

IRAQ: RESPONSIBLE WITHDRAWAL
PLAN NEEDED NOW

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the recent referendum approving a new constitution for Iraq has raised hopes for political stability and an improved security situation. But even with this incremental progress, very few informed observers believe there is light at the end of the tunnel.

The Bush administration's decision to wage war in Iraq was constitutionally flawed, poorly planned, ineptly managed and the result has been a strategic national security blunder that promises to haunt our country for decades to come.

The war has devolved into a quagmire that threatens to leave America isolated in a military struggle that is dangerously perceived as a conflict with Islam. It has drained our treasury, stretched our Army to the breaking point, taken over 2,000 American lives, and resulted in more than 40,000 American casualties. It has toppled an evil and sadistic dictator, but at a cost of more than 100,000 Iraqi lives.

The legacy of this war, and its unbelievably poor civilian direction, also threatens to mark George W. Bush as a failed president—a thought I take no great comfort from because a failed presidency hurts America. By taking our democracy into a war of choice, and not a war of necessity, President Bush will have to answer to history. Those in Congress who gave him their trust and vested him with the authority to wage this war will also have to answer for their part in what looks to be a major strategic mistake.

Those of us in Congress who voted against this war must also answer to history. I felt so strongly that I authored my own separate resolution that would have required international support for coercive inspections in Iraq—a plan that would have uncovered false claims about WMD before American blood was spilled in the deserts of Iraq. I stand by my vote as a vote of conscience and believe the wisdom of my cautions about the unintended, but foreseeable consequences of this war have been tragically borne out.

An increasing number of Americans have come to view the war in Iraq as a mistake. I believe strongly that it was a mistake to go to war in the way we did.

However, I am not prepared to say that it has been a mistake for the Iraqi people, because they now have a glimmer of hope that they can create a stable democracy, even though they would have an even greater chance of success had the Bush Administration taken the time to secure international support for their Iraq policy before plunging into war.

I will never believe or say that American soldiers have died and sacrificed in vain—they may rightly claim that their efforts have given hope to the Iraqi people. Sadly, their sacrifice and the excellence of our armed forces have not been matched by the civilian political leadership of our nation.

As it stands now, the Iraqi people are largely dependent on American soldiers for security, and it is this fact that has caused a number of us who opposed the war to reflect on what our future course must be.

For some, the answer is a simple call for “immediate withdrawal” and hopes that a bloodbath and civil war will not follow in the wake of our departure. This is a perfectly understandable response to quagmire, and the terrible price the Bush Administration has exacted for not being completely honest with the American people about the costs or long-term consequences of waging a largely unilateral war to transform the politics of the Middle East.

Let me be absolutely clear. America must withdraw from Iraq. We need a plan that is designed to bring our troops home and make clear to the Islamic world that we harbor no ambitions for permanent bases, Iraqi oil revenues or any military occupation. But how we withdraw is as important as when we withdraw. This means giving the Iraqis time to form a permanent government and establish the means for international support.

We must exercise care in the way our country withdraws, not just to keep faith with promises made to the Iraqi people, but even more importantly because leaving a failed state in Iraq will deeply endanger our country.

Many of the essential elements in a responsible withdrawal plan are clear: holding down the costs to the American taxpayer; transferring security responsibilities to Iraqi forces; preventing Iraq from becoming a bigger breeding ground for terrorism; restoring America's reputation internationally; and honoring the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. In the coming weeks, I will be laying out my specific proposals to chart a new course for a withdrawal strategy in Iraq.

IN HONOR OF JAHJA LING

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Jahja Ling, director and resident conductor of Cleveland Orchestra's Blossom Festival and long-time member of the Cleveland Orchestra's conducting staff, as he bids farewell to an adoring Cleveland audience and begins another musical journey as music director of the San Diego Symphony.

Jahja Ling is an internationally known pianist and conductor, and has graced the stage of the celebrated Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall and at Blossom Music Center for a combined tenure of more than two decades. The artistic luminosity that frames the work of Jahja Ling inspired the personal best from every member of the Cleveland Orchestra and consistently resulted in triumphant performances for audiences of all ages—whether under the stars at Blossom, within the hallowed walls of Severance Hall, or in concert venues around the world.

As founding music director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, COYO, Jahja Ling's unwavering focus on promoting, supporting and creating opportunities for the musically gifted children of our community has uplifted the lives of an untold number of students of classical music, and inspired countless careers in the realm of the performing arts. The Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra has evolved into a complete symphonic ensemble that includes 110 young musicians. Members

are selected from more than 45 cities in 14 counties throughout northern Ohio. In 1998, the COYO held the prestigious honor of being one in only five youth orchestras selected to participate in the 2nd National Youth Orchestra Festival sponsored by the American Symphony Orchestra League. In 2001, the education director at Carnegie Hall invited the COYO to perform as part of their Family Concert Series.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor, recognition and gratitude to Mr. Jahja Ling. Mr. Ling's musical radiance, grace, energy and passion for his art and for the Cleveland community consistently shone through in every performance as conductor with the Cleveland Orchestra. Jahja Ling's vital outreach efforts in founding the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra will forever affect the lives of every young musician, igniting their future dreams, and connecting all of us with the universal power, hope and light of music.

CONGRATULATING DR. LESLIE AUERS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Leslie Auers of Highland Village, Texas for 15 years of dedication to the healthcare of women in the 26th District of Texas.

Dr. Auers received her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Houston and her medical degree from Texas Tech School of Medicine, where she was in the top 10 percent of her class. She completed her internship and residency at Methodist Medical Center, Dallas in 1987 and 1990, respectively. Dr. Auers served as Chairperson for the Department of Ob/Gyn at Medical Center of Lewisville from 1995 to 1997. Today, she continues to serve the 26th District of Texas with the Obstetrics and Gynecology Associates of Lewisville. Dr. Auers is a member of the Denton County Medical Society, and she is also board certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

As the founder of Obstetrics and Gynecology Associates of Lewisville, former Chief of Staff for Lewisville Medical Center, and former Chief of Obstetrics at Lewisville Medical Center, I commend Dr. Auers on her commitment to helping the citizens of Denton County.

Mr. Speaker we are truly fortunate in my community to have the type of dedicated medical professional that Dr. Leslie Auers personifies, and I wish her every success during the continuance of her career in medicine.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 420, LAWSUIT ABUSE REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 27, 2005

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 420, the so-

called Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act. The legislation will have a significant, adverse impact on the ability of civil rights plaintiffs to seek recourse in our courts.

This bill would remove a court's discretion to impose sanctions on attorneys for frivolous lawsuits under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. By removing a court's discretion to impose sanctions, this bill would make Rule 11 sanctions mandatory.

Mandatory Rule 11 sanctions are a failed experiment. When they were mandatory—between 1983 until they were repealed in 1993—they were disproportionately used to harass civil rights plaintiffs bringing claims to enforce civil rights laws. It would be a mistake to turn back the clock on civil rights.

If such mandatory sanctions are reinstated, what can we expect? The movie, based on the first sexual harassment class action, *North Country*, perfectly illustrates the problem. *North Country* is based on the real life case of Lois Jensen, who in 1975 was a single mother on welfare and took a job working in the taconite mines of northern Minnesota. In that male-dominated work force, she endured extreme sexual harassment and her employer refused to do something about it. After 25 years and three trials, Jensen finally prevailed in 1998. Landmark litigation takes time. And landmark causes of action, often referred to as novel, should not be confused with frivolous claims.

If H.R. 420 passes, motions for Rule 11 sanctions will be disproportionately brought by big corporations against individual plaintiffs to harass, drag-out, and make the costs of their litigation more expensive.

It's important not to make landmark civil rights cases more difficult. Mandatory Rule 11 sanctions would make such compelling cases more difficult by allowing big companies even more opportunities to out-litigate the individual. H.R. 420 will require a mandatory sanctions regime that would apply to civil rights cases and massively skew the playing field against injured victims. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 420, and support the Democratic alternative.

TRIBUTE TO ROSA PARKS

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH K. KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of Rosa Parks.

Rosa Parks took a stand by refusing to leave her seat for a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She forever changed the course of our nation with one simple act of courage and stubbornness. By keeping her seat in the front of the bus she started a movement which would ensure that African-Americans and other minorities would never again be required to take a back seat to bigotry, prejudice, and racism.

The significance of Rosa Parks' life was not limited to the civil rights movement, as can be evidenced by her reputation with people of all ages. She is just as important to children today as she was to the millions she inspired with her singular act of defiance in 1955. She led the life of a true heroine, refusing to bow

down to intolerance, inequality, and narrowmindedness.

She was the voice of courage, the personification of bravery, and the catalyst of change. She sat down when the world told her to get up, inspiring millions to demand equality. She leaves a legacy built upon strength, pride, and hope. She was the beginning of a movement that sought tolerance and equality not only between blacks and whites, but also between people of all backgrounds.

Rosa Parks remains a role model for us all, having demonstrated the importance of perseverance and principle. I was and always will be proud to say that she was, for at least a portion of her life, a Michigander. She will be missed, but her memory will never fade.

TRIBUTE TO ROSA PARKS

SPEECH OF

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Rosa Louise Parks, a woman whose life was exemplified by quiet courage, strength and conviction.

During her 92 years, Ms. Parks impressed all that all of us with a sense of the possible. It was possible to change Alabama segregation law by refusing to give up a bus seat, it was possible to change Jim Crow across America, and it was possible to do all this in a non-violent fashion.

Her refusal to rise from her seat and subsequent arrest led to the 381-day Montgomery Bus Boycott and to the eventual repeal of the segregation laws of the South. Her individual act of defiance is considered by many to be the beginning of the civil rights movement.

It would be easy to remember Rosa Parks solely for this event. However, her legacy is so much more. I will remember her as someone who was deeply committed to equality. I will remember her as someone who never sought out personal attention, yet whose great actions attracted admiration from all quarters. I will remember her as a role model and as a great American.

However, without a doubt the best way that we can honor the life of Rosa Parks is not by erecting monuments or parading up and down the main streets of American towns and cities. This is not to say that we shouldn't honor her in this manner, but rather, we should continue her life's work and try to live by the ideals that she shared with all of us.

We should encourage grassroots democracy for positive change in our districts. We should encourage non-violent action, to resist intolerance and discrimination much as Ms. Parks did. Above all, we should encourage Americans to continue the fight for civil rights and equality.

The freedoms we enjoy today are because of the sacrifice of exceptional individuals like Rosa Parks who stood up to oppression and changed history. But Rosa Parks's greatest legacy is that she taught generations that acts of courage can precipitate great change.

Let us celebrate the lifetime achievements of a truly remarkable woman.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHOOL ENERGY CRISIS RELIEF ACT

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the School Energy Crisis Relief Act to provide relief to school districts that have been hit hard by rising fuel costs. This bill is widely supported and has received endorsements from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, American Federation of Teachers, National School Boards Association and Council of Great City Schools. I would especially like to thank all 26 of my colleagues who have signed on as original cosponsors.

We all know that gas prices were skyrocketing for months before the major hurricanes disrupted fuel production on the Gulf Coast. While some school districts anticipated rising energy costs and budgeted accordingly this year, many others will fall short of the funding needed to meet these costs. As a result, precious education dollars are being spent to fill the tanks of school buses and to heat classrooms. States with areas with wide-open spaces, including much of the West and Midwest, will be especially hard-hit. Schools in urban areas will bear the brunt of additional fuel costs in order to heat the Nation's oldest, and often least energy-efficient, school buildings.

It's not hard to understand why school buses are gas-guzzlers. According to an article in the USA Today, a Fairfax County school district in Virginia which transports 110,000 students daily pays \$2.19 a gallon for diesel fuel. A typical school bus takes 65 gallons. That makes the price of a full tank \$142, and it doesn't go far in a vehicle that gets 7 miles per gallon.

The dramatic increase in gas prices therefore imposes a significant burden. For example, in my district, the Colton Joint Unified School District's buses rack up over a million miles a year. In September, the district paid \$2.72 for a gallon of diesel fuel, which 2 years ago cost under a dollar. As a result, the district is spending at least \$300,000 more to fuel its buses than a couple years ago.

Many school districts across the country are already operating on shoe-string budgets this year. These price hikes threaten to exhaust the budgets of those caught unprepared for higher fuel costs. Recent news reports indicate that some schools are implementing drastic measures to keep their fuel costs under control. In Kentucky, for instance, record gas prices have caused a number of schools to cut back to 4 days of classes a week. Last month, most of Georgia's schools cancelled classes for two days in an effort to conserve fuel.

The School Energy Crisis Relief Act authorizes the Secretary of Energy to issue energy assistance grants to help the poorest school districts across the Nation offset these unexpected and challenging costs. If we don't help school districts cover these energy costs, children won't just get left behind—they will be left at home! At a time when fuel price hikes are creating budget shortfalls for many school districts, America cannot afford to compromise our children's education.

I urge my colleagues to support the School Energy Crisis Relief Act. This legislation will