

## RANJAN MANORANJAN

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a distinguished Ohioan, Ranjan Manoranjan. A native of Sri Lanka, Mr. Manoranjan is a tireless advocate of humanitarian efforts here in his adopted country and throughout the world.

In July, Mr. Manoranjan was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which honors American citizens who through struggle and sacrifice help build our Nation while preserving their own cultural identity.

Past Ellis Island recipients include Bill Clinton, Rosa Parks, and Colin Powell. Co-founder of the International Relief Foundation, Mr. Manoranjan has raised millions of dollars to combat global poverty including significant support for tsunami relief.

□ 1545

Mr. Manoranjan's commitment to social and economic justice is evidenced in a letter I received from his business partner of 18 years.

Nanda Nair wrote, "He has been an example to me for giving back to the community, mentoring others, and preserving ancestral ties while celebrating America's tradition as the land of opportunity and self-improvement."

## HIDDEN HATE CRIMES BILL

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we just passed a hate crimes bill. There is no Federal nexus, not sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution, but then again we have a Supreme Court that often does not recognize the Constitution as written. It rewrites it to suit its own whims.

As a former judge, I was a tough sentencer when that came about, but I am telling you, 10 years from now, when your preacher or even a Muslim leader says something about the Bible or the Koran or something saying that this sexual preference is wrong and they get arrested, then there will be people in this body that say, you know what, maybe I should have voted against that amendment.

## SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). 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.

## 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, a friend of mine has sent me a short and moving poem; and I want to share it tonight.

She writes, "I weep for my country. We seem to have completely lost our way. I want the government to be as generous as private people are. I want my government to do as well as WalMart is doing. I weep for my country. I want black faces to count as much as mine. I need hope, not statistics, platitudes and phony, staged play-acting. I weep for my country. We need a Marshall Plan. We need a New Deal. We need leaders in Congress to start talking about conservation, pulling together, car pooling, not opening the Alaskan oil fields. Oh, God, how I weep for my country."

I was moved by my friend's words, and I am committed to turning her words into action. Tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock I will be convening a hearing to discuss concrete strategies for ending the war in Iraq. We will hear from Middle East experts, military leaders, and others as they offer their ideas for how we can bring our troops home and move toward a peaceful but constructive role in the rebuilding of Iraqi society.

This morning brought news of a deadly series of bombings in Iraq, killing American soldiers and Iraqi civilians, more than 150 people in all, making it one of the deadliest days of this horrific war.

Is this what the march of freedom looks like? Is this what Vice President CHENEY meant when he said the insurgency was in its last throes?

It is more clear than ever that the American military presence is inspiring terrorist insurgents rather than defeating them. Al Qaeda has taken credit for this wave of violence and al Qaeda was not even a factor in Iraq before the U.S.-led occupation began.

The American people understand this. Nearly two-thirds of them give the President poor marks on his handling of Iraq. They are desperate to hear alternatives to the administration's disastrous policy. That is why I have organized this hearing tomorrow, to give voice to a widely held conviction, to spark a national debate, to demonstrate that many of us do not want to just speak out against the war. We want to discuss pragmatic, nuts-and-bolts solutions, in fact, a road map to our very disengagement.

That discussion should eventually go beyond Iraq to include a complete reassessment of our national security priorities. It is time to end the reflexive impulse of using military force to solve our international conflict. It has, by the way, the appearance of strength, but, as Iraq has shown us, it often undermines our national security, rather than enhancing it.

I have proposed a new approach. It is called SMART Security. It stands for Sensible, Multi-lateral American Response to Terrorism. SMART is based on the belief that war should be an ab-

solute last resort, to be undertaken only under the most extreme circumstances. But that does not mean 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 multi-lateral alliance, improved intelligence capabilities, vigorous inspection regimes, and aggressive diplomacy.

SMART would shuffle 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 truly are relevant to the modern security threats that we face.

SMART also includes an ambitious international development agenda to help address the root causes of terrorism, democracy building, education for women and girls, addressing resources scarcity. These are key ingredients to building stable societies in Iraq and elsewhere.

It is my hope and belief that the grievous mistakes we made in Iraq will lead us to this new, smarter national security policy. 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.

## GREAT AMERICAN RICE TRADE IN TROUBLE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise September as National Rice Month and honor those who grow it, process it, transport it, and all those who bring it to the dinner tables of America and the rest of the world.

National Rice Month was established in 1991 when both Houses of Congress agreed and the President of the United States sought to increase awareness of rice and recognize the contribution made by the U.S. rice industry to America's economy. National Rice Month celebrations will take place all across America this month in grocery stores, restaurants, schools, in festivals in many rice-growing communities, including the 36th Annual Texas Rice Festival just outside my district in Winnie, Texas.

Rice is an important part of American history and heritage. It has been grown in North America since 1696, when an improved variety of rice, reportedly from Madagascar, was grown on the Carolina coast. Early Americans recognized the promise of this crop throughout the world; and by 1726 the port of Charleston, South Carolina, was a major rice port in the United States.

As America earned independence, rice was growing as one of our largest exports. Over the years, rice became

less and less important to the Carolinas as crops such as cotton and tobacco were better suited for that climate. But it was not until the war between the States, as advancing Union armies in the 1860s put the great rice plantations to the torch, that farmers picked up and moved west to the rich, fertile land of the Mississippi Delta and the lowlands off the gulf coast of Texas and Louisiana.

Today, there are only six States that have land and climate suitable to produce rice. As a \$2 billion cash crop, rice is the fifth most valuable food crop grown in the United States. Ninety percent of the rice consumed in the United States is grown here.

The people of the United States consume approximately 18 pounds of rice per person per year. That amount continues to increase.

Until recently, the combined acreage of rice farms in the State of Texas was over the size of the State of Rhode Island.

Rice is vital to agriculture producers through exports, too, as the United States is one of only two or three major players in the world rice market. We export rice to more than 120 countries and supply 14 percent of all the rice in the world trade. It is one of the world's most important foods. It is a primary staple for more than half the world's population.

The U.S. rice industry has a long, successful past. However, Mr. Speaker, its future is much in jeopardy. These are tense and troubling times. The American rice farmer is becoming an endangered species.

Ray Stoesser, a constituent and friend of mine down in Liberty County, Texas, is struggling like many other rice farmers. Ray, like most farmers, simply wants a market to sell their product. They want a sanction-free world.

American political policies keep prices of rice depressed while increasing costs to American farmers. World markets are being lost to others. While farmers like Ray are doing the most to improve their yields, they have nowhere to sell their rice. Rice farmers do not want more government subsidies. They want markets for the rice that they sell.

The three largest foreign markets of United States rice producers has historically been Iran, Iraq and Cuba, countries in which the United States has heavily sanctioned against. Those sanctions do not hurt those countries. They hurt American rice farmers. We need to have free rice trade with these countries. The people of these nations are going to eat and buy rice. They should buy rice from America, because that is where they want to buy their rice. But in the name of politically correct sanctions, American rice farmers are hurt because the government does not allow complete free trade with these nations.

The Cuban market and its \$64 million in sales last year has been lost to more

government sanction, red tape, regulation and lack of common sense. Mr. Speaker, however, this resolution, H.R. 3058, the Transportation, Treasury appropriations bill, contains a very important provision to keep rice sales thriving. So as we recover from the stress of the hurricane and fuel price increases, it makes sense that we would want to ship rice to generally a close country such as Cuba who wants to buy it. If we get rice moving to Cuba, it would solve many problems.

We need to make it easier to sell rice to Iraq. We need to drop the agricultural sanctions to that nation.

As we celebrate National Rice Month and look back on its historical importance to America, we must ensure our government gives our rice producers the opportunity to keep the tradition long and strong and end those stupid sanctions. We need to keep the great American rice farmer like Mr. Ray Stoesser on his combine harvesting rice in Southeast Texas.

#### FORGOTTEN POOR

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. Mr. Speaker, for too long we have borne witness to relentless attacks on America's poor and working families. Abandoned by corporate America, betrayed by the political right, largely ignored by the mainstream media, our Nation's poor have become little more than an afterthought, most recently evidenced by what we as a Nation saw in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

While productivity and profit in America are up, wages are falling, and poverty is increasing. Since 1973, not coincidentally the year this country went from a trade surplus to a trade deficit, since 1973 the average worker has seen his or her wages go up about 10 percent in real dollars, while productivity has increased to almost 90 percent.

It used to be in this country since World War II that when productivity went up that workers' wages went up roughly the same amount, that workers shared in the wealth that they created for their employer.

□ 1600

Those days, unfortunately, have passed.

An August census report revealed that in the United States the number of uninsured Americans has increased dramatically. In the last 5 years, the total number of Americans with employer-sponsored health coverage has fallen by almost 4 million. Because 1.1 million Americans dropped into poverty in 2004, almost 2 million more Americans enrolled in Medicaid that year; and yet in the face of growing poverty, the rising number of uninsured Americans, this administration and Republican leadership are demand-

ing that we cut \$10 billion from Medicaid.

Just think about that again. More and more people need Medicaid, not just because of Katrina, but because of layoffs, because of plant closings, because more and more employers are dropping their coverage. More people need Medicaid. More people need health care because they have lost it. The congressional response is cutting Medicaid by \$10 billion in order to continue to give even more tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent of people in this country. That is a choice this Congress is about to make, and it is scandalous.

Household incomes fell for the fourth year in a row in 2004, something we had not seen in this country perhaps ever, at least since the Depression.

The reality is that every segment of American society, except for the very wealthy, has seen its income decline under this administration. Men working full-time have seen their earnings drop below what they earned 6 years ago. Women working full-time have seen their annual incomes decrease also. America's men and women working full-time are the reason our Nation's productivity is up; and yet they are earning less every year.

The number of people living in poverty increased in 2004 by 1.1 million people. Eight million children are uninsured. Thirteen million children live in poverty. The infant mortality rate is rising in the U.S. The infant mortality rate in Washington, D.C., is double that of the infant mortality rate in Beijing. This is the first year infant mortality has increased in this country since 1958.

A U.N. report on global equality sheds light on the shadows of this administration's policies. This report said there are parts of the United States that are as poor as the Third World. One nation cannot survive as a thriving democracy, certainly our Nation cannot, under policies that rely on trickle-down economic theories.

The aftermath of Katrina, when government should be at its most proactive to ensure the return of a thriving economy, this administration is working actively to lower wages in that region. An executive order handed down by President Bush will allow companies that win Federal contracts, companies that are the President's contributors, Halliburton, which is still paying Vice President CHENEY retirement benefits of \$3,000 a week, companies like that, while those companies are rebuilding, the President's executive order allows them to pay lower prevailing wages indefinitely.

The community hit hardest by Katrina is the working poor. These men and women will literally do the heavy lifting in rebuilding the region. Yet the President is saying cut their wages. Cheating workers out of fair wages robs them of the ability to take ownership in their own community. One must ask why the President could depress wages for a community in crisis. It makes no sense.