

AMERICANS ARE DYING BECAUSE OF FLAWED IMMIGRATION POLICY

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Officer Brian Jackson loved his job. He had been a member of the Dallas Police Department since 2001. He moved to Dallas from his hometown in Rhode Island because he wanted to "be a big city cop."

But in the early morning hours of last Sunday, the last 15 minutes of his shift, Officer Brian Jackson, 28, responded to one last call. His shift was basically over, but he agreed to answer one more emergency.

It was not only his last call of the night, but it was his last call ever. Officer Jackson was responding to a domestic disturbance call when he was murdered, allegedly by an illegal alien from Mexico named Juan Lizcano.

But this crime could have been avoided. This illegal alien had been arrested twice in the last year, but because of safe haven sanctuary laws in Dallas, he was never deported. Because of these preposterous laws, a dedicated police officer, husband, and friend lost his life.

Officer Jackson and his newlywed wife had just returned from a delayed honeymoon in Hawaii.

Americans are dying because the government does not protect our borders. This is yet another example of our Nation's flawed immigration policy. This ought not to be.

REPUBLICANS CUT CRITICAL PROGRAMS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the Republicans are preparing for Thanksgiving, like many Americans. But early this morning they slaughtered the turkey. They chopped student loans, school lunch, foster care, long-term care, and Medicaid for struggling families. Now they are preparing to serve a huge portion, with gravy, to Americans with generous new tax breaks and extended tax cuts to those who earn more than \$300,000 a year and who clip coupons for a living, hard-working Americans them.

They are a little worried about kind of the mixed metaphor here, whether or not they will be called Scrooge, and some people will confuse Thanksgiving and Christmas. So they might put the bird back in the freezer and wait until closer to Christmas and hope that the struggling students and families forget what was taken from them to help those who earn over \$300,000 a year.

So that is the big decision on the Republican side of the aisle today. When does the turkey, composed of benefits that should have gone to struggling families, as a gift to the wealthy, get delivered, Thanksgiving or Christmas? Tough choice. Stay tuned.

WE MUST FINISH OUR MISSION IN IRAQ

(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, last month, Ayman Zawahiri, al Qaeda's number two leader, said that the terrorist mission was to "expel the Americans from Iraq." Yesterday, this statement was echoed when Democratic Congressman JOHN MURTHA called for U.S. troops to be withdrawn from Iraq.

Instead of proposing winning solutions for the Global War on Terrorism, some Democrats are throwing up their hands and waving the white flag of surrender. As our brave men and women in uniform continue to protect our country, NANCY PELOSI, JOHN MURTHA, and other Democrats should have learned from last week's mass murders in Jordan that we face a global enemy, following the bus bombings in London and New Delhi.

As a 31-year veteran and the father of a son who served in Iraq, I know our troops and brave Iraqi patriots are making tremendous progress protecting American families. Americans recognize we will face the terrorists on the streets of Iraq or we will face them again in America.

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

DEMONSTRATING THE COURAGE OF OUR CONVICTIONS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the American people want this Congress to debate the war in Iraq. We should have had a debate before we entered into this war. Instead, we rushed into it.

Yesterday, Congressman JACK MURTHA, a man of conscience, a decorated Vietnam veteran, one of the leading advocates for the military here in the United States Congress, stood up and told it like it is, that the situation in Iraq is getting worse, not getting better, and we, our huge U.S. presence, is a major part of the problem. We have become the focus. We have become the people who are being attacked.

Congressman MURTHA deserves credit. Rather than engaging in a debate, what we hear from the other side and from the White House is more and more smear tactics, those who claim they are somehow being unpatriotic. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Dissent in the face of policies that you disagree with is patriotism. To remain silent as you see this country going down the wrong path is not patriotism, it is moral cowardice.

I praise Congressman JACK MURTHA for having the courage of his convictions and standing up and leading the way to get us out of this war in Iraq.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2528, MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 564 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 564

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2528) making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

House Resolution 564 waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration, and it provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 564 and the underlying conference report for H.R. 2528, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2006.

Today, this House has the opportunity to pass a conference report that will provide \$45.4 billion to fund the very important needs of our servicemen and women, our veterans, and our military infrastructure.

This conference report provides an all-inclusive look at the programs that are related to the quality of life of those who currently serve America in the armed forces, their families, and those men and women who have sacrificed so much for our freedom in the past.

Mr. Speaker, by providing \$45.4 billion, this conference report actually marks an increase of \$3.1 billion from fiscal year 2005, and it is an increase of \$300,000 from the President's request.

The bill funds the Department of Veterans Affairs at \$22.5 billion, \$1.7 billion above the fiscal year 2005 enacted level, and \$575 million above the 2006 budget request by the President. Particularly important is the funding for veterans' medical services that includes for the very first time \$2.2 billion strictly allocated for specialty mental health care on top of a doubling for funding of mental health research.

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Mr. Speaker, I should note that over the past 2 years, funding for veterans medical care has increased by 18 percent. Let me repeat: Funding for veterans medical care has increased over the past 2 years by 18 percent. The conference provides a particular victory for veterans back home in northwest Georgia, my district, and across the Nation. This bill does not, and I repeat, does not, contain any new fees for veterans medical services or prescription drugs. This conference report provides \$6.2 billion for military construction, \$5.1 billion for Active Duty construction, and \$1.1 billion for Reserve components.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my statement by acknowledging Subcommittee Chairman WALSH and Chairman LEWIS for their overall vision and dedication to completing this bill, both here in the House and in the conference, for the sake of our servicemen and women, past and present.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this debate. I encourage my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first conference report that the House will consider as a military quality of life-VA appropriations bill. As we all know, as a result of the subcommittee realignment adopted earlier this year by the Appropriations Committee, military construction, Defense Department health programs and all veterans programs are now contained in this one appropriations bill. I want to express my respect and voice my praise for the work of Chairman WALSH and Ranking Member EDWARDS for their work on this bipartisan-supported conference report.

This final conference report is a significant improvement over the earlier House-passed bill, especially in the areas of medical care and benefits for our veterans. Veterans medical services are funded at \$22.5 billion, which has long been the position on this side of the aisle as the minimum amount of funding required to meet our veterans health needs. This total is \$575 million above the President's budget request and \$1.7 billion more than last year.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 2 years, the funding amount needed to meet veterans medical care has increased by 18 percent, so while I welcome this increase in veterans medical services, I remain concerned about the total amount of funds that will actually be required over the coming year. I predict that we will still need to find additional funds next year to meet the fiscal year 2006 medical needs of our veterans.

Other important actions taken by the conferees are the specific targeting of \$2.2 billion for specialty mental health care for our veterans and fully funding the requested amounts for posttraumatic stress disorders. In addition, this bill creates three Centers of Excellence for mental health and PTSD medical care.

Mr. Speaker, last week I was at a forum in western Massachusetts, and I met a Massachusetts father whose son had served in Iraq. He told me about the difficulty his son had attempting to reintegrate himself back into civilian life following his tour of duty. One night during a conversation, his son broke down in tears and laid his head in his father's lap and cried. The father told me at that forum that the next time he held his son's head in his lap was a couple of weeks later when he cut the rope that his son had used to hang himself in their basement.

Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize the vast need, the urgent and increasing need, for counseling services for the men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The New England Journal of Medicine reported earlier this year that one in five of the soldiers leaving the Iraq war are suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder and other mental health problems. We have to make their ability to receive counseling and support simple and seamless. We have to make sure that they do not run into bureaucratic walls or receive the runaround just when they need help the most.

I know that this is something that the chairman and ranking member think about a great deal, and I simply want to express my support for their efforts to confront this growing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report also increases the amount of funding for military construction and housing over the President's request and over the amount in the House-passed bill. Even so, at this level of funding, it will take nearly eight decades to meet the needs currently identified by the Pentagon for military housing and modern basing and training facilities.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this Congress talks about how we support our troops and how we honor their service and sacrifice, but year after year we fail to meet the needs of our veterans, the old and the new, and we fail to provide the funds to provide our uniformed men and women the housing and training facilities that they need in order to prepare for the deadly duties we demand of them.

This is a matter of priorities. This is a statement of values and principles about whether and how we really do believe our troops and our veterans merit the very best this Nation can provide. We just cannot stand here year after year and praise the conferees for doing the best they could within the budget allocation they were given. It is the Congress that determines the amount of that budget allocation for our veterans, for our military housing and

construction, for our military's quality of life. As my good friend and colleague from Illinois JESSE JACKSON, JR., said yesterday on the floor of this House, it's like a farmer saying the summer harvest is bad when he failed to plant seeds in the spring.

Mr. Speaker, like all of my House colleagues, I will be supporting this conference report, but we simply have to do better in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to close this morning by saluting those men and women who so proudly and bravely serve our country. Their sacrifices and their families' sacrifices are beyond the average American's comprehension. We must acknowledge that without these individuals, the rest of us could not enjoy the freedoms we so often discuss in this Chamber.

The appropriation conference report that will be passed today should stand as a "thank you" to those who have worn the uniform of our Nation. Some will say the bill does not provide enough for those who are veterans of military service. Well, in a way, Mr. Speaker, I would agree with that. I honestly do not believe we can ever do enough to support our military men and women. They deserve so much more than we will ever be able to afford to give. It is truly an unbalanced relationship. They sacrifice everything for our liberties. We can only repay a small portion of that debt.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will finish my remarks simply by saying thank you to our troops, thank you to our veterans, and may God bless you and keep you safe.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WAVING POINTS OF ORDER
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT
ON H.R. 3058, TRANSPORTATION,
TREASURY, HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JU-
DICARY, THE DISTRICT OF CO-
LUMBIA, AND INDEPENDENT
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 565 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 565

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3058) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. All