

we have the responsibility as lawmakers to be as fair and just as possible. Certainly a reminder of God's law would be appropriate as we consider the Nation's laws.

SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor to speak to the American public. Sometimes we come to speak to one another.

It is in that spirit of speaking to my fellow Members of Congress that I rise today. Like you, I was horrified when the pictures at the Abu Ghraib prison first came forward, and then the additional admission of abuse, mistreatment, indeed, torture at the hands of people that we were responsible for.

And it seems, Mr. Speaker, that this is not an isolated set of circumstances. Indeed, there are more stories coming out of torture and death of detainees, and of extraordinary rendition, where people the United States is concerned with, we allow them to be transported to other dictatorships where we know that they will be abused.

I have been horrified as the stories start to come out, broadly reported in the press; and from Amnesty International, and the Red Cross. I, like you, my fellow Members of Congress, am horrified that the United States would be lumped into the same categories as countries that we are trying to encourage to honor human rights. Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia look to be countries where we have allowed people or sent them to be tortured.

This took on a decidedly local flavor for me as press accounts came out that a shadow, perhaps illegal dummy, front company, Bayard Foreign Marketing, LLC, in my home town of Portland, Oregon, was used to transport these people.

It appears to have been this company, organized in violation of Oregon law, to hide the true nature and breadth of this extraordinary rendition program. It is important for us as Members of Congress to be clear. Torture is morally wrong. It is not just a quaint idea that some people feel that it is morally wrong, but it is immoral.

Additionally, torture is a bad idea for intelligence purposes. The experts tell us that if you attempt to drown, beat, shock, freeze people, deprive them of sleep long enough, they will admit to almost anything you want them to admit to, but it is not the soundest basis upon which to base our intelligence decisions.

Furthermore, when prisoners are tortured, it taints the case against them; makes it impossible to bring them to justice in a court of law; and, sadly, it

puts Americans at risk. The reason that we obey these quaint notions against torture is not just because it is morally wrong but tactically it puts Americans at risk in uniform and not.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about how Congress can sit on the sidelines and let the press and human rights groups do our job. Well, actually, they can only do part of our job. They can get the truth out, and that ought to be something that each Member of Congress ought to be concerned about. But being able to fix abuses, to hold responsible parties accountable for violation of human rights, a United States policy and perhaps law, that is our job.

Mr. Speaker, in the history of this country perhaps a half billion Americans have lived; only 11,571 Americans have been privileged to be Members of Congress. Who do we represent in this matter? Yes, we listen to special interests, those with strong political voices. We listen to the voters. We listen to the press. But at the end of the day, the things that matter most to us, I am convinced, are our family, our friends, the outstanding men and women who work for us here on Capitol Hill, who are almost like family. How can we look them in the eye when such a cloud hangs over America's honor?

I strongly urge each of my colleagues to look deep into their hearts and think about what they are going to do to provide the answer to their friends, their family, their neighbors, their staff about what we are doing to protect America's honor and to protect the abuse of human rights wherever it may be.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day, and I come before the body this morning to salute our Iraqi women friends. I have with me a group of e-mails that I have received the past couple of days from the Iraqi women that we have been working with; and they are expressing their thanks to our military men and women who have fought so diligently and have worked right alongside with them and with their country to help their country go through successful elections, to recognize the freedom that they have sought and that they have fought for and longed for for 30 years. So it is with great excitement today that they are communicating with us as a free people and as free women.

Not only are they grateful to our military, Mr. Speaker, they are grateful to those of us in the Congressional Iraqi Women's Caucus, from both sides of the aisle here in this body, a group that has come together to walk with them as they walk toward opportunity and hope and freedom.

I would like to express my thanks for the leadership in that caucus to our former colleague, Ms. Dunn, who put a tremendous amount of leadership in this, and to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE), who are continuing to work and lead this group as we seek to help the Iraqi women.

I would like to share with the body some of the e-mails and some of the communication that has been expressed from these women as women and as free people to speak on International Women's Day.

This e-mail says: this is the second year Iraqi women have contributed to this important international gathering as free and independent people. They had a goal of 25 percent representation rights for women in the National Assembly in Iraq. Iraqi women have reached a target beyond that, with 31 percent representation. Spectacular. Spectacular.

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Another, "Iraqi women are now in the future that we all dreamed of. Iraqi women are heroes. They deserve to be leaders. They deserve to participate in building the bright future for their children. We owe our brave brothers and partners their support and understanding. Together, we all celebrate the International Women's Day."

And another, "This day, March 8, is a sign of civilization and democracy. Let us celebrate together."

Another, "Your voice is reaching other countries in the Middle East. Our sisters in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait are also rising. People are speaking out and enjoying democracy. Congratulations to all, celebrating the spirit and courage and contributions of Iraqi women who have added to the vitality, the richness, and the diversity of Iraqi life. In this amazing transformation to democracy in our country, we must recognize women's historic accomplishments and always honor those who have left us behind to carry through."

Mr. Speaker, I am so encouraged by the voices of freedom that we hear in this budding democracy. I stand today to salute the Iraqi women and to encourage them as they continue to work toward freedom, hope and opportunity in their country.

NO PLAN FOR SOCIAL SECURITY SOLVENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States, despite confusion in the press, does not have a plan to ensure the long-term financial solvency of Social Security. His privatization plan would actually reduce Social Security's income and accelerate

its financial problems. His privatization commission, which met a few years ago, did have some solutions to the financial solvency of Social Security. Generally, their preferred solution was to dramatically reduce future benefits, to change from wage indexing to price indexing, which means a young person who retires in 40 years would see generally a Social Security benefit reduced by 40 percent, far in excess of the predicted possible shortfalls that Social Security might have if we did nothing.

Now the President says he has not recommended that. He has not recommended dramatic reductions in benefits; it is just on the table. He has also said increasing the retirement age is on the table, and it is already programmed to go up to 67 by 2020. We are going to have people 70 years old logging in the Oregon forests and working other back-breaking jobs across America. But he says that is just on the table. He has not recommended that yet.

He did, in an encouraging manner, leave open the door a tiny bit to a fair solution, which would be lifting the cap on wages. Only people who earn less than \$90,000 a year pay Social Security taxes on all their income. He left that door open.

In fact, I have introduced a plan in the last 30 Congresses which would fully ensure the future of Social Security by lifting the cap, reducing taxes for those who earn less than \$94,000, and people who earn more than \$94,000 pay more in taxes. But that door was promptly slammed by the Republican leaders in Congress. No, they are not going to do that. That would benefit working people too much.

So we are back to the point where the Republicans do not have a plan to ensure the financial security of Social Security. They do have a plan to make it worse, to carve out resources, to redirect income from Social Security into a privatization plan.

Some people get excited when they hear privatization. They think: It is my money; I can do what I want with it. No. Here are the details. They are detailed in this proposal, very detailed. Wage earners can divert 4 percent, two-thirds of their contribution. They can divert it into government-chosen conservative, as the President says, index funds that will be managed by a company chosen by the government. You could not touch your money, could not borrow against it, like people in 401(k)s, or withdraw it early. The government would control the money until retirement, and then the government would compute a bill, and the bill would be how much your taxes would have earned in the Social Security trust fund plus inflation plus management fees, and they give you that bill.

If investments did not do well, the wage earners might end up writing a check to the Federal Government when they retired. No privatization account for them. Other people who did pretty

well will see they have to pay that money back to the government, and then the government will say your Social Security benefits are really low. This is the President's so-called privatization plan. The government would force, force people retiring to buy an annuity, to bring their Social Security benefit for their predicted lifetime up to the predicted poverty level. It would force people to do that. What a boon for the private insurance industry. Of course, these would not be guaranteed by anybody. You buy one of those plans. That insurance company goes broke. Sorry, you just lost everything.

So instead of an assured benefit under Social Security, taxpayers would be purchasing a very expensive annuity that does not have survivor's benefits, is not indexed for inflation, unlike Social Security, but then very few people maybe, according to a Wall Street Journal article a couple of weeks ago, none of the people in all probability, but maybe a few would do even better, and they could keep that extra money.

So we would undermine the guaranteed benefit indexed for cost of living with survivor's and disabilities benefits for all working Americans so maybe a few could do better, but the insurance companies could do a lot better. The brokers who manage the accounts could do a lot better, but other people would be left in the cold.

And what about survivor and disabilities benefits? They cannot talk about that, because it is impossible. You are 18 years old. You go into the so-called optional account. You save every penny you are allowed to invest. At 24, you are tragically hurt in an accident. You are not capable of working for the rest of your life, and you can withdraw your \$8,000 in your Social Security private account and live on that. No, you cannot.

We need to deal with disability benefits, survivor's benefits and financial problems of Social Security, and the President has not done that with his so-called privatization plan.

INCAPACITATED PERSONS LEGAL PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the legislation I have just introduced, the Incapacitated Persons Legal Protection Act, enrolled as H.R. 1151. This legislation's immediate intent is to deal with the issues surrounding Terry Schiavo.

I practiced medicine for 15 years prior to my election to the House of Representatives. I still see patients once a month, and I was involved in numerous cases involving situations like this.

Terry has been described in the press as being in a vegetative state, and I believe that she is not, absolutely that

she is not. The correct term to describe Terry Schiavo is brain-damaged, severely brain-damaged, but you can see her on videos. Now the judge will not let people such as myself go in there to see her even though the family would like me to be able to examine her. But according to the family, she is the same way. She is responsive. She will look at you, attempt to vocalize. She will attempt to kiss her parents.

The judge in the case, Judge Greer, has tried to dismiss these obvious behaviors indicating that she does have a higher level of functioning and she should not be described as vegetative, as primitive reflexes. And I would assert as a physician that it is extremely dangerous to walk down that kind of a path, where you have somebody with mental retardation, disability or any type of brain injury and you start ascribing obvious human-like behavior on the part of these individuals as being primitive reflexes and that these people are expendable.

Terry is under a court order to withdraw food and water. This is unprecedented in our legal history. Previous cases that received national notoriety, like the Karen Ann Quinlan case, involved family and physicians mutually recognizing that this person did not have a chance of surviving and wanting to withdraw, in the case of the Quinlan case, a respirator, and the court going along with it because the clinicians involved did not want to be prosecuted for manslaughter or murder.

In this case, there is a dispute. The husband wants to terminate food and water, and the family, in the form of the mother and father, vehemently being opposed to it.

The judge has stepped in, and I think he has made some clinical judgments that are not really founded in good clinical science. I am certain if doctors put an EEG on her, we would see extensive brain waves indicating activity in the visual cortex and in the speech centers, and she should not be defined as vegetative.

My bill, H.R. 1151, Incapacitated Persons Legal Protection Act, would simply extend to Terry Schiavo the same benefits currently afforded death row inmates, and she is under a death warrant, death by essential dehydration. It would allow her to receive legal representation, the same kind of legal representation that death row inmates receive. Currently, she does not have her own attorney. Her parents have an attorney. Her attorney has an attorney. Under this bill, she would get legal representation. It would allow for a more detailed review of the case.

As a clinician, she has gotten, to my knowledge, according to the family I have spoken to, no therapy since 1993. I know from having worked with stroke victims and therapists, you can sometimes give these people thicken liquids, and they are able to swallow. Evidently, Terry, prior to the termination of her therapy, was working with a speech therapist and was able to say a