

Month, we are thankful to the Hispanic American heroes like Master Sergeant Roy Benavides.

There were over 10,000 Hispanics killed in Vietnam, 20 percent of the casualties in Vietnam? And as our brave men and women continue to fight overseas in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, we can be sure that American Hispanics will continue to serve this Nation and fulfill the motto of General Douglas McArthur of duty, honor and country.

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY REVISION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank my colleagues who just moments ago voted in support and helped pass the Wind Cave National Park Boundary Revision Act of 2005.

Wind Cave National Park is one of our Nation's oldest national parks and one of the jewels of our National Park system. Established over 100 years ago, Wind Cave was the first cave in the world to be set aside as a national park.

At the turn of the 20th century, its first explorers reported that the cave was only 3 miles long. Well, that report was a little off. Today, we know that the cave has over 117 miles of mapped tunnels; and explorers are still discovering new passages. This makes it the fifth largest cave in the world.

These passages contain many natural treasures, rare and exceptional displays of boxwork, a honeycomb-shaped formation that protrudes from the cave's ceilings and walls, as well as other rare cave formations and a geology that scientists are still working to understand. Past Congresses have recognized the value of these treasures by creating the park. Our ability to enjoy them today is a testament to their foresight.

With over 28,000 acres today, the park surface is an impressive asset as well. The Wind Cave National Park Boundary Revision Act will help expand this stewardship to include an additional 5,000 acres of mixed grass prairie, ponderosa pine forest and a dramatic river canyon.

Home to native wildlife such as bison, elk, pronghorn, mule deer, coyotes and prairie dogs, the park is one of the few remaining mixed grass ecosystems in the country. The expansion would be a natural extension of this habitat and enhance the park's holdings.

This project began when the ranching family that owns the land approached the National Park Service over 3 years ago. The Black Hills region of South Dakota is developing rapidly, and rather than allow the land to be developed into subdivisions and strip malls, they envisioned preserving it for future gen-

erations. That initial discussion expanded to the surrounding community, State government and, eventually, the United States Congress. The Bill's approval in the Senate and its passage here today are the fruits of those discussions.

In addition to receiving support in the House of Representatives from my two predecessors and myself, this bill has enjoyed the bipartisan backing of South Dakota's Senators and South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds. As the expansion project has proceeded, interested parties have weighed in with their concerns, and they have been answered.

Wind Cave National Park has protected and preserved a national treasure for over 100 years. The Wind Cave National Park Boundary Revision Act is an important step toward expanding the park and enhancing its value to the public so that visitors can enjoy it forever.

I would like to extend my gratitude again to my many colleagues who voted for this legislation, and I look forward to moving the proposed expansion forward in the future.

HURRICANE KATRINA

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, my heart goes out to those affected by the tragic events of Hurricane Katrina. This disaster has presented challenges we could not imagine only a few weeks ago.

A major American city needs to be rebuilt and hundreds of thousands of Americans need to find new homes and jobs. While this is a massive undertaking, this does present a unique opportunity. I happen to think that we should always look for a silver lining in any tragedy that we come across.

We can build a better, stronger New Orleans without losing the character and charm that made the city so great and alive, a New Orleans that can serve as a model for other communities throughout the country. We can build a housing infrastructure that can help end the awful poverty cycle that entraps too many Americans.

The rebuilding of this great city will provide jobs to people who desperately need them. However, the administration has already adopted policies that will hurt those that need our help the most. The administration has suspended the law requiring Federal contractors to pay employees prevailing wages.

By suspending the Davis-Bacon Act, the President is shortchanging newly unemployed Americans who are looking to rebuild their lives. Meanwhile, Government contractors can take advantage of cheap labor and drive up profits.

The prevailing wage for construction in the gulf region was among the low-

est in the Nation before Katrina. Without Davis-Bacon enforcement, residents of the gulf region will be working for less than a living wage.

Paying working families less per hour saves taxpayers nothing. All the money earned from shortchanging workers goes into the profit margins of Government contractors.

The people who are affected by Katrina deserve the same competitive wage protections as every other American worker. These people are willing to work hard to rebuild their beloved cities and their lives, and it is an insult to pay them a substandard wage.

The rebuilding of our gulf coast has the potential to be the greatest economic development project of our time. We can create 21st century transportation, housing, communications and energy infrastructures for the region. Some might remember during the Depression when we had the WPA work program.

The people of New Orleans want to work. The people of New Orleans want to put their lives back together. Let us give them their pride. Let us at least give them a wage that they can live with.

The rebuilding of the gulf coast should create economic opportunities for its residents, not an opportunity to take advantage of people desperate to rebuild their lives.

Mr. Speaker, we have already put the interests of Government contractors before those of the people of Iraq. It would be a travesty to do the same for the people of New Orleans.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

SMART SECURITY AND THE FREEDOM MARCH

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Sunday marked 4 years since the painful terrorist attacks that killed 3,000 Americans at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in rural Pennsylvania. Sunday was a day for solemn reflection and remembrance, but our Government, specifically the Department of Defense, threw a propaganda party instead.

Sunday's so-called Americans Support Your Freedom Walk included a

pro-war speech by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and a concert on the National Mall by Clint Black, whose lyrics implicitly accuse war protesters of standing with Saddam.

Sunday was supposedly about honoring our troops. The problems is, Mr. Speaker, most of our currently deployed troops are on a mission that has nothing to do with 9/11. It has long been established that there was no connection between Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the murderous plot executed by al-Qaeda 4 years ago.

Ironically, Sunday's march, which was supposedly about celebrating freedom, took place in the most tightly controlled circumstances imaginable. March participants were required to pre-register. Tall fencing encased the marchers throughout. The media was kept at bay. Helicopters flew overhead. The Park Police issued a public threat that they would arrest anyone who joined without the proper credentials. And what were those credentials? Enrolling 2 days in advance to be checked out to ensure that participants were what? Pro Bush? Pro war? Pro propaganda? Pro continuing the lies of 9/11 linking to Saddam Hussein? And, for good measure, a Pentagon spokeswoman declared that protesting the march would be the equivalent of protesting our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, this was nothing more than mere propaganda, a transparent attempt to shore up the President's dwindling poll numbers, especially his poor marks on Iraq.

For the umpteenth time, they are trying to use the national unity inspired by 9/11 to justify a divisive, controversial and immoral war in Iraq, a war that has cost us nearly 2,000 American lives, thousands of severely wounded veterans, and thousands upon thousands of Iraqi civilians killed and maimed.

If we want to support the troops, the best thing we can do, the only thing we can do, is to bring them home, out of Iraq, where their very presence is animating the insurgency and giving rise to more intense anti-Americanism than ever.

For some time now, I have been calling for hearings on Iraq. But having received no satisfactory response, I am convening my very own hearing scheduled for this Thursday, September the 15th, from 10 to 1 p.m. in Room 122 of the Cannon Office Building.

We will hear from respected Middle East experts and military leaders about how we might achieve military disengagement while still playing a constructive role in the rebuilding of Iraq. We hope to break the silence on Capitol Hill, help fill the policy vacuum and spark a broader public debate about our policy options in Iraq.

Bringing the troops home, Mr. Speaker, and ending this occupation should be the beginning, not the end of a complete reassessment of our national security priority. National security means more than the use of mili-

tary force which, as we have seen in Iraq, can have the appearance of strength but can undermine our national security rather than enhance it.

To that end, I propose a new approach. It is called SMART security, which stands for a Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. SMART is based on the belief that war should be an absolute last resort, to be undertaken only under the most extreme circumstances.

But that does not mean that SMART is not serious and smart about protecting America. It is vigilant about fighting terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, but it does so with stronger multilateral alliances, improved intelligence capabilities, vigorous inspection regimes and aggressive diplomacy.

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SMART would reshuffle our national security budget. No more billions thrown at outdated Cold War weapons programs. That money would instead be invested in energy independence and other efforts that are truly relevant to the modern security threats that we face. SMART Security protects America by relying on the very best of American values, our capacity for global leadership, our dedication to peace and freedom, and our compassion for the people of the world.

TEXAS RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to again update my colleagues on the effort of Houston's and Texas' response to Hurricane Katrina evacuee relief efforts.

From attending daily morning emergency operations meetings in Houston, I can bring a firsthand account of our progress. The city of Houston, which has a Democratic mayor, Bill White, and a Republican county judge, Robert Eckels, has produced an amazingly successful relief effort, hand in hand with out partisanship or jurisdictional bickering.

I have always held Texas politics up as an example of the principle that puts people first and politics second. While we have not always upheld that principle recently, our response to Hurricane Katrina shows the best in Texas government, a single-minded focus on getting things done.

The Harris County Housing Department at Reliant Astrodome Complex has been doing an incredible job of moving evacuees out of cramped, uncomfortable shelters and into secure, medium-term housing situations. The Harris County Hospital District, our public hospital district, created a clinic almost overnight to treat our guests from the storm.

The University of Texas Health Science Center has also been a key asset at the George R. Brown Convention Center, where they are providing on-the-ground health care support to evacuees with all varieties of health care conditions, from children to the elderly to the disabled.

We have had our problems too. FEMA's communications capability has been slow. We have not been able to process people over the Internet or over the phone as fast as we would like. Faster FEMA registration is not just a matter of convenience. The faster we can register people for assistance, the faster we can get them out of that shelter which reduces the threat to public health from infectious disease.

Housing right now is our number one concern. We have over 40,000 evacuee residents already in hotels and motels in the Houston area. We have moved 228 families into housing over this past weekend while I was in Houston. As a result of our efforts in Houston, the numbers of evacuees at shelters are going down dramatically, which is good. Sharing a cot on the Astrodome floor with your family is not what I would call a long-term solution. It is very short term.

However, FEMA's reimbursement certainty is also necessary for housing. The city and the county have been trying to get a master hotel contract with FEMA to speed the payment. We do not have the financial reserves to pay hotel bills for tens of thousands of people indefinitely. We understand that this situation is unprecedented, but we cannot let red tape hold up the need of the folks that are there.

I am glad that FEMA now says the public assistance to Houston is expected to start flowing soon, within the next 1 or 2 weeks. Our reserves are running thin and help cannot come soon enough.

Texas generosity has been displayed from the businesses to individuals, but our local tax base cannot absorb the additional 400,000 people in the State or the 200,000 people in the Houston area. Red tape must be eliminated. Houston is still waiting on reimbursement from expenses from Tropical Storm Allison, which hit Houston over 4 years ago. We will be watching and calling and meeting with FEMA representatives repeatedly over the next 2 weeks on these reimbursement issues.

We cannot afford to wait until 2009 to be reimbursed for the sheltering, housing, transportation, feeding, clothing, and medical expenses of tens of thousands of these evacuees. This situation is unprecedented since the Civil War, which is the last time we had such a large number of out-of-state evacuees.

Our laws and regulations very well may need to change to adapt to our new situation, and they should. The next mass dislocation like this could very well be the next hurricane that could hit Houston or a terrorist attack that could hit any city in our country. That is why Medicaid legislation that I