

number of minority children that participate in the program has decreased even more drastically.

In 2006, 6.7 million of America's children received health care benefits through SCHIP; of these, 6.2 million came from families whose income was less than \$33,200 a year for a family of three. SCHIP working in conjunction with Medicaid through State programs provides necessary preventive, primary and acute health care services for the lowest income children and those with disabilities. Overall, these programs service more than 30 million children.

Children living in both rural and urban areas benefit from the SCHIP program. In rural areas, one in three children is covered either through SCHIP or Medicaid. In spite of this statistic, 17 percent of the children living in these areas remain uninsured. In urban areas one in four children has healthcare coverage through SCHIP or Medicaid, but 19 percent continue to be uninsured.

SCHIP also helps to reduce the number of uninsured minority children. The percentage of low-income African-American and Hispanic children without insurance decreased between 1996 and 2005 because of this program. Prior to SCHIP's enactment, approximately 30 percent of Latino children, 20 percent of African-American children, and 18 percent of Asian-American and Pacific Islander children were uninsured. By 2004, those numbers had dropped to 21 percent, 12 percent, and 8 percent respectively.

Mr. Speaker, let's not undermine the purpose of the SCHIP program. We have a responsibility to our children to provide them with one of the most basic needs in our society, equal access to health care. Let us not ignore the great strides that SCHIP has made in reducing the number of uninsured children. Reauthorize the SCHIP program and keep our children insured.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, members of the Congressional Black Caucus wish to call greater attention upon the disparities that exist in health care.

Children of color suffer disproportionately from a lack of health insurance.

In my State of Texas, the problem is severe.

Texas has the highest rate of uninsured children in the Nation, with over 21 percent of children—that's 1.4 million—lacking health care coverage.

Across the nation, more than 9 million American children lacked health care coverage in 2005.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program, called SCHIP, is critically important to prevent low- and moderate-income minority children from slipping through the cracks of our health care system.

One problem is that eligible children are not enrolling in SCHIP.

Nearly three-quarters of uninsured children were eligible for health coverage through SCHIP or Medicaid in 2004.

A disproportionate number of those eligible, but uninsured, were either Black or Hispanic.

Without insurance, children living in poverty are likely to have poorer health compared to children with insurance.

Uninsured kids are more likely to lack a regular source of health care, delay or have unmet health care needs, use less preventive care, and receive poorer quality care than children with insurance.

I urge my colleagues to remember our uninsured—especially the children—and have compassion on our Nation's most vulnerable.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH: OPPOSING UNTRUE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE BUDGET

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this weekend I noticed one of my colleagues in the majority on the Senate side on Fox News Sunday discussing our Nation's Iraq policy. In his conversation with Brit Hume he asserted that our Iraq policy was a failure because of limited progress on the political front in Iraq.

Mr. Hume challenged him on this point by pointing out that progress has been made recently in other areas of Iraq. Mr. Hume noted that if a lack of political progress in Iraq was the only thing that mattered, then couldn't people call the Democrats a failure because of their dismal record on enacting their priorities this session of Congress? The Senator from Michigan responded by drumming up a list of Democrat success, the first of which I find to be entirely dubious.

He attempted to prove that the majority party has not been a complete failure by first saying the Democrats have adopted a budget for the first time in years.

Mr. Hume had asked him, "My understanding is that you got the minimum wage increase, but nothing else passed. Does that make you a failure?"

The Senator responded, "Well, no, because it is not true. There is a lot of things that have passed. For the first time in years we have adopted a budget."

I am not sure if he has been in the same Congress that I have been serving in. He makes it look like it has been years since we passed a budget, and that is simply not true. In 2005, a budget resolution passed the House and the Senate as well as a conference report. In 2006 a budget resolution also passed the House and the Senate without an accompanying conference report.

So I am a little confused as to where the Senator is getting his facts. Unfortunately, Mr. Hume did not catch the untrue statement. As a result, the millions of Americans watching the popular Sunday news program were led to believe that somehow the fact that the majority has adopted a budget resolution was an unusual feat, unseen for years in Congress. I wish to set the record straight.

Some people might wonder why I call attention to this. My reasoning is simple: The truth matters. When we allow untrue statements to enter the public record, we have allowed the public to be led astray. Those to whom we are accountable deserve so much better. The American people deserve the whole

truth, the whole picture, not half truths or dodgy statements intended to cloud a less than stellar record of accomplishment.

I will give the Senator from Michigan the benefit the doubt. Maybe he really thought that it has been years since Congress adopted a budget. But if that is the case we have an equally large problem; he can't keep his facts straight. Both problems serve to mislead the American people.

Fortunately, at this point I don't think the American people have been too misled. They know that this majority has quickly established itself as the party of broken promises. Recent polls tell the whole story. Since taking office, the majority's job approval ratings have taken a nosedive. It is not a temporary dip either. Ever since January, their approval ratings have consistently trended negative, dropping from 37 percent to a low of 23 percent. These sorts of ratings are so low that they have even turned heads in Washington, where unpopularity in the polls seems to be a way of life. I will submit for the RECORD a chart showing the plummeting of the Democrat job approval.

But I am concerned about the public dialogue at stake. If Congressional leaders can't be trusted with the basic facts and insist on creating a track record of truth distortion and promise breaking, I see it as my duty to voice opposition. Even if I am the only one raising the alarm, I will continue to call for integrity in all aspects of public life, and especially in that most important of arenas, communicating with the American people.

The facts are important. The American people deserve the respect that comes with not taking liberties with the facts.

□ 2100

AMNESTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well this evening to talk about a very, very important subject that we just went through some very contentious debate on, and my colleagues are familiar with that, and it is the immigration issue. The American people are familiar with it. And the people in the great State of Georgia, the 11th Congressional District that I serve, are familiar with it as well.

And the big concern was to not do something in a, quote, "comprehensive way" that resulted in granting amnesty to up to 12 million people, possibly more than that, that have over the last 20 years, since 1986, the last time we granted amnesty to 3 million at that time, we have not secured our borders and because of porous borders,

it is estimated that something approaching 400,000 a year, and some are turned back, obviously, but approximately 400,000 get through. I am talking about illegal immigrants now. And when you do the math over 20 years, that is how we got to the 12 million that are here today. So that bill was all about we need to have the triggers. I am very proud of my Senators, our senior Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS and JOHNNY ISAKSON. JOHNNY ISAKSON who obviously had the trigger so you couldn't do any of this stuff even if you didn't call it amnesty, you had to secure the borders first.

In the final analysis, because of their great concern, our Senators from Georgia said "no" to the bill that was being cooked up on the Senate side and could not be amended to their satisfaction. I am proud of them for that.

But there is another problem, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, something that maybe the American people are not sufficiently aware of, and that is the fact that so many people come into this country every year on a program called the visa waiver program. I want to repeat that because I want each and every one of you to remember this, the visa waiver program. It too was started back in the mid-1980s, about the time of the amnesty bill we were talking about. What it does is this: it allows citizens from 27 countries, mostly Western European, and it didn't start as 27, but basically the initial countries were the United Kingdom, Germany, France, some of the countries that are really our best friends and best allies, there is no denying that. Without question, over the history of our great country, we have had wonderful friendships in Western Europe.

So the thinking back in 1986 was we need to not spend our time on worrying about doing background checks and our consulates, and those are the offices of our Department of State that exist in all of the other countries. They are part of our embassies. There are more consulates in a country than embassies. My colleagues know what I am talking about, and hopefully folks listening understand that you have State Department employees in all of these countries so when people come and apply for a visa and they want to come visit the United States or come over here to study, or get permanent legal resident, a so-called green card, they have to go through our consulates. They have to fill out forms and pay an application fee. They are all checked to a fare-thee-well, as the old Georgia expression goes, but it was decided in 1986, you know, for the countries where these are our friends, they look like us and in some instances they speak our own language, we don't need to worry about them, and so let's just let them come in without a visa. Therefore, the visa waiver program.

Now it has been expanded to 27 countries and growing. So they just show a passport. Our customs agents at our ports of entry, airports mainly, simply

look at the passport. If the passport is from one of the 27 countries, they put a stamp on it and in the person comes.

The thinking is this is good for relations with other countries and we want to be on a friendly level with them. And of course it promotes tourism. And certainly folks involved in the travel industry, and maybe it is businessmen coming over for a 2-week or 2-month period of time. Actually, under the visa waiver program, the maximum amount of time that can be spent here under that program is 90 days.

In the year 2005, Mr. Speaker, 15 million people came to the United States under the visa waiver program. At first it was just a temporary program in 1986, and then it was expanded to more countries. And finally it was made permanent in about the year 2000, this visa waiver program. But we began to realize maybe there was a little bit of security risk, and so we said, look, we want to make sure these passports that we are just looking at and stamping and letting folks come in from these so-called friendly countries, that these are legitimate passports, that these are not fraudulent documents.

Those of my colleagues, and most of you are either parents or grandparents, and you have gone through those teenage years yourself and with your children and grandchildren, and you know it is pretty darn easy to get a fake driver's license. And of course my children, adult children now, never did that. They wouldn't do anything like that, Mr. Speaker. But some of their friends did, and they showed me how it was done. You can go on the Internet and just take your picture and paste it on. That is the kind of thing that is bad enough if it is a fake driver's license in this country, but when we are talking about a fake passport, and they are pretty easy to fraudulently prepare, that is where the danger arises.

Some of the countries, the 27 countries that are participating with us in the visa waiver program, have reported that they have had literally hundreds of passports stolen, and we don't really keep a close record on that but we should. We should be very worried about that, as a matter of fact.

So in 2000 we said, look, here is the way we prevent passport document fraud when people are coming into this country under the visa waiver program. It is a passport issued by Spain, France, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Australia, and I'm not going to name all 27 of the countries, but we want to say, look, we want a digital photograph that we can scan. We don't want some fake overlay laminated on a passport, and we also want to be able to machine read this document.

So, therefore, all of you countries that are participating in this program, that is promoting business and tourism in exchange between countries, you are going to have to prepare your passport in that manner so we know that you have done a background check and we can do a background check. We look at

that passport. We know we have a watch list, a terrorist watch list, a criminal felon watch list, so that we do not just let them come in that minute, 1½ minutes that a busy custom agent has at the Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport. They have to do this quickly. If you spend 10 minutes per passport, you are going to have some people outraged, and that is not acceptable. They have to be able to do that quickly.

We knew this back in 2000, and keep in mind, my colleagues, I am talking about a year, a year and a half before 9/11 occurred. We said in the reauthorization of the visa waiver program and making it permanent, the countries had to have these passports based on biometrics, and we called that program US-VISIT. It has not been completed to this day. And after 9/11, of course, a huge wake-up call on many aspects of how we can do things better in regard to maybe we need some armed guards on the planes, and maybe we need to secure the cockpit door and maybe we should allow in certain circumstances the pilots, if they are trained properly, to carry a weapon, we have done a lot of these things to improve.

And of course all these lines, and every Member of this body, every one of you, probably waited in line today for a good little while getting through security before you were allowed to go to the gate to board your plane, and hopefully the plane was on time. If you were delayed too long going through security, hopefully the plane was delayed.

We continue to do these things, but yet this very important aspect, US-VISIT, to make sure, Mr. Speaker, those 15 million folks that come in for business or tourism or whatever, to promote goodwill with these other countries, and I am for that, but they are to stay 90 days. We don't know where they are or how to find them if they don't go back home in 90 days. And to think that even after 9/11, we still keep putting off that date certain these countries have to have and abide by US-VISIT and have to have the biometric passports and we have to have all of the equipment at our ports of entry so the custom agent can simply swipe that passport and it is fine, or a red light goes off.

This is what I am here tonight to talk about, and hopefully you are aware of it. I think most of my colleagues are. But we need to be thinking about this. We need to be thinking about it in a bipartisan way. This is not one of those issues that we should be fighting about politically. We know that this is for the citizens of this country, whether they are Democrats or Republicans, whether they are young or old, whatever their occupation, their religion, ethnicity. This is for everybody. This is not for PHIL GINGREY's district, the 11th Congressional District of northwest Georgia. This is for all of my colleagues' districts. That is why I am here tonight

talking about such an important thing, and I hope we can get everybody's attention on this.

Later on in the hour I am going to talk about a bill that I introduced in regard to the visa waiver program, talk a little bit about what is going on in the other body in regard to the 9/11 bill that we passed I think the first day we were voting on anything in this 110th Congress, the so-called 6 for '06, to do those things that the 9/11 families asked us to do.

After all, they suffered then, are suffering now, and will suffer forever. We listened to them on both sides of the aisle, and we passed a bill. We did most of what they asked in the 109th Congress under different control, and now we have added a few things in the 110th Congress, and we are waiting on the other body. There are some provisions in their version in regard to this visa waiver program that gives me a little heartburn; we will talk about that as well.

I am expecting that some of my colleagues will join me during this hour, Mr. Speaker, and certainly when they get to the floor after their busy meetings that they are attending right now, I am going to yield time to them to give a little different aspect to this visa waiver issue or some other issue of concern to them.

I am a proud member, Mr. Speaker, of the Immigration Reform Caucus. In this 110th Congress, the Immigration Reform Caucus under the leadership of the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY), we have worked hard to make sure that the Immigration Reform Caucus is a bipartisan group of Members, and it is.

□ 2115

I'm not going to stand here and try to name names, but we have got great Members on both sides of the aisle under the leadership of Congressman BILBRAY from California, and I think that's good. I think that's refreshing that Members know that this is not for politics. This is for policy, and this is for protection.

I see that Mr. BILBRAY is actually on the floor now, and I will look forward to hearing his perspective on the visa waiver program. And then we'll develop a colloquy during the next 40 minutes or so. At this time, it's my distinct privilege to welcome him to the floor and to this Special Order hour. I'm grateful to our leadership, the Republican leadership, for making this the minority party's Special Order hour for the evening and that Congressman BILBRAY is going to share the time with me. So I yield to my friend from California.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia for yielding, and Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you in holding the Chair tonight and thank you very much for the courtesy of allowing us to speak tonight. I appreciate the privilege.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the American people have not only

asked, they have demanded, is that the Federal Government live up to its responsibility of defending our neighborhoods from forces from afar that may be entering this country with harm in their hearts and weapons and viciousness in their hands. I think that one of the things that we've really recognized in the past is the review and the oversight of who we allow to come into this country is one of our big responsibilities.

Let's face it, it doesn't take an act of Congress for a community to hire a teacher or hire police officers, but it takes an act of Congress and it takes the Federal Government to make sure that the people that are allowed into this country are people that are going to be friendly to us, to help us, to actually add to the quality and security of America rather than threaten it.

The visa system has always been sort of the minimum we've done in the past, and the visa waiver actually is an extraordinary concept of saying we are so sure that these countries are so secure and so safe that we're willing to waive the traditional international policy of having people kind of report in and prove that they are who they are and we allow them into the country.

And we've allowed this with many countries like Britain, my mother's home country, and Australia, and we've allowed it with many countries. But it's almost as if we've taken this concept that a little is good, a whole bunch must be great, where the political pressure is to expand this program to such a force that there's no counter-balance of saying, no, wait a minute, who's there really checking and keeping a tab on what is reasonable from a security point of view.

And I think what's important tonight for us to say is tonight is a way for the Immigration Caucus to sort of push back and balance. And I don't mind people that are wanting to have this waiver expanded, but I do mind that when we do not balance the perception, that those who may for business reasons or for their own special reasons want to throw away the paperwork, throw away the procedure for security and say it'd just be easier to do without it, they can say that but then there should be those of us who are willing to stand up and say, yes, but it's there for a reason and that reason is very important, the protection of our families and our homes and our neighborhoods. And only the Federal Government can provide this protection.

Remember, if we allow somebody with harm in their heart to enter this country, there is no defense once they're in this country from gaining access to those neighborhoods, those playgrounds, those schools, those hospitals that we take for granted are protected.

Local government cannot check a visa once the United States Federal Government allows them into the country. A county sheriff cannot check a visa once we've allowed them

through that port of entry at the airport or at that seaport.

So it is incumbent on us that we're extraordinarily vigilant to make sure that only those that we are sure should be in this country are in this country, and it is extremely important that we only allow the waiver process in those extraordinary situations where we can look the American people in the eye and say we really believe this is a safe and prudent way of treating our immigration policy.

I think people will say then, well, why is there debate here? And I think that the gentleman from Georgia understands, there's people that want for business reasons, for personal reasons, to have people coming, going from all kinds of different countries, and they have their personal reasons to do that. Some may be profit and some may be convenience, but those reasons and those pressures need to be counter-balanced.

And the Federal Government must be reminded again and again that there's not just one agenda here, convenience of people coming into the country. There's not one agenda here, people making money by tourists coming and going. There's not one agenda, just business wanting to be able to have their partners come and go as they want. There is the major agenda that needs to be introduced into the formula, and that is the defense of the communities.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make the point to the gentleman that the first slide that I wanted to show, and let me read this quote from the 9/11 Families for a Secure America. I can't tell you how many of the 9/11 families are a part of this group, but this is how they feel. This is a quote. "If Islamic extremists commit another 9/11, it will not make any difference to the victims of that attack that the people responsible carried French passports rather than ones issued by Iran, Saudi Arabia or Lebanon."

This is when they endorsed the bill that I introduced, and we will talk about that a little bit later, but I wanted to yield back to the gentleman for his additional thoughts. But I thought it would be good at this point to interject this quote from the 9/11 Families for a Secure America.

Mr. BILBRAY. I think the real key there, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the outcome does matter when you talk about the security of our Nation, and we forget sometimes when we talk about the security of the Nation that we're talking about the security of our neighborhoods and our homes.

I had the privilege of serving as mayor and chairman of San Diego County and mayor of a small county on the border, and I know and I think any mayor will tell you that those of us in local government just assume the Federal Government's going to do its part. The trouble is the mayor and the police chiefs and the county sheriffs end up having to take on these responsibilities, and they don't have the right to

do what is the Federal Government's responsibility and, that is, check these documents and make sure that the right type of people are coming into the country.

Local government, the mayors, the city council members, the county supervisors, county commissioners, sheriffs, police chiefs, they have to live with the repercussions and the challenges once someone's here, but they don't get the chance to be able to review and approve this. And so that's why it's essential that the Federal Government, which is the only agency that can do this, the one line of defense that we have over inappropriate entry in this country, has to be strong and vigilant and effective.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, the next slide that I want my colleagues to focus in on now is really the kind of a passport that we are wanting, and that U.S. VISIT, and indeed the law in regard to the visa waiver program that was made permanent in 2000 requires them to have this type of passport because let me make one thing perfectly clear to my colleagues.

The visa waiver program trusts the security of our Nation to the background check capabilities and the passport procedures of all these foreign governments, the 27 countries that I mentioned and expanding all the time.

Basically, what we're saying, and if you will look at this next slide, on one side of the passport would be a digital photograph, again, one that is scannable. We have these iris scans, not just the old-fashioned finger prints, but everything in a digital way, including the photograph on the passport. And then I'm going to have to get a little closer to read this, but a machine readable passport has two lines of text, has letters, numbers and something called chevrons. Those are those greater than or less than, these little upside down Vs that you put, but it's a way of bringing a secure method to make sure people are not using fraudulent documents.

I want to talk a little bit now, Mr. Speaker, about some of the things that have been happening lately. It's hard to believe that 9/11 was almost 6 years ago. 2001, we're now 2007 and approaching September. It's almost unbelievable, but people tend to forget, and that's part of the problem.

One of my colleagues, whenever he gives a 1 minute or a 5-minute speech or has an opportunity to speak from the well, he always says, and this is the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), as he concludes, and we will never forget 9/11. God bless him for doing that. Sometimes it gets a little trite, but JOE WILSON knows of what he speaks.

But it's easy to forget, but nobody has forgotten about these doctors, doctors, medical doctors, health professionals that just within the last couple, 3 weeks in London and at the airport in

Scotland, Glasgow, tried to blow up the terminal with the car bomb, laden with highly explosive material, and there was a warning in fact. Someone had said in some text messaging, beware of those who would cure you, meaning the doctors will kill you; those who cure you will kill you.

Well, these doctors in the United Kingdom were citizens of that country. I mean, they had passports, British passports, and in fact, a couple of them had actually, Mr. Speaker, made an application to come to the United States. I think to come to a hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They wanted to practice medicine here. Everybody does want to practice medicine in the United States because, despite the previous hour from the other side, we do have a great health care system. Certainly it needs some improvement, and we're going to work on that hopefully in a bipartisan way, but these terrorists, those who would cure you that would kill you, were trying, at least some of them, to come into this country.

And they could have come in under this visa waiver program and simply showed a passport that did not, by the way, have a digital photo or any digital text or iris scanning. And we didn't have a U.S. VISIT machine that we could run that passport through that so that that would immediately come, go into a data bank so when the 90 days were up or the period of time that they planned to stay, that we could find them, ferret them out and have the ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, agents go after them.

So this is not child's play that we're talking about here. This happened just within the last 3 weeks, and these were homegrown British terrorists that had ties to al Qaeda in Iraq.

I don't doubt the United Kingdom was one of our closest allies. Indeed, they are. Tony Blair has been our best friend and Gordon Brown will be and has been one of our best friends, but this just goes to show that even our greatest friends can be vulnerable to these homegrown terrorists possessing legitimate citizenship documentation and authorized legal passports.

So this is where we are, and this is what's going on this hour, and I will be happy to yield back to my good friend and colleague, the chairman, once again of our Immigration Reform Caucus for additional thoughts. I proudly, by the way, serve on his executive committee of the Immigration Reform Caucus, and I yield to my friend from California.

Mr. BILBRAY. Thank you. I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia's kind words, and let me just say that in the words of the former Inspector General of Homeland Security, specifically said that we should be abolishing the waiver system, not expanding it. So, on a minimum, we've got to stop the expansion.

I think that it just shows a lack of understanding of just how far the pres-

sure's going to back off on our due diligence when it comes to border security by those people that don't see the big picture, and to think that at this time where we're talking about threats, especially what just happened in England, where somebody who they thought was a safe immigrant, literally drove a fire bomb into the front door of a terminal, if I remember right, and what will happen when we allow somebody to do that?

Frankly, I haven't spoke a lot about this, but on 9/11, I was in the immigration commissioner's office the day the plane started crashing into American buildings.

□ 2130

I was actually in the office, and we watched the second plane crash into the second tower. That commissioner said, can you imagine being the agents who let these guys into the country. Now, we didn't know who did this. We didn't know who was responsible. We had no idea.

But the immigration commissioner had the foresight of saying, my God, somehow I know I am responsible, and you imagine being the agent who personally let these people in.

I don't think we think about this, but tightening up and controlling the waiver process is going to be one of the things we have got to do so we don't look back and say, my God, we were warned, we knew this was coming, and why didn't we do more. Why weren't we there to stop this from happening?

All I have got to say is that I was out of politics. I was just meeting with them about immigration issues, but I saw the anguish and the frustration in his eyes and his voice realizing that somehow he knew the immigration agency that he was in charge of somehow contributed to this disaster.

The fact is, I hope all of us start looking at this as being what are we doing today to make sure that we are not faced off in saying, my God, why didn't I do more. Why didn't I push harder? Why wasn't I the bothersome one that told the administration, I know you are being pressured by these guys, but I am going to pressure you back? I am going to give some balance to the process here in Washington?

I think that's all the American people have asked for, a little balance. Again, as the Inspector General said, now is not the time to expand this program. If the President and the administration honestly believes that this country is under a threat, that this country must do extraordinary things to defend our neighborhoods, then the minimum is not to expand this program.

I think reasonable people should say the administration, rather than looking into expanding this program, should be looking to reduce it, at least temporarily, and ratcheting down and reducing the opportunities for people to come in here unreviewed. Because for every country, for every person

that we allow in this country that we have not done our due diligence, we are exposing the Nation to that threat, and we are exposing ourselves to a lifetime of regrets that we did not do the right thing by the American people.

Mr. GINGREY. Colleagues, what Mr. BILBRAY is talking about, of course, is almost unbelievable, but what he says is true. He knows of what he speaks.

In December of this past year, just 8 months ago, the Department of Homeland Security said that they were going to temporarily, not dismantle, thank God, but temporarily suspend the US-Visit program. I am not sure why they made that decision, maybe too much work, they don't have enough money, I don't know. But we asked them to do it in 2000, we asked them to do it again in 2001 with the PATRIOT Act. We asked them in 2002 with the Secure Border Act. We put deadlines on it.

I guess it's kind of like the fence bill. I know my constituents in the 11th District of Georgia know all about that. They asked me, didn't you guys, PHIL, weren't you part of a group that had an amendment in the 109th Congress where when you guys were in control, when the Republicans were in control, wasn't it your amendment that was adopted that called for 700 miles of fencing along the 2,100 mile southern border where we have got some severe problems, not just people coming, seeking jobs, but potential drug lords and gang members, and, yes, terrorists carrying maybe even a nuclear weapon in a suitcase or a briefcase?

I said, yes, I was part of that. We did pass it. I am very proud of it. Then we came back and passed it again. They want to know why we have only got about 15 miles of the 700. It's hard to explain, and we need to have some conversations with the administration in regard to things that the Congress says need to be done, and we vote them into law, and appropriate money. Yet things either don't happen or happen far too slowly.

To think, though, that they just decided we are going to suspend this US-Visit, and as Mr. BILBRAY, the gentleman from California, just said, this is not the time to suspend US-Visit; this is the time to ramp it up, to make sure that we have a machine that reads these passports at every port of entry.

Hey, if American Express can do it, it seems to me the United States of America can do it. American Express and Visa and MasterCard, they have been doing it a long time. They don't get any cash unless they know you are who you say you are.

This is crazy that we haven't completed this. It's just outrageous, outrageous to suspend a program like that when we need it more than ever.

I know my friend from California has a thought on that, because he just stood up. I look forward to your comments.

Mr. BILBRAY. Just a couple of weeks ago, the Senate was shocked, the

White House was shocked at what they saw was a groundswell from America against a proposal that America rightfully thought was amnesty. They wonder why is there so much animosity against Washington on the immigration issue.

It's exactly because of things like the US-Visit system. The American people think that the political leaders of Washington just don't get it and aren't willing to do the heavy lifting. It has been how many years that since, is it 1996, that the US-Visit system was supposed to be implemented. It still hasn't been implemented. Now we have people at a point where they say let's just forget about it.

This is much like the commitments and promises, much like building the fence that the American people have heard so many promises and seen their promises broken so often that they assume this town just does not care or, worse, has been enticed by whatever forces for whatever reason not to do the right thing.

I think when it comes down to developing confidence on the immigration issue, the American people are saying, before you ask us to trust you one more time, we want you to prove to us that you deserve to be trusted.

Go back to the things that you have been promising us for 20 years and do those, get your House in order and take care of it. Things like finish the visit system to where you know who has come into the country and who has gone out of the country. Without that, both, you don't know who stayed in the country.

What's your excuse, Washington? Why are you doing all of these other things that everybody talks about? You can talk about health care. It doesn't take an act of Congress to hire a doctor. It does take an act of Congress to stop a terrorist from crossing the border.

I want to say that it was very scary in February that the Senate was actually looking at expanding the visa waiver. Frankly, I was very proud of one move my Senators, Senator FEINSTEIN, for standing up and saying, whoa, whoa, whoa, we are going a little faster. I want to thank her for that.

It's important that we have bipartisan effort here. The American people are tired of both parties finding excuses and not doing the right thing. They want both parties working together to protect their neighborhoods. When a neighborhood gets blown up, it's Democrats, Republicans and independents whose lives are at stake.

It doesn't draw political lines where the threat is.

Frankly, the issue of being able to address these commonsense things like implementing the US-Visit system, to implement or reduce the impact of the waiver system is something that we need to work together. I want to publicly thank Senator FEINSTEIN for standing up on that issue. I think that we need to push more on that.

But this one right now is that if we can't get the visit system in, what are we doing expanding the visa waiver? That's an extraordinary, extraordinary challenge.

Again, this is why the American people are saying, I don't understand it. How can you ask me to trust you with another law that could be 300 or 1,000 pages when you haven't taken care of the promises you have made over the last 20 years?

Mr. GINGREY. How does the saying go? Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. I think that's exactly the point the Congressman is making in regard to the American people.

They are not happy about being fooled about border security and the nonbuilt fence. They are not happy about this either. They are not happy one bit about suspending this US-Visit program.

I have the next slide, and I think my colleagues will recognize some of these infamous characters. I want to point them out to you, though, once again. Over here, I will point to him, this gentleman right here, is named Richard Reid, but he is better known as the shoe bomber, the shoe bomber.

The shoe bomber flew from Paris with a passport, a citizen from a visa waiver country, got on a plane, had no intention, of course, with a visa waiver, he could stay in the United States for 90 days. He had no intention of getting to the United States. He just wanted to blow that plane to smithereens. Fortunately, we caught him, from a visa waiver program country.

The guy next to him, that's Moussaoui, Zacarias Moussaoui. He is known as the 20th hijacker. He was from Morocco, a French citizen from Morocco, living in France. He flew from London to Chicago and then, as we all remember in the 9/11 report, in particular, this guy, this terrorist with a passport, a legal passport, then enrolled in flight school in Oklahoma City.

Thank goodness that we had very attentive FBI agents who recognized that here was someone that was in this country under the visa waiver program who overstayed his visa. Well, not really a visa, but he overstayed the 90 days, and, fortunately, we caught him. He was the 20th hijacker.

To my near side are the photographs of the Fort Dix Six. These are the so-called pizza delivery guys who were going on the military base at Fort Dix, New Jersey. Many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that represent New Jersey understand the potential horror that these guys, these guys, these terrorists that were here with a passport from a visa waiver country were about to inflict on one of our major military installations.

Well, what I want to talk about now is what I plan to do about this problem with the visa program, not to expand it. The gentleman from California is absolutely right. The other Chamber,

there are Members in this 9/11 bill that we passed back in January, and it's about to go to conference, the Senate version being a little different than the House version, there were some Senators that wanted to expand the visa waiver program, not limit it to the 27, but to expand it far beyond that.

As my colleague pointed out, his Senator from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, said maybe we ought not to do that yet. Well, I do commend her. I join him in commending her for that.

But I want to go a step further. What I want to do, and this is called for in my legislation, H.R. 1342, H.R., House of Representatives bill, 1342, the Secure Entry Act, it's time to suspend this program. It's not time to suspend U.S. Visit. It's not time to expand the U.S. visa waiver program, as Representative BILBRAY and Senator FEINSTEIN so well know.

We need to suspend this program and say to those countries, the 27 or any others that we expand to, I am not opposed in the future to expand it if they have those biometric machine-readable passports, and they have done the due diligence before they have given those passports, just like you would with a visa. If somebody is going to come over here for two or three years to study or something, they have to answer something like 40 different questions and all these background checks.

Not so with a passport. Getting a passport is about like getting a driver's license or a bank credit card or something. It's just a question or two. What's your name, where do you live, give us a photo.

We are not going to be safe with this program, this program that was initiated, I said at the outset of the hour, back in the mid-1980s to promote tourism, friendship and cultural exchange and to promote international trade and business. The Statue of Liberty says it all. But we are living in a different time now.

□ 2145

We are living in a time that we are not safe with this program. 15 million, I mentioned this earlier, Mr. Speaker, in the hour. 15 million people used this program in the last year that we were counting, 2005. It is probably more than that now. Certainly if we expand it, it will be more than that. So I introduced H.R. 1342, the Secure Entry Act, and this would suspend not end, not end. And I want to say to the ambassadors from the State Departments for these other countries, I have talked to them. They say, well, you are going to hurt tourism. Well, tourism is great, but you tell it to the families of the 9/11 victims, the over 3,000 that are no longer with us. We can do this.

But it seems like in this body and in any situation where you have to accomplish things, people for some reason want to wait until the 11th hour and they won't do it and they will procrastinate and they will drag their feet. It's too much trouble, don't have

personnel, don't have the money. Well, you have got to make them do it. And you say, we will suspend the program and you can come to this country only if you have a visa, not with a passport, until you have done what we have our laws require you to do. That is it. That is the bill. And I think when you consider the safety of our people, it is not too much to ask.

We have another. This was someone that came in 1993. I am going back now a little bit. Remember, my colleagues, the first attack on the World Trade Center? They didn't bring it down, but they came close. They came very close, killed a few people, caused a lot of damage. And we treated it as some criminal act, not as an act of terrorism which is what it clearly was. Well, one of those characters we were able to catch, Ahmed Ajaj. And the slide, if you look closely says, "On September 1, 1992, Ahmed Ajaj fraudulently presented a Swedish, and, yes, my colleagues they are one of the 27 visa waiver countries, presented a Swedish passport without a visa for INS inspection when he arrived at JFK Airport in New York on a flight from Pakistan. Thank goodness, on secondary inspection Ajaj's luggage was searched revealing six bomb making manuals, six as if one wouldn't do, videotapes calling for terrorism against Americans, multiple fake passports, maybe some of those stolen visa waiver passports that we are not keeping up with, and a cheat sheet on how to lie to United States immigration inspectors. They are good at that, these people. Fortunately, Ajaj was arrested for passport fraud, and he was serving, long since over, with a 6-month sentence at the time that his fellow conspirators, his co-conspirators attacked the World Trade Center February 26, 1993.

Mr. Speaker, I want to show another slide, and this is from the Associated Press dated July 13, 2007, 3 days ago. And here is what the Associated Press said: "Al Qaeda is stepping up its efforts to sneak terror operatives into the United States and has acquired most of the capabilities it needs to strike here, according to a new U.S. intelligence assessment. The group will bolster its efforts to position operatives inside the United States borders. U.S. officials have expressed concern about the ease with which people can enter the United States through Europe," that is where most of these visa waiver countries are, in the continent of Europe, "because of a program that allows most Europeans to enter without visas."

That is where we are, Mr. Speaker. That is exactly why I am here tonight. That is why the chairman of the bipartisan House Immigration Reform Caucus is with me during this hour. It is that important. It is that important. And we deeply appreciate you listening to us because it is not all about, as we talked about at the top of the hour, this bill that just went crashing down in flames. Because I think, and many

of my colleagues feel, and fortunately the Senate rejected anything that looked like amnesty, we have got to secure those borders first and foremost, and that was what everybody has said. Well, maybe, a sigh of relief certainly from Georgians. But this is a different issue but equally important. This is what you call internal security. Not necessarily just securing the southern border, but who do you let in, and under what terms do you let them in, and where are they going? Are they going to do what they say they are going to do, or are they who they say they are? And if they overstay, even if they are legitimate, who is going to round them up? 15 million of them. 15 million in 2005, maybe more now.

Listen to this, Mr. Speaker, some of the participating countries, and I would like my colleagues to pay attention. The 27, I may not mention them all, are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.K. I left out a few, but you get the picture. You get the picture. I think there is something like 43 countries in Europe. Most of them, 27 at least, are part of this visa waiver program.

We are getting close to the hour that we need to wrap up, but before I do that I want to yield back to my friend from California, who is really a stalwart on immigration reform because he knows the problems that it has created if we don't do the due diligence that the American people have elected us to do. And he knows what has happened and the havoc that it has created in his State, our most populous State, the State of California.

Mr. BILBRAY. I appreciate that. And, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about a visa and we talk about a proposal to go to a \$10 visa processing fee, I go to Latin America on most of my family's casual time; it is kind of the untold story that the chairman of the Immigration Caucus spends so much time in Latin America. But they charge \$10 for a visa and you go through a process down there. And as a visitor, I don't feel put upon to participate in their security in places like El Salvador or Nicaragua or Mexico. But here, when you talk about these countries that are under the visa, you are talking about some of them with massive amounts of immigration. So somebody could come in from Iran, immigrate to Australia, like I said, my mother's former country, could immigrate from Morocco into France, and then once they get their citizenship in that country then use that citizenship as being a free ride into the United States. So in reality, because immigration has become so fluid and nationalization of foreign nationals has become so easy in so many countries, that the issue of allowing some countries to be exempt from review and oversight and others not really are becoming antiquated, and we

need to get back there. If you do not want a terrorist coming in from the West Bank, going through France and coming into this country, then we have to review everyone who comes into this country.

So, in reality, we should be reducing the visa waiver, because we are not talking about people who have come from those countries, born in those countries, and have long term loyalty to those countries. We are also talking about people who have moved to those countries and might have moved there just a few years ago with the intention of getting their citizenship or getting legal residency to use that residency for the next move. And I think the doctors that tried to kill so many in England this last few months is an example that we really do have to be careful how we get it. Who would have thought that doctors from England could be terrorists. History has proven that those assumptions are wrong. And how many other assumptions are we making today that could be proven wrong in a much more graphic way?

I appreciate the chance, Mr. Speaker, for your patience of allowing us to address you here tonight and the American people here tonight, and I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership on this issue. And I do thank the Georgia delegation for standing so strong and so firm and defending our national sovereignty and defending our neighborhoods by standing strongly for immigration control and proper regulation.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentleman from California. And it reminds me, Mr. Speaker, as we talk about my colleagues from Georgia, Dr. Norwood, Charlie Norwood. We will elect tomorrow someone to replace him, but you can't replace him. Dr. Norwood was so strong on all these immigration issues in regard to that CLEAR Act that would let State and local law enforcement departments participate in apprehending illegals who had committed a felony in this country, God rest the soul of a great Member, Dr. Charlie Norwood.

NATHAN DEAL, our longest serving member second to JOHN LEWIS, and everybody knows JOHN LEWIS; but NATHAN DEAL says we ought to end this nonsense of birthright citizenship, Mr. Speaker. You sneak into this country, the husband and wife both illegals, and have eight children and all of a sudden they are all United States citizens. A lot of countries, most countries have stopped allowing that. So, I am glad my colleague gave me an opportunity to pay tribute to some of my Georgia colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, when we started I didn't think it would take an hour, but when you are passionate about something the time goes by pretty quickly. And this is such an important issue.

Who supports, other than me and I hope the majority of my colleagues in the House of Representatives, suspending the visa waiver program? I will

tell you who: The 9/11 families for a Secure America, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, and last but not least because they represent thousands of people in this country, Numbers USA. They are all strongly supportive of this bill. And I hope that we can get it passed, Mr. Speaker, because here again I am not calling for eliminating the visa waiver program; I am saying let's suspend it, let's don't expand it, I agree with Senator FEINSTEIN, and let's get it right. We can get it right, and then people will be safe here.

Listen to what the European terrorist cells have said recently. A quote from Taliban military commander Mansoor Dadullah, as reported by Brian Ross of ABC News. This was just a couple of days ago. "These Americans, Canadians, British, and Germans come here to Afghanistan from far-away places. Why shouldn't we train them?" That is what I am talking about, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we are here tonight. We need to suspend this program until we can get it right so that we can protect the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their attention, and I yield back the balance of my time.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased this evening to introduce the subject of children's health insurance and what has really been a remarkably successful Federal-State, public-private initiative that has really helped to make sure that middle class working families across this country have been able to get health insurance for 6 million of their children. So it has really been helping families all across this country be able to do what they want to do as responsible parents, and that is to be able to help pay for health insurance. Every State does it a little bit differently. That is what we are going to talk about this evening; we are going to talk about how important it has been for 10 years in this country to help children in America get the health care they need and they deserve, and it helps them get off to the right kind of start. So I want to talk more about that and I will be joined by some of my colleagues. But because one of my colleagues is going to be taking over in the chair, I am going to give him a few minutes just to talk about the subject. He is a colleague of mine from Pennsylvania. And I will say in Pennsylvania we are very, very proud of having been one of the first States well before the Federal level to start a children's health insurance program. In fact, we called it CHIP, then the SCHIP program started. In 1992 is when we started it in

Pennsylvania, and I was instrumental in creating the Children's Health Insurance Program in Pennsylvania. It has been incredibly successful. 130,000 children have health insurance in Pennsylvania.

□ 2200

So a colleague of mine, who has also worked in health care for a good long time and knows about the experience of the Children's Health Insurance Program from the other part of Pennsylvania, in the western part of the State, my colleague, a freshman who's done a wonderful job already, JASON ALTMIRE, Congressman ALTMIRE is going to say a few words, and then we'll continue for the hour.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, she is correct. In the State of Pennsylvania, she did a fantastic job in the State legislature in crafting Pennsylvania's plan with regard to children's health insurance. And Pennsylvania, I think, has one of the best, if not the best plans, the model for the entire country on this issue.

And we're going to be joined tonight by some other people who know a lot about health care and especially know a lot about the children's health insurance programs.

We're going to be joined by Mr. PALLONE, who's the chairman of the Health Subcommittee right here in the House of Representatives for the Energy and Commerce Committee which has jurisdiction over this issue, and there's no one in this Congress who has worked harder on this issue over the years and has more experience with crafting this. He was involved in putting this together 10 years ago and now, as chairman, has certainly had a lot to say about it.

And we're going to be joined by our colleague from Connecticut, Mr. MURPHY, CHRIS MURPHY, who was instrumental in his State legislature on these issues. So we really do have some folks here tonight to talk about this issue who have experience, who have detailed knowledge on this issue.

And what could possibly be more important on the domestic front than health care?

And I'm sure my colleagues would agree, as I travel around my district, I'm sure they have the same experience in their district. That's the issue that comes up more often than any other issue because it affects everybody. It is an issue that, no matter whether you're rich or poor, live in an urban setting, rural setting, you have issues with your health care costs.

Small businesses can no longer afford to offer health insurance in many cases. Large employers are having the same issue.

We have 45 million uninsured in this country, people who lack any health insurance at all, tens of millions more that live in fear of losing their health coverage or are underinsured, don't have adequate coverage to cover their needs.