

Congress's ability to influence national policy. We have seen time and again that one Member, who has developed an expertise in a subject and a commitment to change, can influence colleagues on both sides of the aisle to provide support and get a program moving that might spend years languishing in bureaucratic review.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of this was how Charlie Wilson found a way to fund the rebels in Afghanistan, which eventually led to the defeat of the Soviet Union's efforts in that country, which was the beginning of the disintegration of the Soviet empire. As CIA Director James Woolsey later said: "The defeat and breakup of the Soviet Union is one of the great events in world history. There were many heroes in this battle, but to Charlie Wilson must go a special recognition."

Charlie was amazed that the Afghan rebels seemed to be holding the Soviets at bay with rocks and knives, and urged appropriators to provide covert funding to get them more sophisticated weapons. The committee agreed to a few million in the first year, and Charlie persuaded his colleagues to increase spending in succeeding years. Ultimately the rebels began shooting down Soviet planes and helicopters with Stinger missiles. By 1988, the Soviets were on the run. By 1990, the Berlin Wall had fallen and the breakup of the Soviet empire was under way.

Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues will recognize this tale from George Crile's marvelous "Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History." I urge everyone to read this highly entertaining book, and I am happy to say that it may soon be produced as a motion picture.

What you as members will see in this story is that a single voice, heard with respect and supported by House colleagues, can initiate the kind of program that can change the world. I know that Charlie Wilson is gratified to have been given that respect and support, and I am proud in the knowledge that I have been privileged to serve with Charlie in this House and on that committee.

Mr. Speaker, Charlie Wilson retired from Congress in 1996, but he is only now leaving Washington. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in thanking him for giving us the opportunity to take part in history, and to wish him well as he heads home to Texas.

IMMIGRATION

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to wish our mothers across America a happy Mother's Day, and I also rise and honor Cinco de Mayo.

But, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I had to cast a "no" vote on the previous bill because of the ill-conceived provisions dealing with immigration. I am not for a national ID card. Unfortunately, without the input of States and hearings, that is what this body voted for, a database, subjected to the FBI, investigation of your personal matters, along with everyday hackers finding out information about Americans that do not keep the homeland safe.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I announce the introduction of the Save America Com-

prehensive Immigration Act of 2005 and I will be presenting this legislation to my colleagues. This actually deals with reforming immigration, increasing the allocation of family-based visas, legalization for long-term residents, real border security, employment-based immigration where an employer would have to attest to the fact that no American had the opportunity to take this job before a job could be given to an undocumented individual.

This is real reform. I hope my colleagues will accept the challenge. Save America Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2005.

JUDICIAL NOMINEES

(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, before we all leave town for the weekend and to celebrate Mother's Day, I wanted to say just a little bit about the President's judicial nominees. They deserve an up-or-down vote in the Senate. That really is a matter of common sense here in Washington and something that needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, right now, common sense does not seem to be prevailing.

For more than 200 years, the Senate deliberated and voted on judicial nominees that were sent up by the President. During those 200 years, the process has not been circumvented by a minority political party in the Senate. Yet today we have a first—judicial nominees that are being held hostage by misuse of a rule preventing the full Senate from voting either to accept or to reject them.

Mr. Speaker, it is not fair, it is not right, and it is not in keeping with our system. The liberals over in the Senate know this. Yes, the Constitution grants the Senate the ability to make its own rules on procedure, but to twist that right in order to subvert the Senate's constitutional role is wholly inappropriate.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

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

Mr. MACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for two pieces of legislation that will reform, protect and improve Social Security for generations to come.

H.R. 1776, introduced by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), and H.R. 530, introduced by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), ensure Social Security's permanent solvency without raising taxes. For those individuals 55 and older, both bills guarantee there will be no changes to their Social Security.

For workers under 55, both plans provide an option for them to remain in the current Social Security system or to have a portion of their Social Secu-

rity payroll taxes fund their own individual personal savings accounts. At the same time, both plans will yield substantial new savings, new investment and new economic growth, ensuring our children and grandchildren have the freedom, security and prosperity they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to take an active role in tackling Social Security's problems by supporting one or both of these bills, and I look forward to the House's active consideration of these proposals.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize that it is the National Day of Prayer and to ask my colleagues to join me in giving thanks to God for His many blessings.

This day is significant because it reminds Americans to humbly ask God for His wisdom in our daily lives. Prayer is an extremely powerful tool because it allows us to acknowledge that we are all God's children and that we must rely on Him to guide our lives in the right direction.

National days of prayer have been an important part of our country's heritage since the first one was declared by the Continental Congress in 1775. This day reminds us of how our Founding Fathers sought the Lord's guidance while they were forming our country. The unanimous passage of a bill establishing the National Day of Prayer as an annual event demonstrates that prayer is just as important today as it was at the founding of our country. Prayer unites and gives comfort to people of all faiths.

Today, I ask my fellow Americans to join me in praying for our brave men and women in uniform for fighting to protect our freedoms and to spread freedom throughout the world. I also ask that we pray that God help our leaders to make the right decisions and have the strength and resolve as they meet the challenges ahead.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK—DEBORAH MONETTE

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

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, this week is Public Service Recognition Week, a time when we honor government employees at the Federal, State, county and local levels. We cannot thank our public servants enough for the job that they do for this country day in and day out. The Federal Government simply cannot function properly without good employees and the managers who are committed to the work of our Nation.

As the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce and Agency Organization and a member of the Congressional Public Service Caucus, I would also like to honor one Nevadan who is making a difference for

our great Nation. Deborah Monette, a Federal employee at the National Nuclear Security Administration's North Las Vegas site office in Nevada manages a number of high-profile projects at the agency's Nevada test site. Her work includes stewardship of the Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, nuclear test readiness, nonproliferation issues and emergency response programs. In that capacity, she has spearheaded critical counterterrorism initiatives for our country.

One of Ms. Monette's greatest achievements is the creation of the National Center For Combating Terrorism at the Nevada test site. The center is an intensive, hands-on training ground where Federal, State and local agencies and employees involved in combating terrorism can train for the wars of the future. It was established to provide a realistic test and evaluation laboratory for first responders.

She is a 30-year employee. I wish we would honor Ms. Monette and all Federal, State and local employees across this country.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 231.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGALLIS of South Carolina). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for special order speeches without prejudice to possible resumption of legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak in the place of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

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

There was no objection.

AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES: STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, General Richard Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned Congress that the stress on our Armed Forces of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan had raised the risk that it will take longer to prevail in conflicts elsewhere around the world. While General Myers stressed that American troops would still succeed, he acknowledged that the ongoing pace of operations has strained the military and would have a negative impact on operations, including the possibility of higher American casualties.

General Myers' candid assessment is both welcome and, to me, self-evident. A growing number of current and former military officers are expressing strong concern over the strain being placed on our Armed Forces, and for good reason: our Armed Forces are too small and the demands on them are too great.

"What keeps me awake at night," General Richard Cody, vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army, testified in a recent Senate hearing, "is what will this all-volunteer force look like in 2007?" General Cody's concerns are professional and personal. He is the father of two sons who are captains in the U.S. Army. Right now those sons are deployed on their second and third tours of combat since September 11.

Throughout the country, men and women in the Guard and Reserve are being called up repeatedly to serve. Indeed, the line between those in the Guard and Reserve and those on active duty is being blurred beyond recognition. We can no longer ask a small group of men and women to bear such a disproportionate and growing share of the burden. We must expand the standing Army and Marine Corps to provide adequate resources for our long-term national security.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, American policymakers downsized the military in hopes of reaping a peace dividend. Our mistake at the end of the Cold War was to consider the vastly diminished threat of nuclear annihilation as signaling what one commentator called "the end of history." Even as the Soviet Union broke apart, new threats, failed States, radical Islamic terrorism and ethnic and religious strife quickly advanced to challenge the United States. The need for the forward deployment of large numbers of American troops in Western Europe may have largely disappeared, but the end of the bipolar international system has led to much greater instability elsewhere.

Before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the conflicts in Somalia, in Haiti

and in Kosovo, already demonstrated some of the challenges that we confront in the post-Cold War era. Throughout the 1990s, even as the U.S. military maintained a significant presence in Europe, South Korea and in the Gulf region, U.S. forces engaged in these large-scale deployments. American troops are still operating in some of these areas and participating in other smaller peacekeeping operations. Despite the high tempo of activity, the strength of the active duty Army and Marine Corps went from 929,000 in 1990 to 655,000 in 2000.

While we are fighting the war on terrorism and the Iraq war and trying to meet our other commitments, the strength of our active duty Army and Marine Corps has increased only slightly in the last 5 years. At the end of 2004, 671,000 Americans were serving on active duty in the Army and Marines and virtually all of the modest increase in troop strength has come as a result of stop-loss and other measures that have kept soldiers in the force beyond the period of their enlistments.

To meet its needs, the military has mobilized hundreds of thousands of Reserve and National Guard personnel to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan, with many called to service multiple times and others activated from the Individual Ready Reserve. Because the gulf between the expectations of those joining the Guard and Reserve and the reality of today's service is so great, morale has suffered and recruitment is down.

President Bush warned the American people that the war on terror would not be easy or quick. He asked the country to make a generational commitment to promote democracy around the world. But as this applies to adequate troop strength, the administration's rhetoric has not been matched with action.

The defense authorization bill increased end strength of 20,000 for the Army and 3,000 for the Marine Corps. It also authorized an additional 10,000 Army and 6,000 Marines to be added in the next 5 years. This expansion is a beginning. The administration and Congress, though, need to take steps to increase the size of our Armed Forces by a far more substantial amount. Recently, a bipartisan group of national security experts recommended increasing the active duty Army and Marine Corps by a combined 25,000 per year for several years. Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Wesley Clark has called for an additional 90,000 troops to be added to the Army's ranks.

Our Armed Forces are the best in the world, but even the best can be asked to do too much with too few. As we continue our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and confront potential challenges in North Korea, Iran and elsewhere, we must acknowledge that our current force level does not meet our security needs.

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Beefing up our recruiting efforts will not be easy, but we have little choice.