

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, today this House will consider the Homeland Security Appropriations bill, a bill I support for funding the safety of our communities and the security of our country.

While I am proud this Congress is putting real dollars behind homeland security preparedness programs, it is not enough for us to simply write a check. We must play a more active role. We must engage, discuss, and oversee how that check is being spent.

To that end I am working on legislation to authorize in law within the Department the programs most needed back home: the grants for all-hazards emergency planning, supplies needed to carry out those plans, medical and search and rescue support, and antiterrorism and urban area security grants. These grant programs deserve our careful attention, not just simply a brief line in our budget.

We all agree that we need to refocus on all-hazards emergency preparedness. I look forward to working with my colleagues to authorize these programs so that our first responders can depend on us.

ABC NEWS REPORT REGARDING THE HON. DENNIS HASTERT, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

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

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, as a journalism student at the University of Alabama in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I was a member of Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists. Sigma Delta Chi is the gold standard upon which the journalism profession is based. Among other ideals, Sigma Delta Chi, in its mission statement, encourages excellence among journalists and the need to stimulate high standards and ethical behavior in the practice of journalism.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, ABC News, both last night and again this morning, is guilty of throwing high standards and ethical behavior out the window. Their report that our Speaker, DENNY HASTERT of Illinois, is being investigated by the Justice Department lacks one essential element to a good news story: the facts. Even after the Justice Department issued a 10-word statement that said "Speaker HASTERT is not under investigation by the Justice Department," ABC refuses to retract this story. Instead, they cite an unnamed source in the Justice Department as the only evidence they need to throw trash into the mainstream.

Freedom of the press is a precious liberty. It should never be taken for

granted, nor, my friends, should it be trampled on by people who stand behind this ideal instead of standing on the bedrock principle of getting the facts right and reporting the truth.

DRILLING IN THE ALASKA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, in the Book of Genesis, Esau, hungry and believing he was about to die, sold his birthright to Jacob for a pot of red stew. The Alaska National Wildlife Refuge is the birthright of the Gwich'in Tribe as well as a national treasure of natural beauty.

Are we, like Esau, about to sell our birthright to corporations for a mess of oily pottage? Are we ready to despoil our natural heritage in search of liquid fool's gold?

It is time for new thinking. Instead of the oil companies taking over ANWR for drilling, we ought to be talking about taking over the oil companies. They have gouged the American people. They control our politics. They have ignored the growing global environmental crisis. They have defeated alternative energies. The lust for oil has put us on a path toward war.

It is time for new thinking. We should be talking about a windfall profits tax, breaking up the oil monopolies, or even taking over the oil companies, not sacrificing ANWR. Esau thought his birthright didn't mean much. Will we, like Esau, come to regret that we never claimed our right to control over our natural resources, our own environment, our own Nation?

IN SUPPORT OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, THE HON. DENNIS HASTERT

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

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of our Speaker, DENNY HASTERT, a gentleman whom I wholeheartedly trust and believe that he is one of the most ethical stand-up people I have ever met in my life. And most of us know that around here, and that is why a story about his being investigated is so unbelievable that it should not run.

Now, in Washington when a Speaker has criticized an action of the Justice Department on a constitutional ground, I guess we should not be surprised that there is retaliation from those that have been criticized. But let us realize what that is: retaliation.

Now, what frustrates me even more or frightens me even more than retaliation by an executive agency like this is the fact that a news station so desirous of bringing down Washington, DC and the representatives here would run a

false story about an investigation on the Speaker when the Justice Department said there is no investigation. This noncredible journalism, I think, degrades freedom of speech and the reputation of journalists.

HONORING FORMER SENATOR LLOYD BENTSEN AND OUR VETERANS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, first, I would like to take just a moment to acknowledge the passing of Senator Lloyd Bentsen, the former vice presidential candidate and as well, the former Secretary of the Treasury and a dear beloved friend of this institution. To his wife and his family, I offer my deepest reflection of his leadership, his service to this country as a World War II veteran. We will always remember him and for a moment I will be silent in his honor.

On another matter in keeping with the spirit of acknowledging our veterans, I rise today to express enormous concern as we honor those fallen in battle. Yet we must remember those who are here, injured, harmed, traumatized by wars like Vietnam, Iraq, and others. It is shameful that we have found that in this body we have depleted the TRICARE system and, for one, we have forgotten the military families and we are constantly taking moneys away from the veterans hospital and veterans' health care. And I guess the ultimate concern as I go home to interact with my community and my veterans is the stealing of records of our veterans. The identity theft that has put them in such jeopardy.

My office will be open to any veteran who has a concern, and we will be standing with the families to protect their identity, and that identity theft against our Nation's veterans will be investigated. Shame. Shame. Shame. In their time of honor we owe the loved ones of the fallen soldiers our debt of gratitude; and we owe our veterans and their families our continued support.

AMERICAN VOICE: ERNEST FICHTNER

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, we have seen the protests of illegals who have colonized our Nation, parading through our streets, trying to intimidate America.

But they are not alone. Their shouts and demands are being met by a silent revolution. Countless native citizens and naturalized citizens are demanding to be heard as well. Their voice is being echoed across these lands.

Ernest Fichtner writes: "My heart goes out to the Mexican people who

look north for a chance at life and liberty. But this problem sits squarely in the lap of Vicente Fox and his corrupt government.

"We are a Nation of laws and institutions. If the laws are not vigorously enforced, we are left with anarchy and open borders. . . .

"If America does the hard work now, the border integrity of this country will never again be subject to attack, not only from without but from within."

Madam Speaker, we are a Nation of American citizens, not illegal invaders, not lawbreakers, not tax dodgers, not transients.

This land is our land. This land is not Vicente Fox's land. The last thing we need is amnesty anarchy.

And that's just the way it is.

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CULTURE OF CORRUPTION ON THE RX BILL: REPUBLICANS NEGOTIATE IN BAD FAITH

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, we have talked about the culture of corruption here, and it is very interesting that the way I see the culture of corruption is what we do right here on this floor.

Today's seniors are paying the price for a prescription drug plan that does not have their best interests in mind. Rather, it is a plan that was created to actually help the special interests. Why couldn't we have a plan in Medicare? Why? Because that is not what the insurance companies want in the law.

They helped to write the bill, and now the persons who worked with them are representing them. So since the time of the law passing, three of the main Republican negotiators are making very large sums of money.

Madam Speaker, the American people don't like what they see here. They see a Republican majority that is too close to the special interests, and they want Washington to work for the people and work for you again.

HOUSE SPEAKER MALIGNED BY NATIONAL BROADCAST MEDIA

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, "jingoism," "yellow journalism," all words that I used to teach in U.S. history class. I have never been a vocal critic of the state of the national broadcast media, but ABC News has caused me to reconsider.

The two-source rule for accusation has been lost on many of the national media. Now, when Speaker HASTERT is nearing a historic landmark, he is maligned.

On May 31, Speaker HASTERT will become the longest serving Republican Speaker in the history of the House of Representatives. You get this by being fair, honest, open and hard-working.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to serve with you.

BACKDATING OF STOCK OPTIONS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, this may sound strange coming from a Democrat, but I am here to applaud the Wall Street Journal for its work in uncovering a major corporate scandal.

After Enron and WorldCom, we enacted Sarbanes-Oxley to usher in a new era of corporate responsibility. But now a new scandal is brewing, this time involving the backdating of stock options.

When a company backdates stock options, it deliberately moves option grants back to dates when the stock price was lower, ensuring the options will make money for executives while hiding its real cost from shareholders and the IRS. It is free and cheap money for the CEO, and securities fraud for everyone else, plain and simple.

So far, United Healthcare appears to be the biggest perpetrator, but the problem now is spreading to 15 other public companies that are under investigation at this point.

Madam Speaker, the American people don't deserve another Enron or WorldCom. They deserve an era of corporate responsibility that they were promised from this institution. As the SEC and the Justice Department pursue these cases, I hope they will take swift and decisive action to punish those involved and restore investor confidence in our markets.

THANKING SPEAKER HASTERT FOR HIS LEADERSHIP

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I also rise today in support of the principled leadership of the Speaker of the House, Mr. DENNIS HASTERT.

As we all know, Denny is a former high school wrestling coach, and he brings those same values of teamwork and fair play to his work here in Congress. It is often said that to be a good leader, one must first be a good listener, and DENNY's door is always open to every Member.

Under his leadership, this House has passed scores of legislation benefiting American families, children, seniors, taxpayers. We have achieved historic tax reform, a prescription drug benefit for our seniors and legislation to secure our border and prepare our military.

Madam Speaker, last night's news report's attempt to cast a shadow on Mr.

HASTERT, despite the fact that the Justice Department has categorically refuted ABC News claims about the Speaker, this is a case of sensationalism over reporting and it should not continue.

Madam Speaker, I know this Congress will continue to focus on passing good legislation for the American people and not resort to muckraking and partisan attacks. I know all my colleagues in this Chamber join me in thanking Speaker HASTERT for his leadership.

FARMERS DESPERATELY NEED DISASTER ASSISTANCE

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

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, rural America is anxiously awaiting the deliberations taking place regarding the relief for those who experienced 2005 crop failure. Farmers across the country have just completed the most expensive spring planting in the history of U.S. agriculture, and for those carrying the debt from last year due to disaster losses in reaping their crop, it has pushed them to the brink of bankruptcy.

The Senate has committed on a bipartisan basis meaningful disaster assistance, when the House Appropriations Committee voted it down on a party line vote with Republicans opposing. Now in conference committee, we have learned that House Republicans are doing their dead level best to strip this assistance our farmers need so badly out of the legislation.

Farmers of this country need to know if disaster assistance efforts fall short, it was the majority, the House Republicans, that stood in the way and prevented us from getting the disaster assistance they so desperately need.

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SPEAKER HASTERT

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of our Speaker, DENNIS HASTERT, who will soon become the longest serving Republican Speaker in our Nation's history.

Speaker HASTERT guides this House in a bipartisan, fair manner. He is a patient listener who works towards compromise in an even-handed manner. In these days of rancor and bitterness, Speaker HASTERT tries to bring balance and civility into this tumultuous legislative process.

It is irresponsible for media outlets to malign anyone with negative information from unnamed and uncorroborated sources. Speaker HASTERT and everyone else who might be attacked deserves to have incorrect information corrected for the record.