

the proposals that they are examining, which are led by the Democrats, they believe their costs will go to 11.8 cents a kilowatt hour. That doesn't mean just in the vacuum. But take your electric bill that you pay this month, or the one you pay in July when it is really high because of air conditioning, and multiply it by 2½. That will be kind of a rule of thumb as to what some of the proposals out there are doing for energy costs.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I appreciate that. And I have tried to segue a little bit of the climate change debate. We mentioned it here with Chairman DINGELL. To be intellectually honest, a carbon tax would be a way to go. He says 50 cents a gallon. So if the average price today is \$3.65, you add 50 cents a gallon, Americans will be paying \$4.15 a gallon. Now, even in the cap and trade program, really cap and trade equates to 50 cents a gallon. And we just want folks to be intellectually honest and be clear, so the public has to understand.

An issue out today, politicians beware, the issue tied for last, climate change tied for last on a list of domestic priorities for President Bush and Congress in a 2008 survey from the Pew Research Center for the people in the press, lagging behind influence of lobbyists, moral breakdown, et cetera. Last. But California just passed a 20 to 30 percent increase on the electricity bills to deal with climate change. So if we want lower energy prices, we need more supply.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

EFFECTS OF TROOP DEPLOYMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the opportunity tonight in the 30-Something Working Group to talk about an item that is extremely important to America and particularly important to America's military families, and that is the effects of troop deployment on the children, families and communities of military personnel.

Speaker PELOSI has been so supportive of the notion that we need to make sure that we shape our policy, particularly around our Nation's veterans, in support of our military families. The extended troop deployments,

the tour after tour of duty, I know that so many of us as Members have met with soldiers' families and met with individual troops who have said they are on their third and fourth tour of duty, that they are having extended deployments, that they are having a much shorter than they are supposed to time between deployments. Normally they are supposed to go through about 365 days between deployments. Those times have not been respected and they have been sent back much sooner.

Since October 2001, approximately 1.6 million U.S. troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Deployed family members are leaving behind parents, children and spouses to provide a selfless patriotic service to our country. However, families are also asked to make great sacrifices when dealing with the stress and anxiety of multiple deployments, limited and infrequent communications, and the separation of a family member.

In this Month of the Military Child, we thought it was only appropriate that we show our support for those that themselves provide so much support to our soldiers and discuss the consequences of these prolonged separations.

I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, with a story of the Lopez family. The Lopez family is right here. They were profiled in the Sesame Workshop Talk, Listen, Connect Series. Ten-year-old Ernesto, who is the little boy right here, and 6-year-old Jennifer, live with their mother and baby brother on Fort Bragg in North Carolina, which is home of the Airborne and Special Operations Forces and one of the largest military bases in the world. Their dad, Staff Sergeant Ernesto Lopez, is in Iraq on his third tour of duty.

Look how little these children are. The daughter is 6 years old. If he is on his third tour of duty, and most of these tours of duty, Mr. Speaker, are, as you know, about a year each, that means that he has missed half of Jennifer's life already. Half. It is just unbelievable.

Jennifer keeps a special calendar in her room to mark the days until her dad comes home. Ernesto sleeps with a duplicate of the small ball that his father carries, a soft army ball with a molded helmet and a soldier's face, onto which Ernesto drew a heart that means "we love each other," in his words. Even baby Elan, who was born 2 days before his father was deployed, has a soft-sided photo album filled with pictures of his dad that his mother hopes will ease his recognition when he returns.

Imagine. It is going to be incredibly difficult for this family to go through the restoration of bonding that military families inevitably go through. I can't imagine having just given birth and having to leave to go across the world and not know whether or if I would see my family again. That is what our men and women that are fighting for us in Iraq are going

through every single day. And as Ernesto, Jennifer, Elan and Mrs. Lopez know so well, when a parent is deployed, the entire family is deployed.

The Lopez children are an example of the 1.2 million children under the age of 10 who have a parent or parents on active military duty or in the Reserves, which is more than at any other time since World War II.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be discussing the burdens of deployment on the children, families and communities of the brave men and women that serve us in uniform. Families and communities of military personnel are making huge sacrifices every day for the protection of this country, and we must be prepared as a Nation to ensure the well-being of military families, welcome home our brave soldiers at the end of their tours, and provide for their safe reintegration into their communities.

At this time, I would like to recognize the gentleman who suggested that the 30-Something Working Group take up this subject during our weekly hour. He is a tremendous leader when it comes to the issues important to veterans and military families, Chairman BOB FILNER, the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on many issues, especially in these special orders, and tonight a very important one, the effect of deployment on our families, our military families.

You know, this is a war that has gone on the second longest in our history. There are over 4,000 young men and women who have been killed. There have been at least 30,000 casualties that we account for of Americans, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. That 30,000 official figure, by the way, compare that with the following statistic: Over 800,000 veterans have already returned from this war in Iraq.

□ 2130

Over 300,000 of them have filed claims for injuries, whether physical or psychological, while in battle, 300,000. Compare that with the official figure of 30,000. It is a factor of ten. Something is not being told to the American people here.

But then, think of all the families involved of those who have been killed, the best and brightest of our young men and women, the casualties that we admit, the hundreds of thousands of casualties when they come home. Not only do they have to deal with fatality or grave injury, they have to deal with income problems. A spouse may have to take care of her husband and lose two incomes.

What about the children? Over 1 million children of those deployed or were deployed or will be deployed, how do they take daddy coming home, or not coming home, dealing with violence that is a symptom of PTSD, posttraumatic stress disorder, dealing with an amputated father or mother, dealing with brain injuries?

This is something that we as a society have got to deal with. It is part of the cost of war, and the cost of war that we have been asked to take on doesn't cover this. We have to fight for every penny for veterans and their families.

The President says support our troops, support our troops, support our troops. But when they come home, who supports the troops, and who is looking after the families? And that is what we are dealing with tonight.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. FILNER, your leadership on the Veterans' Affairs Committee has just been second to none. Your commitment to our military families has been so incredibly important in trying to make sure that we can highlight their needs and the struggles and difficulties that they go through; and the policy that you are shaping in your committee to make sure that we can improve their lives.

Look at the statistics there. The statistics there show just exactly what the impact is on our military families. The dark green shows 2003 to 2005 what you had in infidelity, it was about 4 percent. Fast forward to 2007, and we are at 15 percent. You go to divorce. We are at 11 percent 2003 to 2005, and you are up to 20 percent in 2007. And then look at any other problem. And of course the military families have problems just like anybody else, but look at the explosion of problems that military families have had in terms of their marital problems. In 2003 to 2005, it was 12 percent and they are at 27 percent now. Granted, war is a stressful situation, Mr. Chairman. But, my gosh, we need to do more. And I know that your committee is committed to doing that.

Mr. FILNER. Let me focus, if I may, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, on the children. And children have to deal again with dad or mom away for extended periods. You mentioned the Lopez family. Or the problems may really begin when dad or mom come comes back, amputated legs, spinal cord injuries, posttraumatic stress disorder.

Now, this is something that our VA or DOD or administration ought to be worried about, and yet it was left to the private sector to figure out, what do we tell our children? How do we answer something at an age-appropriate level?

And I want to thank the Sesame Street Workshop who produces Sesame Street, the nonprofit educational organization, for its leadership. As you mentioned, there are hundreds and thousands of children of military families who are impacted every day by the deployment of one or both of their parents. They responded to this 2 years ago by making an outreach tool to help families and their young children cope with the challenges of deployment: A DVD featuring Elmo who struggles with military deployment of his father, and urges his viewers to share their emotions and fears directly with their parents. After watching this video to-

gether, families have found a new opportunity to talk with their children and communicate together as a family.

Here is the first DVD that Sesame Street did under a Talk, Listen, and Connect series, Helping Families During Military Deployment; and also in Spanish, Partidos Militares Bienvenidos Cambios. And that was distributed with the help of the military and the help of the VA to hundreds of thousands of young people.

Just yesterday, Sesame Street launched a new DVD, a new series called Deployments, Homecoming, and Changes. And that addresses the level of anxiety children may experience after multiple deployments, as well as to help young children gain an age-appropriate understanding of a parent's combat-related health condition so the family can heal together. The DVD features again Elmo and Rosita, and intersperses the Muppets with real families like the Lopez family that you showed us earlier. They are meant for children, but spouses and friends and relatives facing a complicated transition of multiple deployments or the physical and psychological wounds.

I invite, by the way, all Members of the House of Representatives to meet Elmo and the Cookie Monster next Wednesday on May 7, at 4:00, at HC-5. Sesame Street will bring Elmo and the Cookie Monster. You can take pictures with him or her, I am not sure, and pick up a copy of this DVD. It will be distributed free to military families all over the Nation.

I hope every one of our colleagues picks up a copy, watches it, and helps distribute it in their own districts. This is an important tool that was produced for us by people who care about what is going on.

And I will tell you, we are now in the Month of the Military Child. We want to honor the children of military families. But we have now a tool to reach children. This is aimed at very young children below the age of five. And if they watch what is going on, again, I have seen some of the previews. One of the children of a parent with a prosthetic leg was shown bringing the leg to dad to try to make that situation sort of natural and a part of life and not something to be ashamed of or to fear. And so Sesame Street uses the power of video to connect with soldiers and their families and of course the children.

You can watch the video yourself. Go to sesameworkshop.org/tlc for Talk, Listen, and Connect; Hablen, Escuchen, Conecten, at sesameworkshop.org/tlc, and you can see that and watch it for yourself.

I would just like to say to my colleague from San Antonio, who is a psychologist and has dealt with children in his professional life and is a great aid on our veterans committee for issues of mental health and the issues we are talking about today, we thank you for your leadership, Mr. RODRIGUEZ.

Mr. Speaker, let me also thank Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for her steadfast support of America's children and her interest in the needs of veterans' families.

Every day the men and women of our armed forces sacrifice to protect and preserve our way of life, whether by putting themselves in harm's way, or by enduring time away from their loved ones at home.

I would like to recognize Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, for its leadership in serving the most vulnerable population of the Armed Services—the thousands of young children in military families who are impacted every day by issues related to deployment.

Sesame Workshop has responded to the needs of the 700,000 children under the age of 5 who have a parent in the military. In August 2006, Sesame Workshop launched a critically needed outreach tool to help families and their young children cope with the challenges of deployment.

In this video, Elmo struggles with the military deployment of his father and urges his viewers to share their emotions and fears directly with their parents.

After watching this video together, families have found a new opportunity to talk with their children and communicate together as a family.

Just yesterday, Sesame Workshop launched its second phase of its Talk, Listen, Connect series of videos for military children.

This newest resource kit is titled, "Deployments, Homecomings, Changes" and it addresses the level of anxiety children may experience after multiple deployments as well as help young children gain an age-appropriate understanding of a parent's combat-related health condition so the family can heal together.

These new outreach materials are meant for spouses, friends, and relatives of military parents and children who are facing the complicated transitions of multiple deployments or who have returned home with combat-related health injuries, both physical and psychological.

Elmo is again filling an unmet need for developmentally appropriate resources for young children.

This project has garnered overwhelming support from the military community, with nearly 400,000 of the original kits requested from active duty, National Guard, and reserve families to help build a sense of stability and resiliency during times of separation and change.

April is the "Month of the Military Child." Today, we are taking the time to honor the children in military families and acknowledging the personal sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome.

I applaud the critical work of organizations like Sesame Workshop whose project, Talk, Listen, Connect, has the sole purpose of helping make the lives of these children and their families a little easier during some of the most difficult of times.

I commend Sesame Workshop for its work to help empower children and adults alike, as well as help families overcome adversity together in order to bring hope for the future.

Sesame Workshop uses the power of video to connect with soldiers and their families during these difficult times. The video honestly addresses the sadness, confusion and anxiety

with sensitivity and clarity for the 700,000 preschool kids in this country whose parents serve lengthy and frequent deployments.

This video is available to watch on the internet. Just search for Sesame Workshop and TLC.

You can also order a kit on the web site—for your neighbor, your co-worker, or even your own child—that might be struggling with the extended deployment of a parent, or adapting to a parent that has returned home but is suffering from visible or invisible wounds.

As a Nation, we must do more than simply say we support our service members and their families. We must follow through with true deeds and bold action that will ultimately assist our military families as they make the transition into civilian life.

I urge you to learn more about Sesame Workshop and share these extraordinary resources with military families you know.

This video will begin to build a dialogue between children and parents, as well as this country and our Nation's military families. America cares for our military families and this Sesame Workshop film shares this message of support.

We need to make sure the fabric of our society is strong enough to ensure the well-being of the military family and I want to thank Sesame Workshop and the many organizations that contributed to this project.

Again, my thanks to Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for your leadership on this issue.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. And I want to personally take this opportunity to thank you for your leadership as chairman of the VA Committee. And I can honestly tell you that I spent 8 years on the committee prior to leaving for 2 years and then coming back, and it has been day and night with your leadership there. And I want to personally thank you.

Nothing was more frustrating than to serve on the VA Committee for 8 long years and not be able to make things happen. And, in fact, during that period of time is when we were charging our veterans even co-payments and fees and those kind of things. But in the last 1 year and 4 months we have been able, not only with the 2007 budget, the 2008 budget, and the supplemental, we have been able to put \$13 billion to our veterans. And so I want to personally thank you for your leadership on the part of the legislation that we have passed.

Just today in your committee, Mr. Chairman—and Chairwoman, thank you for this opportunity—we are able to pass a series of bills, one of them that seemed so simple, but picks up the COLA that addresses the needs of the survivor spouse as well as children, survivors of veterans, as well as disability compensation. So I want to thank you for that.

Let me just give you a couple of statistics. More than 700,000 children have had parents deployed at some point during the conflict, 700,000 children; 19,000 children have had their parents wounded in action; some 2,220 children have lost their parents both in Afghan-

istan and Iraq. Not to mention the fact that we have lost more soldiers, some 6,000 per year, to suicides, which is uncalled for. And I am really glad that we have started to move on working on posttraumatic stress with our soldiers and adding some resources, and including legislation that allows an opportunity for the first time to reach out and work with the families of those individuals that suffer from posttraumatic stress disorders.

I know personally, just like those families know, that when somebody suffers from posttraumatic stress, just like when somebody suffers from alcoholism, the whole family gets impacted, the children, the spouses.

I just got a call a couple of weeks ago from a soldier that is getting deployed for the fourth time. And he was basically telling me, "Mr. RODRIGUEZ, I have already lost my wife, we have gotten a divorce, and they are now taking away the opportunity for me to visit the children."

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Can I ask you a question on that? Given your expertise and your professional background in psychology; obviously posttraumatic stress disorder is incredibly stressful on families, and I just want to bring up some statistics and maybe have you comment on them.

We have documentation that servicemembers who are given a diagnosis of PTSD were significantly more likely to perpetrate violence toward their partners, with more than 80 percent committing at least one act of violence in the previous year, and almost half at least one severe act. And that source, the third-party validator we have on that is the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, and that was back in 2003 that they cited that.

The stress on families, beyond the deployment, which is obviously incredibly stressful. When they come back and they are suffering from PTSD, that has to have an incredibly horrific impact.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. It really does. And one of the things that we are now looking back, and we should even go back to the Vietnam era, a large number of those veterans that are homeless out there are suffering from posttraumatic stress from the Vietnam veteran era. So we cannot allow that to occur to this generation of soldiers coming in from Iraq and Afghanistan. So I am real pleased with the resources that we have come forward. Now, we have got to make sure that we have those programs and treatment that reach out not only to that veteran but to the entire family and community as a whole. We allowed for legislation because we don't have the sufficient workers out there to provide that treatment, to contract out with the community health centers, mental health centers, to reach out as quickly as possible to those specific soldiers.

We are anticipating, and we are trying to make it more flexible so that soldiers can go through that treat-

ment, because we also know that part of that is we don't want them to go through the stigma, but it almost has to be required that every soldier in those kind of settings go through some degree of treatment to assure that we can come to grips with it as quickly as possible.

We know that the number of suicides that are occurring right now, some 6,000 annually, that is uncalled for. And it is disproportional on the side of veterans versus the general public in terms of those suicides.

I had a young lady in the military that committed suicide. And, believe me, when they commit suicide while in the military, they get treated very differently. The family does not get any compensation whatsoever. And we are having difficulty right now, as we had difficulty with the DOD, Department of Defense, when they ID'd some 22,000 soldiers with personality disorders. When that occurs, that means that it is a preexisting condition. We have to go back and assess. Maybe they do belong with that diagnosis, but we have got to make sure that they are not wrongly diagnosed and not given what they should be; otherwise, they won't be receiving their compensation.

So I want to personally thank you for allowing us to come here tonight and talk about our soldiers and their families and their children, because they are the ones who are also suffering, and those statistics are just alarming and we should not tolerate that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And in this Month of the Military Child, we want to make sure that we highlight the impact on our military members' families, because they are the ones that end up forgotten.

And I thank all of you for coming this evening, because you all have some unique experience and involvement, unique constituencies who are significantly impacted by our troops' deployment in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And someone who in particular has a specific family member who has inspired him is Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, who actually was inspired to run for Congress by his son, Michael, who in response to the attacks from September 11 sought and received a commission in the United States Air Force. And Michael suggested that his dad serve his country, too, by running for Congress. And when they pulled together as a family, Congressman MCNERNEY decided that that was what he needed to do. And we were so pleased when your victory became clear on election night in 2006, and it is with a deep sense of duty and your family's support that I know you are serving here and serving admirably.

So, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY).

Mr. MCNERNEY. Thank you, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And first I want to say thank you personally for everything you have done for this institution and for this Nation. The kind of

leadership you are showing tonight has been shown over and over throughout your 3½ years in the Congress, and I look forward to that kind of leadership in the future.

I want to say a few things about posttraumatic stress. The marital problems diagram that we saw earlier is a shocking example of the kind of thing that we are seeing throughout society as a result of this conflict. It turns out that about one in five of our soldiers that returns from Iraq is suffering from a serious form of posttraumatic stress. And that correlates very well with the numbers we are seeing in the graph: About 20 percent of divorce in the current year, 27 percent of other problems, 15 percent of infidelity. So we know that those numbers are about right. And this is exacerbated by having extended tours, by staying there longer than 12 months, and by going back repeatedly. And we know now that only about half of the servicemembers who are suffering from posttraumatic stress and veterans are receiving the right kind of treatment or are receiving any kind of treatment or have sought treatment.

□ 2145

We know that only about half of those that are looking for treatment are getting the kind of treatment they need. So only about 5 percent of the veterans really are getting the kind of treatment that they need on that.

We really do owe the veterans of the country that have served, that have volunteered in this day and age to serve our country, to go to a conflict region, knowing that their lives are in danger, that they could end up with post-traumatic stress, that it is going to be harmful on their families, nonetheless they volunteered to serve our country, to protect our freedom and fight for us back home. No matter how you feel about the war and any of those political issues, we should all agree that we owe our veterans for what they have done for our country.

You are finding throughout this Congress, the 110th Congress, that we have made a collective decision to do what we can for the veterans. We have increased the VA budget by \$8 billion over the previous year. And that is significant. That is great, but we still need to do a lot more, and we are moving in that direction.

Today in the Veterans' Affairs Committee we had some bills on the GI bill for the 21st century which are an extension of the Montgomery GI bill, a terrific advancement to give our veterans the kind of education that they need to be productive members of our society.

That money is very, very well spent. I have heard oftentimes that for every dollar we invest in education for our veterans, we get paid back ten-fold. You can see that as a true indication of what happened after World War II. The veterans came back from World War II, and they were given a terrific GI bill,

and they have contributed to our society in so many ways in terms of developing our infrastructure, in terms of raising our national stature. And we want to make sure that the veterans coming back from Iraq today have those same opportunities to contribute in other ways than just participating in the war.

With regard to the Iraq war, a specific type of injury is the hallmark or signature of this war, that is the traumatic brain injury. Before in earlier conflicts those kind of injuries, a serious form of traumatic brain injury resulted in death. Today they know how to treat that injury. I will give you sort of a graphic explanation. If that is going to be offensive, you better turn off the sound for a little while.

Basically in a serious form of traumatic brain injury, you get a bullet or shrapnel lodged in the brain, and what happens is your brain begins to swell from the injury. And so unless that swelling is dealt with very soon after the injury, the subject will die. So what they do in the field now is they open up a large section of your skull. They remove the skull itself and embed that into your GI territory to keep that skull viable so it can be reattached later on. In this situation the brain is allowed to swell, and they will have this proceed for about a month. During that time they need to put you in a cold surrounding. They put a cold jacket on you so you are shivering in your bed for about a month. They keep you on medication to keep the swelling down. When the swelling eventually goes down, they will reattach the skull and let you heal.

Another problem is when you have this sort of injury, you are very susceptible to reinjure that, to swell it after they have removed the shrapnel if they can or the bullet. You are very susceptible, so you have to be very careful a year or longer after this kind of injury.

We had a young man from my district, from the town of Manteca. It is a small town of about 60,000 people. He was a Navy corpsman and he was serving in Iraq and their convoy was attacked. He was servicing marines that were injured, and a piece of shrapnel was embedded into his brain. It went in through his eye and he lost his eye. He went through the treatment, and then they brought him back to Bethesda, Maryland. I visited him there a couple of times. This is a very long recovery. The young man is doing fine. He is back home now.

I can tell you the town of Manteca where he grew up and lived and went to church really came together for him. They had a dinner when he was still in Bethesda. About 300 people came out to the dinner to contribute and to show their support for this young man. It was a terrific outpouring of community and faith and love. It was a terrific thing to be representing this kind of town and this kind of a district where people come together in that sort of way for one of their own.

And then when he did come home, the church that he went to, they had a gathering. About a thousand people showed up, and he was there receiving accolades and welcome and love from the entire community. I can tell you, it is a terrible thing to see. Unfortunately, a lot of our young men and women who come back from Iraq don't have that strong of a community. We need to make sure that we provide them, through treatments and efforts to integrate them back into society, to educate them, that they get that sort of opportunity and that they receive the kind of reward that they should for the kind of service and sacrifice that they have made.

With that, I yield back to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and thank you for your leadership.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. MCNERNEY, thank you. It is wonderful we have someone of your stature and your commitment, that is willing to come to the floor and talk about the importance of making sure that we take care of not just the troops but of the troops' family members because they are making a decision to serve the public as well. They make sacrifices, and we all wanted to come together tonight as House Democrats and talk about the sacrifices that those families make.

It is my distinct pleasure to yield to my colleague from Ohio, Congressman ZACK SPACE, whose father served in the Marines during the Korean War, and who also serves on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and has been a passionate advocate on behalf of issues important to veterans and their families.

Mr. SPACE. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for taking the lead on this initiative.

In assessing the cost of war, all too often we resort to cold, hard numbers. And we return to things like the financial cost of this war, how much is it costing this Nation or how many lives have we lost. Those are important considerations, obviously; but in assessing the cost of this war, I think it is important that we as a body, as an institution, point out that there are other costs. For example, the loss of international goodwill, the cost of veterans' care is a part of the cost of war, and what we are talking about tonight, the strain and the effect that the war has had on families.

As I see it, there are a lot of different ways to measure that. The most immediate and obvious is the trauma of deployment. Many families in this country today are uneasy as we speak, praying and worrying about their loved ones who are in a strange and foreign land subjected to hostile conditions.

The financial strain on these families is enormous. The marital strain is significant. The cost to a child who doesn't even know their parent, it affects entire families.

I, too, have a loved one serving now in his second tour of duty in Iraq. Zack

Space is his name as well, my cousin. I had the pleasure of spending some time with his folks Sunday in Ohio for Greek Orthodox Easter. We gathered as a family very mindful of little Zack's absence, and prayed for him. To see the concern and worry in his mother's eyes is moving and very visceral.

A second way of evaluating the cost and strain that this war has had on families is to look at the loss that those families have occasioned. We have heard some testimony today from some very able folks talking about the realities of war and those who are returning from war, the suicide rates, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, even the breakdown of the traditional family unit. They are all affected by the rigors of war.

And many of these attributes are due to post-traumatic disorder or traumatic brain injury that my colleagues have talked about today, lifelong conditions that will forever plague these families.

I would like to talk if I could for a moment about a couple of folks back home and some others that have had a really profound effect on me and my impressions of this war. One of them is Army Corporal Keith Nepesa, who at the age of 22 years was killed in June of 2007 from wounds sustained when an IED detonated near his vehicle in Iraq. Keith was from New Philadelphia, Ohio, in Tuscarawas County, and I know his father. I went to his funeral and again saw the look in their eyes as they laid their son to rest. They will forever be plagued by this war. Their lives will never be the same.

Another young man from my region, Marine Gunnery Sergeant Joshua Heck who was grievously injured on the battlefield last year, and I went to visit him in Walter Reed not long after his return to the States, a return of a shattered man who had lost limbs, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and doomed to a life much different than that which he took with him to Iraq.

I had the pleasure of meeting his wife, Brooke, and his mother who were at his side at Walter Reed bearing much of this burden. As a side note, Joshua, in his hospital bed when I went to visit him, it was at a time when we were debating the course of action that this Congress should take on the war. I asked him what he thought we should do. Having been there, I felt he was qualified to make that assessment and I welcomed his input.

When I asked him that question his response was: Sir, that's not for me to say. You tell me to fight, I fight. I'm a soldier. You tell me to stop and I stop.

And despite his broken body, his love for this country remained as strong as ever. I found it very moving and touching.

Under the leadership of Chairman FILNER, our Veterans' Affairs Committee earlier this year held an Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing on the care of the seriously in-

jured after inpatient care. And at this hearing we received testimony from Sarah Wade, not of my district, but who came to testify on behalf of her husband, Sergeant Ted Wade, who had sustained traumatic brain injury.

□ 2200

And Sarah has been left with a completely different life than that which she had before her husband went off to war. He, and she, and their family, will forever be plagued by these injuries.

When young men and women are killed in this war, or come back grievously wounded, it's not just the soldier that suffers, it's their family. And it's not just the family that suffers, it's their community. Their communities grieve.

I'm blessed with a special district. Ohio's 18 district is one wonderful small town after another. The largest city I have in my district has about 25,000 people. And there are a lot of great things about living in a district like that. We're very community-oriented. There's a strong sense of personal responsibility. When good things happen to us, we celebrate together. When bad things happen, like the loss of a heroic soldier, like Corporal Nepesa, we grieve together as a community. Our community continues to grieve for him, as well as the 15 other young men who went to this war and will never come home.

This war has spread its tentacles in many different directions within our culture. As a Member of Congress, I'm sure I share this sentiment with all of those colleagues who are here with me today. We have a sacred obligation to make sure that we protect them while at war to the extent that we're able. But we also have an obligation to bring them home to their families and to their communities as soon as we are able.

I yield back.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you so much, Mr. SPACE and thank you for your commitment. You really have been representing your district proudly, and I know they're proud of you. And I am honored to serve with you. We truly appreciate your being here this evening.

It's now my pleasure to yield a few minutes to my 30 something colleague who is a little bit more familiar with the normal give and take that we have in the 30-Something group. This is a little more staid and low key for 30-Something, but we're trying to help you all keep up with the pace. And feel free, to my colleagues, to jump in. We usually have a little bit more dynamic style in the 30-Something instead of a one at a time type of approach.

So my colleague, Congressman ALTMIRE, from the great State of Pennsylvania, I have to tell a story before I yield to you. And you've heard me tell this before.

Literally, I'm on the whip team for our caucus, and it was my responsibility right after Mr. ALTMIRE's elec-

tion to sidle over to him and talk to him about some legislation that we wanted him to vote with the caucus on. And literally, his first words to me were that he had to make sure what the impact was on veterans, and that he came here to make sure that the quality of life of our Nation's veterans was upheld and that that was paramount to him. So I thought that was really admirable and wonderful; and you have represented veterans in your community incredibly well.

And I yield to my colleague from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I appreciate the gentlewoman's kind remarks and yielding me the time. And I appreciate my colleagues who have been here allowing me the opportunity to speak because I do have to take the chair. And I want to thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BRALEY) for his patience while he waits for me to step up to the plate.

I really think it's important for us to consider the work that this Congress has done on these issues. And we've spent a lot of time tonight talking about the problem; and that's very important. But it's important that our colleagues and the American people understand what we've done about it. We're not just in a position where we're going to talk about what's wrong. And we know the issues.

There's 700,000 children in America where the head of the household has been deployed. 700,000 children that are missing a parent right now because they're deployed overseas. 19,000 children have had a parent wounded in action. 22,000 have lost a parent in Iraq or Afghanistan.

And we have 40 percent of active duty servicemen and women that are married. So, Mr. SPACE talked about the effect of the spouse, certainly in the tragic extreme, but even when they're deployed and all of the circumstances that arise.

And just today, the American Psychiatric Association released a study focused on the mental health effects of deployments on servicemembers and their family. And that study, again, by the American Psychiatric Association, said that over 30 percent of military family members admitted to being very stressed because of the deployment.

Five years into the war in Iraq, one out of five, 20 percent of those family members surveyed, did not realize that they had the ability to access mental health care treatment to help them with that stress.

And I know we've talked tonight, and it's well documented, the increase in spousal abuse that takes place upon the return from active duty service.

So what has this Congress done? And there are many examples we can give. The largest increase in the 77-year history of VA. We've talked many times.

I wanted to talk about one specific amendment that took place which I offered to the Defense Authorization Bill that dealt with family and medical

leave, and extending the current Family and Medical Leave Act to cover the family members of military, Guard and Reserve members who were deployed, because we obviously need to allow time to work with families in those post-deployment briefings that often take place during the work day. They can't get time off work when they're gathering with their peers from the region to learn what's happening overseas and what the updates are for what's available to them. They should be able to take that time for family medical leave.

Household expenses, getting their financial house in order, dealing with child care issues, all of these are things that are now covered under family medical leave because of the actions of this Congress. This has been signed into law.

Importantly, when the serviceman or woman is injured overseas, you can take Family and Medical Leave Act time to care for the injured serviceman or woman. That's incredibly important. That's going to fundamentally change people's lives, and that's something that this Congress did.

But most to the point of what we're talking about with this study from the American Psychiatric Association and other evidence that exists, we allow family members to take Family and Medical Leave Act time to re-assimilate, as a family, after the serviceman or woman returns from their deployment so they can get to know each other again, spend time with their spouse, spend time with their kids. That is incredibly important. That is a huge achievement of this Congress, and that's something that I'm very proud of, that this Congress has done. That's been signed into law, and it is going to have a major impact on the lives of our brave servicemen and women who are fighting for this country.

So I just wanted to tell that story before I took the chair. And again, I would thank Mr. BRALEY, and I would yield back to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. ALTMIRE. And thank you for really making America's military, veterans as well as the troops currently serving, a high priority for yourself and your agenda and the issues that you champion on behalf of the people in the district that you represent in Pennsylvania.

I want to turn now to another Pennsylvanian who served in the United States Navy for 31 years and rose to the rank of three star Admiral. His battle group conducted combat operations in Afghanistan and precursor operations to the war in Iraq, and he is one of our caucus' foremost experts on the issues that are important to military families and that are important to us as we try to wrestle with this very difficult issue of how we're going to extricate ourselves from this war in Iraq. And our caucus has tremendous respect for your service. And it's my pleasure to yield to Congressman JOE SESTAK.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you very much. I may be the one slowing us down tonight because I'm 50-something in a 30-something group.

This is wonderful. If I might speak, I'm really honored to be asked to say a few words on the last day of the Month of the Military Child.

In the Pentagon, across from the Secretary of Defense's office is the best painting in all of the Pentagon. It's of a young servicemember kneeling in church. And next to him is his young spouse and his young child. And under it is that wonderful saying from the book of Isaiah where God turns to Isaiah and says, Who shall I send? Who will go for us? And Isaiah replies, here am I. Send me.

But really, what that picture depicts is the family that actually is saying, here we are, send us.

I got to know, joining up in 1970 and on, a lot of those families. We don't have, in the military, a human resource department where you outsource problems or challenges. So you sit with them when they're in debt and help to balance their checkbook, or you sit there with them trying to make sure that they get the proper care in the hospital. You get to know the families very well.

And you get to know them in another way during long deployments. Back then, in those early 1970 days, you'd sit there as a young man came up after leaving port and receiving a letter, or getting a letter at sea from another ship as it passes from ship to ship, from his wife that says, Johnny's okay after the operation. But he didn't know about the operation. Maybe in the next port of call, 30 days later, the letter would come in that said, want you to know Johnny had a broken leg. It's okay. He'll have an operation next week.

Or go ahead 3½ decades or so, and how I could sit there and, with technology, record over the Internet and read each evening to my daughter, who was, during this, while gone from her for about a year, during the war and would be able to read to her a book so that she'd go up to the TV and just kiss it. Even today, 7 years later she goes up to the TV if I'm on and kisses it.

I bring those up because I think what people in the military learn is that when authority or responsibility passes, and you come home, that what's really left is the infinite tenderness and caring of a loving family.

And yet, we also recognize in the military, in words that were more reflective of its time, three, 3½ decades ago, that on the commissary bag, shopping bags of each of the military or the Navy complexes would be a saying, "Navy wife, toughest job in the Navy."

Or as 70 years ago, the wife of a Chief of Naval Operations said in a poem, a Navy wife remembers. When crying seems likely, just laugh it away.

I bring those up because what sets our military apart from our professions, as someone once said, is it has

the dignity of danger. And the character that our men and women who serve in the military show and triumph which didn't begin in theories. It really begins in those places from whence we come and the people who made us who we are, not just our communities, but in particular our families.

And I bring that up because today as was brought out here, is every war is different. World War II, our veterans, on average, had about 182 days of combat. Horrific combat. Battles like Normandy or Guadalcanal. But there was some dwell time in between those battles, time for your physical nerves to adjust, which has a major impact upon your mental state, and time for your mental state to readjust.

In Iraq, however, our soldiers go outside the wire every day for 15 months, into a combat-like situation, and then they come home for 12 and go back again. And then come back to families where 19 percent of them face Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, 33 percent have a mental challenge from depression to anxiety.

So as our families say, here we are, send us, it's never been more vital than now to recognize that if this Nation still wants its families to say here we are, send us, we, more than ever before, I believe, owe it to our veterans to take care of them and their families in the ways that have been laid out much better than I could have by my colleagues. So thank you for speaking tonight.

It's a wonderful brotherhood and sisterhood I lived in for many years that finds the grandest sepulchre of all, a home in the hearts of brave men and women. But again, when all that passes out there, what's left is that family. And whatever we can do for them, from now and forever, is the most arduous responsibility I believe Congress, in this time of war can be charged with.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you so much, Mr. SESTAK, for your 31 years of military service and now your continued public service to our country and to the citizens of Pennsylvania and your district. We really truly appreciate your expertise and the heart that you put into this job in representing your community. So thank you so much for joining us.

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It's my pleasure to turn to someone who I admire and respect and look up to. She is one of the few women that are in a leadership role in our Congress on the Armed Services Committee, and she is really a person who has broken through on the issues that are important to the military and the military families and provided a different perspective, as women often do.

And this was such a tremendous source of pride for me, Ms. Davis, that you chair the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, which is an incredibly important assignment of the House Armed Services Committee; and you represent the community of San Diego so admirably in this institution, and

you have been a champion on behalf of veterans and military families.

It is my pleasure to yield to you. Thank you so much for joining us.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Thank you, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Mr. Speaker, I really am delighted to join my colleagues here and to hear the warm stories that they've told and how critical, how important the issue that we're speaking about this evening is because, you know, what is it about? It's really about our national security, and it is about the willingness of men and women to serve.

I found a quote from our first Commander in Chief, President Washington, and I think it's appropriate to what we've been talking about here today because he said that "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."

And I would add to what President Washington said that the willingness with which our families are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive families of early wars were treated and appreciated by our Nation.

When I first came to Congress and I found this fabulous opportunity to serve on the Armed Services Committee, we were not at war. And I met with many of our families and our ombudspople in the Navy and began to understand what they go through. And I remember so strongly that one of the spouses, one of the ombudsmen said to me, You know, people think of our husbands who deploy on ships, obviously, in the Navy. But, you know, all of us prepare and deploy, that families prepare for this. She was talking about a time when we are not at war.

So we can imagine how difficult it is for families who are preparing for that deployment, preparing for the kind of uncertainties that they know will be around the corner. And that's so difficult.

You have the picture of the family here and the children, and I look at the faces of the children; and I see such resilience in their eyes, and children are tremendously resilient. But the reality is that our children who go to school, and most of our children go to regular schools; they don't go to schools where there are only military families, and on some of our bases that's true, but I have learned on many of our bases that most of the families are in public schools out in the community.

Many of those children come to school with great fears of what is going to happen that day. They don't know if Mommy and Daddy are even going to come home, those who are a little more sophisticated about what they are going through. So we have to be very, very careful, be very, very supportive of those families.

We can even think about our own struggles at home, our own struggles

with financial issues and just the general stuff that any couples go through and then magnify that for our families. Many of our families are very young, and we especially need to be supportive of them.

We've covered a lot of ground here this evening, so I don't want to have to go over some of that ground. But if we're going to deploy our men and women at the current pace that we're doing today, we really have to understand the consequences of our policy decisions and sufficiently address how they affect the brave men and women who are serving.

And there is one area that I think the public is learning more about now. And the other day, I had a few hours, and I decided that I didn't have anybody to go with at the time but I wanted to just go see the movie *Stop-Loss*. And I wanted to just sit in that theater by myself and feel the full impact of that movie because there is a policy involved there that we have undertaken. And I think when you go and you see the movie, and I would certainly encourage people to do that to understand the pain that our families go through, how unpredictable it is and how difficult it is.

We have been looking at this policy, of course, and we would like to stop it. But we know that in fact we need the men and women serving today. So as much as we want to stop that, we're not able to do that right away. *Stop-loss*, as we know, allows the military to extend a servicemember's time in uniform, and it has been used far too often, and there have been some attempts to change that. We also know, very significantly, predictability is so important to our men and women who serve, and the repeated deployments make that very, very difficult.

So I think we need to focus, and we are, on the dwell-time that families have. They need to readjust. I have had spouses tell me that now that they've been through so many deployments, they're beginning to teach other families about how to give their loved ones space because when you come home, the family wants to just be right there. Well, sometimes that doesn't work so well, and people need to learn that.

So I think that with many of the policies that we're working on today, and yes, we are learning more; we're learning more about PTSD, we're learning about how we can erase the stigma, and I think the military can actually lead the way for the country in that if we do it right.

So I just want to commend you for having this time today and let you know that we are working hard on this. I wish we could work a lot faster on these issues. But we are trying very hard and keeping in mind every day our wonderful men and women who are serving and their families. They are the ones who are sacrificing today, and we need to give them every support that we can.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Ms. DAVIS.

Mr. Speaker, I sense that our time is drawing to a close.

The whole point of doing this 30-Something hour focused on the impact of deployments on military families was to try to improve the quality of their life and decrease the impact, the negative impact.

I just want to show you an important statistic here is that less than 50 percent of military families felt that they had support available through all of the phases of their family members' deployment, and that is absolutely unconscionable. It is something that Chairman FILNER and the members of the Armed Services Committee, as well as the Veterans' Affairs Committee, have been working very hard at trying to improve, and that is what the Democratic Caucus, under Speaker PELOSI's leadership, has been absolutely committed to.

Mr. Speaker, I want to yield 30 seconds to Mr. SPACE, and then we will wrap up.

Mr. SPACE. I, once again, thank the gentlewoman from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, when we ask troops to go to war, we have a couple of obligations: We have to make sure that we only send them to war when we have to, that we give them the protection on the battlefield to keep them safe and allow them to accomplish their mission, care for them when they return, especially if they're wounded; but certainly, as our colleague from Pennsylvania, Admiral Sestak, attested to, abide by their familial concerns.

It is absolutely unacceptable that 50 percent of all family members of those who are deployed feel that they're not receiving the support they deserve. I thank the gentlewoman for bringing attention to it and beginning to address that problem.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, to bring us home, Mr. MCNERNEY.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Thank you, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of different aspects of the stress of this war on our soldiers, from the families and the children, to the men and women serving.

One thing we haven't talked about is financial stress, and we know that veterans, especially guardsmen and women and reservists when they go overseas, they're particularly vulnerable to foreclosure; and just today in the Veteran's Affairs Committee, we did pass a significant Veterans Housing Authority bill that will be available to those young men and women coming up in the next month or two.

So we're working at all parts of this problem and finding ways to help the veterans through the crises that they're going to be facing upon return, and we welcome them back. This country loves our veterans, and we want to do everything we can for them.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, with that, in honor of the Month of the Military Child, we thank

Speaker PELOSI for her generous donation of this time to the 30-Something Working Group.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. PENCE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, May 1.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, May 7.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, May 7.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced her signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 2457. To provide for extensions of leases of certain land by Mashantucket Pequot (Western) Tribe.

S. 2739. To authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior, the Forest Service, and the Department of Energy, to implement further the Act approving the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 1, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6306. A letter from the Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of the Navy, Case Number 05-01, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1351; to the Committee on Appropriations.

6307. A letter from the Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of the Navy, Case Number 07-05, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

6308. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Department of Defense, transmitting Pursuant to Section 27(f) of the Arms Export Control Act and Section 1(f) of Executive Order 11958, Transmittal No. 06-08 informing of an intent to sign the Integrated Soldier Capabilities Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and the United Kingdom, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2767(f); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6309. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Department of Defense, transmitting Pursuant to Section 27(f) of the Arms Export Control Act and Section 1(f) of Executive Order 11958, Transmittal No. 03-08 informing of an intent to sign the New, More Powerful, and Insensitive Melt-Cast Metallized Explosives Research Collaboration Project Agreement under the Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and the Republic of Singapore, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2767(f); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6310. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo that was declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6311. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6312. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting notification of an Accountability Review Board to examine the facts and the circumstances of the loss of life at a U.S. mission abroad and to report and make recommendations, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 4834(d)(1); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6313. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-243), the Authorization for the Use of Force Against Iraq Resolution (Pub. L. 102-1), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, a report prepared by the Department of State for the February 15, 2007 — April 15, 2007 reporting period including matters relating to post-liberation Iraq under Section 7 of the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-338); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6314. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification of a proposed agreement for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Japan (Transmittal No. DDTC 051-08); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6315. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification of a proposed agreement for the export of defense articles and services to the Governments of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Canada (Transmittal No. DDTC 044-08); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6316. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification of a

proposed agreement for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Portugal (Transmittal No. DDTC 048-08); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6317. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification of a proposed agreement for the export of technical data, defense articles and services to the Governments of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Italy, South Africa, and Malaysia (Transmittal No. DDTC 131-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6318. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 3(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed transfer of major defense equipment from the Government of Germany (Transmittal No. RSAT-02-08); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6319. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's report on the status of Data Mining Activities, pursuant to Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act, Section 804; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6320. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Semiannual Report of the Office of Inspector General for the period ending September 30, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6321. A letter from the EEO Programs Director, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the third annual report pursuant to Section 203(a) of the No Fear Act, Pub. L. 107-174, for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6322. A letter from the Associate Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency, transmitting the Agency's annual report prepared in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-174, for Fiscal Years 2007 and 2006; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6323. A letter from the Equal Employment Opportunity Director, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's annual report pursuant to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 for Fiscal Year 2007; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6324. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting the Commission's FY 2006 Annual Report pursuant to Section 203, Title II of the No Fear Act, Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6325. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting the Administration's Fiscal Year 2007 Notification and Federal Employee Anti-Discrimination and Retaliation (No FEAR) Act Annual Report; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6326. A letter from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting the Office's comments on H.R. 5687, a bill to amend the Federal Advisory Committee Act; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6327. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; State Boat Channel, Babylon, NY [USCG-2008-0151] received April 7,