

Agreement, another item we hope to have on our summer agenda.

CAFTA will lower prices for American consumers while opening vast new markets for American businesses, which in turn will create jobs, good high-paying jobs, here at home.

Finally, while we improve our security and bolster our economy, we will serve the pressing interests of individual families by moving a broad agenda to reform our health care system. And all the while, we will continue our work on the President's call to strengthen and improve retirement security for all Americans and complete our work before the Fourth of July on funding the Federal Government within the limits of our budget.

All in all, a busy summer of heavy lifting awaits, Madam Speaker, but the American people demand and deserve nothing less.

DEFEAT CAFTA

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, we just returned from 10 days in our district, and we found the opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement is even greater than before we left. People at home in our districts recognize our trade policy is not working.

Just look at this chart. The first year I ran for Congress, our trade deficit was \$38 billion. Today after NAFTA and PNTR and a series of trade agreements, our trade deficit is \$618 billion.

These trade agreements cost jobs. They hurt our families. They hurt our communities. They hurt our schools.

Madam Speaker, we should renegotiate the Central American Free Trade Agreement; defeat this bill when it comes to Congress; renegotiate a new Central American Free Trade Agreement, one that lifts up workers in all seven countries.

RX FOR AMERICAN COMPANIES

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, American businesses are faced with increasing pressure from foreign competitors and skyrocketing health care costs. But they are also faced with the weight placed on them not by the marketplace or their competitors, but by the government itself. Burdensome, duplicative, and outdated regulations cost American businesses literally billions of dollars annually and stifle new job creation.

Many of these regulations do little to improve workplace safety, protect our environment or improve the safety of our workers, but are simply on the books because no one has bothered to review their effectiveness.

Common sense by the government must come into play to help relieve

this burden and to improve the environment for job creation. We must do more to make American companies more competitive in the global marketplace and to give our job providers and our workers much needed relief. We must and we will do more.

BAKASSI PENINSULA BELONGS TO CAMEROON

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Nigeria is deservedly working hard to secure a permanent seat on the Security Council of the United Nations. But in the meantime, Nigeria is holding territory known as the Bakassi Peninsula, which rightfully belongs to the Republic of Cameroon.

The International Court of Justice, in settling a dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, there is a decree that the territory belongs to Cameroon. Cameroon is a developing democracy which is achieving economic success for its people.

President Obasanjo of Nigeria in his effort to secure a permanent seat on the Security Council should set an example for the international community. I urge President Obasanjo, in the interest of regional harmony for mutual benefit, to remove troops and government personnel from the Bakassi Peninsula and to pursue positive relations with his neighbors, especially the dynamic Republic of Cameroon.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

MEDICAL LIABILITY INSURANCE CRISIS

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, the smallest State in the Union has now replaced the biggest State in the Union as one of those States in a crisis state in its medical liability insurance. Okay, there may be those in this body who would argue that Texas is no longer the largest State in the Union; but, Madam Speaker, the good news is that 2 years ago Texas faced up to the challenge of medical liability reform and passed a law on the State level, affirmed it with a constitutional amendment that put a cap on non-economic damages and medical liability lawsuits. This allowed more insurance to come to the State, and, more importantly, Texas Medical Liability Trust, the largest medical liability writer in the State of Texas, has reduced liability fees by 17 percent.

But in the State of Rhode Island, which recently joined the other States in the Union that are in crisis, doctors there are experiencing liability insurance premium increases from 175 to 200

percent since 2002 and fully one-half of their physicians, 48 percent, responded to a recent survey saying they were thinking about doing something else.

Madam Speaker, we passed a good bill in this House 2 years ago that nationwide put a cap on non-economic damages of medical liability lawsuits. I urge this body to take it up, and I urge the other body to pass it as well.

HONORING CHERI REZAK

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

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of a constituent who looked at tragedy and saw an opportunity to improve lives.

In the wake of last December's tsunami in southeast Asia, Cheri Rezak and a group of like-minded Minnesotans volunteered their time and resources to travel between Sri Lanka and the United States every 6 to 8 weeks to provide medical care, food, and encouragement to affected communities.

Under the name HelpSriLanka.US, these individuals have already helped the men and women of Sri Lanka to build houses and establish and operate a soup kitchen which feeds nearly 500 people each day. They are also purchasing boats, taxis, and sewing machines to re-establish fishing, transportation and garment industries. Their goal is to repeat this community revitalization in villages throughout Sri Lanka.

In addition, Cheri has personally dedicated herself to providing a temporary home, and much needed respite, to children directly affected by the tsunami. Thanks to her diligence in securing temporary visas, the first of her charges is currently living with her family in Minnesota.

Cheri and her fellow volunteers rose above this disaster to help create a better life for the people of Sri Lanka. I commend them for their work and wish them much continued success.

UNFRIENDLY SKIES

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, the airline pension crisis has proven that the skies are not so friendly for many airline employees getting ready to retire.

Retirement plans that included dreams prepared for over a lifetime are now replaced with just trying to make ends meet. An airline dumping their pension plan is not a solution. This jeopardizes the retirement for thousands and maybe millions of hard-working Americans and increases the burden on our government and taxpayers.

Over the past 2 years, the PBGC and the American taxpayers have assumed

close to \$10 billion in unfunded pension liabilities, \$10 billion.

Is this a winning formula? I do not think so. Just ask over 100,000 United employees having to plan for a future that looks much cloudier today.

H.R. 2106 allows airline carriers to adopt new funding rules for their defined pension benefit systems. This plan, a solution, requires airline carriers to meet their obligations and decreases the need for a taxpayer bailout.

Madam Speaker, this is a solution that could not come at a better time. This legislation is a win-win-win solution, for the airlines, for airline employees, and most importantly, for the American taxpayer.

□ 1415

JOINT REAPPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Pursuant to section 301 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381), amended by Public Law 108-329, and the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair announces on behalf of the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate their joint reappointment on May 26, 2005, of the following individuals to a 5-year term to the board of directors of the Office of Compliance:

Ms. Barbara L. Camens, Washington, D.C.

Ms. Roberta L. Holzwarth, Rockford, Illinois

And, in addition, their joint redesignation of Ms. Susan Robfogel, Rochester, New York, Chairman.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

AUTHORIZING NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY TO AWARD DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN JOINT CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND STRATEGY

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1490) to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the National Defense University to award the degree of Master of Science in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1490

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN JOINT CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND STRATEGY.

(a) JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE PROGRAM.—Section 2163 of title 10, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 2163. National defense university: master of science degrees

“(a) AUTHORITY TO AWARD SPECIFIED DEGREES.—The President of the National Defense University, upon the recommendation of the faculty of the respective college or other school within the University, may confer the master of science degrees specified in subsection (b).

“(b) AUTHORIZED DEGREES.—The following degrees may be awarded under subsection (a):

“(1) MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY.—The degree of master of science in national security strategy, to graduates of the University who fulfill the requirements of the program of the National War College.

“(2) MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NATIONAL RESOURCE STRATEGY.—The degree of master of science in national resource strategy, to graduates of the University who fulfill the requirements of the program of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

“(3) MASTER OF SCIENCE IN JOINT CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND STRATEGY.—The degree of master of science in joint campaign planning and strategy, to graduates of the University who fulfill the requirements of the program of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School at the Joint Forces Staff College.

“(c) REGULATIONS.—The authority provided by this section shall be exercised under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The item relating to section 2163 in the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 108 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“2163. National Defense University: master of science degrees.”

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Paragraph (3) of section 2163(b) of title 10, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), shall take effect for degrees awarded after May 2005.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1490, the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1490, offered today by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Armed Services

and a long-time advocate of the necessity for joint professional military education for Armed Forces personnel.

Today, America's Armed Forces successfully operate together, and with allies, across the globe in incredibly complex wartime undertakings that would not have been possible if it were not for an underlying system to educate military officers and other national security leaders in joint, multinational and interagency operational-level planning and warfighting.

For nearly 60 years, the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia, which I proudly represent, has been a critically important part of that joint professional military educational system. This week, the Joint Forces Staff College achieves another educational milestone with the graduation of the first class to complete the requirements for the Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

These graduates of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School will be assigned to critical roles on the Joint Staff and in the joint warfighting commands. These graduates will bring with them a high degree of skill in joint planning, as well as capability for critical analysis that will allow them to be effective, creative, conceptual and innovative planners and commanders.

This bill, H.R. 1490, provides the statutory authorization to the Department of Defense to award these and future graduates of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School their masters-level degrees. It is a milestone not only for these first graduates but also for the Nation. These officers and those who follow are certain to be our future senior military leaders. Their success will be America's success.

I thank the Member from Missouri for his enduring commitment to the education of America's military leaders and urge all my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 1490.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume; and I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) for her support for this very, very important bill and thank her for her keen interest in professional military education.

I rise today to support H.R. 1490, which would award a masters of science degree to the officers who complete the Joint Advanced Warfighting School at the Joint Forces Staff College. As the gentlewoman from Virginia noted, this bill will give the Department of Defense the authority to award graduates of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School their masters-level degrees. I also urge my colleagues to vote yes on this bill.

It is important that Congress pass the bill and the President sign it so that we can present those men and women with the accolades that they have earned when the first class of that program graduates this coming Thursday at 9 o'clock in the morning.