

but by the early 1960s Martin guitars were back-ordered as much as 3 years.

In 1990, the company formalized its long-standing ecological policy which embraced the responsible use of natural materials and promoted the use of sustainable yield, alternative wood varieties.

Adopting such a progressive policy nearly 20 years ago has helped broaden the use of sustainable materials within the guitar industry over the last two decades and illustrates Martin's admirable dedication to responsible production. Martin's amazing longevity in a constantly changing industry is a true testament to the strength of the company's management and its commitment to crafting guitars of the highest quality.

Mr. Speaker, the Martin Guitar Company has been a source of tremendous pride in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania for generations. Today, I rise to congratulate the Martin family and their many employees on 175 years of achievement. I wish them many, many more years of incredible success. We are extraordinarily proud of them.

IRAQ

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, those who support our occupation of Iraq often justify it by saying that there will be a terrible humanitarian crisis if our troops leave. They must have missed the memo about the humanitarian crisis that already exists in Iraq. And they must be blind to the humanitarian crisis that goes on every day right here in America because of the occupation.

Last week, the Rand Corporation issued a shocking report which measured the crisis at home. The report found that 300,000 troops who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or major depression; that's about 20 percent of all the troops who have been deployed. The numbers are truly staggering, but when you add all the family members who are affected, you realize that we will never be able to calculate the full human toll of the Iraq invasion.

Mr. Speaker, the study was the first complete analysis of PTSD and depression problems. It should have been conducted by our government, our government, which, by the way, has the greatest responsibility for the care of our veterans, but it wasn't. It was conducted by the Rand Corporation, a private, nonprofit organization. The codirector of the report said one of the reasons that RAND did the study was because the Pentagon didn't, and they wanted to have the numbers. It is outrageous that our own Department of Defense didn't know how many of our veterans were suffering from PTSD and from major depression. How did our

government expect to address this health crises if it didn't know the full extent of it?

This is another example, Mr. Speaker, of the administration failing our troops. But it's hardly the only example. Over 125,000 veterans of the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan are on disability for hearing loss and other hearing problems. One of the chief reasons is the Pentagon's failure to fully anticipate the problem of road-side bombs. The blasts from these bombs cause violent changes in air pressure that can rupture the eardrum and break bones inside the ear.

And most tragically, we are learning that the government may be trying to cover up the problem of suicide among veterans. In a trial that opened yesterday, two organizations are suing the Department of Veterans Affairs for failing to provide adequate care to prevent suicides among veterans. An e-mail written by the head of the Mental Health Services for the VA was shown at that very trial. The e-mail referred to approximately 1,000 veterans under the VA's care who attempt suicide every month. And the memo said, "Shhhh! Is this something we should carefully address ourselves in some order of press release before someone stumbles on it?" This is incredible. The Veterans Administration is trying to figure out whether to hide the truth from the American people about the extent of the suicide problem among our veterans. What a disgrace.

Mr. Speaker, we have a solemn duty to care for our veterans, to honor them for their sacrifice, and the best way to honor those who have been injured is to make certain that more aren't injured. That means we must responsibly redeploy our troops out of Iraq. And it means we must get on with the task of helping the people of Iraq to rebuild their lives and their country, and healing the wounds of our veterans right here at home. The administration will not do it. It is up to Congress to do it.

We owe it to our veterans, to the American people, to the Iraqi people. And Mr. Speaker, we owe it to ourselves.

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

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

THE DRUG CONVICTION QUESTION AND FEDERAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, both the Washington Post and the New York Times reported that under

the Bush administration the military has increasingly granted so-called "conduct waivers" to allow more people with criminal records, including drug convictions, to serve in the Armed Forces. As a matter of fact, conduct waivers granted for felonies and other crimes constitute the majority of all waivers, about 60 percent for the Army, and 75 percent for the Marine Corps.

It is important to note that the vast majority of such convictions stem from juvenile offenses, but at the same time, a provision of the Higher Education Act, which Congress is currently in the process of reauthorizing, bars young people with drug convictions from receiving Federal financial aid to go to college. I find it absolutely alarming that the Bush administration seems to think that youth who are prone to youthful indiscretions and get into trouble with drug use are, on the one hand, not worthy of Federal support to obtain a college education, but on the other hand, are perfectly fit to go and to fight the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Because of what many have termed the "Drug War Draft," countless students with minor drug convictions are turned away from the university financial aid office only to be funneled across the street to the military recruiting office. While there is absolutely nothing wrong with giving young people with past drug convictions an opportunity to redeem themselves in service to our country by joining the armed services, it is a moral outrage that current law blocks redemption through educational opportunities to these same individuals.

When asked about the conduct waivers, the Army's Operations Chief Lieutenant General James Thurman stated, "You've got to give people an opportunity to serve." Well, I thoroughly agree with the general, people should be able to contribute to this society in whatever way they best can, whether by enlisting in the military or by enrolling in school and obtaining the skills needed to become productive members of our workforce, our communities, and by extension, our Nation.

SUNSET MEMORIAL

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

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I stand once again before this House with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is April 23, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand. That's just today, Mr. Speaker. That's more than the number of innocent lives lost on September 11 in this country, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,875 days since the tragedy called Roe v. Wade was first handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood

of almost 50 million of its own children. Some of them, Mr. Speaker, died and screamed as they did so, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over the vocal cords instead of air, no one could hear them.

And all of them had at least four things in common. First, they were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone, and each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each one of their mothers, whether she realizes it or not, will never be quite the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever. Yet even in the glare of such tragedy, this generation still clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims, those yet unborn.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it's time for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves of why we are really all here. Thomas Jefferson said, "The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government." The phrase in the 14th Amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution, it says, "No State shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is the clarion declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their Creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core, self-evident truth.

It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. Mr. Speaker, it is who we are.

And yet today another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We have failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection we should have given them. And it seems too sad to me, Mr. Speaker, that this Sunset Memorial may be the only acknowledgement or remembrance these children who died today will ever have in this Chamber.

So as a small gesture, I would ask those in the Chamber who are inclined to join me for a moment of silent memorial to these lost little Americans.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude in the hope that perhaps someone new who heard this Sunset Memorial tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies; that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express; and that 12,875 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough; and that the America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust is still courageous and compassionate enough to find a better way for mothers and their unborn babies than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are also numbered and that all too soon each one of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time.

And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the

cries of innocent unborn children. May that be the day when we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect these, the least of our tiny, little American brothers and sisters from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

It is April 23, 2008, 12,875 days since Roe versus Wade first stained the foundation of this Nation with the blood of its own children, this in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

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

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

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IN SUPPORT OF H. CON. RES. 322, RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

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

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise now to honor an ally who has stood with us in the global war on terrorism. An ally who knows what it's like to fight for peace and for freedom. An ally that continues to pursue liberty even amid increased threats. That ally is Israel.

A millennia ago the Israelites providentially escaped from captivity in Egypt. That event is remembered this week as Jews around the world celebrate Passover. Yet their struggles, of course, did not end after Moses' leadership.

Less than 10 decades ago, Israel was one of the most violent spots on the planet as various governments sought to destroy the fledgling nation. Today, just 60 years after its establishment, Israel has prospered and contributed to the economic, scientific, medical, and agricultural success of nations both in the Middle East and around the world.

I am a proud cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 322, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel, and it reaffirms the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Tonight I also want to recognize Israel's achievement in one particular area as well, and that is agriculture. And maybe it's fitting, with Earth Day here, this topic is especially relevant.

Israel is 60 percent desert, and yet scientists have found innovative farming methods that have allowed the desert there to bloom. Not only has Israel shared its newfound knowledge with the United States, but they have also shared technology and techniques with other nations which contain desert regions.

For example, the world's first surface drip irrigation system was developed in a Kibbutz near Beersheba in the 1960s. It was after an Israeli water engineer noticed a hedge that was noticeably different, healthier and taller. The man, Simcha Blass, used his discovery to create an irrigation device that uses friction and water pressure loss to leak drops of water at regular intervals. So today fruits and vegetable growers in many dry areas around the world use this drip irrigation method thanks to Israel.

In addition, scientists in Israel have developed genetically modified, disease-resistant fruits like bananas and peppers and other crops. These fruits and vegetables help expand the world's supply of food and maintain low prices at grocery stores here and abroad.

Since the 1970s Israel has partnered with the U.S. in several joint scientific ventures, including the Bi-national Agricultural Research Development Fund, BARD. This group basically focuses on enhancing agricultural productivity.

Israel has also pioneered advances in desalination. It was in Eilat, an arid city located at the intersection of the desert and the Red Sea, and it used to be a really barren settlement due to shortages in the water supply. Back then visitors had to bring their own water and wash their laundry in buckets. But today residents own swimming pools, plant flower gardens, and relax in shaded, grassy yards. It is due to desalination, and now the city is self-sufficient in maintaining its own water supply.

Desalination, which turns seawater into freshwater by separating salty compounds from water molecules, is now being considered here in the U.S. in places like Georgia and Texas and Florida. And according to the International Desalination Association, desalination makes up more than half of the freshwater used in the Middle East and North Africa, again thanks to Israel.

Clearly, Israel has demonstrated expertise in agricultural innovation. And as representative of the great State of New Jersey's Fifth District, which is home to many small farms, and New Jersey is called the Garden State, I appreciate Israel's agricultural developments and its willingness to disseminate research and to share that across international boundaries.

So I conclude simply by saying I salute Israel on its anniversary and its many achievements, and I thank that nation for making that nation what it is and for making the United States a better country as well.

FORECLOSURE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the housing foreclosure crisis in America is getting worse. Last February alone