

The harsh restrictions, and cutting off contacts with moderate Palestinians, will severely complicate our ability to assume an active role in helping both sides resolve the conflict.

If we cannot engage with moderates, and those trying to develop the Palestinian economy and build civil society, we forfeit our ability to nurture and strengthen the positive elements in Palestine.

We need a bill that allows us the utmost flexibility to help moderate Palestinians, to quickly get economic and humanitarian aid to places that need it, like hospitals and health clinics, and helps prevent the resumption of terrorism. This bill does not meet these criteria.

We need to isolate and weaken Hamas, and hopefully their tenure at the head of the PA will be a short one. But if we cannot distinguish between Hamas and the majority of the Palestinian people, we cannot possibly expect to have a role in creating what comes next.

Israelis and Palestinians realize that in the end, their fates are tied. When Palestinians' lives get worse, so do those of Israelis.

It's time to help the majorities on both sides reach their mutual goal—a peaceful two-state solution—rather than standing in the way by punishing one side.

Give our State Department an opportunity to nurture peace, or we will surely have to ask our military to counter more terrorism. Vote against H.R. 4681.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4681 Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006.

As an original cosponsor, I fully support this bill and would like to thank my friend from Florida, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and my Ranking Member TOM LANTOS for introducing this important bipartisan legislation.

This bill sends a clear message to Hamas that the United States will never support a terrorist organization cloaked as a democratically elected party.

The support Hamas, a designated terrorist organization by the United States, received shows many Palestinian people do not want peace with Israel and will continue to support terrorist operations on innocent civilians.

Hamas officials continue to endorse recent suicide bombing and continued violence against Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East.

As long as Hamas chooses to continue down the path of terrorism, it will meet with financial and diplomatic isolation from the United States and our allies.

I have read the statements of several groups opposed to this legislation because this will create a road block towards negotiations. What I want to know is how do you negotiate with a government who is hell bent on your destruction.

Would any member of this House negotiate with al Qaeda? I would hope not. Hamas must be isolated, not coddled, and that is what this legislation will do.

Hamas would rather cling to the impossible dream of the destruction of Israel than work towards a two-state solution that will bring prosperity and an end to the bloodshed that has tainted this region for so many years.

This bill rightly ends direct aid to the Hamas-controlled government. Hamas refuses to change so they must be treated like the terrorists they are.

But I want to make clear that the goal of this legislation is not to cause a humanitarian catastrophe but to isolate this terrorist led government, this legislation will allow funding for the basic health needs of the Palestinian people.

I'm sure like me, my colleagues would rather be supporting a Palestinian Authority-led government working towards a peaceful two-state solution but instead we face the realities of a Hamas-led government bent on the destruction of Israel.

Until this Hamas-led government recognizes Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State, renounces violence, dismantles its terrorist infrastructure, and halts all anti-Israel incitement the United States should never provide assistance to the Palestinian-led government of Hamas.

VETERANS' HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for S. 1235, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005.

This legislation will improve the benefits provided to our veterans and their families.

During war and equally importantly, after our soldiers come home and take off the uniform, we as a nation must support them fully. The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005 contains many provisions that will help us achieve this goal.

I would like to point out one particular provision that is similar to a bill, H.R. 821, which I have introduced.

Like H.R. 821, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act will amend title 38 to extend the requirement for reports from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the disposition of cases recommended to the Secretary for equitable relief due to administrative error. Extending this reporting requirement will assist the VA in its efforts to properly care for our veterans and their families.

Administrative error should not prevent a veteran or their loved one from receiving the benefits they have fully earned.

I would like to thank and congratulate Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS as well as the other chairmen and ranking members from our committee who have worked so hard to move this important legislation forward.

It is my hope that we will also be moving a health bill forward with the same bipartisan spirit our veterans have come to expect from our committee.

I support this legislation and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, May 17, 2006, I was unavoidably detained due to a prior obligation.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: Rollcall No. 148: "no" (On Agreeing to the DeFazio of Oregon Amendment to H.R. 4200).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, 2006, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall Nos. 177 and 178. The votes I missed included a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1235, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005, and a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3858, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2005.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 177 and 178.

TRIBUTE TO TELACU FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO SERVICE, ADVANCEMENT, AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, the people of this great Nation share a common spirit and heritage. Whether born on the soil of this land or having chosen to come here in search of a better life—one free of political, social, and economic oppression, we are a nation of pioneers. We believe in the American dream, and the promise that through our labors we can achieve educational and economic success. No barrier is too imposing, no obstacle to tall that it should stand in the way of pursuing this dream.

Two of my congressional predecessors, Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob Javits, advanced legislation in the 1960s that promoted this dream by laying the foundation for an organization called TELACU. Since its founding in 1968, TELACU has become the largest community and economic development corporation in the United States. TELACU is a pioneering institution committed to service, empowerment, advancement and the creation of self-sufficiency. Brought to life through a small investment appropriated by Congress, TELACU has grown to become an organization with nearly \$500 million in assets, creating thousands of jobs, affordable homes, loans to small business people, and most importantly, numerous educational opportunities for young people and veterans.

In 1983, TELACU established the LINC TELACU Education Foundation. For 23 years, the foundation has partnered with corporate donors, private individuals, and a vast network of colleges and universities, providing the driving force behind one of the most effective national institutions ever to impact the educational needs of the Latino community.

In conceiving the foundation, TELACU discovered that while financial assistance is vital for college students to achieve academic success, other factors are also important. Students who are the first in their families ever to attend college often lack the support system necessary to achieve their dream. Socio-economic factors, family responsibilities, cultural identity and financial stress create very real conflicting challenges to academic life.

The LINC TELACU Education Foundation has accepted this challenge head on, combining important financial assistance with highly effective programs that ensure college completion. The foundation supports 600 college students and serves 2,000 elementary, middle and high school students and veterans each year. The success of this extraordinary foundation is best summarized by the numbers: Its scholar retention and college graduation rates are an astounding 100 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I join today with community leaders throughout my State in expressing our Nation's gratitude to TELACU and the LINC TELACU Education Foundation for believing in the dream of higher education for America's next generation of pioneers and helping to make it possible.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, on May 22, 2006, I missed rollcall vote No. 177 on S. 1235, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act, and rollcall vote No. 178 on H.R. 3858, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act. I was unable to vote because I was participating in a House Agriculture Subcommittee field hearing and post-hearing meetings with automobile industry executives in Rochester, MI, on the role that industry can play in promoting renewable energy technology in the United States. Had I been present and voting, I would have voted "yea" on S. 1235 and "yea" on H.R. 3858.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 173: On ordering the previous question. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 174: On agreeing to H. Res. 821, the rule providing for consideration H.R. 5385. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 175: On the Blumenauer amendment to

H.R. 5385. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 176: On final passage of H.R. 5385. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 168, the Chabot-Andrews amendment to the Interior and Environment Appropriations, though I intended to vote aye, I accidentally voted nay. The Chabot-Andrews amendment would prohibit the Forest Service from building more roads for private timber in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. The timber program in the Tongass costs taxpayers approximately \$40 million each year. I have long been a supporter of reforming the road building program in the Tongass, and have supported this amendment in the past. I am pleased that the amendment ultimately passed, and I sincerely regret that I accidentally voted against it.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, 2006, I was unable to be present, to vote on the motions to suspend the rules and pass as amended S. 1235 the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act (rollcall No. 177) and H.R. 3858, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (rollcall No. 178). Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both measures.

COAL-TO-LIQUIDS TRANSPORTATION FUELS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, for decades this Nation has been researching, debating, drafting, and redrafting national energy policy. Unfortunately, the long gas lines of the 1970's that motivated the kind of original thought needed to end our dependency on foreign oil slipped from our memories as supplies increased and prices dropped. Today, we are punished with oil prices floating in the range of \$75 a barrel, record prices at the pump, and an unstable world market for the foreseeable future.

At the same time, according to the Department of Energy, \$35–\$45 a barrel oil is attainable from a source within our borders. It is our most abundant domestic energy resource—coal. With technology that has been around for decades, coal can be liquefied and turned into a liquid fuel, and eventually sold for approximately half of what we are paying now per barrel.

The true value of coal is misunderstood and many ignore its potential to free us from foreign oil at our own peril. We risk stepping into the same trap that has caught so many promising energy policy advances by the ankle for decades.

Research has brought us a long, long way from the days of smokestacks and gray skies. True, there remain many less efficient, older generation power plants in this Nation, but largely because, while the Government draped oil companies in rich tax advantages, it devoted mere dribbles of money to providing incentives for clean burning coal plants.

Thirty years of government and private-sector research and development has created a product, according to the Department of Energy, that is cleaner than required under EPA Tier II fuel standards. And with this Nation's refinery capacity operating on all cylinders, these fuels would fit right into our energy mix as they would require very little additional processing. Coal-to-liquids can curb our appetite for foreign fuel.

Disturbingly, however, for all of our Nation's pride in our competitiveness and innovation, we stand behind a number of other countries in liquefying coal to end our foreign oil dependence.

For instance, these fuels represent about one-third of the consumption in South Africa, which began its production and use in the 1950's using the Fischer-Tropsch process developed during the 1920's by two German researchers. China, India, and Indonesia, recognizing the problems of relying on foreign sources of oil, are all aggressively pursuing coal liquefaction as key components of their energy production. For the U.S., our continued myopia about coal liquefaction is particularly numb-headed, since coal is our most abundant natural energy resource.

In order to catch up to the rest of the world, a position to which the U.S. is unaccustomed, we must invest in our future and Congress began to travel down this road with the reauthorization of the Nation's surface transportation laws last year by including two new excise tax credits aimed at promoting the use of alternative transportation fuels, including liquid fuel derived from coal.

While a helpful first step, due to the restrictive nature of the existing tax credit, I am pleased to join my colleague JOHN SHIMKUS and others in introducing legislation aimed at helping far-sighted firms better afford their foray into coal liquefaction. Our bill would reduce some of the risk that these firms and their investors take as they try to lead our Nation into a new energy frontier.

Simply put, our legislation would extend until 2020 the 50 cents per gallon tax credit for liquid fuel derived from coal that is set to expire in 2009. The legislation does not address other alternative transportation fuels, just coal-to-liquids.

The aim is to provide a level of predictability for a number of years to those willing to put money into coal-to-liquids production. It would help to smooth out some of the ups and downs associated with fluctuating oil prices and the gamble investors make in the financing of these high-tech energy ventures.

Unfortunately, while other governments have been footing the bill for this kind of research and development for decades, our Government has been "playing footsie" with Big Oil. In comparison to the big tax giveaways enjoyed by the oil industry, precious