

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would respectfully remind Members not to traffic the well while another is under recognition.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET IS FISCALLY IRRESPONSIBLE

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, the 2002 budget the President submitted this week is more of the same, the same fiscal irresponsibility and misplaced priorities that we have come to expect from this administration's budgets over the past 6 years. This budget fails to put our fiscal house in order and instead adds \$3 trillion to the national debt over the next 10 years.

And while the President claims his budget achieves balance, he simply leaves out significant long-term costs. Well, American families can't leave out simple bills within their household budgets, and neither should the President be able to do so within his budget.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats will move us towards a balanced budget through fiscal responsibility and accountability, not accounting gimmicks.

CRIME OF THE WEEK

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the crime of the week this week was not committed by some menacing outlaw, but it was committed by a repeat offender, the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles.

The Texas parole board has been releasing violent offenders years before they are finished serving out their sentences, and then these violent criminals continue their lawless ways.

Keith Hines was supposed to be in the jailhouse for 30 more years for violent crimes against the citizens of the State, but the good old parole board gave him a get-out-of-jail-free card, and this was a fatal error.

On December 5, Hines robbed a gas station at gunpoint in Humble, Texas. The robber then ran to his vehicle to make his getaway. Witness, volunteer firefighter and good Samaritan, Steve Jackson, jumped into his car and followed Hines while relaying to 911 the locations of the hijacker.

Down the road, with Jackson in pursuit, Hines jumped out of his getaway car, ran up to Jackson's vehicle, shot Jackson twice and murdered him on the side of the road.

Hines is now charged with capital murder. All this because the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles let this habitual offender go every which way, including loose.

And that's just the way it is.

KUCINICH'S 12-POINT PLAN

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. The House will soon entertain a resolution relating to the surge. It is a nonbinding resolution. The war, however, is binding.

The supplemental resolution relating to funding will give Congress an opportunity to take some binding action related to the war. Congress' real power is to cut off funds.

Money is there right now to bring the troops home, and money to bring the troops home is part of a plan that involves bringing in international peacekeepers while our troops leave.

I have a 12-point plan which I have circulated among Members of Congress as to how we can get out of Iraq. The American people will not tolerate non-binding resolutions as being an excuse for strong and substantive action to end the war as quickly as possible.

CIANA VS. COCKFIGHTING

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Judiciary Committee considered a bill to protect chickens, roosters, from being carried across State lines for use in illegal cockfighting. An amendment was offered on a similar "cross State line" issue, protecting minor girls from being carried across State lines for the purpose of having an abortion without their parents' knowledge or consent.

While the committee ultimately passed the animal protections, they wouldn't even allow a vote on protecting young girls. Even more outrageous, the substance of the rejected amendment has passed twice in the House last year, with large bipartisan majorities.

Mr. Speaker, in case anyone is having trouble following this, let's summarize: by rejecting this amendment, Democrats saw fit to provide greater protections to birds than to minor girls and their parents and unborn children. It is as simple as that. This is supposed to be the year of the children? Not all of the children.

Welcome to the Pelosi Congress.

BUSH TROOP ESCALATION BE- COMES A WORSE IDEA BY THE DAY—CONGRESS MUST SPEAK ITS VOICE

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

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, it is becoming clear day by day that the President's troop escalation plan is not in the best interest of this Nation.

First, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the President's troop escalation plan would take substantially more troops and more money than the President has suggested.

The President says 21,500 troops are needed; the CBO says 48,000 troops are necessary to conduct the mission. The President says it will cost about \$5.6 billion, but CBO says that the number could be four times higher than that.

Second, the administration's intelligence agencies concluded last week that violence would continue in Iraq for at least another 18 months, but the President says his plan will calm the violence in 6 months.

And, third, Pentagon officials admitted last week that they do not have enough armored vehicles, armored kits and other equipment needed to protect these additional troops.

Mr. Speaker, after hearing these three different facts, how can anyone believe the President's troop escalation plan is in the best interests of this country?

On that note, I yield back.

TED FELDER

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last month the low country director of the office of South Carolina's Second Congressional District departed. Ted Felder, who has served the Second District since my election in 2001, has been named Economic Development Director for the City of Hardeeville, which will be one of the fastest growing cities in America in the next decade.

As a native of St. Matthews, Ted graduated from the University of South Carolina. He and his wife, Beth, have a 9-month-old son, John Goodwin. As a longtime friend of Ted's parents, John and Jane Felder, I have known Ted since he was a small child. I have also had the honor of serving with John in the general assembly.

I appreciate Ted's dedication to the low country and the needs of its constituents. I know he will bring the same commitment to the residents of Hardeeville. He has trained his successor, Allen Aimar, to be accessible and accountable, with office manager Deanna Connors.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will never forget September 11. Our prayers are with Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD, his wife, Gloria, and his family.

DUBUQUE, IOWA

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the City of Dubuque, Iowa, the oldest city in Iowa, located among the bluffs of the Upper Mississippi River for being named one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People by America's Promise.

I would also like to recognize the 11 residents of the City of Dubuque sitting in the gallery above who made the

long journey from Iowa to Washington to speak with Iowa's congressional delegation about keeping their promises to Dubuque's families. These residents' dedication and commitment illustrates why their community has been recognized with this honor.

In the annual 100 Best Communities for Young People competition, America's Promise honors outstanding efforts on behalf of young people by their communities. The people of Dubuque, Iowa, have demonstrated their commitment to families and children through their involvement of the Dubuque Mentoring Partnership. Thanks to the important work of the DMP, the number of mentors in Dubuque has more than tripled and the number of children waiting for a mentor has been cut in half since 2005.

As a longtime mentor with Big Brothers/Big Sisters in my hometown of Waterloo, I learned the importance of mentoring to give children the greatest opportunity to achieve their potential.

The people of Dubuque should be proud of their accomplishment. I am proud to represent them in Congress.

LET'S SAVE MONEY, NOT WASTE IT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in disbelief concerning the recent discussion about an airplane for the Speaker. Time and again Members of this body, and more importantly the American people, have been promised that this would be the most ethical and fiscally responsible Congress ever. Many things have clearly derailed that pledge, including a continuing resolution spending billions of dollars without any scrutiny.

What we are seeing here is a mentality of waste. I take the Speaker's word that she did not request the luxurious plane to transport her. However, it is troubling to me that the mentality of others is such that they would recommend more than what is needed.

We are the people's House, and the people expect us to spend their money wisely. We are here to serve, not live like kings and queens. This is an opportunity for us to review procedures and seek ways to save money, not waste it.

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BUSH BUDGET SHORTCHANGES HOMELAND SECURITY PROGRAMS—PARTICULARLY FIRST RESPONDERS

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, President Bush sent Congress a budget for 2008 for the fiscal year that continues the misguided priorities of this administration. Last November,

the American people rejected the status quo, saying that we can do better. It is time for a change, it is a time for a change in direction.

Unfortunately, the President's budget is more of the same. His budget for the Department of Homeland Security is only 1 percent more than it was in 2007. This is a modest increase for a department that is charged with such a critical mission and has yet to meet the goals of protecting our country.

Particularly disappointing is the President's request for programs to support first responders. The President has reduced the preparedness and training by 33 percent. The firefighters' grants would be reduced by 55 percent. State and local law enforcement grants would also undergo cuts, depriving our communities of critical support when they need it most after 9/11.

Mr. Speaker, House Democrats are serious about ensuring that our local police departments and our firefighters have the equipment they need to better protect our communities. The President's budget must be rejected.

RETURN TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, recently Speaker NANCY PELOSI said it is time for Congress to return to fiscal responsibility. It is often said that the best way to lead is by example. But I don't know if spending \$300,000 of the taxpayer money to fly the Speaker in a personal luxury jet to travel back and forth to San Francisco sets much of an example, particularly when any American can find a \$300 ticket for the same route on expedia.com.

According to CNN, Speaker PELOSI has requested that the military give her a jet that would include 42 business class seats, a fully enclosed stateroom, an entertainment center, a private bed, state-of-the-art communications system and a crew of 16.

Now, I know there are legitimate security concerns, but somehow the previous Speaker managed to use a smaller jet that seated 12 and had none of these amenities.

Why did the Speaker request this jet? According to the Washington Times, the Democrat, quote, "is seeking regular military flights not only for herself and her staff, but also for relatives and other Members of Congress."

If this is the Democrats' idea of fiscal responsibility, working families had better hold on to their wallets.

STOP TROOP ESCALATION

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

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, it is becoming ever more clear that the troop escalation plan proposed by

the administration is not—is not—in our Nation's best interest or in the best interest of bringing stability to Iraq.

Last week, three different events demonstrated why it is absolutely essential that Congress accept its responsibility to debate the President's plan. First, the cost of the escalation: The President has advertised it to be \$5.6 billion; CBO, nonpartisan, estimates it will be \$21 billion.

Second, the number of troops required, the President is selling it, advertising it as requiring 21,600 troops. CBO estimates suggest that it will be at least 48,000 troops.

Next, Pentagon officials admitted last week that they do not have enough armored vehicles, armored kits and other equipment that is absolutely essential to protecting the well-being of our troops. We cannot be sending troops into battle without the equipment and the protection that they need.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF ARMY SERGEANT JOHN COOPER OF FLEMINGSBURG, KENTUCKY

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

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of a brave young man from my district who recently lost his life fighting in Iraq. A resident of Ewing, Kentucky, Sergeant John Cooper lost his life in a roadside bomb attack just outside of Mosul. Sergeant Cooper was serving in Iraq with the Army's 2nd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, and was working on security operations in the area.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with John Cooper's mother, friends and family. They relayed to me stories of a brave young man who answered the call to duty by joining the Army in 1995 after graduating from Fleming County High School. He served in Iraq from February of 2003 to February of 2004 before being stationed in Korea.

In October 2006, he returned on a second tour. His mother, Janice Botkin, told me that her son was living out his life-long dream of serving in the military. She spoke to me of her son's bravery, his dedication and absolute belief in his mission, and by all accounts, Sergeant Cooper was a well-respected member and leader of his unit and his community.

Today, as we celebrate the life and memory of this great soldier, my thoughts and prayers are with Sergeant John Cooper's family and friends. The entire Nation is deeply indebted to Sergeant Cooper. We thank him for his service, and we honor him for his ultimate sacrifice.

ENCOURAGE MARKET DEVELOPMENT FOR BIOFUELS

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