

can tell you that they pattern themselves after what we have done here in the United States.

In 1999, when the then-dictator of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, was trying to do his ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo, the United States intervened and bombed and prevented ethnic cleansing from happening. And so today, Kosovo is a multiethnic society, and will continue to be so. And minority rights of Serbs and others must be and will be protected, and institutions, religious institutions, monasteries, orthodox monasteries must be protected, and will be. I know the president and prime minister of Kosovo very well and know the political leadership, and know that they are all committed to building a multiethnic society.

But problems remain. The Serb officials have occupied the northern part of Kosovo. The city of Mitrovica is a divided city. The mine in the north, Trepca, is occupied by Serb forces, and that must not be allowed to stand in the long run. Kosovo must not be partitioned, whether it is de facto partition or de jure partition. Kosovo's borders must be respected.

The United States has a very, very important role to play, and we will continue to play that role. First under President Clinton, then under President Bush, and now under President Obama, we must continue to let the people of Kosovo know that the United States stands with them every step of the way.

And when I mentioned that they are a multiethnic society, the majority of the population is Muslim. They are secular Muslims, and they debunk the theory that somehow the United States is opposed to Muslim religion, which of course is not true. And these people understand that the United States is the best ally and the strongest ally, and will continue to support them.

As co chair of the Albanian Issues Caucus, along with the gentleman from Illinois, Congressman KIRK, I want to say to the people of Kosovo that we will continue to support them, to be with them, to watch them as they build their nation, and the democracy and freedoms that the United States stands for and that the people of Kosovo stand for will always be strengthened.

And let me say in conclusion, on last February 17, when Kosovo declared its independence and there were flags all over the capital of the Kosovo, Prishtina, there were Albanian flags around, there was the Kosovo flag. But the American flag was being waved more so than any other flag in the country. That is still true today.

The people of Kosovo want to continue their great partnership with the United States, and I say to the people of Kosovo: We will be with you, we will stand with you, we will help you build you a new democracy, and we will work together and continue to welcome you into the league of free nations of the world.

I again congratulate the people of the Kosovo for their 1-year anniversary as a free and independent nation.

STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I just got off a call with Carolyn Greco, a constituent of mine from Lumber City Borough in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania. Now, this young lady, who is now retired, has voted in every primary and general election since her 21st birthday; yet, she has never called an elected official before to voice her concern regarding legislation until this now so-called stimulus package.

When asked why, her response was somewhat heartening: "I had faith in the system," a notion that she is now questioning for the first time in her life based on this legislation alone. Let me repeat that. She had faith in the system, a notion she is now questioning for the first time in her life based on the stimulus package alone.

Mr. Speaker, the more the American people have an opportunity to evaluate and dissect this massive spending measure, the more frustrated they grow. Does Congress need to act? Absolutely.

House Republicans stand ready to work with our counterparts across the aisle, if given the opportunity to sit at the table, to craft a package that creates and preserves jobs, invests in our roads and bridges, and offers tax relief to middle-class Americans and small business owners. I don't think you can find one person in this Chamber who believes that we should wait this out.

□ 1530

But this backroom deal is not what the American people want nor deserve. Yesterday the Secretary of the Treasury spoke about accountability and transparency. It is time for the House and Senate Democratic leadership to heed the Secretary's advice and instill that same transparency and accountability into the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, for the past three decades, I have been working, prior to coming to Congress, as a health care professional. And the first rule you learn as a health care professional is "do no harm." And as I look at this stimulus package, I find few good provisions that will fulfill the intent of an economic stimulus within the period of time dictated. Other provisions I find ineffective at best. And overall, I find this bill is harmful, harmful in the sense it will lead to a deeper and a worse recession through deficit spending which will lead to increased inflation, and it will provide a legacy for this Congress of a bloated national debt well beyond where we are today. It enhances and increases our foreign financial dependence. And it provides

for non-stimulus, wasteful spending that will only detract from the true strategic priorities and the real needs that our country faces.

Mr. Speaker, there are 435 able-minded Members of this body. And while we all come from different corners of the country with differing opinions, and I do believe that is what makes us stronger, and unique backgrounds, this is the people's House where debate should be encouraged and thoughtful deliberation should be the standard. This backroom style of politics is not the change President Obama promised. And it is not the change the American people voted for in November.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN JOHN DINGELL

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, 5 minutes is not nearly enough time to do justice to Congressman JOHN DINGELL's record-breaking 53 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives, but I wish to highlight the profound impact his work has had on the lives of Americans.

It is not the length of time you serve here but rather what you do with that time that counts. Today we are honoring not only JOHN DINGELL's record tenure but also his many successes over the past 53 years that have improved the lives of all Americans and made our country a better place. Whether it was passage of landmark environmental laws, implementation of Medicare or passage of the Civil Rights Act, the history that dominates the past half century was being shaped by JOHN DINGELL.

From his first days in the House, Mr. DINGELL has carried on his father's fight to provide health care for every American. He has proposed a national health insurance bill in every Congress since 1957.

In April of 1965, Mr. DINGELL was presiding over the U.S. House of Representatives for the historic vote to create the Medicare program. Those who have had the pleasure of visiting Mr. DINGELL's office know that the gavel he used on that occasion sits on his desk. Congressman DINGELL was there to see history in the making as President Johnson signed the Medicare bill into law at the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.

More than 40 years after that historic day, Chairman DINGELL was instrumental in expanding and improving Medicare, to make it a widely successful effort at improving health care for our Nation's elderly and preventing them from falling into poverty.

In 1993, Mr. DINGELL took the lead in the House in working with the Clinton administration to push for universal health insurance coverage for all Americans. Although Mr. DINGELL

points to that effort as one of his “biggest disappointments,” it was that debate that kept the issue of universal coverage alive for the past 16 years. We are now poised with JOHN DINGELL once again serving as the lead House negotiator to work with President Obama to make health insurance for all Americans a reality in this Congress.

Mr. DINGELL and I share a passion for oversight. When I first came to Congress, and particularly once I became a member of the Commerce Committee, Mr. DINGELL provided valuable mentorship that has enabled me to continue his tradition of aggressive oversight through the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. Mr. DINGELL not only understands the role of Congress to oversee the executive branch, he, perhaps more than anyone else before him, used this authority to uncover abuses of power including corruption, waste and fraud that jeopardized not only taxpayer dollars but also the health and safety of the American people.

JOHN DINGELL has proven that investigations can accomplish as much as legislation. As chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Mr. DINGELL used broad jurisdiction over the committee to effect changes on issues such as defense contracting, insider trading, Superfund cleanup, medical device safety, unfair foreign trade practices, food and drug safety, blood banks and pipeline safety.

In an age when State legislatures are quick to enact term limits, JOHN DINGELL is a shining example of how valuable tenure can be. The perspective and knowledge he brings to the table after 53 years of service is a critical part of the legislative process that allows us to avoid repeating past mistakes and continue to push for longstanding goals such as universal health care.

Whether it is battling in committee or on the floor, teaming up in an investigation or relaxing with JOHN and Debbie Dingell on Mackinac Island, I have valued Mr. DINGELL as a colleague, mentor and friend.

Our country is a better place, and Congress is a stronger institution because of the contributions of JOHN DINGELL.

TAKING CARE OF OUR NATION'S VETERANS: A MOTHER'S LETTER

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. Mr. Speaker, while our Nation faces many serious issues, from the economy to health care, there is one important issue we must not forget. That is the issue of American servicemembers who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with mental health challenges.

Earlier this month, I received a letter from the mother of a marine who is stationed in my district at Camp

Lejeune. This mother is very concerned about how the Marine Corps is treating her son. And I would like to read from her letter.

“Congressman Jones, my son joined the United States Marine Corps while still in high school. I remember him as a little boy looking in awe at his grandfather in his Marine Corps uniform and telling me that was what he was going to be when he grew up.

“Growing up, he was the son every parent could be proud of. He never got into any trouble in school, was always there to help with his younger siblings, held a job after school and was extremely active in the Boy Scouts. He earned his rank of Eagle Scout at the age of 16 and held many positions within the Boy Scouts.

“Because of his Eagle Scout status, he entered the Marine Corps as a PFC and quickly rose to the rank of sergeant within his first 3 years in the Marines. He was an exemplary marine and an exemplary young man.

“If you review his military record, you can plainly see that he had no problems with behavior or performance prior to his deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

“He has had a very difficult time readjusting to life after conflict. He came home to a ‘Dear John’ letter, had several friends injured and killed and has seen more destruction than most of us will see in a lifetime. And having no one to turn to for help because of the stigma and the fear of losing his career, he started drinking to self-medicate so that he would be able to sleep.

“Congressman, do you know what it is like to listen to your once-strong son cry like a baby at 3:30 in the morning three to four times a week because he can't handle what he has been through? Wanting to kill himself because he doesn't feel he is worthy to live because his brothers were shot down?

“Do you know what it is like to be 1,500 miles away and not have the ability to help him through this? All the while wondering and asking why the Corps he served so proudly and willingly has written him off as worthless and weak and offer no help to prevent him from faltering further?

“I am so sadly disappointed in the way the Corps has treated my son. My son left for the Marine Corps 100 percent intact. He will be leaving the Marine Corps with two feet that are fractured, back and knee problems, decreased hearing and decreased vision and PTSD that will carry a lifetime burden for him.

“And yet, according to the Corps, he has disgraced them by his behavior and he is no longer worthy. The way I see it, they used him, abused him and now will discard him and find some fresh young man who ‘isn't tainted’ and they will mold him and ask him to sacrifice himself for their cause. And when he is no longer of use to them, they will discard him, as well.

“I hope with all my heart that the Marine Corps will find the moral cour-

age to do the right thing when it comes to not only my son, but all those other young men and women who need their help and guidance.”

Mr. Speaker, this letter may tell the story of just one marine, but this is not an uncommon tale. An April 2008 study by the RAND Corporation found that nearly 20 percent of the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who were surveyed have symptoms of PTSD or other major depression. The study also found that many servicemembers say they do not seek treatment for psychological illness because they feel it will harm their careers.

While Congress has implemented some positive reforms in funding increases to improve veterans' health care in recent years, more must be done to ensure that our veterans are receiving adequate care and compensation.

Promises made should be promises kept. And our Nation must never forget the servicemembers and veterans who have gone to war for this country.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to put into the RECORD that I have been talking with the Marine Corps. They have promised me they will try to help this young marine. And I must close, Mr. Speaker, for all those serving in Afghanistan and Iraq and all those who were killed and all of those wounded both physically and mentally, that God continue to bless our servicemen and God continue to bless America.

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

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

THE TRUE COST OF THE STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot about the economy, as we should, but I would like to focus on the cost of all of this money that the government says it needs to spend. The front page of today's USA Today is headlined, “Trillions Aimed At Financial Recovery,” and here we see a photograph of the Treasury Secretary, Mr. Geithner, scratching his head as he is talking to Members of Congress when he testified yesterday.

Now we hear about the billions spent for this program and the trillions spent for this program all in the name of helping the economy. I would like to focus on the cost of all of this. If you add up all of the bailout packages from last year, the so-called stimulus packages, and the bills yet to be passed but promised to be passed this year, plus the debt that it will cost Americans yet to be born, it is \$9,700,000,000,000.