

Madam Speaker, this new Democratic Congress is working to help restore the American Dream by opening the doors of a college education to more Americans. We need to all work together to raise all boats.

#### LISTEN TO ALL THE FACTS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Congress will soon hear from members of our military as well as civilian advisers about progress in Iraq. Yesterday, the General Accounting Office released its report. This one report tells only a partial account. We should base decision-making on complete information from our military leaders.

The GAO report does not assess progress being made on the ground, progress our military commanders have indicated is occurring. The benchmarks outlined in the report are laudable goals, assessed by dedicated officials. Developing democracy to protect American families takes time, as we learned in Germany and Japan. It took America 13 years to adopt our Constitution.

Next week, we will receive a report from our top commander in the field, GEN David Petraeus, and our top diplomat, Ambassador Ryan Crocker. We should remain open and receptive to what these professionals have to say. We must protect American families by making difficult but informed decisions.

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

#### ESTABLISHING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR EVERY CITIZEN

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

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, how many ears must we have before we can hear people cry?

Last week, the Census Bureau informed us that more Americans than ever before in our Nation's history are going without access to health care; 46 million, 46 million citizens have no health care coverage. But this national nightmare is measured best not in numbers, but in human lives. Families across Wisconsin are going bankrupt because they can't afford their medical bills. Teenagers across the country will go blind because they do not have access to the care they need for their diabetes.

Congress doesn't need a census report to feel people's pain. And as Members of Congress, we must not wait for yet another census report before we act. It is our duty and our moral responsibility to act now.

People in Wisconsin and everywhere else in America demand we establish

universal access to affordable care for every citizen, and working together, we will.

#### THANKING CONSTITUENTS FOR INPUT AT TOWN HALL MEETINGS

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, the right of people to openly and freely question their leaders and discuss solutions to common problems is the reason our democracy works.

I hold town hall meetings every August all across my district. This August, I had nine town hall meetings. I had over 700 people come out to these meetings. It is a wonderful time. The overwhelming majority of my constituents had a clear message: It is high time to change the way Washington does business.

The people of western North Carolina are sick of wasteful spending and the broken Tax Code that funds it. They have had it with incompetence and waste in Federal bureaucracies. They are sick and tired of Washington not securing the border and stopping illegal immigration.

Again, I want to thank my constituents for coming out to these town hall meetings. It is a sincere pleasure to represent them and to try to fight for that change here in Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank them for coming out and making their voices heard. I have listened, and I am working to make that change.

#### BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

(Mrs. CAPPs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAPPs. Madam Speaker, last week I was fortunate to visit Mexico City as a part of a bipartisan trip organized by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Our trip provided an excellent opportunity for my colleagues and me to meet with prominent Mexican leaders in business, journalism and government.

It also provided a forum to discuss ongoing political and economic changes in Mexico and ways in which we can improve the relationship between the United States and Mexico. We discussed civic and political life in both countries, how we can work more closely with Mexican partner institutions to help bring about a more open, competitive and equitable society. One example is the security issues we both face, one which we share.

Madam Speaker, our relationship with our friend and neighbor Mexico is critically important. It cries out for more cooperation and engagement.

I want to thank the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars and its Mexico institute for facilitating this important dialogue. I know I was better able to get a picture of the state of democracy

in Mexico, the shared goals and challenges that confront both of our countries, how we can be better neighbors to one another.

So I hope we can continue this important conversation and build a better future for the United States and for Mexico.

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#### IN MEMORY OF SPECIALIST TYLER ROSS SEIDEMAN

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a young man beloved by his family, friends and his community. I rise to remember Specialist Tyler Ross Seideman of the United States Army who was taken from us 2 weeks ago today in Multaka, Iraq.

Tyler and 13 of his Army brothers passed away when the Black Hawk he was in went down due to mechanical problems. Tyler, from the small town of Lincoln, Arkansas, was a sniper in the 2nd Battalion of the 35th Infantry Regiment based out of Hawaii. His closest friends described him with adjectives such as "brave," a "great soldier" and a "perfect gentleman."

I had the opportunity to attend Tyler's funeral this past Saturday. The outpouring of love and support from the people of Lincoln is something I will remember for the rest of my life.

My prayers and those of my family are with Tyler's parents, Bill and Lee Ann, and sisters Kiera and Kristen. I thank them for raising a man such as Tyler, and I thank Tyler for his service to a grateful Nation.

#### CHANGING COURSE IN IRAQ

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, for months now this Democratic Congress has tried to change course in Iraq, but a stubborn President, supported by a rubber-stamp Republican Congress in both the House and the Senate, has made that impossible.

In the spring, Republican leaders said by September, which is now, we should know if the President's troop escalation plan is working. And if it wasn't, then they would be ready to explore a different course.

Yesterday, the GAO released a report concluding that the Iraqi Government had fallen short of meeting 11 of the 18 benchmarks that President Bush said they would have to meet. The report also found that four other benchmarks had only partially been met. That means that the Iraqi Government has met only three of 18 benchmarks. Let's not forget that the main reason that

the President gave for the troop escalation earlier this year was to better secure the Nation so that the Iraqi Government could meet these political objectives. The GAO report concludes that "violence remains high" and that the political promises have not been kept.

Madam Speaker, I would only hope that our Republican colleagues would take a serious look and join us, as they said they would, in demanding a change of course in Iraq.

#### COST OF WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. SIREs. Madam Speaker, the President's war has already cost the American people dearly in both lives and tax dollars. Congress has appropriated nearly \$477 billion for the war since March 2003, and the U.S. is currently spending an estimated \$10 billion a month on the war. This spending continues despite reports that 15 of 18 benchmarks for success have not been met and casualties in the war are 65 percent higher this year than last.

This Democratic Congress and the American people are ready for a new direction. We believe it is time to bring our troops home and begin investing here in the U.S.

If you took just some of the money we are spending in Iraq and invested it here instead, we could take care of a lot of our seniors' prescription drug cost problems. And for the cost of just one week in Iraq, we could hire 51,000 more police officers to make our streets safer.

Madam Speaker, it is time for Republicans in this body to listen to the American people and join us in calling for an end to the financial drain of this war. It is time to invest in making our Nation safer here at home.

#### CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

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

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, 10 years ago the Children's Health Insurance Program was instituted. Since then, 6 million children have been given access to private health care insurance in this country. It was absolutely the right thing to do.

But new evidence from the Census Bureau released last week suggests that we are now slipping backwards. The number of children without health insurance coverage in this country increased from 8 million in 2005 to 8.7 million in 2006. That is why we passed 4 weeks ago the CHAMP Act which would increase insurance coverage for children to an additional 5 million children in this country. That's the direction we need to be going in.

Unfortunately, the President is threatening to veto the CHAMP Act. I

hope the President will reconsider, stop posturing on this issue, and do the right thing by America's children.

#### THE KILLING OF JAMIE DEAN

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, as we enter this period when the President is going to come before us and ask us to extend the surge in Iraq, we ought to hear the story of Jamie Dean.

Jamie Dean was a 29-year-old who came from Hollywood, Maryland. He enlisted and served 4 years, including 1 year in Afghanistan where he cleaned out caves and did all of the tough things that went on there. He came home severely depressed, suffering from PTSD, was being treated at the Veterans Hospital after being honorably discharged from the United States Army.

And then he got the letter. On November 26, he received a letter that said pursuant to Executive Order of 14 September 2001, you are relieved from your present reserve component status and are ordered to report to duty. He was going to be sent within 2 months into Iraq, a man who is suffering from PTSD.

This man broke. He started to drink. He had weapons holed up in his home. The day after Christmas, he was surrounded by the police and was shot dead.

We are breaking the Army. We are breaking the Marines. These people should be thought about when we consider the extension.

#### GAO REPORT FINDS LITTLE PROGRESS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, President Bush continues to ignore reality in Iraq, instead glossing over the deteriorating situation while asking for more money from Congress and more personal sacrifice from our troops.

A report released by the White House in July claimed that progress had been made on eight of the 18 benchmarks mandated by the Congress. But a new, unbiased report from the GAO shows that the situation is even worse than the White House led us to believe.

According to the GAO report, Iraq has failed to meet all but three of the 18 benchmarks required for political and military progress in Iraq. Some of the report's most disconcerting findings include the fact that the capabilities of Iraqi security forces have not improved and that violence remains high.

Madam Speaker, with the release of this discouraging and objective report, Republicans in this body must decide whether to continue rubber-stamping

the President's failed policy in Iraq or begin working with Democrats to bring our troops home.

#### DEVASTATING FIRES RAGE THROUGH GREECE

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, as cochair and cofounder of the Hellenic Caucus, I rise today in strong support of the Sarbanes resolution, H. Res. 629, expressing the condolences and sympathy of the House of Representatives to the Government and the people of Greece for the loss of 65 lives and destruction caused by the devastating fires raging through Greece, and which pledges our full support and solidarity to Greece.

This disaster has affected all parts of Greece. Thousands of people are homeless, many of whom have lost all of their possessions. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land have been ravaged. Our government has pledged \$1.3 million to aid Greece during this difficult time. We have sent professional help and fire equipment.

Along with my colleagues in the Hellenic Caucus, we will be urging the State Department to remain in close contact with Greek authorities so that the United States can continue to assist in every way with this effort.

Greece has been a strong ally to our Nation, assisting us in times of need, including the terrible terrorist attacks on September 11 and Hurricane Katrina. We must now help Greece in its time of need. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Greece.

#### CHAMP ACT

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

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, last week the Census Bureau came out with a new report that shows the number of children living without health insurance increased last year by 700,000. It is the second year in a row that the number of uninsured children has increased. Today, 8.7 million children in this country are going without the critical health care services they need to live a healthy and productive life.

Fortunately, this Democratic Congress has acted to reverse this disturbing trend. Last month, this House passed the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act. The legislation provides an additional \$50 billion in funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program which today provides 6 million children access to private health insurance.

Unfortunately, there are 6 million other children that are eligible for the program but are not currently enrolled. Our \$50 billion investment would allow us to reach almost every