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□ 1015

REPUBLICANS' FAILURES IN SECURING PORTS: FAILURES GO BEYOND DUBAI PORTS WORLD

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration's deal with the United Arab Emirates showed the American people again that securing our ports is not their priority.

The bipartisan and unanimous 9/11 Commission report clearly showed the need for increased security for our Nation's ports. Now 4 years after 9/11, less than 10 percent of the 9 million containers entering our ports are ever screened. Even worse, Republicans in this House have fought Democratic efforts to increase port security funding.

In 2003, this House voted to kill a Democratic amendment to add \$250 million for port security grants; then again, in 2005, against a Democratic proposal calling for an additional \$400 million in funding for port security.

For the record, let me say, my constituents in St. Louis, Jefferson County, and Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri, understand right from wrong. They, like all Americans, demand action from this Congress that is long overdue, and they will not go along with any deal compromising our national security.

The American people have every right to be outraged with the administration's approval of the UAE port deal. It is time the people's House make the security of our Nation's ports a priority.

HONORING GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Sam Houston from Virginia was born this day, March 2, 1793. He was unique among all Americans. He grew up in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. He befriended the Cherokees as a kid. He fought the British in 1814. He stood with Andrew Jackson and was wounded three times fighting Indians. He became a lawyer, Member of Congress, and a Governor of the great State of Tennessee. More than enough for one life. But then he left for Texas and quickly got passion about Texas independence.

On his birthday, March 2, 1836, he was one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico. General Sam was made commander in chief of all Texas armies, and on the plains of San Jacinto his outnumbered volunteer army defeated the invaders. Texas was free.

General Sam became President of the Republic of Texas, and when Texas joined the Union, he became Governor and U.S. Senator. He is the only American in history to be Governor of two different States.

His example was a majestic story of bravery, boldness, and brashness.

Mr. Speaker, his last words before he died were "Texas, Texas, Texas." Sam Houston, the stuff real Americans and real Texans are made of. And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

DEMOCRATS' EFFORTS TO ADDRESS PORT SECURITY

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, the United Arab Emirates port deal should never have been approved. Sure, the admission is now backpedaling, but despite this 45-day delay, the administration is still going to try to push this deal through.

It does not matter that the Coast Guard voiced concerns about the proposal before the administration initially approved the deal. It does not matter that large numbers of Democrats and Republicans have come out in opposition to the deal. It does not matter that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not support this deal and believe it to be dumb. Nor does it matter that the administration never checked with the affected communities before signing off on it. No, the Bush administration sees this 45-day period as an opportunity to steamroll Congress.

We simply cannot allow that to happen. Congress must play an active role in this decision. I hope, I really hope, that the House Republicans will join us in insisting that no deal move forward without a vote here on this floor. Democrats insist that in addition to the 45-day investigation there must also be a congressional vote. This is a national security decision, and it is simply too important for partisanship to take precedence over prudence.

IMMIGRATION BILL IN SENATE AND CAMPBELL AMENDMENT

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

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Mr. Speaker, today the Senate Judiciary Committee will begin work on the immigration and border security legislation the House passed at the end of last year.

This bill is one of the most important pieces of national security legislation before Congress because border security is national security.

Recently we have been engaged in debates, some of which you have just heard, about whether or not our ports are secure. This is an important debate. But we know our southern border is not secure; we know that illegal

aliens, criminal illegal aliens, are attempting to cross that border every single day, and it is time that we stop it.

In December, the House passed a good enforcement and border security bill, and the bill is a great start to address this problem and make our Nation safer. One important provision included in the bill was an amendment I had authored which will withhold Federal law enforcement funding from sanctuary cities that prohibit law enforcement officers from notifying Federal officials about known illegal aliens.

The practice of prohibiting cooperation is appalling. We should not reward these cities with Federal funds. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to include this provision and pass a strong enforcement bill without amnesty.

BUSH ONCE AGAIN SKIRTING LAW IMPACTING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, Congress should not allow the secretly decided backroom United Arab Emirates port deal to go through. It must be stopped, and House Republicans should stand up to the President in the name of national security. Our ports are not for sale to the highest bidder.

This deal shows once again the lengths the Bush administration will go to bend the laws to their advantage. The administration failed to conduct a 45-day investigation that is legally required. This, in itself, should be enough to stop this deal. The national security implications are simply too important to ignore. And, unfortunately, House Republicans have neglected our vulnerable ports since 9/11.

Over the past 4 years, House Republicans have opposed and defeated Democratic efforts to increase funding for port security. Right now, only 6 percent of cargo coming into the U.S. is being checked, producing a large hole in our homeland security.

I would hope that we can make port security a top priority.

ENTITLEMENT REFORM

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days we will take up the Federal budget. While I am pleased to see the President's budget hold the line on discretionary spending, the Congress should also get serious about entitlement reform.

The numbers speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. Three entitlement programs alone, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, currently consume about 42 percent of the entire budget. If we add defense and homeland security,

which most people would consider mandatory spending, along with all the other entitlements, we get 82 percent. Only 18 cents on the dollar really is discretionary.

Mr. Speaker, entitlements are important programs, but they will benefit no one if they go bankrupt. And we are headed for a fiscal tsunami in this country. So as we begin the budget process, let us keep in mind that runaway discretionary spending is wrong, and we would do well to rein it in.

But unsustainable entitlement spending is a greater problem that we should address as well for the sake of our children and grandchildren. Whether we like it or not, this is a very real problem. It is not going to go away.

Doing nothing is simply not an option. In fact, doing nothing is the worst thing we can do.

IT IS TIME FOR A POLICY THAT REALLY SECURES AMERICA

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of days we have seen the focus of the American conscience look toward whether America is actually secure.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time now for the administration to craft a policy that answers the enormity of the concerns that Americans have expressed in town hall meetings across America. Frankly, I think when the headlines read 1,300 Iraqi dead, our soldiers standing by, not knowing whether to engage or not in the civil war that is pending, it is actually now time for the President to acknowledge that our troops have done their job, they have won the victory, and they need to come home.

And then we speak of securing America and having conflicts cause the tension that they are causing and then we still want to say that it is all right to sell our ports to foreign entities; and, of course, I think America needs to know that in the 2007 budget there is no funding for securing the Nation's ports around America.

It is time now for the administration to craft a security posture and policy that really secures America. The time is now.

STATE TAX COMPETITIVENESS

(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 the Tax Foundation, an educational foundation for taxpayers since 1937, released its much anticipated third edition of their State business tax climate index. It ranks the 50 States on how business friendly their tax systems are.

The study finds the most business-friendly tax systems in Wyoming,

South Dakota, Alaska, Florida, Nevada, New Hampshire and Texas. The least business-friendly tax codes were found in New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont and Maine.

Low-tax States are where the job growth is. Governors and businesses and residents want jobs to flow to their States. Low taxes will do that. So low taxes in America will also keep jobs here.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a cautionary tale from this report, reminding us that we are truly competing in a global economy, and we cannot ignore the fact that low taxes indeed create new jobs.

RECOGNIZING AMBER CASHWELL'S SERVICE TO SOUTH CAROLINA

(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, as I always say, congressional schedulers have some of the hardest jobs in Washington.

While serving as a scheduler, Amber Cashwell has seamlessly planned a calendar, helped manage the office, and assisted the citizens of the Second District of South Carolina. Throughout her service she has handled her responsibilities with patience, professionalism, and good humor. Her colleagues and I truly appreciate her hard work and dedication.

A native of Spartanburg, South Carolina, Amber began her career in Washington as a staff assistant for Congressman BOB INGLIS. In May, 2004, she graduated from Converse College with an impressive double major in French and history.

Tomorrow, Amber will depart the halls of Congress to work at the Moore Van Allen law firm in Charlotte, North Carolina. I am proud of her success and pleased to congratulate Amber on this wonderful opportunity.

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

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, when I opened up my local paper the other day, I was troubled by a letter to the editor. This gentleman was lamenting the fact that he and his wife were losing a long-time doctor because the physician could not afford to remain in business. What is even more troubling is that none of this is a surprise.

Every day more and more doctors across the country are watching their malpractice rates skyrocket. These premiums are going up as the insurance companies are being forced to pay higher and higher awards for malpractice lawsuits.

Doctors need to be held accountable, yes. However, there is also a need to

recognize the institutional abuse that is far too often perpetrated in our courts by personal injury lawyers and the frivolous lawsuits they introduce. These lawsuits do not just affect doctors. They are affecting patients all across the country who either lose access to their doctor altogether or are cared for by a physician who has been intimidated into practicing defensive medicine.

While everyone is talking about rising health care costs, let us not forget to recognize there are a number of different ways to lower those costs, and starting with lawsuit abuse reform would be a genuine first step.

KATRINA EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2006

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of March 1, 2006, I call up the Senate bill (S. 1777) to provide relief for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, March 1, 2006, the Senate bill is considered read, and the amendment placed at the desk is adopted.

The text of the Senate bill, as amended, is as follows:

S. 1777

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Katrina Emergency Assistance Act of 2006".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the case of an individual eligible to receive unemployment assistance under section 410(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5177(a)) as a result of a disaster declaration made for Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita on or after August 29, 2005, the President shall make such assistance available for 39 weeks after the date of the disaster declaration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 1030

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 1777.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.