

these arguments, not really debate since we are not going back and forth, but listening to the three of us put out information that we believe is important for the American people to hear and to understand—and to understand how we are coming to the conclusions that we are coming too, that we be held to a very high standard of what we say and that we are able to back up each and everything that we do say with facts that are verifiable.

So Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you tonight for being able to lead this hour, and I want to thank my colleague from Texas, Mr. HENSARLING, for his role in our talk tonight and I want to also thank my freshman colleague from Georgia, Mr. PRICE, for his helping me out tonight as well. So the message I would leave with the American people is this, that we have got a growing economy, we have got an economy that is well grounded and is going to sustain this growth; but that what we do not need to do is to increase taxes, tax rates on that economy, but that we continue the pro growth/pro job creation tax rates that have been in effect since 2001 and 2003.

□ 2230

THE SECOND CHANCE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for half the time until midnight, approximately 45 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, of course I come to the floor to talk about a subject that we do not talk nearly enough about. And I really did not intend to talk about tax policy or taxes, but after listening to the last hour, and especially some portions of it, I just could not resist, as I listened to some of the commentary. As a matter of fact, it reminded me of the young fellow who went to Sunday school and rushed home because he was so excited and told his mother, "Mom, you should have been with me at Sunday school. We just had a great lesson. You really would have enjoyed it.

She said, "Well, what was so exciting about it?"

He said, "Well, in Sunday school, they told us all about this great general named Moses and how he led his army out of Egypt with the Egyptians in hot pursuit. And when they got down to the Red Sea," he said, "Moses dispatched his engineers and had them build a pontoon bridge and all of his soldiers went across. And then when the Egyptians got on the bridge, he dispatched his demolition experts, and they dynamited the bridge, and all of the Egyptians fell into the water and drowned. Johnny's mother said, "Now, Johnny, are you sure that is what they told you?"

He said, "Well, no, ma'am." But I figured you would believe this more than you would what they did tell us."

And listening to what some of my colleagues have been saying this evening, I figure that the American people have got to believe something other than that. I mean, I have been truly amazed about how they can put money in the pockets of those at the very top, nothing in the pockets of those at the bottom, and say that they are going to get the economy moving. It would seem to me if they did it the opposite way, if they put something in the pockets of those at the bottom, they have no choice except to spend it. Every dime that they would get would go right back into the economy, and it would circulate, and the guy at the grocery store would get some of it. The person in the barber shop would get some of it. The person selling Pampers would get some of it.

Well, at any rate, it would circulate, and the economy would then be nourished and could grow and develop and not be one sided. But I really did not come to talk about that. So let me move on.

I really came to talk about the reentry of the large number of individuals who are incarcerated in our country. As a matter of fact, the United States of America has become the most incarcerated nation on the face of the earth. Right now as we speak, even tonight, there are 2 million people in our Nation's prisons and jails. Two million. More people proportionately than we would find in prison in China or in Russia or any other countries that we often talk about their human rights violations. And it is a problem that we have got to get a handle on because many of these individuals come home every year.

Right now, we expect about 650,000 to come home from jails and prison, and when they come home, they need to be reintegrated. But, unfortunately, when many of them come home, they cannot find a job. They cannot find a place to stay. There are laws that prohibit them from working.

In my State, for example, there are 57 job titles by law that an individual who has a felony conviction could not hold. As a matter of fact, a person could not even get a license to cut hair without some intervention or a person could not be a mail technician unless they got a waiver or some special consideration. So prisoner reentry has become a big issue but not big enough.

Many of us have been trying to work on it, and we have a bill that we have put together that we think will go a long way. And, of course, it is no panacea. It is a small way of addressing the problem.

I was delighted when the President gave his State of the Union address 2 years ago and suggested that we had to do something for these individuals coming home, and out of that conversation, in many instances, efforts have occurred, and ultimately we have the Second Chance Act on the drawing board, on the table, waiting to be acted upon that would simply provide some

resources to assist these individuals. It would also provide some coordination so that we can have the Justice Department, the Education Department, the Labor Department, all working jointly at the same time, to develop coherent strategies so that as individuals return, there is enough of an effort to keep them from going back.

Statistics suggest that when an individual comes out of prison, unless there is some help for them, unless there is some intervention, 67 percent of them will have done what we call reoffend within a 3-year period of time and more than half of them will be reincarcerated, meaning the recidivism rate, in and out, in and out, money being spent, where, if we could somehow or another try to help them to become self-sufficient rather than spending \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year taking care of them, they could help take care of other members of society and they could pay some of those taxes that my colleagues have been talking about. But if they are not working and if they are incarcerated with no hope, they are not going to pay any of those taxes. So I am looking forward to the time when we will pass the Second Chance Act.

I am so pleased to be joined by two of my colleagues, both who have demonstrated a tremendous amount of commitment, a great deal of energy, effort, and courage to find real solutions to the problems that plague our society. I know that the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), a former prosecutor, a judge who has seen corrections, who has seen sentencing, who has seen people come before the court, probably had to sentence some of them to correctional facilities, but also who knows that it is our responsibility to help them as they return.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his leadership on these issues. He has been hosting sessions across this country with regard to issues that impact ex-offenders and the African American male population in our country and in some of the territories.

Reentry is an issue of common sense and of public safety. I am not on the floor just as a Member of Congress. As my colleague said, I have served as a general jurisdiction judge handling criminal felony cases, even death penalty cases, and also as the elected prosecutor in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. I have been working on community reentry issues or prisoner reentry issues in Cleveland for 25 years. I served on the board of the Community Reentry Program in the city of Cleveland. While county prosecutor, I implemented a Pretrial Diversion Program, as well as the Municipal Drug Court in the city of Cleveland.

And people said, Why as a judge or a prosecutor are you working on these issues?

We must collectively, law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, correctional officials, address this issue. Otherwise, we will continue to spend tax dollars incarcerating and continuing to incarcerate individuals. We need to contemplate that while they are incarcerated that they have an opportunity to train, that they have an opportunity to be educated.

I know a lot of people think that going to prison is like being in a hotel. I guarantee it is not like being in a hotel, even though we used to call our county jail the "McFall Hilton." McFall was our sheriff. It is nothing, as many contemplate. And while they are there, we need to work on issues to give them skills once they hit the streets.

The programs that I spoke about implementing, the Pretrial Diversion Program, the Municipal Drug Court, and some of the community reentry programs, are still in existence. We need to contemplate that prisoner reentry is not a Democratic issue, it is not a Republican issue. It is a common-sense issue. The facts are clear that meaningful reentry programs significantly diminish the chances that ex-offenders will return to prison. They save taxpayer dollars and increase public safety. So why not invest in enhancing reentry programs in order to end the cycle of recidivism? That is exactly what the Second Chance Act does.

Before I discuss the legislation, and I am going to leave that to some of my colleagues as well, I just want to give a few statistics. In 2002, 2 million people were incarcerated in all of the Federal and State prisons. Each year, nearly 650,000 return to communities nationwide. Two-thirds of them are expected to be re-arrested. The State of Ohio has one of the largest populations of ex-offenders reentering the community, with about 24,000 ex-offenders returning to their respective communities annually. Of those ex-offenders, about 6,000 will return to Cuyahoga County, my county, and almost 5,000 will reenter in the city of Cleveland, which is the largest jurisdiction in my congressional district.

Statewide, about 40 percent of ex-offenders will return to prison. In Cuyahoga County, about 41 percent. Such high recidivism rates translate into thousands of new crimes each year and wasted taxpayer dollars which can be averted through improved reentry programs.

H.R. 1704, the Second Chance Act of 2005, allocates \$110 million toward a variety of reentry programs. One of the main components is the funding of demonstration projects that will provide ex-offenders with a coordinated continuum of housing, education, health, employment, and mentoring service. This broad array of services will provide stability and make the transition of ex-offenders easier, and in turn, reduce recidivism.

One of the things that we have found over the years in our community re-

entry programs is a lack of housing for ex-offenders. An ex-offender comes home to a family and the family says, "I cannot take you in. You need to be somewhere else." An ex-offender comes home and does not have access to drug treatment programs and maybe no access to mental health programs. We found that statistically, inmates in many of the prisons not only have a drug problem, they have a mental health problem. And when they hit the streets, they often self-medicate because they are not involved in any psychiatric program that provides them the necessary drugs to be able to help them work through their issues. This is the first of a kind piece of legislation that is critical to the success of ex-offenders but is also critical to the success of our communities. We need to focus on these issues and begin to break down the barriers.

□ 2245

It is important because there are groups that are committed to reentry on the ground, for example, the Community Reentry Program in my city. But also in our State prison system, our director, Reggie Wilkinson, has been very active in creating a program called the Choice Act.

In that he has been able to implement services and programs beginning in the penal institution so that as they come out to the street they are already prepared. I am so pleased to have been a part of many of these programs, and I am so pleased that our legislation has had a hearing before the Judiciary Committee.

Many times you introduce legislation, the legislation goes to committee and it never gets a hearing, does not get voted out of committee; and then it kind of lingers and dies in committee. We were pleased that we have had that Judiciary Committee hearing and pleased to have the opportunity now to try and get it voted out and brought to the floor of the House so all of our colleagues can talk about the issue.

The other beauty of this program is that we have bipartisan support. There are Democrats and Republicans on this bill. The trade representative, Mr. Portman, was very active in that process. I can go on and on and on talking about this issue and my experiences with the program.

But what I will say is I am so pleased. I feel like it is like my silver anniversary in community reentry issues that I am involved in. It is great that I am getting to present an opportunity to talk about a program that is so important to me.

And with that, because our time is limited, I am going to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), and say to him again thank you so much for your leadership, thank you so much for your concern.

I know that the people involved in this country, not only the offenders but their families who are always looking at this, they say, I sent my son to

get a job, and when he went to get the job, if he told them that he had a felony record he would never get the job, or if he does not tell them, then they learn he has a record, he loses the job.

There are men and women out here who need to be put to work and take care of their families.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES). You are absolutely right. I get letters every day that I can never read. I mean, we try and respond to all of our mail. I have got a cardboard box of letters that we have not been able to get to of individuals and their families simply expressing a hope that this legislation is going to be passed, that there is going to be some possibility that they would have an opportunity to reclaim their lives and become again meaningful members of society.

And we certainly thank the gentlewoman for the role that she has played. I am optimistic, because I think we are going to see this legislation passed. Right now we have got about 85 sponsors in the House. When it was introduced in the Senate, there were 10 cosponsors in the Senate, or 10 sponsors, which is a good indication that it has great support and that is continuing to rise.

One of the reasons I think we have been able to have a hearing in the Judiciary Committee is because there is support among members of the Judiciary Committee for the legislation. And one of the members of that committee who has been very instrumental in not only moving this legislation, but instrumental in protecting the rights of American citizens, perhaps like none other, and using his office, we all like to call him our constitutional scholar, that is one who understands the Constitution and what it was that its framers were trying to protect and provide, and so we are indeed delighted that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) is here with us this evening.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) for working together tonight on this Special Order. I especially want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his hard work in dealing with prisoners and their problems.

Obviously, we are in a democracy where in most States prisoners cannot vote, so there is nothing in it for you. However, there is something in it for the prisoners. But also there is something in it when you help those prisoners get out and do well. There is also something in it for everybody else, because if they get out and do well rather than get out, and with the present trend, two-thirds are going right back to prison.

The public, the law-abiding public benefits from your work, because they are less likely to be victimized by another crime. They also as taxpayers are less likely to have to pay for the

\$20,000, \$30,000, or \$40,000 a year incarceration for the two-thirds of the prisoners that go back.

So the gentleman's work not only helps the prisoners, but also help the law-abiding citizens in terms of their public safety and helps the taxpayers in terms of not having to pay for the incarceration.

Your legislation is bipartisan legislation. It is not a panacea for everything that needs to be done, but it certainly makes a significant step in the right direction in ensuring those who leave our Federal and State prisons have the assistance they need to avoid returning.

As you mentioned, there are close to 700,000 people who will leave the prisons, the jails and prisons of the United States next year. Most will be ill prepared to succeed in earning a living and leading a law-abiding life, and the resources to help them are very limited. Your bill will help them.

Now, we know that the chances of success for the prisoners are extremely small. Two-thirds come back to prison within 3 years. We know, as the gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) has pointed out, that it is hard to get a job if you have got a felony record. Obviously, the fact that you have that gap in your resume does not help.

The fact that you have to say that you are a convicted felon does not help you get a job. Most prisoners have limited education, they have limited resources, they have limited job skills, they are disqualified from many Federal programs by virtue of a drug offense.

And there are benefits that they are not entitled to. We also have a situation where they have limited or no family support, no community support. So it is not surprising that two-thirds of all prisoners released are rearrested for new crimes within 3 years of their release.

Although the national crime rate has fallen significantly over the last few years, we are seeing more and more people sent to prison for longer and longer times, and the problem is going to continue to grow before it gets better. We are still passing new bills with longer prison sentences and establishing mandatory minimum sentences and other kinds of sentences that make sure that the time served is even longer and longer and more and more people are sent to prison.

We have seen some of these schemes, like the mandatory minimums studied. And the studies have concluded that minimum mandatory sentences are distorted in the effort to establish an orderly, fair, and appropriate sentencing scheme. These programs discriminate against minorities, violate common sense, and in the end waste the taxpayers' money.

Now, all of this focus on the draconian sentences has led us to the point, as you pointed out, over 2.2 million people are locked up in our Federal prisons and State jails, a five-fold in-

crease in just the last 20 years. The prison population on the Federal level has increased over seven-fold in the last 20 years.

For example, in 1984 the daily lock-up count in prisons and jails was just over 400,000. 400,000. 25,000 in the Federal prisons. Today 2 million prisoners are in State and local prisons. Almost 200,000 in Federal prisons. 400,000 20 years ago, over 2 million today.

According to many studies, most of that is through the new sentencing schemes like mandatory minimums. As a result of the focus on incarceration, the United States leads the world in incarceration, by far. We are in first place: 726 inmates per 100,000 population. 726.

Second place Russia, 532. We are at 726. 532. Most are in the hundreds. England, 142 per 100,000. Australia, 117. Canada, 116. Germany, 91. France, 95 per 100,000. The United States, 700-and-some per 100,000. When you go into the inner cities, it is not 700-and-some; it is 3,000 per 100,000. Five thousand in the inner cities. 116 in Canada, 5,000 in our inner cities.

No matter how tough we get in sentencing, the fact is that 95 percent of inmates will be released at some point. The question is whether they are going to reenter society in a context that better prepares them to lead law-abiding lives or whether two-thirds will return to prison within 3 years, as the present trend is.

If we are going to continue to send more people to prison with longer and longer sentences and spend that kind of money, we ought to spend the little bit of money in this bill to reduce the chances when they are released that they will be likely to come back to prison.

That is why the Second Chance Act is so important. And I applaud the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) and former Representative Portman. This is a bipartisan bill supported by over 90 cosponsors, including me and virtually all of the criminal justice advocates and organizations in the country, including law enforcement who work with or are familiar with the situation encountered by those leaving our prisons.

The only criticism I have heard of this legislation is that it perhaps might not go far enough to fully address all of the problems of those facing problems reentering society from prisons.

Now, I agree with that criticism, because it does not do everything that needs to be done, but it is an important first step. And so I am a cosponsor of not only this bill but one that is being developed by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that was introduced last Congress and will be refiled this Congress, the Reentry Enhancement Act.

That bill addresses many of the programs and issues touched by this bill and goes even further by actually im-

plementing many of the programs on a national level.

Now, I have seen the value of these programs. The Virginia CARES Program, Community Action Reentry System, Virginia CARES Program, has been studied, and they have just little meager resources.

But those who get the benefits of that program, we have seen a 25 percent reduction in recidivism compared to like prisoners who do not get a benefit from the program. Twenty-five percent reduction. When you calculate that out in terms of those that do not come back into prison and what we would have to pay for their incarceration, we save more money than we spend.

And we not only help the prisoners lead a productive life, save more money than we spend and also spare that 25 percent of victims who would have been victimized, victims of crime, they do not have to be victims of crime because we made that cost-effective expenditure of money helping the prisoners, but also helping the taxpayer and helping public safety.

As a society, we often breathe a sigh of relief when a long sentence is issued for a crime as if that is the end of our responsibilities. But with the numbers of prisoners and the amount of money we spend with those long sentences and the fact that when they finish that long sentence, they are going to turn around and go right back, we need to do more.

We need to make sure that we do the financially and morally responsible thing. We cannot allow ourselves the luxury of sounding tough on crime, tough on crime policies with no attention to what happens next.

To continue in the direction we are going is unfair to the taxpayer, unfair to those prisoners, and unfair to the unsuspecting people that will be victims of crime because we did not spend the money that we needed to spend.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work of my colleagues in developing and promoting this legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with them and other members of the bipartisan coalition to enact this measure so that we cannot only help the prisoners but help the taxpayers and help public safety.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

□ 2300

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I thank the gentleman from Virginia. I know that you are on Judiciary and there are people in our country whenever you start talking about doing something that relates to corrections or trying to assist individuals who have been convicted of crimes, people accuse or charge you with being soft on crime. How do you respond to people who suggest that this kind of legislation, this kind of activity, this kind of effort is being soft on crime?

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I ask them to decide right up front what choice they

are going to make on crime policy. Are you trying to reduce crime or are you trying to play politics? We know what helps us get elected. We know how to play politics. We also know how to reduce crime. Once you have made that choice, the rest of crime policy is easy. If you are playing politics, you don't have to worry about the effects of the policy, you just have to make sure that you have got a good vote-getting slogan. You can be wasting the taxpayers' money. You can be even increasing crime. Some of these slogans like codifying "If you do the adult crime, you do the adult time." That slogan has been studied up and down and the conclusion of every study is that the crime rate will go up if you codify that slogan. The crime rate will go up. You help yourself get elected, the crime rate goes up. Like I said, make your choice. If you are interested in reducing crime, some of these policies are stupid. If you are interested in getting elected, some of those slogans are very helpful. When you get into helping prisoners, let's decide not whether you are interested in the prisoner or not, just whether you are interested in reducing crime. If your goal is to reduce crime, this is one of the most cost-effective expenditures you can make, a lot better than lengthening the sentence. Ninety-five percent will get out of prison at one point or another. You have got 600,000 people, almost 700,000 people coming back into the community, two-thirds of whom will end up going back to prison if we don't do anything. If you want to take that 650,000, almost 700,000 people, spend a little bit of money and you can reduce the crime rate amongst that group, if you can reduce the crime rate, you will not only reduce crime, you will also save the taxpayer a lot of money and spare the potential victims of crime that victimization.

If you ignore what you have done for humanity in helping the prisoners, just ignore that, just look at what you are doing for the taxpayer and the law-abiding citizen, this is the right thing to do. You also help prisoners lead a more productive life. But that is frankly, from a public policy position, a secondary aspect. We are trying to reduce crime. We are trying to save money. This saves money and reduces crime so that the law-abiding citizen doesn't have to worry as much about being a victim of crime. You do that by helping the prisoner lead a productive life. That is what your bill does. It is cost effective and reduces crime.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I was about to jump out of my seat in order to respond to being soft on crime. Again as a former prosecutor and judge, I have served on a number of commissions with other law enforcement people. In fact, one of the great community reentry programs is actually part of our Ohio Department of Corrections under the leadership of our director. But in the community reentry program that is run by Lutheran Metropolitan Min-

istries, our motto is that people are more likely to act their way into a new way of thinking than think their way into a new way of acting. One of the things that we want to do is to give them an opportunity to act into a new way of thinking and to have new policies and new opportunities to do some things. The duty of many of these reentry programs is that if we do not do something, we bring offenders back into the community without mental health opportunities, without drug treatment programs, without opportunities for employment.

One of the things that is really impacted by a community reentry program and the opportunity for jobs is child support. There are many offenders who are unable to pay child support because they are not working anywhere and we are paying the cost of supporting their children. Through giving them meaningful employment, we will be able to have them pay some of the cost of the children that they have fathered or mothered. But as importantly as we all talk about the importance of family, the importance of having a mother or father in your life, in many of these programs we are able to bring these ex-offenders back to understanding the need to be a good mother or a good father in order to create better families, and having stronger families in communities creates better communities. Having taxpaying, working citizens in our communities provides a stronger tax base. There are all kinds of reasons that we need to be in support of community reentry.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I thank the gentlewoman so much. I think we are fortunate that many publications are taking the right spin on this. I was just looking at a group of them: The Baltimore Sun, the Houston Chronicle, Newport Daily News, Journal and Courier, Detroit News, Baltimore Sun, Tulsa World, Daily Oklahoman, Baltimore Sun again, American National Catholic Weekly, the Washington Times, the Charlotte Observer.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. The Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. The New York Times, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun Times, the Jewish World Review, the Boston Globe, the Daily Oklahoman, the San Diego Union Tribune, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Miami Herald, the Lancaster News, San Francisco Chronicle, the Virginian-Pilot. All of these have written positive editorials, stories, or entertained letters to the editor. One that struck me that I picked up really came from Oklahoma. It talks about a person.

"Facing five 20-year sentences at the age of 35, Debbie Green's life seemed pretty much over. An abusive husband led her to a heavy meth habit and that, in turn, to dealing the drug and landing repeatedly in Oklahoma's prisons. But in 2001, 7 years into her third prison term, she convinced the parole board to give her another chance. They

did, and so far their bet is paying off: Debbie has worked 4 years now at a fencing company in Tulsa, staying clean, supporting herself, and paying taxes. She credits her success to counseling programs on the inside, strong support from her church and community since her release and her own gritty determination to beat the odds."

I think that programs like this one is an indication that there are indeed places that people can go. And so the Second Chance Act not only provides for the coordination but it also provides some resources. It provides some money, block grants to States that can be used to establish programs such as the one that Debbie benefited from in Oklahoma. We had hoped that we were going to get this out this year. Obviously that is not going to happen because of Katrina and all kinds of other things that have crept or jumped into the legislative process, but next year.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. The gentleman talked about spending the money. We are spending the money. Six hundred thousand people get out every year. Two-thirds of them come back. That is 400,000 going back. At just \$20,000 a year, that is \$8 billion we are spending because we don't reduce recidivism. It is actually probably more like \$10 billion to \$16 billion by the time you invest 20, 30, \$40,000 a piece, but at a minimum \$8 billion, if we spent a portion of that, if we could significantly reduce recidivism by turning lives around like the life you mentioned instead of having to pay for incarceration, we are now on the receiving end of the tax money that she is paying. Every program we have seen, and this is no different, of those reentry programs when you provide education, you reduce recidivism, save more money than you spend, drug treatment, transitional services, significantly reducing recidivism because of the expense of incarceration, 20, 30, \$40,000 a year, you don't have to reduce recidivism very much to save the taxpayer some money. We are spending the money now and we ought to be spending it better. We ought to be smart on crime rather than rhetorical on crime.

□ 2310

If we were smarter on crime, we would spend some of this \$8 billion that we are going to spend next year because we did not make the investments last year. We need to make the investments in these people to reduce recidivism and save money, and if we do that, it would save more money than we spend if we pass this bill.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we have still got a couple of minutes left.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I just want to add that also the Second Chance Act will provide demonstration grants, but it also will create a national offender re-entry resource center for States and local governments and service providers, faith-based, to be

able to elect and disseminate best practices and provide training and support around re-entry.

It will create a Federal task force that will identify programs and resources, identify better ways to collaborate, develop Interagency initiatives.

Finally, it will create, in addition to the grants to nonprofit organizations, offender re-entry research to authorize the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics to conduct research around re-entry.

We know there are programs working out there that are being run by churches, that are being run by other organizations, and we need to collect some of that data in order to implement some of the programs.

Again, I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues, and I often say to people that it is not really just about the ex-offender, and it is not just to help those individuals.

If I am walking down the street and there is a person who needs \$15 to get a bit of crack and I am carrying a briefcase and he thinks that I am an insurance salesman rather than an elected official or politician and that there might be something in there other than notes, if he attacks me, then of course I am at risk. I may end up in the hospital with a \$200,000 hospital bill, \$300,000, \$500,000.

All of the misery, poverty, all of the things that are associated with crime, many of those can really be reshaped, refocused and changed with a sensible re-entry policy, and so I want to thank both of my colleagues for coming and sharing.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized until midnight.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address my colleagues and the people in this country.

There are some important issues before us, as there always are in this Congress, and sometimes I have a little difficulty sorting between which of those issues it is that I would like to speak to my colleagues about, Mr. Speaker.

Tonight, I would like to address the subject matter of the future of this country, the future of the Middle East, the future of this global conflict, this assault on Western civilization that comes from radical, militant, Islamic extremists, the will of the United States of America, Mr. Speaker, to stand up and defend the cause that our Forefathers have fought so hard for and to preserve not just our freedoms which are essential and worth the struggle and worth the sacrifice, but our very safety and lives are at risk, Mr. Speaker.

We need to understand this war that we are in. We need to understand our enemy, and as I listened to the debate here on the floor a couple of weeks ago on a Friday when we debated the resolution to immediately pull out of Iraq, it occurred to me that there were a lot of people actually on the floor of this chamber, Mr. Speaker, that I thought did not have a long-term view for the future of the United States of America or the free world for that matter.

I want to raise a point, and I want to then continue to illustrate that point. I have brought in a picture and a poster to help with that point.

This is not the number one villain in all of Iraq or all of this war against radical, militant extremists, but this is Muqtada Al-Sadr, who is actually a Shiite leader, an individual we have heard quite a lot about. He got into the military business and brought his militia to bear against U.S. and coalition military forces and Iraqi military forces and with mixed results I think we can say at best.

I made a number of trips over to Iraq, and what we do is we go into Kuwait and then usually leave very early in the morning to go into Iraq in the morning. In the evening, I was sitting there, and I had turned on my television set in the hotel in Kuwait and turned it to Al Jazeera TV because watching Al Jazeera TV tells me a lot about what people are seeing in the Middle East and across the Arab world.

As I watched that television, it was Arabic audio, but it had English I call them subtitles. On that date, which was June 11, 2004, this particular CODEL, I watched the television and saw Muqtada Al-Sadr come on there, and I heard him say in Arabic, with the English subtitles underneath, just what you see here, Mr. Speaker. He said, "If we keep attacking Americans, they will leave Iraq, the same way that they left Vietnam, the same way that they left Lebanon, the same way that they left Mogadishu."

Now, what does that mean? It means that the word has been spread throughout al Qaeda world that Americans do not come and stay till it is over, that they will pull out, and that we are not committed to this cause. He would like to convince his followers and those he would recruit to be his followers that Americans are prepared at any moment to pull out of Iraq.

That is far from the case, Mr. Speaker, and this is the cause where we must stay, and we must carry this message across this world to our coalition partners, to our soldiers that are over there, those soldiers that have just not too long ago celebrated a Thanksgiving in foreign soil again, and again to our allies but especially to our enemies.

This language, this statement, that Americans do not stick to it, is a thread that goes through many of the writings and the statements of al Qaeda leaders. I believe I can find that in a Google search in words phrased a little bit differently but the same

meaning, out of Osama bin Laden, out of Zawahiri, out of Zarqawi, and that coupled with Muqtada Al-Sadr.

That message has been sent. It keeps getting sent. It is echoed out off Al Jazeera. That means whoever is watching Al Jazeera hears this message. Many of them believe this message that America is not going to stay until the job is done.

We had a debate on this floor, Mr. Speaker, and that vote took place in the fall of 2002. It authorized the President to use force to enforce the United Nations resolutions, all for a good cause. That is how a free Nation should do this. We should have a free debate, and it ought to be an open debate. The people in this country should engage in this debate and carry their message to their Members of Congress and let that echo in these chambers, Mr. Speaker, and it did in that debate.

The resolution after the vote went up, and it was a solid majority to give the President the authority to enforce those U.N. resolutions and to use force, if necessary, to bring Saddam Hussein in line. In fact, it is the policy and was the policy of this Congress to establish a regime change in Iraq. We had our debate. When debate is over and there is a majority vote that prevails, then the people in this chamber need to abide by that decision.

If we pass a law in here, we do not go out and say, okay, I am going to ignore that law and undermine that law. We live by that decision. It is a majority decision. There is nothing more important than when you have men and women in uniform, put their lives on the line, and you do so by a majority vote and you endorse it, you do not want to see people undermining that effort. Undermining that effort indexes directly with this statement by Muqtada Al-Sadr.

Mr. Speaker, I will pick that up in a moment and carry some more details of this, but I want to take the privilege of yielding to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. KING), my friend, the first of the Caucus States, the first in the Nation primaries.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding.

I would like to thank you for your leadership and your willingness to talk about what is a very important issue for the future of our country and for the future of the Middle East.

Like you, I have traveled to Iraq on two occasions, and I have seen both the problems that our troops are confronting there, but I have also seen the progress. I think it is important when we talk about Iraq that we have a balanced perspective and we look at both those problems and the progress.

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There is no question that today was a very difficult day for the Iraqi security forces, as the suicide bomber killed over 40 police recruits, and the U.S. Marines that were killed on Friday by