

Why would they start now? There are so many problems with the Peru FTA, whether it is the privatization of Social Security, ban on anti-offshoring, or failure to protect our intellectual property rights, there are more than enough reasons to oppose the Peru FTA.

I could go on, but I do not have the time. I ask my colleagues to really listen to what America is saying about these trade deals. I am asking Members to vote their conscience to oppose the Peru free trade agreement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ESCALATION IN IRAQ WAR COSTS

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to draw attention to the surge, or escalation, of the occupation of Iraq. This time it is not an escalation of troops; it is the escalation in spending to continue this senseless, apparently endless occupation.

Recent estimates put the cost of the military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan at \$808 billion by the end of this year. That's just knocking on the door of \$1 trillion, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that again: we are closing in on \$1 trillion, and we haven't even begun to put together a plan to bring our troops home.

This administration has talked about a Korean- or Vietnam-like presence in Iraq. This could mean as much as 50 more years of U.S. boots on the ground. Conservative estimates put just one more decade of military spending at \$1.5 trillion. Who knows what it will be after 20 or 30 or 50 years.

The United States has an obligation, both moral and political, to help the people of Iraq to rebuild their nation. Whether through reconciliation or reconstruction, our commitment must be

ongoing. But we can't start either of these while we are funding this administration's occupation.

Despite the bravery of our men and women in uniform, we all know that we can't bring peace and stability to another country down the barrel of a gun.

A recent report by the Congressional Progressive Caucus found that this misdirection of funds may actually be endangering our own homeland. Each of my colleagues can go to my Web site, www.Woolsey.house.gov, and find out what it is costing their congressional district.

My district of Marin and Sonoma counties in California have already paid \$1.3 billion for the occupation of Iraq. That could have paid for nearly 25,000 public safety officers or nearly 18,000 port container inspectors to provide real security for our homeland.

Instead of passing on a war deficit to our children and grandchildren, we could have been investing in their future and, Mr. Speaker, we must. So far in paying for the occupation, we could have paid for 20,000 more elementary school teachers, or we could have provided almost 500,000 more children with health care, or 200,000 college scholarships to worthy students.

America's working families have demanded, they went to the polls in November, they want us to end this occupation. They want real investment in their own communities. They want this Congress to stand up to the White House and demand that our troops and military contractors be brought home, not in 10 years, not in 50 years. They want our troops home in a safe and orderly responsible manner by the holidays.

Enough of the endless occupation. Enough of the misspent billions. Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. Let's bring the troops home. Let's provide for a secure future for American and Iraqi families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CBC DISCUSSES SCHIP AND THE JENA SIX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subjects of the Congressional Black Cau-

cus Special Order message hour today that will focus on SCHIP as well as the Jena Six.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today 50 million Americans have no health insurance, including more than 8 million children. Eight out of 10 uninsured Americans either work or are in working families. Sadly, many of those uninsured and underinsured are African American.

Being uninsured means going without needed care. It means minor illnesses become major ones because care is delayed. Tragically, it means that one significant medical expense can wipe out a family's life savings. There are millions of working uninsured Americans who go to bed every night worrying about what will happen to them and their families if a major illness or injury strikes.

In my home State of Ohio, there are currently 1,362,000 uninsured, an increase of 18,000 people since 2003. We have also seen the strain on many of the local hospitals in my district when people are forced to use emergency rooms as their source of primary care.

The problem is getting worse. As the price of health care continues to rise, fewer individuals and families can afford to pay for coverage. Fewer small businesses are able to provide coverage for their employees, and those that do are struggling to hold on to the coverage they offer. It is a problem that affects all of us, and we cannot sit idly by while the people of this country continue to go without health insurance.

Tomorrow, we will have an opportunity to expand one of the most effective government programs implemented in the last decade, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP. SCHIP is a joint State-Federal program created in order to provide health insurance to children in low-income households whose income, although meager, was still above Medicaid eligibility.

□ 1945

Currently, the program allows for States to provide health insurance to families whose household income is up to 200 percent of the poverty level. In 2006, SCHIP provided coverage to over 6.7 million children, and although it has been successful since its inception, there are still 9 million children without any health insurance, many of whom are minorities. Currently, more than 80 percent of the uninsured African American children and 70 percent of the Hispanic children are eligible for SCHIP but not enrolled.

It gives me great pleasure to lead this special hour this evening on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I'm pleased at this time to yield time to my colleague and good friend BARBARA LEE from California.

Ms. LEE. First, Mr. Speaker, let me just thank my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus for their leadership, especially our Chair, Congresswoman CAROLYN KILPATRICK, who has done such a wonderful job keeping us focused on “Changing Course, Confronting Crises and Continuing the Legacy.”

I also want to thank the Chair of our Ethics Committee, Congresswoman STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES for her leadership on so many issues and also for her service on the House Ways and Means Committee. She has truly made history as the first African American woman serving on that committee, and as we heard tonight, her commitment to children’s health care is remarkable, and she has done so much on behalf of our children, and so I thank Mrs. JONES for her leadership and for this Special Order.

Let me first rise in solidarity with the tens of thousands of people around our Nation who took to the streets last week to protest the miscarriage of justice that has taken place in Jena, Louisiana.

Students in my district are as outraged as students throughout the country. The case of the Jena Six is yet another example of the institutional racism in our criminal justice system, and it is unacceptable.

We have come so far from the days of Jim Crow, but incidents like this one should serve as a solemn reminder of just how much further we must go in seeking liberty and justice for all.

Just with Katrina, the Jena Six demonstrates in a glaring and tragic manner the unfinished business of America. Unfortunately, these are issues in many instances of black and white.

If we are ever to overcome the tragic legacy of racism in this Nation, we have a duty to our young people to see to it that the principle of equal justice is upheld. If we truly believe in our Nation’s principle of equality under the law, then we must make sure that everyone, regardless of race, is held equal under the law.

There are Jenas everywhere in America, and it’s not just where nooses are hung from trees. Just look at the injustice and the ramifications of mandatory minimum sentences and three strikes laws. Young black men have received sentences under these laws totally disproportionate to the crime committed. It’s time for America to wake up and begin to complete this unfinished business.

Now, let me just briefly talk about children’s health care and say in no uncertain terms that it’s really incredibly irresponsible and downright shameful that the President really does not support children’s health care.

SCHIP is one of the most successful programs in our Nation, facilitating coverage for 6 million children. When I was in the State legislature, along with Congresswoman HILDA SOLIS and now-Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, we wrote the Healthy Families program, which

was the California SCHIP initiative. We were then and continue to be committed to extending the reach of the program as much as possible with the available resources, and now Healthy Families in California provides low-cost access to health care for over 800,000 children, more than any other State.

The flexibility built into SCHIP has allowed California to provide access to health, dental and vision coverage for the children that it serves, and we must continue to support that vital mission.

Providing health care coverage for our children is one of the most cost-effective investments that America can make. Children are the least costly to provide coverage for, and giving children access to adequate primary health care will create a generation of healthier, better educated and, in the end, more productive adults.

Under the Bush administration, the number of uninsured Americans has continued to grow. Employers continue to cut coverage and shift more of the burden to employees as costs continue to rise, but the SCHIP program has slowed the growth for our Nation’s children.

Additionally, comprehensive health coverage for children is an important step towards eliminating the growing, continuing, huge health disparities that plague minority populations, including 800,000 Asian Pacific Americans, 1.4 million African Americans, and 3.4 million Latinos.

Minority children make up more than 5 million of the 9 million uninsured children. These children are more than twice as likely as white children to die before their first birthday, and these mortality rates are a direct result of these children being uninsured.

So, quite frankly, I think it’s two months of the funding for this occupation of Iraq, this funding would cover every child in America for a year. It is a tragedy that children’s health care has not been funded at the level that we’re funding the occupation of Iraq.

Now, unfortunately, I have to say it seems like the President is waging war against our children, and I hope that the American people hold him accountable.

I thank you for organizing this Special Order tonight.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from the great State of California, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield time to my good friend from the great State of New Jersey. He is a leader in international relations and is now the Chair of a new subcommittee called Global Health as part of the International Relations Committee. I give you my good friend and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. DONALD PAYNE).

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by also expressing my accolades to the gentlewoman who is chairing this Special Order tonight from the great city of Cleveland in Ohio.

As you know, she has served with distinction in the past in the judicial system as a judge. She is a former prosecutor, of course, and esteemed attorney, and she now heads the very difficult Ethics Committee, which really says that of all of the people in this body, it was deemed that she was the most qualified and suitable, in addition to qualifications you need to be suited for a position, and so I commend you for that.

Also, as I previously mentioned, we’re very pleased with the Congressional Black Caucus as it continues to be the conscience of the Congress. Our chairperson from the great city of Detroit, Representative KILPATRICK, is doing an outstanding job.

Today, I rise to speak briefly on two subjects. First of all, I rise to speak about my support for the reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, which expands and increases health insurance coverage for low-income children and improves the quality of health care that our children receive. But we need to pass a bill that fully funds and covers all eligible children. How could the richest Nation in the world do less than to provide for its young? It is critical and important because they are our future.

Today, our Nation is facing a health care crisis. Existing private insurance options are becoming increasingly less affordable for families, and 45 million individuals remain uninsured in our country, 9 million of whom are children. The State Children’s Health Insurance Program and Medicaid have been successful in providing 6 million children with health care coverage.

In considering the reauthorization of SCHIP, we must build on past bipartisan success and work together to ensure coverage for the 9 million children who remain uninsured.

I am proud to say that New Jersey has made significant progress in providing health insurance for its children. However, the progress cannot be maintained unless we reauthorize legislation which meets the real needs of children and for children’s health coverage, including addressing the unique needs of children with disabilities.

According to a study released by Families USA, the number of uninsured children in my home State of New Jersey could be reduced by 100,000 Statewide if SCHIP is fully reauthorized.

Without this legislation, New Jersey has more to lose than most States, unfortunately. Why? Because New Jersey did the right thing by increasing SCHIP eligibility to 3.5 times the Federal poverty level because of the cost of living, which is higher in New Jersey, especially housing costs. Similarly, New Jersey enrolled low-income parents in part because research has shown that this results in more low-income children being enrolled in the program.

However, instead of being rewarded for these actions, under the Bush administration's proposal, over 28,000 children and 80,000 parents Statewide could lose their health care coverage. In addition, thousands more children who are eligible now but not participating would never be able to enroll in the program.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government must be a responsible partner in terms of State health coverage initiatives. Forty years ago, Medicare eliminated the problem of the uninsured among the elderly. I believe we have an opportunity to take steps to do the same now with our children by fully reauthorizing this vital health care program.

Mr. Speaker, my commitment to children's health care is solid, and I urge that we support a bill that fully reauthorizes, not half, not a quarter, not three-quarters, but fully authorizes, and I hope that the bill that comes before us will do just that.

Now, if I may speak for a few minutes on the Jena Six.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Absolutely, please proceed.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Because we stand here on the 50th anniversary of school desegregation in the South and 43 years ago after the signing of the civil rights bill of 1964.

However, recent events, particularly in the last 2 years, give credence to the saying that all that glitters is not gold. Although we thought we were making tremendous progress, still many problems remain.

Two years ago, New Orleans washed away, exposing undertones of class and race that did not go away with the signing of those two momentous decrees, *Brown v. the Board of Ed* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In Jena, Louisiana, the issue of race, which had been simmering below the surface, had reached the boiling point late last year. Can you imagine that an act of sitting under the unspoken white only tree will garner the reaction of nooses? Not only nooses, but nooses decorated in the school colors being hung from that same tree? There's no mistake the symbolism that nooses hanging from a tree means in the not-so-distant history of America.

As a matter of fact, the NAACP was founded in 1909 not for full employment, not for equal accommodation. The simple, original goal was simply to try to stop lynchings, just try to stop lynchings, and here we have nooses put under a tree that is the tree for whites only, to send a message that if you sit here, you don't know what might happen to you in the future.

While I find what those students did to be egregious, hanging the nooses on the tree, I am just as disgusted and dumbfounded by the reaction of the school administrators. Chalking up those actions to be a youthful stunt shows a dereliction of duty by the Jena school administrators. Have you no sense of history? Have you have no

sense of common decency? Three days of in-school suspension for the culprits of this prank equates to a slap on the wrist. That punishment says shame on you but really means no harm, no foul.

□ 2000

Yet, after almost 4 months of underwhelming reactions from the school administration who are supposed to protect and advocate for the students under their care, the school imploded.

While I do not condone violence as a solution, couldn't something have happened before we even arrived at this point? Yes, one student was injured, and thankfully he has recovered. But attempted second degree murder, second degree aggravated battery and conspiracy?

The Jena school administration and the local legal system cannot run hot and cold while doling out punishments. They have the responsibility to be objective and fair, and not play with the people's lives like they are pawns in a chess game. The punishment must fit the crime. We are dealing with lives here, especially the lives of young people who still have a lot ahead of them. Threatening to take their lives away at the stroke of a pen does not ring of the necessary objectivity and fairness befitting a district attorney who looked at the black students and said, by the stroke of this pen I can have your future of your life.

And so as I conclude, Martin Luther King said, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

As Members of Congress elected by the people to represent them and to promulgate laws on their behalf, we have to speak out against these types of injustices that threaten the very foundation upon which this Nation stands, equal treatment under the law. If we fail to speak up for these young men, we will be abdicating our roles for which we were elected. What is to say that my grandchildren or your child will not be the next? Let us not sheepishly accept this type of behavior, not in the 21st century.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his comments.

Today, as I said previously, under the leadership of our Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, this is the CBC's special message hour. Today our message is on the SCHIP program and the Jena Six.

It gives me great pleasure to yield time to my colleague and good friend from the Virgin Islands. She is a medical doctor. Prior to coming to Congress, she practiced medicine right here in Washington, DC. She is the leader of the Congressional Black Caucus health brain trust. It gives me great pleasure to yield such time as she

may consume to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, DONNA CHRISTENSEN.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you for yielding, Congresswoman, and for leading this Special Order so we can speak of these issues of importance to our constituents. And let me join my other colleagues in applauding our chairwoman, Congresswoman CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, for setting aside this hour, and let you know again how proud we are, how proud you make all Americans as the first black woman on the Ways and Means Committee and also as Chair of the Ethics Committee.

Tonight, this hour is devoted to two topics, the Jena Six case and the Children's Health Insurance Program. As I tried to decide which one of these compelling and imminent issues to speak on, it occurred to me that there is a connection between the two. Both deal with the well-being of our children and this Nation's responsibility to provide equal opportunity for them for a life of quality and of achievement.

With the case of Michael Bell, who remains locked up with no bail, as well as the other five Jena High School students, this country is witnessing firsthand the kind of injustice perpetrated on far too many African American children which results in the destroying their dreams, their hopes, and their lives. It is time for the good people of this country to rise up and say, no more. So I want to thank the leadership of the CBC and all of our members for answering the call of these young people. I thank the Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Reverend Al Sharpton, the others of the faith leadership, the NAACP, and the thousands who marched in protest, for standing up and standing with the Jena Six and for justice.

These young people and Genarlo Wilson of Georgia are just seven of the countless others who have faced and continue to face the same fate, and we must never stop the work of protecting our children.

That applies also to the issue of the Children's Health Insurance Program. Regardless of what one hears on TV and radio, there are about 6 million children now in the program, 800,000 of whom would lose their insurance if we reauthorize it at the level the President says he will accept. There are now almost 9 million children who are uninsured, 6 million of whom are eligible for SCHIP, the children's insurance. The bill the Senate Republicans are holding us at will only add about 2 million. I believe that every eligible child must be covered, even if that means a shortened reauthorization to stay within the funding limits set in the Senate.

And the White House and Republican talking heads need to stop misinforming and distorting the truth about what we are proposing in the House bill and even proposing in the watered down version that the Senate has reached agreement on. There are no

upper middle class, even middle class children who would be covered under either the House original version or the current proposal. Coverage is provided for only up to 200 percent of poverty, which is where it has always been. The House SCHIP I still support would just finally provide adequate funding to get those already eligible, but not signed up, covered.

Our children need access to health care that includes dental care, mental health care; and it needs to begin at the very beginning by including prenatal care for their mothers. The Territories need to have State-like treatment, and we must also include immigrant children who are legally here.

The American people want us to provide health care to everyone. If we cannot begin with poor children, what kind of country are we? Do we not understand that, in keeping our children healthy, we save money by preventing more serious chronic illness later and that we build a stronger country by enabling them as healthier adults to contribute to everyone's well-being and our Nation's strength?

We in the House have built consensus around the better bill, and that was not easy. We need our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol to join us on the side of right. Come on, colleagues, let's give our children what they need. Let's do the right thing. Let's send the President a bill that is truly observing of the wonderful human beings full of potential that are America's children. If he vetoes it, let it be on him, not on us.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield for comment to my good friend from the great State of California, former ambassador to Micronesia, a now Member of Congress, such time as she may consumer. We are glad to have her here. She is in her third term, the gentlewoman from California, Congresswoman DIANE WATSON.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to give a special thanks to Representative STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES for coordinating this. She certainly has shown her leadership ability in everything that becomes her responsibility. And I thank you for the time.

I want to very quickly add my remarks to those of my colleagues referencing the Jena Six. I was horrified to see us take a step backwards into a period of time when there was fear and hatred displayed on people's faces and in their actions. And certainly we know that with every crime committed there is a punishment.

But the symbol of justice in this country of ours, the United States of America, is a symbol that has a scale and a blindfold, because justice should be blind. And in a country that uses the rule of law as its guide post, how is it that we become so unjust when we are dealing with our young people?

Certainly, things happen and anger builds up and children do things that

are illegal and sometimes foolish. But rather than looking at them as adults, let's apply the law to them as young people and apply it equally so they can learn their lesson.

With a stroke of the pen and destroying the lives of six young men, I think that sends the wrong message to the world. We are asking other countries to model their forms of government after ours here in America. And I would give a caution. We have made too many mistakes, and I would say don't take our mistakes as part of our Western-style democracy. They are truly mistakes of man, not mistakes of law. And so I would hope that, after the demonstrations, after the fury, justice will take place and people will be treated fairly.

Mr. Speaker, our American health care system is failing. According to the Census Bureau, the number of American children who lack health insurance has reached a new high, 8.7 million. Worst of all, that number has actually increased by 1 million just over the previous 2 years. Meanwhile, our gross domestic product during that same period increased by \$1.5 trillion. So at the same time our economy was growing by that amount, 1 million more children were losing their health insurance.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely shameful that, in a Nation as wealthy as ours, we leave so many children sick and vulnerable. It is shameful that the richest Nation in the world has an infant mortality rate that ranks 35th, higher than any other rich nation. It is shameful that while we vote for tax giveaways for the richest Americans, the poorest, most vulnerable Americans are left in the lurch.

I believe we were sent here to do more than just apply Band-Aids to this situation. I think we have the responsibility to make sure that every American, and certainly every child, can see a doctor when they are injured or fall ill. Politics is often about compromise, but which children should we decide not to allow the deserving health coverage? Which of us would be willing to choose between our own children, saying one can be healthy but another must be ill? I think this is a false, immoral choice; and I do not believe we should accept anything less than full coverage for every American child.

In my district, the economics range from the dangerously poor to the superrich. And I say "dangerously poor" to describe the impact of poverty on children's health. Poor children are at risk from disease, from crime, from poor education, and many other negative influences that stem from a poverty environment. This list goes on.

When we talk about homeland security, we really mean the people on the land. So providing a health delivery system for all our children is the only way to guarantee a strong Nation of future Americans. So let's invest in our children rather than in war that can take their lives too early, so regardless

of income levels, our children have a birth right to grow up healthy and strong to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Thank you, STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES and Mr. Speaker, for the time allowed.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I am about to yield some time to a really good friend of mine who in fact was the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission when I was a trial lawyer at the EEOC with my earlier career. But before I do that, I want to make a statement with regard to Jena Six.

I have been blessed in my lifetime to have a lot of opportunities in the law. I was an assistant county prosecutor, criminal division for 2½ years; I was a municipal court judge for 2 years; I was a general jurisdiction judge for 8 years; and I also was the Cuyahoga County prosecutor for 8 years before I came to Congress. And I give that statement, my background, so you understand the breadth and the experience that I have.

The prosecutor in Jena, as I have come to understand, as with every other prosecutor in this country, has an ethical obligation, and it is very difficult when the light is shone on you. Here we have a young man who has been in jail more than a year, a juvenile. Now a court has said to them that his trial should be overturned. That prosecutor, the prosecutor in Jena, should be saying to himself, duh, should I be rethinking the position I have taken? Should I not encourage the judge to do justice? Should I not say to that judge, grant this young man bail until we work this out?

□ 2015

I'm confident it's tough on him because he's got all these other people saying, hold your ground; do what you've been doing. It's a lot easier to hold your ground than to do what's right. And I'm calling upon that prosecutor, the prosecutor in Jena to rethink, go back in a corner in his office all by himself without all the pressure, and contemplate why he was put in office.

Prosecutors are some of the most powerful people in this country, and I'm going to encourage young people who are listening to me to become an assistant county prosecutor. When you are the prosecutor, you are vested with so much discretion that you would have the opportunity to reconsider what's happened with this Jena Six.

But as I move forward, I want to say to this prosecutor, all of us talk about justice and what's happened in our judicial process, in the judicial system. Young people need to see in judicial officers and prosecutors justice so that they will have faith in the system.

Again I'm calling upon this prosecutor to rethink what he did. You know, it's very easy to overcharge. When you overcharge, then you can say to the people, well, I charged him with this, but I was able to get a plea bargain. Justice requires, ethics require that the prosecutor apply the law to

the facts and then make a decision with regard to what the charge should be.

In this instance, again, I call upon this prosecutor to take a look at the circumstances. High school kids. And we've seen fights among high school kids where the fights get rough and damage occurs and injury occurs. And I'm not saying by any stretch of the imagination that there should not be some question or responsibility for the conduct that was engaged in.

But I call upon the prosecutor again, you do justice. Don't wait for the judge to do justice. Don't wait for God to do justice. It's in your hand to do justice, to use the power that you have, that you've been vested with, that the people of America expect you to do your job; and your job will be to rethink the decisions you've made in this case and make sure that justice applies. And it's in your power to do so.

It gives me great pleasure, at this time, to call upon my good friend, one of the great lawyers in the Congressional Black Caucus who's shown leadership in every area that I can think of, my good friend, the Delegate from the District of Columbia, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, for such time as she may consume.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentlelady for her very gracious remarks and kind words. To the gentlelady who remarked that I first knew her when I was Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, I must say to her that it gave me special personal pride to see her elected to the Congress, much more to see her become the first African American woman on the Ways and Means Committee, and she just did us proud again.

The gentlelady from Ohio has applied her distinguished career in the law to reminding the prosecutor what his first obligation is, and that is to do justice. That's why the prosecutor is given such discretion. He often doesn't prosecute, or he thinks of other things that should be done. The onus is on him.

And I found your remarks especially important in light of the fact that after what we've seen in Jena has left us to just get to one side or the other, and that's not solving the problem either.

I want to thank the gentlelady from Michigan, who is the Chair of our caucus, for delegating to you this responsibility and for her great leadership, especially in this week of the Congressional Black Caucus events where we will be discussing public policy and trying, as a group of African Americans, to contribute not only to the Congress, but to our Nation.

If the lady will, I would like to comment on both issues. I decided that the issue, the consciousness on the issue, had been raised and no words that I could say could further raise them.

But my consciousness was raised when 50,000 people went to Jena, led by young people. Now understand, yes, there were civil rights leaders here, but

not since I was a kid in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee did I see a demonstration that was generally led by young people. The organized Civil Rights Movement played its part. But nobody who looked at those television pictures can have any doubt about who organized this extraordinary demonstration. And look what it was. It was a peaceful protest in the tradition of the peaceful nonviolent protests of the 1960s and '70s.

These kids, mostly college and high school youngsters, who identified clearly with the Jena Six of their age, came to Louisiana essentially to say that adults had lost control of their town and of their society. I went and looked for what has happened, and I want to say a few words about what has happened that makes me say that adults lost control.

This event that we all know about under the tree began almost a year ago. Well, in August. Well, August 2006, as a matter of fact. Now we're already in, so that's more than a year ago. Where, interestingly, these students went and asked permission to sit under a tree. Everything thereafter, it seems to me, falls squarely on the shoulders of the adults. Here the children are asking for permission. What do kids usually do when they see a shady spot? And that's what it was, apparently, one of the few shady spots close to the school has been preempted by people of a certain color. Well, you know, the way in which children go to school and college today, tragically, in separate groups, instead of going over and simply starting a fight or simply sitting under the tree, they asked permission.

Mr. Speaker, the noose, one can argue about whether the three nooses should have resulted in expulsion or not. For myself, particularly if there's only one high school, I'm not for expelling anybody. I'm for using the good offices of the adults to try to keep from doing that. And I doubt if there was more than one high school in Jena.

But the fact is that, whether or not the kids knew what the three nooses meant, once that word reached adults, white and black, they knew for sure. And without recounting all of the events, it appears that many opportunities to try to solve this issue were lost because those in charge of the town refused to listen.

How could a prosecutor, the prosecutor of which the gentlelady spoke, have essentially used the threatening language about the stroke of a pen and making your lives disappear after a school assembly? The school assembly was the right thing to do.

But I say to the Chair of tonight's event, where is the civil rights unit of the Justice Department?

After more than a year with this thing heating up, they still have, so far as I know, this unit that does not engage in law enforcement but does help troubled communities. This is a small town. They perhaps don't have the resources or the expertise to know what

to do. But this school has gone through four lockdowns over this event; the local newspaper suggesting that the parents who tried to raise the issue at a school board meeting soon thereafter and were denied were the cause of the unrest. And there has been unrest.

The expulsion hearing for hanging the nooses becomes an issue not simply because that was not considered enough of a punishment. That's arguable. I don't want to stand here and say what was the proper punishment. It's because people look at the fact that that was mitigated to a few days and compare it to the almost instant expulsion of the black kids following a fight.

I don't regard these two things as the same. But I say to you that the reason that this appearance of unequal justice heated up is because after the expulsion was overturned to a few days' suspension, the adults did not, in fact, react to the mounting tension in the school, and it has mounted for over a year.

When the parents of the black students weren't allowed to speak at the school board meeting, they apparently went a second time and were allowed to speak, but, quote, not about the noose issue. There's nobody in Jena, and I can forgive them that, they're small-town folks, who understood that this was mounting, and if you don't get to talk it out, if you don't have small groups, if you don't have somebody helping you, it's just going to continue to mount.

Disciplinary issues continue all around this separate incident. We have incidents of young blacks being attacked by whites in the town, all around this incident without anybody, months later, heating up, incident after incident, all going back to the nooses; gun pulled on some black kids, not because they were involved with the whites who pulled the gun, but in retaliation for a prior incident. So here you have retaliation going and people going after whoever is not of their color.

And the teachers begging for somebody to do something over and over again. The recounting of what happened for a full year says the teachers are saying, for goodness sakes, help us out. We see mounting tension in this school. We had, a few months ago, a dozen teachers threatening a "sick out" if discipline was not restored in the school. And that's when the prosecutor comes forward and ups the charges of the six boys to attempted second-degree murder. That was his response to mounting racial tension in a school.

The prosecutor, I want to suggest to the gentlelady from Ohio, I believe, is in violation of Louisiana rules of professional conduct, just as the prosecutor was in violation of the North Carolina rules in the infamous case involving the woman who accused the Duke players of rape. This prosecutor has done the very same thing. He has gone before the press and spoken in

such a way that I believe he should be investigated by his own under Louisiana rules of professional conduct. And I believe and call upon the Louisiana Bar Association to do so.

But above all, I'm calling this evening on the Justice Department to lend its mediation resources to this poor little town where both the blacks and the whites are greatly in need of outside assistance. This kind of racial tension has built up over time, not only in this community, but I think young people around the country see Jena as emblematic of the abuses, overcharging in the criminal justice system.

Just as this young man who's being held in jail without bail may have been, and indeed did, if, in fact, he is found guilty now, and I do not know if he has yet been found guilty as a juvenile. The matter was thrown out when they wanted to prosecute him as adult.

If he has engaged in that violence, you will not find anybody in the Congressional Black Caucus or in this Congress saying violence was the appropriate response, given the fact that you have not been appropriately responded to on the three nooses. That, you won't find us saying.

What you'll find us saying is that every adult knew what maybe kids do not know, what three nooses have to have meant to these kids' parents and to these kids. And, Mr. Speaker, the adults in Jena allowed this to build up; beyond the adults, the Justice Department, who would have been in touch with these incidents.

□ 2030

They are charged to be in touch with these incidents over the last year. They did not move in and I call upon them to do so now.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. If I could reclaim my time for a moment, in my notes with regard to Jena Six, after the new situation where the white students or whoever hung the nooses from the tree, the African American students decided to protest. So here, then, the district attorney, accompanied by the police, comes to the high school and says to them, I can be your best friend or your worst enemy. I can take away your lives with the stroke of a pen.

My position would have been, again, and I say this very clearly, that this prosecutor knows that he has power and people know that he has power. But there is this piece of poetry that says that when you are talking to young people, in essence, what they say to you is, I would rather see a sermon than hear one every day. And this district attorney should be setting the example by engaging in conduct and setting justice as his point of entree with these students versus sitting down and saying to them, along with the police, cut down what you are doing because I can be your worst enemy or your best friend. And he truly can, but being someone's worst enemy or best friend is not the gauge by which we

would hope that prosecutors in this Nation engage in their conduct and official responsibilities.

I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. NORTON. Just to respond to that and just say a few words about SCHIP, what you say is so important. Also, the power of the prosecutor, we have seen him send Members of Congress to jail. You don't need to tell him much. But above all, what the prosecutor needs to know is this is not decades ago when a prosecutor approaching black people got them to fear and trembling. These are kids. This is 2007. That was seen as a threat, and it didn't do the job. In fact, it upped the ante, and it was irresponsible conduct because he should have been aware of how his words would have been perceived. And if anything, he needed to cool it down, perhaps to say the law is here to do his job if you don't do yours, but certainly that kind of threat had the opposite effect on teens.

Maybe on you and me, we might have said, well, wait a minute, we had better stop here. But these are kids who had spent a full year fighting each other anyway. And, again, where is it going to come to an end? The youngster who remains in jail remains there. We don't know what is going to happen to him. It seems to me the only way to bring it to an end is to bring in outside forces to try to mediate this situation.

I want to say a word about SCHIP in light of the allegation that many of us simply want to give high earners access to this bill to provide health benefits for children above the normal poverty line. And the figure has been cited in some jurisdictions you can make \$60,000 or \$80,000 a year. This needs to be explained to the American people. Yes, there may be some of us who see it as a way to get universal health care, but I will tell you most of us don't see it that way. The reason we have gone to children is because we have failed utterly and know we will continue to fail in the foreseeable future to get universal child care. And so the whole point of the State health bill was to say at least let's do it for children. And the notion of doing it for people with high income needs to be explained.

Poverty benefits are not adjusted for the cost of living in particular places. That has enormous hardship. But its hardship when it comes to health costs cannot be overemphasized because of differences in the cost of living and inflationary rise of health care in particular. Health care inflation is far greater than any other kind of inflation in the society. So you are faced in large cities, for example, with people who can't possibly afford even health care provided by their employer because the cost of living in the high-cost place where they live is such that they can barely afford to live there. So what is \$61,000 in one place is not nearly what it is in a small town someplace else.

I want to point that out because these high-cost-of-living regions are

faced with a terrible dilemma, that those children who will be without health care are in a large number and the salaries as seen nationwide do not explain why.

I looked at what were these places. These places in order of highest, the top three, to lowest are Hawaii, number one; California, number two; and the District of Columbia region, the national capital region, number three.

Is anybody surprised? People can't even afford to live in the District of Columbia anymore because of the cost of living.

New York must be here coming up. I am just looking down the list.

But essentially when you consider, yes, there is some enhanced benefit from the Federal Government, but what these jurisdictions have said is that the situation has become so bad after our investigations for certain people who are, yes, above the Federal limit that we believe that hundreds of thousands of children will, in fact, be without health care unless we move. And I am astounded by the number of States that believe this, and I am chagrined that we see a preemptive strike by the Bush administration to, in fact, despite what we have passed, keep States from bringing in, up to a certain limit, certain families who have been priced out of health care in their communities.

So I call upon Americans, as they read about what we are trying to do here, to understand what we are really trying to do here, to make sure that when we say we are covering all children who need health care and could not otherwise get it, we mean that and no more.

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON of the District of Columbia. And I want you to know, and the people of the District of Columbia to know, we are for your having representation and a vote in the Congress, and we are going to be vigilant and keep working on that very issue.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am currently serving on the Ways and Means Committee. As many people have said this evening, I am blessed to be the first African American woman in the history of this country to serve on this committee. I am pleased this year to work my way to the Health Subcommittee. And on that committee, as a part of that committee, I have had the opportunity to work on the recent legislation passed by the House on August 1 that took a vital step towards ensuring the future health of America by approving the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act. It was called the CHAMP Act of 2007.

On the Health Subcommittee, I have had the opportunity to talk with my colleagues and listen to testimony

from doctors and those in health care and those who provide kidney dialysis, et cetera, to help me begin to formulate my position on many issues.

One of the things that has been clear to me, however, is if we don't provide health care to our children, we are writing our future. I recently had the opportunity to go to university hospitals in my congressional district to participate with some young people in what's called the Healthy Children program and their focus on obesity, one of the biggest problems that faces children in our country and particularly minority children whose diet tends to be not as healthy, low-income folks, as folks who are able to choose fresh vegetables, fruit, et cetera. And as I was playing with these children, and we were doing exercises and we were rolling around the floor with these exercise balls and these various types of strings to help us lift and move our arms, I noticed that these young people were motivated, motivated, to change their eating habits as well as their lifestyle.

Obesity has claimed so many of our children. Back in the day when I was in school, I remember there was this President's requirement that you had to do so many sit-ups, you had to run so many laps, and you had to be involved in activity. And somehow we have to get our children back to that activity.

We have children with high blood pressure. We have children with diabetes. We have children who are working their way to kidney failure as a result of the lack of health care and the lack of preventative health care.

So there should be no surprise on the face of any person in the United States of America that we need to have health care coverage for all of our children.

Now, the controversy becomes how do you pay for it. And right now we are in this Congress where we are saying we want to be concerned about pay-fors. We want to be fiscally sound. So we either have to come up with a way to tax and change it, or we have to be able to reduce expenditures in other areas. I am one of those who believes that it is time to expend the money that we need to expend for health care, health care for all Americans, because I know we are spending much more than that as we fight this war in Iraq and we provide health care to the people of Iraq and still question whether we provide adequate health care to the veterans of our country who have been injured and maimed over there.

But today on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, it has been my pleasure to host this message hour. We have had an opportunity to bring to the attention of the American public our concerns about the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which will be debated on the floor of this House tomorrow.

I encourage America to tune in, listen in, and call in and raise your complaints, raise your concerns, and let

Members of Congress and Members of the Senate understand how important you know that health care for children is.

And, lastly, I will focus back one more time on the Jena Six. It was great to have an opportunity with my colleagues to address that particular issue. And on behalf of our great Chair, Congresswoman CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK of the State of Michigan, I thank the Speaker for granting us this Special Order for today.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, in the 21st century, there are some things that I had hoped we would have put behind us as a society. As we move to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the "Little Rock Nine," there are things that I had hoped today's children would not need to suffer. But as the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I know that we are still in search of equal justice across this Nation. There are still places where the progress of the civil rights era have not fully taken hold.

The tragedy of the Jena-6, which is unfolding right now before the eyes of the Nation, shows us that we still have some distance to travel before putting the demons of the past behind us. The controversy dates back to August 2006 when black students at Jena High School attempted to sit under a tree where white students socialized exclusively. The following day, three white students, who would later be punished only with suspensions, hung nooses from the tree. A series of racially charged episodes involving off-campus violence soon followed the noose incident. In one instance, black student Robert Bailey would be attacked in a white part of town at gunpoint. The white student who attacked Bailey would face only simple battery and probation. The white man who pulled the gun on Bailey, however, would face no consequence. Ultimately, Bailey would be charged with theft of a firearm for wresting the gun away.

Later, racial taunting directed at black students in the high school cafeteria would lead to a fight in which a white student would be injured and sent to the hospital. These injuries, however, would not prevent the student from attending a high school event that same evening. The five of the Black teens involved in the fight—Mychal Bell, Robert Bailey, Carwin Jones, Bryant Purvis, and Theo Shaw were charged as adults with attempted second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder, sentences that carry up to 80 years in prison. The sixth teen will be tried as a juvenile and faces undisclosed charges.

One would have hoped that the elders of Jena would have intervened in a way that led to healing in the community. Sadly, this was not the case. Allegations of prosecutorial misconduct have been directed at LaSalle Parish District Attorney Reed Walters, who told Black students at a school assembly in response to the noose incident that "I can be your best friend or your worst enemy. With a stroke of my pen, I can make your lives disappear." This statement was proven true when Mychal Bell was convicted in June of aggravated second-degree battery and conspiracy by an all-white jury. The court-appointed attorney who represented Bell called no witnesses and presented no evidence in his defense.

The families of Jena have not, however, faced this struggle alone. Just as happened in the 1960's, students, activists, and other con-

cerned citizens from across the Nation have organized, rallied, and raised money on behalf of the Jena-6. Most recently, on September 9, 2007, Reverend Jesse Jackson met with families of the Jena-6 and called upon Jena officials to reconsider the charges. Major rallies were held in Jena and around the country on September 20, the day Bell's sentencing was scheduled to occur. Tens of thousands traveled to Jena from across the country to show their support.

This show of activism has had some effect. This month, charges against Jones, Shaw and Bailey were reduced to aggravated second-degree battery and conspiracy, although Purvis still faces charges of attempted murder and conspiracy. A judge also granted a motion to overturn Bell's conspiracy conviction, stating that the case should have been tried in juvenile court. In addition, the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals overturned Bell's remaining aggravated second-degree battery conviction, also on the grounds that it should have been tried in juvenile court.

At the Federal, we cannot remain silent. Indeed, the Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice has been in Jena for months to assist with conciliation efforts. Investigation units of the Department have also apparently reviewed the situation. It is important for members of Congress to maintain careful oversight of Federal actions to ensure that all the resources of the Justice Department are employed to protect the rights of the local community.

To that end, I will convene a panel at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference to address, the plight of the Jena-6. The forum will be held on Friday, September 28, at 3 p.m. in Room 209c of the Washington Convention Center. The panel will feature: Prof Charles Ogletree, Harvard University Law School; Tory Pegram, Louisiana Affiliate, ACLU; Family Members of Robert Bailey—Jena 6; Rep. Elijah Cummings (MD-7th); Michael Baisden, Radio Personality; Louis Granderson Scott, Attorney of Michael Bell (Jena-6); and Rev. Al Sharpton, Civil Rights Activist.

Ultimately, I believe that a Judiciary Committee oversight hearing may be warranted, as the Department of Justice has intervened with little success. The Department investigated the noose incident, but concluded that a hate crime had not been committed. However, we should explore whether the apparently hostile racial climate at the local high school opens federal jurisdiction under other civil rights statutes. Similarly, the activities of CRS should be reviewed to determine their effectiveness at dispute resolution.

We have reached a point in history where this kind of situation is no longer tolerable. I commend everyone across the country for participating in rallies, sending your support and letting these students and the rest of the country know that we, as a Nation, will not stand for this kind of injustice.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the bipartisan, bicameral plan to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, which the House will consider later this week. This crucial legislation will ensure that millions of our children receive the vital health services they need.

Even though I support this legislation, I rise today with a heavy heart. It is nothing short of a disgrace that here, in the wealthiest country

on earth, eight million children lack health insurance coverage. We ought to be ashamed that we are having this debate at all.

I am absolutely stunned that some Congressional Republicans and the President continue to oppose this legislation, particularly in light of the fact that the President used SCHIP as part of his campaign platform in 2004. Talk about shock and awe! I am shocked beyond belief that they can stand before the American people with straight faces and refuse health care for our children. I am in awe of the gall required to base the denial of these vital, life-saving services on an ideological talking point. Madam Speaker, the ideology of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle has not provided health care for these children yet. It is impossible for any serious person to believe that if this legislation is defeated the Republican ideology will suddenly start working its magic and provide health care for these children whose parents can't afford to buy it in the open market.

In my years fighting for universal health care, we have often said, "Covering children is easy. How could anyone refuse to support coverage for children?" It was coverage for adults that was always perceived as the real challenge.

But today, the Republicans have stooped lower than even I thought was possible. Not only are they saying "We can't afford to give our children health care." This is the same party, by the way, that finds money for tax cuts for the rich, that finds money to fund a disaster of a war. Many times more money than what is needed to cover these children, in fact.

Not only are the Republicans admitting that they prioritize tax cuts for the wealthy and feeding the military industrial complex over insuring our children. They are now standing before the American people and saying "It is not our job to guarantee health insurance coverage for America's children." They are refusing to make that promise.

Instead, they propose that our children's health should be subject to the ups and downs of the stock market, that it should depend on their parents' employment status, or how much they have in a bank account. It is utterly beyond conception how the Republicans can possibly think these concepts will be accepted by the American people. But I will leave my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to face the repercussions of this folly next November.

Let me move on to a more positive subject: the compromise SCHIP bill, which we will pass over these shameful objections. While I would have preferred the original House-passed bill to the more modest bicameral compromise, the House-Senate agreement is a major improvement over the President's proposal, which would result in 840,000 children currently enrolled in SCHIP losing their coverage.

The House-Senate agreement invests \$35 billion in new funding for SCHIP over five years to strengthen the program's financing, increase health insurance coverage for low-income children, and improve the quality of health care children receive. It will provide health coverage to millions of low-income children who are currently uninsured and ensures that the 6.6 million children who currently participate in CHIP continue to receive health coverage. Pending final Congressional Budget

Office estimates, the reduction in the number of uninsured children will approach 4 million children.

Under the agreement, quality dental coverage will be provided to all children enrolled in CHIP. The agreement also ensures states will offer mental health services on par with medical and surgical benefits covered under CHIP. The agreement provides states with incentives to lower the rate of uninsured low-income children. It replaces the flawed CMS August 17th letter to states with a more thoughtful and appropriate approach. In place of the CMS letter, the agreement gives states time and assistance in developing and implementing their own best practices to address crowd-out.

The compromise proposal improves outreach tools to simplify and streamline enrollment of eligible children, providing \$100 million in grants for new outreach activities to states, local governments, schools, community-based organizations, safety-net providers and others. It also establishes a new quality child health initiative to develop and implement quality measures and improve state reporting of quality data. These measures are critical to ensuring that all our nation's children get the health care they need.

Mr. Speaker, let's tell the White House and the Congressional Republicans still standing with it that it's time to stop playing political games. Let's tell them it's time to work together to ensure more children across the country have the high-quality medical care they deserve. The President might not be able to understand that it's the right thing to do, but the American people certainly will.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my dear friend, Ms. TUBBS JONES of Ohio, for organizing this special order on the very importance subject of SCHIP, the State Children's Health Insurance Program. I am particularly pleased that we are having this discussion tonight because I have very serious concerns about the SCHIP legislation that comes before the House tomorrow. My major concern is that the version of the legislation that will come before the House tomorrow is less expansive than the version the House voted on previously.

This is extremely important because reauthorization of SCHIP is crucial to closing the racial and ethnic health disparities in this country. Narrowing health care coverage of our children, as this newly agreed upon version does, clearly falls far short of the goal that we had hoped for in our efforts to decrease health disparities. It is crucial that this Congress continue to bring awareness to the many health concerns facing minority communities and to acknowledge that we need to find solutions to address these concerns. My colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and I understand the very difficult challenges facing us in the form of huge health disparities among our community and other minority communities. We will continue to seek solutions to those challenges.

Reauthorization of the SCHIP is crucial to realizing those solutions. However, we must not compromise away the health of millions of children who will under this new SCHIP version go without health care coverage. It is imperative for us to improve the prospects for living long and healthy lives and fostering an ethic of wellness in African-American and other minority communities.

I thank all of my CBC colleagues who have been toiling in the vineyards for years developing effective public policies and securing the resources needed to eradicate racial and gender disparities in health and wellness.

We know that the lack of healthcare contributes greatly to the racial and ethnic health disparities in this country, so we must provide our children with the health insurance coverage to remain healthy. SCHIP, established in 1997 to serve as the healthcare safety net for low-income uninsured children, has decreased the number of uninsured low-income children in the United States by more than one-third. The reduction in the number of uninsured children is even more striking for minority children.

In 2006, SCHIP provided insurance to 6.7 million children. Of these, 6.2 million were in families whose income was less than \$33,200 a year for a family of three. SCHIP works in conjunction with the Medicaid safety net that serves the lowest income children and ones with disabilities. Together, these programs provide necessary preventative, primary and acute healthcare services to more than 30 million children. Eighty-six percent of these children are in working families that are unable to obtain or afford private health insurance for their. Meanwhile, health care through SCHIP is cost effective: it costs a mere \$3.34 a day or \$100 a month to cover a child under SCHIP, according to the Congressional Budget Office. There are significant benefits of the State Children's Health Insurance Program when looking at specific populations served by this program.

MINORITY CHILDREN

SCHIP has had a dramatic effect in reducing the number of uninsured minority children and providing them access to care:

Between 1996 and 2005, the percentage of low-income African American and Hispanic children without insurance decreased substantially.

In 1998, roughly 30 percent of Latino children, 20 percent of African American children, and 18 percent of Asian American and Pacific Islander children were uninsured. After enactment, those numbers had dropped by 2004 to about 12 percent, and 8 percent, respectively.

Half of all African American and Hispanic children are already covered by SCHIP or Medicaid.

More than 80 percent of uninsured African American children and 70 percent of uninsured Hispanic children are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid and SCHIP, so reauthorizing and increasing support for SCHIP will be crucial to insuring this population.

Prior to enrolling in SCHIP, African American and Hispanic children were much less likely than non-Hispanic White children to have a usual source of care. After they enrolled in SCHIP, these racial and ethnic disparities largely disappeared. In addition, SCHIP eliminated racial and ethnic disparities in unmet medical needs for African American and Hispanic children, putting them on par with White children. SCHIP is also important to children living in urban areas of the country. In urban areas: One in four children has healthcare coverage through SCHIP. More than half of all children whose family income is \$32,180 received healthcare coverage through SCHIP.

CHILDREN IN URBAN AREAS

SCHIP is also important to children living in urban areas of the country. In urban areas:

One in four children has healthcare coverage through SCHIP. More than half of all children whose family income is \$32,180 received healthcare coverage through SCHIP.

CHILDREN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

SCHIP is significantly important to children living in our country's rural areas. In rural areas: One in three children has healthcare coverage through SCHIP or more than half of all children whose family income is under \$32,180 received healthcare coverage through Medicaid or SCHIP. Seventeen percent of children continue to be of the 50 counties with the highest rates of uninsured children, 44 are rural counties, with many located in the most remote and isolated parts of the country. Because the goal is to reduce the number of uninsured children, reauthorizing and increasing support for SCHIP will be crucial to helping the uninsured in these counties and reducing the 17 percent of uninsured.

Mr. Speaker, I would much rather we extend the deadline for reauthorization of SCHIP, while we diligently and reasonably consider the unsettled issues in this debate so that millions of the most vulnerable population, including many African American and other minority children can receive the health care coverage they need to remain healthy and develop into productive citizens of this great country. It is not as important to reauthorize an inferior bill under pressure of fast-approaching deadlines as it is to ensure that we provide health care to those children who remain vulnerable to health disparities. I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring health care coverage for millions of children and reducing health disparities among the most vulnerable populations.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND OUR TAX DOLLARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor now for the next 60 minutes to address an issue that is of utmost importance to all Americans, and it is a very simple one: Where do my tax dollars go and why do I pay so much in taxes? We will see over the course of the next hour where some of the dollars go, and we will also see the fact that, quite honestly, it is hard to determine where some of those dollars go and what the Republican conference has tried to do to address that issue, to try to nail down some of what the facts are. I am referring, of course, to earmarks and transparency in the budget process because, as we all know for all too long, it has been a difficult issue to try just to figure out, when you send your taxes every April 15 to Washington, DC, where some of those hard-earned dollars go to.

These are important issues, as I said at the very beginning, to the American family because, as I have always said, I believe, as Members of Congress, that our focus should be on the family budget as opposed to focusing on the Federal budget, because when we focus on

the family budget, the American family from the east coast to the west, the fact that they have to spend day after day working hard for their money, for their income, to pay for their expenses, when we focus on those facts and when we focus on the fact that the American family has to pay for their housing, their rent or their mortgage, the education of their children, their food and their clothing and other expenses and health care and the like, if we keep our mind focused on that, maybe we in this Congress and the administration will not be amiss as to where those dollars go in the long term.

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If you may recall, it was just a week ago this Monday that we celebrated the 220th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. The Founding Fathers, brilliant men all, had wisdom probably beyond their years and beyond their ages when they crafted, in 1787, that document that lives with us today. It is our job, as Members of Congress, to read that document, to understand that document from an original intent point of view, and by that, I mean to understand what the Founders intended at that time for generations to come.

One of the hallmarks of that document was to understand a federalist system of government. And within that, the States were sovereign in the sense that they were to take care of many factors; people were supposed to have utmost responsibility for themselves and their family, and the Federal Government was to have very limited powers. And in that Constitution it specifically set out, article I, section 8 sets out much of the limitations on the powers that Congress has.

Just shortly after the enactment of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights was created and added a portion of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. And the 10th Amendment to the Constitution says something that I think is important to our fiscal spending, and that is, "All rights not specifically delegated to the Federal Government are retained by the States and the people, respectively." Those powers that are retained by the people, all other ones are by the people and the States.

So the Constitution, if you would look at it, basically just lists what the Federal Government is supposed to do. Everything else is in the hands of the people or the States. Now, over the generations, unfortunately, especially in the last 40 or 50-some-odd years, the Federal Government has grown expansively. And because of that, so, too, has the budget, and so, too, has the burden on the American family.

We come tonight to point out that the budget we have seen crafted by the other side of the aisle continues to grow out of control without constraint and, therefore, puts an additional burden in the form of higher taxes. Here we stand 9 months into this 110th Congress, and what have we seen as far as the budget is concerned? What has this

110th Democrat-controlled Congress wrought? Most specifically, the largest tax increase in U.S. history. Let me repeat that, and I will probably say that later on, the largest tax increase in U.S. history. And why is that? Well, for a couple of reasons.

One, you have continued to see excesses in spending out of the budget coming from the other side of the aisle. That, in and of itself, is bad for the American economy and for the American taxpayer. And secondly, those higher taxes are part and parcel of the Democrat plan. Why do I say that? Well, because part of their plan when they came in here, and this is something that they championed and they said was to be good, was something called PAYGO, pay-as-you-go. Now, in the heart of things you would think that that is not a bad idea to pay as you go. When you think about it, that's how every family in America really should be operating on their budget each week or each month when they pay their bills, figure out how much is in the checkbook, and before they can go on any further they have to make sure they have enough income.

But when the American family needs additional income to pay for additional expenses, where do they get it from? Well, they have to earn it through additional work, or that American family has another alternative, just don't spend the money in the first place. Unfortunately, the other side of the aisle doesn't ever seem to want to choose that second option of decreasing spending or holding spending flat, and that's why we see spending continuing to grow out of control. And as that spending continues to grow out of control, how do they make up for it? Well, they, unlike the American family, are not out there earning those dollars for those PAYGOs. They do it the old-fashioned way; they tax it. And they take it out of my pocket and out of your pocket, out of the American taxpayers' pocket.

So we're here to discuss those dilemmas that are facing the American family. And I'm pleased to be joined this evening by a gentleman who has been fighting on this floor those very issues, fighting on the floor for the American family to make sure that the American family can retain as much of their hard-earned dollars as possible, and to address these issues that we've begun to address so far as far as spending and trying to constrain it. So right now I would like to yield the floor to the good gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, I thank my friend very much.

And as you've been pointing out, we deal with these issues within our own families. My wife and I have been married 29 years this summer, and we have three fantastic daughters. But over the years, including this weekend, I've had to tell my girls, you know, gee, I'd like to help, but money doesn't grow on trees. We're not going to be able to do it right now; perhaps in the next month