

stunt and the American people will forget the private meetings and the \$16.5 billion in gifts that the Republican Congress has provided Big Oil. Republicans should know it is wrong to hand out billions of dollars to oil companies at a time when they are making record profits and then cut home heating assistance to the elderly. But they do not forget.

The paper trail is too thick for the Republicans to hide their cozy relationship with Big Oil. The record is finally cleared up. Big Oil, Vice President CHENEY, the Republican Congress, what a team. It gives a whole new meaning to family.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change and time for new priorities.

SETTING THE HISTORICAL RECORD STRAIGHT

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to set the historical record straight. As my colleague JEB HENSARLING recently stated, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own set of facts."

Prior to the war, Members of Congress had access to the same intelligence as the administration did, and it was determined that Saddam Hussein posed a serious threat to the United States.

The 2002 resolution authorizing the use of force received overwhelming bipartisan support, but now some make it seem otherwise. Charges being leveled at this administration that somehow prewar intelligence reports were manipulated are false and unworthy of this body.

The facts are clear. The 2004 Senate Intelligence Committee report stated that there was no evidence of manipulated intelligence in relation to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities. The bipartisan Robb-Silbermann commission in 2005 reached the same conclusion.

Attempts to distort these facts are an attempt to revise history. Doing so undercuts the efforts of our troops and undermines our national security.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY RUSSELL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Nancy Russell is a woman of great courage, vision, and determination who has made heroic efforts in protecting the Columbia River Gorge. Her singleness of purpose and determination was a driving force that led to the unique Gorge National Scenic Area legislation in 1986.

She and her late husband, Bruce Russell, made significant personal financial commitments securing the purchase of key properties and easements. Without Nancy and her efforts, this na-

tional treasure would undoubtedly have been spoiled by sprawling development, pollution, and traffic.

Nancy Russell and her efforts have earned much recognition and acclaim, but perhaps nothing is as meaningful as when hundreds of her friends, supporters, and admirers gathered this weekend to honor her in the 25th anniversary of the advocacy group she founded, the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge.

Notwithstanding her recognition, the true legacy of Nancy Russell is to be found every time anybody hikes, bikes, drives, or flies over the magnificent Columbia River Gorge, which she has protected for generations to come.

DEMOCRAT OBSTRUCTIONISM

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Democrats and President Bush have consistently and truthfully said that Saddam Hussein was a threat to our country. In the 2002 war debate, Senator HILLARY CLINTON said, "If left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will continue to increase his capability to wage biological and chemical warfare." Liberal Democrat NANCY PELOSI declared, "Saddam Hussein certainly has chemical and biological weapons." Howard Dean vowed, "There is no question that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the United States and our allies."

However, since losing the 2004 election, Democrats have developed a disturbing case of obstructionism and now falsely claim that President Bush exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Why would Democrats go from agreeing with President Bush in supporting our mission in Iraq to slandering our Commander in Chief and questioning our troops' efforts? Politics, pure and simple politics.

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

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, in this morning's Washington Post, one of the paper's columnists implied that I and other Members who oppose Medicare cuts are simply "demonizing Republicans."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I hate to break it to you, but I am more concerned with the people who live in my district than the current image problems affecting the Republican Party. Truly, what concerns the people in my district is what Congress is considering doing this week.

We are right now waiting to see the latest version of a bill that takes away food from children, makes it more difficult for young people to go to college, and slashes funding for foster parents.

I know that many of my colleagues would like to spin this bill as a fine example of fiscal discipline; but rather than taking from children, why do we not think we should start with, oh, I do not know, honestly accounting for future deficit projections, or eliminating billion-dollar pork barrel projects for the chairmen of certain committees, or how about an open and competitive bid on huge government contracts.

Five years ago, Mr. Speaker, this country had record surpluses. In half a decade, we have dishonest accounting, the largest deficit in history, and a budget reconciliation process that is conducted behind closed doors. Believing that America can do better is not a partisan attack.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, Congress will soon debate much-needed immigration reforms. One of the most pressing matters is the sad state of technology used to process immigration case files. The U.S. Customs and Immigration Service uses paper printouts to process over 7 million applications per year.

To address this glaring deficiency, I am introducing the Comprehensive Immigration Data and Technology Accountability Act. This legislation will do three things. First, it will create a database that allows real-time access to pending casework and move to a fully electronic system. Second, the database will be linked to Federal law enforcement agencies, reducing the number of illegal immigrants released into our communities. Third, the legislation sets deadlines for the planning, implementation, and review of the new database.

It is past time that we used the fee-based immigration system to upgrade technology and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our application process. It is the right thing to do for Americans, and it is the right thing to do for those coming to America.

STANDING UP FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to speak on behalf of the American people. The American people want us to stand up and fight these dastardly budget cuts to the needy at a time when this country is in such great pain. We have just gone through the visceral attacks of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. The American people are suffering. They are hurting. At the very same time that we are hurting and suffering the most, this Republican-led Congress and

the President of the United States want to put forward budget cuts that would hurt them the most.

Let me tell you about them: \$12 billion in Medicaid cuts at a time when 45 million Americans do not even have health insurance, and \$850 million cuts in the food stamp program when 2 million people, according to the Agriculture Department, were just added to the hungry rolls.

This is the wrong time to do these cuts. These cuts are made to offset a \$70 billion tax cut for billionaires and millionaires who do not even need the money; and in order to even pay that money, we have to go and borrow it from Communist China.

The American people deserve better, we can do better, and we must do better. Let's vote down these cuts and stand up for the American people.

MEDICARE HISTORY

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

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, today, senior citizens across America can sign up for the new Medicare prescription drug benefit that will save them money on medicines that they need. Many are concerned that the program with its many choices is too confusing, not to mention the mixed signals being sent by this House. Health care can be complicated, but saving money on prescription drugs that senior citizens need should not be. We have a responsibility to help seniors save money, not scare them away from these critical new benefits.

Back in 1966, many people thought that the original Medicare hospital insurance plan was too confusing. Then, as now, volunteers were trying to help seniors enroll, even going door to door. Back in 1966, not all seniors answered the door; and as a result, millions failed to enroll in the first round of benefits before the initial sign-up window had closed. "I think the problems ahead will be vast," said Democrat Senator Abraham Ribicoff in the spring of 1966. "The encouraging fact," he added, "is a willingness to cooperate, despite the earlier strong opposition to Medicare, to make it work. I am sure it will," he said.

I share Senator Ribicoff's optimism. Older Americans have flooded the Medicare hotline and Web site, and they are attending workshops in America's senior centers in large numbers.

It is natural for many seniors to have questions. I urge this House to help our constituents deal with this new benefit.

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RUBBER STAMP CONGRESS

(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, I am here to make a public service announcement. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) laid out the problems of the bill that has been floating around in the Congress, but I want him to be assured that the rubber stamp Congress is coming in on Thursday.

Now, it says here, I approve of everything that George Bush does, and that is what this rubber stamp is we are going to use in here on Thursday. Last night, the Ways and Means Committee produced a tax cut bill. They will bring it over here, bring it up to the Rules Committee, roll it all together with the tax cuts and the tax giveaways and make the poor people pay for what the rich people get. They are going to bring it out here, and we are going to watch 218 Republicans march up and rubber stamp that baby.

Whatever George Bush asks for, whether it makes sense or not, that is the responsibility of the Republican majority, and they all have to bring their stamp on Thursday, because if they do not bring it on Thursday, we are not going to get to go home for Thanksgiving to rejoice over how much we have been able to give to the rich. This is a very important week. Don't forget your rubber stamp on Thursday morning when you come to work.

SAINT LEO THE GREAT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Saint Leo the Great Catholic School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for being named a No Child Left Behind nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. The Blue Ribbon Schools program honors K-12 schools that are academically superior in their State or demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

Saint Leo the Great is one of just 10 North Carolina schools to receive this prestigious award. In fact, it is the only private school in the entire State to achieve this recognition. Not only am I proud of the students and faculty at Saint Leo for their academics, I am also proud of them for their compassion. Following Hurricane Katrina, the students at Saint Leo reached out to their peers at Saint Clement of Rome, a fellow nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School in Louisiana. The students at Saint Leo made congratulatory cards and sent individual blue ribbons to the students and teachers at Saint Clement. They also raised money to pay travel expense for the principal of Saint Clement to receive the Blue Ribbon Award in Washington, DC.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the students, faculty and staff at Saint Leo the Great Catholic School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

KENNETH "KEN" BRUCE

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

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my sorrow and the sorrow felt by the people of Campbell County, Tennessee, over the tragic death of Mr. Ken Bruce on Tuesday, November 8, 2005.

Mr. Bruce is survived by his loving wife, Jo; his two sons, Christopher and Patrick; his parents, Gene and Beverly Bruce; his brother, Greg; sister, Wendy, as well as all those who knew Mr. Bruce and experienced his overwhelming goodwill and humorous service.

Mr. Bruce was one of the rare individuals in this world that dedicated his life to serving others. Through his 20 years service in the Army and Army Reserves, and as a school administrator, the students of Campbell County High School where Mr. Bruce served as an assistant principal knew him as a man who they could talk to, who would listen, who would empathize and who would offer good sound advice. They also knew him as a man with a great sense of humor, always willing to offer a one-liner that would put a smile on their faces.

It is difficult, when we experience such a profound loss, to find words that do justice to a life cut short or bring condolences to those feeling the deepest pain. Those who knew him well knew he would want everyone to carry on, to approach each day with an open mind and with an open heart and with an enthusiasm for life that encourages us to find the good in every situation and to turn to the Lord for answers to their most difficult questions.

It is my hope that all of us affected by this terrible sad death will continue together to help this community carry on, to help them find peace and calm, for as surely as we know there will be a tomorrow, we know we will never see his smiling face in this life. We can only take solace in the knowledge that Mr. Bruce has gone on to a better place where his spirit will continue peacefully into eternity.

You will be sorely missed, Mr. Bruce, and we will never forget. As Horatio said in Shakespeare's Hamlet, "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

May God continue to watch over your family and the communities of Campbell County, Tennessee.

MEDICARE PART D

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage seniors across America to learn about Medicare part D, the new voluntary prescription drug benefit available to all seniors. Tuesday marked the first day seniors could