

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

LET'S NOT FORGET IRAQ

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, this week was the beginning of the 111th Congress, and it is absolutely clear we face enormous challenges. We must deal with an economic crisis that is robbing the American people of their savings, their jobs and their homes. We must tackle our problems in health care, energy, education and the environment. The domestic agenda is going to be long, it is going to be hard, and it is going to demand our time and our energy.

But I rise today to make this plea: Let us not forget Iraq. About 140,000 American servicemembers remain in harm's way in Iraq. Military families and veterans continue to struggle and to suffer, and the occupation continues to cost us over \$11 billion a month. That is money that is desperately needed to help the American people right here at home. Yet Iraq seems to have disappeared from our radar screens, from our newspapers, from our media. The three major television networks have decided to remove their full-time reporters. With Iraq off television screens, I am concerned that it will be out of sight and out of mind.

But forgetting Iraq would be wrong. It would be dangerous. The dying hasn't stopped. Nearly 100 civilians have been killed in the first few days of this month alone. In addition, over 300 died in December and over 300 died in November. Many, many more are sure to die in the days and months ahead, not to count those that are being injured and displaced. The number of Iraqis being killed today is about the same as the number that were being killed in 2003 and 2004.

There are other issues that demand our attention as well; the new Status of Forces Agreement, which is bound to create confusion and new problems for our troops. And we must come up with a plan, a plan to meet the refugee crisis. Four million refugees must be resettled. The humanitarian crisis goes on and on.

But despite all these problems, there is reason for hope. The administration that decided to destroy Iraq in order to save it will be gone in 2 weeks, and I am confident that the new administration, with President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton leading the way, will put us on the right path. They are committed to ending the occupation within 16 months. I actually urge them to do it even sooner and to ignore the voices that will advise them

to leave residual forces and permanent bases behind. I also urge them to engage the international community and Iraq's neighbors, including Iran, in a diplomatic effort to stabilize the Middle East, which is absolutely essential.

A full redeployment of our troops in a new diplomatic effort will send a signal to the world that a compassionate America is committed to peace; that it is committed to human rights instead of war and instead of torture.

Madam Speaker, the pundits and neocons who got us into the Iraq mess in the first place are calling it a victory. This is the second time they have called it a victory. They would like us to close the book on Iraq and to move on. But the occupation is still standing in the way of peace, it is still undermining our moral authority in the world and is draining our Treasury at the worst possible time.

We have more than enough domestic problems to deal with, but ending the occupation of Iraq must also be at the very top of this new administration's agenda. I am confident that it will be, because we will finally have the leadership in the White House and the State Department that will do the right thing.

Madam Speaker, let's not forget Iraq.

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

ENSURING FAIRNESS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, here we find ourselves at the end of the first week of this new session of the 111th Congress. There is a lot of talk and has been a lot of talk since the election about bipartisanship. There has been a lot of talk on both sides of the aisle about bipartisanship, and that is important. I am a strong supporter of bipartisanship, and everybody talks about it. Bipartisan discussions, however, require bipartisan action. If action in a bipartisan way doesn't follow those discussions, then credibility is denied.

Now, I firmly understand and appreciate that elections have consequences, and the election of this past November resulted in a House, the United States House of Representatives, with a membership ratio of 59 percent on the Democrat side and 41 percent on the Republican side. So on the floor of this House, that is the ratio, and it is reflected in votes even this week.

Nobody would argue, I don't believe, Madam Speaker, that every single Member, every single Member of this

House is important. We all represent virtually the same number of people, and it is pivotal that each and every Member be given the appropriate and equal opportunity to be involved in the process, because that is what gives credibility to representative government.

Now, as you and I both know, Madam Speaker, and as our colleagues know, the bulk of the congressional work is done in committees. That is where the critical issues are debated, that is where the hard work is done, that is where the issues are tossed back and forth and where solutions are hammered out.

Now, when voices are silenced, either by not being able to speak in committee for various problems with rules or when individuals are not even allowed to sit in committees, then it does a disservice to each and every American. We are better when we are tussling with those ideas, when we are working as hard as we can to come up with the appropriate solution for our Nation. We are not better when we are just talking about politics.

Again, in reviewing the ratios on the House floor, they are 59 percent Democrat, 41 percent Republican. Most Americans, if you asked them, would say that is what ought to be reflected in the committees, because that is where that hard work is done, that is where those issues are hammered out. I agree those ratios should be reflected in committee. If they aren't, then America is cheated and democracy is cheapened. The committee ratios are incredibly important because they determine the work product that occurs in this House. So, again, Madam Speaker, the House of Representatives, 59 percent Democrat, 41 percent Republican.

Now, when we look at committee ratios that have just come out this week, it appears that on some of the most pivotal committees where issues like taxes and financial services and health care are going to be decided, that ratio has not held. The ratio appears to be closer to 63 percent Democrat, 37 percent Republican. This is a significant decrease of a significant number of seats, and it disenfranchises many Americans across this Nation. It is a matter of fairness, Madam Speaker. It is a matter of fairness. The American people may not care about the specific processes here, but they do care about fairness.

So I call on the Speaker, I call on the majority leader, I call on the majority party, to make certain that the committee numbers, the numbers, the ratios of Democrats to Republicans in our committees, reflect the appropriate ratio that is reflected on the floor of the House of Representatives. Madam Speaker, it is a matter of fairness.

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.)

**THE \$700 BILLION GOVERNMENT
BAILOUT IS NOT WORKING**

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, in 2008, Wall Street's biggest banks got Congress to hand over to them \$700 billion of your taxpayer money. Now they want more.

Yesterday, Neel Kashkari, the Interim Assistant Secretary for Financial Stability, gave a speech at the Brookings Institution. He gave fancy sounding bureaucratic names to the \$175 billion that he has already forked over. He called it Capital Purchase Program, Asset Grant Guarantee Program, Targeted Investment Program. Essentially he was talking about the \$20 billion that went to Citigroup.

He asked rhetorically, when will we see the new banks making loans? Well, that is part of his job, to get them to make the loans. But he said as long as confidence remains low, banks will remain cautious about extending credit.

Oh, Mr. Kashkari, we know that well. The reason the auto industry is in trouble is because credit has dried up. Car loans can't be made.

So let me get this straight: He wants more money, because he has only given \$175 billion from the taxpayers' money out there in the country to the biggest banks that did the wrongdoing to begin with, and they are still reluctant to lend.

Let me give Mr. Kashkari a dose of reality. Your program isn't working, and it is not working for Main Streets across this country.

PNC Bank of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, one of the Nation's largest banks, now the fifth largest bank, has received \$7.5 billion from Mr. Kashkari.

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And instead of providing additional lending capacity and loan workouts for those mortgages to help resolve the problem, PNC took the money. And you know what they did? They came across the border to Ohio and they bought National City Bank in Cleveland.

I see my dear colleague from the city of Cleveland, Congressman KUCINICH here this evening. He understands this well.

National City has been a headquartered institution in Ohio, headquartered in Cleveland since 1845.

Now, Treasury's money, the taxpayers' money, went to PNC and they came to Ohio and bought National City Bank, putting all those people out of work. And PNC became bigger. So what Mr. Kashkari did was take our money and give it to PNC, that hasn't worked down any of those loans, but they came to Ohio and bought out National City

Bank. So PNC gets bigger, our banking system gets more concentrated, and PNC becomes more powerful. Some say they actually have price control power on the western side of Pennsylvania.

So, PNC gets \$7.5 billion. Cleveland and Ohio lose a Fortune 500 company, and Ohio, where foreclosures are raging, gets nothing. We get nothing. We just get more foreclosures.

In 2008, Citigroup, one of the main culprits that caused the financial meltdown, was given \$25 billion. They got more than PNC. They got it from us, the taxpayer, and then they have foreclosed, just in my district, on another 235 families in Lucas County, Ohio.

Last November I found an advertisement in my local paper that said there was going to be an auction in my home county. I was surprised. I didn't know the company coming in, called Hudson and Marshall of Dallas, Texas. So I went.

Guess what? Citigroup was one of the banks selling properties. I attended and watched homes in my community sold for as little as \$7,900, a price so low that the original owners could have gone back into those homes. Not only was Citigroup auctioning homes that night, but so were TARP money recipients; those are the banks that got the money through the Treasury from us, Wells Fargo, US Bank, Deutsche Bank, ABN/Amro, Chase Home Finance, Fifth Third Bank, Standard Federal and LaSalle. They all got money.

It is clear that some of the recipients of the Treasury money are unwilling to craft real workouts. And so what happened in our region was people got kicked out of their homes. Wall Street hired the auction company from Dallas, Texas. They came to our region, they sold all those properties for very little money, and they're going to get big, huge tax losses written off on their IRS filings for the tax year of 2008.

But where are our families? Out on the street. Our people lost their homes.

I would like to invite Mr. Kashkari, Secretary Paulson and all the PNC executives to come to Ohio, and I want them to live in the neighborhoods that their actions have affected. We'll give them a little heater, Bunsen heater overnight so they don't get too cold in the houses; and we'd like them to experience the results of what they have done to the American people.

Last year, 4,100 homes in my region were foreclosed upon. In the last 2½ years, 10 percent of the properties in my home community have been foreclosed. 10 percent of the housing stock. And as foreclosure rates continue to rise in places like Ohio, it's pretty obvious that's what's happening here in Washington isn't connecting to Main Street.

Sadly, Hudson and Marshall, the auction house that Wall Street hired to sell all those homes in my community, are coming to your town too. This month alone they are slated to be in several cities in Michigan, Arizona, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Is-

land and New Jersey, and they're going to auction another 1,455 properties. They've now sold over 70,000 homes in the last few years, and expect another 30,000 in the year 2009.

Mr. Kashkari, your program isn't working.

Madam Speaker, I would like to place the additional remarks that I have in the RECORD.

What is happening is an outrage to the American people, and they're being asked to pay for it. There shouldn't be any more TARP bills clearing this Congress until hearings are held in the communities that have been affected. We need to use our power in order to go out to the voters that sent us here.

Equity is bleeding profusely from our communities. The sheer volume of the properties sold at auction is disturbing. Financial institutions which have been capitalized through the TARP Program have failed to do mortgage workouts—FDIC and SEC should do their jobs, and they are not—and must be required to do mortgage workouts, rather than foreclosing on homes and participating in auctions. Hudson & Marshall stated in a press release that they have made \$1.2 billion doing auctions.

The intent of the TARP was to help stabilize our financial system, which includes in large measure our housing industry. Yet, we financial institutions enriching themselves, merging, and yet foreclosing on families rather than working to stabilize families in their homes. A stable home permits people to focus on obtaining and maintaining employment, purchasing food, and contributing to society in positive ways rather than relying on social services funded by State and Federal dollars. Furthermore, we see communities falling apart. Community members and local banks are effectively locked out of the opportunity to reinvest in themselves because monies from the Department of Housing and Urban Development which would allow community banks and members to purchase foreclosed homes have not yet arrived.

No second round of TARP money should emerge from this Congress unless regular hearings are held and the victims of this crisis can have their voices heard in the deliberative process. The Committees should travel to the communities most affected. Why should we trust Wall Street Banks again as more families teeter on the edge.

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

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

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