

JUDGING PEOPLE BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, last June 6 I voted for a hate crimes bill in this session, and was proud to do it. Since that time, the black ministers association in my city has come out strongly against the hate crimes bill that provides protection to people against violent crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I addressed that group in Memphis Tuesday a week ago, and at that meeting one of the ministers got up and said to the press, "The reason we're against this bill basically is because a white man can't represent black people."

I represent a black district. I am one of only two Members that do. I plan to represent my people, as I have, and show this country from my district in Memphis, Tennessee, that regardless of race or color, a person should be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin, and they can represent people in this country, for this is indeed one country under God, with liberty and justice for all.

We recently celebrated in my city the 50th anniversary of the 1957 civil rights bill and will have the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King. That event will be in Memphis, Tennessee.

We've come a long way, and we have a long way to go.

CONGRATULATING THE APPALACHIAN STATE MOUNTAINEERS ON THEIR VICTORY OVER THE MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, following Appalachian's upset football win over Michigan, Boone, North Carolina, is no longer a sleepy Blue Ridge mountain town. The representatives from each university responded to last Saturday's contest with class: Appalachian not insufferable in victory; Michigan a gracious loser in defeat.

But the beneficiaries of this game, Mr. Speaker, are the underdogs, the little guys who are given little or no chance of tasting the spoils of victory. Appalachian's Mountaineers and Michigan's Wolverines will post impressive records during the 2007 season. But Saturday's game, Mr. Speaker, will reinforce the optimism of the proverbial underdog, with the assurance that their chances of achieving victory, albeit remote, are within the realm of possibility, and much is to be said in support of that conclusion.

GAO REPORT SHOWS THAT IRAQI GOVERNMENT IS NOT LIVING UP TO ITS PROMISES

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, this week we finally got an objective analysis of the situation in Iraq. We shouldn't be surprised that it differs significantly from the status report from the White House last month, which painted a much rosier political and security scenario in Iraq. Nor should we be surprised if its conclusions are different from a final report that is scheduled to come from the President this week.

The GAO findings are not a surprise. When President Bush began this troop escalation plan, he promised this Congress that the Iraqis must meet these benchmarks, and, if they did not, they would lose the support of the American people.

Many of us who opposed the troop escalation plan were skeptical the Iraqis would be able to meet these benchmarks and that 30,000 more troops would bring about any real improvements in securing Iraq. The GAO report shows that our concerns were justified.

With the failure of the Iraqi Government to meet 15 of the 18 benchmarks, it is clear that a change of course is needed. I would hope that my Republican colleagues would stop blindly following President Bush and conclude, much as this Nation has, that it is time to begin bringing our troops home.

TAX PAIN ON AMERICANS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Congress talks about feeling the pain of Americans. Well, raising taxes on them doesn't ease their financial pain. Working families are already burdened with high gasoline prices and increased expenses every day of their lives. Working Americans deserve to keep more of their money. It should be their responsibility how to spend it, not a bunch of tax-and-spend bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We talk a lot about helping American families. Well, let them keep more of their money, instead of taxing them more. More government spending is not a strategy for helping Americans. More taxes on Americans, so special interest groups get more Federal money, is not a strategy for helping Americans.

President Kennedy and President Reagan both proved tax cuts work. Tax cuts, not tax increases, are the fundamental way to move our economy forward. We need to make permanent the tax cuts. And who benefits from tax cuts? Anybody that pays taxes benefits. And those that live off the taxpayer should not expect everybody else to pay more taxes for them.

And that's just the way it is.

SUPPORT AMERICAN TROOPS BY BRINGING THEM HOME

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, all of the photo ops and the doctored statistics in the world will not change the fundamental fact that there is no military solution to the civil war in Iraq. Instead of facing reality, the President is asking for another blank check for his failed policy, and Congress should not give it to him.

We must decide whose interests we represent, a President who has staked his legacy on an unnecessary war, or the millions of Americans that understand that ending the occupation is the first step in repairing the damage that this administration has done to the security of our Nation and the world.

Congress has the power really to end this failed policy. We should not approve another penny to continue that policy. Instead, we should use our constitutionally mandated appropriations power to fully fund the safe, timely and responsible redeployment of our troops and contractors from Iraq.

When we say we support our troops, let's mean it by bringing them home.

VICTORY IN IRAQ

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

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the plan for General Petraeus' surge was designed to improve Iraq's security so that political and economic progress could follow. Stability measures implemented in violent areas in and around Baghdad and across the nation have produced recognizable results.

There is an increased security in Iraq, and optimistic reports are traveling back from Members of Congress, war critics, and, yes, even the liberal press. Areas once considered terrorist strongholds are now relatively secure. Progress. Sunni and U.S. forces are working together for victory. Progress. Tribal leaders are turning their backs on terrorist insurgents and helping American forces. Progress.

Next week, General Petraeus will deliver a comprehensive report on Iraq and what the surge has produced since he has been on the ground, and I am confident his report will be detailed and honest.

Mr. Speaker, the level of progress is evident, and I believe the continued success of the surge will pave the way for the only way out of Iraq: Victory.

GAO REPORT SHOWS THAT IRAQI GOVERNMENT IS NOT LIVING UP TO ITS PROMISES

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, for months now we have heard from our Republican colleagues that September would be a critical month for the war in Iraq. Earlier this year when this Democratic Congress and the American

people voiced their overwhelming opposition to President Bush's troop escalation plan, our Republican colleagues said, "Give the President time."

The problem is, both the Republican Congress and the Bush administration have been moving the time frame for success on the troop escalation plan. First it was June. Then it was August. Finally, a couple of months ago, Republican leaders agreed that September would be the defining month.

It is clear that President Bush has no intention of ending the troop escalation in Iraq, even though the Iraqi Government has failed to meet the benchmarks that he himself outlined earlier this year. President Bush is determined to leave as many troops in Iraq as possible, no matter what the facts suggest.

The question now is, will Congressional Republicans finally break away from the President and do what is right for this Nation and for the military? Congressional Republicans must realize that the time has come to change course.

MOVING FORWARD AND WINNING PEACE IN IRAQ

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

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, for the last year the Democrats have been saying that the war in Iraq is lost and we should pull our troops out, and they were, of course, opposed to the surge. But after hearing from witnesses of every political stripe week after week on the oversight subcommittee, this profound reality became obvious: The least costly and best alternative for America is not to lose. It is to win.

We are more than halfway through the campaign, and it is too costly to quit and to go back. The concept that we can win is novel to Democrats perhaps, who think in top-down solutions in Washington and in Iraq. But our new military strategy is proving successful.

Just as our Nation grew from the bottom up, town by town, State by State, so also federalism shows success in Iraq. Local communities are working closely with our military to curb violence. For this reason, we must ensure that they have the freedom and the autonomy to continue to develop.

The best alternative for America in Iraq is to move forward to win the peace.

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CHILDREN DESERVE HEALTH INSURANCE

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is getting harder for American families to make ends meet, especially when it comes to the rising cost of health insurance.

New census data shows that the number of Americans without health insurance nationwide rose by nearly 2 million in 2006. In addition, the number of children without health insurance grew by 700,000 to nearly 8.7 million children. These new numbers mean that one in nine American kids don't have health insurance, including 22 percent of Hispanic children and 14 percent of African American children.

These numbers are appalling for a Nation as wealthy as ours. That is why the Democratic Congress passed the CHAMP Act; to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program for 6 million children and to provide 5 million more children with health insurance, covering a total of 11 million children. But President Bush has threatened to veto this critical bill, despite strong bipartisan support among Congress and Governors.

Mr. Speaker, these new census numbers can't be ignored. It is time to stop playing politics with children's health insurance. It is time for the President to support and sign the CHAMP Act.

WAIT FOR REPORT TO EVALUATE PROGRESS

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, as America awaits word from our military and diplomatic leaders in Iraq early next week, it is apparent to me that many in Congress seem prepared to prejudge our progress and dismiss the report of General David Petraeus even before he makes it.

Many, as has been done here this morning, cite the recent GAO report as a basis for accepting retreat and defeat in Iraq. But as Fred Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute pointed out recently, the mandate of the GAO report was not to evaluate progress broadly defined in Iraq, it was to determine whether or not the Iraqi Government had met 18 benchmarks set by the U.S. Government. Fred Kagan pointed out that the term "Anbar" actually only appears twice in the GAO report, despite the extraordinary progress in the Anbar Province where we have seen Sunni leadership come forward, working with marines, working with the al-Maliki government and defeating terrorism. The so-called "triangle of death" is so safe the President of the United States was able to land there and meet with Sunni and Shia leaders earlier this week.

I think it is imperative that we stand with our soldiers, we wait and hear from our military and diplomatic leaders, and for the purpose of freedom in Iraq and for the purpose of our national honor, we accept nothing short of victory in that nation.

CHAMP ACT CHAMPIONS CHILDREN

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, for a decade now the Children's Health Insurance Program has provided 6 million children access to private health insurance. Thanks to CHIP, every year over the last decade, the number of uninsured children fell. That is until the last 2 years.

Last week, the Census Bureau reported that the number of American children living without health insurance increased from 8 million in 2005 to 8.7 million in 2006. This is simply unacceptable.

I would hope President Bush saw these troubling numbers and finally realized we cannot afford to ignore them any longer. Last month, this Democratic House acted by passing the CHAMP Act, legislation that will allow us to reach an additional 5 million children who are already eligible for the CHIP program.

When CHIP was created back in 1997, it was supported by both Democrats and Republicans. But today, both the White House and the House Republican leadership oppose the CHAMP Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Census Bureau report should serve as a wake-up call to the President to reconsider his veto threat of the CHAMP Act.

AMERICA HONORS HER GOLD STAR MOTHERS

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

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, last month I was humbled and honored to introduce a resolution honoring the goals and ideals of Gold Star Mothers Day. In 1940, FDR designated the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mothers Day to commemorate the tremendous sacrifice these courageous mothers have endured on behalf of our Nation.

This year Gold Star Mothers Day will be held on September 30. This brave group of women have turned their personal tragedy into patriotism and caring service.

I want to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Georgette Frank of Elk Grove Village, Illinois. Her son, Phil, enlisted in the Marine Corps right out of high school in response to the September 11 attacks, and paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Phil believed that the best way to keep America safe was to take the fight to the terrorists. And the last time he saw his mom he said, "Be strong, Mom. No matter what happens, you be strong." That's exactly what Georgette has done.

Phil and his family represent the best and the bravest that our country