

to render its decision on the agents' appeal, I am hopeful that the House Judiciary Committee will soon hold a hearing to investigate this injustice. I thank Chairman JOHN CONYERS and his staff for their interest in investigating this case.

This case deserves a hearing because Ramos and Compean were doing their job to protect our borders. They should never have been prosecuted. During oral arguments for their appeal on December 3, 2007, one of the judges considering the case, Judge E. Grady Jolly said, and I quote the judge, "It does seem to me that the government overreacted here. For some reason this one got out of hand."

I want the families of Agents Ramos and Compean to know that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and I will continue to do all we can to see that this miscarriage of justice corrected.

NATIONAL BOULE CONFERENCE

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my enthusiastic congratulations and support for the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority during its National Boule Conference, celebrating 100 years of its organization and existence. The sorority, founded at Howard University on January 15, 1908, is the first Greek-lettered sorority established and incorporated by a group of nine African American college women. The AKA sorority broke barriers for African American women in areas where little power or authority existed due to a lack of opportunities for minorities and women in the early 20th century.

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, the sorority consists of college-educated women of African, Caucasian, Asian and Hispanic descent. The sorority serves through a membership of more than 200,000 women in over 900 chapters in the United States and several other countries. Since its inception, Alpha Kappa Alpha has helped to improve social and economic conditions through community service programs. Members have improved education through independent initiatives, contributed to community building by creating programs, and influenced Federal legislation by advocacy through the National Non-Partisan Lobby on Civil and Democratic Rights.

My wife, Vera, is a proud member of Tau Gamma Omega, the graduate chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. Two of my sisters, Ceola and Floretta, are also AKAs. They often meet in our home. And I have always been very proud of the leadership and mentoring relationship my wife has established and continues to display with younger women who join. Tau Gamma Omega is a strong voice and positive presence in the community where they serve.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that there are 26,000 AKAs in the District of Columbia this week. And today I was very pleased to receive, along with my wife, State representative Connie Howard, and the immediate past president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, the Honorable Bobby Steele and a large contingent of AKAs from my hometown of Chicago, Illinois.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity and the United States House of Representatives, I commend the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority on all their continuing endeavors to help the community. And I welcome the 26,000 attending members of the 2008 Centennial Boule to their founding place of Washington, D.C.

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

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

NIGERIAN SWEET CRUDE OIL

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. Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in America knows that we import an exorbitant amount of the oil that we use in this country. We are dependent on oil from the Middle East. We are dependent on oil from South America, from Venezuela and elsewhere. And as a result, we are at the mercy of these countries if they decide to cut back on the amount of oil that they are selling to this country or if OPEC decides to raise the price per barrel of oil.

As a result of our dependency on foreign oil, we now see gasoline at the pump of between \$4 and \$5 per gallon. And everybody in this country, in fact, almost everybody, about 70 percent of people in recent polls, have said they want America to move towards energy independence. They want us to drill here in the United States. They want us to drill offshore on the continental shelf. They want us to drill in ANWR up in Alaska. They want us to use coal share converted into oil for energy. And they want us to drill for natural gas. But unfortunately, we are not going to do it because we can't get the votes in the House or the Senate to get this job done.

Now today we had a meeting. And we found out that in addition to our dependency on foreign oil from sources like Saudi Arabia or Venezuela or elsewhere in the world, we find out that from Nigeria we import almost 37 percent of our sweet crude oil, which is the preferable kind of oil you want for many of the refineries on the east coast because they can convert that in

an easier way into gasoline to be sold at the pump. Now if they have to rely on heavier crude oil, as I understand it, they won't be able to convert that because they are not geared up for that. They are used to using, and the refineries are geared to using the sweet crude oil.

So as a result, we see 37 percent of the sweet crude oil coming from Nigeria and almost 1 million barrels of oil a day coming from that country. And they have problems over there right now we found out today, Mr. Speaker. They have rebel groups that are stealing as much as 500,000 barrels of oil a day and selling it on the world market to put into their own pockets. And if they decide to go further into the pockets of Nigeria, they can dig into the 1 million barrels of oil that we receive from Nigeria a day. And that is about 9 percent of the oil that we get from around the world.

The reason I'm bringing all this up is that we are dependent on Saudi Arabia. We are dependent on Venezuela. We are dependent on Canada. And we are dependent on Mexico. And now I find that we are dependent on Nigeria for about 9 percent of the oil we have, which is about 37 percent of the sweet crude oil we get, which is the preferable kind of oil that we need for refining on the east coast of this country.

We are dependent on the rest of the world. And the price of gasoline at the pump is between \$4 and \$4.50 a gallon. And if there is a disruption because of OPEC or what goes on in Nigeria, we could see the cost of gasoline per gallon go to \$5, \$6 or \$7 a gallon. And the American people and our economy cannot stand that kind of a price for gasoline. People are spending \$70, \$80 or \$90 for one tank of gasoline. And seniors and people that live in rural areas and business people trying to get to and from work cannot afford that. We can't afford the cost of getting food to the marketplace and for us to buy it without raising the price of these products. Everything is going up because of the price of oil.

And we find that we can be energy independent in this country. We can move rapidly toward energy independence if we drill off the continental shelf and Alaska, and drill for natural gas and convert coal shale into oil. We can be energy independent, and we don't have to depend on the rest of the world.

And the American people, Mr. Speaker, need to contact their Congressmen and their Senators and tell them that we need to move toward energy independence. We need to drill here in America. We can get the job done. We're a can-do country. And we need to get with it right away.

IT IS TIME TO BAIL OUT MAIN STREET

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we've bailed out Wall Street once already this year. We may be doing it again soon. But it's time to bail out Main Street by doing what we should have done 50 years ago, and that is provide Americans with universal health care. It's the fastest and most effective way Congress can shore up the American family. Because we all know that Americans are either paying too much for health care, can't afford to buy enough coverage, or can't afford any coverage at all. And the cost in dollars and in human terms is staggering.

A generation ago, the head of General Motors famously said, "as GM goes, so goes the Nation." It's no secret that GM and America are struggling with an economic crisis. We can make the difference by addressing the single largest expense facing an American family and American business today, health care. Every day in America, the American people are forced to dig deeper and deeper into their own pockets to pay for health care. And every day American business is forced to transfer more of the burden to employees or drop coverage altogether.

America's health care system today looks like an ambulance riding on one wheel. And even that wheel will soon fall off if we continue to support a failed system that is not made in America, not worthy of America and nothing more than an accident of history.

In the early 20th century, there was a movement to provide universal health care. But ironically it was fiercely opposed by the insurance industry at a time when it made most of its money selling death benefits to those who feared a pauper's grave. Emerging from the Great Depression in 1930, Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted to institute universal health care. But his advisers feared the American Medical Association would kill FDR's proposal for Social Security in their opposition to health care.

In the 1950s, the legendary labor leader, Walter Reuther, first won a health care benefit and a pension too for automobile workers in a labor agreement with General Motors. Then Reuther tried to enlist GM and others to join forces and lobby the Federal Government to institute universal health care. But business couldn't see coming the economic storm from global competition and didn't trust government. Organized labor, flush from a victory in Detroit, saw health care as a perpetual win at the bargaining table, and organized medicine was relentless at lobbying until they drove the universal health care program into the ditch again.

In the second half of the 20th century, there were other attempts by the American leaders, but all of them were killed by seemingly unlimited lobbying resources. Today we have 50 million Americans with no health care coverage at all, another 25 million Americans without adequate protection, and

every American can't find pants with pockets deep enough to keep paying costs that are already out of sight.

The only universal truth about health care in America today is that every single American knows someone with a health care crisis or is facing one themselves. American business has to compete today in a global economy, but American business has a major health care benefit expense on its books that the international competitors do not have. Even great companies in my congressional district, which are national models to providing employee benefits like health care, are being stretched to the limit, and their balance sheets, like a rubber band, can only flex so much before they break.

We cannot stand idly by and watch when we know that developing and instituting an American single payer health care system can dramatically improve the health of American business and American families literally and financially. And for the first time in decades, we have a chance if we're willing to seize the opportunity. There are cracks in the dams of opposition. A new survey of U.S. doctors published recently in the *Annals of Health Research* finds that 59 percent of American doctors now support single payer health care plans, which is a dramatic double-digit increase in support in the last 7 years.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution a few weeks ago. Organized labor recognizes a changing global economy that means they can best represent workers not at one bargaining table, but on a national level where everyone benefits equally.

Even business is beginning to rethink its trust of government. In 2002, Detroit's auto subsidiaries in Canada strongly supported continuation of a single payer health care program because of its positive economic impact on them and their workers.

A few years ago, I asked businesses' executives if they would be willing to pay 6 percent of their revenue to off-load health care and no one raised their hand. Now the average cost is 13 percent for business, and a business leader recently asked me if that deal was still on the table. I'm here to say single payer is on the table. It's time to breach the dam of opposition and create a single payer health care system for the health and well-being of the American people and American business.

We have tried the alternatives. The free enterprise system has had 50 years. But they can't do it. They have failed again and again, and the costs go up all the time. It's time to do what works in every industrialized country in the world.

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HONORING SENATOR JESSE HELMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. McHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, this evening, I rise with a heavy heart to honor the life of former Senator Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., of North Carolina. Senator Helms served from 1972 to 2002, 30 years in the United States Senate, tying the longest-serving Senator from North Carolina in that record.

Senator Helms was known to most Americans as a rock-rib conservative, both committed to a smaller, more efficient government that taxes less and spends less, and also a social conservative who would stand up to the common society of the day that was allowing for many permissive activities.

Senator Helms was much more than that, though. He was an ardent anti-communist, and supported freedom around the world against the tyranny of communism. Senator Helms has a very distinguished record in the United States Senate spanning three decades.

He was known as the strongest conservative in the United States Senate in his time, one of the best known American conservatives of his time. But what many people don't realize is that in 1976, just 4 years into his first term in the United States Senate, Senator Helms did a very bold thing, he endorsed Governor Ronald Reagan in his primary for President against Gerald Ford. Senator Helms was the only Senator to endorse Reagan in 1976.

Although then-Governor Reagan had not won any primaries coming into the North Carolina primary, Senator Helms put his full campaign organization behind Governor Reagan. And in an upset victory, Governor Reagan beat sitting President Gerald Ford in that Republican primary, the first primary that Reagan won in 1976.

Historians note that without winning the North Carolina primary, Ronald Reagan may not have had the opportunity to be President in 1980. He may not have had the ability to continue his campaign going into the convention in 1976. So for Americans who know Reagan, they should thank Senator Helms and his bold move in endorsing Governor Reagan.

Beyond that, in his final term in office, the world came to him. He didn't change his principles, he didn't change the things that he was focused on, but he took the opportunity to reform the U.N., working with Senator JOE BIDEN of Delaware. The Helms-Biden agreement called on the U.N. to reduce its budget and define its mission. It also forced a much-needed review of all U.N. policies. It was a large reform, and Senator BIDEN said at the time, "Just as only Nixon could go to China, only Helms could fix the U.N."

Just after that in 2000, Helms was the first U.S. lawmaker to address the U.N. Security Council. That is an amazing tribute to his leadership. He was not simply "Senator No," he was voted as the "Nicest Lawmaker in Congress."

What people know about him was the personal touch he had with people. My