

child who is currently eligible which would significantly reduce the number of uninsured children in America.

Madam Speaker, this Congress has acted. It is time for the President to join with us in prioritizing the health care needs of our children.

THE "RE-SADDAMIZATION" OF IRAQ

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

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, last week I talked to a father who lost his son in May in Iraq. He was, of course, devastated. He asked me a question: Why did my son die in Iraq?

That is a question that will be on all of our minds in the coming days when we receive the new report from Iraq. When we look at the report in a very calm, dispassionate manner, I hope we think about what is really going on in Iraq. What is really going on in Iraq, what the President has crowed about as a great success in these regions is what you might call the "re-Saddamization" of Iraq.

The President is going to brag about the sense that he is now giving more power to tribes and tribal sheikhs who at some point when we eventually leave Iraq will be better equipped and better armed to fight the central government that the President used to crow about.

I think we need to have a calm, dispassionate review of what we're doing. We are creating the conditions that could result in a worse civil war. We have to have a calm review and make the right choices.

PRIORITIZE CHILDREN'S HEALTH

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, President Bush has threatened to veto a bill that would provide health care insurance to 5 million children who are currently uninsured. The President's reason: The bill is simply too expensive. But what he ignores is the fact that the CHAMP Act is fully paid for.

This Democratic House is concerned that too many children are growing up without health insurance, making it impossible for them to receive the regular checkups that they need to live long and healthy lives. The CHAMP Act would strengthen the CHIP program, a popular Federal-State health care partnership so we can reach nearly all of the children who are currently eligible for the program.

The price tag is an additional \$50 billion over 5 years. Again, the President says it is simply too much money. Yet, he has no problem asking this Congress to rubber-stamp a new Iraq war emergency funding bill that press reports say could be as high as \$50 billion and that would only last about 5 months.

Madam Speaker, it is time President Bush prioritize the health care needs of our Nation's children. He should simply support the CHAMP Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAHOOD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert a personal explanation at this point with respect to H.R. 811. Although I am listed as a cosponsor of the bill, on further reflection, I do not support the bill and intend to vote against the bill. Were the bill not already on the Union Calendar, I would delete my name from the list of cosponsors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS). Without objection, the gentleman's statement will appear in the RECORD.

There was no objection.

□ 1030

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind Members that, under clause 7 of rule XVII, it is not in order to bring to the attention of the House an occupant of the gallery.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE VOTING IRREGULARITIES OF AUGUST 2, 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 611, 110th Congress, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members to the Select Committee to Investigate the Voting Irregularities of August 2, 2007:

Mr. DELAHUNT, Massachusetts, Chairman

Mr. DAVIS, Alabama

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, South Dakota

COMMUNICATION FROM HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER, REPUBLICAN LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable JOHN A. BOEHNER, Republican Leader:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 4, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, H-232, U.S. Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: Pursuant to House Resolution 611, I am pleased to appoint the following Members to the Select Committee on Voting Irregularities.

Mr. Mike Pence of Indiana—Ranking Member, Mr. Steven LaTourette of Ohio, and Mr. Kenny Hulshof of Missouri.

These Members have expressed interest in serving in this capacity and I am pleased to fulfill their requests.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Republican Leader.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHY OF THE HOUSE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF GREECE

Mr. FALLOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 629) extending the condolences and sympathy of the House of Representatives to the Government and the people of Greece for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the devastating fires raging through Greece since June 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 629

Whereas more than 3,000 forest fires have been recorded in Greece since June 2007;

Whereas over a 10-day period, an estimated 4,000 people saw their homes destroyed by the wildfires, which razed dozens of villages, destroyed livestock and charred an estimated 469,000 acres of mostly forest and farmland;

Whereas dozens of Greek families have lost their loved ones to the fires;

Whereas thousands of Greeks have been left homeless and hundreds of thousands of acres of pristine forest have been destroyed;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of mature olive trees, vineyards and thousands of animals perished in the flames;

Whereas damage to the Greek economy is estimated at between \$1,600,000,000 and \$5,400,000,000;

Whereas the United States and Greece have stood side by side in confronting world challenges throughout the 20th century, and will stand together in confronting this new challenge; and

Whereas the United States, through its government, its people and its Greek-American community, has already extended significant support to the people of Greece during this difficult time: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) extends its condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Greece for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the devastating fires raging through Greece;

(2) vows its full support and solidarity to a close friend, a strategic partner, and a longstanding ally in this painful and difficult hour;

(3) fully supports the Administration's initiatives to provide assistance and relief to the people of Greece, including its pledge of \$1,500,000 in aid as well as expert and technical assistance;

(4) encourages public institutions, specialized agencies, as well as private citizens, to offer their resources; and

(5) expresses confidence that Greece and its people will succeed in overcoming the hardships incurred through this tragedy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank my honorable colleague and dear friend from the State of Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) for introducing this timely resolution that extends sympathy to our Greek friends, and I want to also add my name as a cosponsor of this proposed legislation.

Madam Speaker, while many people across Europe and the United States spent the month of August soaking up the summer sunshine and enjoying their vacations, thousands of Greeks were engaged in a desperate struggle to save their homes, livestock and beautiful countryside from the devastating effects of wildfires.

Americans watched in alarm as television footage showed flames ominously approaching the ruins of temples and stadiums in ancient Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games.

They were saddened to see the worst fires in Greece's living memory sweep across well-known and picturesque tourist sites, including Corfu and Kefalonia in the west and the Peloponnese in the south of the country, Madam Speaker, and their hearts ached at the personal stories of individuals who lost their homes as well as family members to the all-consuming power of the fire.

The sobering statistics highlight the true extent of the loss. Over a 10-day period, an estimated 4,000 people lost their homes, while around 469,000 acres of forest and farmland were destroyed. Dozens of families are now without their loved ones while thousands have been left homeless. According to media reports, estimated costs for the destruction of homes and properties are well over \$1 billion.

Here in the United States, we know all too well how devastating the effects of Mother Nature can be, as Americans in Utah and Montana launched their own battle against damaging wildfires this summer, and exactly 2 years ago New Orleans and other Southern cities suffered from the destructive effects of Hurricane Katrina.

Just as we valued the aid of foreign nations in our difficult hours, we stand ready to offer a helping hand to our

Greek friends during their time of need. This House extends its deepest condolences to the Government and people of Greece following the vast destruction wrought by the wildfires. We welcome the administration's pledge of financial aid as well as technical assistance, and we express confidence in the ability of the Greek people, who have personified the strength of Zeus throughout their history, to overcome the hardships resulting from this tragedy.

I strongly support this measure and urge my colleagues to join me in expressing sympathy for and solidarity with our good people from Greece.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to be an original cosponsor of this important resolution, and I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES), the author of the resolution, as well as the chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. LANTOS, for their leadership in bringing this resolution quickly to the floor today.

This resolution allows the Members of this House the opportunity to extend our profound condolences to the people of Greece and to their government over the tragic losses endured during the recent fires in Greece which have claimed the lives of scores of people.

The human toll in casualties, injuries and loss of property is difficult to bear, with an estimated 4,000 people having lost loved ones, homes and, indeed, even communities.

Moreover, hundreds of thousands of acres of Greek forests and farmland have been obliterated. And all of this, Madam Speaker, has occurred as a result of the more than 3,000 forest fires that have broken out in Greece since June.

This massive tragedy has been bravely shouldered by the people of Greece. The heartfelt thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the families and friends of those who lost their lives in this tragedy and with all of the people of Greece.

United in friendship, the United States and Greece have stood together on the same side of many of the world challenges throughout the last century. It is appropriate, therefore, that we provide assistance and support to our friend and ally in this hour of need.

I, therefore, urge my colleagues to support this resolution and, in so doing, express their condolences and pledge their support for efforts to relieve the suffering endured by the people of Greece as a result of the tragic fires that have ravaged their nation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure that I yield whatever time that he needs, as the chief sponsor of this proposed legislation, to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES).

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding and for his support of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues, Congresswoman MALONEY, Congressman BILIRAKIS, Congressman SPACE and many, many others in this body, in support of H. Res. 629, expressing the deepest of sympathy to the families who have incurred enormous loss and who continue to suffer the effects of the terrible fires that have raged across Greece since June.

I also want to thank Chairman LANTOS and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN and their staffs for their assistance in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Official reports of damage from the Greek Government will be forthcoming in the next few weeks, but on Monday, the New York Times reported that over a 10-day period an estimated 4,000 people saw their homes destroyed by the wildfires which razed dozens of villages, destroyed livestock and charred an estimated 469,000 acres of mostly forest and farmland.

As of Sunday, the official death toll had risen to 65. According to the Greek fire brigade, thousands have been rendered homeless, and hundreds of thousands of acres of pristine forest have been destroyed. The fire has also affected a substantial part of Greece's agricultural sector. According to Reuters, hundreds of thousands of mature olive trees, vineyards and thousands of animals perished in the flames. Overall damage to the economy is estimated at 1.2 billion to 4 billion Euros.

As the resolution reads, we take this moment to stand with the people of Greece and vow to come to their aid as they have done for us and others throughout the world time and time again. There is no doubt that the people of Greece will prevail in the face of this difficult time. There is no doubt that they will succeed in the recovery effort.

My colleagues and I have been working to identify areas where the United States Government can assist in the near term and as part of the longer commitment that will be needed in reversing the damage. We are grateful that the U.S. Government has already extended funding and other support in this regard, and we are very proud of the commitment already demonstrated by our friends and organizations in the Greek American community who are coordinating a substantial relief effort of their own.

I'd like to thank the Greek ambassador, Ambassador Mallias, for his leadership in reaching out and helping to coordinate assistance to his country. He's here with us today in the gallery.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to tell a story briefly. I had the opportunity to visit Greece in 1985, more than 20 years ago, with my grandmother who had not been there for almost 30 years. I remember her taking me by the hand as we walked through her village, which

is in the southern Peloponnese, and the Peloponnese has been particularly hard hit by these fires.

And as we walked the paths of her childhood, I remember that she was looking for one particular olive tree that she remembered not from 30 years prior but from 60 years before that she played under as a small child. It was a touchstone of her childhood and of her memories, and it made an incredible impression on me, the love, the connection that she had to this village and to that land.

Today, for many Greeks and for many Greek Americans, these touchstones, these sacred markers have gone up in flames. Beyond this, the loss of life is tragic. For these reasons, Americans all across this country are moved to reach out to the citizens of Greece.

Madam Speaker, the spirit of the Greek people is indomitable. It will triumph over this tragedy, and with this resolution, America signifies that it stands with Greece and its people in this hour of need.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague and good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 629 and extend my condolences and sympathy to the people and the Government of Greece for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the raging fires that destroyed the homes, villages, farms, livestock, but not the spirit, of the country.

Since June of this year, the people and the Government of Greece have been battling forest fires due to extensive heat and lack of rain. An estimated 495,000 acres of mostly forest and farmland have been destroyed, the worst damage since the 1950s.

Today I stand with my colleagues, Chairman FALEOMAVAEGA and the ranking member, to avow close support and solidarity to a close friend, a strategic partner and a longstanding ally in this painful and difficult hour.

I applaud the administration's initiative to provide assistance and relief to the people of Greece, including its pledge of \$1.5 million in aid, as well as expert and technical assistance. I have confidence that Greece and its people will succeed in overcoming the hardship incurred through this tragedy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I thank the gentleman for his remarks, and I thank the honored guests who are with us today. We grieve for the people today, and we stand with them in this time of sorrow ready to help.

With that, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I also want to commend and thank my good friend, the senior ranking member of our committee, for her support and her assistance in managing

this legislation, and I want to thank my colleague from Maryland for his most eloquent and moving speech this morning to share with our colleagues in the House the tragedy facing the good people of Greece, and I sincerely hope that we will support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 629.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1045

PACIFIC ISLAND ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3062) to authorize appropriations to provide for South Pacific exchanges, provide technical and other assistance to countries in the Pacific region through the United States Agency for International Development, and authorize appropriations to provide Fulbright Scholarships for Pacific Island students, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3062

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY EXCHANGES.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for exchanges with Pacific Island countries carried out under the educational and cultural exchange programs of the Department of State.

SEC. 3. USAID IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES.

The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is authorized, upon request by the government of a Pacific Island country, to provide to such government technical and other assistance.

SEC. 4. J. FULBRIGHT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) From 1949 until 2003, the Department of State awarded 13,176 Fulbright Scholarships to students from East Asia and the Pacific, but only 31 Fulbright Scholarships went to students from Pacific Island countries.

(2) In the 2003–2004 academic year, the Department of State awarded 315 scholarships to students from East Asia and the Pacific, but none were awarded to students from Pacific Island countries.

(b) REVIEW AND REPORT.—The Secretary of State shall conduct a review and submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report regarding the marginalization of students from Pacific Island countries in the awarding of Fulbright Scholarships.

(c) PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS FROM PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES IN THE J. FULBRIGHT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State shall establish a program within the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange Program (established under section 112(a)(1) of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2460(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Fulbright-Hays Act) to make awards to students from Pacific Island countries to permit such students to study in the United States pursuant to the terms and conditions of such Exchange Program.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to amounts that are otherwise authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to provide awards under the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange Program, there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$500,000 for each of such fiscal years to provide such awards to students from Pacific Island countries.

SEC. 5. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY DEFINED.

In this Act, the terms "Pacific Island country" and "Pacific Island countries" mean any of the following countries:

- (1) The Cook Islands.
- (2) The Federated States of Micronesia.
- (3) The Independent State of Samoa.
- (4) The Kingdom of Tonga.
- (5) Niue.
- (6) Papua New Guinea.
- (7) The Republic of Fiji.
- (8) The Republic of Kiribati.
- (9) The Republic of the Marshall Islands.
- (10) The Republic of Nauru.
- (11) The Republic of Palau.
- (12) The Republic of Vanuatu.
- (13) The Solomon Islands.
- (14) Tuvalu.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this proposed resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I want to thank the distinguished chairman of our committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and our senior ranking member of our committee, the gentlewoman