

the said election results have absolutely no effect on the policy. That does not fit the definition of representative democracy I was raised to believe in since grade school. Elected officials do not possess the right to represent the people when and if they chose, as though they know best. We do not live under a benevolent dictator, where the power of decision is placed in the hands of a ruler whom we must trust to make a conclusion we are otherwise deemed incapable of making ourselves. Nor do we live in a country where the wealthy elite enjoy all of the authority, sending young men and women of the poor and middle classes off to become maimed Purple Heart veterans and dead Medal of Honor heroes, fighting in an utterly fruitless quagmire of a war. Especially of late however, the aforementioned possibilities seem likely explanations for the current shameful, stubborn, and painfully simplistic foreign policy utilized by our great nation, with its outrageously gigantic economy, technologically superior mechanized army, and not to forget, insatiable thirst for pure, unadulterated, according-to-hoyle victory. Although many would love to believe such a naive, black-and-white definition of victory, sadly like most things in this world it is not that simple. Victory is a word that, for every conceivable variable, from the largest, most holy mosque destroyed by American artillery fire to the youngest Iraqi girl whose parents were brutally murdered by either a Sunni or Shiite death squad, has numerous definitions. You cannot limit yourself to one characterization of what victory is, for that is a direct route to complete failure and disappointment, as we see everyday on CNN, when we are told the story of another Joe Everyman 21-year-old private-first class from anywhere USA who was killed on a humvee patrol mission aimed at securing the other ninety-five percent of Iraq not secured over three years ago when we triumphantly declared mission accomplished, and were immediately showered with flowers by the Iraqi people. And to those within this country who believe that to withdraw will be a crushing blow against American pride and standing in the world, expound such blind patriotism when it is your son or daughter walking the streets of Baghdad with no idea whether the next street corner will be populated by a nearly invisible IED, exactly like those that have crippled so many young, promise-filled Americans, or one of the many deceivingly well-hidden snipers who make steady sport of firing potshots from a spire outside of an untouchably holy Mosque, hitting our young men and women when they least expect it. It is for these American heroes that I, along with most Americans must hope President Bush's current policy is a success.

Because I know in my heart of hearts that this administration is too prideful to consider taking a hint from the American people, or the 9/11 Commission, or the Iraq Study Group, I am forced to cheer for any alternative to the current policy of "stay the course" while simultaneously hoping that the abovementioned "course staying" rises like the Phoenix from the ashes and succeeds. If Mr. Bush's strategy is a success, which it appears as though, barring some unforeseen circumstance, it most definitely will not be, it will be a victory for the American fighting man and woman, because until the next pre-emptive war, they will be safe. But will the next be somewhere in Asia, Northern Africa, or most likely the Middle East yet again? Iran and Syria both seem hell bent on becoming America's Tour of the Arab World stops two and three.

Most likely it will take Republican pressure and lots of it to revise in any way the single-minded policy of this administration. Nevertheless, it is a heartrending day for de-

mocracy when the resounding message of the American people is deemed secondary to the egocentric and stubborn strategy of a few white men (and black woman) who call a giant, white, house on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. their office.

To reiterate an earlier point, the leaders of this nation are not free to choose what is in our best interest, when we the people have clearly and resoundingly spoken against the current ideals and strategies. The current policy quite simply costs too many Americans and Iraqis their lives without a foreseeable goal or proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Rather, they have a solemn obligation to represent the views of the people of this country. But who knows? Maybe a benevolent dictator would make things a whole lot easier for most people in this country. Who likes freedom anyways?

TRIBUTE TO GIFFORD CARL
RAMSEY

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Gifford Carl Ramsey, a fellow trooper and colleague in the Florida Highway Patrol. He died on January 10, 2007—a victim of cancer—and will be buried this Saturday, January 20, 2007, at Glendale Baptist Church in Miami-Dade County's Richmond Heights community.

Born on January 16, 1959, to Gifford and Agatha Ramsey, he was affectionately called "Spanky" by those of his closest friends and teammates, who played on the football team at Florida A&M University. Awarded a full athletic scholarship, he led the Rattlers on the gridiron by winning two consecutive national football titles in 1977 and 1978, and was honored as Division I-AA and Black College All-American.

Ever since I have known Trooper Ramsey as a member of the Florida Highway Patrol's 66th Recruit Class of 1982, he eminently served above and beyond the call of duty until his promotion to Sergeant in July 2006. He also volunteered as chaplain of the National Black State Trooper's Coalition and became the vice president of the Florida Coalition of Black State Troopers.

Responding to an inner calling of consecrating his life to the service of God, he affirmed his vocation by accepting Jesus Christ as his personal Savior in 1988 and joined the congregation of Glendale Missionary Baptist Church under the tutelage of the late Reverend Joseph Coats, Sr. On January 20, 1993, he met his future wife, Lisa Smith of Philadelphia, PA, and married her a year later on July 9, 1994. Two children, Jarrett and Jayla, were born out of this happy union. Thereupon, he and his wife became partners in God's Vineyard, and in 2001, Trooper Gifford "Spanky" Ramsey was ordained a Deacon of Glendale Baptist Church.

Blessed with an unenviable commonsense approach to life, he was also imbued with the rare wisdom of recognizing the strengths and limitations of the members of his congregation and those he served. Trooper Ramsey went about the duties of his profession, and he also became a missionary at home and abroad, serving a short-term tenure in Cape Town, South Africa.

Trooper and Deacon Ramsey was my good friend, and I am deeply saddened by his passing. He was my mentor ever since I became a trooper in the Florida Highway Patrol in 1989. Indeed, he will be an indelible reminder of the noble commitment of public service, and the awesome power of his religious vocation to minister to the youth under the aegis of programs such as the Juvenile Justice Center Read Aloud Program, the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, Special Olympics Fundraising Events, Child Passenger Safety Details in both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. His faith was deep and genuine, and his love for Glendale Baptist Church defined his dynamic friendship and understanding. No one who knew Trooper "Spanky"—and being struck by his sunny disposition and optimism—went away not acknowledging the presence of a caring community leader.

Like the God he faithfully served during the remaining years of his life, this trooper and gentleman came and lived among us that we may have life and have hope more abundantly. True to his faith, Reverend Ramsey would urge us to believe that his death does not represent an irrevocable finality, and he would assure us that he will live on in the good deeds he left behind. Indeed, no life could be more revered for having fulfilled his vocation as God's faithful steward. I will cherish the wonderful memories I have of his magnificent friendship.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG
PRICE NEGOTIATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act. I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 4, and I congratulate Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader HOYER for keeping their promise to the American people by taking this important step to place access to quality care for America's seniors and fiscal responsibility for taxpayers over increasing corporate profits.

The Republican Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 included an unprecedented provision outright prohibiting the Federal Government from negotiating for lower prescription drug prices. The result was predictable. Drug company profits soared, while drug prices increased for seniors and persons with disabilities. A July 2006 New York Times article reported that pharmaceutical companies may have received a more than \$2 billion windfall last year as a result of the transfer of low-income Medicaid recipients into the Medicare Part D program. Profiting from the sale of medications for our most vulnerable citizens is unacceptable.

H.R. 4 will require the Department of Health and Human Services, HHS, to negotiate for lower drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries. This legislation does not say how the negotiating authority should be implemented, but instead allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to determine the best way to negotiate for the lowest prices.

I have held several town halls in my district about Medicare Part D, and each time my

constituents have clearly stated that a ban on negotiating for lower prescription drug costs makes no sense. H.R. 4 is supported by community pharmacists, AARP, consumer rights' groups, and dozens of other organizations. Additionally, negotiating for lower prescription drug costs is not a new idea. States, corporations, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and large pharmacy chains all negotiate to receive price discounts on prescription drugs. In fact, HHS already has experience negotiating for lower prescription drug costs. In 2001, the agency successfully negotiated for lower prices for Cipro, the medication used in response to the anthrax attacks. It is time for HHS to use this expertise to benefit America's seniors and persons with disabilities.

Clearly, there is still much more work to be done to correct the many inadequacies of Medicare Part D, but H.R. 4 is an important first step, and one which will result in lower drug costs and real savings for millions of seniors and people with disabilities.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4.

HONORING MUHAMMAD ALI ON
HIS 65TH BIRTHDAY

SPEECH OF

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish a very happy birthday to the former heavyweight champion of the world, and the undisputed greatest boxer of all time, Muhammad Ali.

Mr. Speaker, Muhammad Ali never shied away from speaking his mind on issues concerning racial inequality, social injustice and human rights issues, either while he was heavyweight champion, or today, as he continues to be a world leader on these issues.

Since retiring from boxing, Ali has raised over \$50 million for charities here in the U.S. and around the globe, and he has delivered millions in food and medical supplies to countries throughout Africa and Asia.

He has been on international aid missions to Cuba, and he played a key role in getting American hostages released from Iraq before the start of the Persian Gulf war.

Muhammad Ali's penchant for peacemaking was recognized by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 1998 when Ali was named a U.N. Messenger of Peace.

While serving at the U.N., he also worked to build the Muhammad Ali Center in his hometown of Louisville, KY, to promote respect, hope and understanding among all people, and which strives to help all individuals realize the greatness within them.

Standing on principle and never casting aspersions on those who challenged his moral convictions, Ali objected to the war in Vietnam, and refused to be inducted into the U.S. Army in 1967.

As a consequence, Ali was indicted for draft evasion, convicted, and was stripped of his boxing title. Eventually Ali was ultimately vindicated in the United States Supreme Court, which overturned his conviction, by a unanimous vote in 1971, but not before losing valuable years of his livelihood and being wrongly

accused of being unpatriotic and disloyal to the country he loved so dearly.

Muhammad Ali would regain his boxing title in 1974, but far more important was the manner in which he wore the mantle of champion.

Mr. Speaker, Muhammad Ali is not only one of the greatest athletes of our time, he has become one of the most recognized and beloved people in the world, and he insists on using his celebrity to help his fellow man and woman.

His athletic prowess made him famous, but it is his heart and good deeds that will have cemented his place in our hearts forever.

Muhammad Ali is a hero in every sense of the world, and we all owe him a debt of gratitude for his role in making America a more conscientious and better country.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG
ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Negotiation Act. This legislation corrects a grave mistake of the past by striking a provision in the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 which prohibited the Secretary of Health and Human Services from directly negotiating with pharmaceutical companies. In addition, H.R. 4 explicitly requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to directly negotiate with the pharmaceutical industry for lower prescription drug prices.

This legislation is necessary because Medicare drug plans have failed to obtain significant price discounts for seniors. In fact, the drug plans' prices are over 60 percent higher than prices for identical drugs in Canada. Requiring the Secretary to negotiate with the drug companies will bring much needed relief to millions of Medicare beneficiaries.

More than 90 percent of Americans agree that the Secretary should be directly negotiating with the pharmaceutical industry.

Unfortunately, the current Secretary has said he does not support the underlying legislation. His predecessor, though, has demonstrated the authority for and efficacy of the HHS Secretary negotiating with the pharmaceutical industry for lower prices. In 2001, former HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson successfully negotiated a reduced price for Cipro. In fact, the Secretary negotiated the price down from \$4.67 to \$1.77 per dose—a reduction of nearly 500 percent. Additionally, when Secretary Thompson resigned his position at HHS, he explicitly stated he wished Congress had given him the power to negotiate with drug manufacturers to secure lower prices for Medicare beneficiaries.

The Medicare Prescription Drug Negotiation Act will save seniors money both at the pharmacy counter and in the form of lower premiums.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that helping seniors obtain prescription drugs at prices they can afford is part of the Democratic 100 hours plan. I thank the gentlemen from California and Michigan, and the gentlewoman from Missouri for their leadership on this issue, and I

urge my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Negotiation Act.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF "BLACK
JANUARY" IN AZERBAIJAN

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, on January 20th, the people of Azerbaijan, both at home and abroad, will commemorate the 16th anniversary of what has become known as Black January. The terrible event remembered by this commemoration was an atrocity—but it also gave birth to a hope that led eventually to independence and freedom.

At around midnight, on the night of January 19–20, 1990, Azerbaijan was invaded by 26,000 Soviet troops pursuant to a state of emergency that had been declared in secret by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow. Dozens of people would be dead in the streets of Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, before the Soviet authorities in Moscow ever even deigned to acknowledge that a decision had been made to suppress the pro-independence and pro-democracy movement in Azerbaijan.

A courageous resistance by Azerbaijanis to the Soviet invasion continued into February. Eventually, 140 Azerbaijanis were killed, about 700 more were wounded, and still hundreds more were rounded up and detained indefinitely.

The Soviet attack against innocent civilians in Azerbaijan followed massacres in other constituent republics in the then-Soviet Union, including Kazakhstan in 1986 and Georgia in 1989. Tragically, the Azerbaijani experience would be replicated in large part 1 year later in Lithuania.

In a report issued shortly after the tragedy of Black January, Human Rights Watch put the onrush of events into a larger perspective: ". . . the violence used by the Soviet Army on the night of January 19–20 was so out of proportion to the resistance offered by Azerbaijanis as to constitute an exercise in collective punishment. The punishment inflicted on Baku by Soviet soldiers may have been intended as a warning to nationalists, not only in Azerbaijan, but in the other Republics of the Soviet Union."

But brute force was not enough to hold the Soviet Union together.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the night of January 19–20, 1990 gave birth to Azerbaijan's independence. It was on that night that Azerbaijanis lost their fear of the Soviet Union. It was on that night that Azerbaijanis realized their dream of independence and freedom could not, and would not, be denied.

On August 30, 1991, in the wake of the attempted coup in the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan declared its independence—one of the first constituent republics to do so. And the last troops from the former Soviet Union were finally removed from Azerbaijani soil in 1993.

Every January 20, as many thousands gather in Martyr's Cemetery in the hills above Baku, the dead are honored and the nation's commitment to independence, democracy, and freedom is renewed. The victims of Black January did not die in vain.