

Figures released by the Treasury Department show that retail sales of firearms and ammunition rose by almost 3 percent in 2005. All told, 4.7 million new guns were sold during this past year. Yet government figures and independent statistics revealed that firearm crimes and accidental fatalities, including among youth, all trend downward.

A recent assault on the Mall, ironically involving one of the Capitol Police chief's children who was one of the victims, underscores the importance of making guns available to law-abiding citizens in Washington, DC.

Residents here deserve the same self-defense measures that we do in our individual States. The second amendment applies to all Americans, not just some. It does not take a constitutional scholar to figure that out.

Mr. Speaker, anti-gun activists attacking our second amendment rights are perpetuating a myth of more guns equals more violence. It is not true.

□ 1015

STOP GLOBAL WARMING

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, last week, the President of the Marshall Islands visited Bainbridge Island, Washington. In discussions with me he made a specific plea. He asked America and the U.S. Congress to finally do something about global warming. The reason he said that is that rising sea levels literally could drown his entire nation.

He basically told me that his entire nation could become the first nation state to be environmental refugees, and he said, you know, we don't hardly put any carbon dioxide in the air. You put 25 percent of all the carbon dioxide in the world into the air, and your Congress does nothing. I think he had a pretty good point.

While the science of global warming becomes unambiguous and inarguable and clear, this Congress has lined the pockets of the oil and gas companies with giant subsidies and done absolutely nothing about global warming. It is a tragedy.

You know, we have had a lot of Republicans historically to stand up for the environment, such as Teddy Roosevelt; Bill Ruckelshaus, who met with us yesterday, who said do something about global warming. We need some action instead of passivity.

U.S. FLAG MUST BE PROTECTED

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is Flag Day, and I rise in support of the Flag Protection Amendment. February 23, 1945, after surviving the bloodiest bat-

tle since Gettysburg, a platoon of marines trudged up Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima with a simple task, to raise the American flag above the devastation below.

When the flag was raised by SGT Mike Strank and his platoon, history records that a thunderous cheer rose from our troops on land and on sea and in foxholes and on stretchers. By adopting the Flag Protection Amendment, we will raise Old Glory again.

We will raise her above the decisions of a judiciary that were wrong in the law and the history of our values. We will raise her above the cynicism of our time. Out of respect for those who served beneath it and those who died within the sight of it, we must say that there are boundaries necessary to the survival of freedom.

Let us pass the flag amendment and restore to Old Glory the modest protection of the law that she represents.

HOUSE GOP IGNORES THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF AMERICA'S MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the House Republican Do-Nothing Congress refuses to do anything to address the economic conditions that have led to large majorities of middle class Americans feeling squeezed to make ends meet.

Since taking control of both the White House and the Congress 5 years ago, Republicans have chosen to focus their attention on America's wealthiest, claiming the benefits would trickle down to the middle class. Well, Mr. Speaker, the American people have waited for 5 years, and they have not seen any results.

Instead, they see a monthly paycheck today that is not much different than the one we received back in 2001. While their wages have stagnated a lot of their monthly costs have increased dramatically. Housing costs are at their highest levels in 14 years. Health care costs for the average family have increased more than \$1,200. College tuition is up 40 percent and gas prices have doubled. The middle class is indeed squeezed, and yet they are getting no help from the Republican Congress that chooses to listen only to the wealthiest few.

Mr. Speaker, House Democrats are ready to take America in a new direction. We will start by listening to all of our constituents, not just the wealthy elite.

IRAQ AND THE WAR ON TERROR

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our brave servicemen

and women for their exceptional work in fighting the global war on terror.

I recently spent time in Iraq with the 48th Brigade Combat Unit of the Georgia Army National Guard. This unit was doing some incredible humanitarian work for the Iraqi people, building schools and managing health clinics. Of course, these aren't the stories that you read about on the front page of the New York Times, so I want to share one with you today.

One evening during my trip, I was having dinner with a young sergeant named Keith Weathers. This sergeant would explain to me why his unit was doing so much to help the Iraqi people. Sergeant Weathers said it was because he and most Americans have hope and opportunity, and it was his mission to share the abundant opportunities our Nation enjoys with those struggling to achieve freedom in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers are bringing hope and opportunity for the Iraqi people every day. The war on terror is not an easy fight, nor is it an expedient fight, but it is undoubtedly the right fight.

I hope we all take Sergeant Weathers's words to heart and continue supporting our troops and their mission.

MINIMUM WAGE AMENDMENT

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Ladies and gentlemen, the American people want a new direction. And Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House Appropriations Committee finally acted on something that the House Republican leadership has refused to address for over a decade.

Finally, yesterday, the full Appropriations Committee passed the amendment to the Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill that will very gradually increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25. Do you know that those who were working at the minimum wage in 1968, if today they were getting a comparable compensation, it would be over \$9 an hour.

I commend the Appropriations Committee for passing this in a bipartisan fashion, because expanding economic opportunity for over 7 million hard-working wage earners, plus another approximately 9 million members of their family should not be a partisan issue.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership has said they do not intend to allow us to vote on the House floor on this critical issue. Today's minimum wage is at its lowest level in 50 years. Let's change that for America's hardest working families.

PRISON FELLOWSHIP

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the Federal activist courts have dealt yet another blow to religious freedom in America. Earlier this month a Federal district court ruled that a faith-based prisoner rehabilitation program in an Iowa prison be shut down. The court ruled that the program sponsored by Prison Fellowship goes too far in blending church and state.

But consider the facts. The program is completely voluntary. The prisoners can opt out of it at any time. It is open to persons of all faiths or no faith, and prisoners are not required to assimilate into any certain faith in order to graduate into the program.

Mr. Speaker, this is sad news for those who wish to see prisoners undergo real change and rehabilitation. This program works. Their recidivism rate is only 8 percent for their graduates compared to about 80 percent for the prison system.

Having worked with Prison Fellowship since its founding 30 years ago, I can personally attest to the tremendous life-changing success it has had in our Nation's prisons for many, many prisoners. This ruling seeks to stop a very successful program of change or renewal. For the sake of our prison population, I hope it is overturned.

THE BUDGET DEFICIT

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I brought this chart along to explain to people what we mean by fiscal responsibility. When Democrats talk fiscal responsibility, we are talking about taking a deficit and turning it into a surplus. Republicans mean take the surplus and create a big deficit.

The 10-year budget, after the Republicans took over, changed a \$5.5 trillion surplus to a \$5.5 trillion deficit, a swing of \$9 trillion. Before you start talking about the war, remember the \$300 billion we spent on the war is \$.3 trillion. We have had a \$9 trillion deterioration. We can do better.

The Democratic Caucus has a better budget. The Congressional Black Caucus has a better budget. The Congressional Black Caucus budget, while the Republican budget is \$163 billion in the hole, our budget is balanced.

We did it without increasing taxes on anyone making less than \$200,000, and we spent \$160 billion more on veterans benefits, education, health care and other priorities. We can obviously do better, and we must do better, because if we don't control the budget today, there will be no Social Security or Medicare in the future.

U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS EXCEL ON THE CENTRAL FRONT OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, throughout the past 3 years, U.S. troops have built an elaborate counterterrorism network that has enabled coalition forces to capture or kill hundreds of terrorists in Iraq.

Their skilled persistence and dedication are saving the lives of countless Iraqi citizens and American families. Last Wednesday evening, the safe houses of terrorist Zarqawi became the final destination of two 500-pound bombs dropped by a single F-16C aircraft. Although this tremendous military achievement occurred within moments, it was actually the work of a coordinated counterterrorism operation involving U.S. troops, Iraqi security forces, coalition troops and Iraqi citizens.

In the wake of this historic event, we must continue to support our troops as they work to achieve victory in Iraq. House Republicans are committed to fulfilling this mission to ensure that our troops sharpen their intelligence capabilities on the battlefields of Iraq instead of the streets of America, protecting American families.

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

IRAQ AND NATIONAL SECURITY

(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, for months the national media and our friends across the aisle have consistently worked to convince the American people that the battle in Iraq plays no significant role in our national security. I know that some are really sincere in that belief, and I also know that there are some who are only looking for political gain.

But the call to disengage, the call to withdraw, based on this argument that our national security is separate from what happens in the battle in Iraq is naive at best.

On this Flag Day, a day we take to honor this national symbol and remember those who sacrificed for this great Nation, I want every member of the United States military to know that what you are doing in Iraq and in Afghanistan and all across the Middle East is important. It is vital to our national security, and it will ensure that our flag proudly waves for freedom for generations to come.

FLORIDA'S HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, this week tropical storm Alberto marked the first challenge of hurricane season for Florida residents. Florida residents

again demonstrated their experience and level of preparedness. My district stood in Alberto's path, but the performance of emergency services and utilities proved exemplary, and the storm's disruption proved minimal.

In fact, a silver lining might even be found. Yesterday's rain extinguished 18 wildfires. I applaud Governor Bush for his strong leadership in ordering an evacuation of low-lying areas and declaring a state of emergency. As we learned in the tragedy of Katrina, the threat of tropical weather must be taken seriously.

While Alberto will certainly not be the greatest challenge we will face this hurricane season, we can be proud of our reaction in our State. Dunnellon Police Chief Bob Jackson, in central Florida, demonstrated the right attitude when he said we cannot control the weather, but we can certainly react in a proactive way.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the further consideration of H.R. 5576, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JUDICIARY, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 865 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 5576.

□ 1029

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5576) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes, with Mr. PETRI (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, June 13, 2006, the amendment by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) had been disposed of and the bill had been read through page 252, line 5.

Pursuant to the order of the House of that day, no further amendment to the