

Had Congress not expressed outrage with the plan, a 45-day investigation would not be taking place today. However, investigation is simply not enough. I have absolutely no confidence that the Bush administration will conduct a proper investigation without pressure from Congress. Democrats and Republicans here in the House must stand against this proposal. We already know our ports are vulnerable. We should not add to that vulnerability by turning our port operations over to another country.

OUR ECONOMY IS DOING GREAT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, our economy is doing great. But Americans will not find that out from the Main Street media. New York Times, January 2006: the U.S. economy slowed sharply at the end of 2005.

Atlanta Journal Constitution, January 2006: economic growth slows to a snail's pace.

The New York Times again, January 2006: pockets of concern slow a strong U.S. economy.

But what the facts show, the U.S. economy grew 3.1 percent during 2005. The unemployment rate is 4.7 percent, the lowest since July 2001.

The Congressional Budget Office projects economic growth at 3.6 percent in 2006. Personal incomes grew above inflation last year in 49 out of 50 States. Two million jobs were created last year, and more Americans are working than ever before. Average weekly earnings grew faster in 2005 than the average growth during the Clinton years.

Do not believe the headlines. Our economy is the envy of the industrialized world, and we are doing great.

PORT SECURITY

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

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my concern with the potential port management transfer to Dubai Ports World.

Less than 1 month ago, our President stood in front of us and told us that homeland security was the number one issue this Nation faces. And, in fact, this administration has a strong and great record in defending our homeland.

But last week, when I was home, Americans throughout my district expressed deep concern that this fast track deal had not been given the type of scrutiny that all of us took a constitutional oath to do when we said we would protect our country.

I need to say that, although the United Arab Emirates has been recently a good friend, including a friend in the war on terror, this deal deserves much more discourse and much more scrutiny before it goes forward.

I plan to support legislation to provide congressional oversight for such important decisions in the future and to put a hold on this deal unless and until Congress satisfies itself, as the administration has, that America's interests and security will not be imperiled.

STATUS OF THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, my son Johnny and his new bride bought a house last fall. He is a baseball coach at our local high school. He has joined a record number of people, the largest in the history of the United States, who own their own home. The great American Dream, to own your own home.

The naysayers say the economy is struggling, but the facts do not prove out to be the truth. More people own their own home in America than at any time in the history of our Nation.

We are growing. We have an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent, and that is one of the lowest in history. Texas unemployment is at an all-time low in modern history. Our economy grew a solid 4.1 percent in the third quarter, the 10th straight quarter of GDP at a rate above 3 percent.

We are producing more. We are growing more. We are providing more jobs. We need to prevent the tax increases that many in this body wish to make. We need to make sure that we maintain a good tax structure and keep the tax cuts in position so that this growth will continue. It is good for the American Dream.

PORT ACQUISITION

(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 said that Washington does two things well, nothing and overreact. And both have been in high relief in the last week in our Nation's Capital.

Americans learned just a few days ago of the approval by the Committee on Foreign Investment of the United States that a company owned by the United Arab Emirates had purchased the ability to operate ports in six major American cities.

Those on the do-nothing side argued very quickly that the contract had been vetted in the CFIUS program, a 30-day perfunctory review. They argued that no more review was necessary, despite the fact that the UAE had been the home to the banks that funneled money to the 19 hijackers on 9/11 and, in fact, had endorsed the Taliban government in Afghanistan before that attack.

On the overreact side, many in Congress, especially, it seems, Democrats

in the Senate, called for a complete cancellation of the contract without regard to the fact that since 9/11 the United Arab Emirates has been a strong ally of the United States, providing a safe harbor for more than 500 of our ships to be refueled and readied.

For my part, I joined those in Congress who called for a thorough investigation of this contract in the next month and a half and in an agreement reached this weekend between the administration, Congress, and the companies involved of a 45-day review to go forward.

But in order for this contract to be moved forward, the American people must be absolutely certain that doing so will not compromise the methods and practices that the Coast Guard, Customs, and Homeland Security employ to protect our ports.

OUR ECONOMY

(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 applaud the Republican fiscal policies that have led the United States economy to an expansion rate of 3.5 percent in 2005. Over the last year we have experienced real economic successes as a result of our legislation that puts American families first.

In 2005 we witnessed historically low unemployment rates, a GDP growth rate of 4.3 percent, and 30 straight months of employment gains. It is no wonder consumer confidence rose last month to the highest level in several years. The current unemployment rate of 4.7 percent is lower than the average rates in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Our policies, Mr. Speaker, are working. And just last month our payroll employment rose by another 193,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is strong. Household net worth is at an all-time high. Construction spending is at an all-time high. Homeownership is at an all-time high.

I think we can all see the trend developing here. As a Congress, we must adhere to the principles of lower taxes and more responsible government spending. These are the policies that have a proven track record of growing our economy. I am greatly encouraged that economic forecasters project our robust economy will continue in 2006.

RECOGNIZING PRESIDENT BUSH'S HISTORIC TRIP TO INDIA

(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, while preparing for his upcoming visit to India, President Bush recently highlighted the unique role India is playing in the 21st century. As the largest democracy in the world and

one of the largest economies in the world, India possesses a rare combination of freedom and innovation which is paving the way for the country's bright future.

The United States already shares a strong strategic partnership with India, enhanced by the extraordinary success of 2.2 million Indian-Americans. Our nations are working together to defeat the global threat of terrorism, support democracy around the world, and encourage fair trade. Last year, exports from America to India increased by 30 percent, clearly indicating a bright future for U.S.-India trade with mutual benefit.

By traveling to India this week, President Bush is taking another step to cement the bonds of this strong relationship. I appreciate his leadership, and I am confident that he will witness the same positive developments I saw during my recent trip to India.

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

SECURING OUR HOMELAND

(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, we are hearing a good bit about national security today; and whether it is ports or the PATRIOT Act, we know that there are things that we in this body can do and steps we can take to be certain that America is a safer place for our children, for our families to live, to work, to enjoy our lives.

Mr. Speaker, the PATRIOT Act as it comes back around and as we hear more about this and hear more about the reauthorization of this, I would encourage our colleagues to remember this is a tool that has proven to be successful and useful in our national security. It has proven to be a useful tool in keeping America safe. It has proven to be useful to law enforcement. It deserves reauthorization. It deserves reconsideration, and I encourage all Members of this body to support reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, Effective today, February 16th, I resign my seat on the Committee on Education pending my appointment to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Sincerely,

JOHN BARROW.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 17, 2006, at 1:25 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4745.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, Speaker pro tempore TOM DAVIS signed the following enrolled bill on Friday, February 17, 2006:

H.R. 4745, making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for the Small Business Administration's disaster loans program, and for other purposes.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO MEXICO-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276h, and the order of the House of December 18, 2005, the Chair announces on February 16, 2006, the Speaker appointed the following Members of the House to the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. KOLBE, Arizona, Chairman
Mr. McCaul, Texas, Vice Chairman

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HON. CURT WELDON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable CURT WELDON, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a subpoena for testimony and documents issued by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compli-

ance with the subpoena is inconsistent with the precedents and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

CURT WELDON,
Member of Congress.

PORT SECURITY

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

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, the idea that any foreign government could control our ports sets off alarm bells for many Americans. And it ought to. Our Nation's ports are among our most critical infrastructure.

And that is why I cannot fathom why the Bush administration would willingly transfer the operation of 20 U.S. ports to a company owned by the United Arab Emirates, a country who may be an ally today but has had a checkered past when it comes to supporting terrorism. In approving the transaction, we see once again how the administration conducts business behind a veil of secrecy, cutting corners, failing to follow the law and acting at the behest of not the American citizens but industry. Indeed, they only agreed to the 45-day review the law requires after the company suggested it. And while mid-level officials were signing off on this deal, the President was nominating a top DP World executive to serve in his administration, a blatant conflict of interest.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that Dubai Ports World says there will be a firewall between the company and its U.S. ports, make no mistake, their employees will be operating these ports as of Thursday.

And whether the issue is ports, the Iraq War, the wiretapping of American citizens, what concerns me is this Republican Congress has never once asked this administration the tough questions. It has to. Congress must not once again give in to a policy that is clearly not in the public interest.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

FACILITATING SHAREHOLDER CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS TO MAKE SETTLEMENT COMMON STOCK AVAILABLE UNDER THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 449) to facilitate shareholder consideration of proposals to make