

IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL BILL

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

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with a quote from Coretta Scott King: "Struggle is a never ending process. Freedom is never really won. You earn it and win it every generation."

I rise today to talk about one of America's priorities in the emergency supplemental appropriation bill, and that is to fulfill the promise to help rebuild Louisiana and Mississippi from Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

In August of 2005, the American people saw something that was hard to believe. They saw a U.S. government that was incompetent, a government that was inept, and a government that did not care about its open people.

Unfortunately, 2 days ago, President Bush vetoed the emergency supplemental bill and showed the American people that things haven't changed. After the President vetoed the bill, he had the audacity to make the following statement: "... the bill is loaded with billions of dollars in non-emergency spending that has nothing to do with fighting the war on terror. Congress should debate these spending measures on their own merits—and not as a part of an emergency funding bill for our troops."

Only two other people in the country believe that we are winning the war in Iraq, by the way. That's President Bush and Vice President CHENEY. The cheese stands alone. The \$1.3 billion for east and west bank levee protection and coastal protection isn't pork. The \$30 million for K-12 education assistance has been debated and has been deemed essential.

The \$25 billion for small business disaster loans will help rebuild; the \$80 million for HUD rental assistance will bring people back home; the \$4.3 billion for FEMA disaster recovery grants is an emergency for our fellow Americans in Louisiana and Mississippi who have been waiting 18 months for you to keep your promise to rebuild Louisiana and Mississippi.

Mr. President, you were wrong to veto this bill. I have been to New Orleans seven times and going back in June. Sadly, every time I look there, it look looks like a war zone. It is unbelievable that 18 months have passed and the most basic human needs have not yet been met; 18 months later, and residents are not able to move back. There is still debris everywhere, and people are without electricity 18 months later. The roads are not passable, no clean running water, not enough schools and teachers; 18 months later and no street signs, toxic fumes in the air and not enough police; 18 months later, this is unacceptable.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle made the statement over and over again about how we should pass a

clean bill. Well, I have been elected 25 years, and I have never seen a clean bill yet. If the President or my Republican colleagues would have done their job 18 months ago, we wouldn't need to have these extra funds in the supplemental bill. It is shameful that the very people who write the checks and pay the taxes in our cities are not given the money they deserve.

I remember the President's press conference in Jefferson Square in New Orleans and his promise to rebuild. His veto showed the American people once again that he has no intention of living up to his promise.

The Democratic majority has done their job. They passed this bill. Sadly, the residents of Louisiana and Mississippi will have to keep waiting on you to remember your promise. The good citizens of Louisiana and Mississippi demand good government. This is responding to the caring, and it is also an example of not just talking the talk, but walking the walk.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I don't have a vote in the full House, but if I did, I would have voted for the supplemental and for the override of the President's veto. So I am proud that a bipartisan majority voted on my behalf and on behalf of the American public, who do not support the war in Iraq, do not support the surge, and want to see a clear effort to extricate this country from an internal civil war and to bring our troops home.

It is clear to me that, despite the glossed over reports, the surge has done nothing but to cause one of the highest casualty rates in the month that just ended. Although there is no good option, the problems will continue for some time whether we go or leave. It is clear that the Iraqis want us out. It is clear that we lose or disable our own soldiers every day, and that innocent Iraqis are also injured every day that we stay. So the only moral choice is the one embodied in the supplemental and the two votes that have been taken.

I reject the way this supplemental has been characterized. If you listen to the news media, you would think that the nonIraq war items in the supplemental were nothing but pork, used to induce Members to vote on this bill. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In addition to giving the President what he asked for, we have made sure that a number of emergency domestic issues are also addressed. That is what supplementals are for. But let's start with the war, because in addition to fully funding the needs of troops, this bill contains \$450 million for a very important and very much needed post-traumatic stress disorder counseling for our men and women when they come home to help them transition and to help them resume normal lives after being immersed in the caldron of war. We owe it to our soldiers and their families, having borne the bankrupt of this war, to have the help they need when they return.

Traumatic brain injury has been called the signature wound of this war, especially if so many of our soldiers suffer from it after exposure to bomb blast and IEDs. This supplemental includes \$450 million for research into the best treatment and care for those who have to be hospitalized and rehabilitated because of these injuries.

We were all horrified when the problems at the Walter Reed Medical Center and other veterans facilities across the country were exposed; \$20 million is included in the supplemental to address this time-honored facility that is the forefront of care for our war-wounded veterans. There is another \$100 million to ensure that our military, National Guard and Reserve members get timely health care, including mental health care. Once again, we owe it to them to respond with the best possible care that we can give.

This bill also addresses the shamefully long lingering needs from one of the biggest and most tragic domestic crises of our time, when Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf in 2005, much was promised to those who were left homeless and uprooted in its wake. But, unfortunately, until this bill, not enough has been done. Included in the supplemental is \$1.3 billion for levee protection and coastal system restoration to make them structurally and environmentally safer so that New Orleanians and other gulf residents can resume their lives.

After Katrina schools were devastated. Teachers left. In order for people to move back home, they need to be assured that there will be renewed and revitalized schools for their children's education. The supplemental provides \$30 million for K-12 education to bring those schools back and for recruitment to bring back teachers and other educational professionals back to the city. Some of our universities, like Southern and Dillard, were also damaged by the

storm of the century. There is \$30 million requested in that supplemental to assist them.

The health, housing, small business and community development needs of the gulf are also finally heard and responded to in this measure, with a provision for community disaster loan forgiveness to assist local governments in meeting the needs of their displaced and devastated people.

There is also \$4.3 billion of FEMA disaster recovery grants and a social services block grant extension; \$25 million for small business disaster loans, and \$80 billion for HUD tenant-based rental assistance.

In the area of health care, two great needs are addressed in this bill with \$1 billion to purchase vaccines, emergency vaccines, that would be needed to protect this country in the case of a global flu pandemic; and another \$750 million to make sure that the children's health insurance programs, which cover millions of children in 14 States and some of the territories, will continue uninterrupted.

These are just some of the important areas funded in this bill, and it's why it must go forward. If we don't do it in this supplemental, a measure that is reserved for critical issues like these, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to get them done at all.

The American people are looking at us and wondering if their priorities are our priorities. This legislation demonstrates that we not only know what the priorities are, but that we are ready to stand with them and act on the issues they have told us are important to them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

A BREAK IN THE PURSUIT OF PEACE

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, today the Associated Press reported that in the middle of the Iraq civil war, their parliament will be taking a 2-month break starting in July. While our troops are dying, while they are being wounded, while they are trying to provide security to the Iraqi people, the Iraqi leadership is planning to take 2 months off.

I hope that this does not mean that the Iraqis are giving up on providing a peaceful resolution to this conflict. If anything, the parliament should be re-dedicating themselves to providing security and hope to the Iraqi people, not taking a break, not letting any hope

for a peaceful resolution slip through their fingers.

Our best hope for peace in the region, actually, will have to come through hard work, through negotiations, through constant attention. Every day we turn a blind eye to the real situation on the ground in Iraq, more people die, more American troops, more Iraqi civilians die. I don't know about anyone else, but this is simply unacceptable to me.

The American people have said again, and they have said again, that they want our troops out of Iraq. This administration must demand that the Iraqi leaders stay in town, stay at the table, and not go on vacation.

After all, how can we stand down if the Iraqis aren't there to stand up?

This is a very serious problem, Mr. Speaker. How can we have a partnership with the Iraqi people, as our administration has promised, a partnership that they say is working to bring peace in Iraq, if half of that partnership goes on vacation?

My position has remained the same from the very beginning: We need to fully fund the withdrawal from Iraq. We need to bring our troops and military contractors home. We need to provide real and reliable health care to our returning troops. We need to work with the international community to provide for a dependable and safe future for the Iraqi people.

The way to bring peace to Iraq is not through building walls around neighborhoods, creating walled-in villages, breaking up lives and breaking up families. The way to bring peace to Iraq is to give sovereignty to the Iraqi people and to have a surge of peaceful negotiations. The only way to bring about peace is to bring our troops home, to empower the Iraqi people to build a future based on hope and equality.

And I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if not now, when?

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THE PRESIDENT CUT FUNDING FROM THE TROOPS

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment and outrage at President Bush's veto of the Iraq War supplemental bill. By vetoing this bill, the President has vetoed the will of the American people, and it is the President who is denying funding for our troops.

The President has vetoed a responsible funding bill for the troops that would have provided more funding for our troops and military readiness than the President requested. The President rejected a bill that reflects the will of the American people to wind down this war. The American people sent this message very strongly last November.

By vetoing this bill, Mr. Speaker, President Bush vetoed: One, fully funding our troops, and providing \$4 billion more than the President requested; honoring our veterans by providing \$1.8 billion more for veterans health care. Is \$900 million for treating traumatic brain injury pork? Is \$20 million to repair facilities at Walter Reed pork?

By vetoing this bill, the President has vetoed accountability for the Iraqi Government, and he has vetoed his own benchmarks that he laid out January 10 in his speech to the Nation. Let me quote from that speech.

"A successful strategy for Iraq goes beyond military operations. Ordinary Iraqi citizens must see that military operations are accompanied by visible improvements in their neighborhoods and communities. So America will hold the Iraqi Government to the benchmarks it has announced.

"To establish its authority, the Iraqi Government plans to take responsibility for security over Iraq's provinces by November. To give every Iraqi citizen a stake in the country's economy, Iraq will pass legislation to share oil revenues.

"To empower local leaders, Iraqis plan to hold provincial elections next year and allow more Iraqis to re-enter their nation's political light, the government will reform de-Baathification laws and establish a fair process for considering amendments to Iraq's Constitution. America will change our approach to help the Iraqi government as it works to meet these benchmarks."

Mr. Speaker, the supplemental contained these benchmarks directly quoted from the President's speech. So was the President's call for benchmarks a sincere request or what?

Providing the President with a clean supplemental bill simply provides him a blank check for the same failed policies in Iraq he has rejected and vetoed, his own benchmarks, as I simply quoted his speech.

New evidence keeps emerging that clearly points to a new direction in Iraq. Despite the President's constant claims of "progress," the facts are otherwise. The U.S. death toll in Iraq reached 104 in April, making it the deadliest month of the year and one of the deadliest of the entire war.

Republican Senator CHUCK HAGEL recently returned from Iraq and paints a bleak picture. "This is coming undone quickly, and Prime Minister Maliki's government is weaker by the day. The police are corrupt, top to bottom. The oil problem is a huge problem. They still can't get anything through parliament." That is a quote from someone who just went there, Senator CHUCK HAGEL.

Over the weekend, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction released his quarterly report and paints a dispiriting picture of our \$20 billion rebuilding efforts. For example, an audit of the facilities in Iraq discovered serious maintenance and operational problems, with seven out of