

have on hand. The industry should be encouraged and in some cases required to store and transport dangerous chemicals in smaller quantities.

"Fourth, limiting chemical facilities in highly populated areas. Many chemical facilities were built long before terrorism was a concern and when fewer people lived in their surrounding areas. There should be a national initiative to move dangerous chemical facilities, where practical, to lower population areas.

"Fifth, government oversight of chemical safety. The chemical industry wants to police itself through voluntary programs, but the risks are too great to leave chemical security in private hands. Facilities that use dangerous chemicals should be required to identify their vulnerabilities to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Homeland Security and to meet Federal safety standards."

Now, those are the five points that were mentioned by the New York Times yesterday in their editorial, and also by Greenpeace. But I wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, that more than 3 years have passed since 9/11 and Congress has yet to seriously address the need to secure our Nation's chemical plants. We are finally seeing some movement in the Senate, but not yet in the House. And it is time to take serious action to reduce the threat of an attack on a chemical facility which would endanger millions of lives.

Last month I reintroduced the Chemical Security Act, H.R. 2237, which requires the EPA and the Department of Homeland Security to work together to identify high-priority chemical facilities. Once identified, these facilities would be required to assess vulnerabilities and hazards and then development and implement a plan to improve security and use safer technologies within 18 months. Senator CORZINE has introduced this bill in the Senate.

Now, since the legislation was first introduced in the House in 2002, I have tried to get the Republican leadership to conduct a congressional hearing on chemical security. And I welcomed the announcement last week on the House floor during the discussion or debate on the Homeland Security bill, there was an announcement that the House Select Committee on Homeland Security chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) said his committee would hold a hearing or start a series of hearings on chemical security beginning June 14.

I would also like to see my own committee, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, which has jurisdiction over chemical facilities, to follow the gentleman from California's (Mr. COX) lead and schedule hearings or begin to have hearings this summer.

Hopefully, we will see some positive signs, some movement in the House, at least to have hearings on the issue, but it really is a very important issue, not only for New Jersey, my home State,

but throughout the country. I am also pleased that the New York Times has pointed this out.

Greenpeace, of course, has talked about a number of initiatives even beyond the ones that were mentioned in the New York Times, and I plan to spend some time over the next few weeks talking to Greenpeace about whether additional legislation is necessary to address some of their concerns.

#### HOLES IN NATIONAL GUARD BENEFITS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, last weekend I traveled back to Oregon, as I frequently do, and participated in an Armed Forces Day parade in Cottage Grove, Oregon. The particular focus this year was the return from Iraq of the 2162nd, a National Guard unit which is based in Cottage Grove, in the last 60 days. There was a good turnout among members of the community.

Of course, we are looking forward next week to Memorial Day, which will be a sober event, as we will honor some of those who have recently lost their lives in service to our Nation.

But one thing stands out in both of these celebrations and that is that there is tremendous support for our troops in uniform, but that support somehow is not getting translated in many ways into policy here in Washington, D.C., in the budgets proposed by the President that relate to offset of benefits for disabled veterans, a disabled veterans tax, that relate to other services for veterans or equity in benefits for the National Guard.

Today, as I got to the plane, I saw an article "Dental Problems Stymie Guard Call-ups." This particular article was about the National Guard in Washington State where 30 percent of the 4,500 called up were ineligible for active duty because of dental problems, 20 percent nationally. I do not know the percentage for Oregon; I have not seen it. But when I was meeting with members of the 2162nd, when they were down in Fort Hood prior to their deployment to Iraq, and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) and I were meeting with them, this one fellow in the front says, I have a problem, Congressman; I would like you to try and help me out here.

He opens up his mouth really wide and he is missing a couple of front teeth. I said, What is going on there? He said, I had two bad teeth. I went to my predeployment physical. They said, You have those bad teeth; we have to take care of them. So they yanked his teeth out and sent him to Fort Hood. But at Fort Hood they said, You are not active duty military. We are not going to take care of your problem. You go to the end of the line and you will be in Iraq before we get around to it.

So he was going to go home to Oregon on his leave before he left to try to get false teeth inserted so he would not spend a year in Iraq with a big gap in his front teeth.

We need equity in benefits and better benefits for our Guard members. We are treating the National Guard indistinguishable from active duty forces, yet they still often suffer in terms of equipment and they definitely suffer in terms of equity of benefits, health coverage for our Guard members before they are activated. All Guard members should receive health benefits during their service in the Guard. That means they will be ready to defend the country at the drop of a hat. They are ready to deploy. But it also is a good way to induce and recognize the service of these people in our National Guard.

This morning when I got to the plane there was another Guard member there from Kingsley Air Force Base who does military police work, on his way to a conference. And he and I got in a little chat and we were talking about the proposed base closure in Portland. Then he said, When are we going to get recognition on our retirement benefits. The fact that Guard members have a set age instead of a set number of years of service, they are discriminated against.

Education benefits, they are discriminated against. Active duty military soldiers serve in Iraq, come back, leave the military, can get education benefits. National Guard soldiers serve in Iraq, come back having finished their contract in their term, want to get education benefits. No. They have to sign up for another term in the Guard.

But the active duty soldier did nothing to earn those benefits.

We need equity in education benefits. We need better health care benefits. We need better pension benefits. We have to begin treating our National Guard members like the essential component they are of the Nation's national defense today.

They are not an afterthought. They are the front line as much as the active duty military. And there can be no more fitting recognition by this House of Representatives coming up to Memorial Day, in the wake of Armed Forces Day, than to deliver on those changes in benefits and those improvements for our Guard soldiers and to better deliver veterans benefits for all of our Nation's veterans so that Lincoln's words do not become a hollow promise.

□ 1945

We will take care of our veterans. We can afford it in the greatest Nation on earth, and we should make good those promises before Memorial Day.

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

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

#### FOREIGN FELONS BILL

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, earlier this month the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the law preventing convicted felons from purchasing guns does not apply to individuals convicted of felonies in foreign countries.

In the case of *Small v. United States*, the ruling stated the law needs to explicitly state that foreign felons are also prohibited from buying firearms. This ruling has opened the doors for dangerous criminals to purchase guns in this country with no questions asked. But the loophole can easily be fixed.

That is why I have introduced H.R. 1931, the Foreign Felons Gun Prohibition Act. My legislation will ensure our gun laws take crimes committed in other countries into consideration before allowing a firearm purchase to go forward.

We cannot allow convicted drug dealers, murderers, rapists and even terrorists to purchase guns just because their crimes were committed in another country.

Mr. Speaker, a convicted drug dealer from South America can purchase all of the guns and ammunition that he wants and can buy in this country legally. This loophole puts the lives of our police officers, ATF officers and innocent bystanders in danger. And as demonstrated in the recent GAO report, it is already too easy for individuals with terrorist ties to buy guns in this country. This loophole will allow someone actually convicted of assisting terrorists overseas to purchase weapons like an AK-47 or a 50 caliber sniper weapon that can shoot down a plane.

I completely understand some felony convictions handed down by foreign courts have legitimacy questions. Convictions can be trumped up for political reasons by corrupt regimes. And nations involved in civil wars or other political disputes may have more than one illegitimate court administering justice. This legislation takes that into consideration.

My bill allows individuals to challenge the legitimacy of foreign felony convictions in our courts. If the foreign felony is found to be out of bounds legally, the individual would be allowed to purchase that gun.

This would do nothing to take away the right of someone to be able to own a gun. I want this bill to ensure that anyone charged with an illegitimate or a politically motivated foreign felony is not discriminated against. This may be inconvenient for some, but we must make sure that gun sales are limited to law-abiding citizens.

Mr. Speaker, we are at war. We cannot allow our enemies in the war on terror to arm themselves within our borders just because of a loophole. This is a homeland security problem with a common-sense solution.

Congress must work to close all of the loopholes in our pre-9/11 gun laws. It is too easy for person with ties to terrorism and criminal organizations to access guns in this Nation. Passing H.R. 1931 will help us win the war on terror and keep our streets safe from gangs and criminal.

We should be working together to make this country as safe as possible, certainly for our police officers, our ATF agents and the innocent bystanders. We can do this, but we must learn to work together. We must change the rhetoric of the gun issue. We are working for gun safety, not taking away the right of someone to own a gun.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DEGETTE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

#### SUPPORT EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, critics of embryonic cell stem research maintain it is wrong to promote science which destroys life in order to save life. As the leading prolife legislator in Washington, Senator ORRIN HATCH put it, "Since when does life begin in a petri dish in a refrigerator?"

To reduce this issue to an abortion issue is a horrible insult to 100 million Americans suffering the ravages of diabetes, spinal cord paralysis, heart disease, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's dis-

ease, multiple sclerosis and Lou Gehrig's disease.

I have met with medical researchers from the University of Minnesota Stem Cell Institute, the National Institutes of Health, the Mayo Clinic, and Johns Hopkins University. As one prominent researcher told me, "The real irony of the President's policy is that at least 100,000 surplus frozen embryos could be used to produce stem cells for research to save lives. Instead, these surplus embryos are being thrown into the garbage and treated as medical waste."

Only 22 of the 78 stem cell lines approved by the President in 2001 remain today. This limit on research has stunted progress on finding cures for a number of debilitating and fatal diseases, according to scientists and patient advocacy groups across America.

Mr. Speaker, the scientific evidence is overwhelming that embryonic stem cells have great potential to regenerate specific types of human tissues, offering hope for millions of Americans suffering from debilitating, fatal and cruel diseases.

Mr. Speaker, it is too late for my beloved mother who was totally debilitated by Alzheimer's disease, which led to her death. It is too late for President Reagan who suffered a similar fate. It is too late for my cousin, Joey, who died a cruel death in his 20s from diabetes, but it is not too late for the 100 million other American people counting on this House to support funding for life-saving research on stem cells derived from donated, surplus embryos created through in vitro fertilization.

Let us not turn our backs on these people and take away their hope. Let us listen to respected colleagues and friends like Senator ORRIN HATCH, Senator CONNIE MACK, and former HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, all pro-life people, all who tell us this is not an abortion issue. Let us make it clear that abortion politics should not determine this critical vote. Embryonic stem cell research will prolong life, improve life, and give hope for life to millions of people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support funding for life-saving and life-enhancing embryonic stem cell research. The American people deserve nothing less.

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

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

#### STEM CELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.