

And that's just the way it is.

IRAQ TIMETABLE AND FUNDING

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

Mr. McNERNEY. Madam Speaker, this Congress remains committed to forging a new direction in Iraq. Overwhelmingly, the American people support our plan to establish important benchmarks and a responsible timetable to redeploy the troops.

Yet, the President has threatened to veto our legislation, even though it ensures our troops have everything they need, and for our veterans when they return home. However, just last week, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said, and I quote: The debate in Congress has been helpful in demonstrating to the Iraqis that American patience is limited.

Mr. Gates went on to say that the strong feelings expressed in the Congress about the timetable probably has had a positive impact on communicating to the Iraqis that this is not an open-ended commitment. To ensure that the Iraqis step up and take control of their own country, we must continue to demonstrate that the American people will not stand for an open-ended commitment of American resources or personnel.

□ 1215

INTERNATIONAL SOLID WASTE IMPORTATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT

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

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, since 1992, Michigan has not been able to control the millions of tons of trash entering our State from Canada, and the problem continues. Every day, over 400 trucks from Canada dump trash into our State. These trucks come barreling across the border without inspection and examination, raising a viable national security threat.

At this time, our State government has almost no say in whether or not Michigan should accept the over 4 million tons of trash and hazardous waste from Canada every year. Michigan instituted laws banning Canadian trash in 1988, but the Supreme Court struck down these laws a mere 4 years later and ruled that Congress has not granted such authority to our State.

For too long, Michigan has had its hands tied by the Federal Government, and it is time to let the decisions about the integrity and the safety of our land be made by those who inhabit the land. As a proud cosponsor of H.R. 518, I urge my colleagues to support the International Solid Waste Importation and Management Act and empower Michigan to make certain the beauty and safety of our land remains intact for generations of Michiganders to enjoy in the future.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS LOOK TO COVER SOME OF OUR NATION'S UNINSURED BY EXPANDING SCHIP PROGRAM

(Ms. HOOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HOOLEY. Madam Speaker, last month the Democratic Congress showed the commitment to expanding health care coverage to millions of children who are currently uninsured. In our budget for the upcoming fiscal year, we included a \$50 billion funding increase for the SCHIP program so that we can provide health to millions of additional children.

After SCHIP was created 10 years ago, the number of uninsured children began to fall every year. But last year, for the first time since 1998, the number of uninsured actually went up.

As we recognize Cover the Uninsured Week, it is important to highlight the growing number of families without access to affordable health insurance and the need for this Congress to strengthen SCHIP now. For 6 long years, this problem of the growing number of uninsured has been ignored. This new Democratic Congress will not ignore the problem. We are committed to expanding health insurance to millions of children who need insurance, and our budget gives us the opportunity to achieve this worthy goal this year.

REJECT THE IRAQ EMERGENCY FUNDING BILL

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, this week the House will once again take up an Iraq emergency funding bill which is seriously flawed and should be rejected.

Having 535 politicians attempt to micromanage the war on terror from atop Capitol Hill is a recipe for disaster. This Congress should not be telegraphing our war strategy to the enemy and setting arbitrary timetables for withdrawal, nor should we be tying the hands of our Commander in Chief and military leaders on the ground.

Iraq has become a central battlefield on the war on terror, not because we say so, but because the terrorists themselves have declared Iraq to be the central front for their global jihad. Therefore, it is vital that we win the war and achieve success in Iraq. To do so, this Congress must reject efforts to micromanage the war and give the Iraqi new strategy opportunity to succeed.

HONORING MR. DAVID HALBERSTAM

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, yesterday a great American died, David

Halberstam. We had a mutual friend, and through that I got to know Mr. Halberstam. He chronicled and wrote and reported the events of the last half of the 20th century. He saw truth, he spoke truth, and he wrote truth; and he gained his first fame at the age of 30 when he received a Pulitzer Prize for reporting about a quagmire known as Vietnam, a misdirection of American energies in foreign policies that led us to lose over 30,000 lives and many casualties in a great blunder under American foreign policy. We have a similar situation today in Iraq, another mistaken folly, and lives are being lost.

Madam Speaker, I would hope that we could speak truth to power, and that power would know that the Congress is giving the President a bill to support the troops, to bring the troops home and support them by seeing that they are not put in harm's way, and that the President will support the bill that the Congress gives him.

We have lost a great leader in Mr. Halberstam, and may the truth and knowledge that he brought to this country be imbued in this House and in executive leadership where another politician along with the 535 here serve.

PASS A CLEAN BILL

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, the liberal leadership of this Congress put the lives of our soldiers in the field in a very difficult, very difficult position. When they passed the supplemental bill earlier this month, they loaded it up with pork. Actually, the bill sounds more like a shopping list. There is money for spinach and for fish and for peanut storage. A lot of pork, and it is something that does not do a service to our military.

But what the leadership did was to make an offer that couldn't be refused to a lot of Members. They claim to support the military, but in the bill what they are doing is tying the hands of the military by inserting a timetable for withdrawal and taking the power away from the commanders in the field. Majority Senate leader HARRY REID didn't help when he considered that the war was lost. That is the message that he is sending to our troops and to the terrorists alike, that everybody ought to give up.

American citizens need to ask themselves, is defeat an option? What would happen if we were to leave?

What we need to do is let the soldiers do their jobs, us do ours, pass a clean bill, and send it to the President.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings

today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

PRESERVATION APPROVAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1675) to suspend the requirements of the Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding electronic filing of previous participation certificates and regarding filing of such certificates with respect to certain low-income housing investors.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1675

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Preservation Approval Process Improvement Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. SUSPENSION OF ELECTRONIC FILING REQUIREMENT.

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall—

(1) suspend mandatory processing of Previous Participation Certificates (form HUD-2530) under the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Automated Partners Performance System (APPS) and permit paper filings of such certificates until such time that the Secretary—

(A) revises the December 2006 draft proposed regulations under subpart H of part 200 of title 24, Code of Federal Regulations, to eliminate the unnecessary burdens and disincentives for program participants; and

(B) submits such revised draft proposed regulations to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate for review by such Committees; and

(2) suspend immediately all filing requirements under the Previous Participation Certificate process with respect to limited liability corporate investors who own or expect to own an interest in entities which are allowed or are expected to be allowed low-income housing tax credits under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The Preservation Approval Process Improvement Act of 2007, introduced by

myself and Representative GILLMOR, was recently reported out of the Committee on Financial Services without objection, and I am pleased it is being given consideration on the House floor today. In addition to expressing my appreciation to Chairman FRANK, Ranking Member BACHUS, and Housing Subcommittee Chairwoman WATERS, I would especially like to thank my colleague from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR) in moving this bill forward and his efforts to address the regulatory barriers impacting the investment in affordable housing.

I am also very appreciative of the expert assistance provided by the House Financial Services Committee staff, including Jeff Riley and Cindy Chetti, who have been working on this issue for more than 1½ years.

H.R. 1675 will reduce burdens caused by HUD's unnecessarily complex regulation of its previous participation reporting requirements, known as the 2530 process.

Written many years ago when small mom-and-pop companies were investing in affordable housing, HUD's regulations governing the 2530 process are no longer in sync with the type of real estate transactions being conducted today. As a result, when applied to the more typical investor of today, these regulations impose huge administrative and regulatory hurdles. The application of these cumbersome regulations was made worse last summer when HUD automated the 2530 process using an electronic system known as APPS. In addition to being difficult to navigate, the APPS system experiences technical difficulties almost daily and has led to a number of security breaches involving personal data.

As a result, H.R. 1675 will suspend the requirement that 2530 filings be done through HUD's electronic APPS system. Participants may choose to continue to use APPS, but HUD must permit other participants to submit 2530 paper filings. The suspension of HUD's requirement that all filings be done through APPS will continue until HUD revises the 2530 rules to eliminate unnecessary burdens and disincentives for all participants. The revised regulations are to be submitted to the Committee on Financial Services as well as to the Senate Banking Committee for review.

Further, the bill requires the HUD Secretary to immediately suspend all filing requirements under the previous participation process for limited liability corporate investors owning an interest in entities that receive low-income housing tax credits. Limited liability corporate investors have no operational control over properties and pose no risk to the Department. The investors are simply providing much needed capital to build affordable housing for low-income Americans, and such investment should not be inadvertently discouraged by outdated, burdensome regulations.

I submit for printing in the RECORD a letter addressed to Chairman FRANK

and Representative BACHUS from nearly 30 organizations endorsing this legislation, including the National Association of Realtors, National Multi-Housing Council, the National Association of State and Local Equity Funds, and many more.

It is time for us to bring a common-sense approach to affordable housing. In passing this bill we will be taking an important step toward encouraging investment in such housing options and reducing unnecessary regulatory roadblocks.

MARCH 27, 2007.

Hon. BARNEY FRANK,
Chairman, House Committee on Financial Services, Washington, DC.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Financial Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR SIRs: We are writing to express our support for H.R. 1675, the Preservation Approval Process Improvement Act of 2007, introduced by Congresswoman BEAN and Congressman GILLMOR on March 26, 2007. This legislation is very important to ensuring continued investment in safe, affordable rental housing.

The Preservation Approval Process Improvement Act will reduce unnecessary and onerous HUD filing requirements for purposes of participating in HUD programs. The current requirements, under the HUD 2530 filing process, are discouraging investment in affordable housing.

HUD's current 2530 Previous Participation Review process is intended as a risk assessment tool, but has, in fact, been a barrier to housing development and preservation. The current regulations and the accompanying electronic system that processes 2530 submissions do not take into account the complexities of today's real estate transactions. The reporting requirements are unduly burdensome and offer no additional benefit to HUD.

Presently, investors who represent more than half of the investment in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program have elected not to invest in HUD multifamily properties if such investment would subject them to the 2530 filing requirements. Investors have reduced their share of investments to below 25 percent in any property, or fund of properties, so as to not trigger the unduly burdensome requirements.

With the assistance of many members of the House Committee on Financial Services, we have been working with HUD for more than a year to try to resolve this issue. The Preservation Approval Process Improvement Act is a significant step toward reducing filing burdens and requires immediate useful action from HUD, whose previous response has been contrary to the goals of encouraging investment in affordable rental housing.

Our organizations strongly support this legislation to reduce filing burdens for, and encourage investment in, affordable rental housing. Please contact Francine E. Friedman, Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition, 202-955-1536, or Denise B. Muha, National Leased Housing Association, 202-785-8888, with any questions or concerns.

Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
Bank of America
Barker Management Incorporated
Boston Capital Corporation
California Council for Affordable Housing
California Housing Partnership Corporation
CharterMac Capital LLC
Council for Rural Housing and Development
G.G. MacDonald Companies