

to fly on the Russian Soyuz in April 2006. If this amendment is not enacted, INA restrictions will prevent a continued presence of U.S. crew onboard the ISS and limit U.S. presence onboard the ISS to Space Shuttle visits. We could lose our leadership role on the International Space Station.

I know this amendment has been negotiated and discussed by many of my colleagues, who recognize the extreme importance of passing a measure which allows NASA to continue with its current role on the Space Station. I am a sponsor of this legislation and, at the same time, I have been concerned that we not be so restrictive on NASA to prevent them from doing their mission. S. 1713 as amended grants NASA the authority to procure urgent required goods and services from Russia, including crew rescue, to allow continuing ISS operations in the most safe and effective way possible. Some of these goods and services will be required from 2012 to the end of the program's operation. Moreover, ISS is an operational program that continues to evolve, requiring enough flexibility to deal with emerging issues over time. Consequently, Congress may need to address this issue again at a later date. We should be watchful as we move forward that we are able to maintain the ISS and to retain our leadership role.

As the Chairman of the House Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee, I am mindful of the importance of a continued American presence in space. This amendment moves in the right direction by supporting those Russian entities which are compliant, while helping to solve near-term problems for NASA and its international partners.

Without legislative action, NASA will have limited access to the ISS until the U.S. Crew Exploration Vehicle is ready to be deployed. I urge my colleagues to pass S. 1713 as amended as expeditiously as possible. I also salute my colleagues for bringing this important legislation to the floor in such a timely manner and plan to offer my support as we pass this legislation today in the House of Representatives.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in strong support of the amendment offered by Mr. HYDE and Mr. LANTOS.

Iran and Syria remain threats to the security and stability of the Middle East and the world whether it is from their continued support of terrorists to their desire to obtain unconventional weapons.

Iran continues to thumb its nose to the IAEA and the international community on its desire to obtain nuclear weapons.

According to the British, Iran is providing weapons to terrorists attacking coalition troops and working hard to destabilize Iraq even though it is not in the region's interests.

Syria keeps its border with Iraq open thus allowing foreign fighters to illegally enter Iraq and carry out terrorists plots.

These terrorists are working against the Iraqi people's quest for freedom and democracy.

Iran is not the only neighbor Syria has been working hard to destabilize.

Last week, the UN released the findings of its investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri and I don't think any of us in this House were surprised to see that they pointed a finger at the regime of Syria's President Bashar Assad.

Before his death the former prime minister had become one of the most vocal opponents of the Syrian occupation.

This report names high level Syrian and Lebanese government officials who plotted to assassinate this outspoken leader.

I hope that our actions today will show President Assad that our resolve is strong.

Mr. Speaker, Syria must change its ways and begin to contribute to international peace and security rather than undermine it.

I urge all my colleagues to support this important amendment.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1713, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the Senate bill was amended so as to read: "An Act to make amendments to the Iran Non-proliferation Act of 2000 related to International Space Station payments, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 CONCERN OF FARMERS AND RANCHERS

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to voice the concerns of farmers and ranchers who struggle to feed the world as well as their own families. Kansans will tell you it is difficult to make a living on the farm. Federal farm policies do not take into account the current scenario of input prices rising to record levels. Natural disasters, whether it is hurricanes in the South, in the gulf, or droughts in the Midwest, still fall far beyond what a farm bill or crop insurance policy can adequately address.

As we have seen with hurricanes Katrina and Rita, not only do such disasters introduce terrible human suffering and paralyze the region in which they hit, but they also affect with transportation bottlenecks and skyrocketing energy prices many others a long way away.

Any suggestion that things are good in ag country does not meet the reality test. Having completed 69 town hall meetings, one in each of the counties that I represent, I know farmers are greatly affected by the high cost of fuel, fertilizer, and natural gas.

American agriculture depends on natural gas to bring food to our tables. We use natural gas for irrigation, for

drying our crops, processing our food, and, most importantly, in producing our fertilizer.

In addition to price of natural gas and fertilizer, the cost of diesel is a major concern for producers. In Kansas, it is estimated that the average farmer's fuel bill will increase \$17,000 this year. Since January, diesel fuel has increased from \$1.95 a gallon to \$3.15 a gallon this month. Kansas farmers say when you do the math, it just does not pencil out.

It is easy for a Congressman to talk about these issues, but the mail from my Kansas farmers can better tell of the real struggles and convey the real story of life on the farm.

Mr. Speaker, this is a letter from a farmer at Otis, Kansas. He gives me his name and tells me he is a middle-age farmer with an operation located in western Barton and eastern Rush counties. He tells me: "The recent fuel and fertilizer price increases are pushing my bottom line into the red. Three years ago I could buy a transport load of diesel fuel for \$7,800 and today the same amount costs me \$27,740, a difference of 330 percent."

He says: "It seems as though other industries can pass fuel expenses by putting on fuel surcharges. However, we are not able to do that. The American public is taking the farmer for granted with the cheap quality food that we provide. Wait until we are dependent upon foreign food like we are oil. I just hope and pray that the farmer can survive. Thanks for any help."

And this from Lynette Stenzel, a farmer in Ness City, Kansas. She tells me she is "extremely concerned with rising fuel prices. It not only affects the economic concerns on the farmer, but our local government, schools, churches, hospitals and even our community service organizations. More money into the expense side of farming leaves less on the income side to support schools, churches and help raise funds for community projects. When living in a rural area, the economic situation of the farmer really does affect local bills as well."

She tells me that her younger brother, who now operates a third-generation family farm, said he felt if and when he had to pay the same amount for fuel as he got for a bushel of wheat, it would be time to give up the farm. "I am hoping he forgot that comment, as that time is here. His 12-year-old son wants to continue the family farm, so hopefully that will be possible."

Finally, from a farm couple in Southwest Kansas: "The real America is not in the political realm of Washington. Real Americans cannot afford to drive to work. They won't be able to heat their homes in the winter. Real American farmers continue to lose money feeding the world. We need real help for the real America."

Mr. Speaker, we need to work together as Members of Congress, as policymakers in these very challenging

times. We must pursue economic, agriculture, and energy policies that increase the chances that our farmers can continue to farm the land and feed the world.

Mr. Speaker, as my farmers said, we need real help for the real America.

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

(Ms. CARSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WAL-MART MAKING LIFE WORSE FOR WORKERS WHILE APPEARING TO DO GOOD

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. Mr. Speaker, this morning the New York Times reported an absolutely shocking story. The Times published an internal memo from Wal-Mart written earlier this year. The contents of that memo are stunning.

The memo, penned by Wal-Mart's executive vice president for benefits, is concerned with employee benefits, namely how to cut the cost of benefits while improving Wal-Mart's public relations. In other words, the memo laid out a scheme whereby Wal-Mart will make life worse for working people, while appearing to do good. It focused on cosmetic improvements to Wal-Mart's image and real damage to Wal-Mart's employees.

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First of all, the memo admits that Wal-Mart's critics are onto something.

The memo states that Wal-Mart's health care plan, for example, is expensive for low-income families, and Wal-Mart has a significant percentage of associates and their children on public assistance. The memo states that 46 percent of children of Wal-Mart employees are either on Medicaid or uninsured. It reveals that in 2004, 38 percent of Wal-Mart's employees enrolled in the company health plan spent more than 16 percent of the average Wal-Mart income on health care.

Next, the memo goes on to complain that too many workers are sticking around too long, driving up labor costs. The thanks that these loyal employees get from Wal-Mart is a plan by Wal-Mart to get rid of them. According to the memo, Wal-Mart is seeking to cut its labor costs by switching to more part-time employees who will not have meaningful access to the company health care plan. So while Wal-Mart announces to the public that they are going to offer the best health care plan they can for their employees, they are secretly redesigning their work force so those who work for them will not be able to take advantage of the health care plan that they have announced.

The memo also suggests that Wal-Mart can cut its labor costs by keeping less healthy employees out of the workforce. It even suggests that they should include physical lifting requirements in the cashier job, just so that the company can use that requirement as an excuse not to hire unhealthy people. The memo says that the top Wal-Mart officials received the recommendation enthusiastically. And, guess what? We are starting to see those changes take place.

Earlier this week Wal-Mart announced a new health care plan for employees, including a high-deductible plan with health savings accounts. What does the memo say about this? It recommends plans with high deductibles and health savings accounts in order to attract low utilizers, that is a euphemism for healthier people, and discourage employment of high utilizers, the euphemism for sick people.

The question is often asked, is Wal-Mart bad for America? The company's own executive vice president has answered that question. The memo speaks for itself.

Madam Speaker, what Wal-Mart is saying here is that the benefit that they have announced to their employees as being new and expansive it turns out is no benefit at all. You must work 1 year before you qualify, and yet Wal-Mart plans to get rid of those people who have worked that length of time. Wal-Mart plans to hire more part-time people so they will not qualify for the health care plan. Should they hire somebody that qualifies for it, they want to be able to discriminate in their hiring against somebody who may have a health care problem, and, therefore, they do not want to hire them, so they will make up a test that that person has to go through, go around collecting shopping carts or lifting things so that they can root those people out of the selection process for whom they would hire. So Wal-Mart then says that this is the discriminatory policy that they want to follow.

What this shows is that Wal-Mart in the last couple of days has announced a new energy policy; they announced a new health care policy; they said they support an increase in the minimum wage, that it would help their businesses; and people started to say, what is this? Is this an extreme makeover for Wal-Mart? Have they come to their senses whereby they recognize their obligations to their employees, their obligations to the Earth's environment, their obligations on energy policy? Has Wal-Mart finally become responsible?

No, this is not an extreme makeover. This is a cosmetic nip and tuck. This is a cosmetic redo of a policy that is no policy at all, because, apparently, Wal-Mart has already designed, as this memo points out, the means by which they will not have to invoke the benefits of the health policy for their employees.

This is damning evidence, but what it means, if we thought that this was

going to be maybe a new Wal-Mart, a Wal-Mart that would be welcome to communities rather than fought by communities, what this means is, in fact, that that is not the case at all. Wal-Mart is going to continue their policy of everyday low wages, of everyday no health care, of everyday ruination of the environment, of everyday mistreatment of their workers. That is the Wal-Mart policy. That is the Wal-Mart policy that caused them to violate labor laws over and over again, to discriminate against their employees over and over again, to abuse the women employees over and over again. That is the record of Wal-Mart.

This was a false sunrise. This was a false sense that somehow Wal-Mart had started to accept its responsibility towards its employees. In fact, once again, it is going to abuse its employees. Sadly so, that is the case.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

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

There was no objection.

REMEMBERING SAM SMITH

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recall the life of Sam C. Smith, former mayor of Cartersville, Georgia, president of Century Bank, and a lifelong community activist who leaves behind an everlasting legacy of service to his hometown. Sam is survived by his wife, Connie Hill Smith, and his three children, Ginny, Taylor, and Drew.

Sam's untimely death this past weekend is deeply felt by the entire Cartersville community, and I would like to share some of his accomplishments here today.

Sam lived life with a passion for everything he did, and he worked tirelessly for the betterment of his community. Never a man with small dreams or goals, Sam served as mayor of Cartersville from 1998 to 2002, and his tenure exemplified the kind of work that can be achieved when a city's leader is committed, involved, and enthusiastic about making his city a better place to live.