

the first time in over 4 years are holding you to your word.

□ 1030

TIME FOR THE TRUTH

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, from the beginning, the Bush administration has offered a litany of reasons to justify their decision to fire the U.S. Attorneys. Unfortunately, the answers they provided have never even held up for 48 hours.

First, the Bush administration said the attorneys were fired because of performance-related issues. Yet we find out these attorneys have exemplary records. The Deputy Attorney General did not even review the file of one of the fired U.S. Attorneys.

Then the administration said it was an internal staffing issue and pointed the finger at Harriet Miers. And now other top White House officials not only knew about it from the beginning, but were behind the firings.

Yesterday the White House said that they will talk to Congress, but they will not take the oath and swear to tell the whole truth.

The White House says they have nothing to hide, but they are only willing to speak behind closed doors, not under oath. Our goal is to finally get to the truth, but not to create a confrontation.

The scandal at the Justice Department has gone on long enough. Careers have been destroyed, and legitimate public corruption cases have been derailed. It is time for accountability. It is time for the truth.

DEMOCRATS TRYING TO FIX THE FINANCIAL MESS THAT WAS CREATED OVER THE LAST 6 YEARS

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

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, this week the House Budget Committee will mark up its fiscal year 2008 budget. After 6 years of fiscal recklessness, the Democratic budget will actually aim to balance in 2012, something that Republican budgets have been unable to achieve over the last 6 years.

It is important that the American people remember how we got to where we are today. In 2001, President Bush inherited a \$5.6 trillion surplus, but over the next 6 years, with help from Congress, the President turned that surplus into a \$2.8 trillion deficit.

Congress has been so fiscally irresponsible that President Bush has borrowed more money from other nations than all 42 of his predecessors combined.

This is not a fiscal record to be proud of. The President's attempt to finesse his budget has been uncovered by a

nonpartisan CBO that concludes the President's budget does not reach balance in 5 years.

Madam Speaker, Democrats have a different set of priorities, and ours begin with actually aiming to balance the budget for the first time in 6 years.

WHAT ARE ROVE AND MIERS AFRAID OF? WHY WON'T THEY TESTIFY UNDER OATH?

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, yesterday the White House said that political strategist Karl Rove and former appointee to the U.S. Supreme Court Harriet Miers would be made available to the Senate for an interview regarding the growing U.S. Attorneys scandal. However, the White House refused to allow them to testify under oath or in public.

Is the White House serious? Do they honestly believe this Congress will allow them to get away with this?

It would be one thing if the Bush administration had been completely honest with the Congress over the last month, but every day there are new details that completely contradict what was said the day before.

Last month, Attorney General Gonzales said there was no coordination between the Justice Department and the White House in the firing of the eight U.S. Attorneys. But we now know that Karl Rove and Harriet Miers were involved from the very beginning.

The administration has stalled and deceived at every step during this investigation. With that track record, why should this administration believe the Congress would agree to unacceptable secret testimony without being under oath?

U.S. ATTORNEY SCANDAL

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

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, Democrats made a promise last November to bring accountability back to Congress and the Federal Government. In just a few short months, we have conducted thorough and meaningful oversight on a series of issues that would have been swept under the rug by the previous Republican leadership, which sadly was often more concerned with protecting the administration than doing the right thing.

Earlier this week, the Justice Department, at the request of congressional Democrats, released thousands of pages of e-mails and internal documents related to the firing of eight U.S. Attorneys by the administration. The documents indicate that the administration's contention that the attorneys were dismissed for performance-related reasons simply is not true.

This Congress is seeking to attain the rest of the story by asking senior

White House officials involved in the U.S. Attorney scandal to testify under oath. Unfortunately, the administration does not want to comply and provide the American people with the facts.

As a former elected district attorney, I know how critically important it is for prosecutors to be independent and to perform their job without fear of retaliatory firings.

It is time for this administration to do the right thing and hold those responsible for the scandal accountable.

IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, the Iraq supplemental will be coming to the floor this week, and it brings together many of the recommendations that we have heard from the nonpartisan Iraq Study Group, from the Pentagon and the President himself, but it provides more resources for our troops in the field and when they come home, and finally provides accountability for this administration.

First, the legislation demands that the Iraqi Government meet benchmarks the President himself outlined earlier this year.

Second, the legislation calls for responsible redeployment out of Iraq at the beginning of next year. The Democratic Congress did not come up with this date out of the blue. This was in the recommendations from the Iraq Study Group.

Third, the supplemental includes important funding for our military that was requested by the Pentagon.

This week marks an important milestone to begin a new direction in Iraq and begin to phase our troops home, and to bring about a regional solution for what is going on in the Middle East.

EQUIPMENT FOR OUR MILITARY

(Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, thanks to the long contributions of our soldiers and our veterans, America has amassed the most powerful military in the history of mankind. It is so powerful that we almost cannot imagine, we can almost imagine its resources are infinite, but they are not.

They are limited, and due to the ever-expanding, ever-deteriorating war in Iraq, they are stretched dangerously thin. Our soldiers and our families, they will never complain, and that is why we must speak for them. We must ask, no, we must demand, that they have the equipment, the training and the support that they need to succeed, and today they do not.

Since the Iraq war began in 2003, the Army has lost nearly 2,000 wheeled vehicles and more than 100 armored vehicles. Almost half of the U.S. Army's

entire supply of ground equipment is now deployed in the Middle East. The constant demands of combat and the treacherous terrain are wearing out equipment at up to nine times the usual rate.

America's military is overburdened, and now our Nation must seriously discuss how to best deploy our depleted forces against the dangers of our day.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In response to one of the earlier 1-minute speeches, the Chair must note that Members should direct remarks in debate to the Chair and not to the President.

GULF COAST HURRICANE HOUSING RECOVERY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 254 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1227.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1227) to assist in the provision of affordable housing to low-income families affected by Hurricane Katrina, with Mr. CARDOZA (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, March 20, 2007, amendment No. 53 printed in part B of House Report 110-53 by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), as modified, had been disposed of.

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AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. NEUGEBAUER

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part B of House Report 110-53.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 6 offered by Mr. NEUGEBAUER:

Strike section 306 (relating to transfer of DVP vouchers to voucher program).

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 254, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) and a Member opposed each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, this is a pretty simple and straightforward amendment. It just simply just strikes section 306 from this bill.

What we do in this legislation already is we extend many of the vouchers for the disaster voucher program. But what we are trying to do in this bill is not only just say we want to extend them, but that we want to make them permanent.

Actually, this is not the place to debate whether we need to add additional vouchers to the voucher section 8 program. One of the concerns I have about this is that the scoring on this is an additional authorization of \$735 million, nearly three-quarters of \$1 billion. We are not opposed to debating whether we need to add additional vouchers or change the formula in the future, but this is not the place to do that.

What I said yesterday and continue to say is we are using these disaster programs to push forward things that other people have been working on in other agendas and trying to do this on the backs of the people that have suffered a great disaster.

One of the things I want to go back to is the fact that we stated yesterday that it's not like this Congress has not responded to the people in Louisiana and Mississippi; \$110 billion has been authorized by this Congress for the disaster relief, and \$116.7 billion in CDBG money has been provided to give flexibility for the housing needs of the people in this area.

When we go back to the city of New Orleans itself prior to the hurricane, we had 7,000 public housing units in New Orleans, and 2,000 of those were already scheduled to be torn down, and 5,100 were online, and not all of those occupied. Now approximately 2,000 units already have been repaired, 1,200 have been returned.

Ten billion dollars has been allocated to the Road Home Program in Louisiana. Let me repeat that, \$10.5 billion authorized, \$300 million spent, a full 3 months after the hurricane.

The problem making these vouchers permanent is we are giving preference to folks that are living in communities where other people have been in line. One of the things that I think there is a misconception on is we have talked the last few days about what is going on in New Orleans and what the future is. In 2019 or thereabouts, New Orleans will celebrate its 300th anniversary. For 300 years, that community has been building to what it was pre-Katrina.

There is some misconception in the next 6 months by extending some of these programs and moving forward that all of a sudden everything is going to be back to normal in New Orleans. That is not going to be the truth.

What we need to do is begin to build the housing back, letting that go forward. I know that yesterday, the distinguished chairman said, well, the reason we have to go back and get the units back in order is so that is not keeping them from building new units. In fact, it is. The fact is, we can't tear down some of those units. That is the very land that we are talking about

going back and reusing. It doesn't make sense to me to go back and rebuild all of these units or remodel them, only to come back eventually and have to tear them down so that we can do the new planned communities.

We should go back to the basic tenets of this bill. The basic tenets of this bill was to hopefully get off high center those few glitches that, quote, the leadership in New Orleans and Louisiana say is keeping them from moving their reconstruction forward. It hasn't stopped the people in Mississippi, but for whatever reason, it has stopped the people in Louisiana and moved forward.

Mr. Chairman, we should not extend permanently these vouchers. This is not the form for that. It's not appropriate, it's not fiscally responsible for us to do that. We have extended those vouchers to meet the current needs of some of the folks. We really don't even know how much people will think about returning. But one of the things about making these vouchers permanent, I believe you will ensure that some of these people don't return because many of them have moved on to other places.

Now, we are saying we are going to make your vouchers permanent. We are going to put you in front of people that have been in those communities for a number of years and have been waiting in line to be eligible for this very assistance.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman from Texas once again referred to an earlier amendment from yesterday, but trying to understand this particular amendment has nothing to do with whether you construct or destruct or replace public housing. What this says is the following: There were people who were living in the gulf area who were receiving some form of assistance under HUD programs. Some of them lived in public housing, some of them were in vouchers, some of them were living in subsidized housing for the elderly and the disabled. The places where they were living were washed away in the most literal, physical sense.

We all agree that we have not yet, in the gulf area, replaced that housing. It's true there have been slowdowns, for instance, in Road Home money in New Orleans. But in Mississippi earlier this year, the Oreck Vacuum Company, which to its credit had tried to help the people in the gulf by reopening a factory that the company had in the gulf, shut the factory down because, they explained, the shortage of housing made it impossible for them to recruit