

The vast majority of legal gun owners understand the need to stop gun violence. We must all work together, regardless of our interpretation of the second amendment, or whether we live in an urban, suburban, or rural area.

Let us make a commitment to replace our rhetoric with action. Let us make our communities a better and safer place for all young people of all backgrounds.

Together, we can stop this public health care crisis and save lives. I came to Congress to save lives. I will not give up on this fight. We can reduce gun violence in this country. We just have to find common ground on how we are going to do that.

COMMENDING AND HONORING THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend the men and women of the Capitol Hill Police Force. I think it is important at this time that Members of Congress step forward to say thank you: thank you for your service, thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for putting so much emphasis on training, and thank you for putting the emphasis on keeping this Capitol building and all the Members and staff and visitors who come here on a frequent basis to be safe, to be secure.

I think it is important, with so much attention right now on the Capitol Police Force, that all Members of Congress, Republican and Democrat, unite to say that we support you; we think you are doing an honorable and good job.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics show that there are over 1,500 Capitol Police officers, men and women of diverse backgrounds from all over the country, and some from around the world. They come here to save lives, to protect lives.

There are over 3 million visitors that come to this historic place that we call our Nation's Capital, both Washington, D.C. and this Capitol building and this complex where we work, where some of us live.

But I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that with so much attention on the Capitol Police, it is necessary that we look at what they do on a daily basis.

It is not always easy, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the public, to see them on a daily basis; for visitors to come in, tourists, staff, Members of Congress; to see them on a daily basis. People aren't always courteous.

But what I found out about the Capitol Police officers, these men and women, is that they always will greet you with a smiling face, even when they are having a bad day; that their training is shown through by the way that they have acted over the years that they have been in service here on Capitol Hill.

As Members of Congress, we must say thank you: thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for your commitment, thank you for your dedication to our country, because after all, they are here to protect and save lives; and as Members of Congress, we should respect them for their dedication and their training; and we must honor them each and every day that we are here, because they are our colleagues as well here in the Capitol complex.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, as I said, to commend and honor the Capitol Police. It is the right thing to do. I think my colleagues should join with me in supporting the resolution that Congressman MARIO DIAZ-BALART and I filed just this evening to honor them for their work and their service.

So I urge my colleagues to join with me on this resolution; and I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to schedule a vote for us, so that we can honor these men and women who work with us each and every day.

Thank you to the Capitol Police officers.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

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, we live in quite interesting times. Where else could you invest about \$1 billion and get \$100 billion in return? A Republican Congress, but of course.

As the New York Times recently pointed out, the people's House has turned into the House that Jack built. Here is what the Times says in an op-ed:

These are the men
That fleeced the tribes
That paid the money
That made the bribes
That purchased the Congress
That Jack built.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to read the rest of this poem, written and published last Friday, because it nails right on the head this is the House that Jack built.

Let's look at the \$1.2 billion that Jack Abramoff bought. Let's look at the house he built. The energy industry, oil and gas interests, they spent about \$87 million. What did they get? \$14.5 billion in tax breaks, given and paid for by the United States taxpayers; given access to \$65 billion in oil and gas from the Gulf of Mexico, costing the taxpayers \$7 billion in royalties they should be paying back to the Treasury that they did not get; given \$2 billion to the ultra-deepwater drilling fund. They were given that money, all for \$87 million in contributions and expenses paid on lobbying. \$14 billion in tax breaks, \$7 billion in lost revenue for royalties in the Gulf of Mexico, \$2 billion in tax subsidies there to the ultra-deepwater drilling fund.

You can't get a return on your investment like that on Wall Street.

Where can you get a return like that? The Republican Congress, of course. But that is not limited. In fact, that is prevalent.

Let's take the health care industry. They spent about \$173 million on lobbying and campaign contributions. Yet the pharmaceutical interests, \$139 billion in additional profits over 8 years. The prescription drug bill here, which was supposed to cost \$394 billion, ended up costing close to \$790 billion to the American people.

□ 2000

Private insurers will make \$130 billion in extra profits in Medicare overpayments, HMOs given a \$10 billion slush fund, all for \$173 million in lobbying expenses and contributions mainly to the Republican Party.

Take business interests, spent \$500 million on lobbying. We had a corporate tax bill to fix a \$5 billion disagreement with Europe. By the time it was done, it cost \$150 billion, not \$5 billion, and it never fixed the problem. \$150 billion in corporate giveaways to special interests on the corporate tax bill, \$139 billion in additional profits for the pharmaceutical interests, \$130 billion in additional profits to the HMOs, and in lost revenue to oil and gas companies close to about \$22 billion while oil and gas interests are trading and oil is trading at \$66 a barrel, all in The House That Jack Built.

This is the operative philosophy of the Republican Congress. They have turned the Capitol upside down to figure out how much change they can take over from the American people and pass it off to the special interests.

When the gavel for the Speaker comes down, it is intended to open the people's House, not the auction house. For the last 6 years that gavel has been turned over to the auction house, whether it is the oil and gas interests, whether it is private insurers, whether it is the HMO industry, whether it is in fact the pharmaceutical industry, or whether it came to the corporate tax bill.

Oil is approaching about \$70 a barrel, now nearly \$3 at the pump. Gas home heating costs, up 38 percent. Health care costs are up 58 percent for the average family, \$3,600 in the last 4 years. College costs and tuition, up 38 percent for the American people, yet median incomes are down 2.3 percent, and yet what does this Congress continue to do? It continues to turn itself into an auction house for the special interests. When college costs were up 38 percent, the Republican Congress cut student loans by \$13 billion. Yet, we have continued to pass on over the last 4 years \$3 trillion in additional debt that was borrowed, more than all the predecessors of the last 42 Presidents combined.

One thing you can say about the Republican Congress and President Bush when it comes to the economy: We will be forever in your debt, because that is all you have left is a sea of red ink, and

you have turned the American people and the treasures that this country has over to the special interests when it did not need to be this way.

Mr. Speaker, the special interests may have bought the Capitol, but the American people are paying for it. Jack is gone, but others are leaving. This place will remain The House That Jack Built until we get serious and undertake real lobby and ethics reform and return to the work of the American people. They are struggling under the interests of higher energy costs, higher health care costs, higher educational costs. They have not had a raise in over 5 years, and the politics as usual, business as usual continues with the policies and making sure that the special interests get heard first.

This House is the time and this election will be about returning the people's House back to the American people and ensuring that that gavel does not open up the auction house but the people's House.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 513, 527 REFORM ACT OF 2005

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-404) on the resolution (H. Res. 755) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 513) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to clarify when organizations described in section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 must register as political committees, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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.)

OCALA NATIONAL FOREST

Mr. KELLER. 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 Florida?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the proposed sale of 300,000 acres of national forest lands, which includes almost 1,000 acres of the Ocala National Forest in my congressional district.

The administration's 2007 budget proposes this sale. Their rationale for selling our national forest lands is to raise \$800 million for rural roads and schools;

and they say these parcels are not crown jewels of our national forests. Well, a picture is worth a thousand words, so let me show you a photograph of a specific piece of land in the Ocala National Forest which is marked for sale by the administration. This looks like a crown jewel to me. Does anyone really believe that this piece of land would look better as a shopping center, strip mall, or as a condominium development?

While our budget shortfall is temporary, ruining pristine national lands is permanent. We cannot sell national forest land every time there is a budget shortfall. This is a dangerous precedent for Congress to set. Our financial problems need to be addressed over the long terms, not through the shortsighted sale of national forest treasures to the highest bidder.

Mr. Speaker, our national forest lands are worth protecting. Millions of Americans each year use our national forests to go hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, horseback riding, and canoeing. The Ocala National Forest also provides a habitat for thousands of animal species such as rare birds and black bears.

Mr. Speaker, to sum it all up, I believe the idea of selling off our national forest lands is environmentally reckless and financially shortsighted, and I am not alone. On March 7, I submitted a Florida delegation letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was signed by both of our U.S. Senators, Republican Senator Mel Martinez and Democrat Senator BILL NELSON. It was also signed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of our U.S. House Members. This letter specifically opposes the sale of 1,000 acres of the Ocala National Forest, and, in general, also opposes the sale of 300,000 acres of forest lands all across the country in 41 different States.

On March 13, all four of the living former Chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service sent a letter to Congress also strongly opposing the auctioning off of 300,000 acres of national forest lands. On March 28, I submitted a bipartisan letter with Congressman BEN CHANDLER, the Democrat from Kentucky, to the House Budget Committee, signed by 54 Congressmen opposing the sale of 300,000 acres of national forest lands.

Well, where do we go from here? The U.S. Department of Agriculture will continue to receive comments on this proposed sale until May 1. It is our hope and request that the administration withdraw this proposal.

Fortunately, the House budget which we will be voting on this week does not contain any language endorsing the administration's proposal to sell these forest lands. If the administration does not withdraw their proposal, I am confident and optimistic that this House will vote down this proposal with a very large bipartisan vote. Our children and grandchildren deserve no less.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the confusing new Medicare Prescription Drug Program, in light of yesterday's visit to my Ohio congressional district by Bush administration Health and Human Services Director Michael Leavitt. Yesterday, Monday, April 3, Secretary Leavitt arrived hours late in a blue bus after people had waited and waited in very cold weather. He spent only a few minutes, shook the hands of a couple of staff people, and spoke briefly with only two hand-picked seniors, and, by the way, spoke to them in front of the news cameras, before making his prepared remarks to the press.

To the one senior that had a chance to ask the Secretary a question, explaining that they could not afford their medicines, he towed the administration line saying, "This is a good program that helps a lot of people."

When asked by one senior about the program not covering his wife's medication needs, incredibly, the Secretary answered in the same way, and this was to the one person, "This is a good program that helps a lot of people."

Now, the Secretary had his picture taken. It was on the front page of our newspaper, but of the 79 people in the room, he shook hands with only two, spoke to only one and left. I guess he is doing this all over the country.

The Secretary says, yeah, this program has had a few bumps in the road. It is a new program but we fixed them. No, Mr. Secretary, you have not fixed them and they are more than bumps in the road. The one thing that is guaranteed is that the pharmaceutical companies are making billions.

Here are a couple of comments that have come from consumers and seniors in my district. A husband and wife team says they take five prescriptions each. Under their old plan they had a 20 percent co-pay, but by this summer they will have reached the \$2,250 cap. And the new drug plan is a farce and an insult to seniors of this country because now they are going to have to pay the amounts beyond that and they ask, "Is there anyone that cares or is listening in Washington?"

Another husband wrote, "It is costing my wife and me more per month for