

Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to possible further legislative business.

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.

THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT IS TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of government is to protect the people. It is a very simple but yet fundamental principle of the United States Constitution.

Our Federal Government has to protect us from enemies from abroad, and our government does a good job of doing that. Our government also has the secondary responsibility to protect citizens in our country, and our government does a fairly good job of that.

But there is a unique problem where our government seems to be lacking, and that's protecting citizens that are working overseas for American contractors against other American citizens who commit crimes against them.

Today, Mr. Speaker, in the Judiciary Committee, a brave young lady came and testified about what happened to her, an individual by the name of Jamie Leigh Jones from my congressional district down in Texas.

As a young 20-year-old she went to work for KBR Construction Company overseas in Iraq. She was there just a few days when she was sexually assaulted by several individuals. After she was assaulted, Army doctors intervened and treated her initially for her medical injuries, which were devastating. The medical doctors took and prepared a rape kit, as is supposed to be done in cases like a criminal investigation, and for some reason, they never turned that rape kit over to the Federal Government, to the Justice Department, to the FBI. They turned it over to the company, and it has subsequently been damaged and destroyed.

After Jamie Leigh Jones was sexually assaulted, she was imprisoned as a hostage in a trailer, as she says, where she was not allowed to leave, was not allowed to eat or drink water. She frantically was able to find a cell phone that one of her guards let her borrow. She called her father in Texas, and he called me. And within 48 hours the State Department had dispatched two agents from Baghdad Embassy, found Jamie Leigh Jones, rescued her, and brought her back to the United States.

We would hope, then, that our government would continue this investigation to find the rapist who committed this crime against Jamie Leigh Jones.

This occurred in the year of 2005, and for these 2 years we have heard blissful silence from the United States Justice Department on what they are doing, if anything, to find these criminals who committed this crime.

After Jamie Leigh Jones has now come public with this, my office has received numerous phone calls from other workers who were contract workers, civilians, all females who were assaulted while working in Iraq who are now coming forward to tell their stories. And in their case, like Jamie Leigh Jones, nobody has been prosecuted and held accountable for the crimes committed against these women, these American citizens, these American patriots who are working overseas with our military, but yet crimes are being committed against them. And there is silence from the Justice Department about what is being done, if anything.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that Iraq and what has taken place against civilian workers is reminiscent of the days of the Old West, the Wild West, where crime was committed and no one was held accountable for their conduct.

There are hundreds of Department of Justice officials in Baghdad doing all kinds of things. Why aren't they investigating crimes against civilian workers that are being committed by other Americans? We don't know the answer. It's important that our government fulfill its first duty to its people, which is to protect them, and when crimes are committed against American civilians by other Americans in foreign lands, where we have jurisdiction in the green zone of Baghdad, that our government be relentless in bringing those people, those criminals, to the bar of justice and put them in jail rather than remain silent and not responding at all to these crimes.

So I would hope, Mr. Speaker, as this year ends and the next year begins that our Federal Government, our Justice Department, has a renewed interest in the Americans that are overseas. More Americans are serving in Iraq that are civilians than are serving in the military. And we know that crimes are being committed against them. It's important that those criminals be brought to the bar of justice and held accountable in a public trial because, Mr. Speaker, justice is what we do in America.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1745

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from 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.)

HOUSE SHOULD VOTE ON TREATMENT PARITY BILL

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

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, with 54 million Americans suffering the ravages of mental illness and 26 million suffering from chemical addiction, the failure of this Congress to pass the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act is a slap in the face to millions of Americans with mental illness and/or drug and alcohol addiction. It's also the biggest failure of this session of Congress.

Congress' failure to knock down the discriminatory barriers to treatment is a matter of life or death for people suffering from mental health and addiction diseases, diseases that took the lives of over 200,000 Americans last year alone.

Just 2 weeks ago, my friend of over 25 years took his own life as a result of depression. He joined 34,000 other Americans who have committed suicide from depression this year.

In my home State of Minnesota, Anna Westin was a young woman with anorexia. She suffered for several years from this terrible disease. Her parents' insurance company refused to cover the inpatient treatment that she desperately needed. Distraught at her condition and being a financial burden on her parents, young Anna took her own life.

Representative PATRICK KENNEDY and I held 14 field hearings across our country this year on the need to end insurance discrimination against mental illness and addiction. We heard story after story after story like these.

We heard from Steve Winter, who traveled in his wheelchair to several of our field hearings. When Steve was a young teenager, he awoke one morning with a stinging pain in his back. He stumbled downstairs to breakfast. He realized that blood was streaming down his back. He heard his mother's voice say, "Your sister is in heaven, and now you and I are going there to join her." His mother was pointing a gun at him. She had been taken off the schizophrenia drugs she desperately needed. As Steve put it, "My mother didn't shoot my sister and me; her mental illness did."

Clearly there are not many families in America, Mr. Speaker, who haven't been touched in some way by mental illness or addiction. Like my close personal friend, like Anna Westin and Steve Winter's sister, I could have been one of the thousands of Americans who die each year from mental illness and chemical addiction.

For on July 31, 1981, I awoke in a jail cell in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as

the result of my last alcoholic black-out after abusing alcohol for 12 long and painful years. I'm alive and sober today, Mr. Speaker, only because of the access I had to treatment in 1981. I'm living proof that treatment works and recovery is real.

But too many people don't have that access to treatment. It's a national disgrace that 270,000 Americans were denied addiction treatment last year. It's a national tragedy that 160,000 of our fellow Americans died from chemical addiction and 34,000 died from suicide as a result of their depression. And it's also, Mr. Speaker, a national crisis that untreated addiction and mental illness cost our economy over \$550 billion last year.

And what is Congress' response? Despite bipartisan passage by three House committees and two subcommittees, we were denied a vote in the full House on the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act.

This legislation would give Americans suffering from addiction greater access to treatment by prohibiting health insurers from placing discriminatory barriers on treatment. As many as 16 million Americans in health plans could receive treatment under this act.

Despite the 273 cosponsors of H.R. 1424, this treatment parity bill, no vote was held. Despite the tens of millions of Americans suffering the ravages of addiction and mental illness, no vote was allowed to increase their access to lifesaving treatment.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end the discrimination against people suffering from mental illness and chemical addiction. It's time to end the higher copayments, deductibles, out-of-pocket costs, and limited treatment stays, discriminatory barriers to treatment that don't exist for any other diseases. It's time to treat mental illness and chemical addiction under the same rules as physical illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for the House of Representatives to vote on the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. Those still suffering cannot afford to wait any longer.

RECOGNIZING CRAIG PENDLETON, FOUNDER OF NORTHWEST ATLANTIC MARINE ALLIANCE

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to talk about Craig Pendleton, a fisherman from Maine who has dedicated his life to protecting and supporting small-boat fishermen and the communities that depend on them.

Craig is part of a long and proud tradition of fishing families in Maine. Like many fishermen in New England, he experienced the decline of major fishing stocks in the late 1980s and early 1990s and was frustrated by Federal management strategies that

seemed to penalize fishermen without really helping to rebuild the stocks.

Many fishermen experienced that frustration, but Craig stands out because he responded by rolling up his sleeves and working hard to find solutions. In 1997, my first year in the Congress, Craig founded the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, or NAMA.

The purpose of NAMA was to work with fishermen up and down the coast of New England to articulate a vision for the future of fishing and fisheries management. Most of these fishermen were small owner-operators who had never participated in politics or management, but through NAMA Craig was able to get them involved.

NAMA was a new voice in the debate over how to manage New England's fisheries. Environmental organizations and Federal managers had long recognized that fish stocks were in trouble, but the small family fishermen were typically shut out of high-level discussions about how to solve the problem. These were the people without advocates, without lawyers, without expensive lobbyists. However, they were often the first to suffer the brunt of any new limits on fishing.

These are the fishermen that NAMA fights for. Over the years, under Craig Pendleton's lead, NAMA has worked tirelessly to help local fishermen understand the complicated jargon of new Federal fisheries regulations and draft their own proposals for new fisheries management plans. I worked closely with Craig and NAMA when I drafted provisions in the recently reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act to protect the interests of small-boat fishermen. Fishermen feel empowered by NAMA.

Recently, NAMA became one of the leading proponents of Area Management, an innovative fishery management strategy that allows local communities to take a leading role in managing fisheries resources. The strategy rests on the commonsense idea that fishermen, if they choose, should be able to take responsibility for environmental stewardship and the fair allocation of fisheries resources in their own communities.

Recently, Craig Pendleton announced that he is stepping down from the position he has held for 12 years as coordinating director of NAMA. Here today on the floor of the House, I would like to recognize Craig for all his years as a tireless advocate for fishermen and fish and for all that he has achieved for small-boat owners and operators in Maine and across the country.

I admire Craig and the other men and women involved with NAMA because they are willing to endure significant personal sacrifice to ensure that the fishing industry and way of life that they love are preserved for their children and grandchildren. I hope that those future generations will stand at the helms of their fishing vessels and see our time as a turning point, when small fishing communities across the country began to take a leading role in

the management of the fisheries resources on which they all depend. Craig Pendleton is a pioneer of that movement, and I would like to thank Craig on behalf of the people of Maine and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). 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.)

THE HEALTHY HOSPITALS ACT

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, over the last several months, and certainly over the last 2 weeks, Congress has had a number of accomplishments. Today we did a number of things that were important such as funding for our troops. We also improved toy safety. But there have been a number of other opportunities which, unfortunately, with the schedule that we missed, that we could have done and should have done and I hope next year we will do. And that is while we are looking at issues to improve health care and reduce health care costs, when we talk about Medicare or Medicaid or SCHIP, one of the things we should have done was really work to lower costs and save money and save lives.

We hear both sides of the aisle these days talking about the costs of everything: The national debt in the trillions, earmarks need to be reduced, health care is too expensive. But too often we keep talking about these problems or saying perhaps Congress can find a way to pay for these things. But shouldn't we look at how to fix the problem and not just finance it?

We had a solution in front of us that could have saved \$50 billion in health care costs. But it didn't happen.

Earlier this year I introduced H.R. 1174, the Healthy Hospitals Act, which received strong bipartisan support. This legislation is a simple solution to lower costs associated with hospital- and health care-acquired infections.

The implementation of this bill is not expensive; it only requires hospitals to publicly disclose their hospital-acquired infection rates and follow simple cleanliness techniques that we already expect our caretakers to follow, things you assume that hospitals and clinics are doing, but, unfortunately, they are not always doing that: washing their hands, wearing gloves, sterilizing equipment before and after uses, testing patients for other diseases prior to treatment or admission to hospitals, giving antibiotics before and after surgery. These aren't