

major cities all across America. In fact, two-thirds of the subprime loans are used in non-urban areas as well.

Today's working families are being challenged in so many ways. While wages stay flat or decline, we have seen people's gas prices and health care costs continue to soar. It's time that our working families finally get the relief they deserve, and taking on predatory lenders has to be a part of the solution.

As a member of the Senate, as I said, I joined colleagues to work on Ohio's predatory lending laws. I work on this important issue here in Washington also, because I believe it's an important one for the people of this country.

One of the things I did was to take a first step in introducing House Resolution 1723. It's a bill that I introduced that targets FHA home loans. It clearly outlines unacceptable practices that could be used in an attempt to influence an appraisal on a home. It also puts in place a blind draw, a system that would randomly select the appraiser, rather than having loan companies have favorites that they use to make unrealistic appraisals.

Ensuring that homes are appraised fairly is an important piece of the puzzle. Many borrowers cannot refinance or sell to avoid defaulting because their property is not worth what they owe on the home. Too often, the original mortgage is based on the inflated appraisal, and H.R. 1723 will keep that from happening when it comes to FHA loans.

Families across the Nation are now feeling the kind of pain that we in Ohio have suffered; 2.2 million subprime home loans made in recent years have already failed, or will in foreclosure. These foreclosures will cost homeowners as much as \$164 million, and that figure only begins to describe the cost to the families.

Our sons and daughters, our mothers and fathers, are losing their homes, and in the process they are losing their hold on the American dream. Our working families deserve real relief, not just empty words.

I urge this Congress to take a strong stand on predatory lending. We must make sure that Americans' dream of home ownership does not turn into a nightmare for even more families.

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#### SUBPRIME LENDING

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

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the best news for the American middle class is our home ownership rates. Wages are stagnant for the middle class. They are not keeping up with inflation. Health care costs just keep going up. Folks do not know what their health insurance is going to pay for until they get sick. They don't

know if their pension is really going to be there when it comes time for them to retire, or their employers take a quick dip in bankruptcy so they can short the promises they made to their employees.

Almost 70 percent of American families own their own homes. We heard Mr. CUMMINGS speak just a few minutes ago, powerfully, of what it meant to his family when he was 10 years old and they bought a home for the first time.

The deed to a home is the membership card in the middle class. For the middle class, the equity they build in their home becomes the bulk of their life savings. What they build by paying a mortgage faithfully month after month becomes the bulk of their life savings.

When they need to borrow money, when they have one of life's rainy days, when they want to send the kids to college, or someone in the family gets sick, or they lose their job or they go through a divorce, or they need to repair their homes or they get in over their head in credit card debt, they have to borrow money against their homes. Too often when they borrow money against their homes, they are having their trust betrayed.

Several Members tonight have talked about subprime lending as lending that goes to those who have problems with their credit. Some is, but more of it, more of it, has to do with who places it with which borrowers, which homeowners put their trust in the wrong people and have their trust betrayed. According to Freddie Mac, a quarter of mortgages, subprime mortgages, are made to people who qualified for prime loans, who didn't have problems with their credit, but they went to the wrong person and they had their trust betrayed.

Subprime loans, or predatory loans, take fees and costs that cannot be justified by the cost of the loan or the risks that are posed that the borrower will not make their payments. Those loans strip equity and steal the life savings of the borrower. Lenders even pay more to brokers who bring them loans where the borrower has agreed to pay more than what they qualified for based upon their own credit history and what they own of their home, their equity in their home.

They put borrowers in loans, in mortgages, they cannot possibly pay back. They will have to refinance again so they can flip the loan. They will have to come back again, often having to pay a prepayment penalty to get out of a bad loan so they can refinance again. They are teaser rates. They are only good for a couple, 3 years, and then the rates are adjusted.

For many borrowers, they can qualify for the teaser rate, but they can't possibly pay their monthly payment when it goes up by 50 percent or more, as happens too often. They refinance again, and every time they refinance, they lose more of their equity in their home. They lose more of their life savings.

People who are in the subprime market for as much as a decade, for as much as 10 years, they have an almost 1 in 3 chance of losing their home to foreclosure. When they lose their home to foreclosure, they lose their membership in the middle class. They fall back into poverty, probably for the rest of their lives.

I have introduced in the last two Congresses, with Mr. WATT from North Carolina, my colleague, and Mr. FRANK, the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, legislation that is based upon successful State laws that protect homeowners from those kinds of abuses, those kinds of predatory loans, and this has not prevented there being good availability of good mortgages, sound mortgages, mortgages that help folks build wealth, not steals their wealth from them.

We need to do a great deal more now to help the people who are facing foreclosure right now, who are facing losing their homes, who are facing falling from the middle class for the rest of their lives. Businesses can go into bankruptcy. They can have obligations, promises they made with their eyes wide open, written. But a middle-class homeowner cannot go into bankruptcy and have a mortgage rewritten, adjusted, mortgages that they entered when their trust was betrayed.

The American middle class needs someone to be on their side. They are facing an uncertain world. They are facing an insecure world where what they need to know is there for them, that they can own their home, that they can pay off their home and live out the balance of their lives in a home that is theirs outright. They need that certainty. They need to know health care is there. They need to know that their pension is there. They need someone on their side.

This Congress needs to be on their side.

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

(Mr. PALLONE 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ: THE VOICES OF AMERICA'S CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, like all of my colleagues, I have received thousands of e-mails, letters, faxes and

phone calls about the ongoing occupation of Iraq. So many of them are touching, and they are impassioned. They urge me, they call on me, and they even beg me to get the administration to bring our troops home, and to allow the Iraqis to restore the security of their Nation.

Last week I received a set of letters that stood out among all of them, from Ms. Rene King's students at Sheppard School in Santa Rosa, California. Most of the children are 9 through 13 years old, yet their thoughts are mature and beyond their age. In fact, their words speak so much truth, a truth which we can absolutely not ignore.

From Marcos, 10 years old, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? Because the people in Iraq aren't safe. Their villages and houses are destroyed. I do not like fighting."

From Arturo, 11 years old, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? There is a lot of killing, a lot of people have died. People want to get out of fighting. I feel sad when people die."

From Freddy, 11 years old, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? I do not like fighting and killing people. Some people are dead. Don't send my people, please. We don't like to fight all the people. The people are sad. We need to save money for poor people here in America. Ms. King (my teacher) is sad. Stop sending people into the war."

From Tony, 11 years old, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? There are a lot of sad and crying families. I feel sad in our country. I don't like when people are mad at our country. I do not feel safe and other people do not feel safe."

From Genaro, age 13, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? There is a lot of killing. More than 3,000 Americans have died. Stop sending people to the war. We need to save the money for poor people here in America."

From Yovany, age 12, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? There is a lot of killing. We need to save money for the poor people. More than 600,000 Iraqis have died. Please stop sending people to the war."

From Jose, 10 years old, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? The people of Iraq aren't safe in their villages, and houses are destroyed. More than 3,000 Americans have died. Please stop sending people to war."

From Tomas, age 9, "Can you please stop the war in Iraq? There is a lot of killing. A lot of people have died. More than 3,000 Americans have died. Families are being broken apart."

From Steven, age 12, "Can you stop the war, please? A lot of people have died. Please, I don't like wars. No one feels safe. If you keep sending soldiers, more people will be sad."

One student, Angelina, wrote directly to the President, and here is what she wrote. "I think you are making a big mistake. I like you, but your choices make me mad. You need to ask your people about war. I know these people said they will serve the Army. They

never said they wanted to die there. If you were ever able to run again, Mr. President, I would not vote for you. I wish I could say you are helping, but you are not. There is another way to handle things other than guns and bombs. I think you should be more like Martin Luther King, Jr., Mr. President. He thought there was another way to handle things than war. I think the United States needs a different President."

These words are honest, these words are true. If only more people listen to the children, the future of this Nation may be different. What a better world we could be living in.

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#### AMERICANS WITHOUT HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, the United States is the world's leading, industrial Nation. We are the wealthiest Nation in the world, and we are a country at the cutting edge of medicine and health care, leading the world in discovery of new medicines, treatments and methods of care.

Yet we are a Nation that, despite spending the most per capita on health care, has some of the highest rates of infant mortality, the lowest rates of life expectancy, and the highest proportion of uninsured, when compared to other industrialized nations. We are a Nation where nearly 45 million Americans do not have health insurance. We are a Nation where over one-half of all uninsured are adults working full time, and we are a Nation where 9 million children are without health coverage.

Too many Americans, too many hardworking families, too many children, are without care and they are suffering the consequences. Democrats believe something must be done, and Democrats will lead our Nation in a new direction. We have solutions to drive down the cost of care. We have a plan to expand health coverage opportunities for working families, for small businesses, and for the self-employed. We understand that we must provide Americans with access to affordable health care, and we will start with America's children.

America's uninsured children are twice as likely to forego needed care. They are more likely to use costly emergency services for routine care, and they are more likely to miss school and to underperform, compared to their peers who have health coverage. America's uninsured children come from working families. Six million children have at least one parent who works full time.

America's population of uninsured children is growing. Last year, for the first time since 1998, the number of uninsured children in our country has in-

creased. This trend is alarming, it is unacceptable, and it cannot continue.

That is why Democrats are committed to continuing and expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which is commonly known as SCHIP, by reauthorizing this initiative and dedicating an additional \$50 billion over the next 5 years so that we can expand coverage to qualified families. This is a significant and wise investment, and it demonstrates that we as a Nation understand why health coverage matters for families, for the healthy development of children, and for the continued economic competitiveness of our Nation.

More than 14 years ago, the Pennsylvania State legislature enacted legislation establishing one of the Nation's first state-supported public/private children's health insurance initiatives for children of working families. I authored this proposal and I championed its enactment. This is one of my proudest accomplishments in my years of public service. I am proud of this effort not only because it led to a dramatic increase in the access to care for Pennsylvania's children, but also because it inspired Federal action.

Five years after Pennsylvania enacted its CHIP program, the U.S. Congress recognized that providing America's children health coverage is one of the most cost-effective worthwhile investments we can use as a Nation. So using Pennsylvania's law as a model, we enacted SCHIP. SCHIP has been an unqualified success, which is why the Democratic-led Congress wants to significantly strengthen it, and Governors like Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania want to expand it. Unfortunately, President Bush does not.

The President's budget did not include funding to even maintain coverage for those children already enrolled in SCHIP. It would also severely restrict those children who qualify for SCHIP. At a time when there is broad bipartisan support for moving forward and expanding our efforts to cover more children, sadly the President wants to move us backwards and cover fewer children.

Mr. Speaker, every child in America deserves access to health care. Our children deserve access to primary doctors who will help make sure that they enter school healthy and ready to learn, and that their hardworking parents deserve the ability to afford the insurance that provides for their care.

We have a plan to insure all of America's children. I look forward to working with my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, to enact this top priority for this Democratic Congress and for America's families.

#### HEALTH CARE UNINSURED AWARENESS WEEK

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