

reported yesterday on the hidden costs of the occupation of Iraq. We learned that the true cost so far is \$1.3 trillion, or nearly double the amount the administration has been talking and has requested. And the price tag could soar to nearly \$3.5 trillion if we continue on the administration's reckless course in Iraq.

The hidden financial costs of our involvement in Iraq are staggering, but yesterday we also learned that there are hidden human costs as well that are truly, truly heartbreaking.

CBS News reported last night that the suicide rate among veterans is over twice as great as the suicide rate for the general population. In 2005 alone, there were at least 6,256 suicides among veterans in the 45 States that provided data to CBS. That is an astonishing 17 suicides per day for just that one year.

Those statistics are for veterans of all wars, and they are shocking. But the statistics for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are even more devastating. Veterans aged 20 to 24 have the highest suicide rate of all. For these young men and women, the suicide rate is two to four times higher than the suicide rate for the general population.

And yet another report published yesterday in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that the mental health problems of Iraq veterans are much greater than previously thought. It found that Iraq veterans are more likely to report alcohol abuse, family conflicts, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder after being home for 6 months than immediately after their return. The suicide statistics tell us that the real Iraq death toll is significantly higher than the official count of just over 3,860. And the mental health statistics tell us that the real number of wounded is much, much higher than the reported number of around 28,000.

All of this terrible news means that we can no longer sit around and do nothing about the occupation of Iraq. We must take action immediately, and we must take it in two ways.

First, America must do a much better job of meeting the physical and mental health needs of our veterans. The administration has underfunded and ignored the Veterans Administration system, leaving veterans stuck in a bureaucratic nightmare that stops them from getting the health care that they need. Congress has passed a bill that would help veterans to get care much faster. It improves conditions at VA hospitals and invests in new ways to treat physical and mental problems caused by the war. The President needs to sign that bill as soon as possible.

And, second, we must move immediately to end the occupation of Iraq and redeploy our troops. That is why I voted today for H.R. 4156, the Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act.

While the bill is not perfect, it essentially says that funds authorized for

Iraq will not be used to continue the occupation, but are to be used to achieve the safe and orderly redeployment of our troops out of Iraq.

That is what I and many others have been demanding, and that is what the American people have been asking. It is time to stop the death. It is time to stop the suffering. It is time to bring our brave troops home and do everything we can to help them and their families to rebuild their lives. Anything less is unacceptable and immoral.

□ 2215

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRALEY of Iowa). 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.)

#### AMERICANS ARE PRAYING FOR RAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, tonight Americans across the Southeast are praying for rain. As drought conditions have stretched from weeks into months, residents face a stark reminder of how one of our most precious resources, water, can also be one of our most unpredictable.

The lessons of natural disaster all too familiar to the good folks back home in Kansas. In the past year, nearly every county in Kansas has suffered from disastrous conditions.

The weather has been hard on many of us, but especially on our farmers and ranchers, who depend on nature to earn their living. It's hard to find words to express their concern, their worry. Many have worked the same acreage for decades, and they've always trusted that if they treat their land right, if they plow its soil and they plant it carefully and tend it for many months, it will reward them with a crop that will earn their living.

But in so many counties, disaster conditions have slashed crop yields. Ranchers face their own problems as animal feed prices soar.

Kansas farmers and ranchers are good hardworking people, but lately they've found that the land and the weather are betraying them. That's why it's so important that earlier this year Congress passed a critical agricultural disaster relief package. These funds helped Kansans continue to farm and ranch in spite of the ever-present threats of drought, fire and other catastrophes.

Today I urge America to come together once again to show the same compassion to our brothers and sisters in the Southeast. Farmers are finding

that no matter how much they care and the effort that they devote to their land, their crops simply won't grow. These hardworking families can't make ends meet and they need a helping hand from Congress.

I urge my colleagues to remember the struggles of farmers and ranchers in the Southeast, in Kansas and across America who continue to confront the challenge of this difficult weather.

And again, we're praying tonight for the rain for the Southeast, and it looks like we might get some rain, and we are just blessed.

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

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

#### THE ORDERLY AND RESPONSIBLE IRAQ REDEPLOYMENT ACT

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4156, the Orderly Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act, just passed.

Let me be clear about why I voted for it. This legislation is a compromise that I hate, but it's the only way to move the agenda of the American people forward. This legislation is anything but perfect, but it does make important strides.

It requires the President to use funding to begin to redeploy U.S. soldiers out of Iraq within 30 days of enactment and sets a goal for complete redeployment by December 15, 2008.

It requires the President to implement a comprehensive diplomatic political and economic strategy to bring stability to Iraq. For the first time, the President will actually have a plan in Iraq.

It requires the President to report to Congress. It will end the secrecy that has surrounded everything about this war.

And it requires the President to accept what the rest of us know, that waterboarding is torture. It is a crime, and this bill says it's not going to be used in the interrogation of prisoners.

After World War II, we prosecuted Japanese soldiers for waterboarding U.S. prisoners of war. But the President's new Attorney General is walking around wondering about whether waterboarding is a crime.

House Republicans who voted "no" said they're willing to sacrifice the will of the American people at the altar of blind political obedience to the White House.

If Republicans in the Senate filibuster this bill, they'll be telling the American people to go away because

they intend to follow the President over the cliff.

If this legislation should reach the President's desk, it just might finally force him to confront reality. But I don't expect any of that to happen.

The President intends to hand Iraq over to the next President. In the meantime, this President is waging an Iraq veto war relying on Republicans to act as mechanical robots and rubber-stamp his vote on every single Iraq policy the Democratic majority has brought forward.

The American people may not understand how badly they've been deceived and misled by this administration, but it's going to continue. Sometime next spring, the President will announce things in Iraq are going so well he'll bring home a few thousand of our troops. He'll have them arrive in the fall during the election, when Republicans are desperate to explain why they ignored the American people. He will not tell us that 100,000 soldiers will be permanently stationed in Iraq at 14 military bases the administration has so artfully called enduring bases. Of these, five are superbases: Camp Victory North, al Asad Air Base, Balad Air Base, Camp Taji, and Tallil Air Base. These are huge bases with everything from video stores to supermarkets and rental cars. They are so big that one of them, Balad, 40 miles north of Baghdad, is the second busiest airport in the world, second only to Heathrow in the amount of air traffic.

Building enduring bases stands for indefinite U.S. military involvement in Iraq, which is not something the Congress or the American people want or will stand for.

The President is running a war by veto. If we could have a vote on a no confidence motion, this war would be over. But in our democracy, the ballot box is the only vote of no confidence and, regrettably, we have another year to wait to get rid of the President.

That only reinforces the need for today's vote. If Republicans won't support something as mild as this, then the American people need to know the Republicans are stonewalling. Every time we force the debate out in the open, the American people see it for what it is.

If Republicans continue to prolong the war, the American people will take charge next November and unelect even more Republicans.

We call this legislation a bridge fund, meaning to build a way to bring our soldiers out of Iraq and home where they belong. We're trying, and we're not going to stop until the American people can declare the mission accomplished and the men and women of our Armed Forces are home.

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.)

#### MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT TO FAINT

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Luke records in his Gospel that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." That's in Luke 18:1.

I believe in the power of prayer, and I should note that the power of prayer is beheld in the One to which we pray, God Almighty.

Yesterday, my Governor, Sonny Perdue of Georgia, hosted a special prayer service at the Georgia Capitol to pray that the Lord would provide rain for our drought-ravaged State. Governor Perdue wisely recognized that a request such as this must be made to a higher power, and I commend him for his humility and wisdom in calling on God to provide what man cannot provide.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Jeremiah 33:3, which states "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

The book of Hebrews, in 14:16 states, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

We are a needy people, in desperate need of God's mercy and grace. Throughout Scripture, we are commanded to pray and seek God's face, not as a last resort but as the first order of business.

My home State of Georgia is facing one of the most severe droughts in its history. Our rivers and reservoirs are at record lows, and many of our communities face water shortages that could challenge their ability to meet water supply needs in the near and distant future.

The situation has gotten so bleak that the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, EPD, has declared a Level 4 drought response across the northern third of Georgia, which prohibits most types of outdoor residential water use. In fact, many nurseries and outdoor plant suppliers are going out of business because of this.

Worse yet, many forecasters are calling for a dry, mild winter that could result in serious water supply problems by spring.

I've had the privilege and honor of working with my fellow delegation members in a truly bipartisan effort to come up with practical responses, such as conservation and water management, to Georgia's water crisis. Despite our best efforts in Washington and in Georgia, there's no legislative solution to this problem. The issue at the heart of our drought problem is a severe lack of rain, and there is nothing that government can do to change that.

The Apostle Paul tells us to make our requests known to God with thanksgiving, so I gratefully acknowledge what the Lord has done for us already and boldly call upon Him to show favor on us yet again by sending rain to my beloved State of Georgia. God has not failed us before, and I'm confident He will not fail us now in our time of need.

At a time when religion has been continually forced from the public square, I want to offer my sincere thanks to Governor Perdue for his bold and faithful trust in the Almighty. His efforts helped unite hundreds of Georgians from all walks of life, leaders and citizens from varying faiths and denominations, races and ages for this prayer service.

So I join the Governor and fellow Georgians in calling out to God to provide rain from heaven, and I pray that the Lord will give wisdom and discernment to the Governor and each of us in leadership positions to address the drought and its devastating effects on our State and our citizens.

So I pray, Lord, You are sovereign and completely in control of all things, and I acknowledge Your awesome power and authority.

All things are in Your control, and nothing is too small or too great to bring before You. When you walked on the Earth in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, You spoke and stilled the waves and calmed the winds. You spoke into the existence, the heavens and the Earth. You created man in your image, and I know you can alleviate the severe drought conditions we face in Georgia.

So Lord, I ask in the name of Jesus that you bring down rain from heaven and refresh our land, fill our reservoirs and dry lakes and streams. I pray that You will quench our parched land, and I implore You, Lord, to show mercy upon us and to see us through this difficulty and show Your awesome hand in moving nature to suit Your will and bless Your people that call upon Your name.

Thank You, Lord for all that You have done and will continue to do for us. And I pray this in the precious powerful name of our Lord and Savior, in the name of Jesus Christ I pray this. Amen.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 2230

#### CONDEMNING VIOLENCE AGAINST PHILADELPHIA'S POLICE OFFICERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.