

resolution (H. Res. 332) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1591) making energy supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 96th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

On March 24, 1915, 300 Armenian leaders were rounded up and deported and killed under the orders from the young Turk Government. And so began the genocide that lasted for 7 years, resulting in an estimated over 1.5 million Armenian deaths. To this day, unfortunately, the Turkish Government denies that this occurred.

Ladies and gentlemen, Members of the House, I just returned from Darfur with a group of our colleagues 2 weeks ago. Over 450,000 people have been killed and millions displaced in Darfur; yet government officials claim there is no genocide, that the situation is overblown.

Yesterday Rwanda, today Darfur. And we can remember the Holocaust. Clearly, silence is genocide's best ally. It is time that the Congress end this silence and pass the Armenian genocide resolution. The message will be clear: the United States of America will never forget and never stand for those who support genocide.

□ 1915

PROTECT IMPORTANT TAX RELIEF

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to express my concern that Democrats will not extend tax relief measures critical to the American people. Residents in my State are at risk. Floridians currently have the ability to deduct their sales tax from their Federal tax returns. However, this deduction expires after 2007.

As Democrats set the agenda for the coming year, there is talk of offsetting increases in Federal spending by raising taxes for millions of Americans. Frankly, I worry that they will use this important provision to pay for additional spending.

Listen up America: Congress needs to make sure that taxpayers do not face unnecessary tax increases. I appeal to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that our constituents can keep more of their hard-earned money.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee). 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.

DO NOT FORGET IMPRISONED TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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. Mr. Speaker, today is the 98th day since a great injustice took place in this country. On January 17, 2007, two U.S. Border Patrol agents entered Federal prison to begin serving 11 and 12 year sentences respectively.

Agents Compean and Ramos were convicted last spring for shooting a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our border into Texas. These agents never should have been prosecuted, yet the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted the agents and granted immunity to the drug smuggler, who claimed he was unarmed. The illegal drug smuggler received full medical care in El Paso, Texas, was permitted to return to Mexico, and is suing the Border Patrol for \$5 million for violating his civil rights.

Mr. Speaker, he is not an American citizen. He is a criminal.

The same U.S. Attorney's Office in western Texas also prosecuted another law enforcement officer, Deputy Sheriff Gilmer Hernandez, who was doing his job to protect the American people. This makes no sense. Citizens across this country and many of us in Congress want to know why does the Federal prosecutor in western Texas choose to go after law enforcement officers while protecting illegal aliens who commit crimes.

The American people have not forgotten agents Ramos and Compean, who should never have been sentenced to jail. Instead, they should be commended for trying to protect the American people. I encourage citizens across this country to continue calling the White House and asking the President to use his authority to immediately pardon these two heroes.

Many of us in Congress are concerned about the Federal prosecutor in this case and the justification for the criminal charges brought against these agents. Senate Judiciary chairman PATRICK LEAHY has already approved Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN's request for an investigation of this case; and just last week in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Attorney General Gonzales responded to Senator JOHN CORNYN's call for an oversight hearing by promising to fully cooperate.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that the House, under the leadership of House

Judiciary chairman JOHN CONYERS, will soon hold hearings to look into this injustice.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the House will continue to encourage the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. CONYERS, to look into this case, and I ask the American people to continue to call the White House and to complain about this injustice.

MOURNING THE PASSING OF DAVID HALBERSTAM

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this Nation lost one of its most gifted journalists and authors in a car accident in California, David Halberstam.

As a reporter for The New York Times, his coverage of the Vietnam War earned him a Pulitzer Prize and the enduring respect of his colleagues. This man embodied the spirit of a thoughtful, free, and independent press.

President Kennedy was so frustrated by the truth of his reporting on Vietnam that he once called The New York Times and demanded David be fired. The New York Times did not back down, and neither did David. He was labeled unpatriotic because the stories he wrote did not flatter the administration. But he reported what he saw, regardless of the consequences. Now we see the value of his great insight in the history of that conflict.

I have often said that without the members of the press, the civil rights movement would have been like a bird without wings. In David's reporting at the Nashville Tennessee and later in his book on the Nashville student movement, called "The Children," he delivered the message of injustice in the South.

We trusted David. We knew that he was determined to report the truth. We trusted that he would get the story right, and we believed he would be fair. He was deeply moved and affected by the dizzy dint, the commitment and the dedication of the young people in the Nashville student movement because they were prepared to face violence with non-violence and peace.

I feel that we have lost one of the greatest minds in America, who understood the deepest ramification of violence and war. I only wish that he were here today for Members of this body to consult as we try to find answers in Iraq.

David was a sympathetic referee in the cause of civil rights and social justice. He helped convince the Nation that the price of segregation and racial discrimination was too high. He used his pad and his pen to answer the calling of his conscience. He stood up for what he believed to be right.

This Nation will always be indebted to him and people like him, who are

willing to speak the truth regardless of the consequences.

I have known David for almost 50 years. In him the Nation has lost one of its prolific writers, but I feel like I have lost a very good friend. I feel like I have lost a companion in the struggle for civil rights and social justice in America.

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

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

PREDATORY LENDING PRACTICES IN THE SUBPRIME MORTGAGE INDUSTRY

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern with regard to predatory lending practices in the subprime mortgage industry and to emphasize the need for Congress to act swiftly in addressing this critical issue.

Owning a home is an essential component of the American Dream. Simply put, homeownership has the power to transform lives. I still remember the day 45 years ago when my family first moved into our own home. I was only 10 years old, but I will never forget that momentous event.

Homeownership changed life for me and my seven brothers and sisters. We were able to go to better schools, and our family was able to build wealth. Over the years, my parents worked hard to make the mortgage payments every month, building equity, and eventually paying it off. My mother at 81 still lives in that house, mortgage-free. Because my parents invested in their home, my mother can now live out her final years in dignity and with a sense of security.

Every American family deserves the benefits of homeownership that transformed my life. That is why I am outraged by reports of predatory lending practices in the subprime mortgage industry and the upsurge in foreclosures that have occurred as a result thereof.

The national foreclosure rate has been increasing at an alarming rate. According to RealtyTrac, a realty research firm, foreclosures increased by 42 percent from 2005 to 2006, to 1.2 million. That translates into one foreclosure for every 92 households.

Much has been made of the impact these foreclosures will have on Wall Street. However, I am equally concerned with the impact that they will have on the hundreds of thousands of Americans who are losing their homes.

Increasing foreclosures are directly related to the subprime mortgage industry, which has grown from less than

8 percent of the total mortgage market in 2001 to approximately 20 percent of the market today. Subprime mortgages, which target borrowers with low credit scores, often cost more than prime mortgages, and include terms that allow payments to balloon or grow exponentially over time.

Predatory lending practices are common in the subprime mortgage industry, where borrowers are more likely to either have limited options available to them or be unaware of their options. Disturbingly, African Americans and Latinos are more likely to get higher rates than white borrowers with the same qualifications, and borrowers over the age of 65 have five times the odds of receiving a subprime loan than younger borrowers.

This trend is illustrated in the congressional district that I represent, the Seventh Congressional District of Maryland.

If you look at these maps, it is clear. In the map on the left, the red indicates the concentration of low-income African American and Latino populations. In the map on the right, the red area is the highest concentration of subprime loans.

Note that the two areas are nearly identical, indicating that subprime loans in the Seventh District are more likely to be given to African Americans and Latinos and lower-income people. This is simply unconscionable. Somebody is making big bucks off of vulnerable families in my district who are losing their homes. For those of us who remember redlining, this is simply more of the same. We must end discrimination in lending practices now.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by urging my colleagues to continue to work on this issue. Today I introduced a resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that issues related to the subprime market must be addressed.

Specifically, the legislation identifies the following goals for reform: strengthening Federal regulations, banning unfair and deceptive practices, requiring lenders to establish a borrower's ability to pay, increasing the disclosure of alternative mortgage products, reducing or eliminating the prepayment penalty, eliminating mandatory arbitration, identifying brokers and lenders with high rates of foreclosure, and mandating preloan counseling.

As a member of the Baltimore Home Ownership Preservation Coalition and the Joint Economic Committee, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution and join with our chairman of the Committee on Financial Services, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), in addressing this critical issue.

Finally, I want to thank all of my colleagues who have come to the floor this evening to address this issue.

□ 1930

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman 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 SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PREDATORY LENDING

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, American families are hardworking, good people and deserve financial security. American families do not deserve to have their physical, emotional and financial security compromised by predatory lending practices engaged in by the subprime mortgage industry.

Subprime mortgage lending includes a wide range of loan products. What these loans have in common is they are marketed to hardworking people made vulnerable by credit scores that disqualify them from traditional loans, or who have limited credit history, thereby limiting their borrowing power.

Subprime lending is associated with significantly higher levels of foreclosure than prime lending. Subprime lenders make excessive mortgage loans of up to \$1 million, and often the borrower can obtain "cash out" refinancing. Additionally, subprime lenders offer 100 percent financing to those with poor or limited credit.

Subprime lenders are known for their forceful marketing techniques which have included "stated income" loans in which the borrower is not required to provide documentation. This places American families in danger of borrowing a substantially greater amount than what is reasonably affordable and places them in danger of being unable to meet their mortgage payments.

These predatory lending practices are forcing large numbers of American families into foreclosure. Said another way, American families are losing their homes, homes they worked hard for. They are enduring undue stress and emotional instability when confronted with this prospect.

In 2002, approximately 2.2 million American families who had borrowed money from a subprime lender had either lost their home to foreclosure or were thought to be in danger of foreclosure. The Center for Responsible Lending conducted a study in which they found that millions of American households will lose their homes and as much as \$164 billion due to foreclosures in the subprime market.

In Ohio, my home State, Ohio leads the Nation in the rate of foreclosure.