthand, as I toured the fence, how the fence each and every day protects innocent civilians' lives. I came back and, along with the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY), authored a resolution, cosponsored by 163 of my colleagues. Today, in form and fashion, this will come to the floor of Congress as H. Res. 713.

Today, Congress will respond by standing strongly and boldly with our precious ally, Israel, in her right to defend her own innocent civilians from terrorist assault. I urge all of my colleagues to join us as cosponsors again and, of course, to support H. Res. 713, deploring the misuse of the International Court of Justice by a majority of the United Nations General Assembly for narrow political purposes.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

(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, in the coming months, we are going to hear a lot of talk from our Republican friends about an economic recovery. No doubt they will use statistics to claim that the President's economic policies are working, but do not go telling that to the middle-class families in my district about a recovery, because they have not seen one.

Since the President was inaugurated, America has lost 1.8 million jobs in the private sector. Mr. Bush is in a race with Mr. Hoover to have the worst administration in this last century.

Most of the few new jobs we are creating pay lower wages than the national average, most come without health care benefits, and yet the President still maintains his economic policies, cutting taxes for the wealthy and outsourcing jobs, are the way of solving the problems.

The American people know better. The President can say things are looking up. He can repeat that line over and over and over and over again, but he cannot hide the truth. The economy is still in trouble.

Fortunately, in 111 days, the Americans will get a chance to let the President know about how they feel about his economic recovery. When they do, the President will be packing his bags and heading back to Texas. November 2 is coming, Mr. Speaker.

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AUSTRALIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(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, I rise in support of the Australian-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which will be good for our farmers, manufacturers, and businesses both small and large. Last year, Australia imported \$44.5 million worth of transportation equipment, \$20.9 million in manufactured machinery, and \$7.1 million in food products from Kansas alone. These strong figures characterize the trade relationship between Kansas and Australia, which is destined to grow substantially.

In 2003, Australia was the 10th largest export market for my State. With the Free Trade Agreement in place, 99 percent of Kansas' goods will enter Australia tariff-free. I believe this will translate into higher revenues for small businesses, greater agricultural trade for farmers and more jobs for Kansans.

What will be good for Kansas will also be good for the rest of the Nation. In fact, it is expected that manufacturing exports will increase by at least \$2 billion, significantly boosting the economy. We currently run a trade surplus with Australia, and the Free Trade Agreement will ensure that this strong trade relationship continues.

I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of an important national debate on environmental protection, particularly in light of over 300 Bush administration environmental rollbacks. Yesterday was perhaps the most important announcement from this administration as they have opened up 60 million acres in national forests that were previously protected after extensive rulemaking throughout the Clinton administration. They now propose to turn that on its head and to abrogate Federal responsibility for our Federal land. The forests will be opened unless every State moves to protect, without national standards or safeguards.

It is unrealistic to expect every State to withstand extreme pressures from the special interests. History shows us that. The reason that every major environmental law was enacted at the Federal level was because we needed uniform national standards, and State stewardship was not adequate. The public knows that environmental protection to avoid a sad patchwork in our national forests requires that the Fed-

eral Government and this administration exercise full partnership. Sadly, the administration does not understand or support that concept.

SOLDIER HEROISM: STAFF SERGEANT ADAM SYKES

(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, I rise to pay tribute to an American hero. Staff Sergeant Adam Sykes decided not to attend Georgetown University so that he could serve our Nation in Iraq.

In a tense battle in April 2003, Sykes's unit was pinned down by an Iraqi ambush. He quickly rallied two of his squads in a counterattack. He positioned both squads and charged an enemy stronghold all by himself, bounding over 70 meters of fire as it swept across the ground. He reached his objective and cleared it with a grenade and a machine gun. Then, while still exposed to the enemy, he climbed to the third floor of a building so that he could get a good vantage point to call in mortar fire. Additionally, he moved to a squad that had taken casualties and managed himself to help in their evacuation.

After the awards ceremony, Sykes said, "So many people are pouring out their hearts over there trying to make things right."

May God bless the men and women of our Armed Forces and may God bless America.

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS MEETS WITH THEIR VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

(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, we had a very positive event this morning, and that was the meeting of the House Democratic Caucus with the Vice Presidential nominee-to-be, JOHN EDWARDS. I think it is important to note what a hopeful and bright, engaging, but very committed and dedicated person and human being he is. I believe what America needs today is to look to the future for a greater hope for our young people, a peaceful world, a resolving of crises around the world. JOHN EDWARDS brings to this great Nation an opportunity to work toward a conciliation, not stepping away from the war on terror, but standing up to it and bringing more allies to the table. What a wonderful new day to know that America does have hope.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the opportunity for debate and for this distinguished Member of the Senate to be able to inform America of the greatness of his desire to serve but, more importantly, the hopefulness that he brings to America.