

a successful businessman in the city of Houston. With all this great history for the Astros franchise it would be hard to take the team to a new level, but this current squad of players has done it.

When this current team entered Spring Training there were great hopes that this Astros team would be amongst the best in our history. With the addition of hometown star pitchers Andy Petite and Roger Clemens there was no reason to believe that the Astros couldn't compete for a championship. This team never gave up; they never looked at the standings and thought their hopes and that of their fans were futile. No, instead this team took one game at a time and slowly built up momentum. First there was a four-game winning streak to get the Astros back to a .500 record. Then in early September, the Astros won 12 straight games to pull even in the race for the National League Wild Card. Yet, somehow they still had another gear left in them and they became baseball's hottest team down the stretch. The Astros won the final seven games of the regular season and nine of their last 10 to overcome Chicago and San Francisco in the race for the Wild Card. From Aug. 14 to the end of the regular season, the Astros had a major league-best 36-10 record. The Astros currently have an amazing 18-game home winning streak, the longest such streak in baseball in the last 10 years. While this streak is extraordinary, it's not hard to see why the Astros do so well at home. This year the Astros set a franchise record for attendance with over 3 million fans coming to watch baseball in beautiful Minute Maid Park. Clearly, the great fans of Houston are the tenth man on the field, the ones who have cheered our Astros on to victory.

I am so proud of this year's team because of how they overcame adversity this year. Despite the high expectations and the early season troubles this team never got down on itself, like true Texans they lifted themselves up off the dirt and played to their potential. Much of the credit for this year's success should go to Astros owner Drayton McLane who assembled this current team and has been such a great franchise owner in Houston for many years. Also, the work of Astros Manager Phil Garner to resurrect this team will go down in baseball legend. He came in to a very difficult situation, one in which most others are content to mediocrity, but instead he decided to lead. His calming influence and superior baseball knowledge gave the players the confidence to go out on the field and succeed day in and day out.

For the last decade the heart and soul of the Astros franchise has been Jeff Bagwell and Craig Biggio and this year is no different. Both players have been perennial All-Stars and have won numerous awards over their long careers, but their leadership in the clubhouse is what makes them such great Astros, there is no doubt that one day both of their uniforms will be retired in Minute Maid Park. I also want to recognize the great Roger Clemens, who undoubtedly will go down as one of the greatest pitchers of all time. He has been many things over his illustrious career, he started out as Boston Red Sox, then a Toronto Blue Jay, and then as a New York Yankee, but no matter what uniform he was wearing his heart was always in Houston. This year he postponed his retirement to help his hometown Astros try to win a World Series,

with an astounding 18-4 record this year he has clearly helped pitch the Astros into the playoffs. This Astros season, especially their comeback from the bottom of the division has been a total team effort.

This inspiring team is now in the National League Division Series against the Atlanta Braves. They have already managed to take one of two games from the Braves in this best of five series and gain the home field advantage. With all due respect to my colleagues from Atlanta, I have to say that I am confident the Astros can finish off the Braves at home in Houston this weekend. Because the one advantage this team has that fewer others can claim is that if their backs are against the wall in these playoffs you know this team will never quit. It is that inspiring spirit that has many of us Houstonians dreaming of a World Series Championship.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). The Chair will recognize Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to further legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY AND THE "BACKDOOR DRAFT"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am sad to say that the military draft is alive and well in the United States of America. But, this time, it is the Bush administration's shameful behind-the-scenes version: a "backdoor draft," specifically targeting soldiers who have already served and poor young men and women from rural areas who enlisted because the military helped them pay for a college education they would not have been able to get otherwise.

Since the war in Iraq began, the Bush administration has done everything in its power to cajole and deceive soldiers into serving longer than they want or longer than they agreed to.

Depending on members of the Army Reserve and National Guard, who almost always serve the country only here at home in the United States, to serve in Iraq was just the tip of the iceberg. This administration has also started the shameful policy of issuing "stop loss" orders, which allowed the military to break its contractual obligations to a service member in order to keep that soldier in the military for longer than he or she has agreed. They have resorted to the shameful policy of recruiting the "ready reserve," a group of retired soldiers, who, after completing their years of service, agreed to serve their country should a national emergency arise.

I have got news for the President. Our invasion of a country that never threatened us, did not have weapons of mass destruction or even a weapons of mass destruction program, and did not have links to al Qaeda, does not qualify as a national emergency.

These shameful Bush administration policies all add up to a "backdoor draft," a means for the administration to dishonestly and dishonorably force soldiers who have already served their country to be serving now or to force soldiers to serve 6 or even 12 months longer than they agreed to. In fact, many soldiers have been manipulated into extending their contracts with the Army. They have been warned that if they do not reenlist on time, their brigade could be shipped to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time that President Bush and his fellow Republicans have pursued an all-too-real "backdoor draft," just this week, the House Republican leadership placed on the schedule under the suspension calendar a controversial bill to reimplement the draft. The suspension calendar, of course, and we all know this, is reserved for noncontroversial legislation. The reimplementing of the draft is hardly noncontroversial, and surely, it should be subject to hearings and expert testimony.

The administration must assess the military's recruitment and retention rates, the military's manpower needs, and the extent to which our troops are overextended in the field. The American people deserve better than this.

Our troops who will still be in Iraq after we leave here today should not be left with the message that Congress did not have the time to discuss in detail what must be done to help them in the field.

There has to be a better way, Mr. Speaker. A better way than voting one way and acting another, especially when American lives are at stake. We need new policies that will make America stronger at home and more respected around the world. That is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 392, a SMART Security Platform for the 21st Century. SMART stands for Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. We would not be in Iraq if we had pursued a SMART Security strategy in the first place.

SMART Security treats war as an absolute last resort. It fights terrorism with stronger intelligence and multilateral partnerships, and it controls the spread of weapons of mass destruction with aggressive diplomacy, strong regional security arrangements, and vigorous inspection regimes. SMART Security means respecting our Nation's servicemen and women by respecting their service contracts and then providing them with the care and the benefits they deserve once they have returned home. It does not mean tricking our brave soldiers into serving for longer than they expected or agreed to. SMART Security is tough, pragmatic, and safe, and it is the right choice to keep America truly secure.

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM

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

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, there have been many external threats to this Republic across the years. Recently, we have been highly focused on the war on terrorism and diminishing global nuclear threats. We have always been able to face such external threats successfully because our country has had a strong internal foundation.

But, today, it is critically important to sound a past-due warning about the internal threat to this republic. We are going to awaken to the fact that our own courts, in spite of their sacred duty and charge to defend the United States Constitution, have now become the greatest threat to its survival. The rule of law itself and the underpinnings that hold this Nation together are now at stake.

This undermining of our Constitution did not develop overnight. One hundred and eighty-four years ago, Thomas Jefferson wrote: "The object of my great fear is the federal judiciary. That body, like gravity, ever acting, with noiseless foot, and unalarming advance, gaining ground step by step, and holding what it gains, is engulfing insidiously the special governments into the jaws of that which feeds them."

Only 3½ decades after Thomas Jefferson wrote these ominous words, United States Supreme Court ruled in it their Dred Scott decision that "all blacks, slaves as well as free, were not and could never become citizens of the United States." The Supreme Court said that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit."

Mr. Speaker, we can all see the sickness and evil in that twisted reasoning today. It is a sickness and an evil that precipitated the worst loss of American life in any war in the history of this Nation, 600,000 dead soldiers: husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers.

In the face of these historical realities, it is astonishing today that we do not seem to collectively recognize the dangers represented by an unrestrained judiciary, especially since many of the great conflicts in our society's recent history have been precipitated by arrogant court decisions imposed by an unjust court and imposing an unjust mandate on the entire Nation.

Not so long ago, our courts mandated racial segregation in our public schools. That was the so-called "separate but equal doctrine." And people died on the streets reversing that obscene ruling.

American courts have now declared that protecting viable unborn children from the hideous act of partial birth abortion is "unconstitutional." The courts are now beginning to attack the very foundation and makeup of our country and any civil society, that being marriage and the family itself.

They have said it is "unconstitutional" to protect a 9-year-old girl from Internet pornography or for her to pray a certain prayer in school or for her to voluntarily say her Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States using the words "under God."

Mr. Speaker, are these the causes that our American heroes lying out in Arlington National Cemetery died for? And I am just wondering when those who still have breath say will enough is enough.

As we seek to protect America from the external threats that we face like terrorism, we would do well to remember that it is not the water on the outside of the ship that sinks it. It is the water on the inside. And, Mr. Speaker, I submit that there is water on the inside of this ship.

When courts forcefully interject false and unconstitutional notions that go against justice, natural law and common sense, without allowing the issue to go through the legislative process of debate and consensus, it abrogates the miracle of America and abridges the freedom of the people to govern themselves.

Daniel Webster's admonition to all of us is so very appropriate. He said, "Hold on, my friends, to the Constitution and to the Republic for which it stands, for miracles do not cluster and

what has happened once in 6,000 years may never happen again. So hold on to the Constitution, for if the American Constitution should fall, there will be anarchy throughout the world."

Mr. Speaker, the commitment to true justice in the heart of this Congress and in the heart of the one who occupies the Oval Office are now the only two remaining barriers which prevent judicial oligarchy and the subsequent fall of the American Constitution.

May those of us in this Congress find the courage to assume our constitutional power to prevent the judicial destruction of the United States Constitution.

And, Mr. Speaker, may God give the people of this Nation the insight and soundness of mind to maintain the presidency of the United States in the hands of George W. Bush, who will protect America and the world from such an irrelevant revocable tragedy. God bless America.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

ELECTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I join with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), my co-chair, to salute the people of Afghanistan for this historic time in their Nation's destiny.

□ 1515

I am the cochair with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) of the U.S.-Afghan Caucus. Again I would like to congratulate the government and the people of Afghanistan, who are in the midst of a historical turning point. Leading up to the elections going on today, there has been great progress made in the registration process.

Of an estimated 10 million eligible voters, over 9 million voters, over 40 percent of whom are women, have registered for the country's first presidential election. Saturday, today, this process is ongoing. I applaud the high percentage of registered voters and the diversity of the 24 candidates for presidency. It shows that democracy is in fact working, and these candidates symbolize for the Afghan people the pluralism and open electoral process.

I hope the warlords understand that it is through the ballot box and not the bullet process that we will find democracy and peace in Afghanistan.

I am pleased with President Karzai's choice for his two running mates, Mr.