

measure, and as a result of that, further discussions are ongoing, and the need, again, is to put forward a measure that will provide health care for 10 million children in this country that find themselves and their families without the necessary assistance for medical care.

Mr. Speaker, the President, on the day before yesterday, proposed that there be an additional \$49 billion spent in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There's no one in the House of Representatives who does not support the military efforts of the United States military. There's no one in the House of Representatives who is not exceedingly proud of the extraordinary work that the military has done. The military has done what the Commander-in-Chief required of them, and for those of us, as policymakers, expect that they would be able to do.

And quite frankly, one of my colleagues is preparing legislation that talks about the benchmarks that we had originally set for the military and the fact that the military, the U.S. military and the coalition forces have achieved all of those benchmarks. And, in short, we could not arguably say, with the removal of Saddam Hussein or with other temporizing measures that have been brought to various provinces in Iraq, that the military has not been successful. They have been. And when they come home we want them to receive the proud accolades of the American citizenry, and that's every Member of the United States House of Representatives.

But let's compare the cost in that particular effort with the cost for our children's health. Forty-one days in Iraq would provide health insurance for 10 million children.

Now, I don't know all of the nuances of the defense budget, but I have reason to believe that if we did not give all of the money as requested by the President that this particular effort could be run for a substantial period of time.

I might add, all of us are mindful of how stretched the United States military is. But you know something? Without knowing, I would venture a guess that some soldier's child may not be properly insured in this country. Some soldier's child. To my way of thinking, that is absurd. For us to be in the position, a Nation as resourceful as our Nation, a Nation as accomplished as our Nation, a Nation with genuinely the best physicians and nurses and hospitals in the world would find ourselves in this position.

We must pass SCHIP, and we must do so immediately.

□ 1530

HONORING THE LIFE OF SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to the House's attention that it was on October 25 a few years ago, not long it seems, only days ago, in 2002 that our State of Minnesota lost Senator Paul Wellstone.

Paul Wellstone, Mr. Speaker, was a United States Senator, was a professor of politics, political science, at Carleton College. Paul Wellstone was an organizer of average citizens in Minnesota and helped them to discover their own power and their ability to maneuver the instrumentality of government to work for the benefit of the average citizen. Paul Wellstone was actually the State Chair of the Jackson for President campaign in 1988.

Paul Wellstone was truly a friend of all working people everywhere on the globe. And I just wanted to let you know, Mr. Speaker, that as we approach October 25, and I reflect back upon my own personal exposure and friendship with Paul Wellstone, whose picture hangs in my office right now, that I just wanted this day to go by with us in contemplation of what a true servant leader represents.

Paul Wellstone was a friend of mine. I'm proud to say that he was a political hero of mine as well. I had the awesome benefit of knowing him, and I'll never forget some of the things he said to me. But, among those things was to make sure that you never ever stop listening to the people.

Paul Wellstone was comfortable anywhere he went. He was comfortable in the hair shops, the beauty salons and the laundromats. Paul Wellstone obviously was comfortable in the halls of power in Congress.

Paul Wellstone, wherever he went, was a person who understood that he carried a sacred trust, that government service was a trust that the people of the State of Minnesota entrusted in him, that it was not a privilege, but it was an awesome responsibility, and he never forgot it.

Paul Wellstone was a leader in many ways and was an example to young people like myself. And as I think what his life means to me, means to the people of Minnesota, I have to consider that it is also that awesome responsibility that he laid out there. A servant leader, Mr. Speaker. Not just somebody who was looking to be served but a person who was looking to serve.

Paul Wellstone's favorite color was green, that was the color of his campaign literature, because it symbolized life. And I shamelessly copied it, Mr. Speaker, because I wanted to carry on that spirit of service, of being ever-green, of being ever new, and being committed to the idea that we have to constantly and continuously renew ourselves, our values, our faith, and our consistency when it comes to serving people all over the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that whether it was veterans, of whom Paul Wellstone was a tireless advocate, or whether it was students or whether it was the poor in our country, and I will

never forget the tour he took around this country to highlight poverty in America, Paul Wellstone could always be found serving people. His loss was a tragic loss.

Only the day before we lost him, he was scheduled to come to my office, and we were going to do some campaigning together. It was a long night, Mr. Speaker, when we heard back the reports as the news reports said that a plane has gone down in Ely, Minnesota, and it was thought to be containing Paul Wellstone and his partner, Sheila Wellstone, and their daughter and several other campaigners. We hoped all night that what we thought might have happened didn't happen, but at the end of the evening, we learned that that tragedy, in fact, did occur. Our worst fears were confirmed when we learned that we lost him, but it was a long several hours before we realized that that tragedy had actually occurred, and we had hoped against hope. I will never forget that night.

Mr. Speaker, as I wind down my remarks, I just want to say that in many ways I have dedicated my service and take great inspiration from Senator Wellstone. I will never forget him, and I hope that this House and Senate never do, either.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SARBANES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House once again.

I share the sentiment of my colleague in recognizing Senator Wellstone. He was definitely a cornerstone here in this building for public service and really was a student of many of our great leaders of the past and gave voice to health care in a way that no other can do it.

As you know, in the 30-Something working group, we come to the floor every day, or just about every day we are in session, to share with the Members the things that we have to continue to work on here in the House in a bipartisan way and also share with the Members the importance of making sure that we stand up on behalf of those Americans that need our assistance.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to my colleague to address the House for as long as he would wish to do so.

Mr. LAMPSON. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me and for allowing me to take a minute or two to talk of a person who has done something significant for our country.

Mr. Speaker, it is a distinct honor and a privilege to be a Member of this House and to be from the great State of Texas and to have in my district the home of American manned spaceflight,

the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, or JSC as it's called. The largest industry contractor at JSC is a company called United Space Alliance, or USA, and it operates the space shuttle for NASA and helps train our astronauts, who also call JSC home.

For more than a decade, the head of USA has been a gentleman whose name is Michael J. McCulley. The company's president and CEO, Mike has led his company through some of the most difficult, and some of the most exciting, days in the history of the space shuttle. In just a few short weeks, he will step down from USA to begin a well-deserved retirement. He probably won't go far away. I rise today to salute this good man and his leadership.

Mike came to his duties at USA from the front lines of space exploration. As a shuttle pilot, he has flown *Atlantis* into Earth's orbit and seen firsthand the majesty of this planet from space. But even before that, Mike was a naval aviator and test pilot, having operated more than 50 different types of aircraft, flown from the U.S.S. *Nimitz* and the U.S.S. *Saratoga*, and at the beginning of his naval career even served aboard atomic submarines in the depths of the oceans. That, my friends, is a true explorer of both inner and outer space.

People like Mike McCulley show that in some of our most challenging times, there will be those ready and willing to serve the American people, placing their lives at risk for exploration, discovery, and achievement. Only through that kind of courage, that kind of selfless service, will our Nation's scientific advancement in space be assured and be continued.

On behalf of this Congress of the United States of America, I hope that Mike and his wife, Jane, and their family will accept our thanks and our best wishes on his well-deserved next phase of an exciting, all-American life. Congratulations, Mike.

Mr. Speaker, if I may continue while our colleague who has control of the time has gone to make a critical vote in the Ways and Means Committee, in speaking about Michael McCulley, there are two other things I would like very much to raise as an issue. I started speaking about space because Mr. McCulley is one of the great Americans who has played a significant role in moving us forward technologically in this world, and I am concerned right now that we are not moving ourselves, as a Nation, forward in science and technology, engineering and math studies for our youth. We are not challenged, it seems, to have the same kind of commitment for research and development, for exploration as we once had. And, unfortunately, other nations are stepping up to the plate to take our place. So it is my hope that we will find a new and renewed interest in funding space exploration and making sure that NASA has the moneys necessary to perform the tasks that it is required to do as a science organization for our Nation.

I find it fascinating that in the early 1960s, when we were having difficulties as a Nation, when our Nation happened to be at war and we were having civil strife and were having financial problems in the 1960s; yet John Kennedy, a new, young, enthusiastic President, stepped up to the plate and challenged us to go to the Moon, doing something that not many people thought was possible. And at the same time many of the naysayers and doubters were saying, how can we possibly do that financially? But we made the commitment. We put the money where it was necessary. And our young people learned how to do it and made an unbelievable success for us and changed the world, created new industries.

The information technology industry has grown from our need to be able to communicate with people in space. We have seen medical advances to the extent that lives are now being extended. People are living a higher quality of life because of what we have learned, what the technological advancements have been because of our involvement in space. All of these things changed America and, to a large extent, changed the world.

But in the last several years, we seem to have had a continuous slackening of the support and the commitment that we made or we saw in earlier years in space. For example, during those Apollo years in the 1960s, when we were going back and forth to the Moon, and in the early 1970s, 6 percent of the Nation's budget was committed to NASA. Today, that number is around six-tenths of 1 percent, 10 times less. So we have expected a major science agency of this government to do more but to do it with significantly less, and we can't continue to do that.

Now we are starting to see the impact of other programs that we have learned along the way. We have critical satellite systems that fly overhead in space that give us information about weather and about Earth science, about the environment of the Earth. Those satellites in many instances are getting old. As they get old and cease to operate, we must have something to take their place, and that something must be in place before these existing satellites die or else there will be a gap in knowledge and information. And a gap in information, for example, on the gulf coast, where I live and where Mr. MEEK lives, would put people in harm's way. They will not have the advance warning of an approaching storm and be able to prepare their property or prepare their families to get out of harm's way. Those critical areas are important for us to acknowledge, to commit to, to believe in, and to fund. A gap in that knowledge means that our families will not be as safe as they were with the knowledge.

As we weaken our commitment to science and to NASA and we lose some of the hope that these systems will continue to operate, and just think if our information technology satellites

went out of service, what would we do without our PDAs? What would we do without our Blackberrys and our cell phones? If they stop working, then we stop communicating, and we communicate with the world.

So it is my hope that we will find a renewed commitment and fund NASA to a greater extent than what we have been doing so. It is my hope that the billion dollars that the Senate has found to put into the Commerce, Justice, and State portion of our budget, which we will be taking to conference very soon, will find the same kind of support in the House of Representatives that it has found in the Senate and that we will support this commitment so that, instead of having to choose between doing the work for space exploration or science, we can do both because it is the commitment that the people want us to make to give them the hope for a better tomorrow, to keep us growing with our quality of life, to keep us having hope that our children will go and get the education necessary to do the things that will give us the kind of lives that we have strived for for such a long period of time.

Mr. MEEK, I appreciate your yielding to me. I got to talk about Michael McCulley, who is a friend of mine, who has led a major space effort for this country for a long period of time and also to just sort of put forth some of my passion, which is to make sure that we get NASA funded properly out here on the table so that we can continue that dialogue.

I don't know what your topic was, but thank you for letting me butt in, and I would be happy to answer any questions, if you have them.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am just very pleased that you came down at the time that you did come down and share with us about how important the NASA program is, especially to not only the development of the country but to our young people and those that have contributed and dedicated their lives to helping us along the way in the sciences, not to compete against States but to compete against other countries as it relates to the forward lean that we have to have.

We are going to talk about children's health care and a number of other issues, but we are glad that we kicked off with the NASA program.

Mr. LAMPSON. The Children's Health Insurance Program is critically important. It's critically important to giving children the opportunity to grow up healthy enough to want to do well enough in their early years in school so that they will have an opportunity to go off and study math and science and engineering later on. It's a big deal for all of us.

□ 1545

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You're 110 percent right. And being from Florida, as you know, we have a number of NASA assets in Florida. And even when I was

in the Florida legislature, we were very supportive of programs that gave kids a jump start in the math and sciences to be eligible for NASA programs and other private programs that are out there as it relates to innovation and space.

Mr. LAMPSON. Well, I thank you for your commitment. I thank you for all the work that you have done to further the Children's Health Insurance Program. This body has come very close to making it law, and it's my hope that we will succeed very quickly to make sure that the 10 million children in this country who do not have access to this health care are covered.

So thank you for your good work, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to make it a success.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much. And as we speak, there are those in the Capitol dome trying to make sure that children's health care gets its fair share from this country of ours.

I would just like to share with the Members some of the good things that are happening under the Capitol dome.

We have passed, Mr. Speaker, a number of measures that have been bipartisan and major as it relates to legislation. The 9/11 Commission recommendations are something that the House and Senate both passed, and that was signed into law. The largest college aid expansion since the 1944 GI Bill saved, on average for every student, I would say almost every American because, as it relates to college loans and student loans, the responsibility for paying many of those loans back fall back on parents and grandparents. So that's \$4,400 in interest that the American people don't have to pay.

The first minimum wage increase in a very long time, double-digit years, was passed by this Congress. And it was because of the Democratic leadership and some of our friends on the Republican side that voted for the passage of that bill that we now have an increase in the minimum wage.

Innovation Agenda to promote 21st century jobs, passed by this House, signed into law. The Reconstruction Assistance Program for gulf coast disasters and hurricanes was passed and signed into law. The largest veterans health care increase in the 77-year history of the VA passed off of this floor and is still in a holding pattern as it relates to that becoming law or empowered by not only the President but the legislative process. Also, the landmark Energy Independence and Global Warming Initiative that was passed by this Congress.

Now, I think it's important that we look at the record-breaking roll call votes that have been taken thus far by this Congress and the work philosophy that we have in the 110th Congress versus previous Congresses. And you know that two of the initiatives that have passed on a bipartisan vote that I did not mention that the President has vetoed was the expansion of the life-

saving medical research on stem cells that passed in a bipartisan way by this House and by the Senate and was vetoed by the President. And the most recent veto is the one that's dealing with health care for 10 million children and working families that passed off this floor on a bipartisan vote, came 13 votes shy last week of overriding the President's bad veto, had the votes in the Senate to do so, but it's something that we're working on right now, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the reasons why I came to the floor today, and my other colleagues that will be joining me a little later on, to talk about the SCHIP plan.

I can tell you, as we stand here, Mr. Speaker, to address these issues dealing with children's health care, one said, when I was on the floor last week, well, the Congressman is talking about health care. The CHAMP, or SCHIP, bill is dealing with insurance. Well, I can tell you, when you're talking about insurance, you're talking about health care. If you don't have insurance, you're not going to be able to afford health care, especially the preventive care that the CHAMP bill or the SCHIP bill calls for. So, if you take the opportunity to go meet the average American that has a child that is not covered under health insurance, you're going to find an individual who will share with you that, without it, they can't go to many of the doctors offices where they can at least pay a small fraction or at least afford preventive care and the annual checkups that children need.

We're in a situation right now, Mr. Speaker, that we have children, if this SCHIP bill or CHAMP bill is not reauthorized, we're going to have children without health care, without health insurance. Whichever way you cut the cookie, they're going to need a way to pay for health care or you might as well look forward to parents going down the drugstore aisle trying to correct the sniffles and trying to head off fever and trying to head off other situations that young children run into. But those are just the minor issues. What about the bigger issues that, if detected early, can be prevented if we have the kind of health insurance that would be helpful for children?

As we start to look at a re-approach on this bill after the President's veto, I know that the Speaker and others, and in reading through not only the newspapers but also in meetings that have taken place, we are still holding hard on the 10 million children insured. Now, I think that's very, very important that we head in that direction and that we stand firm on the 10 million.

Last week, I was sharing with many of my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle, those of whom were in the 13, because there are some that are saying that they are with the American people, they don't necessarily have to be with the Democratic Caucus because this is not about the Republican Conference or the

Democratic Caucus, this is about children having an opportunity to have health insurance to be able to have quality health care, and that's what it's about. And I want to commend my colleagues that are on the other side that have voted on behalf of not only their districts but young people in America and their families.

So, now we're down to correcting a wrong. Last week, I talked about the story, Mr. Speaker. In all great pieces of legislation and every initiative there is always a story before you get to the glory, and we're still writing the story. And I think, as we go into the final chapters of this SCHIP debate here in the House of Representatives and the Senate and we deliver another product to the President of the United States, I think it's important for those who voted against overriding the President on this issue, think about what you have done. You might not have felt the full brunt of the displeasure of the American people for the Congress, where many of our children are insured because we have health insurance and we have the kind of insurance that will cover our children, and that there are families that don't celebrate the same thing that we do, that there is going to be a great level of displeasure out there. And I want to say that out loud because I want to make sure that Members understand exactly what they're doing.

No one came to Congress to vote against health care for children. I don't think anyone jumped up and said at any political forum or debate, when they were debating, need it be a Republican primary or a Democratic primary, to say, "You know, one of my goals when I get to Congress is that I'm going to vote against children's health care." I think they wouldn't have even made it to the Halls of Congress. I'm speaking to that individual Member that decided not to, whatever the situation may be.

I haven't seen, in my 14 years of public service, Mr. Speaker, a bill that I am 110 percent in support of and agree with every section in that bill. When we put together legislation, there is always something in the bill that you wish you could have more of or not have at all in the bill. And it's very unfortunate, especially when we're in a body of compromise, when we're talking about children that will become uninsured if we don't pass this bill, I think it's important for us to realize our place in this debate. I commend those that voted. You were supposed to vote for that. I'm glad you did. I'm glad you voted for the SCHIP program.

Let me just run some numbers. One may say, well, we're concerned about cost as it relates to providing insurance for children to have health care. Well, one day we're going to compare this as it relates to war, because a lot of folks get into the chest-beating posture or session when it comes down to the war in Iraq. And we're concerned about what happens with children tens

of thousands of miles from the United States of America. I'm concerned, also. But I'm really concerned about what is happening with children here in the United States. And I think it's something that we all should pay very, very close attention to.

One day in Iraq costs \$330 million. That will cover 270,000 kids. One week in Iraq costs \$2.3 billion. That's 1.8 million kids who can be covered under the children's health care bill. One month in Iraq is \$10 billion. That's one month that can cover 8.1 million children as it relates to health care. And the cost of 40 days in Iraq is \$12.2 billion. That will cover 10 million kids' health care. I think it's important to look at just over one month that will cover a full year of health care for 10 million children. Just a couple of days over the average month will cover 10 million children.

So, when we start lining our priorities up of where we stand as a Congress, and I'm talking to the real minority here because there are very few Members of this House that are voting opposite of where the American people want us to be, and that's providing health care. Polls have shown here in the United States over 80 percent of Americans are saying that it's important for us to have children's health care. So, you have a very small percentage saying that they don't agree with this, and maybe they need more information.

But when you have Members of Congress, and we're talking about lights on, lights off, health care for 10 million children or not, that's a simple decision for one to make. If you have issues with the application of it, it has to be better than what we will not have if we don't reauthorize it and reauthorize it for 10 million children.

I think it's important that you understand a number of the coalitions that are here. And I'm spending the time on the floor, Mr. Speaker, to share this with the Members because this is, A, what do we look for in legislation? We look for bipartisanship. That's what the American people always say. They would love for Democrats and Republicans to work together. You have that in this bill. I mean, for this to be a partisan body, you have to look at the significance of having a bipartisan piece of legislation with major Democrats and major Republicans that are on board on the legislation.

You also have to look at the second issue that I think is very, very important; the fact that it passed both House and Senate overwhelmingly. And you have to look at that as a component and a proof to the leadership and the reason why we have to insure children, 10 million children in the United States of America. That's very, very significant. Don't let anyone belittle the work that has happened on both sides of the aisle with Democrats and Republicans sending a bill to the President.

I would also add on to that point the fact that the President vetoed the bill.

And you had a commitment from the Senate, the United States Senate, that they would override the President of the United States on this issue because he's wrong. That's what is so good about our democracy. That goes back, not just a bill on Capitol Hill, it goes back to those days that used to come on Saturday morning to let young Americans know how this process worked. And then in the House we took the vote and we fell 13 votes short of overriding the President. That's very, very significant.

I came last week and commended those groups, those nonpartisan, volunteer groups that are dealing with children's diabetes, that are dealing with a number of issues, polio, the doctors that came to Capitol Hill, the March of Dimes, all the different foundations that are out there doing good things and passing good information out and encouraging Members to sign on and get that vote. We couldn't have had the kind of vote that we had last week if it wasn't for those outside organizations and Americans and parents and grandparents and children saying we should have health care.

□ 1600

When they see the kind of numbers that I am reading off, spending \$330 million in Iraq in 1 day, that's just 1 day. I can get down to \$3,300 and change every second that we are spending in Iraq. And you have folks here that are mumbling and grumbling about the cost of an insurance bill that will provide health care to 10 million children, we have 40 plus Governors out there in the 50 States that are out there saying that we need this bill. I want to break this down because I want to make sure that the Members, I don't want to use a lot of acronyms, I don't want to get into a lot of programs and all of that because I'm on the Ways and Means Committee and there's enough acronyms there to talk about health care. I'm on the Armed Services Committee and there is a plethora of acronyms that we could use there and all kind of big words. I want to make sure that everyone understands what it comes down to. You are either with insuring 10 million children or you're not. Period. Dot. There is no in between. There is no "maybe I need to take more consideration" or "maybe I need to look at this a little further." We have already taken one vote that has passed the House overwhelmingly. We have already taken a second vote that fell 13 votes short of a two-thirds vote to override the President of the United States. And now we're about to take another vote. So it's almost like three strikes and you're out.

Mr. Speaker, I have been on this floor now coming on 5 years, speaking not only to the Members but also making sure that staff and everyone else understands the significance of every vote that we take. And if this was about politics, I always say it, look in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD time after time

again, if it was about politics, I could just sit in my office and let just the electoral process take its course.

I do believe that Members who are not voting for children's health care are making a career decision. That's what they're doing. Now, if this is the last day of school for Members and they're retiring after this term that is a whole other thing. But for those who want to continue to serve not only their districts and the American people, they have to pay very close attention to the vote that they are taking here on this floor. Insuring 10 million kids is bigger, in my opinion, than winning some sort of, you know, one or two political races. I am not into that. I was sent here to Congress, and many of us were sent, all of us were sent here to represent the folks back home. And I guarantee you, the folks back home are not saying, "Please don't insure children. Whatever you do, Congressman, make sure you don't insure 10 million children or 5 million children. Just make sure you don't do that, and you have my vote." There is not anyone back there saying that. And so I think it's important for us, when we get into this process, I think it's important for us to share with Members what we are here for. Like I said, once again, there are some things in the bill that I don't agree with, but when you start talking about the insurance for children that my children celebrate, I wasn't elected for me to have my children to have health care and I look at my constituents and say, "Run for Congress one day and you can be like me." That's not what it's about. It's about us being able to stand for them.

I think it's also important to look at even with some of the media accounts about some of the things that are going on here in Washington that we are working hard on, the Democratic side of the aisle, because Americans voted for change, Mr. Speaker. They didn't vote for the status quo. Republicans had the majority last time. There were Democrats and Republicans and independents who said, You know something, we gave you an opportunity. My kids and my grandkids and the fiscal situation this country is in is more important than my party affiliation. And we have seen throughout the country, Republicans say, "I'm going to vote for the Democrat this time because I want to see change." Now that change is here and I read off a list of bills that were passed in a bipartisan way. These are not just Democratic bills, we beat our chests and say, "Not one Republican voted for it." Yes, there are one or two there. But the majority of the major bills that have passed have passed with some Republican votes, and that is important to the process.

USA Today, War Costs May Total \$2.4 trillion. When you look at the cost of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, it could cost \$2.4 trillion the next decade or nearly \$8,000 per man, woman and child in this country according to the Congressional Budget Office that is

scheduled for release and that took place here today earlier. A previous Congressional Budget Office estimate put the war cost at more than \$1.6 trillion. This one adds to the \$705 in interest. And if you take into account, Mr. Speaker, as we continue to go on as it relates to the war in Iraq, as we look at the borrowing from foreign nations and then we turn around and we also bring a bill, I'm going to add to those points, we bring a bill that we show how we are going to pay for the bill so that we don't have to continue to borrow from foreign nations, so that we don't have to continue to see our kids having to pay some \$8,000 per man, woman and child because of the decisions that were made here on this floor in previous Congresses.

So how do we have a paradigm shift? Well, we come about bringing about that paradigm shift through good policy and bipartisanship. So I am speaking to the 13 that voted against, helped us fall short of that, of overriding the President. It could have been a different day the following day after that vote, but it wasn't because we had some of our Republican friends not voting with us.

I am going to put a pin there, and I am going to allow my good friend from Ohio (Mr. RYAN). First of all, I just want to say, sir, that I'm sorry about your Indians. I'm really sorry. As you know, I e-mailed you and told you that I was with you. Being a Dolphins fan, I'm switching sports now, but I'm having a rough year, and I wanted someone to have some joy that I knew. And I know you, sir, and I know you're excited about your Cleveland Indians. And they fought hard. But I'm sorry, sir, that they didn't make it through the process.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We're still struggling. There are a lot of emotional issues that Cleveland Indians fans have had for a long time. And then you factor in the Cleveland Browns and the drive and the fumble and Michael Jordan singlehandedly beating us a couple of times in the playoffs and you add this to the mix, we have some psychological issues we need to deal with, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully we will be able to work through them.

But today is the day that we are talking about the excess in spending on the war. We hear a lot back in our districts, I'm sure you do in the Seventeenth District in Miami, and I hear in the Seventeenth District of Ohio, we hear about the rising cost of health care. We hear about the rising cost of education. We hear the problems that we have incurred in this country because we haven't invested into developing alternative energy sources in the United States of America, and we haven't developed them fast enough.

We have all these issues that local communities deal with, Community Development Block Grant money that they get from the Federal Government that local communities can build sidewalks and roads and sewer lines and

they can use all this money. That is Federal money that works its way down to local communities. And when we look at the needs of local communities, every single day in the paper in Ohio, it is water lines, it is sewer lines. In the summer it is what sports do we have to ask the kids and the parents to pay for this year? Why are we cutting the art programs? Why don't we have enough money to handle the septic and the sewer systems in our local community? For years, the Federal Government continued to make those investments. And what we hear now coming out of the executive branch, Mr. MEEK, is that we don't have the money to do it.

Now, we are talking about providing health care for 10 million kids, poor kids, who live within 200 percent of poverty, a family of four making maybe \$40,000 a year. What we are arguing on our side is that we think it is in the best interests of this country, all of us together, not one family or this family, all of us, is that if we provide and pay for health care for these 10 million kids and their families, because we believe on this side and our friends on the other side who voted with us, not the President, we believe that if we make this very small investment of \$35 billion over 5 years, that we are going to have a healthier country, that we are going to have kids who aren't sitting in the classroom getting other children sick, that they are going to be able to concentrate and focus.

We sit here and we say, "We need more people to major in math. We need more people to major in science. We need to compete with the Chinese. They graduated thousands and thousands of more engineers than we did in the United States of America." Part of that is we need our kids to be healthy. We need them to be able to concentrate in school, not sneezing and getting colds and pneumonia and not missing classes. We need them to be healthy. And that is the basic concept behind the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

To have the President, after he began a war that is going to cost us \$2.4 trillion, with a T, tell us that we don't have enough money to provide health care for these 10 million kids is a complete outrage and doesn't really make any sense. Now, I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, for the Congress to know and to be reminded that over the past 6 years, with a Republican President, a Republican House and a Republican Senate, that this President and that Congress, those Congresses have borrowed more money from foreign interests than every President and Congress before them combined. Over \$1 trillion in foreign money. Now, the same Congress and the same President asked to raise the debt limit, meaning we can go out and borrow, as a country, more money, five times he asked to raise the debt limit. Then, on top of that, the final number is the increase of the debt under this President is \$3 trillion. So

he raised the debt by \$3 trillion, raised the debt limit five times. Now we have a war that is going to cost us \$2.4 trillion, with a T, and he says, "We don't have enough money, Mr. Speaker, to provide health care for 10 million kids at \$35 billion, with a B, over 5 years."

For 40 days in Iraq, we could pay for 10 million kids to get health care for a whole year. Forty days in Iraq. And what is the investment going to get us? It is going to get us healthier kids. It is going to get us kids who can concentrate and pay attention in school. It is going to save us money in the long run because we are not going to cart these kids off to the emergency room 2 weeks later with pneumonia when we could have taken care of them with maybe a small prescription. Those are the kind of prudent investments that we want to make in this country. Those are the kind of investments that we should be making in this country.

We talk a lot in this country about what are we going to do in the next century? We lost manufacturing, and we are not sure what the new economy is going to look like. But there are some things we know about, Mr. Speaker. We know that our kids in Niles, Ohio, or Youngstown, Ohio, or Miami, Florida or wherever you are from, are competing more directly with the students in China. We know that our kids are now competing. The old steel belt and the old rust belt in Ohio is Cleveland and Youngstown and Akron and Pittsburgh. For the longest time, those cities used to compete with each other and those businesses used to compete with each other. Now this whole region is competing with Shanghai. And our kids are competing more directly with those kids in China, India and all over the world, 1.3 billion people in China, 1.2 billion people in India. We only have 300 million people in the United States of America. We are at a real disadvantage when it comes to just mass numbers. And democracy is not always easy, either. If you want to open up a factory in China or you just clear a neighborhood out, you give everybody 25 bucks, they give you a week to get out. There are no environmental laws. There are no worker rights. It just happens. The government comes in and moves everything along. Democracy is sometimes a little more difficult, in a good way. We have rights; property rights, human rights and all kinds of different things that citizens in China don't have.

But my point here is this, we only have 300 million people. So if you look at what the Democratic agenda, the 6 in '06 and what my friend from Florida has been stating, what we have been trying to do is very, very simple. We're trying to invest into those 300 million people so that they're healthier, so that they're more educated, so that they are able to live the American dream. Now, no one here is saying that everyone needs to be a winner. We understand that life is life. There are winners and there are losers. But as a

country, we want to make these investments because we all benefit from it. We all benefit from that.

□ 1615

The investments we are making now, just look at our agenda now. One of the first things we did, we raised the minimum wage for the first time since 1997 so that we are lifting people up. One of the second things we did is we reduced the cost of college education, or tried to. We cut student loan interest rates in half. So when you go out and borrow for your kids to go to school or a student borrows next year to go to school, the interest rate will be 3.4 percent, as opposed to last year when it was 6.8 percent and that money was going to the banks. They were making a heck of a lot of money off of it.

Mr. Speaker, we are saying keep those rates low; let's improve access so that everyone can go to a community college and get a skill or they can go off to college and get an associate's degree or a master's degree or Ph.D. so that they are educated to compete. What we also did was increased the Pell Grant by \$1,000 over the course of the next 5 years. Is that as much as we want? No. Absolutely not. We are not even close. But we are moving in that direction. It's tough, when you have a war that is costing you \$2.4 trillion, to come up with any money to make these kinds of investments. But that is what we wanted to do, and we have changed the direction in regard to college education.

Now, if you're a kid going to school in Ohio, where we had the new Governor come in and he froze college tuition for 2 years so there will be a zero increase next year and a zero percent increase the following year, if you add that to what we have done with the student loans and the Pell Grants, you're talking about saving average families thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. An average student loan, because of the interest change we made, an average family will save \$4,400 over the course of the loan.

Now, we are not coming out here beating a drum, saying we have got to cut taxes, we have got to cut taxes for millionaires. We are saying if you send your kid to school and you take out a loan, we just saved you \$4,400. If you have someone in your family, or one of your students, kids that are going to school that are working for minimum wage, they got a pay increase. If you're utilizing the Pell Grant, you're going to get more of that. These are good, solid investments we've made. In addition to this, we have the State Children's Health Insurance Program. So these kids have opportunity.

Now one of the other things that really isn't on the agenda to talk about, but the Senate just passed it last night, we are trying to pass it again through the conference committee and hopefully get the President to sign it, but the President said he

was going to veto it, is the Health and Education bill, where we are making investments to build community health clinics so that people who don't have health insurance now can at least go to a health care clinic and get some preventive care.

Mr. Speaker, I just found it stunning, and I think a lot of other citizens of this country did as well, and I know many Members of Congress have found it stunning too, when we were having this big debate about children's health and the President said, Well, they have health insurance. They can go to the emergency room.

I found that absolutely stunning that the President of the United States, in 2007, his solution or lack of solution is to say that these kids could just go to the emergency room. Now, I am sorry, but that is unacceptable. Not only is it bad economics, it is unacceptable from a moral position.

It has been frustrating, but I want the American people, Mr. Speaker, to understand what we have done through the House is passed legislation. And my friend with the great reform of the Small Business Administration, our friend from Pennsylvania, creating an angel investor fund and basically re-tooling the SBA for the 21st century in a high-tech economy, the things that we have done have been investments into our country and into our people.

Now, I'm sorry. Giving \$100,000 tax break to someone who makes millions of dollars a year is not benefiting anybody because they are not even taking that money and investing it back into our country. They are investing it probably in China and India. What we are saying is we are going to make these investments.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to follow up on a couple of points that the gentleman from Ohio mentioned, one of which was this idea that, well, these kids who don't have insurance can just show up at the emergency room. What I hear people who are of that mindset say is this SCHIP program is too expensive, there's not enough money to cover these kids and, therefore, I don't want to pay for them; somebody else can worry about that, send them to the emergency room.

But here's the problem with that way of thinking. We do pay for it when they show up at the emergency room. They show up there, they get covered, and, as the gentleman indicated, an earache that could have been knocked out with antibiotics turns into something more serious, a cold turns into pneumonia. Other situations that could be easily treatable, they instead turn into bigger health problems. We all pay for that because, in this country, when a hospital has uncompensated care or debt based on the fact that people don't have insurance but still show up for treatment, we are the ones that pay for that.

The reason that when you go to a hospital an aspirin will cost \$15 is because of the cost shift that takes place

when somebody, one of these children without health insurance shows up at the hospital, usually in the least cost effective way possible in the emergency room. So that is what happens when the President or someone else says, Well, let's just send them to the emergency room and everything will be fine. We are paying for that. That is why health insurance premiums go up, that is why costs are skyrocketing, and that is the cost shift that takes place.

On another point, I wanted to mention, and we are talking about our successes, some of the things that have happened in this Congress, I wanted to relay a story that took place over the weekend. I was holding a town hall meeting in my district and we were taking questions and someone asks the question, Well, when are you guys going to do something about the cost of college? I have got a kid in college. When are you going to lower the cost of higher education?

I said, That is a great question and I want to apologize to you because you should be aware of the fact that we have done something about that. This is not something that is on the drawing board or just passed the House or is awaiting signature. This has been signed and enacted, \$20 billion of relief for parents and students for higher education. The largest expansion of higher education funding since the GI bill in 1944 passed this House, passed the Senate, and has been signed into law by the President.

Maybe we haven't done as good a job as we should be doing in getting the message out. This is a major legislative victory for this Congress and for this country. We cut in half the interest rate on student loans, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent, which, by itself, if we did nothing else, would save the average student borrower in this country \$4,400 by itself.

But that is not all we did. We increased Pell Grant funding to \$5,400, the largest increase and the highest amount available in history, in the history of the Pell Grant program. We increased funding for Perkins loans. We increased the availability and the types of students and the types of schools that can qualify for Perkins loans. Just as important, we capped at 15 percent of discretionary income the amount that the student borrower will be required to pay in paying back their loans.

So they will not be forced into debt over their heads, and they will be able to have a more manageable debt burden when they graduate and when they start in the workforce and their income is not that high. These are good achievements. That was all in that bill.

So what I said to the person who asked this question was, this was something you took the time to show up at the town meeting to ask this question. This was the number one issue of concern to you, and that is why you asked me this question. And we did something about it. This Congress has

helped you on the issue that is of the greatest concern to you. It is going to help millions of Americans, parents and students around this country, afford higher education, afford the cost of college.

We have had tremendous legislative success. As you have talked about, more days in session, more rollcall votes, more legislation passed, than any Congress in recent history, maybe in the history of the country to this date. So we have legislative success.

I wanted to not let the time go by without talking about that College Cost Reduction Act, because that is going to affect people's lives.

So I yield back now to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. ALTMIRE. The good thing about it, and Mr. RYAN and I were in a meeting the other day, and I think it is important, very important, and I was sharing a little earlier today about giving thanks to those out in the field. And when I say "those out in the field," those Americans out there, because the President said he wasn't going to sign the College Interest Rate Reduction Act or what have you, the \$4,400 that Mr. RYAN alluded to.

If it wasn't for the American people pushing for that, it wouldn't have happened. If it wasn't for the American people saying that we wanted a minimum wage after double-digit years of no minimum wage, it would not have happened. If it wasn't for the American people stepping up at the last given Tuesday when we had the election for this House saying that we wanted to move in a new direction, it would not have happened.

I think it is important for us to look at this American spirit rising up again on the children's health bill. When we look at health insurance and we look at health care for children, the American people are going to make that happen, because hopefully we will have an opportunity to vote on that bill again. Hopefully after taking the number one vote that was a bipartisan vote, sending a bill to the Senate, the Senate sent a bill to us, and we voted out the bill and sent it to the President, and the President, two votes that took place, overwhelmingly bipartisan, the President vetoes the bill, okay? And now you are going to have a real third opportunity to vote again.

I don't know if those that have voted against the previous bills, if they want to continue to do it, because their excuse is to say, Well, you know, there was something I didn't understand on that first vote. Congressman, you mean on the second vote you still didn't understand? And then on the third vote? Well, maybe you are not in the business of making sure that children have health insurance so they can have health care.

So I am hoping that we can come together in even a greater way in passing a children's health care bill that covers 10 million children. I think it is impor-

tant. I agree with the Speaker. I am glad she has put her foot down and this Congress has put our foot down and said we are going to do this. Because at the end of the 110th Congress, there is not going to be a short list of accomplishments; there is going to be a long list, because there has been a drought for a very long time to bring the issues and concerns back to those who attended your town hall meeting.

Congressman, what are you doing for the district? What are you doing for us? Yes, it is wonderful about the war. We know that is going on. All of us share in making sure our men and women have what they need to have and all of those different things, but what are you doing domestically? How does this affect my children?

Mr. RYAN talked about someone is going to sit next to a child that doesn't have health care, and if that child is sick, you can have all the health care in the world. Your child is coming home and they are going to bring whatever that other child has into the household and then everyone is sick, and now we have employers without employees, and we can go on and on and on. It is a domino effect. I think it is important that we continue to highlight that.

But I appreciate the fact you all have brought light to all of this. Even Mr. RYAN was talking about a democracy. I think a democracy is a good thing. I think it is playing out well. Even though we fell on the short end, 13 votes short of overriding the President, a major accomplishment with having the Senate vote in an overwhelming way and having the votes to override the President, and having a supermajority vote here in this House based on the strong Democratic leadership of even bringing the issue to the floor in the first place.

So I am excited about it. I do have faith in the American spirit. I know it will rise up. Those that have sent us here, those that do not work in the Capitol, those counting on us to do the right thing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think it is important, too, to recognize we are just beginning. I think we have moved into a new direction. We are clearly not done. We are clearly not close to being done. No one here is satisfied. No one here will say, This is great; we have really accomplished everything we wanted to. We can go out and turn out the lights and let someone else finish the business.

We have got a lot more to do, if you look at what we want to do with alternative energy, if you look at what we want to do as far as continuing to try to reduce the cost of education, K-12 and whatnot.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We are out of time, Mr. RYAN. I want to thank Mr. ALTMIRE and yourself.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was commu-

nicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

□ 1630

MANAGING PUBLIC LANDS

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity you have given us to speak for awhile about public lands and about how the public lands are treated and how the future will and will not deal with those public lands.

One of the facts that we have to deal with is how a government deals with property, whether personal property or public property, is a window to the soul of that government. Personal property is tangible and civil liberties are intangible, but both of them are at the center of the historic purpose of this American government, and the preservation of one is indeed the precondition for the preservation of the other.

Sir Henry Maine once wrote a book called "The Village Communities" in which he said: Nobody is at liberty to attack several property and to say at the same time he values civilization. The history of the two cannot be disentangled. The desire, the use of property, whether it is on land or whether it is the use of public property, that desire is what raises mankind from political slavery.

One of the things that we do not often enough around this place is to consider why we are doing what we are doing. Indeed, one of the concepts that is there is that we do what we do because we have done what we always did; and sometimes when you take a moment to look back and reflect on that, in this particular Congress we have been inundated with laws and proposals which have huge and significant impact on personal and public property in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I would like to do is try to go through with several Members who are in the West, public land States who understand firsthand the responsibility and relationship of this, specifically what we are doing in these particular areas.

One of the people I would like to address some of these issues deals with the public property in our forests. As you know, we are having major fires in this country, and the Speaker on this floor said now is the time we need to do what is right.

I would like to yield some time to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and simply ask him to address that, of what can this Congress do to make it right, especially when we deal with our forests and our processes for the future of our forests to make them healthier or better.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Thank you, Mr. BISHOP. I appreciate your work on