

57. Private First Class Geoffrey S. Morris
 58. Specialist Philip G. Rogers
 59. Sergeant Michael W. Mitchell
 60. Sergeant Yihiyh L. Chen
 61. Specialist Robert R. Arsiaga
 62. Specialist Stephen D. Hiller
 63. Specialist Ahmed Akil "Mel" Cason
 64. Specialist Israel Garza
 65. Corporal Forest Joseph Jostes
 66. Specialist Casey Sheehan
 67. Specialist Scott Quentin Larson Jr.
 68. Sergeant David M. McKeever
 69. Private First Class Christopher Ramos
 70. Corporal Jesse L. Thiry
 71. Lance Corporal Matthew K. Serio
 72. Lance Corporal Shane Lee Goldman
 73. Private First Class Moises A. Langhorst
 74. Private First Class Christopher R. Cobb
 75. Private First Class Ryan M. Jerabek
 76. Lance Corporal Travis J. Layfield
 77. Lance Corporal Anthony P. Robert
 78. Private First Class Benjamin R. Carman
 79. Lance Corporal Marcus M. Cherry
 80. Second Lieutenant John Thomas Wroblewski
 81. Lance Corporal Kyle D. Crowley
 82. Staff Sergeant Allan K. Walker
 83. Private First Class Deryk L. Hallal

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Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO).
 Mr. SERRANO.
 1. Sergeant Gerardo Moreno
 2. Sergeant Lee Duane Todacheene
 3. Petty Officer Third Class Fernando A. Mendez-Aceves
 4. Staff Sergeant George S. Rentschler
 5. Specialist Tyanna S. Felder
 6. Captain Brent L. Morel
 7. Sergeant First Class Marvin Lee Miller
 8. Private First Class Christopher D. Mabry
 9. Sergeant First Class William W. Labadie Jr.
 10. Specialist Isaac Michael Nieves
 11. Staff Sergeant William M. Harrell
 12. Lance Corporal Phillip E. Frank
 13. Lance Corporal Levi T. Angell
 14. Lance Corporal Christopher B. Wasser
 15. Corporal Nicholas J. Dieruf
 16. Lance Corporal Michael B. Wafford
 17. First Lieutenant Joshua M. Palmer
 18. Specialist Jonathan Roy Kephart
 19. Sergeant Felix M. Delgreco
 20. Corporal Matthew E. Matula
 21. Lance Corporal Elias Torrez III
 22. Corporal Michael Raymond Speer
 23. Private First Class Chance R. Phelps
 24. Private First Class Eric A. Ayon

25. Staff Sergeant Don Steven McMahan
 26. Specialist Michelle M. Witmer
 27. Specialist Peter G. Enos
 28. Private First Class Gregory R. Goodrich
 29. Staff Sergeant Toby W. Mallet
 30. Specialist Allen Jeffrey "A.J." Vandayburg
 31. Staff Sergeant Raymond Edison Jones Jr.
 32. Sergeant Elmer C. Krause
 33. Airman First Class Antoine J. Holt
 34. Specialist Adolf C. Carballo
 35. Specialist Justin W. Johnson
 36. Sergeant William C. Eckhart
 37. Private First Class George D. Torres
 38. First Lieutenant Oscar Jimenez
 39. Lance Corporal Torrey L. Gray
 40. Corporal Daniel R. Amaya
 41. Chief Warrant Officer Lawrence S. Colton
 42. Chief Warrant Officer Wesley C. Fortenberry
 43. Private First Class Nathan P. Brown
 44. Sergeant Major Michael Boyd Stack
 45. Lance Corporal Robert Paul Zurheide Jr.
 46. Lance Corporal Brad S. Shuder
 47. Private Noah L. Boye
 48. Corporal Kevin T. Kolm
 49. Staff Sergeant Victor A. Rosaleslomeli
 50. Specialist Richard K. Trevithick
 51. Sergeant Christopher Ramirez
 52. Specialist Frank K. Rivers Jr.
 53. Staff Sergeant Jimmy J. Arroyave
 54. Sergeant Brian M. Wood
 55. Specialist Dennis B. Morgan
 56. Specialist Michael A. McGlothlin
 57. Specialist Marvin A. Camposiles
 58. Private First Class Clayton Welch Henson
 59. First Lieutenant Robert L. Henderson II
 60. Sergeant Jonathan N. Hartman
 61. Staff Sergeant Edward W. Carman
 62. Lance Corporal Gary F. Van Leuven
 63. Lance Corporal Ruben Valdez Jr.
 64. Lance Corporal Michael J. Smith Jr.
 65. Captain Richard J. Gannon II
 66. Corporal Christopher A. Gibson
 67. Private First Class Leroy Harris-Kelly
 68. First Sergeant Bradley C. Fox
 69. Specialist Christopher D. Gelineau
 70. Corporal Jason L. Dunham
 71. Private First Class Shawn C. Edwards
 72. Staff Sergeant Cory W. Brooks
 73. Petty Officer Third Class Nathan B. Bruckenthal
 74. Petty Officer Second Class Christopher E. Watts
 75. Petty Officer First Class Michael J. Pernaselli
 76. Staff Sergeant Stacey C. Brandon
 77. Staff Sergeant Billy J. Orton
 78. Chief Warrant Officer Patrick W. Kordsmeier

79. Captain Arthur L. "Bo" Felder
 80. Specialist Kenneth A. Melton
 81. Lance Corporal Aaron C. Austin
 82. Sergeant Sherwood R. Baker
 83. Sergeant Lawrence A. Roukey
 84. Staff Sergeant Abraham D. Penamedina

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the distinguished Members from both sides of the aisle who have participated tonight. I would also like to thank the veterans and their families who have contacted my office to express their support for this effort, and other Members' office.

Unfortunately, a single hour is not enough time to recognize each of our fallen citizens. My colleagues and I will continue this tribute on Monday evening for as many tomorrows as it takes to properly thank those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their Nation.

I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of my colleagues to thank the brave men and women who continue to serve our Nation in both Iraq, Afghanistan, and overseas. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families in these times.

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REPUBLICAN AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, in this Special Order, we are going to focus on two things. I am first here to speak a tribute to a very good friend of mine and then I will share the rest of the hour with my colleagues.

TRIBUTE TO LOIS BRITT

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of a true leader and my friend, Anne Lois Britt. On June 4, just 3 weeks ago, Lois Britt passed away in her sleep. Not only did her family lose a devoted and caring matriarch but Lois' passing marked a serious loss for my State. Lois' first love was to her family and grandchildren, Ralph and Luke, but she loved and treated the betterment of rural North Carolina like it was her second family. She touched the lives of so many, and words cannot express what she meant to those around her. Throughout her nearly 50-year career, Lois was able to work for, and with, the things she loved—her family, people, education, agriculture, and Duplin County.

Lois was born and reared in Duplin County, North Carolina. Duplin County is in the rural eastern part of North Carolina. However, Lois could see from an early age, if given just a few resources, the citizens of Duplin County could do and achieve wonderful things. She was determined to improve the

lives of everyone she knew, and she knew almost everybody. So after earning her bachelor's degree from East Carolina University and graduating from North Carolina State with a master's degree in adult education, she returned home to begin her life's work.

Once back in Duplin, she started with the extension service, working in 4-H, home economics and community development. For more than 33 years, she helped mold 4-H'ers, families, and co-workers into positive, productive citizens. To put into perspective how much she meant to the 4-H community, I would like to tell you a story I heard from one of her closest friends. It is customary in North Carolina to have one large family Bible that you keep records, newspaper clippings, and any general memorabilia about your family. One common item usually found in Duplin County family Bibles was the children's 4-H certificates. For 33 years, Lois Britt signed every single 4-H certificate awarded. You see, Lois was a part of everyone's family in some way or another. Countless people in Duplin County credit Lois and the skills they gained under her 4-H and extension leadership for the success they have enjoyed in life.

While she was doing what God had put her on earth to do, helping others, Lois' career began to take off. In 1976, she was promoted to county extension director. She held this position for 14 years and was the first woman in North Carolina's history to serve in that capacity.

After leaving the county extension in 1990, she worked until 2000 with Murphy Family Farms as vice president for public relations. Additionally, she was a member of the board of the North Carolina Pork Council and was vice president of the National Pork Producers Council. It was through her work in pork and agriculture that Lois and I first became friends. We worked together in the North Carolina State Senate and here in the House of Representatives on a number of projects to improve and bolster the pork industry in our home State. We did not always see eye to eye on every issue, but I always knew where she stood and I admired her for that.

It was during her time with Murphy Brown Farms and the North Carolina Pork Council that Lois became a national spokesperson for her industry. She gained national notoriety in her field as an effective and creative leader. People looked up to Lois and respected what she had to say. Although she never ran for public office, I suspect Lois could have held any elected position she wanted due to her leadership, compassion, and understanding of complicated issues.

While moving the agribusiness sector of North Carolina forward, Lois became heavily involved with North Carolina State University. She served on the University of North Carolina board of governors and had been appointed to the chancellor's board of visitors for

North Carolina State University. In fact, one of the easiest decisions I ever made in the State Senate was to vote for Lois Britt for board of governors.

Along with her distinguished professional career, Lois was awarded and achieved many honors in her successful life. Awards such as the North Carolina Pork Council Hall of Fame, North Carolina 4-H Lifetime Achievement Award, the North Carolina State University Watauga Medal, the 2003 Volunteer Service Award from the National Agricultural Alumni and Development Association, and the 2002 Distinguished Alumnus for Agriculture from the North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are just a few of the awards and achievements bestowed upon Lois. If I read them all to you, we would be here till next week.

As you can see, Lois Britt meant the world to her family, her community and the State of North Carolina. Lois had a history of helping people solve problems that arise from our need to be good stewards of the land. She built systems that allow our youth, families and communities to plan and execute productive agribusiness enterprises. She was a great mother and a great friend.

I am pleased that her son Ralph, his wife Suzanne, and Lois' sister Gail have traveled to Washington to join me in celebrating the life of their loved one. They traveled to D.C. to be a part of this tribute, along with many other of Lois' closest friends. I was also honored to be a part of her life. Although Lois is no longer with us physically, we can rest easy knowing she is reunited with her husband and is teaching somewhere in heaven. May God bless her soul.

Mr. Speaker, a group of us is here tonight to bring some perspectives to many things that have been said in the past few weeks by leaders and members of the Democratic Party. I want to recognize first, Representative MARSHA BLACKBURN who represents the Seventh District of Tennessee, and then Representative KENNY MARCHANT who represents the 24th District of Texas. I will then speak very briefly and then recognize the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) who is here.

Let me please turn the floor over to the gentlewoman from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina and how we welcome her enthusiasm and her dedication to helping move forward with the Republican agenda and with the leadership that has been shown.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin my comments this evening, I would like to just pause for a few moments and commend our colleagues from across the aisle as they have stood tonight to remember and to commemorate those men and women who have given their lives in the fight for freedom. We can never begin to express our thanks and our gratitude to the men and women who

fight to preserve freedom. Our country has a long, storied, noble history in the fight for freedom and democracy. I want to commend them for reminding and for remembering that there are those who have given their lives. We need to remember each and every individual.

This Nation has been being attacked by terrorists now for a couple of decades. We need to go back and as we remember these men and women who have lost their lives in Iraq, we need to also remember those that lost their lives with the Khobar Towers, with the Cole, with the first World Trade Center bombing, those in Afghanistan and those that currently serve in Afghanistan as well as all of our men and women who are currently deployed. In Tennessee, in my district, we have men and women who are members of the National Guard who are deployed in both Afghanistan and Iraq. To those families, we say we stand with you so solidly, so totally in this fight for freedom.

We have men and women from Fort Campbell, which primarily sits in the Seventh Congressional District of Tennessee, who are preparing to redeploy with the 101st or the 160th, who are in the process of being redeployed. We thank each and every one of them for their service, for their sacrifice, their families we thank for their service and their sacrifice, these precious children who are at home for the summer without mom or dad to go to the ball field with them or to take them to swimming lessons or to hold them tight at night when they are worried and have fears and concerns. We stand with you in this fight for freedom.

We are talking a good bit about what our agenda has been and being in touch with the desires of the American people. I want to call attention to a couple of things that have been in the press lately. We had seven House Members yesterday who wrote a letter to Minority Leader PELOSI saying that they were shocked by a statement in which she said the war in Afghanistan was over, and I am quoting from the letter. They wrote: "Messages like yours could demoralize our troops and undermine our efforts to fight terrorism in Afghanistan and around the world." That was in their letter, and reminding her that we have known all along this is going to be a long, long war. It is not going to be an easy war. It is going to require some sacrifice on all of our parts, on each and every single individual's part.

And then I pulled another article from today's press. It was talking about Taliban, Rebels Fight Afghan, U.S. Forces. We had 102 insurgents that were killed in 3 days of fighting in Afghanistan. It just goes to show us, those who wish us harm, those who would do evil are still out there and still fighting and fighting against freedom.

But much of this has to do with focus and where we put our focus and where

this 109th Congress chooses to place its focus. We were here earlier this week talking about the agenda, the Republican agenda, and some of the things that we have accomplished. We are in our 69th day, I believe it is, of our session. There are many strides that we have made for the American people. As we have talked about this, and I know the gentlewoman from North Carolina is certainly aware of this, every time we pass a bill here, it does not mean we have added another law or added another statute to the books. Many times what it means is that we are removing or repealing something and that is the way it ought to be, because being committed to freedom, being here to defend the individual freedoms that each and every person holds dear, means that one of the things we are doing is trying to roll back that long reaching arm of government, roll it back and send that power and send that money and send that authority to the State and local levels. That is something that we as a majority feel is very important: individual freedoms, local control, moving forward on an agenda that is a conservative, well-placed agenda, rooting out waste, fraud and abuse, looking for ways to shrink some of these programs.

These are some of the things that we have been able to make progress on over the last few months: bankruptcy reform, which we passed with 302 votes in this body. That meant we had 73 Democrats cross over and vote with us to pass that. The reason they do that, most of America agrees with the majority's agenda, things that are going to strengthen families, things that are going to strengthen small business.

Class action reform. We have all heard the stories of how trial lawyers go out and make 20, \$30 million off of different class action cases and then the members of the class end up with a coupon for 50 cents off, a free movie, a free bottle of juice, a free packet of some commodity. Class action reform passed in this body with 279 votes. Fifty of those votes were Democrats.

The REAL ID Act, border security, addressing illegal immigration and the impact illegal immigration has on this great Nation. We passed the REAL ID Act which is the first step in this, working in concert with many of our State legislatures. They were supporting us as we moved forward with the REAL ID Act to be certain that we had valid documents, immigration documents, used for driver's licenses. The REAL ID Act passed with 261 votes. Forty-two of those were Democrat votes.

Permanent repeal of the death tax which we have passed in this body. We look forward to seeing that signed into law, because we are looking to roll back taxes and free up this economy, continue to free it up. We have had 25 months of sustained economic growth and it comes from the tax reductions that have been passed by this majority. One of those is the death tax repeal. An important reason for this is because

the death tax is a triple tax. You pay tax when you acquire an asset, you pay tax when you maintain the asset, and certainly when you earn your income that you use to purchase that asset, you are paying tax there, too. So rolling back the death tax. Two hundred seventy-two Members of this body, the U.S. House of Representatives, voted to repeal the death tax. Forty-two of those were Democrats.

Continuity of government. The energy bill. Everyone is concerned about gas prices. Something we can do that is going to help us send the right message is passing an energy bill.

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And we did that in this House, sent it across the Rotunda to our friends and colleagues in the Senate. And we passed that energy bill with 249 votes; 41 of those were Democrats. And the gentlewoman knows that all of this goes to show that America responds to our agenda. They are looking forward to our reducing the size of government, getting government off their back, getting it out of their pocketbook, leaving them with more money to spend, lightening up on that regulation so that the free enterprise system can do what it does best: generate jobs. We know we do not create those jobs. Government does not create those jobs. Free enterprise creates those jobs.

So as we look at an agenda that is based on hope, is based on planning for the future, is based on a better life for our children, we welcome that the other party comes along and supports this agenda because we know it energizes America. We have provisions that energize this economy, that get us moving in the direction that we should be moving.

I want to thank the gentlewoman for organizing this hour, looking at the strength that is in the agenda that we are working on this year and looking at the momentum that we have for this agenda. It is going to be a busy summer here in Washington, and it is going to be a very brisk, aggressive fall. And we look forward to continuing to work on these issues of taxation, of regulation, the immigration, addressing illegal immigration, litigation, beginning to continue to address these frivolous lawsuits; and we know that progress is going to be made on behalf of the American people.

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me and for inviting me to join her on the floor.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Now I would like to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT), who has come into this Congress along with me and whom I have come to appreciate so much for his leadership and insights.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for yielding to me.

It is a rare privilege for me to be on the floor with her tonight, and it was a

privilege for me to spend the last hour listening to the names of men and women who have given their lives so that we would have the opportunity to be here tonight and to state our views and debate and pass laws that will affect this country.

But this evening I would like to commend the leadership of the Republican-led 109th Congress, which at its halfway point has been marked by major legislative achievement. The Democrats have responded to our party's ideas and vision with a lack of ideas and a lack of vision. They have continuously criticized the actions of the majority, but remain unwilling to put forward any constructive plan on Social Security, energy, or illegal immigration.

I am proud of the many initiatives already passed by House Republicans this year to strengthen this great Nation. This includes class action reform. This reform addresses the most serious cases of class action abuse by allowing large interstate class action cases to be heard in Federal court. The measure unclogs specified, very specific, overused courts and ends harassment of local businesses through forum shopping and limits the thousands and thousands of frivolous lawsuits that are being filed every day.

Another example is the READ ID Act. The READ ID Act completes the mission and recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. It closes asylum loopholes and implements driver's license reforms, strengthens deportation laws, and defends our borders. This bill is necessary to secure our borders and our homeland.

This majority has also passed the permanent repeal of the death tax. The death tax is the leading cause of dissolution for most of our small businesses in America. This unfair tax hampers economic growth. Permanently killing the death tax creates a tax policy that supplements economic growth and opportunity and gives hope to future generations. Our small farmers, our Realtors, our small businesses in America only want to pass on what they have spent generations earning to their families; yet we have a death tax now that robs them of that ability.

America needs a comprehensive energy policy. This Republican Congress has passed an energy bill that creates ½ million new jobs in a wide range of industries. The initiative provides incentives for renewable energies and leadership in energy conservation. The Energy Policy Act allows for increased domestic oil and gas exploration and development. It aims to decrease America's dependence on foreign oil and therefore make our country safer and more self-reliant.

Republican Members of Congress are also currently hammering out solutions to the looming Social Security crisis, as well as negotiating a highway bill that will improve driver safety, traffic congestion, and create millions of new jobs across America.

Such progress and achievement for the well-being of this country can only be attributed to the leadership and effectiveness of congressional Republicans. I am disappointed that our opposing party continues to hinder progress and relies on its legislative obstructionism.

I am proud of what we have accomplished thus far in the 109th Congress for the American people.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE), who also came in with this freshman class and represents the Second District of Virginia.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for her leadership tonight and for allowing us to participate here with her in this hour.

We have heard from the gentleman from Texas and the gentlewoman from Tennessee that we are right at our halfway point for the very first year of the 109th Congress. I think that the gentlewoman from North Carolina would agree with me that it is a very exciting time to serve in Congress. There are very many major issues that face our Nation, and the exciting thing is that this Congress is committed to dealing with those issues.

We have begun the debate on Social Security. We will begin the debate on Medicaid reform with the commission that is being formed, a bipartisan commission. We will work on the total issue of health care, Medicare reform, illegal immigration. There are just many issues that this Congress must deal with and is committed to dealing with.

We have heard tonight about some of the major pieces of legislation that have already been passed by both bodies and enacted into law, from bankruptcy reform to class action lawsuit reform to the READ ID Act and the Continuity of Government Act.

We have also heard about pieces of legislation that were in the works for a very long time and have now passed over to the Senate and we are awaiting their action. On a national energy plan, our country knows today how critical it is that we have a national energy plan. We can no longer be reliant on foreign oil, which today is 62 percent of the energy of the oil that is used in this country.

Other key things that this Congress has sent to the Senate is the Child Interstate Abortion Act, a critical piece of legislation for our parents and our families; Gang Violence Deterrence and Protection Act, critical for our safety in our communities; the flag protection amendment; U.N. reform; and the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act. Also, both Houses have acted on our highway bill, and that bill is currently in conference and there will be a compromise at approximately somewhere around \$284 billion for highways, transit, and road safety through 2009, creating countless new jobs and addressing many transportation needs.

The American people need to know that Congress is hard at work and dealing with problems that have not yet been addressed. Bankruptcy reform and class action lawsuit alone were at least 6 years before those bills were passed. Last year Congress did not pass a highway bill; and this year, as we have heard, we are very close to finalizing that.

The people of this Nation have expressed that Congress needed to demand and require commonsense reform in regards to our participation and financial support of the U.N. I commend the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) and the House Committee on International Relations for their hard work. Now the U.S. can require accountability and tie payments to it.

And we now have figures to show how well the Bush tax cuts are working. Current numbers reflect an additional \$100 billion in revenue. It shows that that economic model of allowing people to keep more of their hard-earned money means that they will create new jobs, they will invest it, and they will grow tax dollars for us.

But to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), who has organized this, Mr. Speaker, as pleased as I am with the progress and accomplishments of this Congress, I stand here today with a very heavy heart and am very distressed beyond belief by the action and decision of the Supreme Court today in regards to private property rights.

The constitutional right of the government to eminent domain to purchase private property for public use is a sensitive, difficult issue even when roads, schools, and other public facilities are the reason for the rare and cautious use of this power. But to force an unwilling private party to sell his property for the ultimate use by another private party, even if the property's intended use is a more productive one, is just plain wrong.

The exact words of the dissenting opinion are: "Under the banner of economic development, all private property is now vulnerable to being taken and transferred to another private owner so long as it might be upgraded, i.e., given to an owner, who will use it in a way that the legislature deems more beneficial to the public in the process."

Mr. Speaker, this decision today effectively removes the requirement of public use from the takings clause of the fifth amendment. With this decision all property owners are at risk. My office is currently exploring what legislative remedies are available to ensure that Americans do truly own their property.

I would like to thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me. I look forward to continuing to work with her and adding this additional item to our plate to make sure that the people of our country express the right that our forefathers came here for, to own private property.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) for her comments, and I want to tell her that I am as distressed about this ruling as she is. I think that the people of this country are very concerned with activist courts and are very concerned at where the country is going as far as judicial rulings, and I want to join her in doing whatever we possibly can legislatively to stop this kind of action from being taken. She is absolutely right. It is one of our most fundamental rights, the right to private property, and it is one of the things that has made this country so great. So I look forward to her leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART), someone I have come to know and admire tremendously, who represents the 25th District of Florida, for his wisdom on the issues we are discussing tonight.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman is very kind, and I thank her for yielding to me.

I too want to join the many who have expressed their gratitude for what she is doing here tonight. But really more importantly, if I may, I want to thank her for her incredible, passionate leadership particularly on fighting waste, fraud, and abuse that is, unfortunately, still rampant in the Federal budget. She has been such a champion, and it has been a privilege for me to learn from her, see how she does it, and she has been extremely effective. So it is truly just wonderful to see how she works, and it is wonderful that she is giving this Special Order to speak about issues that are important to the United States of America.

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I was listening to the honorable gentlewoman from North Carolina, and she was talking about things that have happened in this Chamber. One of the things that is important is to highlight that it is not only legislation that we have passed here, but it is legislation, not for the sake of passing legislation, it is legislation that has had real, concrete, positive results for the American people. Let us look at some of the results; more than just the legislation, but the results of that legislation.

Look at, for example, the growth in the GDP, the gross domestic product. This is after 9/11. This is after the Internet bubble burst. This is after the recession that President Bush inherited when he first got elected. Despite all that, because of legislation that the President led on and that this Congress passed, the GDP, the growth of the economy, has been spectacular. Mr. Speaker, we have had 14 consecutive quarters of real growth in the economy, a 3.5 rate in the first quarter of this year, a 3.5 percent increase in the GDP. Again, 14 consecutive quarters of real growth, despite what this Congress and our President found itself dealing with after 9/11.

Look at payroll employment. It rose by 2.2 million jobs during 2004; 2.2 million jobs that would be unemployed if it was not for the policies of this Congress, of this majority, and of the President of the United States. Mr. Speaker, 3.5 million jobs over the past 24 months. Ask those hard-working Americans who now have jobs if the policies that this Congress has pursued and passed have not worked for them. They have worked for them, and we are grateful for the President's leadership. I think we have to always remind ourselves that with a little bit of help, with a few Democrats, but with the leadership of the Speaker of the House and the Majority party, great things have happened for our country, for our working men and women in our great country.

Look at, again, the fact that unemployment today, right now, is lower than it was, than the average of the 1970s, the decade of the 1980s and, yes, even lower than the decade of the 1990s. Hard to believe that that is possible, after 9/11, after the scandals on Wall Street, after the bubble-burst of the Internet. Again, that is because of the leadership of our President and because of the leadership of this House.

The homeownership rate is at record levels. More people own homes than ever in the history of our country and, by the way, if we look at minority homeownership also, that is at record levels.

Now, we have more to do. We have more to do, still, and we are working hard to do even more. All of us are concerned about the deficit. We have to reduce the size of the deficit. We know that the President has said, and he has pledged to cut the deficit in half over the next five years. The budget that this House passed does just that in a responsible fashion. It gets a handle on the deficit. It is going to reduce the deficit in half. We do that by controlling spending.

Hey, folks, this is not rocket science. If you are spending too much money, that is why you have a deficit, hey, what do you do? Spend less. Not rocket science. Well, that is what we are doing.

But let me tell my colleagues what our friends in the Democratic Party have proposed as their solution to control the deficit. We hear them here on the Floor of the House continuously, and even in the Senate, talking about, oh, the deficit is too high. But then, what do they propose? They propose billions and billions and billions of dollars in additional spending, which would go directly to increase the size of the deficit. They have done so publicly. They have done so with an amendment in the Committee on the Budget on which I have the honor of serving and also here on the Floor of the House. They cannot have it both ways. They cannot be concerned about the deficit and then propose billions and billions of dollars of additional spending in the Federal budget, spending of Federal dollars.

The President, by the way, has done a great job in looking for programs that are not working. I do not think again it takes a rocket scientist to understand that there are Federal programs that frankly are just not doing that well, that are just wasting the taxpayers' money. Once again, I have to repeat what I said in the beginning. I want to thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for her efforts, particularly in trying to fight waste in the Federal Government.

The President has also done a great job. He has created this assessment tool called PART. What he has done is he has gone through every single area of the Federal budget, the Federal Government looking for things that can be reduced or eliminated because they are not needed, not doing a good job, because there are other programs that are better and less expensive. He has proposed eliminating a number of programs and to shift that money to programs that do work.

We also have to be very proud of the job that the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations is doing, the honorable gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS). He has actually cut an incredible amount of those duplicative, those programs that do not work, that are proven money-wasters, and has shifted those funds to programs that do work. I think, again, we are doing some good things. We do get every once in a while, a few, a couple, one or two, sometimes three or four, and sometimes many more, Democrats who come on board and help us with these efforts. But, unfortunately, most of the heavy lifting to cut waste, to reduce the deficit, to cut taxes, to incentivize the economy has been done with no help from the opposition party. But, fortunately, we have been able to pass those issues, and that is why the economy is doing as well as it is doing, and that is why millions of Americans that otherwise would have been unemployed now have jobs.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I just want to end with a separate thought. It is always difficult, and I think an honor and a privilege, to listen to the names of our fallen heroes, and we had that tonight, we heard it a little while ago, and I think it is always something that we have to again thank them, thank their families, and thank God that there are heroes like them that are willing to put even their lives on the line to protect our freedoms. I have to say that I was very pleased to see Members of this House come on to this floor to mention the names of our heroes with respect.

That, unfortunately, contrasts so dramatically, sadly, with the statements by a member of the other party of the U.S. Senate. He recently had to apologize because he compared our troops, our men and women in uniform, compared them to the Nazis, to the Soviets and their gulags, to that mad assassin, crazy regime of Pol Pot in Cambodia, those regimes that killed people

as a policy, assassinated people. And for anybody, anybody to even mention our troops, our men and women in uniform in that same breath as the Soviet gulags, Pol Pot, or the Nazis is, frankly, totally unacceptable. I guess he was comparing the hard work of our brave men and women in uniform to Nazis. Is he equating the treatment of innocent victims in the concentration camps or in the gulags to the humane treatment that terrorists are getting in Guantanamo at the hands of our troops? Again, it is totally unacceptable.

We accept his apology, after he was forced to apologize, even though he first did not want to. We are talking about the second highest ranking Democrat in the U.S. Senate who said those things. So we will accept his apology. I think, though, that we should also demand his resignation from that position of leadership, a position of leadership, the second highest ranking leader, democratic leader in the Senate, who compared our troops to the Nazis, to the Soviet gulags, and to Pol Pot.

So that is why, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell my colleagues that I was very pleased with coming here tonight and listening in contrast to the names of our fallen heroes. That is the way we should refer to our troops as heroes, as men and women who guarantee the peace not only of the United States of America, but of the entire world. They are heroes that will never be forgotten. And I, for one, have to tell my colleagues, as I will also never forget those who insult our heroes, who compare them to Nazis; I will never forget that either.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for her great leadership, for her impassioned leadership and again, in particular, I thank her for really teaching us a lesson as to what it means to be passionate, fighting for the taxpayer against fraud, waste, and abuse in the Federal budget.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much the gentleman from Florida. He also has great passion for the issues that he is concerned about, and I am so proud to be serving with him in the 109th Congress.

I agree with him that it is appropriate for us to honor our heroes, and what happened tonight is a great contrast to much that has been said recently.

Mr. Speaker, I took to the Floor earlier this session to reject Democrat charges that the Republican Party is out of the mainstream. At the time I thought the rhetoric from the other side of the aisle could not be more partisan, more vitriolic, or more damaging to America's credibility abroad. I also thought that they would take their rhetoric only so far. I never thought that they would take their rhetoric so far as to put our troops in greater danger than they are already in. But, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say I was wrong. From the chair of the Democrat National Committee to their

party leaders in Congress, something has gone terribly awry. Where are the statesmen who put country ahead of party? What happened to the party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, the party of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and John F. Kennedy?

Last week I was able to take my grandchildren to Arlington National Cemetery, and I can tell my colleagues that I could not read the words at the Eternal Flame spoken by President Kennedy without getting very, very emotional. I think that President Kennedy's words are so important for us to talk about tonight in light of our having talked about our soldiers who have given their lives. President Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." That is what the brave men and women who are now serving in our military have done. They have asked what can they do for their country. Some of them are giving the ultimate sacrifice.

But, unfortunately, the party of President Kennedy and the party of these other great patriots seems to be gone. It has been replaced by the party of moveon.org and George Soros. A once proud party with a strong pedigree of ideals and values has devolved into a festering wound whose only attributes are hate and obstruction. What is worse, Mr. Speaker, is some Democrats are proud of their transformation and proclaim it loudly. At a DNC gathering in New York, the chairman of the party said, "I hate Republicans and everything they stand for."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not hate Howard Dean and I have never heard another single Republican say that they hate him, but we do feel sorry for him. I feel sorry for those whom he has let down, the millions of Democrats across the country whose party he leads. Mr. Speaker, unlike Dr. Dean, I do not lump all members of the opposition party together. I know there are good Democrats who possess bright ideas and patriotic souls. Some of them might even live and work in this town. And I feel for them. Their leader believes that the louder he screams, the better people will somehow be able to hear him. But I tell my colleagues this: soon, people will stop listening.

Mr. Speaker, our two-party system works best when both sides bring ideas to the table and hash them out. Yes, the Majority party tends to win most, if not all the time, but that is what the voters intended. I understand this better than most, because I spent 10 years in the North Carolina General Assembly in the minority party.

What is most important is that the marketplace of ideas is routinely stocked with the freshest and most visionary policies each side has to offer. I am happy to say Republicans are doing their job, but I am sorry I cannot say the same about the Democrats' leadership.

Instead of policy proposals, we get blank stares. Instead of negotiation, we

get obstruction. Instead of dialogue, we get rhetoric.

□ 2045

And I truly wish this were not the case, because now is a time of great responsibility. Now more than ever we need a Congress that is serious about preparing this Nation for the challenges of the century ahead.

And, Mr. Speaker, while Republicans are happy to continue passing our solution-oriented agenda, I truly wish we had a partner in the Democratic Party. How much more vibrant would our political discourse be if we could speak civilly with each other? How much more fruitful would this Congress be?

Nowhere is this clearer than the issue of Social Security. We all know that reforming America's most honored program is more than a hot topic around here; it is the premier domestic issue of our day. And so you would think that all honest attempts at reform would be met at the very least with openmindedness and a desire to discuss, but not so.

When a member of the Democratic caucus offered his plan to reform Social Security, his own leadership chastised him for even bringing an idea and signaling a willingness to talk with Republicans.

Mr. Speaker, it is one thing for Democrats to criticize Republican policies. It is another for them to reprimand one of their own for simply introducing an idea. While I certainly do not agree with the policies proposed in the gentleman's legislation, I applaud him for bucking his party's reticence. He put the needs of the American people before politics. For that he should be commended; and for their condemnation of action, the Democrats should be ashamed.

For what is the purpose of this body but to debate solutions to problems and then choose the very best among them? And that, Mr. Speaker, is just what House Republicans have been doing. My colleagues have given you a long list of accomplishments in this session of Congress. We have proposed an agenda with solutions that are reaping results.

I am happy to say that on many of the most important issues of the day, a large number of rank-and-file Democrats have joined us, despite the reluctance of their leadership.

In 5 short months, the House has passed landmark legislation addressing everything from our roads and highways to the war on terror. Mr. Speaker, we have heard on numerous occasions from the minority leadership that bills are being railroaded through, that substitutes are not being allowed, that rules are closed too often.

You have heard already how most of our bills have had Democratic votes. And nothing could be further from the truth that our rules are closed. And I might also add that Democrats are being treated a great deal better than they treated Republicans when we were in the minority.

When Democrats controlled the House, Republicans were often denied the right to offer motions to recommit. For those unfamiliar with that term, it is the last chance for the minority to attach an amendment to a bill under consideration by the full House.

When Republicans took control of the House, we changed the rules so that the minority always has the opportunity to offer the motion to recommit.

We have enacted rules governing debate on legislation that have allowed for numerous Democratic amendments and substitutes. We responded to demands for greater access to legislative information and have granted nearly every request of the minority. Yet the Democratic leadership continues to use abuse of power as a campaign issue.

I ask the American people to examine the facts, and I also ask the American people to contrast the Republican record of achievement with the Democratic record of obstruction, obtuseness, and obliviousness.

I mentioned earlier that when I last took to the floor to discuss these matters, I thought the Democratic leadership could not be further out to sea when it comes to the most important issues facing the Nation.

Well, it now seems they are somewhere between the Bermuda Triangle and the Lost City of Atlantis. You know, Mr. Speaker, I just do not think the leaders of the Democratic Party here in Washington get it. It has been 4 years since our homeland was attacked, and they still cannot distinguish friend from foe, and patriot from terrorist.

From the comments made by members of the Democratic leadership in both bodies, it is clear that they are not connected with the realities of the war on terror. One said, and I quote, "the war is unwinnable." Another compared our men and women in uniform to Soviets and their gulags, unquote. And yet another, perhaps most egregiously compared Operation Iraqi Freedom which brought an end to Saddam's ethnic cleansing to the Holocaust. He said, the war, and I quote, is the biggest fraud ever committed on the people of this country. This is just as bad as the 6 million Jews being killed, unquote.

Mr. Speaker, I struggle for the words to respond to such comments. The Washington Democratic establishment is simply adrift at a time when our Nation is at war and preparing for the next great American century. It is sad that they are not a part of that preparation. And it is deplorable that in some cases they are actively campaigning against it. I hope that soon things will change. And I hope it happens before the Democratic Party is lost once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate all of the comments that were made by my colleagues tonight outlining the very major successes that have occurred in the 109th Congress already. Along with

my colleagues, I came to Washington to get things done. I long for a time when the Democratic leadership will come to the table and work with Republicans to make policy that has the best interests of the American people at heart.

DEMOCRATS ARE IN TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I was not expecting to come down here tonight. I did because I was very upset by some of the comments that were made by my Republican colleagues.

Many of them said that they were not here tonight to attack the Democrats and the Democratic Party. In reality, that is exactly what they did. And the negative comments that they were making about Democrats and what we stand for were, frankly, very offensive to me, because I have been here as a Member of Congress for 17 years. And I have never seen the Republican Party sink to the depths in terms of their attacks on Democrats and their unwillingness to cooperate with the Democrats and their abuse of power in this institution.

One of the things that disturbs me the most is that I have always thought that Republicans were very concerned as a party about spending money and about deficits. I remember when I was first elected to the House of Representatives back in 1988. There were a group of Republicans who used to come down on the floor of the House of Representatives every night during Special Orders, about this time, and would hold up a digital clock and talk about the huge deficits that the Federal Government was pursuing and how it continued to go up and how it was necessary for the Republicans to take the majority back because they would be the only ones that would try to do something about the deficit.

Well, you do not hear that anymore from the Republicans, the party that historically, at least in the early days when I was here, seemed to be so much concerned about deficits, has essentially ignored the issue.

I hear my Republican colleague saying that it does not matter what the deficit is, it does not matter how much it grows, you know, that it is just some sort of accounting measure and we can spend all we want and we can go into debt and borrow all we want, and it does not make any difference.

In fact, what you find now is Democrats coming down on the floor and holding up the same charts and talking about the deficit being at an all-time high and the negative impact it is having on this government.

So I say to my Republican colleagues, what happened to the Repub-

lican Party that cared about the deficit and was concerned about rampant spending? Because they have become the majority now, they can spend whatever they want and not worry about the impact on the Federal Government over the long term?

In fact what we see is the Republican Party abandoning its ideals, abandoning its principles for the sake, essentially, of just being in the majority and in control.

We have witnessed, as Democrats, efforts on the part of the Republicans to simply exclude us from almost every aspect of this institution. The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) who spoke before me suggests that she wanted to get together and work together with the Democrats.

How is that possible when Democrats are not allowed to have a hearing in committee, when the committee moves forward without allowing Democrats to have amendments, when bills come to the floor without the opportunity for Democrats to even speak because the amount of time that is allowed on the bill for speaking is very limited or practically eliminated?

The fact of the matter is that the Republican majority has no interest in reaching out to Democrats and hearing their views. All they want to do is force legislation down the throats of the Democratic minority and act as if in some way they are reaching out, when in fact they are not.

I heard some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in the last Special Order go on and on about how the economy is so wonderful, everything is so rosy, more jobs are being created. I do not know what fairy land they live in. When I go back to New Jersey, all I hear about from my constituents is how factories have closed and moved overseas; how jobs have been outsourced to other countries in Europe and Asia; how people are unemployed, and if they have a job, it does not pay as much as it used to; about how pensions and health care benefits have been reduced.

And for the Republican to stand up here tonight and talk about their accomplishments and how great the economy is, they are simply blind to the realities. At one time, Republicans used to look out for the little guy. They used to be concerned about what the average American was doing, whether or not they had a job, whether or not they, you know, were making an income in small-town, in rural America. They have forgotten about the little guy.

All their emphasis as a Republican majority is not on the average American, but on the well-to-do American, on the millionaire, on the corporate interest. What happened to the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln, of Theodore Roosevelt, of Ronald Reagan for that matter?

We did not see anything that comes to this floor that looks out for the interest of the average person. What we

see are tax cuts that go primarily to millionaires and corporate interests. We see special legislation come up that gives a tax break to someone who happens to be, you know, the CEO of a major firm. Whether it is pension policies or it is health care policies, everything is oriented toward the corporate interest or the interests of the wealthy individuals.

You know, when you talk about deficits, deficits of the kind that we see now are basically crippling the American economy. And I used to think that the Republican Party, like the Democratic Party, cared about America first. But that is not the case any more.

Sending jobs overseas is not a problem. Outsourcing jobs, setting up free trade agreements that basically allow other countries to take our jobs, take our resources, this is the face now of the Republican Party. And the saddest thing of all, in my opinion, and this is what I think many of my colleagues, why so many of my colleagues on the Democratic side were here tonight talking about the war and putting up the faces of those who had died in the war, is that Republicans, from what I remember, used to be very wary of getting America involved in overseas conflicts.

Throughout the 20th century, the Republican Party, in many cases, was what we call isolationist, meaning that they felt very strongly that we should not get involved overseas, we should not get involved in wars overseas if they were not in our national interest.

Many Republican Senators and Members of the House of Representatives would come to the floor throughout the 20th century, those in leadership roles, and question whether America should be involved in wars overseas. But we do not see the face of that Republican Party anymore.

□ 2100

We just get involved in wars wherever it happens to be. We do not worry about the rationale for the war. We do not worry about the fact that so many people died or are wounded or the amount of resources we spent on the war.

My colleagues tonight talked about war in Afghanistan and Iraq as if it was going to go on for a long time and last beyond, who knows, 5, 10, 15, 20 years. What is the cost of that? What is the cost in terms of Americans lives and cost in terms of the resources that we have to spend in Iraq and in other places that could be spent on domestic priorities here, educational needs, health care needs, housing needs here at home as opposed to the billions and billions of dollars that are being spent in Iraq?

Do not tell me that we should not think about how we are going to end the Iraq war and how we can end it soon, because every American life that is lost and every dollar that is spent over there could possibly, that dollar