

night. We have cut back on our police officers; we have let the assault weapons bill expire; we now cannot even have our police officers check to see if a criminal has bought a gun because in 24 hours the records are destroyed.

We are not going in the right direction. We can make a difference. I hope people will support this bill.

THANKING OUR ARMED FORCES FOR THEIR COURAGE, DEDICATION, AND BRAVERY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the men and women of our Armed Forces for the courage and the dedication that they have so bravely displayed while liberating and securing Iraq from tyranny and terrorism. Through their hard work and dedication, these Marines, sailors, airmen, and soldiers have succeeded in defeating terrorism and giving birth to a new democracy in the Middle East, one that will serve as a model for the entire region.

Every day, U.S. forces transfer more security responsibilities to Iraqis, giving them the tools that they need to secure their nation. Today, there are more than 150,000 Iraqi security forces who have been trained and equipped by the United States and our coalition forces. Iraqis now patrol Baghdad's hotspots, parts of Mosul, Fallujah, and Saddam's hometown of Tikrit.

Every week, between 1,500 and 3,000 new Iraqi security forces enter active duty, joining the U.S. and coalition forces in our joint battle against terrorism. By liberating Iraq, our fighting men and women showed the world that terrorism and tyranny would no longer be tolerated.

After 9/11, President Bush decided to take the fight to the terrorists; and, once again, our Armed Forces answered the call to service. Ever since, U.S. and coalition forces have spectacularly defeated Saddam's tyrannical regime and transformed Iraq for the better. Those who were once oppressed now rule Iraq, holding the highest offices of a democracy.

Having accomplished the great task of liberating the Iraqi people from the scourge of terrorism, our forces have remained in Iraq to assist in rebuilding the country. Our men and women in the military have built schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure to improve the lives of ordinary Iraqi citizens. They have restored electricity and water to the Iraqis who have suffered from three wars in one generation. Roads and bridges are being repaired to increase commerce. Our soldiers have been able to accomplish this and so much more, even though murdering terrorist gangs try at every turn to thwart their progress.

The valor and the courage of our Armed Forces in the face of this enemy

have been critical to the reconstruction of Iraq. This was exemplified by the recent visit of our Deputy Secretary of State to the once-terrorist stronghold of Fallujah.

I am proud that my stepson, Aviator First Lieutenant Douglas Lehtinen, is preparing to deploy to Iraq. He will join the thousands of U.S. soldiers who are bravely fighting to guarantee that future generations of Iraqis will not have to suffer under tyranny.

Some of these soldiers, such as my husband, retired First Lieutenant Dexter Lehtinen, as a platoon leader in Vietnam, have paid dearly for the freedom that so many of us take for granted. My husband, Dexter, was wounded by a grenade that almost took his life. Instead, today he carries the scars of battle to remind us that while freedom may not be free, it is always worth fighting for.

I am proud that my stepson, Dougie, chose to volunteer and to protect the country that we all love so much from those who desire to destroy it. To all the brave men and women who have, do, and will continue to serve our Armed Forces, thank you on behalf of a grateful Nation.

FOCUSING ON CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS TO U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to begin what I hope will be the start of a constructive dialogue about our Nation's immigration laws.

There has been a lot of heated rhetoric about this topic in recent months. But what I believe has been lacking from this debate is a discussion of real solutions and an accurate portrayal of the real contribution of our Nation's immigrant community.

In Congress, on cable shows and in newspaper columns across the country, we witness undocumented workers being unfairly and inaccurately blamed for all of our Nation's ills. In fact, it seems as though there are some cable show hosts out there who have made this practice the cornerstone of their programming. Just look at Lou Dobbs and his "Broken Borders" segment. If you ask me, it should be called the "Broken Record" segment. Because night after night after night, it is the same thing. It is about giving a platform to anti-immigrant extremists so they can espouse their misguided, misleading, and often malicious views.

Mr. Speaker, I am the first to admit that our Nation's immigration system is simply not working. It is not meeting the needs of our Nation, it is damaging families, and it is hurting businesses. But rather than targeting Windex-wielding cleaning ladies, we should be talking about practical solutions.

Do these individuals actually believe we should deport the more than 10 mil-

lion undocumented working men and women working in this country? Do they think that is truly the answer? Let us say they say yes. Do they think our Nation has the will or the requisite resources to round up these individuals and ship them all off? If that is the case, I would simply ask them, what would life be without the more than 700,000 undocumented restaurant workers washing dishes and cleaning tables, 250,000 household employees, or the almost 1 million undocumented farm workers? These industries where these workers toil would literally come to a screeching halt if not for their labor. Their absence would cripple entire communities. Fruits and vegetables would rot on the vine, office buildings and hotels would go uncleaned, and children would go unattended.

So this evening, I thought I would set the record straight and give the folks at CNN and other news outlets a little unsolicited editorial advice. I think we should be talking in this country about mending borders. Rather than a segment about broken borders, why not create a segment about mending borders on your stations? How about a segment where elected officials, policy analysts, and immigration experts on all sides of the political spectrum discuss ideas and proposals for fixing our flawed immigration policy? How about, instead of endless footage of workers crossing the border, we see footage of real contributions of immigrants to our agricultural industry?

I wish I could turn on the television set one night and see scenes like this, by Rick Nahmias. This is the face of our immigrant community, right here, Mr. Speaker. It is back-breaking, thankless labor. These men and women are exposed to dangerous pesticides and punished by brutal working conditions. They lack safety equipment and have no place to send their children to school. Many of these workers wake up at 2 in the morning to take a bus to our fields, and they do not return until long after dark.

But this is why we have fresh fruits and vegetables at our grocery stores and on our kitchen tables. It is men and women like this in this poster who sustain our \$30 billion agricultural industry. According to the Department of Labor, at least half the 1.8 million crop workers in the U.S. are undocumented. That is the Federal Government.

I would like to show the next poster, one we never see on TV. The subtitle of the article is "Jobs Americans Won't Do." I wish everybody would read the front page of The Wall Street Journal on March 11. The Wall Street Journal article focuses on the challenges growers have finding workers. For example, ahead of a recent lettuce harvest, one grower took out ads in local papers for field workers to pick up the lettuce. He needed about 350 workers. The grower got one reply, just one reply. Mr. Speaker, the simple truth is our aging, more educated workforce is unwilling to pick the lettuce.

I do not blame them. It is truly arduous work. So rather than attacking immigrants for filling these important jobs and for sustaining our vital agricultural industry, let us talk about creating a system that allows them to come out of the shadows and work here legally and safely and humanely. Rather than unfairly attacking immigrants for draining entitlements, let us talk about the undocumented workers who are here in this country and, according to the Social Security Administration, subsidize our Social Security system by \$7 billion. Unfortunately, I have yet to see a segment about this on the cable channels.

Mr. Speaker, rather than focusing on the fiery rhetoric that boosts cable ratings, I would rather we focus on the words of the late Pope, John Paul II, who said, Undocumented migrants are the most vulnerable of foreigners. With those words as our guide, I hope we can work together to create an immigration system that is reflective of their enormous contribution and the greatness of this Nation.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF PRIVATE AARON HUDSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I received an announcement this morning from the Department of the Army. It is a casualty announcement that unfortunately we all receive from time to time, and it says: "The United States Army announces the loss of Private Aaron M. Hudson, 20, of Highland Village, Texas, who died on April 16, 2005 in Taji, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to initial reports, Private Hudson died from injuries sustained on April 15, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his patrol.

Private Hudson was assigned to the 401st Military Police Company, the 720th Military Police Battalion out of Fort Hood, Texas.

Private Hudson's family resides in Highland Village, Texas. The Army extends heartfelt sympathy and condolences to his family who have suffered this loss."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought I should do something to perhaps fill in a little bit more about the life of Private Hudson; and although I did not know Private Hudson, we did reside in the same city for a while.

Private Hudson was a 2002 graduate of Marcus High School in Flower Mound, Texas. He joined the Army a year ago and left for Iraq in January, and he was serving at the 401st Military Police Company.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of the information that I am going to tell the House tonight came from a newspaper article in the Dallas Morning News from Monday, April 18, 2005; and I will insert that into the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Private Hudson was traveling in a convoy between Baghdad and Camp Taji on Friday performing a routine patrol delivering mail, Mr. Hudson, his father, said. He was the gunner in his military police team and was charged with security at the rear of the convoy when a roadside bomb exploded. A large piece of shrapnel shot through his body armor and struck him in the chest.

Private Hudson was born May 17, 1984, in Dallas. He played baseball, soccer, and basketball growing up; but his main high school sport was golf.

□ 1945

Mr. Speaker, I received a phone call from a Highland Village policeman, Chuck Barr, who was a next-door neighbor of Private Hudson.

Chuck being a policeman, you might imagine is somewhat circumspect about young men as they grow up. But he had no such reservations about Aaron Hudson. He told me that he trusted Aaron completely. He and his wife, Dawn, frequently used Aaron as a baby-sitter for their young children. And the photograph provided to me by Chuck Barr, the policeman in Highland Village, shows him and Mr. Barr's son sitting at their home in Highland Village.

Officer Barr related that Aaron had fun, but he never got into trouble. He said he and his wife, Dawn, used to always know when Aaron arrived home at night because his truck was a little bit loud as it pulled into the driveway next door.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot even imagine the pain that Mark Hudson and Angela Hudson, Aaron's parents, are going through this evening and this week. I called Mark Hudson today, and even though he was suffering enormously, he did take the time to talk to me a little bit about his son and his son's life. I told him that I would be speaking on the floor of the House tonight about his son.

And he said, I want you to tell the other Members of Congress that his son, Aaron, was proud to be a soldier. He said, As a father, I could not ask for more than for my child to go and help people halfway across the world, people he had never met before, to go and help them, and to give his life in trying to extricate them from tyranny.

Mr. Hudson wanted this body to know how much he supported the other young men and women over in Iraq this evening, how much he supported them in their effort to provide freedom for the Iraqi people.

Mr. Hudson told me that Aaron loved to be called a soldier. Mr. Hudson reminded me that tonight in the Hudson household the casualty rate is at 100 percent, but still he wanted me to convey that he and his family harbored no ill will against the Iraqi people. It was clear in Mr. Hudson's mind his son had been murdered by criminals, by a criminal element in the country of Iraq and not the Iraqi people that his son had gone to help.

Mr. Hudson also asked me to say a special note of thanks to a gentleman, and unfortunately Mr. Hudson did not know this gentleman's first name or his rank, but he was with Aaron in the 401st Military Police Division. The man's name is Robertson. He went through basic training with Aaron and they deployed together in Iraq, and it was Robertson who got young Aaron onto the medivac helicopter, and probably it was Mr. Robertson who heard Aaron's last words.

Mr. Hudson said that the letters he got back from his son were always upbeat. He never complained about things like the food. He never complained about his life in Iraq. He loved the camaraderie and the structure of being around his fellow soldiers. Mr. Hudson said in the newspaper article, Let's face it, he would rather have been home, but he knew why he was there and he knew his being there was important.

Well, Mark Hudson, Angela Hudson, I want you to know that just as we heard the gentlewoman from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, say when she was speaking of her stepson that was going to be deployed, on behalf of a grateful Nation, we say, "Thank you." As Aaron comes home this week, I again would say, Thank you.

[From the Dallas Morning News, April 18, 2005]

HIGHLAND VILLAGE SOLDIER KILLED (By Christy A. Robinson)

An Army private from Highland Village died in Iraq on Saturday, a day after he was struck by shrapnel from a roadside bomb.

Pvt. Aaron Hudson, 20, was a 2002 graduate of Marcus High School in Flower Mound. He had joined the Army almost a year ago and left for Iraq in January. He was serving with the 401st Military Police Company.

"He liked being called a soldier," said his father, Mark Hudson. "My son died doing what he wanted to do. As a father, you can ask no more for your children than to willingly help other people."

Pvt. Hudson was traveling in a convoy between Baghdad and Camp Taji on Friday, performing a routine patrol and delivering mail, Mr. Hudson said.

He was the gunner in his military police team and was charged with security at the rear of the convoy when a roadside bomb exploded. A large piece of shrapnel shot through his body armor and struck him in the chest.

"We knew in the back of our mind that this could happen," Mr. Hudson said. "The people of Iraq, did not kill my son . . . the criminal element in Iraq killed my son. He was there to help the Iraqi people."

Pvt. Hudson was born May 17, 1984, in Dallas. He played select-level baseball, soccer and basketball growing up, but his main high school sport was golf.

He always felt at ease around people of any age, especially around his grandfather's golfing buddies. "He loved to play golf with those men. Those men loved him, too," Mr. Hudson said.

Pvt. Hudson conducted extensive research into which branch of the military he would join, his father said, before settling on being a military police officer in the Army.

"The thing that makes it odd is we aren't a military family," Mr. Hudson said. "He sent us a letter the fourth week into basic