

declared, "No one has greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

To you, Nick, I say thank you. Thank you for the example of your life. To his comrades in Alpha Battery who are here in this country now and also back in the theater, I say thank you for carrying on the mission. Thank you for honoring the flag, the highest ideals of service and what we represent as Americans.

Four special people in his life also need to be thanked, because as much of our country does not know, serving in the military is a family business that only 1 percent of our population responds to.

To Terri, I bear condolences for you, as I shared with you at the funeral home on behalf of a grateful Nation. Despite political differences that fly in the air, the backbone of our freedom is founded in sacrifices like your family has made, and I thank you for lending us Nick for a time. To Wray Jean and Gove, Nick's mom and dad, I say thank you for your son's service and for the example of his character. To his father-in-law Alan, thank you for your example and work. Raising a young leader who impacted our community, his duty and honor to country represent the best and greatest aspects of our national character. His sacrifice is not in vain.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MINORITIES IN THE MEDIA

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the contributions of minorities in the media and encourage greater media diversity.

The past year marked a breakthrough for Latinos in the media. Just last night, America Ferrera won the Emmy award for best actress in a comedy series for her work on ABC's "Ugly Betty." In her portrayal of Betty Suarez in "Ugly Betty," Ms. Ferrera portrays an intelligent, caring young Latina professional trying to break into the field of publishing. Her character has a strong connection to her family, while at the same time she is dedicated to her work.

America Ferrera is the daughter of Honduran immigrants. Through her work on "Ugly Betty" and in films, including "Real Women Have Curves," she is a role model for many young Latinas and women of color everywhere.

We need to improve the image of American Latinos and Latinas as portrayed by the media. We can do this by increasing the number of American Latinos employed in all facets of the media industry.

"Ugly Betty" is one of the few programs on broadcast television that portrays a Latino family and main char-

acters. The show has waded into tough issues like immigration by portraying the struggle of Betty's father to successfully navigate the immigration process.

In describing her Emmy last night, America Ferrera said the win, "Symbolizes the wonderful blessings of the past year. I am so happy and humble to be on a show that is not only fun, but is making a difference and inspiring people and changing the way we look at prejudice and diversity."

Other Latinos also have important roles to play as well in the media. Characters such as Dr. Callie Torres, portrayed by Sara Ramirez on "Grey's Anatomy," and Gabrielle Solis, portrayed by Eva Longoria on "Desperate Housewives," portray dynamic Latinas in television.

Behind the scenes, Selma Hayek, a premier actress herself, is also producer of the "Ugly Betty" show. Another new program called "Cane," featuring a Latino family in Florida involved in the sugar business, is premiering this fall on CBS.

This is important because the characters that Americans see on television can help shape their view of the world and attitudes toward different groups of different backgrounds. In fact, 40 percent of American youth ages 19 and under are children of color, and very few of those faces that we see on television actually represent the races and cultural heritage here in America.

With increasing positive portrayals of minorities and programs, television can reflect a broader majority of hard-working American families, families that are indeed diverse. We should not stifle diversity of voices in the news and entertainment that consumers see, hear and read. The success of programs like "Ugly Betty" and the recognition of actresses like America Ferrera show that the American public is paying attention and wants to see more quality and diverse programming.

In this new and exciting time, minority performers and programs are not only increasing, but are also being honored. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the FCC and media companies to promote diversity in the media.

Again, I want to congratulate America Ferrera on her Emmy win and commend America and everyone on the cast of "Ugly Betty" for breaking down those stereotypes of Latinas. I hope that this is one of the first in a long line of successes for minority performers and that programs that retain positive minority characters will flourish. Working together, we can provide diversity, promote it, and have a better understanding here in our country.

□ 1945

DEMOCRATS SEEK TO USE AMT AS WEDGE

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, nobody wants tax increases, and a tax increase right now would be detrimental to the economy of the United States. In fact, the Treasury Secretary thinks it would be disastrous. It would put the economy into a tailspin.

Chairman RANGEL of the Ways and Means Committee recently tried to use as a wedge the AMT, the alternative minimum tax, as a way to create a new system down the road that would raise billions and billions of dollars in new taxes across this country. As a matter of fact, they would raise the top tax rate on capital gains to 36 percent. On people making over \$200,000 a year, it would raise their tax rate to 36 percent; and these tax increases would be absolutely devastating to the people of this country and to the economy of this country.

Chairman RANGEL in 1996 had an opportunity to vote against the alternative minimum tax, but he voted for it. And now he is saying he is against it, and he is using it as a wedge to get other taxes increased, which over the long term, over the next 10 years, will result in billions and billions of dollars of new tax increases for the people of this country.

Tonight, I would like to enter into the RECORD some statements made by Grover Norquist and Bob Novak in a column he wrote, so that the people of this country will be aware of what is coming about. Explaining all of these tax changes is very difficult in 5 minutes. It is very difficult for the people of this country to understand. But I want the people of this country to know that the Democrats are planning to use the AMT as a wedge so they can raise taxes across the board and hit everybody. And it is going to hurt the economy of this country and hurt every American taxpayer.

All I would like to say is that the American people need to know this. I hope everybody reads this. Everybody wants to do away with the alternative minimum tax on our side of the aisle, but we want to do it cleanly in one fell swoop. At least we ought to reduce it over a period of time so it goes away, but they are using it as a wedge so they can raise taxes in the next 10 years. And it will be very detrimental to the American economy.

[From the New York Sun, Sept. 7, 2007.]

RANGEL'S PRIORITY IS REPEALING THE AMT

(By Russell Berman)

WASHINGTON.—Amid mounting opposition to a proposed tax hike on the managers of hedge funds and private equity firms, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Charles Rangel, is making clear that his first priority is fixing the widely reviled alternative minimum tax.

Congressional Democrats have zeroed in on private equity taxation in their search for new revenue sources to pay for expanded health care and other domestic spending priorities. Mr. Rangel convened a marathon hearing yesterday to delve into an array of tax "fairness" issues.

"It has not been the goal of this committee to target any tax provisions other than the AMT," the Harlem Democrat said at the outset of the hearing, which featured 20 witnesses. "However, it is fair to say that since the AMT is such an expensive revenue loser—because the revenue it brings in was never expected—that naturally we have to look at the entire tax code."

Created in 1969 to ensure that the wealthiest Americans assumed at least a minimum tax burden, the AMT, because it is not adjusted for inflation, increasingly is affecting middle-income taxpayers and has drawn criticism from both sides of the political aisle. More than 23 million Americans could be subject to it this year.

"It's the perfect storm of bad tax policy," the director of the Urban Institute's Tax Policy Center, Leonard Burman, told lawmakers yesterday, adding that the AMT is "hideously complex."

Yet the cost of repealing the AMT is estimated at more than \$800 billion over the next decade, leading to the proposed tax hike on private equity. A bill sponsored by Mr. Rangel and Rep. Sander Levin of Michigan would more than double the tax rate that hedge fund and private equity managers would pay on their investment gains, known as "carried interest." Carried interest is currently subject to the capital gains rate of 15 percent, but the proposed change would treat it as income subject to the marginal rate of as much as 35 percent.

Citing annual incomes for managers as high as \$500 million, one Democrat, Rep. Artur Davis of Alabama, made no secret of his view that the party should look for revenue from "individuals who are making massive amounts of money," saying they "frankly won't really miss the difference."

Economists and tax lawyers testifying yesterday debated the likely impact of the tax increase on the financial sector and the economy, as Republicans on the committee pressed them on whether it would drive investment overseas or whether managers would shift the burden to investors by charging higher rates.

A Republican congressman from Virginia, Eric Cantor, said Democrats were on a "hunt" for new revenues and that the private equity proposal "targets one of the most innovative sectors of the economy."

In a prepared opening statement, the ranking Republican on the committee, Rep. James McCrery of Louisiana, warned that the proposal "will move us backward while the rest of the world moves forward to improve their competitive position." He added: "I seriously doubt this proposal will become law during the 110th Congress."

The debate over the taxation of hedge funds and private equity has raged on Capitol Hill amid heightened scrutiny of the \$2 trillion industry and of the vast profits the firms have taken in.

The effort to raise the tax rate on carried interest faces opposition from the private equity industry, and more recently from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a coalition of minority and women business groups.

As he did at a Senate committee hearing in July, Bruce Rosenblum, the chairman of the industry's lobbying group, the Private Equity Council, warned that a tax hike on carried interest could discourage investment and hurt American competitiveness.

The proposal has divided New York's two senators. Following her top Democratic rivals in the presidential campaign, Senator Clinton has come out in favor of the tax hike. Senator Schumer, the third-ranking Democrat in the Senate, has signaled his opposition, citing the potential harm to Wall Street and New York's competitiveness worldwide. He also has said targeting part-

nerships only in the financial sector would be unfair, suggesting that a similar increase be considered for partnerships in the oil and gas industries. Mayor Bloomberg, meanwhile, has mostly stayed silent on the issue.

The Senate Finance Committee held its third hearing on the issue of carried interest yesterday, focusing on pensions.

[September 10, 2007]

CONFRONTING HIS MONSTER

(By Grover Norquist)

The House Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Rep. Charles Rangel, held a hearing this month supposedly about simplifying the tax code for middle income families. What it really was about was a monster Mr. Rangel created, fed, defended, and now has turned on its master: the Alternative Minimum Tax. This tax was changed around a bit throughout the 1970s, and found its modern form in 1982. That year, Mr. Rangel voted for an AMT rate of 20 percent, which still only affected several thousand taxpayers.

In 1986, he voted to raise the AMT rate to 21 percent, and several thousand more taxpayers were affected. Mr. Rangel did not vote for an increase in the top rate to 24 percent that followed.

In 1999, Mr. Rangel voted against repealing the AMT beast and slaying it forever. Had that bill become law, the AMT would have been permanently repealed on December 31, 2007—this year. Instead, Mr. Rangel is forced to deal with a monster of his own creation. The monster has gotten hungry. According to official estimates, failure to restrain the AMT will lead to 27 million taxpayers having to pay this tax. A tax that would be dead, gone and buried this year if not for President Clinton and Mr. Rangel.

The irony is almost poetic. The typical AMT taxpayer lives in a state like Mr. Rangel's New York, Nancy Pelosi's California, and Robert Menendez's New Jersey. They have a jumbo mortgage, sky-high state income taxes, a couple of kids, and a six-figure income. For the most part, these are the inner-suburb-urbanite, center-left voters who supported the AMT authors in the first place. It is unlikely that there is a thousand dollar contributor who is not paying the AMT.

Now there is considerable pressure on Mr. Rangel to help these constituents. So, he has been supporting a plan to eliminate the AMT—and raise taxes on everyone else to pay for it.

He has to find a way to "pay" for AMT repeal because of the return of PAYGO rules with the new Democrat majority. You can't cut any taxes, according to these bizarre rubrics, without raising other ones.

If Mr. Rangel can't find enough tax increases to kill the AMT, he can try a "patch" that will keep the AMT-paying households at "only" several million taxpayers. This requires fewer tax increases, all of which will be permanent, in order to pay for only one year of this AMT "patch."

There is a better way. Senator Grassley, the ranking member on the tax-writing Senate Finance Committee, has a good way of describing the AMT: It's a mistake. It is not doing what it was intended to do. Instead, thanks to proper care and feeding by zookeepers, the AMT beast is threatening to ensnare tens of millions of American families.

To paraphrase Mr. Grassley, "you don't 'fix' a mistake, or 'patch' a mistake—you correct the mistake." In this case, that means a clean kill of the AMT. Revenue losses shouldn't be counted, since the AMT mistake is yielding a windfall of income never intended by policymakers.

There is legislation to do just that in both chambers of Congress. This legislation is not sponsored by the likes of Mr. Rangel, who ostensibly wants to help AMT taxpayers, but by conservative Republicans who want to kill the AMT because it's the right thing to do. Phil English of Pennsylvania, and has 54 cosponsors. In the Senate, it's sponsored by none other than Mr. Grassley as S. 55. Quite simply, it would fully and totally repeal the AMT immediately.

Some prefer a more incremental approach, which is also fine. Forty percent of the AMT problem would be eliminated if Congress were to simply repeal the Clinton AMT that Mr. Rangel supported. That is, Congress could simply undo the AMT tax hike that was part of the 1993 Clinton tax increase. Doing that would take the top AMT tax rate from the current 28 percent to a lower 24 percent.

The "AMT Rate Reduction Act of 2007" does just that and reduces the current top rate of 28 percent to 24 percent. It's sponsored by Rep. Ed Royce of California and Eric Cantor of Virginia in the House as H.R. 2253 and has 20 cosponsors. In the Senate, it's sponsored by Senator Specter as S. 734.

In politics, you have to wear bifocals—long and short sight. Repealing the Clinton AMT may be the best we can do this year, so supporters of full AMT repeal should also be supporters of Clinton AMT repeal.

In any event, taxpayers should see through Mr. Rangel's bluster. He's not riding in on a white horse, saving the middle class from the AMT. Rather, he's desperately running through the countryside, trying to get everyone to forget that the Frankenstein monster was one he helped create.

IRAQI REFUGEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have a conflict making it impossible for me to remain for the very important hour that the Congressional Black Caucus has taken on Iraq. I am about to go to the Senate floor tomorrow, though, as there is a test on whether there will be a filibuster on the D.C. voting rights bill even as D.C. residents are on the ground in Iraq fighting, even as I have gone to funerals at Arlington Cemetery because of this war.

We have a President who has announced a token drawdown at the same time he is Koreanizing the war, making sure we remain there at least as permanently as we have been in some parts of the world, like Korea and Germany already. He wants to make a piggy bank of the Congress of the United States, and the test is whether we are willing to go along with these now-clear goals of the President.

I want to devote my 5 minutes to asking a question that really needs to be asked. We are looking at the battle. I want to ask, is there really still an Iraq? Three million refugees have left the country since 2003. Another 3 million have been internally displaced. Some have called it ethnic cleansing. I believe it is involuntary ethnic cleansing, because in a civil war you want to win, not chase the other people out. We