

bill in six years? Why didn't he veto the corporate tax bill in 2004—a bloated bill that doled out \$139 billion in corporate welfare when all that was needed was a \$5 billion tax fix to put us in compliance with our trade agreements?

We Democrats are going to fight for the priorities of the American people. The President should not try to rehabilitate his fiscal record by vetoing responsible appropriations bills—or, for that matter, the bipartisan children's health insurance bill.

OUR LONG-TERM FISCAL CHALLENGES

Finally, let me say that as important as this disagreement over appropriations is, we must not be distracted from the long-term fiscal challenges that face our nation. Fiscal responsibility is not some virtue that exists in a vacuum. It's vital to our future.

As Bob Bixby of the Concord Coalition points out: "The basic facts [of our fiscal challenges] are a matter of arithmetic, not ideology. Two factors stand out: demographics and health care costs."

With the imminent retirement of 78 million Baby Boomers, and the attendant demands on Social Security and Medicare, we are on the cusp of a fiscal tsunami that threatens to drown our nation in a sea of red ink.

Over the next quarter century, the number of Americans 65 and older will nearly double—from 12 percent of the population today to 20 percent.

Medicare and Medicaid will grow by nearly five times as a share of the economy by 2050, if we assume the growth of health care costs does not slow. And these programs will absorb as much of our nation's economy by the late 2040s as the entire federal budget does today.

According to the 2006 Financial Report of the United States—signed by Treasury Secretary Paulson—our fiscal exposures (explicit liabilities and implicit obligations) had a present value of \$44 trillion, or about as much as the net worth of all household assets.

We are not going to grow our way out of this problem, through some magic supply-side solution. The GAO estimates that it would require inflation-adjusted average annual economic growth in the double-digit range every year for the next 75 years to close the gap through growth alone.

It is imperative that we get serious about our long-term fiscal challenges. There is plenty of room for debate over the mix of options that should be considered. But we do not have time to waste.

Senators Conrad and Gregg and Congressmen Cooper and Wolf have put forward proposals for a bipartisan task force. While I would like to believe that Congress could address these issues through the regular legislative process, the experience of recent years suggests that this is extremely difficult in the current political environment.

Thus, I support the Conrad-Gregg and Cooper-Wolf proposals in concept, although I have concerns about several specific provisions.

My preference certainly would be to have Members of Congress and this Administration make recommendations that are considered in this Congress. But there are two problems with that: First, this is now an outgoing Administration, with little over a year left. And second, despite the good-faith efforts of Secretary Paulson, this Administration is loath to put all options on the table.

As a result, I believe that we must move forward with such a task force after our new President is inaugurated in January 2009, with a process allowing the President and Congress to consider alternatives.

Turning a blind eye to our long-term challenges would not only be irresponsible, it

would be unforgivable. As Comptroller General Walker has warned: "Continuing on the unsustainable fiscal path will gradually erode, if not suddenly damage, our economy, our standard of living, and ultimately our national security."

Our fiscal future need not be filled with peril—if we have the courage and will to recognize and address these challenges.

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT ZACHARY TOMCZAK

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to honor the life of Staff Sgt. Zachary Tomczak, who died September 25, 2007, in Iraq from wounds suffered when his unit came under small arms fire.

Zachary, who served in the Army's 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division based in Fort Bragg, NC, graduated from Huron High School in 2002 and joined the Army soon after graduation. He was serving on his fourth tour of duty when he was wounded. He is described as a phenomenal person who stood as an example for all American citizens. His high school principal said, "Zac was someone who demanded very little of us and gave an awful lot. He was a wonderful, wonderful young man."

The lives of countless people were enormously enhanced by Zachary's compassion and service. He represented the best of the United States, South Dakota, and the Army. His life continues to inspire all those who knew him and many who did not. Our Nation and the State of South Dakota are far better places because of his service, and the best way to honor him is to emulate his devotion to our country.

Today, we remember and honor Zachary's noble service to the United States and the ultimate sacrifice he has paid with his life to defend our freedoms and foster liberty for others.

I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my sympathies to the family and friends of Staff Sgt. Tomczak. His commitment to and sacrifice for our Nation will never be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN GIDEON PRATHER SR.

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I must inform the House of the passing of another member of that vanishing breed of "the Greatest Generation" of Americans who served our Nation during World War II and made our Nation and its communities strong when they came home.

John Gideon Prather Sr. was somebody all of us turned to for advice. Part of that was because he was a wise attorney, helping many clients who couldn't really afford one, but it was also because that's just the way he was, regardless of his chosen profession. The country lawyer in him gave advice to judges, other attorneys and clients across Kentucky.

As a prosecuting attorney, he set the tone for how lawyers ought to interact with one another professionally, fight as they may in the courtroom. Our community and our criminal justice system are stronger because of him.

John left us September 21, 2007 at the age of 87. His law partners were his son John Jr. and Winter Huff. He began working in his father's insurance company in the 1940s. After Pearl Harbor was bombed, he joined the U.S. Navy, where he served in North Africa and Italy. After the war, he graduated from the University of Kentucky law school and began his legal career, spanning six decades and including terms as Somerset City and State prosecuting attorney.

As a civic leader, he was not just a member of our community organizations, including the Jaycees, Kiwanis Club, VFW and American Legion, he was a leader in them. He was also a profound Sunday school teacher. But John Prather's greatest civic effort was his near-life-long commitment to Troop 79 of the Boy Scouts, headquartered at his church in Somerset. Generations of young boys became much better men through John's dedication to Boy Scouts. They were his greatest pride and maybe his greatest legacy.

He leaves behind his wife, Jean, a son, a daughter-in-law, and four grandchildren.

John was a father figure and friend to us lawyers, his church, civic colleagues, and, indeed, the whole community. A mighty oak has fallen and the void left on the mountain top is both painful and profound. We will miss the gentlemanly courtesies, wise counsel, and warm friendship he dispensed so liberally.

We will miss John G. Prather.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE REMARKABLE EFFORTS OF SEW MUCH COMFORT

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize the nonprofit organization, Sew Much Comfort, which coordinates the efforts of volunteer seamstresses to adapt clothing for wounded servicemembers.

This all-volunteer initiative formed in December 2004 as a 501(c)3 public charity and is the only organization that provides specially designed adaptive clothing to military hospitals. Ginger Dosedel founded the organization nearly 4 years ago when her husband was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base. Their son underwent treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for muscular cancer and suggested to his mother that she may be able to help the many wounded soldiers they met while in Washington, DC.

Their mission "to design, create, and deliver customized clothing for these brave troops" not only provides our heroes with a tangible symbol of our immeasurable support for them, but also helps to facilitate the healing process upon their return from military service.

The Emerald Coast Chapter of the American Sewing Guild recently sponsored an event where numerous volunteers gathered in Baker, a city in my district of Northwest Florida, to sew for this wonderful cause.

Over the past four years, thousands of volunteers have worked diligently to alter shirts, shorts, boxer shorts, and pants. All of which are shipped to a central distribution center in Ohio and then allocated to military hospitals throughout the United States, as well as Germany, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize the remarkable philanthropic efforts of Sew Much Comfort and their volunteers for their generosity and commitment to service which has helped to create a better life for our brave servicemembers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. HULSHOF. Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I was unavoidably detained and missed September 7th's rollcall vote, number 869. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007.

RECOGNITION OF RETIREMENT

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker. I rise today in recognition of the retirement of Vernon Martin, the Executive Director of the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center. Vernon has been a valuable partner in my efforts to represent the First District of Georgia and a great friend.

Over the many years that we have known each other, he has been wonderful to work with and always kept the safety, security, and well-being of the community in the forefront of his thoughts. Vernon has dedicated 38 years of service to Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, where he was instrumental in the economic development of the region. The service area for his office has undergone tremendous change in the past four decades. Coastal Georgia needed leadership and hard work to transition from the slow growth rates that characterized prior eras to the booming growth that the region is now experiencing. Vernon and his staff at the RDC have provided steady guidance and support to the communities they serve, helping them prepare for the future and adapt to change.

Vernon's list of accomplishments over the years is a long one. He was active in the creation of Coastal Emergency Management Plan to insure the safety of Georgia's coastal communities during hurricanes, established the Nation's first and largest rural revolving loan fund, helped to create one of the Nation's first regional rural tourism program and was involved in coordinating off-base impact planning for two major military installation expansions. In 2004, Vernon was awarded the Walter Scheiber Leadership Award for his support to the Association and for his outstanding leadership and innovation as a regional council executive director.

Although he will be missed at the Regional Development Center, we are all glad to know that he will still serve in an advisory capacity and help transition to a new Executive Director. I'm sure Vernon is counting the days until he can fully enjoy the beautiful Georgia weather on his beloved motorcycle. I wish him the best of luck in his retirement.

CONGRATULATING ST. JOHN'S
PREPARATORY SCHOOL IN
DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, Massachusetts, on the occasion of its 100th Anniversary Celebration and extend the congratulations and best wishes from the United States House of Representatives for continued success in all of its future endeavors to the School's Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty, Staff and Alumni.

St. John's Preparatory School held its first day of classes on September 10, 1907, and over the next century, it has graduated 12,000 alumni, who have gone on to make significant, lasting contributions in careers and communities throughout the region, across the country and around the world.

Today, St. John's Preparatory School continues to honor the legacy of its founders, the Congregation of the Brothers of St. Francis Xavier, and remains dedicated to the pursuit of humility, zeal, compassion, trust and simplicity in all endeavors.

Throughout its history, the School has nurtured a dynamic community of learners encouraging its students to develop their full spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and creative potential, and it has inspired its student body to value and honor the diversity that enriches both the school community and the world beyond its campus.

St. John's Prep students continually strive for excellence and have earned distinction in scholarship, athletics, service and the arts. The Prep, as it is better known by many, is committed to the character, mission and values of a Catholic education and since its opening has celebrated its Catholic identity and formed partnerships with schools in the region to enhance educational opportunity and ensure access for students from all walks of life.

St. John's Preparatory School seeks to promote human dignity and the pursuit of peace and justice, and its alumni, students, faculty and staff have established various programs to respond to the needs of many working side by side with other volunteers and social service organizations locally, nationally and internationally.

Congratulations to St. John's Preparatory School for one hundred years of education, inspiration and enrichment bestowed upon so many who have passed through its halls and in recognition of the contributions and accomplishments of its alumni, administration, faculty, staff and students that have touched many throughout the world.

MS. FABIOLA SMALL

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to recognize a longtime community leader in southeast Texas. Ms. Fabiola Small has worn many distinguished hats throughout her lifetime, including co-chair of the Port Arthur Weed and Seed; founder of Love People, Inc.; founder of the Port Arthur, Texas Juneteenth Pageant; president of Woodmen of the World, Lodge 6192 and Youth Lodge 4640; president of Texas Senior Citizens Association; and board member of Tekoa Academy Charter School.

"Ms. Fab" selflessly volunteers her time at the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Sports Section, and delivers meals to the young and the elderly. She has received countless awards, including the 2006 Woodmen of the World Insurance Society; 2006 Fraternalist of the Year; MVP of the National Fraternal Congress of America; 2006 Women's History, Builders of Communities & Dreams; 2007 MVP of the U.S. Congress, and 2007 Juneteenth Trailblazer.

Ms. Small is the first African American to be recognized as the National and International Fraternalist of the Year. An award presented to fraternalists who provide outstanding volunteer service in his or her community, and excellent leadership in his or her local chapter throughout the past year. Ms. Small's volunteerism even caught the attention of Southern Living Magazine, who will feature her in an upcoming issue.

Ms. Small has dedicated her time and energy to the Golden Triangle for most of her life. Her selfless acts of kindness, devotion, and compassion for others are a true testament to her character. With 4 children, 18 children that she has taken under her wings, 22 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren, "Ms. Fab" is an inspiration to others, setting a great example for all to follow.

On behalf of the Second Congressional District of Texas, I applaud Ms. Fabiola Small on her outstanding achievements. She has helped make our world a better place to live, and I applaud her unwavering service and dedication to the community.

And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL WICE OF WEST CENTRAL NEBRASKA

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 1, 2007

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay my respects to a broadcasting institution in West Central Nebraska, Paul Wice. This past Friday he turned on the microphone to host "Talk of the Town" one last time.

A 1962 graduate of Kearney High, and a 1966 graduate of Kearney State College, Paul has been a fixture on the airwaves for listeners in my district for nearly 40 years.

I have had the pleasure of being interviewed by him both as part of news stories, and as a guest on his show.