

Mr. Speaker, people have rights. Government has no rights. Government has power and it obtains it when we forfeit our rights to the government. In this time of terrorism, our government uses high-tech surveillance to capture them. This is good. But the fourth amendment states: "The right of people to be secure from unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated."

It is the duty of the judiciary, not this body, not even the executive branch, to protect those rights and review searches.

When I was a judge in Texas, I signed hundreds of warrants. I was even the State wiretap judge, and I found that warrants make better police officers and they make better criminal cases.

In this post-9/11 era, we cannot allow our zeal to be safe to get in the way of judicial review of search warrants and wiretaps while continuing to provide tools for law enforcement to capture those terrorists. You see, Mr. Speaker, we can have it both ways. We can be safe and secure and maintain our civil rights as a free people. That's just the way it is.

MEDICARE INFORMED CHOICE ACT

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

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, there is one issue of great concern that I hear about over and over again when I am back home, the needlessly complicated Medicare prescription drug program.

Seniors are confused and frustrated as they attempt to study 60 plans in order to first decide whether to join and then to choose a plan to sign up for. Many are simply giving up.

I have already held half a dozen informational seminars on the program and every session has been packed. There is clearly a problem.

Congress could and should make the progress better, more affordable, and less confusing by allowing Medicare to negotiate prices with drug companies. But the very least that Congress must do is pass a Medicare Informed Choice Act which would delay the enrollment penalty, prevent beneficiaries from losing their employer-based coverage, and allow seniors to switch plans if they make a mistake.

Given the current confusion, it is essential that we allow beneficiaries to take their time, check the facts, and know their options without being rushed to choose. We owe no less to our seniors.

IRAQ'S DEMOCRATIC VICTORY

(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, yesterday's New York Times proclaims loudly that "Iraqis, Including Sunnis, Voted in Large Numbers" during Thursday's historic elections.

Throughout the world, people were waking up to the great news about Iraq's most recent democratic victory. USA Today discussed the inspiring turnout in Iraq, while even Knight Ridder declared that high voter turnout in Iraq promises fully representative parliament.

The National Review reported that U.S. troops describe a festive atmosphere across Iraq. The Los Angeles Times wrote that the ballot box is the new battle ground. The Boston Globe described how, for one Sunni family, casting ballots was an act of resistance.

I was particularly pleased to learn that the BBC reported the Iraqi vote met global standards. From New York to London, the mainstream media finally recognized and reported the clear successes of the election which delivered a devastating blow to terrorists and ultimately helped protect American families.

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

STOP THE MEDICARE INSANITY

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, very few decisions are more personal or important than health care decisions. And when Washington gets involved in health care, especially in Medicare, government must put patients first.

Decisions already made, if not changed, will result in 38 percent of the doctors seeing fewer Medicare patients, half of physicians less likely to participate in Medicare Advantage and a third of the doctors no longer visiting nursing homes.

Unless Congress acts, the ability for seniors to access quality medical care will get worse.

The way our government pays doctors for taking care of our parents and our grandparents through Medicare is unbelievably broken. Physicians will be subjected to a 26 percent pay cut over the next 5 years, and an official of the government agency in charge of Medicare said they will cut doctors pay until they stop seeing Medicare patients and then they might fix it.

Mr. Speaker, then will be too late. Americans deserve better from their representatives. Those who care for all of us are being driven out of business by a government that cares more about money than health. Let's stop this insanity.

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RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Congress is about to go home in a few days either today, tomorrow, Monday,

Tuesday, sometime in the next few days, and this House, again, has failed to increase the minimum wage.

There are large numbers of people in this country, people with children, often single mothers, sometimes, not usually, adults in their 20s and 30s and 40s who make \$5.15 an hour. The Senate finally increased the minimum wage. The House is going to go home sometime in the next few days having failed to even bring up to a vote an increase in the minimum wage.

Since this House floor session began about 16 minutes ago, in that time, a minimum wage worker would have earned about \$1.10 or \$1.15. A CEO of a Fortune 500 company in this same 16 minutes would have earned about \$1,500. Mr. Speaker, we can do a lot better in this body than we have done this year.

GREAT AND HEARTWARMING NEWS FROM IRAQ

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, great and heartwarming news from Iraq.

Early this morning, I received an e-mail from a soldier serving in Iraq which provides one small example of how democracy is progressing in Iraq and how our troops along with the Iraqi security forces are making a difference.

He wrote: "The highlight of my day, Election Day, was in south Baghdad, where there were no polling stations in January 2005 and where many Sunnis did not vote in October 2005. I watched as two affluent local sheiks walked into the polling station together holding hands, which is a huge sign of respect here. What was moving about this was one sheik was Shia, the other Sunni. They told me how much they appreciated what the United States had done for them and that they could never repay us. The Sunni said, 'We are tired of violence and the fighting that destroys our people and our country; that they would work to make the U.S. proud and that the sacrifices of American soldiers is respected and appreciated.'"

God bless our troops.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, while we are locked up here today, I would like to wish my wife Sherry a very happy birthday. This week, I have been telling her, has been a real doozy for civil liberties.

We learned that both the Pentagon and the National Security Agency have been spying on thousands of innocent Americans. Apparently, the NSA was doing it at the direction of President Bush.

I was shocked to learn that one of those documented instances of the Pentagon domestic spying happened in my district.

A student protest against military recruiters at the University of California at Santa Cruz, which occurred this past April, was not only observed for suspicious activity, but the "threat" was declared "credible."

I cannot condemn these actions strongly enough. Using government time and money to spy on people exercising their constitutional freedoms is just ridiculous.

I have already signed on to two letters about these violations of privacy, calling on the NSA to fully explain the constitutionality of their surveillances and calling on the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice to investigate NSA's actions.

As Members of Congress, we must be diligent in our oversight of the Pentagon, but our job is next to impossible when the administration hides behind the cloak of national security to thwart the civil liberties of many Americans, as they have done with the Pentagon surveillance program.

The Pentagon must come forward with an explanation about why they were spying on the UCSC rally.

The right to express differing opinions was one of the founding principles of this country.

The voices of the American people must always be heard, whether this administration agrees with them or not.

It is hypocritical for us to urge transparency in foreign governments while ignoring what our own government is doing in violation of its citizens' civil liberties.

WE SHOULD BE SUPPORTING PRESIDENT BUSH

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the liberal media and my liberal colleagues are attacking the President for protecting America. The wiretaps that he has ordered are legal, and he informed the Intelligence Committees 12 times about them.

What are we going to do? Are we going to wait around until terrorists attack us and then say we ought to check what they are saying on the telephone to their al Qaeda buddies?

The fact of the matter is the President is defending the United States of America, and we should be supporting him.

The PATRIOT Act, which is being stuck in the Senate, needs to be passed. We need to get these guys and stop them before they attack buildings in New York or Indianapolis or California or Washington, D.C., and the President wants to do that. That is why the PATRIOT Act is so important.

Let's talk about torture. Putting a guy on a water board who is about to blow up a bunch of soldiers in Baghdad

and holding him under the water for a little bit to make him tell us what he is going to do or if he is going to cut somebody's head off that is an innocent civilian, or go into a school and blow up a bunch of kids is not what I call terrible. We are not pulling out their fingernails or cutting off their heads. We need to put pressure on them to tell us what's going on so we can save Americans and American troops.

This is a war. It is not a tea party. And we need to win it. The President is doing the right thing, and we need to support him. God bless President Bush.

FUNDING FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AFTER HURRICANES

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have all appreciated the great charitable spirit of Americans as they welcomed into their homes and into their neighborhoods and into their States the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Rita and Wilma. But this appropriations bill that is making its way through the House and the Senate is crucial for survival of many of our school districts around the Nation.

Let me cite my colleagues a particular figure for Houston Independent School District. We are now paying \$186,000 a day for the additional Katrina students who are in our school districts. We welcome them, but we cannot pay this burden alone. This is costing our school district an additional \$30 million, and so far, we have been reimbursed by the Federal Government \$164,000. My friends, \$30 million, \$186,000 a day, and all we have received is \$164,000. In addition, we have got \$300 million on hold, that the school district has not received.

We need this appropriations bill to be fully funded. We need the tax cuts to be put aside. We need FEMA to be able to do its job for those who are still waiting, languishing in shelters and needing homes, languishing in tents and needing trailers. We need this system to work on behalf of the working people of America and those who are in need.

Americans have opened their hearts and pocketbooks to those in need. The Federal Government, the greatest safety net that all of the people have, needs to do its job and do it now.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 623 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 623

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of Saturday, De-

ember 17, 2005, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules relating to the following measures:

(1) The bill (H.R. 4519) to amend the Public Health Service Act to extend funding for the operation of State high risk health insurance pools.

(2) The bill (H.R. 2520) to provide for the collection and maintenance of human cord blood stem cells for the treatment of patients and research, and to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the C. W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program.

(3) The bill (H.R. 4568) to improve proficiency testing of clinical laboratories.

(4) The bill (H.R. 3402) to authorize appropriations for the Department of Justice for fiscal years 2006 through 2009, and for other purposes.

(5) The bill (H.R. 4579) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend by one year provisions requiring parity in the application of certain limits to mental health benefits.

(6) The bill (H.R. 4525) to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

(7) The conference report to accompany the bill (S. 1281) to reauthorize the human space flight, aeronautics, and science programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes.

(8) The conference report to accompany the bill (S. 467) to extend the applicability of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002.

(9) A joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHUGH). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), my friend, 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.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution provides that certain specified measures may be considered under suspension of the rules at any time on the legislative day of Saturday, December 17, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership of this House has set forth a positive legislative agenda for the remainder of this week and the balance of the first session of the 109th Congress. The goal of this plan is to address a number of outstanding issues remaining on Congress's calendar before we adjourn that maintain our commitment to improving America's economy and national security.

Over the past year, we have passed a number of important new education, health care, tax, trade and national security bills that will keep Americans safer and healthier, create new jobs and improve our economy. This rule will allow the House to consider a number of additional bills today under suspension of the rules that will ensure that Congress can complete some additional important work before we adjourn for the holidays.

This rule makes in order the consideration of nine bills under suspension