

Congratulations to the Chicago White Sox. But our little team of 42 years for the first time in the history of the State of Texas took Texas to the World Series. Not only did we take Texas to the World Series, but being in my congressional district, the Minute Maid Park, the Astros are my constituents, among many others. We gave our community just a heck of a lot of joy, as you heard the buzz going around the children, the young people, the elderly, season ticket holders and others. I cannot thank the Astros enough.

We still believe. We may not have made it this time around, but we still believe in the Houston Astros.

UNIFORM BUILDING CODES

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that is of great concern to me, the prudent spending of our precious Federal tax dollars. In an ever-difficult budget environment, we need to be more vigilant in determining how these funds are spent.

So far Congress has provided \$61 billion in Federal funds for the recovery of the gulf coast. As we turn our attention to helping rebuild this area, any Federal funds for rebuilding should be spent according to a modern, uniform statewide building code. Did you know that Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama do not have statewide building codes?

Today I will introduce a sense of Congress resolution that Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama should adopt modern, uniform statewide building codes so that their rebuilding is, quite frankly, up to code. Every other State on the eastern seaboard already has similar codes. The Gulf Coast States should, too.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. Quite frankly, it is a must.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from 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.)

PROTECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I have taken the floor previously to talk about the shortcomings of the administration's efforts in the area of homeland security.

As an expert in aviation security, I have criticized the fact that the Republican majority and the White House have seen fit to arbitrarily cut the number of screeners, which not only causes obvious inconvenience for passengers, but it creates the potential for security threats as the smaller number of screeners are under tremendous pressure to process a large number of people in a short period of time. And they are being asked to do it with 1980s equipment.

Now, you can do it one of two ways. You can have a lot of people with crummy equipment or a few people with state-of-the-art equipment. This administration is trying to do it on the cheap without enough people and with obsolete equipment that cannot detect plastic explosives at passenger checkpoints and often in carry-on bags or checked baggage or cargo.

Our ports, I have talked about that, a tremendous vulnerability, not doing radiological detection. Nobody is going to shoot a missile at us, the failed Stars Wars system notwithstanding, but they may well try and smuggle in a nuclear device in a container. Our ports and our borders are wide open to such smuggling with just a very few deployed radiological devices.

But Katrina brought home another lesson, which is we need to be ready both for unnatural disasters, terrorist attacks and natural disasters. And there is a looming natural disaster that this administration has ignored, and that is the potential of H5N1 flu, the bird flu, so-called, should it become easily transmissible between bird species and humans, and then human-to-human contact could perhaps spread the disease widely.

The numbers are absolutely shocking regarding the potential for loss of life because of this. The administration, the President apparently read a book, that is great, and the book was about the great pandemic, and suddenly he got excited about it. Except experts in his administration and worldwide have known since before he became President that there was a potential for species crossover with this flu, and a tremendous loss of life is potential from this.

This administration last year in preparation for this looming disaster, and it already infected and killed a number of humans at a rate of better than 50 percent in Asia last year, so last year in preparation for this they took some steps. They put more money in the budget for vaccines, antiviral drugs and basic research. Woo, yea for them.

But guess what? The total spending was \$110 million, approximately half of what they spent on chastity education in America. That is how high this ideological administration put on the idea

of protecting America against an influenza outbreak. They could spend almost as much money as they put together for abstinence-only education.

Now, that seems to be kind of a misplaced priority. Belatedly now they are talking about billions and accelerated research and stockpiling antiviral drugs. I gave a floor speech last summer calling upon the administration to begin to stockpile the drugs. Unfortunately, virtually every other country in the world is in line ahead of the United States of America, and the drugs are not manufactured here to buy those drugs, because those other countries have chosen to stockpile them to protect their people. Even though they do not work very well, they are the only thing we have now.

Now the administration is talking belatedly about a crash program to try to develop vaccines 2 or 3 or 4 years down the road in the hope that this crossover will not take place before then. This is yet another example of poor planning by this administration; the fact that they created this huge new bureaucracy, the Department of Homeland Security, that failed so miserably when Katrina occurred.

And, oh, by the way, Brownie, you did a heck of a job. That hack who failed so miserably is still on the Federal payroll. Can you believe that? The guy is pulling down over \$100,000 a year sitting over there having failed so miserably. The President cannot even get rid of him, let alone other political cronies in this administration.

And they are failing us in other areas of security that I referenced earlier, and they are failing the American people in this critical health care component.

Much more robust steps must be taken quickly. The clock is ticking. It is already perhaps very, very late. We can only hope that this virus does not evolve too quickly through nature, and I know this administration does not believe in evolution, but that is how viruses happen. They do evolve. All it needs is a couple of small changes, and it will be transmissible. It will be a pandemic. We need to do more to protect the American people.

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.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

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

There was no objection.

EMINENT DOMAIN DISASTERS

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, you can never satisfy government's appetite for land or money. They always want more.

Today the Federal Government has taken and controls over 30 percent of the land in this Nation. States and local governments and quasi-governmental units have taken and control another 20 percent. Tremendous amounts of land in my home area of east Tennessee have been taken by numerous Federal agencies and departments. Not all of this is bad, but people in government have never been sensitive enough about taking other people's property. They just do not seem to realize how much this can hurt a person or a family. In fact, very few people get concerned about this until it is their land or their home that is being taken.

Fortunately, this has not happened to me or my family, and I am not on some personal vendetta, but many people in east Tennessee have had this heartbreaking experience happen to them. These people were for the most part people like many of my ancestors, good, intelligent, hard-working people, often poor, often with not a lot of education, but people with common sense, and often smarter in reality than the elitist do-gooders who came in and used the power of the Federal Government to take their homes.

To show how much this can hurt, I would like to read a letter that was published in the Knoxville News this past Sunday from a man who no longer lives in my district, but whose family home was in my district. This is the letter from John Webb of Gainesville, Georgia, a man whom I have never met.

He wrote, "In the spring of 1964, there was a storm that hit Marion County, Tennessee, that resembled the recent storms of Katrina. It left behind people who were devastated and lives that were changed forever." He says, "I was only 12 years old at the time and was on a camping trip with the Boy Scouts when I was told that I had to go to the hospital to see my father. There was a good possibility that he would not live through the night.

"The name of the storm was the Tennessee Valley Authority; my father had a stroke during a battle with the government agency which had condemned his farm of 110 acres on the Tennessee River.

"A panel of judges decided during the next 12 months of deliberation that the offer made by TVA to purchase my father's farm for \$240 per acre was indeed too low and that it should pay the outrageous sum of \$400 per acre.

"Court records show that the TVA experts stated under oath that this

property had no present or future value as anything but farmland."

Mr. Webb continues, "Even as my father lay in bed completely paralyzed on his left side from the stroke, unable to be present at proceedings, the court system granted TVA its wish, using the power of eminent domain.

"With the simple stroke of a pen, my father's farm was gone, completely against his will.

"Left behind was a woman with two teenagers to raise, a husband who required 24-hour medical care at home, and a future that looked as bleak as those victims of the hurricanes."

"For the next 3 years," Mr. Webb writes, "we learned a lot about bed sores, bed pans, and what it was like for a once proud man to lose his health and his humility.

"My father finally succumbed to pneumonia, and my mother lived for another 20 years with the aid of family, friends and Social Security.

"I still wonder about how all of our lives would have been different if it had not been for the power of politics and money. John E. Webb of Gainesville, Georgia."

Mr. Speaker, if we do not wake up and realize how important private property is both to our freedom and our prosperity, we are going to destroy our Nation. Politicians love to create parks, and this sounds so good, but when we continue to take more and more private property, we have to continually raise taxes on the property that remains in private hands, and we drive up prices on that remaining land. More and more young people cannot then afford homes, or they have to be jammed together in high-rises, condos or homes on postage-stamp-sized lots. In addition, the government cannot and does not take as good of care of land as private owners do.

We need to put more people in office who understand how hurtful it is when government takes property and takes people's homes and farms, and we need to put more people in office who will pledge to take better care of the land government already has and stop government land grants and give poor and lower-income people a chance to own property and appreciate this very important part of the American dream.

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REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2744, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. PUTNAM, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-257) on the resolution (H. Res. 520) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2744) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural

Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes at this time.

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

There was no objection.

URGING CONGRESS TO MAKE WISE BUDGET CHOICES

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, since 2000 this Congress has racked up more than \$3 trillion in additional new debt, and by the year 2008, we will cross the \$4 trillion mark. Why? It is trying to do something that no other Congress and no other President has ever tried in American history. It is trying to fight two wars with four tax cuts. This Congress has served as an ATM machine to the special interests, showing them with billions of tax breaks and tax shelters and handouts of the hard-working tax dollars of the American people.

Yet suddenly our Republican friends are finding themselves as fiscal hawks. In fact, right now the House is working to slash more than \$50 billion from education, health care, environmental programs, all that are important investments for the American people. Why? So they can do another \$70 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent in America.

At the same time that these so-called fiscal conservatives are complaining about the deficit, they are trying to add a total of another \$100 billion in tax cuts to the special interests.

I ask my colleagues, are these the right choices for the American people? We are now paying \$445 billion to date for the war in Iraq, \$20 billion to rebuild Iraq. We just have a spanking new dam in Mosul, Iraq, with all of the levees, yet we cut the Corps of Engineers here in the United States, which affected the levee in New Orleans.

In fact, we built 110 primary health care centers in Iraq, vaccinated 3.2 million children in Iraq. This Congress cut \$10 billion from Medicaid, cutting Medicare programs, cutting back community health care clinics in the United States and training of doctors.