

After all of this, we thought we had an agreement that this legislation would come before this body on suspension. We can understand why it was necessary for the Rules Committee to allow two amendments to be offered. We understand politics, and we do not have a problem with that. We do, however, have a problem with raising expectations among the people of this great State and having those expectations dashed as they were today.

We are hopeful that the leadership will bring this legislation before this body before we go out for the July 4 break. I do not believe there is any better way to celebrate this Nation's birthday, which we do on July 4, than by saying to the American people that the Voting Rights Act, which was created to get rid of creative devices that work to nullify and dilute the impact of minority voting in our great State.

I am proud to represent the State of South Carolina in this body. I used to teach history to students in that State. I used to tell my students all the time that one of the reasons that we study history is so that we can understand the past so that we will know pretty much how to prepare for the future. And one of the things I used to tell them, Mr. Speaker, is that if a thing has happened before, it can happen again. And I am afraid that the creative devices that were developed in the 1890s and early 1900s in this country under what we call the Black Codes, things like numbered posts, things like at-large voting, things like what we call full-slate voting, would be allowed back into our electoral process if we politicize section 5 that grants review. And if we were to turn that section over to a political appointee to make determinations as to whether or not they allow to be required other forms of exceptions, that is exactly what we will do with that law.

So, Mr. Speaker, I come today to thank the bipartisan group of legislators on the Judiciary Committee for fashioning an acceptable compromise to bring to this body. And I also ask the leadership of the Republican Party to please bring this legislation to this body next week and give us an opportunity to say to the American people that we will celebrate our birthday on July 4 with an understanding that everybody, irrespective of status, will have their votes counted and counted effectively.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

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, the Democrats gave the Republicans a gift last Friday. Let me give you a drum roll here. It is a wonderful gift given by the left to the conservatives here in Washington, D.C. Let me tell you what that gift was. It was the Democrat agenda. They call it the new direction.

Someone said after they released this agenda that it was a new direction. When you are going in circles, you are constantly going in a different direction every time you go around that circle. And that is what the opposition party here in this Chamber is doing, they keep going in circles. It is the same old ideas.

They call it an agenda, but it is more like the Cliff Notes for Liberal Lunacy, Mr. Speaker. The theme of their agenda is best described as, well, promise, tax, spend. Promise, tax, spend. It is what they do best. And it is encouraging to see, and it shows a stark difference between the two parties and where we want to take our country, Mr. Speaker.

They say fiscal responsibility. That is one of their agenda items. Well, that is a wonderful thing to advocate, but it is laughable coming from Democrats. Here on this House floor, just this year, the opposition party has asked for \$45 billion in new spending; \$45 billion. And they call that fiscal responsibility. That is just amazing. And do you know what? They want to have all these new spending programs and call it fiscally responsible. Well, how are they going to do that? How are they going to pay for it? By raising every American's taxes. That is how they will do it.

They say roll back the Bush tax cuts. What that means is every American will pay more next year if the Democrats are in control than if Republicans are in control. That is what it means.

Energy policy. Energy policy. They want to lower gas prices and achieve energy independence. It sounds good. It is very good. Their voting record is far different from that. As we proposed ways of exploring for new energy sources, oil and gas, renewable energy, putting forward bold ideas here on the House floor, they just vote "no." We want to put out tax incentives for new innovation and new ideas for energy production. They say "no." We want to drill and explore for energy in Alaska. They say "no." One hundred eighty-four Democrats voted against exploration of ANWR; 196 Democrats voted against the passage of the Gas Act to relieve high fuel prices for every American; 124 Democrats voted against the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which provided tax incentives and energy production improvements.

Look, the Democrats' rhetoric is far removed from the reality of their voting here on the House floor. But let us talk about what they have done to energy. When you constrict the supply of energy and the demand goes up, costs go up for the consumers. As demand rises and supply is constricted, prices go up. It is very simple, basic economics. Well, the Democrats are in favor of constricting that supply and making the costs go up. That is the policies they have advocated.

But let us move on to taxes. As I said, they have all these new spending proposals, but what are they going to do? Let us talk about the tax cuts the

President has implemented in the last 5 years. One hundred eleven million American taxpayers have seen their taxes decline by an average of \$1,800. That is a wonderful thing for the American people. Over 5 million individuals and families will see their income tax liabilities completely eliminated because the President cut taxes across the board. So if you pay taxes, you have received a tax cut, Mr. Speaker, but those that don't pay any taxes didn't receive a tax cut. That is who the Democrats are saying are left behind by tax cuts. Well, it is a basic notion of fairness, Mr. Speaker. If you pay taxes, we have cut your taxes. But if you don't pay taxes, how can we cut your taxes? So I think the American people should remember that when the Democrats talk about Republicans not cutting everyone's taxes.

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Let us talk about the economic growth that we have implemented as a conservative party here in the House and the Senate with a good President working hard. We have had real per capita disposal income growth of 8.5 percent increase since 1999.

HONORING AMERICA'S FALLEN IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

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 recently marked a sad milestone in the war in Iraq, as the number of Americans fallen surpassed 2,500. We owe it to each of these families to do everything we can to honor the debt of gratitude we owe them, a debt that can never be fully repaid.

Over the past year, I have led 20 other Members of Congress from both parties in reading the names of the fallen in Iraq and Afghanistan into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

In the words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, each of these heroes stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase in its blessing.

God bless and keep each of the brave Americans whose memory we honor today: 1. 1st Lieutenant Benjamin T. Britt. 2. Specialist Cheyenne C. Willey. 3. Sergeant Regina C. Reali. 4. Master Sergeant Joseph J. Andres, Jr. 5. Sergeant Myla L. Maravillosa. 6. Specialist Anthony O. Cardinal. 7. Specialist Sergio Gudino. 8. Specialist Dane O. Carver. 9. Chief Warrant Officer Isaias E. Santos. 10. Chief Warrant Officer Richard Matthew Salter. 11. Sergeant Dominic R. Coles. 12. Private Joshua M. Morberg. 13. Specialist Lance S. Sage. 14. Specialist Aaron M. Forbes. 15. Private 1st Class George Anthony Lutz II. 16. Specialist Prince K. Teewia. 17. Staff Sergeant Ayman A. Taha. 18. Private Jonathan R. Pfender. 19. Sergeant 1st Class Shawn Christopher Dostie. 20. Sergeant Marce-

lino Ronald Corniel. 21. Sergeant 1st Class Jason Lee Bishop. 22. Staff Sergeant Christopher J. Vanderhorn. 23. Lance Corporal Ryan S. McCurdy. 24. Corporal Albert Pasquale Gettings. 25. Specialist Ryan D. Walker. 26. Sergeant Jason Lopezreyes. 27. Lieutenant Colonel Michael E. McLaughlin. 28. Sergeant Adam Leigh Cann. 29. Private Robbie M. Mariano. 30. Sergeant Johnny J. Peralez, Jr. 31. Sergeant 1st Class Stephen J. White. 32. Captain Christopher P. Petty. 33. Major William F. Hecker III. 34. Corporal Brett L. Lundstrom. 35. Lance Corporal Jeriad P. Jacobs. 36. Lance Corporal Kyle W. Brown. 37. Sergeant Radhames Camilomatos. 38. Specialist Clinton R. Upchurch. 39. Specialist Robert T. Johnson. 40. Sergeant Nathan R. Field. 41. Civilian Darren D. Braswell. 42. 1st Lieutenant Joseph D. deMoors. 43. Major Douglas A. LaBouff. 44. Major Michael R. Martinez. 45. Major Stuart M. Anderson. 46. Specialist Jacob E. Melson. 47. Specialist Michael I. Edwards. 48. Chief Warrant Officer 4 Chester W. Troxel. 49. 1st Lieutenant Jaime L. Campbell. 50. Lance Corporal Jason T. Little. 51. Lance Corporal Raul Mercado. 52. Sergeant Michael Joseph McMullen. 53. Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Anthony Jordan. 54. Lance Corporal Jonathan Kyle Price. 55. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kyle E. Jackson. 56. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mitchell K. Carver, Jr. 57. Corporal Justin J. Watts. 58. Specialist Dustin L. Kendall. 59. Private 1st Class Kasper Allen Dudkiewicz. 60. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ruel M. Garcia.

This brings our total to 1,957 names read.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize and thank the brave men and women who continue to serve our Nation with distinction in Iraq, Afghanistan and throughout the world.

Our thoughts, our prayers are with you and your families both during your service and after you come home.

God bless America.

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

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

DROUGHT SITUATION

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask permission to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Nebraska is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call attention to the chart that is being presented here which is a drought monitor and reflects pretty much the current situation in drought.

The interpretation of that map would lead you to understand that yellow

means abnormally dry. The light brown indicates a moderate drought. Brown is severe drought. Red is excessive or extreme drought, and then black or dark brown is exceptional drought.

We can see that a large part or the central part of the country is either in an extreme or exceptional drought, and that is disturbing, but if it only was ongoing for this particular period of time would not be so damaging.

The problem is that this is a 7-year process. We are in the seventh year of this drought, and most of those areas we are beginning to see some patterns emerge that are very disturbing.

This, for instance, is what has happened in some of the cities and towns in my district and in the State of Nebraska, and you see Lincoln, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, a minus 27, 28 inches over that period of time. Some other areas in the eastern part of the State are 10, 15 inches down, but if you look at this map, what you will notice is that the western two-thirds of Nebraska, the western half of Kansas, western half of Oklahoma, much of South Dakota, at times North Dakota, Montana, down into Texas, Arizona and New Mexico have experienced this extreme drought and this loss of water.

What that means is the aquifers in most of those areas are declining. The reservoirs are down to where they are 25, 30 percent full instead of 75 to 100 percent full, and as a result, we are beginning to see a pattern that is really very difficult for many of our farmers to continue to combat.

In many cases here, what we have seen is a reduction of herds. As water has been insufficient and pastures dry out, you cannot support as many cows on that pasture, and you have to sell off some of your brood stock, and of course, that has hurt the cattle industry in those areas.

We have also had to compensate by increased irrigation, and of course, that has been very expensive as fuel prices have gone up, as fertilizer has increased in costs by triple, sometimes quadruple over the last 3 or 4 years. Those input costs have squeezed profit margins to the point where many people are not able to survive in farming.

Also, we have seen some rather major changes in agricultural practices, mitigation of drought. For instance, we are now planting more sorghum, which requires less water than corn or soybeans. We are seeing skip row planting where we are not planting every row that we used to because of the lack of water. Using no till, which means that you plant the seeds in the ground without actually plowing up the ground because that causes water to evaporate so that preserves water.

So, a lot of changes have been made, but even so, this has not been enough. We are still seeing all of those problems.

What we are seeing is a major loss of equity in many of these farmers. They simply had to go to the bank and bor-

row more money and sacrifice whatever equity they have built up in their farm or in their ranch. As a result, we are seeing some people now that are teetering on the brink to some degree.

We will see what happens in the rest of this planting season and growing season, but things are getting somewhat extreme and somewhat dire.

2002, 2004, we had some drought relief. We are not sure what will happen because in those years we were able to get an offset, and we went into the conservation security program and secured, roughly, \$3 billion in both of those years for drought mitigation, but this year, again we will be asked for an offset. I really do not know where that is going to come from.

We are concerned, and I am simply on the floor here today speaking, letting people know, make them aware of this thing that has continued now in this year for the better part of 7 years and is really affecting the agriculture sector.

IRAQ AND THE FISCAL YEAR 2007 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House voted on the Defense appropriations bill for the year 2007, and once again, we missed a golden opportunity. We missed an opportunity to pass a bill that strengthens our national security, while at the same time, reflecting the very best of American values.

Foremost among these values is our desire for peace, our capacity for global leadership and our compassion for the people of the world.

Unfortunately, the Defense bill passed by the House, which included a \$50 billion bridge fund for Iraq, came to a grand total of \$431 billion. This amounts to more than all other discretionary programs combined. With this latest appropriation, the war in Iraq now totals \$320 billion.

With this amount of money, we could have given more than 61 million American teenagers a 4-year university scholarship. We could have created nearly 3 million affordable housing units, a process by the way that would in itself have created over 1 million jobs.

Remember, this is the same war that Paul Wolfowitz said could be paid for out of Iraq's oil revenues, the same war that caused Bush economic adviser, Lawrence Lindsey, to be fired when he suggested it might cost as much as \$200 billion.

Three years, more than \$300 billion later, and over 2,500 American soldiers killed and more than 18,000 wounded, and with Iraq's oil still not flowing at the capacity it was before the war, there is still no end in this war in sight. We are still mired in a seemingly endless conflict.