

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

REFLECTING THE 2-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESIDENT'S "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED" SPEECH

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last Sunday marked the 2-year anniversary of President Bush's now infamous "Mission Accomplished" speech aboard the USS *Lincoln*. Tomorrow the House of Representatives will vote on another \$82 billion for the Iraqi conflict and Afghanistan conflict, bringing the total cost to the American taxpayers of \$300 billion. Sunday, the 2-year anniversary of the "Mission Accomplished" speech; tomorrow the United States Congress puts the tab at \$300 billion for the Iraqi and Afghanistan engagements.

What have we accomplished? We have defeated Saddam Hussein; yet we find ourselves mired in an endless occupation. This past January we witnessed a successful election; yet the progress on developing a functioning government has been slow at best. Terrorism and the insurgency remain as strong as ever and at times seems to be escalating.

Today we learned about another explosion killing 50 individuals. Last week over 100 individuals were killed in different terrorist acts. The economy is stalled, the civil society cannot form a consensus, and millions of Iraqis remain without basic services such as electricity. The brave men and women in the American Armed Forces continue to fight a valiant effort, but the battle has taken its toll.

In addition to the \$300 billion it has cost the taxpayers, we have lost 1,600 sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles; and 12,000 citizens are wounded, some permanently. And the strain is so great the recruiters in the armed services cannot meet their enlistment goals. Through the first 5 months of fiscal year 2005, the Army is short its recruitment goal by 15 percent. The Pentagon now says that they are stretched so thin, it would be difficult for the Armed Forces to meet other obligations should they need to.

Mr. Speaker, Operation Iraqi Freedom was a war of choice. As President Kennedy once said, "To govern is to choose." One can only hope that the war in Iraq was the right choice, and as I said, tomorrow we will add an additional \$82 billion, bringing the total cost to \$300 billion.

But in the meantime, while we have made this effort in Iraq and Afghani-

stan, what has happened here at home? Every President has always thought in the middle of a military engagement, how do I make America stronger post this war? What do I do to think about America's future, raise its sights to see another horizon?

President Lincoln, in the middle of the Civil War, he thought of the transcontinental railway system. President Lincoln thought of the land grant colleges. President Eisenhower thought, in the height of the Cold War, of the highway system in America. President Kennedy, in the middle of the escalation of Vietnam and the Cold War, thought of putting a man on the moon. President Roosevelt, during World War II, thought of the GI bill that built and made this an American century the last century.

So as we go through it, Eisenhower thought of the highway system here in America; President Bush is threatening to veto the highway bill. President Lincoln thought of the transcontinental railroad system; President Bush wants to veto Amtrak and eliminate it. Every President has thought of America as a greater and bigger vision. This is the first President who is now talking about a lesser vision for America in the middle of a war.

We must not have the legacy only of 1,600 dead, 12,000 wounded, and costing \$300 billion and an America that is weaker and smaller and all we have left them is \$2 trillion of additional debt to dig their way out. We can do better. We must have a vision of America that is stronger past this conflict, not one that leaves Iraq stronger and us weaker.

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

(Mr. GINGREY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

SENIOR DEMOCRATS SHOULD LISTEN TO THEIR RANK AND FILE

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the time here on the House floor to discuss a pressing matter not only to this House of Representatives but to the future of our country, really, and the type of debates we are going to engage in as a body.

It has been interesting to read press reports, press reports that some on the

other side of the aisle have been pushing forward regarding this House and the behavior of our Republican Members on this side. It turns out that senior Democrats, the senior Members of the other party, have focused on the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), our Republican majority leader. They focused on the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) because he has been an effective conservative here in the United States House of Representatives, an effective leader for this House for all Republicans, and actually for all Americans, to pass tax relief, to pass limitations on lawsuits, to pass good conservative social policies that actually help our country move forward. The Democrats are attacking him because he is an effective leader, and they are rising to this challenge. Instead of debating the issues, they are debating process. Instead of debating substance, they are debating process.

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Because they cannot beat us on the issues that we are fighting for every day on this side of the aisle, and because many of their rank-and-file join with us on these votes, some in the leadership on the Democrat side of the aisle have resorted to ethical complaints against the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

What has been found in recent days, many reports indicate that those leaders are casting stones; yet they are living in a glass house, and their leadership, many leaders on the other side realize that there are ethical violations on their own side, so perhaps they should not engage in this battle.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have found that the leadership on the other side, many leaders, at the very least, realize that perhaps they should not take this line of attack against our Republican majority leader, because they have violated the very same rules that they point to him for violating.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask many of the leadership on the other side to listen to their rank-and-file and realize that we need to be debating the great issues of the day, not debating ethics. We need to have a functional Ethics Committee here in the House. We need to have a House that can actually move policies forward and not sit here every day and listen to the other side of the aisle complain about process.

So I ask those senior Democrats to listen to their rank-and-file, the rank-and-file that voted with us on the energy bill, the rank-and-file that voted with us on the Republican side for an energy policy, for tax relief, for a good budget; those that are actually looking at reasonable reforms to move our Nation forward, instead of resorting to what the New Republic says is their strategy, and I quote from this article, "Democrats should consider fighting by extra-parliamentary means, going beyond the standard parameters of legislative debate and attacking Republicans not on issues but on ethics, character. In other words, it may be time

for Democrats to burn down the House in order to save it."

Burn down the House, Mr. Speaker. That is their strategy. Many on the left think that that is the way to take back this House, and we on this side of the aisle are going to continue working on the issues that the American people care about and continue moving this Nation forward.

ORGANIZED LABOR LEADING THE FIGHT FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation struggles with soaring health care costs, bankrupt pensions, and devastating job loss, it is organized labor that leads the fight to protect, defend, and advance the economic security of our Nation.

I was recently meeting with leaders from the Ohio Association of Public School Employees, and we talked about all of the issues facing our Members and their members in my home district and throughout the State of Ohio. We talked about the contract-by-contract struggle to hold health care costs down. We talked about the impact of the State budget and the devastating ideas to expand privatization, make it easier to lay off workers, and force school districts to minimize or diminish health insurance, and to limit collective bargaining.

The answer to Ohio's problems is not to weaken labor unions like OAPSE, but to strengthen them and to let all of our communities share in the benefits that labor has worked so hard to achieve. I am proud of unions like OAPSE, and I am proud to share in their fight for dignity and respect.

Right now, in my State, we have a crisis for our retirees, the very people who gave their entire working lives to serve children in Ohio's schools. They need a retirement that offers a good quality of life and one that relieves the pressure of deciding between food and medicine.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take care of the people who take care of our kids; and if what is happening in Ohio is any indication, we are failing miserably.

On Monday of this week, I was at a school in my district; and while at that school, I learned of schools in our region terminating breakfast programs in order to save money. I learned of art and music classes being canceled. I learned of libraries being closed in some schools, and operating on a half-time basis in others. I learned of teachers of gifted students being laid off. I learned of high schools where all foreign language classes have been canceled. In short, I heard about conditions which, left unabated, will lead to the disintegration of our great State.

But standing here in the people's House, I am hopeful. I am hopeful be-

cause the people of Ohio are fighters, and unions like OAPSE are leading that fight. Because of their efforts, we will bring back Ohio and Ohio will once again lead the Nation in building a better future for our kids.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

LET US WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF AMERICA

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, our friends on the other side of the aisle have opened a Pandora's box by spending most of the 109th Congress focused on ethics matters. With all the righteous indignation they can muster, the minority has called for investigations of the majority leader's every move, even digging up stories as far back as 1997.

At the same time, the minority prohibited the Ethics Committee for 4 months from convening to hear the charges that they were leveling against a Member of Congress. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle simply did not want to give the majority leader a chance to make his case to the committee and to clear his name. They hoped to look like paragons of purity. Instead, we know now that they are just the purveyors of partisan politics. By grinding the Ethics Committee to a halt, they knew that every story about Tom DeLay would have the phrase "under investigation." And why give him a chance to prove his innocence when you can trap your political nemesis in a cloud of suspicion and controversy? Why have a fair hearing when you can rig public opinion through implications and accusations in the news media?

The minority leadership has called for investigations of Mr. DELAY's travels. Mr. DELAY has welcomed the chance to present his case, and I have full faith that he will present his case vigorously. But I would caution and I would ask the minority leader to be more careful to consider the implications for her caucus the next time that they call for a congressional probe. The

minority leader and the minority whip have now trapped some of their own Members with their own fiery rhetoric.

The Democratic leadership called for investigations of lobbyists paying for travel. What they did not count on was that several members of their caucus took trips paid for by registered lobbyists. Some have admitted that they missed filing deadlines for disclosures on numerous trips. To their credit, they apologized for their errors, but then went on to say, I can tell you one thing, Jack Abramoff was not on any one of the trips. But Abramoff was involved in travel for other Democratic Members. The Associated Press reported yesterday that two Democrats "received travel expenses initially paid for by lobbyist Jack Abramoff on his credit card or by his firm."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not want this body to denigrate itself. We do not serve the people who elected us and we do not serve our parties in the long term if we engage in an ethics war with charges and counter-charges. Let us be clear: there are no winners in an ethics war. Everyone loses. Instead of helping the American people, we disgust them. Instead of building up, we tear down the working relationship that we need across the aisle to do this Nation's business.

We need to concentrate on the good things that we have done so far in the 109th Congress, like abolishing the inheritance tax, the energy bill, the transportation bill, bankruptcy reform, class action lawsuit reform, winning the war on terror, protecting our borders; and there are many more good things that we need to do in this country, Mr. Speaker, for the American people. Let us work together.

INNOVATIVE HEALTH CARE INITIATIVES FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Cover the Uninsured Week. Many of us have heard from our constituents this week, just as we have in the weeks, months, and years prior, asking that we make health insurance coverage a top priority of the 109th Congress. America's families are living in fear that someone they love might develop a health problem that they cannot afford. We must begin a meaningful dialogue about this problem that will continue until every American has access to quality, affordable health insurance.

This national disgrace has reached crisis proportions. Forty-five million Americans, more than 8 million of whom are children and more than 80 percent of whom live in working families, are one ambulance trip away from financial devastation.

I was pleased to join the gentleman from California (Leader PELOSI) and other Democrats in cosponsoring