

SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF OUR TROOPS

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, last week, Members of this House were given a chance to put some real action behind the slogan, "Support the Troops," because one of the spending votes that we had before us included a provision to support the 21st Century Veterans Bill of Rights.

This Bill of Rights will restore full, 4-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars to help make these troops, these soldiers part of an economic recovery like the veterans of World War II.

The first 2 years of the new GI Bill would cost what we spend in 2 days in Iraq. Imagine that. We could provide our veterans with 2 years of the GI Bill for 2 days of what we spend in Iraq. And yet some folks here in the House could not bring themselves to support the provision. All I can say is, what does that say to our brave men and women in uniform?

Veterans who have sacrificed for our country deserve to receive our Nation's support. The administration sent them to Iraq, and because they are vigilant and dedicated, very few of us standing here today serving in the U.S. House of Representatives or Senate have sent our sons and daughters over there.

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We haven't had to watch our kids be killed or wounded.

And we must not let our troops down. A prime example of letting them down comes from one of our Nation's top research arms, the National Institute of Mental Health. In a recently released report, the Institute found that the number of suicides among veterans of the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan may exceed the combat death toll because of inadequate mental health care. According to the Director of Community Mental Health Centers, hobbled by financial limits, haven't provided enough scientifically sound care, especially in rural areas.

We've lost more than 4,000 of our Nation's bravest to deadly attacks in Iraq alone. How can a nation stand by while we lose that many men and women to suicide? It is unbelievable that we would be allowing this to happen.

According to a report by the Rand Corporation, soldiers who have been exposed to combat trauma were the most likely to suffer from depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. About 53 percent of soldiers sought treatment during the past year; half of those who received care were judged by Rand researchers to have gotten inadequate treatment. That means about three-quarters of those in need of mental health assistance are going without or are receiving inadequate treatment. Is that how a grateful nation shows its appreciation?

Meeting the needs of our returning troops should be how we show our appreciation, and it should be paramount in our fiscal deliberations. But we can go one step further. We can bring our troops home. We can reject the administration's call to send more troops into the theater. Once we fully fund the safe and orderly redeployment of our troops and military contractors, we can focus our efforts on the men and women walking with hidden wounds, the wounds of PTSD.

I urge my colleagues to reject a blank check for the administration's endless occupation of Iraq. When the House receives the Senate-passed supplemental, we must oppose any bill that does not truly support our troops. We must oppose any spending that is not dedicated to redeploying our soldiers home to their families.

We must bring our troops home. We must end the occupation of Iraq. And we must provide the troops with the care and services they need. We must show them just how much we appreciate their service.

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.)

TANKERS

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor late this afternoon to express my concern with the United States Air Force's decision to award the \$35 billion contract to build the next generation of aerial refueling tankers to a foreign-led consortium of companies over a proposal put forth by American-based Boeing.

As I stand here today, Americans across the country are hopefully receiving in the mail our effort to stimulate the U.S. economy, that \$600 check. Why, during this time when we're trying to address the issue of our economy and create jobs, is our government outsourcing a multi-billion dollar tanker contract to a foreign company instead of creating those jobs here in America?

The Air Force's selection of European Aeronautic Defence and Space will lead to about 19,000 aerospace jobs in Europe. This decision has a significant impact, of course, in my home State of Kansas. Boeing's finishing and test center for tankers would take place in Wichita. Throughout the State, local suppliers would provide support services and parts for Boeing. In Kansas alone, Boeing's proposal would create or sustain 3,800 jobs and \$145 million annually, important in-

vestments that Europe now stands to gain.

Not only is the Air Force's decision a blow to American jobs, it's bad for our servicemembers and bad for the American taxpayer. Now that we've had a chance to look at the Air Force's analysis, we see how badly flawed the tanker selection competition was. The result is that the Air Force chose a tanker that is higher cost, higher risk, less capable, less survivable, and less efficient.

Boeing has filed a protest with the Government Accountability Office. I have listened to the explanation of the Air Force and the Department of Defense officials and I remain unconvinced that this was a fair competition. And so we now eagerly await GAO's results later this summer.

In the meantime, the Air Force's decision has raised questions that Congress should address. How does this decision impact America's economic security? How does it impact our military security? What are the national security effects of outsourcing critical military work to France and other foreign countries that often oppose our country's foreign policy? Should the Department of Defense's procurement process take into account billions of WTO-disputed foreign subsidies that give foreign manufacturers heavily weighted advantage in these competitions?

Air Force refueling tankers allow our military to operate around the world. In this day and age, the importance of modernizing our aging tanker fleet with the best available option cannot be overstated. In the coming weeks and months, I urge my colleagues in Congress to work to ensure that the right choice is made for Americans and America's military men and women.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my disappointment with the votes we took last week on Iraq. There were some provisions in the amendment that I voted against that I strongly support, including the ban on torture and the requirement for sufficient rest time for our troops between deployments.

I helped lead the effort in this House to prohibit the administration from establishing permanent military bases in Iraq. I have been outspoken on the failure of previous Congresses to hold private contractors accountable and to punish waste, fraud and profiteering. But last week I could not vote for these provisions because the amendment did not include a firm, responsible deadline to bring our troops safely home.

Let me be clear: Any funding bill that does not contain a binding deadline to end this war is an open-ended commitment to continue it. That's

why I have and will continue to vote against such legislation.

It is now 62 months since the invasion of Iraq and 60 months since President Bush's "Mission Accomplished" pronouncement. It has been 16 months since the beginning of the troop surge that President Bush and his congressional allies believed would give the Iraqis breathing space to resolve their internal conflicts and assume responsibility for their own security.

The vast majority of Americans concluded a long time ago that this war was a mistake. It has strengthened al Qaeda and Iran. It is time to end the war responsibly and bring our Armed Forces safely home.

The death toll of brave Americans now stands at 4,072, with nearly 30,000 wounded, many with life-shattering physical and mental and emotional scars. More than one in three soldiers and marines returning from Iraq later sought help for post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health problems. The toll on our military families is tremendous. More than 1.7 million Americans have served at least one tour in Iraq or Afghanistan. Four in 10 of these troops have served more than one war zone mission.

Our open-ended commitment in Iraq undermines our ability to meet challenges to our national security elsewhere.

We clearly have much work to do in Afghanistan, where the 9/11 attacks originated. We must also be concerned about the readiness of our Armed Forces in the event that a new threat arises elsewhere in the world. And then there is the toll the war continues to take on our ability to address our needs here at home.

More than 5 years into this war, we know that it will cost more than \$600 billion, but we still don't know what its final price tag will be or how much longer we will continue to pay it. We do know that our national debt is soaring, that our economy is either teetering on the edge or already in recession, and that the price of crude oil is approaching \$130 per barrel. In my hometown of Portland, unleaded gasoline has jumped to nearly \$4 a gallon, with heating oil now surpassing \$4 per gallon.

And we know that these fuel costs are draining family budgets throughout Maine and across America. Is there any question that our open-ended presence in Iraq contributes to these soaring costs? Is there any doubt that the money we are borrowing to pay for this war, largely from the Chinese and the Saudis, will leave our children an enormous debt to pay?

We are spending more than \$3,800 on this war every second. In the time since I began to speak, we've spent another million dollars. These are funds that we could use to fix our ailing health care system, to repair our crumbling infrastructure, to invest in education for our kids, to implement an energy policy to reduce our dependence

on foreign oil, fight climate change, create new jobs, and stimulate new technologies.

Mr. Speaker, more than 140,000 courageous and capable American forces remain in Iraq. They continue to serve with great ability and tremendous courage in the crossfire of a bloody, intractable religious civil war waged, in one form or another, for more than a thousand years.

We need much more than a change in mission for fighting the war in Iraq. Congress must change policy through a firm, responsible deadline to end it. As George Mitchell demonstrated in northern Ireland, only a firm deadline will compel the leaders of the warring factions to assume responsibility for their own security and their own future. And we need a plan to win the peace by engaging Iraq's neighbors to join us to create a stable, successful Iraq because that outcome is as vital to their long-term interests as it is to ours.

Enough is enough. Let's close the open-ended commitment President Bush and his allies in Congress have given to this war. Let's set a firm, responsible deadline and bring our troops safely home.

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 May 20, 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 12,902 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 12,902 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 May 20, 2008—12,902 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.

TO SECURE OUR BORDER

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

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Department of State recently issued a travel warning alerting American citizens about the deteriorating