

to the medications they need to stay healthy. It is my hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will work with me to make changes to Part D that improve and strengthen it for our seniors and help forge a prescription drug benefit that is meaningful, affordable and straightforward. The new leadership in Congress cares a great deal about our seniors, and it is time that we fulfill our promise to ensure that Part D serves seniors in the best way possible.

IRAQ ESCALATION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, President Bush—after using false information to sell a war to the American people and Congress, after invading Iraq without a plan to win the peace, after time and time again maintaining a failed “stay the course” policy—is now trying to sell an escalation of the war in Iraq as “a new way forward.” I am not buying it.

As the sister of a Vietnam veteran, I still remember vividly our escalation of that failed war and the thousands of additional lives that it cost. I remember vividly the worry I had for my brother and the feeling that our troops would be better served if they were returned home rather than fighting in another country's civil war. Those are the same feelings I have today about our troops who are serving bravely in today's failed war, the Iraq War.

I have long stated my desire for the President to begin a withdrawal of our troops from Iraq. I am a member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and I have strongly supported my colleague JOHN MURTHA's plan to redeploy our troops from Iraq. The American people made it crystal clear at the ballot box in November that staying the course in Iraq is not an option. Yet, President Bush has once again turned his back on calls to end the war, he has turned his back on the will of the electorate, and he is going in the opposite direction with a plan for escalation.

I applaud the Democratic leadership in the House and Senate and its plan for a phased redeployment of American troops beginning in months and for more intense diplomatic outreach. This plan is more sensible and would prove ultimately more successful than digging ourselves deeper in the quicksand that Iraq has become.

Furthermore, I will support any proposal that comes before Congress that would block funding for the implementation of escalation. I will support the effort by Senator KENNEDY and my colleague ED MARKEY to require the authorization of Congress before the President escalates this war.

As the daughter of a soldier and the sister of a soldier, I will always support our troops. It has become clear to just about everyone but the President that the best way now to support the troops is not to send more into the Iraqi Civil War—the best way to support them is to bring them home.

A TRIBUTE TO THE BROOKLYN ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam, Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Brooklyn Alumnae Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority as they host the New York Metropolitan Area Founders Day Celebration on January 13, 2007. The Brooklyn Alumnae Chapter has been outstanding in its service of the Brooklyn community for over 50 years and I am privileged to have such a dedicated group of individuals in my district.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority was founded on January 13, 1913 by 22 collegiate women at Howard University. These students wanted to use their collective strength to promote academic excellence and to provide assistance to persons in need. The first public act performed by the Delta Founders was in 1913 at the Women's Suffrage March in Washington D.C.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization whose goal is to provide assistance and support through established programs in local communities throughout the world. A sisterhood of more than 200,000 predominately Black college educated women, the Sorority currently has over 900 chapters located in the United States, England, Japan (Tokyo and Okinawa), Germany, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Republic of Korea. The major programs of the sorority are based upon the organization's Five Point Thrust of: Economic Development, Educational Development, International Awareness and Involvement, Physical and Mental Health and Political Awareness and Involvement.

The theme of this special event is “Keeping our History: Past, Present and Future.” This is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the life and achievements of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. this coming week.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to recognize the impressive achievements of Bernadette Walker, President of the Brooklyn Alumnae Chapter as well as the co-chairs of Founders Day, Valerie White and Natalia S. Young, for their commitment to the Brooklyn community.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this wonderful group of Americans and the great things they stand for.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CURES CAN BE FOUND ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Cures Can Be Found Act. This legislation promotes medical research by providing a tax credit for investments and donations to promote adult and umbilical cord blood stem cell research, and provides a \$2,000 tax credit to new parents for the donation of umbilical cord blood that can be used to extract stem cells.

Madam Speaker, stem cell research has the potential to revolutionize medicine. Stem cells could hold the keys to curing many diseases afflicting millions of Americans, such as diabetes and Alzheimer's. Umbilical cord blood stem cells have already been used to treat 67 diseases, including sickle cell disease, leukemia, and osteoporosis. Umbilical cord blood stem cells have also proven useful in treating spinal cord injuries and certain neurological disorders. Adult stem cells have shown promise in treating a wide variety of diseases ranging from brain, breast, testicular, and other types of cancers to multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, heart damage, and rheumatoid arthritis. Just this week, the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times ran major stories on the progress made in obtaining stem cells from amniotic fluid, which is easily obtainable from a pregnant woman during routine pre-natal tests.

By providing tax incentives for adult and umbilical cord blood stem cell research, the Cures Can Be Found Act will ensure greater resources are devoted to this valuable research. The tax credit for donations of umbilical cord blood will ensure that medical science has a continuous supply of stem cells. Thus, this bill will help scientists discover new cures using stem cells and, hopefully, make routine the use of stem cells to treat formally incurable diseases.

By encouraging private medical research, the Cures Can Be Found Act enhances a tradition of private medical research that is responsible for many medical breakthroughs. For example, Jonas Salk, discoverer of the polio vaccine, did not receive one dollar from the federal government for his efforts. I urge my colleagues to help the American people support the efforts of future Jonas Salks by cosponsoring the Cures Can Be Found Act.

FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my pleasure that the House has passed H.R. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. Nearly nine out of ten Americans believe that it is time to increase the minimum wage, and I could not agree more.

An increase in the minimum wage is long overdue. The minimum wage has not been increased in almost 10 years. This is the longest Americans have had to wait for an increase in the minimum wage since the original law was enacted in 1938.

While Americans have been waiting for an increase in the minimum wage, the cost of most necessities has risen. The fact is, the real value of the current minimum wage is the lowest it has been in over 50 years. Meanwhile, the costs of health care, gasoline and a college education are rising, and families in my District are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet.

An increase in the minimum wage will have a particularly beneficial impact on women, especially single mothers. The majority of minimum wage earners are women and common

sense tells us that a single mother cannot effectively provide for her children on \$10,000 a year. Because many of these mothers are forced to work extra hours or a second job to afford food and rent, their children end up spending most of their time without a parent at home to raise them.

If America is indeed the Land of Opportunity, we must reward those who pay their dues. A parent working full-time at the current minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour is likely living below the federal poverty level, and is often unable to afford what their children deserve: rent in a safe neighborhood, decent child care, and enough food on the table.

The minimum wage issue is ultimately a question about our fundamental values as Americans. Do we value hard work? Do we believe that people who work full-time should be able to support themselves? To support their families? Isn't it our job to support those who want a hand up, and not a hand out?

I believe the answer to these questions is yes, and I believe that most Americans agree with me.

I am pleased that the House of Representatives, under the leadership of Speaker NANCY PELOSI, brought this bill to the Floor during the first 100 hours of the 110th Congress. The priorities of working Americans are truly the priorities of this House of Representatives.

I am hopeful that the United States Senate will also make a minimum wage hike a priority and pass this bill as soon as possible. I am encouraged by the President's recently expressed willingness to cooperate with Democrats on this issue. The President's signature cannot come soon enough; the bill's initial 70 cent increase does not take place until 60 days after H.R. 2 becomes law. Mr. Speaker, nearly 13 million hard-working Americans have waited long enough.

SUPPORT FOR THE SAFE COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I am planning to reintroduced legislation in the House of Representatives aimed at addressing the looming financial crisis facing the Nation, the Securing America's Future Economy, SAFE, Commission Act. The bill would establish a national bipartisan commission that will put everything—entitlement spending as well as all other Federal programs and our Nation's tax policies—on the table and require Congress to vote up or down on its recommendations in their entirety, similar to the process set in 1988 to close military bases. Mandating congressional action on the panel's recommendations is what differentiates this commission from previous ones.

Support for the bill is coming from both sides of the aisle. I submit for the record an analysis by the Heritage Foundation and a letter of support from the Concord Coalition.

This legislation will be good for the future of America.

THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

THE WOLF SAFE COMMISSION ACT: A CHANCE TO GET THE BUDGET BACK ON TRACK (By Stuart Butler)

The recent Mid-Session Review by the Office of Management and Budget underscores the facts that sensible tax reform stimulates the economy and that faster growth swells revenue to the government as a byproduct of new jobs and extra income for Americans. The review also confirms the overall, disturbing long-term budget picture indicated in the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) long-term forecast. Under current law, both taxes and spending will rise rapidly during future decades towards European levels, with an ever-growing government taking a larger and larger proportion of the nation's income and threatening America's future economic growth. Decisive action is needed.

But faced with this threat, Washington is paralyzed. Rather than seriously tackling the tsunami of entitlement spending that will hit the budget after the baby boomers begin to retire, Congress actually made the situation far worse by enacting the huge Medicare prescription drug benefit. And while the Bush tax reforms have significantly helped in the short term, even if made permanent they would shave only about one percentage point from the future growth in taxes. Absent any additional reforms, the CBO forecasts that, with the Bush tax cuts extended, federal taxes will top 20 percent of GDP by about 2025 and approach 23 percent of GDP by 2045. The historical average, and today's level, is just over 18 percent of GDP.

With Congress polarized and paralyzed, some Members of Congress, along with President Bush, are exploring the idea of a bipartisan commission as a way to break away from the path of rapidly rising spending and taxes. President Bush pressed for an entitlements commission in his State of the Union address. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) has sponsored legislation (S. 3521) that includes a commission to review the long-term solvency of Social Security and Medicare. Meanwhile, Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA) has crafted a commission bill ("The SAFE Commission Act," H.R. 5552) specifically intended to win bipartisan support for bold action to secure the country's fiscal and economic future. Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) has introduced that bill in the Senate (S. 3491).

Commissions can help break a political logjam. They can also become vehicles for action that achieves a short-term political fix and yet does little in the long term or even makes things worse. So the political dynamics and mandate of a commission are critical. Fortunately, the Wolf commission bill recognizes these facts of political life and offers real hope for sensible action. A reason for this is that in its instructions to the commission, the bill wisely combines reform with fiscal changes in a manner that could achieve a breakthrough.

The core of the fiscal problem is the sharp projected rise in future entitlement spending, especially spending on programs for middle-class retirees. Contrary to many people's perception, taxes are not falling—as noted, taxes are projected to rise steadily to record levels under current law, in real terms and as a percentage of GDP. Still, in today's political deadlock many lawmakers maintain that tax revenue must be part of the equation if they are to have the political "cover" to accept curbs on popular entitlements.

But for good reasons, conservatives strongly resist the idea of raising taxes. For one thing, taxes are not the problem—spending is. Moreover, raising tax rates or instituting

new taxes would threaten economic growth, compounding the economic harm associated with government spending. Further, raising taxes likely would reduce the pressure on Congress to curb spending or, worse still, encourage lawmakers to increase their spending promises.

The Wolf bill seeks a solution to this political equation. It creates a bipartisan commission intended to address the unsustainable imbalance between federal commitments and revenues while increasing national savings and making the budget process give greater emphasis to long-term fiscal issues. While the commission could consider a range of approaches, the bill places emphasis on two: reforms that would limit the growth of entitlements while strengthening the safety net and tax reforms that would make the tax system more economically efficient and improve economic growth. The commission would hold public hearings around the country to discuss the long-term fiscal problem, and its recommendations would receive fast-track consideration by Congress.

By combining a slowdown in entitlement spending with reforms to strengthen assistance to the needy, a commission proposal could win support of liberals and others who worry that surging middle-class retiree spending in the future will crowd out safety net spending. And by placing an emphasis on pro-growth tax reform, a commission proposal could also lead to some additional revenues not by raising taxes but thanks instead to faster economic growth—just as the Bush tax reforms produced the recent sharp increase in federal revenues. Combining these features in a commission proposal could lead to a package that conservatives, liberals, and moderates all believe would advance their agendas—a necessary result for an economically sound agreement to succeed in a polarized Congress.

Some might argue that appointing a commission to address the long-term fiscal situation is an abrogation of responsibility by Congress. In an obvious sense, it is. But the Wolf bill also shows that lawmakers recognize that America's budgeting system is broken and in the current environment cannot lead to a responsible long-term federal budget. Representative Wolf's commission proposal seeks to alter those destructive dynamics in order to secure a sound economy for future generations.

THE CONCORDE COALITION,
Arlington, VA, June 28, 2006.

Hon. FRANK WOLF,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. WOLF: On behalf of The Concord Coalition, I am writing to express our deep appreciation for your leadership in sponsoring the Securing America's Future Economy, SAFE, Act, which would establish a bipartisan commission to recommend legislation addressing our Nation's unsustainable long-term fiscal outlook.

We strongly agree with you that the need for serious action is not just an economic imperative but a moral one as well. We also share your view that partisan divisions in Washington have become so wide that a commission may now be the only way forward on this issue. By establishing a fiscal policy commission with a broad mandate, meaningful public engagement, and the ability to consider all policy options, your legislation represents a very constructive step toward bringing about consensus solutions.

The demographic and fiscal challenges facing the budget in the years ahead are well known. Analysts of diverse ideological perspectives and nonpartisan officials at the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO)