

pushing ahead to grant health care coverage to millions of children, a program called SCHIP. Unfortunately, the President's proposal to reauthorize SCHIP is woefully inadequate. His funding level won't even cover the children currently enrolled in the program. Nationwide, 6 million children are covered by the SCHIP and another 9 million are uninsured. If there was ever a question of where our priorities are, it should be with strengthening and modernizing the SCHIP program.

I've just come from a meeting with our Governor, Eliot Spitzer. New York operates a separate stand-alone program under SCHIP, Child Health Plus. As of December 2006, nearly 400,000 children were enrolled and receiving comprehensive health coverage in the program. Our stand-alone SCHIP program has increased enrollment by over a quarter of a million children since the start of the program.

Nationwide, we have to remember that the SCHIP program is a critical part of our health care safety net, providing health coverage to more than 4 million low-income children who do not qualify for Medicaid. SCHIP has served New York and our country well, and I will continue to work to improve access for children's health care coverage.

ELIMINATING INFECTIONS FROM MEDICAL DEVICES

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, at least half of all cases of hospital-acquired infections are associated with medical devices. These medical devices include items ranging from tongue depressors to catheters and heart valves.

These preventable infections infect 2 million patients per year and end up costing 90,000 lives and over \$50 billion annually. These are unacceptable costs for patients, taxpayers and Congress.

Up to this moment this morning, we already have over 1 million cases, you can see on this chart, 47,000 deaths and a cost of over \$26 billion, and that's just as of today.

Yesterday we passed the Medical Device User Fee Act which included an amendment in there that I placed in that allows for the government, the GAO, to study these issues. They note that even after rigorous cleaning and sterilization, virus and bacteria still exist on reused medical devices.

Manufacturers, providers and facilities should take measures to reduce the rate of infections. I urge my colleagues to refocus our Nation's health care system on patient choice, patient safety and patient quality and join me in working on these things together where we can save lives and save money for our Nation.

STRATEGIC RESET

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, today I will vote for the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act. I agree with the 70 percent of Americans who want our troops out of Iraq. And I agree with the comprehensive report called "Strategic Reset" from the Center for American Progress, written by three authors, one of whom is Lawrence Korb, former Assistant Secretary of Defense.

They write, "The current Iraq strategy is exactly what al Qaeda wants, the United States distracted and pinned down by Iraq's internal conflicts, trapped in a quagmire that has become the perfect rallying cry and recruitment tool for al Qaeda. The United States has no good options, given the strategic and tactical mistakes made in Iraq since 2002, but simply staying the course with an indefinite military presence is not advancing U.S. interests."

Today we will vote to change the course to bring our troops home by April of 2008. I will proudly vote in favor of that bill.

WAR IS NOT WON BY EVACUATION

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker: "Many people think the best way to escape war is to dwell upon its horrors and to imprint them vividly upon the minds of the younger generation. They flaunt the grisly photographs before their eyes. They fill their ears with tales of carnage. They dwell on the ineptitude of generals and admirals. They denounce the crime and the folly of human strife."

These words of Winston Churchill in 1934 stressed upon the people of Great Britain that the cynics, who don't believe some things are worth fighting for, should not have their way. They ignore the victories and accomplishments and, instead, focus upon setbacks.

War is hard. It has always been hard. Congress will once again debate a timetable retreat for American troops to leave Iraq. The timid will want to turn their back on the enemy and leave a desperate people and a nation floundering; all this because war is hard.

Retreat tells the enemy that if they wait America out, we will bow out of the fight.

Mr. Speaker, Churchill also remarked, "war is not won by evacuation."

And that's just the way it is.

WORK-FAMILY POLICIES

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, a new report that just came out by the Government Accountability Office shows that the United States lags far behind other industrialized countries in providing policies that help families balance the competing demands of work and family responsibilities.

Critics argue that implementing such policies here could have a negative impact on the economy, but many countries with strong work-family policies are among the world's most competitive economies in the world and have unemployment rates that are the same or lower than the United States.

More and more businesses are finding that doing right by workers is good for the bottom line. Paid parental and sick leave, flexible work schedules and access to child care provide a boost to worker productivity, retention, and recruitment that outweigh the cost of implementing such policies.

U.S. workers, businesses, and the economy would benefit from stronger work-family policies.

"A copy of the GAO report is available on the JEC website at <http://www.jec.senate.gov/Documents/Hearings/06.14.07%20Work-Life%20Balance/GAO%20-%20Kay%20Brown%20Testimony%20-%20FINAL.pdf>."

THE GROWING ECONOMY

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, this week, news reports came out indicating our Federal budget deficit has continued to drop and our economy continues to grow due to tax relief policies passed by Congress in 2001 and 2003.

In spite of that good news, Democratic leadership in Congress is discounting advancements made possible by this tax relief by trying to slap U.S. taxpayers with a \$400 billion tax increase that will slow our economy and its current progress.

Additionally, Democrats piled \$6 billion in new spending onto January's omnibus budget bill to finish the 2007 appropriations process, passed a budget for 2008 that is \$20 billion more than the President's budget request, and added billions in extra spending to the few appropriations bills the House has passed.

Raising taxes hurts American families, discourages innovation and hinders job creation. Let's work together in this Congress to make tax relief permanent and continue to grow our economy. Together, this Congress can foster further prosperity and build a better, brighter future for our country.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

□ 1030

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2956, RESPONSIBLE REDEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ ACT

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 533 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 533

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2956) to require the Secretary of Defense to commence the reduction of the number of United States Armed Forces in Iraq to a limited presence by April 1, 2008, and for other purposes. All points of order against the bill and against its consideration are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) four hours of debate, with three hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services and one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 2956 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 533 provides for consideration of H.R. 2956, the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act, under a closed rule. The rule provides 4 hours of debate, with 3 hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services and 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The rule waives all points of order against the bill and its consideration except those arising under clause 9 or 10 under rule XX. The rule provides for one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear about what we will be told today by the President. We will be told that adequate progress has been made in some

areas of Iraq but more work needs to be done in others. What this really means, of course, is that once again security and political benchmarks have not been met, that vast areas in Baghdad that were supposed to be under control by now are not, that a drop in violence in some areas has been met with increases in violence elsewhere, that political compromises are not being made with sufficient speed by the Iraqi leadership, nor is there any available evidence that the situation is going to change, that the escalation will suddenly become more effective next week or next month. Instead, all signs indicate that in September when General Petraeus reports to Congress, he will deliver the exact same message that we are hearing today: to be patient.

But patience means nothing when deadlines are constantly moved. In January a leading Member of the minority said that we would be able to tell in a few months if the escalation was working. Now we hear it is still too early to tell. It has been 7 months. Which prediction are we supposed to believe?

As time has advanced, an absence in progress has not been met by an absence in tragedy. At the present rates, between now and September, another 200 Americans will be killed, 200 more families changed forever. And hundreds, if not thousands, more innocent Iraqis will have died as well.

We will hear today that to change our course in Iraq will signal defeat. But this willfully ignores the entire history of the Iraq War. After more than 4 years of relentless conflict, including recent months of historically high troop numbers, experts tell us that in Iraq al Qaeda is stronger than ever. A military official told ABC News yesterday al Qaeda's "operational capability appears to be undiminished."

The conclusion is clear: The American military is not being given a chance to bring peace to Iraq or to fight our enemies, not because our troops are not good enough but because the current mission is inherently flawed.

It is not weakness to admit a strategy is not working and to change it. It is the very opposite: a sign of strength. Our leaders corrected failing courses when they arose during the Civil War and during World War II. Why should this war be different?

What Democrats are calling for today is not a retreat. It is not a surrender. It is a statement that Congress will not wait for another ambiguous so-called progress report and will not give the administration another chance to move the goalposts. Instead, we will refuse to needlessly sacrifice our soldiers, weaken our military, undermine our national security, and bleed our country in ways that even the worst terrorists could ever dream of. And it is a statement to the Iraqi people that they will no longer have to live as dual victims: victims of violence and victims of a flawed military strategy that is at best

failing to bring peace to the country and at worst perpetuating their suffering.

The bill will refocus our troops on fighting terrorists. By doing so, the disastrous strain being placed on our Armed Forces will be lifted without sacrificing security objectives, and their healing can begin.

Second, it will remove a strategy from the playing field that is certainly not working and throw open the door to new approaches which may actually succeed. For example, the legislation requires the President to report by January on how he is engaging U.S. allies and regional powers in the effort to bring stability to Iraq. Far from abandoning the Iraqis or lessening American security, we will finally make the rehabilitation of Iraq the international priority that it must become. The only thing we will be abandoning, in other words, Mr. Speaker, is this administration's mistakes.

And to my friends on both sides of the aisle, yesterday I received an advance copy of a report from the Defense Department's Inspector General that will be made public today. It detailed the work of some of the first companies to make armored vehicles and armored kits for our soldiers in Iraq. They were given sole-source, unbid contracts even though senior defense officials objected, favoring a competitive process instead.

I hope people heard what I said. Senior officials at DOD wanted competitive bidding for these machines, but they were overridden by the Under Secretary of Defense.

The results were sadly predictable. The companies failed to meet demand and sent critically important equipment late. Some of the armor that our soldiers were sent had cracks that had simply been painted over to try to fool them instead of fixing it. In certain instances two left doors were sent for the same vehicle. Troops already fighting a deadly foe had to use their precious time and energy to improvise and come up with ways to turn useless equipment into something that could protect them.

Our soldiers have been asked to endure terrible hardships, as well have their families, some of which, I am ashamed to say, have been the direct result of the practices of this administration, and they are enduring them to this day and at this very hour. For Congress to leave them there, to ask them to continue fighting to survive under the mounting weight of a flawed mission—that, Mr. Speaker, is the true definition of abandonment. And after 4 years, Democrats are tired of this Congress abandoning our troops to a fate they have never deserved.

I would ask everyone in this Chamber how they would justify this continued carnage to the families of our soldiers. With all we know now, how can we still say to the children of those killed or to the young men and women maimed for life, your loss was needed?