

we doing the right thing? Is it worth the sacrifice?

I can think of no better place to ask those questions than at that hospital. So I asked those young heroes, and I can honestly report that they answered "yes." A few said "absolutely."

For Specialist Bruce, the battle is now over. He now rests in the loving arms of the God of our fathers. He takes his place in that long line of patriots who have made the ultimate sacrifice, that long line that has never failed us. It is now left for us to carry on.

There are no words adequate to express our condolences. It is enough for us to say that on behalf of a grateful Nation, we will never forget. We will always be proud, so that we will always be free.

RESTORING DEDUCTIBILITY OF SALES TAX FOR TENNESSEE PROVES WORTHWHILE

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today I was coming back to D.C. reading the Nashville Tennessean, the local news section, and my attention was drawn to a headline here: "State's March Sales Tax Revenue up \$14.8 Million Over Estimates."

Mr. Speaker, there is a reason that the State sales tax revenues are up so much in the State of Tennessee, and it has to do with actions that this body took last year. Last year, we voted to restore the deductibility of sales tax to those of us from nonState income tax States. Tennessee, Texas, Washington State, several States are affected by this provision. It proves the point, you want more of something, you lower the taxes. Things that are taxed less are going to flourish.

I would like to say thank you to our Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT); to our leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY); and to our whip, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), for their leadership and their support in restoring the deductibility of sales tax for my State, Tennessee, and the other States that fund their State governments by State sales tax.

VOTE TO REPEAL DEATH TAX ONCE AND FOR ALL

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, the death tax kills small family-owned businesses, it makes financial planning nearly impossible, and it is an unfair form of double taxation.

The death tax is itself the leading cause of death for over one-third of all small, family-owned businesses who cannot afford to pay a death tax rate of up to 55 percent in order to keep the

family business alive. Under current law, there will be no death tax owed in the year 2010, but, in 2011, death taxes go up to 55 percent. Unfortunately, the only family-owned business in America who knows whether someone will die in the year 2010 is the Sopranos. The rest of us have to spend thousands of dollars each year on accountants, lawyers, and financial planners to make sure our family-owned business survives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote yes to completely repeal the death tax once and for all.

PROMOTING GOOD LEADERSHIP

(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, under the leadership of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the House has provided tax relief, creating 3 million jobs, prescription drug coverage for needy citizens, and welfare reform, promoting independence, along with a strengthened military to protect American families.

Additionally, Majority Leader DELAY and his wife Christine play a valuable role in their home community. As foster parents, they have devoted themselves to improving the lives of abused and neglected children and are now focusing their efforts on creating homes for foster children who need them. Their work is a true sign of compassion that is rarely recognized.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) has been called one of the most effective leaders in the history of the House of Representatives, and it is his effectiveness that motivates his critics. Radical liberals, financed by a billionaire, are leading a desperate smear campaign against a decent man who has delivered remarkable results. His critics are inspired by bitterness, hatred, and partisanship, and their smears will fail as they failed against DICK CHENEY, Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, and John Ashcroft.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) will continue his success of effectiveness for the American people.

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

HOLDING FEMA TO HIGH STANDARDS

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my concern regarding continued abuses by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA as we know it. As my colleagues know, Florida suffered devastating blows when an unprecedented four hurricanes struck down in our State last year.

My colleagues and I in the Florida delegation have been fighting with

FEMA on its hurricane policies for the past few months. We have battled them about paying for debris removal in front of properties on a private road. These people pay taxes, too.

Now a new abuse has come to light. FEMA apparently paid funeral expenses for an estimated 315 deaths in Florida, although only 123 fatalities were actually recorded. Once again, it has a disregard for accuracy, efficiency, and its responsibility, I believe, to the citizens of Florida and the United States' taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in holding FEMA to the high standards that our citizens require.

THE PRESIDENT'S SOCIAL SECURITY PLAN

(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, the President says he is going to change his tack; he is no longer going to scare the people. He is going to give them a solution.

This weekend, Gary Trudeau's renowned "Doonesbury" performed an important public service. It codified the recent words of the President describing his Social Security plan. Here it is. To ensure that every American has equal access to his remarks, let me enter "Doonesbury" into the RECORD and read some of the President's remarks.

This is a direct quote from the President of the United States. He is explaining the plan he has: "There's a series of parts of the formula that are being considered. And when you couple that, those different cost drivers, affecting those, changing those with personal accounts, the idea is to get what has been promised more likely to be or closer delivered to what has been promised."

Does anybody know what he is talking about? This President is halfway through his 60-day barnstorming tour to gain support for his Social Security plan. I personally hope he stays out for another 90 days.

I think when the American people get through with listening to this gibberish, they will recognize that it has all been a way to deflect our eyes from all the problems of this society. We are to get a bankruptcy bill out here tomorrow. We have done nothing about Social Security. We have done nothing about Medicare. Come on, Mr. President.

SEE . . . LOOK . . . COST DRIVERS! HELPS ON THE RED!

MAKE ANY SENSE?

THIS MUST BE SHARED!

HEY, FOLKS—CONFUSED ABOUT THE BUSH PLAN FOR SOCIAL SECURITY?

WELL, HELP IS ON THE WAY! HERE—IN HIS OWN WORDS*—THE PRESIDENT EXPLAINS!

*TAMPA, FL 2/04/05

BECAUSE THE—ALL WHICH IS ON THE TABLE BEGINS TO ADDRESS THE BIG

COST DRIVERS. FOR EXAMPLE, HOW BENEFITS ARE CALCULATE, FOR EXAMPLE, IS ON THE TABLE; WHETHER OR NOT BENEFITS RISE BASED UPON WAGE INCREASES OR PRICE INCREASES . . .

THERE'S A SERIES OF PARTS OF THE FORMULA THAT ARE BEING CONSIDERED. AND WHEN YOU COUPLE THAT, THOSE DIFFERENT COST DRIVERS, AFFECTING THOSE—CHANGING THOSE WITH PERSONAL ACCOUNTS, THE IDEA IS TO GET WHAT HAS BEEN PROMISED MORE LIKELY TO BE—OR CLOSER DELIVERED TO WHAT HAS BEEN PROMISED.

DOES THAT MAKE ANY SENSE TO YOU? IT'S KIND OF MUDDLED.

LOOK, THERE'S A SERIES OF THINGS THAT CAUSE THE—LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE, BENEFITS ARE CALCULATED BASED UPON THE INCREASE OF WAGES, AS OPPOSED TO THE INCREASE OF PRICES. SOME HAVE SUGGESTED THAT WE CALCULATE—THE BENEFITS WILL RISE BASED UPON INFLATION, AS OPPOSED TO WAGE INCREASES . . .

THERE IS A REFORM THAT WOULD HELP SOLVE THE RED IF THAT WERE PUT INTO EFFECT. IN OTHER WORDS, HOW FAST BENEFITS GROW, HOW FAST THE PROMISED BENEFITS GROW, IF THOSE—if THAT GROWTH IS AFFECTED . . .

IT WILL HELP ON THE RED.
'NUFF SAID!

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE NO FLY NO BUY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. McCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, last month, the front pages of our Nation's newspapers contained chilling headlines: "Terror Suspects Buying Firearms."

At least 44 times in a 4-month period, people whom the FBI suspected of being members of terrorist groups tried to buy guns. In all but nine instances, the purchases were allowed to go through.

A background check of the would-be buyer found no automatic disqualification such as being a felon, an illegal immigrant, or deemed mentally defective. There certainly have been many more instances of suspected members of terrorist groups trying to buy these guns, but since the Justice Department destroys background check records after only 24 hours, we will never know.

So not only are we allowing suspected terrorists to arm themselves, we are destroying the records indicating how many guns they actually have bought. We are destroying critical intelligence in the war on terror, and suspected terrorists are exploiting our pre-9/11 gun laws.

The question many of my constituents ask me is, "Why are these people

allowed to be able to buy guns in the first place?"

It defies common sense. We are at war. We saw what these terrorists are capable of armed with only box cutters purchased at a hardware store. Then why do we make it so easy for our enemies to buy firearms and ammunition within our own borders?

Since 9/11, we have adopted a multitude of new laws in the wake of the war on terror. Just try to fly out of Reagan National Airport. No one is spared from the reach of these new laws. Senior citizens, children, and Members of the House have been subjected to routine inspection before boarding a commercial flight. It is an inconvenience perhaps for some, but if it prevents one terrorist from boarding a plane, it is a good law.

But our gun laws are dangerously out of step with the war on terror. The same people who are prevented from boarding a flight can walk into a gun store and purchase a hand-held weapon of mass destruction. This is absolutely ridiculous.

Let me set the record straight. I am not out to take away the right of any law-abiding citizen from being able to buy a gun.

We need common-sense gun safety regulations that protect law-abiding gun owners, while making it tougher for criminals and terrorists to obtain guns. That is why I have introduced a bill that would deny those on the Transportation Security Administration's No Fly List from purchasing firearms.

Why the No Fly List? Granted, the No Fly List includes some law-abiding citizens who are on the list in error. But it is the only Federal terrorist watch list with a procedure to get innocent people off the list, and the No Fly List is the only watch list to have public scrutiny. Other lists without practical application may be just as inaccurate but afford no due process to those wrongly listed.

My bill will ensure that these people incorrectly listed on the No Fly will be able to get their names off the list as quickly as possible. They would then be able to complete their gun purchase, no questions asked. Again, an inconvenience for some but necessary steps to ensure terrorists are not buying guns in our country.

The Federal Government charged with protecting us from terrorists should put at least as much effort into making sure terrorists and criminals are buying guns as what senior citizens and children might bring aboard a plane. We are at war, and the Federal Government has made it easier for our enemies to arm themselves.

I have written Attorney General Gonzales and asked him to endorse my bill. And if he cannot endorse it, I want to know why. I understand the Second Amendment concerns of law-abiding citizens and gun owners. But these laws can coexist with responsible people's rights to hunt and protect their families.

Responsible gun ownership is a right of all law-abiding Americans, but we also have to take the responsibility to protect law-abiding Americans from acts of terror and crime.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen, unfortunately, many, many acts of crime and gun violence in the last few weeks. Each week for the next several weeks now, I am going to bring this subject up. I know a lot of the American people think Democrats have given up on this issue. I promise the American people, I will continue with this issue. I will fight for good gun safety laws to make this country safer.

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In SUPPORT OF LIEUTENANT PANTANO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York). 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, last Wednesday I spoke about Marine 2nd Lieutenant Ilario Pantano and his struggle to defend his actions in battle.

April of 2004 was a time of widespread violence from Iraqi insurgents. It was the deadliest month of the war.

On April 15, 2004, Lieutenant Pantano was faced with a very difficult decision. Just 3 days after he had witnessed a deadly ambush, his unit received a tip about a weapons stockpile. Leery of the tip, he led a unit of 40 men to the area and immediately noticed two Iraqis in a vehicle who appeared to be escaping the area.

After stopping the vehicle, he ordered the two Iraqis to search the vehicle themselves so as to avoid a booby trap for himself or the others under his command. Suddenly, he said, the two insurgents pivoted towards him after disobeying his command to stop, and in a split-second decision Lieutenant Pantano decided he had to fire his weapon to protect himself and his men.

It was not until 2½ months later that his radio operator mentioned the incident to another Marine, who then accused Lieutenant Pantano of murder. He now is facing charges of two counts of murder.

Mr. Speaker, I have met Lieutenant Pantano and his family. I have watched again and again the "Dateline" interview Stone Phillips conducted with Lieutenant Pantano, and I have researched this situation at length. I believe Lieutenant Pantano is truthful in his recounts of the events of April of 2004 and he was justified in his action while having to make a split-second battlefield decision.

I question why the radio operator would wait 2½ months to tell his report of the events if he really believed murder had taken place. Furthermore, as is noted in the "Dateline" video, the sergeant was never even present for the actual shooting. How can he make a