

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. The pages have given to this institution and the page program. You have set a bar by which we can now challenge other page classes, and I want to thank you.

Mr. Speaker, also joining us is the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and for all of his work with the page program. I want to thank all of the pages for their service and take a moment to brag a little because Stella is from my district. I know how great Stella is, and I know you know how great she is. We were so delighted to have her join us. She has added a great deal to the page class, including directing the play "The Black Rose." Stella's folks are here today and are going on a tour. So please say hello to them. We are proud of the work you did and the work all of you did.

Mr. Speaker, I had a chance during college to intern here on Capitol Hill twice. It was a different experience than the page experience, but I hope many of you will come back as interns, as staff, and ultimately come back as Members of the House. And if you are lucky, you can become lords in the Senate and then we will have to show even greater respect to all of you.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all the pages very much for their work. It is tremendously appreciated. I want to wish you, Stella, and wish the entire class all the best of luck.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to steal some thunder from some of the words I will mention tomorrow afternoon and tomorrow evening, but you know what you have been doing and you know the role you have played here and the friends you have made and the relationships you have built. You take a unique quality back with you.

As a former high school history teacher, it is not the book learning; you have actually lived it. You are now some of the most informed people in the operating of the House of Representatives from the whole congressional district in which you reside. You know truth from fiction. You know, as the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) said, that people come here well intentioned to do the best job they can for their districts. You have seen the debates, and you have run out of the Capitol. You understand the environment we live in here, that representatives try to balance a thousand balls in the air at one time, and you have had to do that, too.

I am also speaking here for the floor staff on both sides of the aisle who have worked with you diligently, and you have worked with them, whether it is the school program which I applaud you on and your efforts in that respect, or it is the dorm staff. You truly have been a class that many of the people you have had to work with over the past year are honestly saying that they are going to miss you. I cannot think

of a better tribute to pay to a group of young men and women, than for those, especially adults that you have had to work with for over a year, to say I am going to miss that class.

Mr. Speaker, these pages have set the bar. We will challenge the incoming classes to try to meet their high standard. I hope they do. I hope we will continue to be better for that.

This period of time is in honor of the pages. You will get to celebrate with your families tomorrow night, say your good-byes and make America stronger by having well-informed young women and young men to get back into the everyday activities of our homes and how to make our country better. Thank you, God bless you all, and God bless the United States of America.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude to all of the pages who have served so diligently in the House of Representatives during the 109th Congress. I have attached a list of the fine young people who have served this House as Pages.

We all recognize the important role that congressional pages play in helping the U.S. House of Representatives operate. This group of young people, who come from all across our Nation, represent what is good about our country.

To become a page, these young people have proven themselves to be academically qualified. They have ventured away from the security of their homes and families to spend time in an unfamiliar city. Through this experience, they have witnessed a new culture, made new friends, and learned the details of how our Government operates.

As we all know, the job of a congressional page is not an easy one. Along with being away from home, the pages must possess the maturity to balance competing demands for their time and energy.

In addition, they must have the dedication to work long hours and the ability to interact with people at a personal level. At the same time, they face a challenging academic schedule of classes in the House Page School.

I am sure they will consider their time spent in Washington, DC to be one of the most valuable and exciting experiences of their lives, and that with this experience they will all move ahead to lead successful and productive lives.

Mr. Speaker, as the Democratic Member on the House Page Board, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this group of distinguished young Americans. They certainly will be missed.

SPRING 2005 PAGES

Katy Ake—CA
Paul Bennett—FL
Rachel Bentley—OH
Emily Berger—CA
Katharine Billingslea—NC
Lauren Boswell—MD
Suzanne Brangan—TX
Stephen Burke—NJ
Kerrianna Butler—CA
Jon Calvo—GU
Elsbeth Centola—OR
Joy Chung—IA
Daniel Ciucci—CO
Stella Clingmon—CA
Stephanie Collard—RI
Juleah Cordi—CA
Matthew Cujak—WI
Awapuhi Dancil—HI

Ruben Davis—PA
Lauren DeNunez—CA
Caroline Dickerson—TX
Edward Dumoulin—IL
Timothy Ford—MI
Adam Hammond—ID
Lane Hartley—VA
Alexandra Heard—MD
Lauren Henley—IL
Allison Holmer—CA
Amanda Huth—TX
Sarah Jaeschke—AR
Derek Jannarone—NJ
Holly Johnson—VA
Krystal Johnson—AL
Jaclyn Kahn—NJ
Rosemary Kelley—VA
Zachary Kiriha—CA
Dean Ladin—IL
Thomas Leonard—PA
Peter Linscheid—MI
Seth Lloyd—VI
Anthony Lupo—CA
Tyson McBride—UT
Caitlin McGowan—MN
Conor McManus—FL
Shannon Magnuson—FL
Jeremy Moore—MI
Chelsie Morales—AZ
Richard Moses—KY
Lucy Nicholas—CT
Darren Nowels—MD
Travis Proctor—KS
Danielle Raines—AZ
Rachel Romer—CO
Taylor Salisbury—MO
Matthew Sheldon—NM
Sara Skiles—MS
Kellie Staab—PA
Elizabeth Stone—TN
Joshua Strazanac—MI
Michael Trummel—WY
Dustin Tryggstad—WI
Allison Vanderboll—WA
Sarah Walker—AR
Whitley Wallace—UT
Ginger Wells—KS
Wesley Williams—MA
David Wilson—PA
Kevin Wood—TX

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MACK). 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 Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

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

There was no objection.

THREAT TO OUR SOUTHERN BORDER

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

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken many times on this floor concerning the need to secure our borders. We must do so if we are going to have any kind of responsible immigration policy and retain our national sovereignty. We know with somewhere between 36,000 and 50,000 additional enforcement personnel on our southern borders, we can catch virtually all of the potential terrorists and drug dealers trying to enter this country illegally.

But we now find that other-than-Mexican illegals, or OTMs as they are referred to by our Border Patrol, have discovered a large loophole in our law. Under this loophole, OTMs can cross our border illegally and be apprehended by our border patrol. The border patrol is then forced to give them paperwork allowing them to bypass all other immigration checkpoints and virtually release them into our country.

This criminal scheme is not the fault of some quirk in U.S. law. It is being forced on our border patrol by international law which we are allowing to undermine our rule of law, national immigration policy, our Constitution, and our sovereignty. International law says illegal immigrants must either be deported to their country of origin or placed in detention. If there is no room in detention, they must be released on bail with a promise that they return later for trial.

There is never any room in detention any more for the millions of illegals violating our southern border every year. And since these illegals are not Mexican, our border patrol is required to buy them airfare back to Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, China, Iraq, and on and on. So they sign an agreement to show in court in 30 days and are released.

With that paper in hand, they can pass legally through all other border patrol checkpoints and vanish into cities in America. We have caught 90,000 OTMs since October 1, 2004, and 98 percent have failed to show back up in court. Once hidden in large immigration communities inside our country with new false identification, it becomes virtually impossible to apprehend them.

Mr. Speaker, I have stood here before and called for deploying 36,000 troops to our border to effectively close it. But with this situation in place, we could send 1 million troops to our borders, and it would not make any difference. Border patrol says these people swim across the Rio Grande and come looking for our officers with a demand "permiso," for the warrant that gives them a free pass into our Nation illegally.

Mr. Speaker, we need a new law right now. Anyone who crosses our border with Mexico illegally should be considered a citizen of Mexico for enforcement purposes. They should be returned there or incarcerated here immediately. This is not the United Nations or WTO. We represent the people

of our districts. We are responsible to the people of the United States and are sworn to defend our Constitution. We have an inherent God-given right to national sovereignty, and this House must not stand by while foreign nations undermine our laws and our independence.

Mr. Speaker, I will be back next week to further this conversation.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

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

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, on April 12 at Fort Hood, Texas, President Bush told an audience of thousands of servicemembers that for the first time Iraqi soldiers outnumbered U.S. soldiers in Iraq. That was April 12. Specifically, he put the number of trained and equipped Iraqi forces at 150,000.

This rosy assessment of the situation in Iraq is shocking not only for its arrogance but also for its ignorance. The President was either totally oblivious to Iraq's true security failures, or he was intentionally misleading the American people into thinking peace has taken hold. His statement was uninformed at best, deceitful at worst. Either way, the President's assessment misleads the American people in knowing the true situation in Iraq.

Take, for example, his claim that 150,000 Iraqi soldiers have been trained. Iraq's military leaders reveal the number is closer to 75,000, half of the President's statement; and we are not sure what the quality of training is and how those trained individuals are measured.

Also, the actual number of trained security personnel committed to a secure and democratic Iraq is probably less because, as the chief of police in Basra, General Hassan al-Sade stated, at least half of his 14,000-member militia is openly opposed to a secure Iraq, and another quarter are politically neutral but do not follow his military orders. General al-Sade recently told the Guardian newspaper, "I trust 25 percent of my force, no more."

After giving his Fort Hood speech last April, the President never again

mentioned that 150,000 Iraqi security personnel have been trained. Perhaps that is because he realized his assessment was entirely inaccurate; but the President never admitted to the American people that he was wrong in his assessment, and he has still not told the American people when he will determine Iraq to be secure or how and when he plans to bring the troops home.

Mr. Speaker, the best way to secure Iraq is to remove U.S. troops from the country. Nothing enrages and unites the Iraq insurgency more than the presence of nearly 150,000 American soldiers on Iraqi soil. One option is to bring one American soldier home for every Iraqi soldier that has been trained. If 75,000 Iraqi soldiers have been trained, half of the President's April 12 assessment, why can we not remove the same number of our own soldiers and bring them home? This is just one idea for exiting Iraq. I encourage the President to come up with his own plan. I am not against supporting the President's plan if it is a good one, but right now he does not even have a plan.

Fortunately, there is a plan that would secure America for the future, SMART security. SMART is Sensible, Multilateral, American Response to Terrorism for the 21st century.

□ 1415

SMART will help us address the threats we face as a Nation. SMART security will prevent acts of terrorism in countries like Iraq by addressing the very conditions which allow terrorism to take root: poverty, despair, resource scarcity and lack of educational opportunities. SMART security encourages the United States to work with other nations to address pressing global issues. SMART addresses global crises diplomatically rather than resorting to armed conflict. Efforts to help give Iraq back to the Iraqis must follow the SMART approach: humanitarian assistance, coordinated with our international allies, to rebuild Iraq's war-torn physical and economic infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, it has been more than 2 years since the United States started this war in Iraq; and now the American people, especially the soldiers who are bravely serving our country halfway around the world, need and deserve a plan for ending this war. It is time for the President to create a plan to end the war in Iraq and to bring our troops home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MACK). The Chair will remind all Members that remarks in debate may not engage in personalities toward the President. Policies may be addressed in critical terms, but personal references such as accusations of mendacity are not in order.