

provide an agenda. I don't know where they have been for the last 4 years. This is absolutely unacceptable. We pushed for a Homeland Security Department. We wanted a secretary to sit at the table and be part of the Cabinet. The independent 9/11 Commission gave President Bush failing grades on America's preparedness. Dirty bombs and other deadly materials are still able to enter the United States through unsecured ports and airports. The administration has failed to meet the basic needs.

Democrats have a plan. We will implement all of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. We will improve border security; invest in mass transit security; fully man, train and equip first responders; and we will screen 100 percent of the containers before they come into this country.

Mr. Speaker, we will make America safer.

□ 1015

WAR PLANS LEAKED TO SADDAM

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, last week a disturbing report was released showing evidence of a security breach at U.S. Central Command in Doha, Qatar.

According to the report, Iraqi documents now in our possession show that Russian officials provided Saddam Hussein with intelligence on U.S. strategic planning during the lead-up to the war in Iraq. The documents say Russians provided the intelligence through "their sources inside the American Central Command in Doha," specific details 2 weeks before our troops entered Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a small matter. U.S. CENTCOM in Qatar is the nerve center of our operations in Iraq. That's why it is absolutely vital that we have full confidence in the security of our operations there. With troops on the ground and in harm's way, it is essential that we seek to find out how this information was leaked and whether or not such leaks could still be happening.

While military officials have been slow to investigate, Congress should not be. Getting to the bottom of this should be a top priority of the House and Senate Intelligence and Armed Services Committees. Nothing less than the security of our troops is at stake.

ATTACK ON STUDENT AID

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, student aid is under serious attack. As I look at the 100 amendments that were blocked from being considered later on

today, we saw amendments that would have extended the Pell Grant to qualifying prisoners. That is an attack on student aid; an amendment that would have provided forgiveness for teachers who go into rural communities, that is an attack on student aid; amendments that would have restored \$12 billion to the student aid pool.

If those are not attacks on student aid, then I need to be educated.

CONGRATULATING KRISTINA SLATER

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to bring to the attention of the U.S. House a wonderful recognition of one of my constituents, Kristina Slater, and what she has just received. Just yesterday she was honored at the Pentagon with the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service Award at the Secretary of the Army's annual awards ceremony.

This award stands for more than a certificate or a pin. It stands for superior commitment to excellence. It stands for dedication. It stands for remarkable pride in doing one's job day in and day out.

Kristina Slater's work exemplifies this. She was instrumental in helping transition various information, technology functions, finances, and manpower to meet current and future needs of the Army. The results of this are being met with strong operational success, vital to everyone involved.

We are all extremely proud of Kristina Slater and congratulate her on this wonderful honor. As the highest honorary award bestowed upon a civilian employee by the Army, this worthy achievement is a testament to Ms. Slater's diligent and loyal service to our Nation.

I know the House joins me in thanking Kristina Slater on this award and her selfless service and dedication to our Nation.

DEMOCRATIC PLANS FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Democrats rolled out a plan for emergency and energy independence by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, as the spring arrives, gas prices are once again on the rise. America's dependence on foreign oil is up to 60 percent. Dependence on foreign sources of energy compromises our national security and makes families and businesses less secure because of high energy costs.

To free America from dependence on foreign oil, Democrats pledge to achieve energy independence for America by 2020 by eliminating reliance on oil from the Middle East and other un-

stable regions of the world. We will increase production of alternative fuels from America's heartland, including bio-fuels, clean oil, geothermal and fuel cells. We will also promote hybrid technology and enhance efficiency and conservation incentives.

During consideration of an energy bill last year, the Republican majority rejected many of these proposals when they were offered by Democrats. Under a Democratic majority, energy independence would finally become a reality. That is what people want.

TIP FOR DEMOCRATS ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, after many months, the Democrats have managed to release their so-called national security agenda; and one of the things their agenda calls for is improving border security.

Last year, House Republicans passed the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act as well as the REAL ID Act. How do these bills protect our borders?

First, the Border Security Act increases penalties for illegal immigration and holds violators accountable to restore the integrity of our Nation's borders, reestablishes respect for our laws, and helps ensure that terrorists cannot enter the United States.

Second, the REAL ID Act federally standardizes the requirements for applying and issuing State identification cards because the 19 hijackers responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks carried between them 13 valid driver's licenses and 21 State-issued ID cards.

How did the Democrats vote on these issues? 164 of them opposed the Border Security Act and 152 opposed the REAL ID Act. So Democrats now want to improve border security? Here is a tip for them: start voting for legislation that does exactly that.

SEAL OUR BORDERS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the issue is not hard to understand. The American people understand this issue and we are getting lots of calls into our offices.

We have the immigration debate. As we talk about illegal immigration, as we discuss the problem of illegal entry into this country, we all know that you have to begin with the very first step. It has to be a priority and that priority is seal our borders.

We all learned in kindergarten that the beginning is a very good place to start. As we have this debate on illegal immigration and illegal entry into this country, let's begin at the very beginning by sealing the borders to this great Nation.

DEMOCRATS WILL NOT PROTECT AMERICA

(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, yesterday congressional Democrats outlined their agenda to better secure America. I must say I was a bit surprised by what they had to say. Even though America has not been attacked on our soil since September 11, 2001, even though the vast majority of the leadership of the al Qaeda has been killed or captured, even though we have toppled two dictatorships and brought freedom to 50 million people in Iraq and Afghanistan, even though funding has been dramatically increased to aid first responders, the Democrats are trying to peddle the idea that President Bush has failed to secure our Nation.

Even though it was the Democrats who gloated that they “killed the PATRIOT Act.” Even though it was the Democrats under the Clinton administration who gutted our intelligence operations. Even though it was leading Democrats who voted against giving our troops the funding and support they need to win the war on terror. Even though it was the Democrats who advocated a defeat and retreat strategy for Iraq.

I hope the American people will take a good look at the Democrats’ plan and who is offering it, because they will see once again that it is the Republican Party that is the one that will fight to the ends of the Earth to protect America.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE REMINDER

(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, I greatly appreciate pharmacists, social workers and other caregivers who are working to help American seniors realize they have only 6 weeks to take advantage of an opportunity to save hundreds of dollars in the coming year.

Although over 27 million Americans have registered for the Medicare prescription drug program, additional seniors throughout our Nation are still eligible to sign up for this positive plan. I am glad that independent reports indicate that those who have registered say the total cost of all of their drugs is often less than the amount they were paying for just one prescription benefit in the past. Additionally, seniors who have consulted Medicare experts and insurance counselors are usually quite happy with their coverage.

As the May 15 registration deadlines draws near, I encourage American seniors to take advantage of this opportunity to significantly decrease their

drug expenses. Simply call 1-800-MEDICARE.

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

PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 609, COLLEGE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2005

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 742 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 742

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965. No further general debate shall be in order. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no further amendment shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

House Resolution 742 provides for a structured rule and continued debate on several additional amendments to H.R. 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005.

This second rule for H.R. 609 allows for the consideration of the Democratic substitute bill offered by the ranking Democratic member of the Education and Workforce Committee, Mr. MILLER of California, and allows for 30 minutes of debate on that measure alone so the House will be able to debate and discuss the substitute’s vision of whether

it is appropriate to support the creation of at least eight new Federal education spending programs which are contained in that language.

Mr. Speaker, it seems like only yesterday we were discussing this bill. And with apologies for using baseball analogies; but it is spring training season and for a Cubs fan, hope looms always eternal. But to quote the great philosopher and relief pitcher for the Kansas City Royals, Dan Quisenberry: ‘I have seen the future. It is just like today, only longer.’

When we are talking today about how we help kids to fulfill their dreams of a college education, I think he is going to prove not only visionary but prophetic. What we talk about today I think will be the future, just longer.

This rule today allows eight important additional amendments to be brought forth, and they will be debated on the floor.

I think it is significant of the 117 amendments that were filed on this bill for the Rules Committee, 15 were made in order yesterday, another eight today. Half of yesterday’s and half of today’s will be either Democrat or bipartisan amendments.

□ 1030

This does not even begin to count the number of issues which were already worked out between the minority and the Education and Workforce staff and chairman in the base text of the bill over the past several months, or those items for Democratic Members which were included in the manager’s amendment which was passed by a voice vote yesterday.

I also want to statistically note that 44 of the amendments that were filed were in violation of our germaneness rule, including mandatory spending on new programs or invoking jurisdiction of other committees, including Judiciary and Ways and Means.

Twenty-five of the amendments were filed past the Rules Committee deadline.

Members are always advised to be sure of the procedure and the time deadlines for submitting amendments, and once again, we said yesterday, having the additional time before part two would give Members a chance to work out with the Parliamentarian’s Office the details of their particular amendments.

Eight amendments were withdrawn. Three were duplicative. Four were taken care of in the manager’s amendment from yesterday.

The underlying bill, H.R. 609, still strikes a very good balance between reauthorizing important and existing higher education assistance programs, while steering clear of social engineering mandates and massive new spending programs. At the same time, it returns the emphasis to the original intent of the 1965 Higher Education Assistance Act, to give students a hand up in helping them to earn their own higher education.