

Thompson, Staff Sergeant George T. Alexander, Jr., Lance Corporal Jonathan R. Spears, Corporal Benjamin D. Hoeffner, Specialist Christopher T. Monroe, Sergeant Michael T. Robertson, Sergeant 1st Class Ramon A. Acevedoaponte, Staff Sergeant Lewis J. Gentry, Sergeant Evan S. Parker, Master Sergeant Thomas A. Wallsmith, Sergeant James Witkowski, Lance Corporal Robert F. Eckfield, Jr., Lance Corporal Jared J. Kremm, Staff Sergeant Daniel R. Lightner, Jr., Captain Michael J. Mackinnon, Colonel William W. Wood, 1st Lieutenant Debra A. Banaszak, Private 1st Class Dillon M. Jutras, Sergeant Shaker T. Guy, Captain Travis W. Nixon, Private 1st Class Kenny D. Rojas, Staff Sergeant Joel P. Dameron, Sergeant Michael Paul Hodshire, Specialist William J. Byler, Specialist Derence W. Jack, Private Adam R. "A.J." Johnson, Sergeant 1st Class Matthew R. Kading, Staff Sergeant Wilgene T. Lieto.

Mr. Speaker, Veterans Day is Friday. Let us remember each of these fallen heroes and all who came before them. In the words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt: "Each of these heroes stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase in its blessings."

Let us also remember the brave men and women who continue to serve our Nation with distinction in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world. Our thoughts and prayers and gratitude are with you and your families at this time until you return home safely to your fellow man and woman, citizens of this country.

This Friday we will remember the 2,058 military personnel who have fallen in Iraq and the 247 Americans who have fallen in Afghanistan.

□ 1900

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

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

HEARINGS TO ADDRESS WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I might speak at this time.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor last week and read part of an article that appeared on October 23 in the article by

Knight Ridder reporters about the Pentagon program costing taxpayers millions in inflated prices. I came to the floor and I reported that there was some reports that we were paying anywhere from \$20 for a plastic ice tray that should cost about 89 cents. In addition to that, we were paying \$81 for coffee makers that you can buy at a retail store for \$29. In addition, I said that we were paying for a 5-cubic-foot refrigerator \$27,000 that should cost about \$3,000 or \$4,000, and these are the kinds of refrigerators that are put on aircraft.

I wanted to report to the House tonight that I am extremely pleased. I wrote a letter to the chairman and ranking member, Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER and Ranking Member IKE SKELTON, and today we held hearings on this issue of inflated prices. I want to say that the hearing was attended by a fair number of those on the Armed Services Committee.

The witnesses, the Admiral and the Under Secretary that were there present, we were able to ask about these inflated prices. They explained this program that is called the Prime Vendor program. We talked about how it used to be when there were competitive prices, and now we have gone to where there is a middleman that works with the prime vendors.

From that, Mr. Speaker, the reason I wanted to come to the floor tonight is because I was so encouraged by the response of the chairman and the ranking member that next week we are going to bring the prime vendors to the committee to talk about these inflated prices.

Mr. Speaker, as I said today on the Armed Services Committee, there is one thing that the American people, maybe they do not follow us when we talk about deficits and debt and some of these other issues that are very important to the future of this Nation; but there is one thing they know, that if you are paying \$20 for a plastic ice cube tray that you can buy for 89 cents, they know that is not right. I also said to those on the panel today that when you are paying \$24,000 or \$25,000 for a 5-cubic-foot refrigerator, the taxpayers know that is not a wise investment as well.

So tonight I want to give credit to the chairman and the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. It was a very informative hearing today that will lead to additional hearings next week. And what I am hoping will come from this is that the taxpayers will know that we do care about abuses and we do care about inflated prices.

We are going to get to the bottom of this, thanks to the leadership of Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member SKELTON and the committee members, both Republican and Democrat. We are going to get to the bottom of this and we are going to be able to say to the taxpayers and to the reporters for Knight Ridder that wrote this article that we are going to see that wrongs

are made right and we are going to do exactly what is in the best interests of the taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I know that my friend from Texas and my friend from Illinois talked about those who serve in this Nation and who have given their lives. As I close this way all over my district, I will close this way tonight.

I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless their families. I ask God to please hold in his loving arms the families who have given a child, dying for freedom.

IRAQ AND THE 250TH MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BATTALION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, usually, when I speak on the House floor each evening, I voice my concern about some of the Bush administration's woeeful policies in Iraq. Trust me, there is no shortage of material to speak about.

But tonight I want to boast a little bit. I want to share how very proud I am to represent the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion, an Army unit that returned home from Iraq today. They returned home to Marin County, just north of the Golden Gate Bridge in California's Sixth Congressional District.

I had the great pleasure to meet and enjoy dinner with the members of the 250th battalion this past September during my visit to Iraq. Their vigilance and dedication to the welfare of the United States is admirable. Everything they do, they do to serve their country. And I could not be more proud to represent them as their voice in Congress. They are truly American heroes.

Unfortunately, the members of the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion and other military units that have served or are currently serving in Iraq have not always gotten the treatment they deserve from their government. Far too often, the Bush administration has failed to live up to its promise to the troops, whether it is denying them full veterans' benefits, sending them on second, third, and now fourth deployments to Iraq and/or to Afghanistan, or failing to provide them with the life-saving body armor or equipment that they need. One thing is clear: This administration has failed our troops time and again.

Sadly, the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who have been deployed to Iraq, and their families, were not the only ones affected by the war in Iraq. That is because just about every single American will suffer from the billions of dollars in budget cuts to important domestic programs since the U.S. invaded Iraq. These budget cuts are directly related to not only the tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, but also to the ludicrous spending for the military misadventures around the world

of the civilian leadership, with the White House, the Pentagon, and this Congress making decisions that cost our country billions, in fact, \$1 billion a week, actually. Anyone who thinks that the more than \$200 billion that Congress has allocated for the Iraq war so far has not affected important domestic programs is just kidding himself or herself.

In the last example and the very latest example, tomorrow, the House will vote on a reconciliation bill that would give tax breaks to the wealthy of \$70 billion to \$100 billion in tax breaks, while slashing safety net programs for the poor, programs like Medicaid, student loans, child support enforcement, and veterans' health care. This is just wrong.

If he wants to get things right, President Bush and his administration would actually send a clear message that it has let the American people down, and now it is time to start anew. First and foremost, that means leaving Iraq.

After all, the President's notion that we are fighting the terrorists in Iraq so we will not have to fight them here at home is pure nonsense. If that were true, how could the President explain the London subway bombings earlier this year? How could he explain the terrible bombs that went off at three hotels in Jordan earlier today, already killing over 50 people and wounding more than 100?

Mr. Speaker, our troops and the American people have endured enough sacrifice. We need to end this war and bring our fine soldiers home. We need to give Iraq back to the Iraqi people through a range of economic, political, and humanitarian partnerships.

The American people deserve better than a war that has destroyed the social safety net here at home, and the extraordinary men and women whom I met in Iraq certainly deserve better. In return for their unflinching loyalty, they deserve basic competence and integrity from their Federal Government. They deserve leaders as courageous as they are.

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

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

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage all Americans to take the time to prepare an advance directive. November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, and this month should serve as a reminder for individuals to take the time to discuss with their loved ones important end-of-life and medical decisions.

As people discuss their end-of-life health care wishes, there are two legal documents that can help. The first is a living will. Living wills are probably the most recognizable and familiar document to aid individuals in communicating their wishes.

However, Mr. Speaker, today I would like to draw the attention of the American public to a different type of advance directive, a medical power of attorney. A medical power of attorney, or health care proxy, allows you to appoint a person whom you trust to serve as your health care agent.

Each State government has a medical power of attorney form that a citizen can fill out and have witnessed. This then authorizes the appointed agent to make health care decisions on an individual's behalf. Mr. Speaker, people should not be scared away by these forms; they are written in plain English, and they are very easy to fill out.

I have brought with me an example from my home State of Georgia in order to illustrate how easy this process can be for the American public. The form is simple and straightforward, and is only 6 pages long. I have highlighted two sections for us to look at today.

First is the portion where you identify yourself and then name your power of attorney, and I call my colleagues' attention to the first poster. It may be a little bit difficult to read from the back of the Chamber but basically, Georgia's statutory short form durable power of attorney for health care. And the instructions, again, pretty simple. Print the date, print your name and address, print the name and address of your agent. It is that simple. This authorizes the individual to act for you and, as my colleagues can see, in Georgia, you have the opportunity to initial the statement also. This is the second poster, Mr. Speaker, to check the box really that best reflects your wishes, and there are three. It is just a simple, initial process.

The first one is, I do not want my life to be prolonged, nor do I want life-sustaining or death-delaying treatment, et cetera.

The second check box: I want my life to be prolonged, and I want life-sustaining or death-delaying treatment to be provided, under certain circumstances.

And then the last box, and again, a simple check: I want my life to be prolonged to the greatest extent possible without regard to my condition, the chances I have for recovery, or the cost of the procedure. It is as simple as that.

In addition to State government and public health departments, many organizations and hospitals around the country have advance directives available for patients and loved ones who may find themselves facing these tough decisions.

Mr. Speaker, executing living wills and powers of attorney are so important, I plan to introduce legislation next week that encourages all Americans at all stages of life to prepare these advance directives. My legislation will offer a one-time, refundable tax credit to those individuals who prepare an advance directive.

The refundability of this tax credit is essential in incentivizing lower-income Americans, who often are unaware or unable to adequately prepare for end-of-life medical decisions, to prepare advance directives to ensure that their wishes are honored and valuable health care resources are used where they are needed and wanted.

Mr. Speaker, it has been shown that medical care at the end of life consumes almost 15 percent of our country's health care budget and nearly 30 percent of the Medicare budget. In addition, according to an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, it has been estimated that hospice care and advance directives can save between 25 and 40 percent of health care costs just during the last month of life.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government needs to provide an incentive to the American people to have these conversations and to take these important actions. It is not only in the best interests of patients and families, but also our country's health care system and the American taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in cosponsoring this important piece of legislation.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a new-found sense of fiscal responsibility on the Republican majority side of the aisle. There should be.

Last year, the fiscal year was a record deficit, nearly \$600 billion. Not only did the United States of America borrow over \$400 billion from investors, and a great deal from China and other foreign interests, they also borrowed the entire Social Security trust fund surplus for the year, about \$180 billion, money that was intended to pay for future benefits for Social Security retirees to ensure that those benefits would be there to pay for the looming retirement of the baby boomers.

Mr. Speaker, \$180 billion extracted only from people who earn salary and wages and earn less than \$90,000 a year was borrowed and spent. Some of it was