

HONORING THE EMPLOYEES OF THE HOMELAND SECURITY DE- PARTMENT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting day. Earlier today on the floor of the House, we rose to pay tribute to the 5-year anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security and to express our appreciation for the employees for their extraordinary efforts and contributions to protect and secure our Nation. Security protection is not perfect.

And there have been challenges and, if you will, mountains to climb in preparing this Nation for its own security. Having been on the early established Homeland Security Committee and having gone to Ground Zero as the smoke was simmering, I know full well the value and purpose of all of these front-line employees.

I offer them today my greatest appreciation and would say to all of them, I would wish that all of our jobs relating to security would be extinguished, but we know that it cannot, and our task is to protect Americans. For that, we must be diligent and transparent. We must value civil liberties, but as well, we must be sure on security.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that when we bring our troops home, we will have a civilian Homeland Security Department that can truly help secure America.

DO NOT PASS THE U.S.-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased as Speaker PELOSI decided to assert Congress' power over international trade by waiving ill-advised fast-track rules, and I hope the decision to waive the 90-day deadline for a vote on the Colombia FTA will effectively kill the agreement.

This is not a good idea at this time. Colombia has not proven that they are capable of providing the human rights that the people of Colombia so desperately need. Passage of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement would greatly diminish our Nation's reputation as a leader in the fight to end human rights abuses worldwide. Like the Peru agreement which preceded it, the Colombia FTA is based on the flawed NAFTA-CAFTA model which also led to the outsourcing of millions of high-paying American jobs. This comes at a time when our own country is in a recession and experiencing unprecedented job loss.

All around, this is not a good idea, and I hope that we will kill this.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONNELLY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BROKEN JUSTICE IN IRAQ

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the justice system has broken down for Jamie Leigh Jones and other female contractors sexually assaulted in Iraq by their coworkers.

In June 2005, nearly 3 years ago, Jamie Leigh Jones was drugged and gang raped by her KBR coworkers in Iraq. After 2½ years and no real answers from our own government agencies, Jamie decided to go public in hopes of finding the answers and getting justice. She testified before the House Judiciary Committee in December of last year. And despite Jamie's experiences and the national attention that this issue garnered, nothing changed in Iraq. There continues to be a hostile living and working environment for female contractors that are Americans working overseas for American employers.

A "boys will be boys" atmosphere seems to appear where assaults occur, and then they're covered up. The Department of Justice says it has several active investigations, but it has not prosecuted any contractor for a sexual assault since the invasion of Iraq 5 years ago.

The Justice Department has over 200 employees in Baghdad. The question is, what are they doing? Why aren't they prosecuting crimes by Americans against Americans? There are 180,000 civilian workers in Iraq; not all of those people are good folks, some of them have committed crimes, but yet not one of them has been prosecuted for an assault that has occurred. These assailants remain free and unaccountable while the victims continue to suffer.

And yet there is more. This week we learned of another victim. She identified herself this morning at the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations as Dawn Lemon. Dawn Lemon's story is brutal. She went to Iraq as a KBR contractor. She was stationed in the hostile red zone as a paramedic. She awoke in January of 2008, just 3 months ago, to the sound of incoming rocket attacks. But when she woke up, she was naked in a chair, covered in blood and feces. She had feces in her mouth. She found a U.S. soldier lying naked in the bed next to her with his clothes and his gun on the floor. All she could remember was screaming at this unknown soldier that was laying on top of her. She sought help from a KBR

colleague, thinking that he would save her, but he didn't. As a soldier anally raped her, her KBR colleague forced her to perform oral sex on him. And when Dawn told her KBR supervisor about the incident, she was told to be quiet. When she reported the incident to the camp's military liaison, she was told again not to say anything.

In order to leave Iraq, Dawn had to cooperate with KBR. She had to sign documents agreeing not to discuss the rape in public. She decided to send those documents via e-mail to an attorney in the United States, but 20 minutes after she sent those documents Army investigators showed up and confiscated her computer. They were obviously tracking her e-mail communications.

Before she left Iraq on leave, she was assigned to sleep guarded by two Army Criminal Investigative Division officials to keep her safe. Her alleged assailants, however, were in the same camp, but they roamed freely, doing what they wished.

As the Federal Government agencies refuse to take responsibility and implement change and as these agencies have continued to pass the buck back and forth, still, nothing has occurred in these cases. There are no jurisdictional problems. The law exists to prosecute these individuals in Iraq, and these laws have been applicable for some time. There is nothing but excuses from our government agencies for failure to prosecute these criminals.

We knew in December that Jamie Leigh Jones was not alone. Three years later, this is still occurring. Dawn Lemon now joins a growing number of female contractors who have been sexually assaulted in Iraq by their coworkers.

Justice has failed these women. Is our government hiding these crimes? Why don't companies like KBR cooperate rather than stonewall these investigations?

Mr. Speaker, we will find the answers to these questions, I assure you. Victims like Jamie Leigh Jones and Dawn are to be admired for coming forward. Our duty is to protect them and their rights. We can do no less because, Mr. Speaker, justice is the one thing we should always find, even in Iraq.

And that's just the way it is.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Public Health Week and to applaud the passage of legislation to address health issues that impact the quality of life of all Americans. I commend my colleagues for joining me in passing critical health care legislation to improve the lives of Americans, from the youngest to the oldest among us, by increasing their access to care.

It is fitting that we address this legislation during National Public Health Week, a time when our attention is focused on the critical need to improve public health. I think it is also fitting that we recognize this week while we remember Ryan White, who died 18 years ago yesterday. This brave young man, whose namesake, the Ryan White CARE Act, has saved so many from the ravages of HIV/AIDS, taught us all an important lesson about our personal roles in improving the public's health.

I am the sponsor of two bills that passed this week, the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Act, which amends the Public Health Service Act regarding early detection, diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss, and the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Management Act, which provides schools with guidelines on how to create appropriate management and emergency plans for children with food allergies.

I also support the following bills that were adopted by the House this week:

The Wakefield Act, which amends the Public Health Service Act to improve emergency services for children who need treatment for trauma or critical care;

The Cytology Proficiency Improvement Act, which provides revised standards for quality assurance in screening and evaluation of gynecologic cytology preparations to ensure that health care professionals who screen and interpret tests for cervical cancer are skilled in today's medical technology;

Reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury Act, which provides for the expansion and improvement of traumatic brain injury programs by providing grants to States to support the treatment and rehabilitation of traumatic brain injury patients.

The Safety of Seniors Act, which directs the United States Department of Health and Human Services to oversee and support education campaigns focused on reducing falls and preventing repeat falls among older Americans;

And finally, the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, which establishes grant programs to provide for education and outreach on newborn screening and coordinated follow-up care once newborn screening has been conducted.

These bills will make great strides in ensuring the public's health and the essential mission of our Nation. Without health, children cannot grow to be all that God meant for them to be, adults cannot fulfill their role as contributing members of our society, and our elderly cannot peacefully live out their golden years.

If one were to ask any of us to list those things that might be the enemy of our destiny, we would all have to agree that poor health would be at the top of the list. For this reason, I will continue to fight for the expansion of quality health care programs to help ensure that every American can benefit from a more vibrant and productive quality of life.

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

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

U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. I rise in support of bringing this important agreement to the House floor.

Ladies and gentlemen, I come from the State of Illinois. I represent a district that's heavily dependent on exports for growing our economy. We make heavy construction equipment. We grow a lot of corn and soybeans. We export a tremendous amount of plastics and petrochemicals. This trade agreement is a big winner for States like Illinois as it is for our Nation.

You know, right now our products made in Colombia, whether farm products or manufactured goods, they enter the United States essentially duty free. The Andean Nations of Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia, they've got the opportunity for all their products to come to the United States duty free, but our products made in America face taxes when they're exported to Colombia. In fact, the bulldozers made in my district, I have 8,000 workers, union workers who work for Caterpillar, they make the yellow bulldozers. Mining is a big industry in Colombia, we want to sell those products there, but they face 15 percent tariffs when they're exported. It makes them harder to compete with the Asians.

The corn and soybeans and livestock products produced in my district, they face tariffs today up to 40 percent, making it hard to compete with the Argentinians and Brazilians and the Colombian market, a nation of over 40 million people.

The bottom line is 80 percent of U.S. exports to Colombia will be duty free immediately once this trade agreement goes into effect. And I would note that, as we've seen, countries like Chile and the central American countries and elsewhere where we have trade agreements, we've seen 50 percent faster growth in exports in nations who have trade agreements than those who do not.

And I would note also, again, Colombian products come to the United States duty free, tariff free, but our products face barriers going in. This agreement eliminates those and makes trade a two-way street. It's an important agreement, and I urge it be brought up for a vote and I urge bipartisan support.

Those who oppose this trade agreement say Colombia hasn't done

enough. And I want to begin by asking, who is the Republic of Colombia? What nation in Latin America is the oldest democracy in Latin America? It's Colombia. What nation is the second largest Spanish-speaking nation in all Latin America? Colombia. What nation is the most reliable ally of the United States, particularly when it comes to counterterrorism and counter-narcotics? Colombia. And what nation has done more under its current democratically elected president to reduce violence in Latin America? It's Colombia, clearly.

Colombia is not only a friend of the United States, in fact, our enemies in Latin America identify Colombia as our best friend. And they say, you know, watch the United States, they always turn their back on their friends; watch how they treat Colombia when it comes to this trade agreement.

And those who would argue against this trade agreement say, you know, you've got to look at the labor violence, you've got to look at the violence in the country; and Colombia just has not done enough to address violence. Well, President Uribe is the most popular elected president in this entire hemisphere. This Congress today suffers from a 15 percent approval rating, President Uribe in Colombia has an 80 percent approval rating. He was elected to reduce the violence in his country, and he succeeded.

In fact, 71 percent of Colombians today say they feel more secure because of President Uribe. Seventy-three percent say President Uribe respects human rights. Homicides are down 40 percent, kidnappings are down 76 percent. Colombians feel free to drive anywhere in Colombia. And I would point out that today, the murder rate in Colombia is lower than Washington, D.C., it's lower than Baltimore. It's safer to walk the streets of Bogota, Colombia than it is in Washington, D.C., yet those who oppose this agreement say the murder rate is too high and that Colombia needs to do more. But Washington, D.C. is more violent than Colombia.

Here's the facts: When it comes to labor violence, President Uribe has made major changes. He has increased the Prosecutor General's budget by 72 percent in the last 2 years. He has added over 2,100 new posts, adding 418 new prosecutors, 445 new investigators. He has done so much that the President of the United Workers Confederation of Colombia says, "never in the history of Colombia have we achieved something so important." Yet there are those who want to turn their back on President Uribe in Colombia.

And when it comes specifically to protections provided to labor leaders, and I have met with many Colombian labor leaders, and they note that in Colombia, if you're a labor activist or labor leader and you feel in danger, you can request special protection from the government.