

five years and will move at least three times before they are adopted. One in five will never be adopted. In the face of these disheartening statistics, we must celebrate those parents who choose to adopt and provide a loving home to these children and encourage the adoption of more children from foster care.

In November 2000, hundreds of lawyers, child advocates, State foster care agencies, and courts, worked together to finalize hundreds of foster care adoptions across the country as part of National Adoption Day. Since then, National Adoption Day has grown as thousands of new families have come together.

I am proud that Montgomery County, Maryland, which is in my Congressional District, has finalized 7 adoptions this month and 30 so far this year. In one family, 2 sisters, Jerry and Beverly Wright, have adopted 5 children, and, with their biological children, now have 10 children safe and well-cared-for in their home. I congratulate them, and all the happy and thriving families that include adopted children.

HOMEOWNERS' DEFENSE ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3355) to ensure the availability and affordability of homeowners' insurance coverage for catastrophic events:

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I would also like to thank Mr. KLEIN and Mr. MAHONEY for their leadership in authoring this bill.

Too well, we all remember the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the resulting confusion families encountered about their insurance coverage or lack thereof. Well, imagine if a hurricane were to go through a state and only 1 in 8 homeowners were covered by an insurance policy. Unfortunately, this is exactly the situation that exists in California today—only 1 in 8 (or 12 percent) of Californians possess earthquake insurance. At the time of the Northridge earthquake in 1994 almost three times as many people were covered. After the Northridge earthquake, the cost of the coverage doubled and the amount of coverage provided was cut in half.

The California Earthquake Authority (CEA)—created after the Northridge earthquake when insurers restricted homeowners' insurance policies in order to avoid earthquake exposure—currently provides about two-thirds of the residential insurance coverage in California. Since its inception 11 years ago, CEA has been unable to accumulate the amount of capital it projects it will need in the event of a catastrophic earthquake. This year approximately 40 percent of the premium that CEA collects from policyholders will be paid to re-insurers rather than towards capital accumulation or more coverage under the policy.

Including the CEA in the benefits provided under H.R. 3355 will allow it to reduce its claims-paying financing costs while still being able to pay the cost of its losses and repay any reinsurance or loans from the Federal

government. By reducing its claims paying costs CEA will be able to accumulate capital faster and encourage more people to buy earthquake insurance.

Inclusion of the CEA in H.R. 3355 makes good economic sense, good actuarial sense, and good common sense. I urge my colleagues to support the Manager's Amendment and the underlying bill before us today.

THE ENSURING MEDICARE ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL THERAPY ACT OF 2007

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the many Medicare beneficiaries who require therapeutic rehabilitative services.

I first developed an interest in rehabilitation issues after someone in my own family was forced to cope with a disabling paralytic disease. I saw the benefits of recreational therapy first hand, through the therapy my father received, and I want to be sure everyone has access to the same treatment already covered by Medicare.

Recreational therapy can be a vital service for the ill and the disabled. In many cases, it is a critical means for improving the functioning, independence, and quality of life of persons with illness or disability. Recreational therapy is always prescribed and supervised by a physician as part of a patient's rehabilitative plan of care.

It has long been a priority of mine to remove existing barriers to Medicare beneficiaries' access to recreational therapy. For years, I have worked alongside therapists in trying to help those with illnesses or disabling conditions gain consistent access to these services.

In the past, dozens of my colleagues and I have sought clarification from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on its policy on coverage and payment of recreational therapy services in three inpatient settings: rehabilitation hospitals (IRFs), psychiatric hospitals (IPFs) and skilled nursing facilities (SNFs).

CMS regulations and policy manuals currently lack sufficient clarity on the treatment of recreational therapy provided in these inpatient settings. As a result, widespread confusion and misperceptions surround the recreational therapy benefit under Medicare. Out of concern for potential liability for fraud and abuse, many IRF, IP, and SNF facility administrators are declining to offer recreational therapy, creating inconsistent access to these vital services for patients throughout the country.

CMS has responded to each Congressional inquiry made on this issue, but to date CMS has not clarified its coverage and payment policy of recreational therapy services to fiscal intermediaries, facility administrators, treating physicians, and other relevant entities. In order to ensure that patients are able to receive appropriate rehabilitative services, CMS must formally clarify its policy.

For the sake of Medicare beneficiaries in need of recreational therapy, it is time to require CMS to do so.

To be sure, CMS has confirmed in writing that it considers recreational therapy to be a covered service in each of these three inpatient settings. CMS has also confirmed that the costs of these services have been built into the prospective payment systems for IRFs, IPFs, and SNFs and, therefore, Medicare is already paying to provide recreational therapy services to beneficiaries who need them. Yet access to recreational therapy is not assured.

To remedy this situation, I am introducing the Ensuring Medicare Access to Recreational Therapy Act of 2007, with Representative Phil English, to make certain that patients who need recreational therapy services, as prescribed by their physician and as warranted by their health condition, have consistent access to these medically necessary services.

Our bill simply directs CMS to clarify current coverage and payment policy by issuing notification that recreational therapy is a covered inpatient service in IRFs, IPFs, and SNFs and that the cost of providing such services has already been built into the prospective payment systems for these inpatient settings. This clarification will serve Medicare beneficiaries far better than the current CMS guidance on this issue.

It is important to note that this legislation will not create new coverage, or add any financial burden to the Medicare program. It will, however, ensure access to rehabilitative care so that individuals with disabilities, injuries, or chronic conditions may regain their maximum level of independent function.

I urge my colleagues to please join us in the fight to remove these arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to consistent access to recreational therapy services for all the Medicare beneficiaries who need them.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ABOUT LOWE'S CHRISTMAS TREES

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Lowe's Home Improvement, a company that has long been a strong force of economic development and community involvement in North Carolina.

It recently came to my attention that this week there was a bit of a kerfuffle over a misprint in Lowe's holiday catalog. Apparently the Christmas tree section of the catalogue had a misprint that labeled them "family trees."

There was no small outcry from a number of concerned citizens who thought that Lowe's might be up to something here. Well, I want to set the record straight. After hearing from Lowe's myself I know that it was a simple printing error—a matter of a hiccup in the creative process.

Lowe's was quick to apologize for the printing error and assured me that they were not out to alter the nomenclature of this fine Christmas tradition. As a former Christmas tree farmer I know how important it is to millions of Americans that a beautiful evergreen graces their living rooms each year as part of their celebration of this sacred season. At the same time, I also know that Lowe's was in no way attempting to undermine our celebrations of advent.

I fully support every American's right to voice concerns over what many see as the steady march of secularism each Christmas season. But I want to assure them that Lowe's had no such intentions in mind. A printing error slipped through the cracks and the company has pledged to redouble its catalogue proofreading processes.

A company spokesperson has even been quoted in the media explaining that the catalogue title was an error and was inconsistent with the company's long-standing practice of referring to its Christmas trees as "Christmas trees." This spokesperson said that Lowe's had intended to convey that family traditions often begin with a Christmas tree.

I hope that now that the facts are out, we can all return to celebrating the birth of Christ this Christmas season, undistracted by this dust-up over a simple copyediting slipup.

THE ALL-AMERICAN HOLIDAY BILL

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and encourage Americans to come together this holiday season and protect the greatest economy the world has ever seen. The American economic experiment that started back in the early 20th Century has proved that freedom, innovation and individual drive have the ability to create a prosperous economy. Our economy has enabled us to build a democracy that so many nations seek to emulate. Yet I am sad to report that many families, particularly in the mid-west, which is the backbone of America, are losing manufacturing jobs to countries with less stringent regulatory systems and cheaper labor.

Madam Speaker, the holidays are upon us and I am troubled by the difficulty to buy American-made goods in my holiday shopping quest. Americans should be able to purchase products that are made by Americans. For many years, I have had concerns over the decrease in American manufacturing jobs and the increase in our trade with China, who sends us unsatisfactory goods that are harmful to our families and children.

Today, I am introducing an important resolution that fulfills what I believe to be one of our most important obligations as patriotic Americans: encouraging Americans to purchase American-made products this holiday season.

China is the second largest supplier of consumer products and an increasingly dependent supplier of agricultural products to the United States. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) stated that to date, in 2007, over 80 percent of CPSC recall notices have involved Chinese-made products.

Specifically, over the past year, pet food laced with chemicals found in fertilizer caused the sickness and death of several dozen pets in the United States. The Food and Drug Administration released warnings on toothpaste products from China that contained poisonous chemicals, as well as farm-raised fish products that contained uncertified antimicrobial agents. Furthermore, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued a recall of nearly 450,000 tires suspected to have major safety

defects. Since March 2007, nearly 20 million Chinese made toys have been recalled by U.S. companies due to suspected lead contamination.

It is clear that China's irresponsible regulatory system is not sufficient to keep the citizens of their trading partners safe. In fact they are not able to provide safe products for their own people. In June 2004, the Chinese People's Daily reported that fake baby formula had killed 50 to 60 infants in China. Fish farmers in China reportedly feed various drugs to the fish to help keep them alive in polluted Chinese waters, and in July 2007, the Xinhua News Agency reported that a government survey of 7,200 different products from nearly 6,500 enterprises found that 19.1 percent of products made in China for domestic consumption in the first half of 2007 were sub-standard.

I call on my colleagues to join me in supporting the U.S. economy and, in turn, our Armed Forces, by purchasing American products. One of the best things we can do for our returning soldiers is to make sure they have good jobs when they return. Buying American-made products will keep good manufacturing jobs available for our soldiers when they return home. I understand how difficult it will be to purchase all American food and gifts during the holiday season. However, for the 1.8 million American jobs that have been shipped overseas, for the future jobs that are in jeopardy of being lost to cheaper labor and, of course, for the troops serving our country overseas, I ask you to buy for America this holiday season.

ORDERLY AND RESPONSIBLE IRAQ REDEPLOYMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my support for H.R. 4156, the Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act, which will begin the redeployment of U.S. forces out of Iraq, strengthen our military and enhance our national security. By passing this measure, the House of Representatives is, yet again, sending a clear signal to the President that we need a new course in Iraq.

Though I opposed the resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq, I later voted for numerous supplemental appropriations bills to ensure that we provided sufficient equipment and resources for our troops. They have done an amazing job in undertaking a difficult and changing mission, and they deserve nothing but the full support of the Nation and its leaders. However, nearly 5 years after our initial invasion of Iraq, the best way to support our troops is to bring them home. In May of this year, I voted against the supplemental appropriations bill for fiscal year 2007 because it gave the President far too much authority to continue a war that had been repeatedly mismanaged by the civilian leadership at the Pentagon.

Unfortunately, 6 months later, very little has changed. The underlying causes of violence in

Iraq, which are ethnic and sectarian in nature, have not been addressed. In September, the Government Accountability Office found that the Iraqi Government had met only 3 of 18 congressionally mandated benchmarks for legislative, economic, and security progress. These problems cannot be solved by U.S. military force, and we should not expect our troops to be involved in a civil war. We need to shift our forces from combat operations and redeploy them out of Iraq while we refocus our Nation's efforts on fostering a political reconciliation among Iraq's tribal, ethnic, and religious groups to end the violence.

The bill before us today provides a blueprint for ending the war and bringing our troops home. It requires the President to begin redeployment of troops immediately, with a goal of completing redeployment by December 2008. It also shifts our forces away from a combat mission to focus on force protection, counterterrorism efforts, and the training of Iraqi security forces. Furthermore, it prohibits the deployment of U.S. troops that are not deemed fully mission capable. This provision is particularly important because our men and women in uniform have faced repeated deployments with insufficient rest and training time, and we must take bold steps now to prevent our military being strained to the breaking point. Our readiness levels are already dangerously low because of operations in Iraq, which endangers our national security in the event of a national disaster, a terrorist attack, or some other contingency.

H.R. 4156 recognizes that we need a new direction in Iraq and does not give the President a blank check to maintain the status quo. For that reason, President Bush has threatened to veto the measure. I am deeply disappointed that he is so out of touch with the American people and their priorities. He has requested nearly \$200 million to continue operations in Iraq with absolutely no strings attached, while he ignores pressing needs here at home. On Tuesday, he vetoed the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2008, claiming that it was too expensive. Operations in Iraq have cost a total of more than \$450 billion, yet the President is unwilling to invest \$10 billion in priority areas such as medical research, elementary and secondary education, Pell grants, health services to underserved populations, and heating assistance to low-income Americans.

While it is not a perfect bill, H.R. 4156 is an important step to force a fundamental shift in our Iraq policy and to bring our troops home. I would have preferred to see an earlier deadline for troop redeployment, and I have co-sponsored legislation with that goal. Nevertheless, a vote for H.R. 4156 is a vote for change, and I thank my colleagues for supporting it.

FEDERAL FOOD DONATION ACT

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mrs. EMERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Federal Food Donation Act of 2007. As we prepare to return home to spend time with our families and give thanks