

LET US FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE'S BUSINESS

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, to refute the comments of the previous speaker suggesting we are captives of special interests, that we are not doing the people's work, I will beg to differ.

I see a lot of progress here. But I also see a lot of name calling that I think is unfortunate and unnecessary. Pointing fingers, trying to catch each other in scandal does not bring honor to this House. So they can give their statements and they can give their quotes and they can make soundbytes, but the American public are worried about health insurance. They are worried about gas prices. They are worried about our soldiers in Iraq. They are worried about terrorism. And we should be working on that as Democrats and Republicans. But, instead, we sit here and make accusation, innuendo and create diatribe. We are much better than that.

We had an emergency evacuation today. We are on pins and needles based on the real terrorist threat that exists, and we are just becoming name callers.

So I urge all of us, both sides, to take a moment, pause and honestly focus on the people's business, not on trying to score cheap political points.

IN SUPPORT OF MEDICARE FOR ALL

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend my remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REHBERG). Without objection, the gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to agree with the gentleman from Florida that the American people are worried about many things including health care. And that is why I stand to ask the House for support on H.R. 676, a bill that will establish a U.S. national health insurance.

A Kaiser Foundation poll found that 64 percent of Americans favor expanding Medicare to all. The Deans of Harvard and Stanford Medical Schools, 13,000 doctors, including the former editor of the New England Journal of Medicine and two former Surgeons General now support Medicare for All.

By expanding Medicare to all, we will contain costs. Medicare boasts 3 percent overhead. In contrast, the Medicare HMOs, 15 to 30 percent overhead. Medicare also has a much lower rate of spending increase than private health plans.

Medicare for All will make the U.S. more competitive. GM and Ford are losing money in competitive advantage

because other developed countries have universal health care. Ontario now makes more cars than Detroit. Canadian GM, Ford and other auto manufacturers have sent a letter in support of their single-payer health care system as a result.

All over this country, Americans are looking for some help from the Congress of the United States on health care. It is time for us to come together, Democrats and Republicans alike, in defense of universal health care, Medicare for All.

HONORING MR. SANFORD WALKE, PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT

(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 honor Mr. Sanford Walke of Hernando Beach, Florida. He was the chief engineer in the army during World War II, and Mr. Walke recently was a person to whom I presented the Purple Heart for his heroic actions in battle.

On a flight over Germany on July 8, 1944, Mr. Walke's plane was shot down over France. The last one to jump out of the plane, he was forced to open his parachute over enemy territory. He was then taken as a Prisoner of War and held in a German prison camp. He was put on long and arduous marches until he was able to escape with another British soldier months later. The two soldiers were hiding in a barn in a German village when the British tanks rolled in and took over the town. Thankfully, the British took care of him until he was able to reunite with his American soldier buddies.

Mr. Speaker, true American heroes like Sanford Walke should be honored for their service to our Nation and for their commitment and sacrifices in battle.

COMMENDING CAPITOL POLICE AND OTHER PERSONNEL FOR THEIR PROFESSIONALISM IN EVACUATION

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, commend the Capitol Police and all the other personnel who did such a fantastic job when we had the evacuation earlier today.

It is never good, obviously, to have this kind of evacuation. But when we were kids in school, we had fire drills and things like that, and we wanted to see how well it was done. Today, it was done in a very professional way. And, thank God, it really was not a threat, but it is nice to know, when we need to leave, we can.

So I want to just take the time to thank the Capitol Police and to all the personnel who worked with us here in

making sure the evacuation was smooth and nobody was hurt. Responding to the threat and the threat over the aerospace was swift. And I think all of us as people who work at the Capitol can sleep a little better tonight knowing that our very highly trained personnel really had things under hand. It again shows the American public why we all need to be prepared for terrorism and why this is a new world, and I think that we are meeting the task. Again, I want to thank all those concerned.

□ 1745

TIME TO PROVIDE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS

(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 gentleman from Florida got up here and talked about the fact that we should work together as Democrats and Republicans. Let us have a little review of history, and I think the gentleman was here when it all happened.

In 1993 and 1994, President Clinton presented a health care plan for every American. The Republicans took the position that any plan run by the government was a bad one, and they took pride and bragged in the next election over the fact that they had killed the Clinton health care plan.

Now, 1994 is more than 10 years, and we have yet to see any proposal come out of the Republicans. Not a single member of the Republican caucus has been able to get a hearing or lay a bill before a committee. There are many of us who put bills before the Congress. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) put one forward, I put one forward, as did the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL).

Where are the Republican proposals to do anything about the American people's health care problem? It is the number one cause of bankruptcy. It is time.

MAKING AMERICA MORE COMPETITIVE

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, Yogi Berra said that predictions are hard to make, especially when they are about the future. But that does not mean we should not look ahead. In fact, if you do sit down and think about what America is going to be like 5, 10, 20 years from now and how our economy is going to be in relationship to the rest of the world, I think we should all be very concerned.

Right now, China is in the beginning stages of trying to start an Asian Union, much like the European Union,

where the yuan is the euro or the monetary means. They are trying to combine the people in Southeast Asia, which could make an economy of about 3 billion people. The European Union is now absorbing new European countries, plus they have a natural bond to the Islamic world based on their current immigration trends, and they could easily develop an economy of 1 billion people.

So if you look downstream, the very likely position for our economy could be third place, unless, unless, we change the environment here in America.

Last year we had a trade deficit of \$671 billion and a Federal deficit. If we are going to bring jobs back to America, we have to change the environment by making our country more competitive.

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

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

SEEKING JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF SYRIAN OPPRESSION

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to call the attention of the Members to the important cause of defending the human rights of the Syrian people and holding the Syrian regime accountable for the most deplorable actions against its citizens.

Syria is an oppressor state in every sense. It brutally stifles its political dissidents and minority groups. It denies its ordinary citizens freedom of religion, of conscience and belief. It seeks to silence its people by preventing them from exercising their right of free speech. It discriminates against women, condoning violence and sexual assault against them.

The police continue to detain people arbitrarily, placing them in prisons and torturing them, using methods that seem to herald back to the return of the Middle Ages, stretching prisoners on racks or fracturing their spines on wheels.

Since 1963, Syria has ruled under emergency law, using the hollow excuse of Israel being a threat, and using that to suppress freedom, diversity of opinion, and equality between religions and between sexes.

About 600 Lebanese detainees have been languishing in Syrian jails since

1989. Those who have managed to escape bring harrowing stories with them that they have told to the international human rights community. They must be released immediately.

In an event that defies comprehension, in 1982, Rifaat al-Assad, the brother of then dictator Hafez al-Assad, turned his Soviet-made guns against the Syrian city of Hama. When the dust settled approximately a week later, the death toll of innocent civilians had reached 30,000 people.

The perpetrators of this massacre, including Rifaat al-Assad, who resides in Marbella, Spain, have received no punishment and live amid absolute luxury. Their comfortable lifestyle is an affront to the Syrian people and to all of humanity.

Another of the perpetrators to be held accountable is Ghazi Kanaan. He headed the military intelligence unit responsible for clearing the way for the massacre at Hama. He also later became the Syrian top intelligence man in Lebanon and reportedly built all of the intelligence units responsible for killing Lebanese Christians and imprisoning many other innocent Lebanese.

Bahjat Suleiman is the head of Unit 251 in the General Directorate of the Intelligence Services. Some of the crimes against the Syrian people were detailed in H. Con. Res. 18. This resolution, which I authored, was overwhelmingly adopted by my colleagues in the House, clearly illustrating our body's commitment to holding the Syrian dictatorship accountable for the systematic attacks against the Syrian population.

Inaction on our part is not an option. The cost of failing to address this grim reality sooner can be measured by the rising number of Syrian and Lebanese men and women that the Syrian Government has killed or tortured.

Today, the Syrian people, the dissidents and the peaceful opposition leaders, are poised to act. They are demanding that the Syrian Government release all prisoners of conscience and that it allow for the winds of reform to sweep through its corrupt system. U.S. policy must support the Syrian people, its dissidents, human rights activists, and pro-democracy advocates so that they, too, could free themselves from the shackles of tyrannical rule.

In that vein, I recently introduced the Lebanon and Syria Liberation Act that contains provisions calling for the establishment of a program of assistance to pro-democracy advocates and opposition groups in Syria and Lebanon. It also establishes a program to develop independent broadcasts into Syria and Lebanon to help promote freedom and democracy in both countries.

The act sends a message to the Syrian Government that the United States will not stand for its unacceptable behavior in violation of all moral and legal standards. This legislation, with its concrete measures to punish the Syrian regime, clearly demonstrates to

the Syrian people that America stands with them in their efforts to free themselves from the shackles of tyranny and to help them build an open society based on democratic values and principles.

We must honor the brave men and women of Syria by acting to defend their right to live as free men and women. We must begin by ensuring that the Syrian regime and its leaders are made to pay for their crimes against the Syrian people. We must support efforts to seek justice for the victims of Syrian oppression.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CONGRESSMAN PETER RODINO, JR.

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, May 7, I lost a friend, a constituent, and an inspiration. Many of you in this Chamber knew and worked with Peter Rodino, a former Congressman from Newark, New Jersey. For those who did not know him, you undoubtedly recall his service or have read about his life and illustrious career in public service.

Congressman Rodino is most well-known for the role he played in the impeachment hearings of President Richard Nixon. He demonstrated a dignified image of Congress at a time when cynicism characterized the public's view of our government. He upheld the integrity of this institution. He was himself a person of character.

Despite the important role that he played in the glamorous hearings, Congressman Rodino's real legacy is in the work that he did to further civil rights for all Americans. As the son of an Italian immigrant who grew up on the ethnically diverse streets of Newark, Congressman Rodino understood the importance of building bridges to unite ethnic communities.

He was determined to see women and Americans of all races and religions receive equal civil rights. In his role on the House Committee on the Judiciary, Congressman Rodino was instrumental in managing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the House floor, where it passed and was eventually signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson.

Congressman Rodino authored the Fair Employment Practices Amendment within the historic civil rights bill. He strived to advance the rights of women, immigrants, and disenfranchised ethnicities. He never forgot his own roots.

In 1971, Congressman Rodino passed legislation making Columbus Day a national holiday, providing millions of Italian Americans with a day to celebrate our proud heritage.

To establish an Italian American presence in Washington, Congressman Rodino worked to found the National Italian American Foundation, NIAF, and the Italian American Congressional Delegation. It is my honor to