

But what happens if my concerns are justified and ignored? Nothing good.

HONORING OUR WAR DEAD

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to praise President Obama's decision to review President Bush's policy of banning the media from photographing the coffins of our fallen soldiers.

The American people were not allowed to see the flag-draped coffins when they arrived from Iraq and from Afghanistan. It was said that it protected the privacy of the soldiers and their families. There was a group who didn't want the American people to see the terrible human costs of the war because if they did, they would be more likely to oppose it.

Secretary of Defense Gates says he will now review the policy. He said this week that if the needs of the families can be met and the privacy concerns can be addressed, then the more honor we can accord these fallen heroes, the better.

He also said that reviewing the policy "makes all kinds of sense."

President Obama also addressed the issue at his news conference Monday night. He said he will make a decision about the policy after evaluating Secretary Gates' review and after he has an opportunity to understand all of the implications involved.

The President and Secretary Gates are 100 percent right to proceed carefully because this is a very sensitive issue.

Some families may not want pictures taken of their loved ones' coffins, and their privacy should certainly be protected. Other families will want photographs taken.

For example, one father of a fallen soldier was interviewed recently, and he said, "Looking back, I would have wanted to see the reverence and the honors given to him by the receiving military. I would have loved to have had that captured and to be able to hold it."

Madam Speaker, families should be able to decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow photographs. If that can be done in a practical and respectful way, then I fully support changing the policy. But I also believe that the best way to handle the issue of coffins is to make sure that there are no more coffins in the first place.

That is why I've called for a redeployment of our troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan and for a worldwide ceasefire or a timeout from war.

The Taliban is resurgent in Afghanistan, and the Middle East is still as unstable as ever. It is time for us to use the more effective tools of diplomacy, reconciliation, and humanitarian assistance to build a lasting peace.

President Obama has pledged to use these tools, and he has already talked

about making diplomatic overtures to Iran.

The people of the world love and admire Barack Obama, and I believe they will respond positively to an American President who reaches out to them with an unclenched fist.

Madam Speaker, 4,238 brave American soldiers have died in Iraq, another 640 have died in Afghanistan. Tens of thousands more have been wounded, and their families are also suffering.

We must also remember soldiers of other countries who died as they served alongside our troops. They returned to their countries in flag-draped coffins.

I support the Obama administration's decision to review the coffin policy. But the way to honor the fallen is to make sure that there will be no more coffins.

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

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

THE STEAMROLLER OF SOCIALISM

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

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I stand here today because Americans face a fork in the road. One path leads to socialism, and the other path leads to freedom. This non-stimulus bill is the road to socialism. It will give us a journey that includes bureaucratic controls, high taxes, government intervention, Cuba-style medicine, and economic collapse of America.

This steamroller of socialism is being shoved down our throats, and it will strangle our economy. This porkulous bill has a few decent provisions in it, but it's mostly filled with mystery meat. Rancid meat. Like the millions for plug-in government cars and millions for mouse restoration that will ruin the entire meal. The captivating rhetoric about openness and transparency is providing cover for the rancid meat.

Another tainted bite includes a move towards socialized medicine. As a physician, I'm deeply concerned about the breach of privacy and the abuse of care that is hidden in this stimulus bill, especially for senior citizens. The vague language could potentially deny life-giving care to the elderly.

You see, \$2 billion is allocated in this non-stimulus bill for the new National Coordinator of Health Information—or you can call him "Dr. Doom." Dr. Doom, the government's own human health care calculator, will make his or her own calculations to determine if your needed care is cost efficient.

The vague nature of this language could lead to health care rationing for

elderly people and handcuffing the development of life-saving drugs to fight infections all because Dr. Doom doesn't deem them to be cost efficient. When momma falls and breaks her hip, she will just lie in her bed in pain until she dies with pneumonia because her needed surgery is not cost efficient.

I'm a medical doctor, and I'm certain that the Federal Government can no more determine what type of case is the most cost-effective and appropriate for my patients than they can determine how best to educate our children or spend our hard-earned tax dollars.

This is what happens when Congress considers a bill that costs \$1 trillion. Convenient little billions just slip on in. You'd think \$1 trillion would at least buy time and public scrutiny. Not by this bill.

It's true that our economy needs a significant jolt that requires immediate attention, but there is another direction we can go.

Congress could come together promptly to create jobs, restore faith in markets, and again unleash America's entrepreneurial spirit. The American people have a choice. There's a better alternative that I've cosponsored to provide fast-acting tax relief for hardworking families and small businesses that will create twice the jobs at half the cost of this bill.

We must give small businesses the capital they need to employ workers and to buy inventory. Congress should suspend or eliminate the capital gains tax to provide an inflow of tax into our economy. Next, we must eliminate the death tax so that family businesses can continue to thrive and produce high-paying jobs. And ultimately, let's support tax relief for our hardworking families and save future generations from this 784-pound gorilla that's in this room.

Americans must choose in which direction we will go. It will be disastrous to let politicians make that decision for us. Are we going to have government run our families and our neighborhoods? Are we going to take care of ourselves and help our neighbors? Are we going to make decisions about our own lives, where our children go the school, make our own health care decisions, and how to spend our own hard-earned money; or is government going to do that for us?

Liberals need to stop pretending that the American people can't tell the difference between SPAM and filet mignon. Instead of the wasteful mystery pork that this bill gives us, let's give the American taxpayers and entrepreneurs the red meat that they need to stimulate the American economy: permanent tax relief and job creation incentives.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear. The people in Georgia are hurting. They want action, and they want it now. But nine out of ten of them oppose this bill. They want an alternative. We have alternatives that won't even be considered by leadership.

Normally, I implore my colleagues to vote a certain way, but today I urge the American people to call, write, and e-mail and tell your U.S. senator and congressman to vote “no” on this rancid meat and demand alternatives be considered.

Let's demand the road to freedom.

□ 1630

TAX CUTS ARE NOT THE ANSWER

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. If the Republicans hadn't run the economy into a ditch and if they had a credible alternative, maybe we'd listen to them.

Tax cuts, tax cuts, tax cuts—tell me about a tax cut that ever built a public school. Tell me about a tax cut that ever educated a child at a public school. Tell me about a tax cut that built a bridge. We've got tax cuts to nowhere. They just want to carry on about bridges to nowhere.

We've got 160,000 bridges in this country on the national highway system that are falling down. They're functionally obsolete or they are structurally deficient. A tax cut will not fix a single one of them. I guess maybe after they give the rich people all their money back, we can take up a collection for public schools, a collection to educate our kids. Maybe they'll be generous. Maybe they will even build us some bridges. I don't think so.

The Republicans don't have a credible alternative. Unfortunately, this bill also has too much tax cuts in it because of Republican insistence, particularly from the Senate side. We have lost so many jobs and potential jobs in this bill because of tax cuts.

Now, let's look at infrastructure spending. In this bill, \$29 billion to modernize roads and bridges, rebuild roads and bridges. That creates 835,000 jobs. \$18 billion for clean water environmental restoration projects, 375,000 jobs. That's \$47 billion—that's 6 percent of the bill, nowhere near enough—is going to create 1.2 million jobs. That means 35 percent of the jobs in this bill come out of 6 percent of the bill, and none of them come out of the tax cuts they're talking about on that side of the aisle.

Infrastructure spending was cut to make room for tax cuts. Mass transit was cut to make room for tax cuts. Two of the largest transit districts in Oregon, they're suffering the same thing as transit districts across the country. They have too many passengers so they're going to have to cut service. Americans are turning to transit to avoid high gas prices. They're turning to transit as an effective alternative and a good way to get to work, and the service is going to go away. There's no transit district in the world, not a one, that makes money, but the Republicans say, oh, we can't afford to

support those transit districts; let's give the money back to people. Well, what are they going to do? How are they going to get to work? There's a lot of people who don't have an alternative.

And then the making work paid tax cut, which is in this bill, is down to eight bucks a week per person. Now, I can just see, you know, someone of the generation that gets that \$8, there's a lot of people in my district could use eight bucks a week, they sure could, but they don't think it's going to put America back to work. They don't think it's going to turn this economy around. They don't think that's going to give us a better future. It can help them with some essentials. It can help their kids with some essentials, but they would rather see the money invested to put other people to work in good jobs and rebuild this country and give us a better future. Eight bucks a week.

I can just see, you know, 20 years from today when our kids and grandkids are still paying for the money we borrowed to give some people \$8 a week back will say, Grandpa, what did you spend that eight bucks a week on because I'm paying taxes to pay that money back. Grandpa probably won't remember where the eight bucks a week went.

The education cuts, to make room for tax cuts, which can mean some of the school districts in my State have to chop 20 days off the year, 20 days. Now, tax cuts aren't going to help those kids get their education. They're not going to keep those schools open.

School construction, remodernization, out. Had to make room for tax cuts. Now, why are we making all this room for tax cuts when none of the Republicans are supporting the bill? Because there's three Republicans in the Senate who are writing this policy. They're more powerful than the President of the United States and the Congress combined apparently because the Senate is so dysfunctional, and they're writing the bill and they want the tax cuts. They're delivering tax cuts for these guys, and they're sticking it to the American people in terms of a meaningful jobs creation stimulus package.

Veterans took a big cut. Everybody loves to come to the floor and wrap themselves in the flag and talk about how much they support our troops. You can measure it in this bill. Veterans and our servicemembers were cut in their housing and other services to make room for tax cuts.

Tax cuts are not the answer. I personally think we should start over, reject the tax cut mantle from that side of the aisle, and invest the money in rebuilding this country. If we're going to borrow the money, it should provide benefits for years to come, not a transient benefit and not a tax cut.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO NISWONGER CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IN JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Niswonger Children's Hospital in Johnson City, Tennessee. On March 2, 2009, the hospital will open its doors and the new home for the Children's Hospital, our region's first hospital for children. The Children's Hospital at Johnson City Medical Center has offered premier health services in approximately 20 pediatric subspecialties for the past 16 years.

Once open, Niswonger Children's Hospital will serve children from birth until 18 years of age in a four-State region, including parts of Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky. With the financial assistance of Scott and Nikki Niswonger and the people of our region, the hospital will be a place where children will feel comfortable coming to for their care.

Niswonger's patient-centered care philosophy will put families in control of their care, and I certainly commend them for their work.

Madam Speaker, when I began my medical practice some 30-plus years ago in Johnson City, we used a closet and had a one-bed neonatal intensive care unit. Today, we have a state-of-the-art intensive care unit to care for children.

When I began practice, when I graduated from medical school, almost half of the children who were born at 7 months died. Today, they have the same life expectancy as a term birth, and from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank this family for what they have done to make the health care of our region better and our children's lives better.

DON'T USE FEDERAL FUNDS TO BUY UP AT-RISK LOANS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, today the White House apparently made an announcement that they're considering a proposal to head off potentially millions of more home foreclosures by using Federal funds to buy up at-risk loans and apparently refinance them. It's one of several proposals that the White House is looking at.

I would urge the new President of the United States not to allow the Federal Government to purchase toxic assets, and I'm placing in the RECORD an article from late last fall by William Isaac, the former head of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation during the 1980s, the early part of the eighties, late seventies, when over 3,000 banks in our country were resolved without going to