

Street Journal stated, In this bill, the biggest winner is OPEC. So, Mr. Speaker, maybe to survive, Texas and the other oil-producing States should just join OPEC and get a better deal on our crude oil.

And that's just the way it is.

NON-INTERVENTION AND NEUTRALITY

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, Bruce Fein is a nationally syndicated columnist who was a high-ranking official during the Reagan administration. He does not support a neocon, globalist, world policeman-type of foreign policy for the U.S., a foreign policy that used to be considered as the policy of liberals.

Last week, Mr. Fein wrote a column describing the traditional conservative view. He wrote: "Non-intervention and global neutrality should be the national security creed of the United States. Every soldier deployed abroad should be returned to deter and defend the United States at home. Non-intervention and neutrality everywhere, coupled with the threat to annihilate any United States attacker would make the country safer, freer, and more prosperous. Foreign adventurisms create more enemies than they destroy.

He also quoted George Washington's farewell address, in which President Washington warned against "overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty."

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the traditional conservative view is what was expressed by President Bush during the 2000 campaign when he came out very strongly against nation building and said the U.S. needed a more humble foreign policy.

AMT PATCH

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, at \$2.9 trillion, the Federal budget is bigger than the entire economy of every single country on Earth, except Japan. Bigger than the economies of China, bigger than the economy of Britain, bigger than the economy of Germany. Just the Federal budget is larger than all of those economies.

So, Mr. Speaker, my friends on the other side of the aisle, I want to ask them this question: Out of \$2.9 trillion, can't you trim enough money to stop impending tax increases on the middle class and every American in this country, rather than proposing new tax increases? Unfortunately, the actions of this Congress say no, that the Demo-

crat majority is intent on raising taxes in order to grow and expand this rather large and bloated Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important the American people know what the Democrats in Congress are intending to do, and that is to raise taxes and grow government.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

STOPPING YOUTH VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an extraordinarily important issue, one that, quite frankly, is not often discussed on this very floor and needs in so many ways to be brought forward, not only to the attention of the Members of this body, but a dialogue that needs to reach out all across this country to discuss the devastating trends of youth violence. I am pleased to note that colleagues today, including STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, BOBBY SCOTT, YVETTE CLARKE, DONALD PAYNE, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE and LINDA SANCHEZ, will be coming to the floor under these 5-minute Special Orders to also address this issue of youth violence.

There isn't a day that goes by that we don't thank our veterans for the sacrifice that they have made and note the loss of life that has taken place in Iraq and in Afghanistan and the wounded. And we take great pride, and rightfully so, in this Chamber for making sure that we are providing for our veterans, providing especially for those that come home with post-traumatic stress syndrome, and addressing these concerns in a meaningful and significant way. And yet here in our own country, in our cities, in our suburbs, most recently out in Nebraska, violent deaths and shootings take place and seemingly go unnoticed.

JOHN LEWIS traveled with me to Hartford, Connecticut, to address there a group of citizens concerned about violence in the neighborhood, where in 2006, 16 shootings took place in a single week. At that hearing, a Vietnam veteran, Steven Harris, stood up and said, I appreciate what Congress is doing on behalf of veterans and providing them with post-traumatic stress syndrome relief. But what about the kids in my neighborhood who have to deal with this on a regular basis? What about the youth all across this country who are perishing?

There are incredible statistics, Mr. Speaker, that this body needs to discuss in a way that will send hope out to

our communities and our neighborhoods. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 24-year-olds overall. Homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans between the ages of 10 to 24 and the second leading cause of death for Hispanics of that age. Guns are a factor in most of these homicides.

In a nationwide survey of high school students, 6 percent reported not going to school on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school. Children who have witnessed violence in their communities are vulnerable to serious, long-term problems. This country stood and paused and we said the world had changed forever after September 11. But for grandmothers in their communities, the world had changed before that, because this kind of senseless violence continues.

This Nation, this Congress, must solve this problem. The problem cannot be addressed explicitly through incarceration. We have ample amounts of punitive measures that exist on our books today. What we don't have is a comprehensive approach to it, reaching out into these communities, assisting and helping and providing the plans such as BOBBY SCOTT has outlined, "From Cradle to College," that provide the hope, that provide the leadership for communities coming together in a manner in which they care about our children.

We are aware of what is happening all around the world, and we can come to this floor and chronicle it. But in our own cities, in our own States, we must begin to speak and save our children there.

□ 1500

BORDER AGENTS CAMPION AND RAMOS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, at this time of the year, it is common for whatever President is in power to review requests for pardons and for commutations of sentence. And yesterday, the President exercised his constitutional authority and pardoned numerous individuals, at least 29 of them, and I have all of their names here. I count seven drug dealers that were pardoned, one individual for receiving kickbacks in defense procurements contracts, and he commuted one sentence of an individual that was aiding and abetting the distribution of cocaine.

I want to make it clear; the President has the absolute power under the Constitution to pardon anybody he wishes or commute the sentence. And I want to read part of the Constitution, a pocketbook Constitution that many

of us here carry that says, "The President shall have the power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States."

You notice, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't give any conditions, except he can't pardon someone who has been impeached. It doesn't require that a committee decide who is to be pardoned. It doesn't require that the Justice Department do anything or be even involved in the process. It gives the power of pardon and commutation to the President; and he has that right to pardon anyone he wishes, and I uphold his right to do so.

But in jail today in the Federal penitentiary somewhere across our United States are two individuals who I think should be pardoned, or at least their sentences should be commuted. And numerous people on the House, on both sides, have asked the President to look at these cases and pardon these two individuals, especially in light of their appellate court hearing that took place just a few weeks ago in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, Louisiana. Of course, those two people are Border Agents Ramos and Campion, who I feel like were unjustly convicted by an overzealous prosecution, a comment that was made by one of the Federal judges on appeal, "overzealous prosecution."

But be that as it may, and it seems to me that they have been imprisoned a year now, most of that time they have been serving solitary confinement. For what crime? Well, because they supposedly violated the civil rights of a drug smuggler bringing drugs in from Mexico worth about \$1 million. And the United States Government, rather than prosecute the drug dealer, prosecuted the Border Agents because they didn't follow policy, protocol, filling out appropriate forms after this shooting took place. But they go make a deal with the drug dealer. They make a deal with the devil, and they get testimony from the drug dealer in their trial. Talking about the Federal prosecution made a deal with him.

But, you see, that whole case kind of has some bad things that happened. We had learned, several of us, that while the drug dealer, granted immunity, that means they are not going to prosecute him, to testify, and before the trial took place, he brought in another load of drugs from Mexico to the United States worth about \$700,000.

The U.S. Attorney's Office, in a carefully worded propaganda piece, denied that that ever occurred. But since we saw, and I have seen the DEA report, we knew a second drug deal took place. And now, finally, after this took place and many of us knew about it, the Federal Government has decided to prosecute the drug dealer on that second case; conspiracy to import drugs into the United States, and charging a new indictment with three offenses, conspiracy to commit crimes against the United States.

So the Federal Government makes a deal with the drug dealer. He brings in drugs after the deal is made. Now he is in jail. And it seems to me, justice would demand that these two Border Agents be released at least until this appeal is over with. But I think they should have their sentences commuted or even they should be pardoned by the President.

But I say all that to say the bureaucrats say, Oh, these two Border Agents haven't followed protocol. They haven't applied the right way, they haven't filled out the right forms for a pardon and a commutation of sentence. Well, the Constitution that I just read doesn't require forms to be filled out for people in prison to get a pardon. I don't remember Mr. Scooter Libby filling out some kind of form to get a pardon. He didn't even ever go to jail. He just got a Get Out of Jail Free card. He was pardoned. The President had the absolute right to do that. I don't quarrel with that. President Nixon got an absolute pardon by President Ford. He didn't fill out any forms to get that pardon.

So, Mr. Speaker, I recommend and urge the President to commute the sentences of these two Border Agents. And he can do it on his own. He doesn't need permission from some bureaucracy, and I hope he does so and does so quickly.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

DRUG SENTENCING REFORM AND COCAINE KINGPIN TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2007; AND YOUTH VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening for two important matters. And I believe that when we listen to our colleagues speak about fairness, as my good friend from Texas, Congressman POE, just did, I happen to agree with him that there are instances where we must respond to the unfairness of the justice system in the instance of these two Border Patrol agents who are incarcerated while the drug dealer goes free. But there are also commonsense approaches that we must make to address the question of the overall unfairness in the system.

Today, I introduce H.R. 4545, which is the Drug Sentencing Reform and Cocaine Kingpin Trafficking Act of 2007, and it responds to the cry of the U.S. Sentencing Commission and the U.S. Supreme Court, by no means liberal bastions, that have argued and have

been convinced that the disparities in sentencing between crack cocaine and cocaine is patently unconstitutional and unfair. And it was the Supreme Court on December 10 that restored the broad authority of Federal District judges to sentence outside the sentencing guidelines and impose shorter and more reasonable prison sentences for persons convicted of offenses involving crack cocaine.

Right now, we know it takes \$20,000 to incarcerate someone in the prison. But these justices and the U.S. Sentencing Commission said that it is important to end the disparity and not to give more for crack used, unfortunately, by the poorest of Americans, and allow those who use the high-priced cocaine, not really that different, to get off almost scot-free.

This bill tracks the Supreme Court decision, but, more importantly, it includes an offender drug treatment incentive grant program, and it places and increases an emphasis on certain abrogating factors such as selling drugs to children. And it has penalties for the real bad guys, and those are the major drug traffickers.

We must get a grip on the inequity of the justice system that allows some who can sit in their living room and smoke cocaine to get off easier than those who are on the streets with crack. We want to get rid of all uses of drugs, but we have to be fair in the justice system.

I also rise, Mr. Speaker, and I hope my colleagues will join me in cosponsoring H.R. 4545. We introduced it today with 20 sponsors, including a member of the leadership, and we are grateful and hopeful that we will get a hearing on this legislation. But I also join my good friend, Congressman JOHN LARSON, to be able to step on the line, to stomp out the violence that our children are participating in.

Some few years ago, I was on the select committee against violence headed by my former colleague Martin Frost. Let me just say to you that homicide is the second leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds. Twenty-seven thousand young African Americans were murdered in this country over the last 5 years of the Iraq war; there have been fewer than 1,500 killed in Iraq. The murder of a teenager costs about \$1 million in loss and accrued costs. A teenager disabled by gunshot costs about \$2 million. Seventy-one percent of police chiefs and sheriffs and prosecutors nationwide agree that there must be programs for preschool children and after-school programs. But, more importantly, parents and teachers and the faith community and Members of Congress must stand against this violence.

The killing of Sean Taylor by those under 20 years old. The killing of Deputy Constable in my district, Odom, whose funeral I went to, killed by those who were 11th and 12th graders in one of Houston's high schools.

We have to stand and denounce violence, but we must intervene with