

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a special group of people, the millions of participants and volunteers of the Special Olympics. Next Sunday, the Special Olympics turns 40 years old, and we are extremely grateful for the opportunities they provide to the intellectually disabled members of our community.

The goal of the Special Olympics is simple to express, but monumental to achieve: to empower individuals to become physically fit, productive and respected members of the community through sports training and competition. Not deterred by the challenge of their tasks, the organizers of the Special Olympics programs have performed phenomenally and made a serious impact in countless lives.

Ironically, their extraordinary results are likely due to their focus on the games, and not the winners. This is apparent from their oath, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me brave in the attempt," a message from which we can all learn.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to recognize and congratulate the Special Olympics on their 40th anniversary and to wish them continued success in their most worthy cause.

AMERICAN ENERGY

(Mr. KING of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to address the energy situation as well and point something out that I don't believe has been very well illustrated here.

This chart that I have, the inside circle is all of the Btus of energy that are consumed in the United States annually, 72 quadrillion Btus. The outside circle is all of the different sources of energy. Excuse me, this is the production chart on the inside. The outside circle is the consumption chart. We are producing only 72 percent of the overall energy that we are consuming. We need to grow the entire size of the energy pie. But if you take out of it all of the things that the environmentalists don't want us to do, it leaves only a little bit of solar and wind and geothermal. That is only 0.74 percent of our energy production.

They want to grow it into 100 percent of our energy production. That cannot be done. We have to grow all sources, not the tiny little sliver, three-quarters of 1 percent that the environmentalists would let us do. Let's go for all of it, as the gentleman from Illinois said.

AFFORDABLE ENERGY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Today, Mr. Speaker, we addressed an enormously important issue, and that is how to give relief to the American people on these soaring energy prices, small businesses, teachers and bus drivers, families who are carpooling, others who are trying to get to work. We owe them our collective minds to be able to ensure that we have a combined philosophy and program as it addresses the question of affordable energy and protecting our national security.

So I do believe there is a right way of drilling. I do believe we should go into the National Petroleum Reserve, and frankly I believe we should release gallons of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve so the American people can have immediate relief. I also think it is extremely important that we conserve, and we look at solar and wind.

And as it relates to the 23 million leases that are there, only 3 million are used, let us delegate from those who may own them, let us set aside some opportunity for minority and women-owned businesses and small businesses to be able to engage in that. Let's have a collective effort.

SPECIAL ORDERS

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

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

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

OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the Government Accountability Office issued a report on Monday that should worry every single Member of the House. The GAO said that the government isn't moving quickly enough to ensure that radioactive materials don't get into the hands of terrorists.

Last year the GAO ran a sting operation to see how easy it would be for anyone to get a license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to buy enough radioactive materials to create a dirty bomb. They set up a bogus company with only a post office box number and got the license within a month.

The government then promised to tighten up on its requirements for the purchase of radioactive materials, but the GAO report found this effort is still

years behind schedule. So while the government takes what looks like its sweet time, we live under the threat of a dirty bomb that could kill many Americans and devastate our economy.

But as outrageous as this situation is, it is only a prime example of how our country's real security needs are being ignored.

Another example is the occupation of Iraq because the administration continues to have tunnel vision when it comes to Iraq. While the administration devotes most of our military resources and troops on the occupation of another country, an occupation that actually makes no sense whatsoever, it is blind to the real threats to our security in Afghanistan.

Even Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has admitted that we are focusing on the wrong place. Earlier this month he said, "I don't have troops that I can send into Afghanistan until I have a reduced requirement in Iraq. We don't have enough troops in Afghanistan to hold, and that is key clearly to the future of being able to succeed in Afghanistan."

Mr. Speaker, al Qaeda is growing stronger along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Even Ryan Crocker, our ambassador to Iraq, admitted when he testified before Congress in March that stopping al Qaeda in Afghanistan should be our top priority, not the occupation of Iraq.

Yet we have five times more troops in Iraq than Afghanistan. That doesn't make military sense; it doesn't make common sense.

We can have two reactions to this tragic situation. We can scratch our heads and wonder at the folly of it all, or we can take action. Of course I prefer action. That is why I have offered a SMART Security plan which would defeat terrorism through strong international alliances, aggressive diplomacy, improved intelligence, and initiatives to address the root causes of terrorism.

In addition, I and my colleague, Representative BARBARA LEE from California, asked Members of Congress to sign a letter to Prime Minister al-Maliki of Iraq last week. Thirty-one Members signed the letter, and I thank them.

The letter states, "We, the undersigned Members of the United States House of Representatives, support the sovereign right of the government of Iraq to insist that any security agreement between the United States and Iraq include a timetable for the complete redeployment of U.S. Armed Forces and military contractors out of Iraq."

Prime Minister al-Maliki has called for such a timetable. We should work with him to make it happen. This is a great opportunity to end our disastrous and counterproductive occupation of Iraq.

Yesterday, The Washington Post released a poll that shows that 63 percent

of the American people believe that the war in Iraq was not worth fighting. Let's listen to the American people, Mr. Speaker. Let's bring our troops and military contractors out of Iraq, but let's not repeat the same military folly in other parts of the region.

TEXAS IGNORES WORLD COURT

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Texas, the State of Texas, has ignored the order of the World Court in Geneva. Let me give you the facts of this case.

Fifteen years ago in 1993 there were two young teenage girls by the name of Jennifer Ertman, 14, and Elizabeth Pena, 16, headed home as the sun set in Houston, Texas.

They took a shortcut so they could get home in a timely fashion, as ordered by their parents. That was their fatal mistake. They came in contact with a group of gangsters headed by Jose Medellin. It was a gang initiation. The girls stumbled upon the gang of gangsters, and these gangsters kidnapped, held hostage, and brutally sexually assaulted these two girls for as long as they wished.

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After they were through, they tortured them, and Jose Medellin strangled each of them with their shoelaces. Medellin was proud of his conduct. He was later arrested by the Houston Police Department along with others from his group of bandits, specifically Derrick O'Brien, Peter Cantu and two others.

These individuals were tried by Texas juries. A Texas jury found that Derrick O'Brien committed the worst crime in our society, ordered the death penalty, and he's been executed.

The ringleader of the case, Jose Medellin, well, his case has been on appeal for 15 years. Here's what has happened in his case. He was convicted. His case worked its way all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court upheld this conviction. Then years later he says, I should have been allowed to talk to my Mexican consulate at some time during the proceeding, even though he never requested it upon his arrest.

Of course, then, the Federal Government gets involved in the case. The case works its way back through the Supreme Court. Before it gets to the Supreme Court, the administration, the White House, intervened and told Texas courts to give Medellin a new trial because he was not allowed to ask or see his Mexican consulate, even though he didn't request it. Remember, Medellin was illegally in the United States, even though he had been here since he was 6 months of age.

The State of Texas, the Texas courts, in all due respect to the President of the United States, ignored his request.

The case went back to the Supreme Court, right down the street.

A few months ago the Supreme Court of the United States said, World Court has no jurisdiction. The President of the United States has no jurisdiction to tell the courts in Texas what to do and upheld his conviction and ordered him executed.

But, once again, the World Court intervened yesterday, and said the State of Texas cannot execute Medellin.

Well, let me tell you something, the State of Texas on August 5 is going to execute this defendant for what he did. The State of Texas has decided that the World Court has no jurisdiction to tell the State of Texas or any other State what to do. I think it was put appropriately by the fathers of these two girls.

No parent wants to see their child die before their time, especially the way that these two girls died. I have four kids, three of them are girls; and seven grandkids, four of them are girls. Here's what one of the fathers had to say about the death of his daughter. He said, "The World Court doesn't mean diddly. This business belongs in the State of Texas. The people of the State of Texas support the execution. We thank them."

More appropriately, the other father, Adolfo Pena, the father of Elizabeth Pena, said, "I believe we have been through all the red tape we can go through. It's time to rock and roll."

Justice must be served for victims of crime. 15 years justice has been waiting, in this specific case, 15 years, longer than one of the girls even lived. This defendant arrogantly has been sitting on death row.

I was a judge when this case was tried back in Texas in the 1990s, and it was one of the worst crimes we had ever heard in our city, where two teenage girls minding their own business were kidnapped by a bunch of gangsters, sexually assaulted, tortured, murdered and the criminals bragged about this conduct.

Today is judgment day for Jose Medellin. He deserves the death penalty, he earned it, and justice demands it, whether the World Court likes it or not.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

PRESIDENTIAL SIGNING STATEMENTS ACT

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. Mr. Speaker, on May 8, 2008, I introduced

H.R. 5993, the Presidential Signing Statements Act. This bill would promote congressional and public awareness and understanding of Presidential signing statements. I am very pleased that next Friday the House Judiciary Committee will examine the issue of Presidential signing statements as part of a hearing on the balance of powers in our government.

The history of Presidential signing statements dates back to the 19th century. However, on September 17, 2007, a Congressional Research Service report noted that U.S. presidents have increasingly employed these statements to assert constitutional and legal objections to congressional enactments.

In doing so, Presidents sometimes communicate their intent to disregard certain provisions of bills they have signed into law. It is for this reason that I have introduced the Presidential Signing Statements Act. Just as the American people have access to the text of bills that are signed into law, they should have easy and prompt access to the content of Presidential signing statements that could affect how those the laws will be executed. To enable a more complete public understanding of our Nation's laws, the Congress should also be able to call for the executive explanation and justification for a Presidential signing statement.

According to CRS, President Clinton signed 381 signing statements while in office. Seventy of these statements raised legal and constitutional objections. President George Bush has signed 157 signing statements, 122 of these statements contain some type of constitutional challenge or objections. Because future Presidents are likely to continue this practice, Congress should act now to pass legislation to ensure proper understanding and disclosure of these signing statements.

The American Bar Association recently examined the issue of presidential signing statements and appointed the task force on presidential signing statements and the separation of powers doctrine.

The task force issued a report urging Congress to enact legislation requiring the President to promptly submit to Congress an official copy of all signing statements he issues and to submit a congressional, to the Congress, a report setting forth in full the reasons and legal basis for this statement. The ABA also recommended that such submissions be available in a publicly accessible database.

The bill that I introduced would require the President to provide copies of signing statements to congressional leadership within 3 days of being issued. Secondly, it would require signing statements to be published in the Federal Register; and, third, require executive staff to testify on the meaning and justification for Presidential signing statements at the request of the House or Senate Judiciary Committee; and, fourth, provide that no monies may be used to implement any