

colleagues in the American Legion to ensure our Nation's veterans receive the benefits they have earned and deserve.

Madam Speaker, thank you. And thank you again to the Reverend, as we thank him for sharing his spiritual guidance and wisdom here today in the House of Representatives and for his commitment to serving his fellow veterans.

SCOTT GARDNER ACT

(Mrs. MYRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MYRICK. Today, I reintroduce the Scott Gardner Act. Tragically, Scott Gardner, who was a loving husband and father, was killed by a drunk illegal alien who remained in our country even though he had previous DWI convictions.

And we have had other constituents killed recently. Jasmine Lawrence and Min Chang were both killed in wrecks caused by drunk-driving illegal immigrants in Charlotte, North Carolina, area roads.

Most recently, 20-year-old LeeAnna Newman and her unborn child were killed just outside of my district after her car was struck by an illegal alien who later admitted to getting behind the wheel after drinking tequila. He had a previous conviction also in North Carolina.

This act will give our law enforcement and immigration officials the capacity and resources to deal with illegal aliens driving under the influence in a manner that fits the crime. It would make DWI grounds for mandatory detention and deportation of illegal aliens, and it would aid law enforcement and our immigration laws by requiring the sharing of information among Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies, who would be required to collect this information during the course of their normal duties.

State and local law enforcement agencies would be given the resources required to detain illegal aliens for DWI and immigration violations until they could be transferred to Federal authorities for deportation.

It is a travesty that our country allows illegal immigrants to remain after being found guilty of DWI.

We cannot prevent every instance of illegal aliens driving under the influence.

However, there is no reason we should not take every measure possible to remove habitual DWI offenders from our roads.

Our constituents expect us to ensure their safety and security.

The Scott Gardner Act will go a long way toward clearing our roads of criminal illegal aliens who represent a grave threat to the safety of our citizens.

THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, the new Democratic Congress continues to listen to the concerns of middle-class Americans.

We know that average American families have actually lost ground over the past several years, even after several years of economic growth and high corporate profits. Wages are stagnant, personal debts are at an all-time high, and individual savings are at an all-time low. Higher education and health care costs are skyrocketing.

Last week, the Democratic Congress took a step towards helping middle-class families by passing the Employee Free Choice Act, which helps Americans join together to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

Once again, our legislation passed with bipartisan support, and once again, it will benefit working families across this country. This is just one more example of how the new Congress is leading this Nation in a new direction, just as the American people asked us to do last November.

SLOW-BLEED IS NO OPTION

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, right now, brave Americans are going door to door in some of the most dangerous parts of Iraq. They are working with the Iraqi people to bring stability to Iraq, and they are doing this because it is their duty and because they understand our enemy, what is at stake should we not succeed.

Right now, in households all across this country, there are families praying for the safe return of their loved ones. They understand the dangers. They know what is at stake. Unfortunately, in Washington, it would seem that too many politicians do not realize what is at stake, what the consequences are of failure. Instead, some propose we tell these soldiers and their families that Congress believes that the only choice is to close the door. They say retreat is our only option. Their desire is to adopt a policy of slow bleed, methodically squeezing off the necessary funding.

We all know our enemy is committed. We also know that this slow-bleed tactic, supported by some here in Washington, is a weakly disguised measure to turn our backs on our soldiers. That is something, Madam Speaker, that I cannot support.

SCOTT GARDNER ACT

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

Mr. MCINTYRE. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking today about an extremely important piece of legislation that my good friend, Representative SUE MYRICK, and I are introducing. The Scott Gardner Act

strengthens our national immigration laws and preserves our public safety.

On July 16, 2005, 33-year-old husband and father, Scott Gardner, was killed by a drunk driver while his family was driving to the beach located in my congressional district. His wife was critically injured and his two children were robbed of their father for the rest of their lives. The drunk driver was a repeat offender and an illegal immigrant, an individual who should never have been in this country in the first place.

This tragedy was completely preventable, but our broken borders allowed an illegal immigrant with four prior drunk driving charges to remain in the United States. This situation must change so that we never lose another life to a criminal who doesn't deserve rightfully to be in our country.

This act, the Scott Gardner Act, would ensure that DWI is grounds for mandatory detention and deportation of illegal aliens. It would improve communications between Federal, State and local agencies. And it would allow those agencies and law enforcement to collect immigration information in the course of their normal duties.

FAMILY FARM PRESERVATION ACT

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, America has some of the most beautiful farmland in the world. But rapidly expanding urban sprawl is threatening this cherished natural resource every day. In fact, since 1960, approximately 1.5 million acres of American farmland have been converted to nonagricultural uses each year.

This week, I will introduce legislation aimed at slowing this trend that threatens family farms and our cherished open spaces. The Family Farm Preservation Act would encourage farmers to continue farming their land by exempting them from capital gains taxes when they sell their land development rights to qualified groups committed to conservation. Without protection from this significant tax burden, too many farmers are being forced to sell their land to developers, and that means fewer family farms and ever-shrinking open spaces.

By giving farmers an incentive to continue farming their land, this bill helps preserve the cherished way of life while protecting beautiful American landscapes at the same time. I hope all my colleagues will support the Family Farm Preservation Act.

PRESIDENT'S HOMELAND SECURITY BUDGET

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, in his second State of the

Union Address, President Bush stood in this very Chamber and told the Nation that the government would take unprecedented measures to protect our people and defend our homeland. As I stand here, almost 5 years after the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the President has delivered a budget that will not keep that promise.

The President's proposed budget once again provides inadequate appropriations for Homeland Security. President Bush proposes slashing grants to our first responders. This will include massive cuts to both our firefighter grants and our State homeland security grants. It includes cuts to law enforcement and cuts to the Justice Department, and all of this while trying to fund tax cuts for the wealthiest among us.

Madam Speaker, this Democratic Congress remains focused on protecting this Nation from the real threat of global terrorism. Democrats are fighting for America's future. We will secure not only our homeland but our families, our jobs and our children's future.

HONDURAS MISSION

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recall the memory of three selfless and courageous Georgians, who tragically were killed in an accident last month while performing missionary work in rural Honduras.

Perry Goad and Ric Mason of Cartersville and Martha Fuller of Newnan were doing God's work on a church mission in the tiny village of Mal Pais. Together with a group of volunteers from several Georgia churches, they were working to set up running water, connect electricity, pave roads and improve life for the families living in Agalta Valley. It was during this effort that the group's truck rolled over on an undeveloped stretch of road, killing Perry, Ric and Martha.

Madam Speaker, these are three outstanding citizens who eagerly dedicated their time, their effort, their love and spirit to helping those in need. They were not content to simply sit in church and learn about the problems facing our world. They made an effort to go out and to fix these problems. And indeed, our community has truly lost three guiding lights.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in remembering the righteous lives of Perry Goad, Ric Mason and Martha Fuller and in offering prayers of healing to the other volunteers who were injured in the accident.

FALSE LINK BETWEEN AL QAEDA-IRAQ

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

Mr. PASCRELL. It is not surprising to learn that during the Scooter Libby trial, Vice President CHENEY's former communications aide, Catherine Martin, said that delivering a message on Meet the Press was a tactic we often use. By the way, within the last 10 minutes, Mr. Libby has been found guilty on four of five counts.

The truth shall lead America. The truth is that the 9/11 Commission found no credible evidence of a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda and the attacks upon the United States. The epicenter of our war against terror is not Iraq but on the border of Pakistan and on the border of Afghanistan.

The American people deserve the truth instead of deceptive tactics. And if this administration won't give the people the truth about this war, then this Congress will.

He stated, Mr. CHENEY, five separate occasions that Saddam Hussein was joined at the hip with bin Laden. He told the American people five times a lie and repeated it year after year on the same TV station. The epicenter of our war on terror is on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members must refrain from engaging in personalities toward the Vice President.

WE MUST TAKE CARE OF OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, all of us in this Chamber agree, our recovering veterans deserve hospitals that are clean, secure and sanitary when they return home from the battlefield defending our great Nation in the name of liberty.

The recent findings at Walter Reed Army Medical Center are a grave breach of trust to those who shed blood on the battlefield fighting for our freedoms. This Congress must work with the administration to implement a comprehensive evaluation of conditions at Walter Reed and hold those in charge accountable for these deplorable conditions.

The bipartisan commission created by the President to determine whether similar problems exist at other military and VA hospitals is also a necessary and appropriate course of action. Going forward, we must ensure world-class standards and patient-centered efficiency for our veterans. Better oversight is clearly necessary to ensure military facilities exemplify our soldiers' honor and courage.

As hearings on the conditions at Walter Reed are held this week, this Congress must reaffirm its commitment to our wounded soldiers and veterans to ensure they are provided first class medical care.

WALTER REED SCANDAL

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, the long-festering situation at Walter Reed's Building 18 is nothing short of a national scandal. I am pleased that the new 110th Congress is taking critical steps this week to investigate problems at the facility, and hold accountable leaders that allowed these conditions to deteriorate to this disgraceful state.

Last week, I met with veterans from my district to express deep concern about the lack of adequate transportation for veterans, the increasing length of time it takes for veterans to receive benefits or access health care and the stagnant funding of the VA system over the last 6 years. And they describe a system unable to cope with increasing patients at a time of war.

The challenges faced by these Connecticut veterans are emblematic of a military and VA health system swamped by the influx of wounded from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and shortfalls of funding to adequately care for them caused by the misplaced priorities of the last Congress.

In the first days of this new Congress, we took an important step to address this problem by providing an additional \$3.6 billion for veterans health care, yet as my constituents related, there remain critical issues that need to be addressed as we move forward. The men and women who serve this country deserve nothing less than a health care system worthy of their service and sacrifice.

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CALLING FOR RESOURCES, ATTENTION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, you cannot run America on the cheap.

In the wake of Katrina, we learned that years of requests for investment in infrastructure and basic human needs had been ignored. After sending our troops into Iraq, we learned that they lacked basic protective equipment because this administration was looking to save pennies even as it was wasting billions of dollars on private contracts run amok.

Now the scandal at Walter Reed Hospital is revealing that behind the curtain even our neediest veterans are not being spared the double whammy of inadequate resources and lax accountability.

All Americans should be outraged at this and demand accountability. But we should also be outraged at the cynical agenda this administration has brought to all government functions. Resources are cut, making it impossible for the affected workforce to deliver high-quality services. At the same