

REPUBLICAN OVERSIGHT FAILURES

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the Iraq war, House Republicans have rubber-stamped every war supplemental the President has sent to Congress with very few questions about how the money is being spent.

House Democrats have repeatedly tried to get Republicans to join us in supporting the creation of a select committee to investigate government contracting.

The committee would be similar to the Truman Committee during World War II, which, under Democratic Senator Harry Truman's leadership, held hundreds of hearings and fact-finding missions into contracts approved by the Democratic Roosevelt administration.

Truman did not see this as a partisan issue, and said, unlike Republicans today, he took his oversight responsibilities seriously.

The Truman investigation saved the American taxpayer an estimated \$15 billion. Just think how much money we could save the American taxpayer today. Under Halliburton's two largest Iraq contracts, Pentagon auditors found \$1 billion in questioned costs and \$400 million in unsupported costs, and these discoveries are from Pentagon auditors.

Just think what we could discover from a real congressional investigation. It is time for the Republican rubber-stamping to end.

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DEMOCRATS HAVE A WEAK RECORD ON NATIONAL SECURITY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today Democrats are scheduled to host a media stunt to unveil their so-called strategy on national security issues. While I am sure that the Democrats will talk the talk, actions speak far louder than words. The American people need to look beyond the Democrats' spin and study their record on these issues. When they do, they will see the Democrats have no credibility, because they voted against many measures to keep our country safe.

Cases in point: Republicans voted to pass the major border security bill in December, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill. Republicans voted to pass the PATRIOT Act to keep Americans safe, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill. Republicans voted to pass the REAL ID Act to make sure that people who received driver's licenses are here legally. The Democrats, led by their minority leader, again opposed the bill.

If this was not bad enough, Democrats are trying to cut \$60 billion from military weapons systems that keep our brave men and women in uniform safe. If Democrats want to talk the talk like they are for strong national security, then they need to start walking the walk.

GRACE PESHKUR

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Grace Peshkur and her family on the occasion of her fourth birthday today. Grace is an extraordinary child who has endured a life of struggle, and yet she has persevered against a rare skin disease and genetic disorder called epidermolysis bullosa, or EB for short.

Grace is an inspiration to many Long Island families who have rallied around her. She has helped raise awareness about EB, which I had never heard of before meeting Grace.

Over 12,000 Americans like Grace are afflicted with EB. The symptoms are fragile skin, recurrent blisters and painful sores caused by minor rubbing and that can be aggravated by routine activities we take for granted, like eating, walking and even changing clothes.

For Grace and her family, every day that goes by is another battle won. I admire the Peshkur family and over 12,000 other Americans afflicted with EB who fight this disease and are working to raise awareness, find better treatments and, ultimately, discover a cure.

In lieu of a fourth birthday present for Grace, I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor H. Res. 335, which would raise awareness by creating an EB awareness week.

Mr. Speaker, we can only imagine the difficulty that Grace and her family face on a daily basis, but we can do something about it. We can provide the hope and promise of a cure.

DEMOCRAT "NATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA"

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, Democrat leaders are planning to make big news at a press conference later today. What is the news? That they are tough on national security. This kind of claim coming from congressional Democratic leaders leaves the American people scratching their heads. It is one thing to hold an election-year conference full of tough talk on national security issues; it is quite another thing to back that talk up with your voting record.

Unfortunately, their rhetoric doesn't match their record. Where were the Democrat leaders when it came time to vote for the PATRIOT Act or for border security legislation or armed serv-

ices recruiting or the REAL ID Act? Given the chance, they often line up against our Nation's national security initiatives, again and again and again.

It is Democrats who would like to censure President Bush for authorizing the NSA terrorist surveillance program. It is Democrats who want to unilaterally withdraw from the Iraqi front in the war on terror. A news conference to announce Democrat leaders are tough on national security, that certainly is big news.

ENERGY PRICES

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, gasoline prices are once again on the rise. Over the last 2 weeks, prices are up by 14 cents, 40 cents higher than at this same time last year. Americans are looking to Washington for relief, but no relief has occurred. That is because House Republicans rubber-stamped an energy plan that was written in secret by a Cheney energy task force, whose participants are still not known to the American people.

Based on the final law, one can only assume that the American consumer was not represented at those closed-door meetings. The Bush administration, Mr. Speaker, has admitted that this energy law will do absolutely nothing to reduce the pain Americans feel when they fill up at the pump.

In fact, according to the President's own administration, the final energy law will actually lead to higher gasoline prices. As gas prices increase in the coming weeks, the American people should blame House Republicans who rubber-stamped an energy policy written by and for Big Oil at the White House.

AMERICAN SOLDIERS REMAIN COMMITTED TO SUCCESS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that an ounce of action is worth a pound of theory. As I listen to theories of doom and gloom about our military operations in Iraq, I am proud that American soldiers remain focused to successfully accomplish their mission to protect American families. Last week, the U.S. director of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office reminded us of the tremendous progress that has been made in Iraq over the last 3 years.

Ambassador Daniel Speckhard reported that Iraq's per capita annual income increased from \$500 per person in March 2003 to \$1,200 today. More than 30,000 Iraqi businesses have been registered in the past year. Iraq now has a free press, more than 2,000 Internet cafes, and more than 5 million cell phone users.

While naysayers focus on a civil war in Iraq, our troops are committed to creating a civil society in Iraq which protects American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

REMEMBER THE TRIANGLE FIRE

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, March 25, came and went, and not enough of us took notice of its significance. March 25, 1911, was the anniversary of the tragic Triangle Fire, an event that truly encapsulated the lengths to which industrial greed was allowed to operate at the expense of the American worker.

When the fire had subsided, 146 of the 600 Triangle factory workers were dead in New York City. Many workers jumped to their deaths from eighth, ninth and tenth floors rather than face the searing flames.

But the harsh reality of working in a sweatshop was their lives. The Triangle factory had never conducted a fire drill, had locked doors, poor sanitation, crowding, all symptoms that contributed to the high death toll.

It would be easy to believe that the Triangle Fire was a tragedy of the past, but the horrifying truth is that tragedies like Triangle are occurring throughout the world: 188 workers were killed on May 10, 1993, in Thailand when the factory of a toy company went up in flames; 52 workers were killed on November 25 of 2000 in a fire at a garment factory near Dhaka, Bangladesh. This is what happens when we try to Wal-Mart America. Think of it the next time you buy something off their shelves.

ACTION ON IMMIGRATION

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today our colleagues in the Senate begin hearings on immigration legislation. I rise to urge our colleagues in the other Chamber to follow the House's lead by passing legislation that focuses first and foremost on securing our broken border enforcement system.

Porous borders and the illegal immigration caused by them are a threat not only to our national security but to our national economic security. The Federal Government, more specifically Congress, has a duty to do everything we can to secure our borders.

Enforcement first legislation passed by the House last year was the right approach. Once we have effectively secured our border, then and only then should we focus on the other consequences of illegal immigration.

Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation of immigrants. Our Nation's greatness is built on the hopes and dreams of those

who have come here from another country. I understand that.

But above all, we are a Nation built on the rule of law. As a Nation and as a Congress, our duty is to enforce these laws and secure our borders.

REQUESTING A REFUND FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, it is time we give the American people a refund, because this Congress is not giving them what they paid for. Day after day, we see headlines detailing the incompetence, mismanagement and sometimes outright corruption of our government, and yet this Congress sits idly by rubber-stamping the administration's policies.

Three years after the invasion, we are mired in an endless occupation of Iraq. Yet this Congress has approved \$480 billion without a single question of where the \$10 billion that is missing has gone and how did Halliburton continue to get its no-bid contracts.

A few days ago we learned that government investigators were able to smuggle enough radioactive material in the U.S. to make two dirty bombs. Not a single question by the administration or this Congress, because they have not provided the money for border and port security.

Since 2000, the Congress has added \$3 trillion to the national debt. Yet we didn't hear so much as a peep out of this Congress when the debt limit was raised for the fourth time in 5 years. The taxpayers bought thousands of trailers in Louisiana, and they sit empty.

Mr. Speaker, the people's House is here to serve the people, not the special interests. It is time the American people either got their money's worth or a refund. It is time for new priorities. It is time to end this rubber-stamp Congress.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM WORKING

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

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it appears that the more the Democrats talk down the new Medicare prescription drug program, the more the enrollments seem to go up. Democrats have been doing nothing but demagoguing and criticizing this program, yet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced just last week that more than 27 million Medicare beneficiaries are now getting coverage and saving money on their prescription drugs.

In fact, they just announced that another 1.9 million additional beneficiaries have signed up just since February. This is wonderful news. Even the

New York Times is reporting success stories from seniors who signed up for the program and are now saving hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on their prescriptions.

Mr. Speaker, this prescription drug benefit is doing something that most Democrats probably didn't even think would happen: maybe they didn't want to have happen: it is helping seniors; it is reducing their costs.

As nice as it would be to hear Democrats stop for a moment and actually admit that this program is a success, perhaps they should just keep up their futile demagoguery, because at this rate, we will be at 100 percent enrollment in no time at all.

REPUBLICAN RUBBER-STAMP CONGRESS REFUSES TO HOLD BUSH ACCOUNTABLE FOR KATRINA

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, gulf coast residents continue to pay the price for the Bush administration's incompetence, cronyism and failed leadership. Yet, House Republicans refuse to ask the tough questions of an administration that showed no competence during Hurricane Katrina.

The House Republican Davis report on the Katrina response is woefully incomplete. The White House was allowed to ignore congressional subpoenas, and Michael Brown's e-mails were excluded. How is that a proper investigation? Worse yet, Republicans hold no one in the Bush administration accountable.

Americans cannot afford to gamble their security on the same Bush administration team that mismanaged Katrina. The American people deserve a bipartisan independent Katrina commission, like the 9/11 Commission, to get all the answers we need to better prepare for future natural and terrorist disasters.

Hurricane Katrina should have served as a wake-up call to House Republicans about the critical need for congressional oversight. Unfortunately, they refuse to ask the tough questions.

NATIONAL MOM AND POP BUSINESS OWNERS DAY

(Ms. BEAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BEAN. Mr. Speaker, I am excited to rise today to support National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day. This celebration honors the husband and wife business owner teams whose work helps drive the economy and fuel job growth.

Married couples who work together to build and maintain a business assume broad responsibilities. Not only is their work important to our local and national economies, but their success is central to the well-being of their families.