

get shot by our Border Patrol agents. So 1,097 violent assaults against people who we send down to that violent border to protect us from criminals that are coming into the United States. Three a day occur, and we can suspect that probably three a day have occurred this year. It is important that our government prosecute those assaults, those people who commit crimes against our border agents when they sneak into the United States, many of them to commit crimes in the United States.

It has also gotten so violent on the Texas border that a local sheriff in Hildago County, Lupe Trevino, has issued automatic weapons to his sheriff's deputies, and has told them to use those weapons if they are fired upon. That is a new policy. That is how violent the border is, and they are all down there just protecting us.

One of the reasons they protect us is because of America's unfortunate but tremendous greed for illicit drugs. And because we have an appetite for narcotics in this United States, the drug dealers are willing to supply them. That is another issue. This country has to get around to solving that appetite that we have as a Nation for illicit drugs.

So we have that appetite and we send our Border Patrol agents down to the border to keep those drugs from coming into the United States, and then if one of them gets in a scrape, we prosecute them rather than the drug dealers. Maybe those times have changed because of this commutation. I certainly hope so.

And we certainly can't expect the Mexican Government to do their part. We hear constant reports of corruption in Mexico, especially with Mexican officials on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande River. That is unfortunate because they have an obligation to protect Mexican citizens as well as we on this side have an obligation to protect American citizens.

Border protectors need to know we support them. Back in the days of Vietnam, some of us remember those days when our troops came home, how they were treated. They were treated with utmost disrespect, unfortunately. And we have changed. Our country has changed. We show great respect to our troops that are in Afghanistan and Kosovo and Iraq, and we should because they are protecting us.

Our border protectors down on the border, our Border Patrol agents and our border sheriffs, need to know that America stands behind them as well because they are fighting a war just as important and just as violent as those troops in Afghanistan and Iraq are fighting. And they need to know that we will support them when they do their job, when they enforce the rule of law to keep people out of this country that are coming over here to smuggle drugs. Our Federal Government needs to get on the right side of the border war.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1700

#### EQUAL ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MASSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to quiet a voice, to complete a commitment that I made to the 640,000 voters who sent me here.

Ten years ago this month, I completed a course of chemotherapy that saved my life under some of the best and most expert medical care available in the world.

I believe passionately and I believe strongly and I believe to the core of my soul that all Americans should have access to the same medical care that I had access to 10 years ago. And so today I stand to complete a promise and a commitment: I will personally, with malice towards none and negativity towards none, won't accept the Federal and congressional health care benefits policy until such time that all Americans have access to the same medical care that all of us in this exalted and honored Chamber have access to. It is not a pejorative, it is a one-person commitment to try to change the system we have today. And I will not rest until all Americans have access to quality health care.

#### COMMENDING THE NATIONAL CHAMPION UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA GATORS

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

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my University of Florida football team for winning its second NCAA BCS championship bowl game in the last three seasons. Go Gators.

I want to congratulate the University of Florida not only for being the best academic school, but also athletic school in the country.

Their 24-14 victory over the Oklahoma Sooners showed off teamwork, sportsmanship, and one of the defense plays that I have seen. They held the team with the highest scoring offense to just 14 points. The Gators once again came back to prove that the University of Florida season was no fluke, and that the Florida Gators are again a championship team that made history. Congratulations to their great players and outstanding coach, Urban Meyer, for coaching a remarkable group of guys.

Let's do a quick fact check.

The Gators won their second national championship in the past 3 years and the third in the school's history. Florida is the fourth school in the modern era to win two outright national titles in 3 years. Florida finished the 2008 season with a 13-1 record, matching the single-season school record for wins.

Tim Tebow became the fifth player since 1950 to win a Heisman Trophy and two national championships.

The win makes Urban Meyer the fifth active coach with multiple national titles and the fifth coach since the AP poll began in 1936 to win two national championships in his first four seasons at a school.

Tim Tebow, Florida's leader and quarterback, not only ran for 109 yards, but threw 18-for-30 and was flawless in the fourth quarter alone when it mattered the most and the pressure was on.

Percy Harvin, whose gutsy play won him the game ball, came back from an ankle injury and dashed for 122 yards on only nine carries. And it was his 52-yard run down the stretch that set up Jonathan Phillips' 27-yard field goal early in the fourth quarter for a 17-14 lead, which the Gators never lost and never looked back.

There has been some discussion in this body about having a national championship playoff. Let me be clear, we've had a playoff. And I hate to say it, that everything is just not all equal. We want to encourage all of our kids to participate in sports and activities because we know that it builds character, but it is clear that the Gators are superb to any other schools with the conferences that we play in.

So, in closing, I want to leave you again with the Gators' chant that I just love: "One, two, three, four, five, them there Gators don't take no jive."

#### APPLAUDING PRESIDENT BUSH'S COMMUTATION OF BORDER AGENTS' SENTENCES

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, on September 14, 2006, I first stood before this House to call attention to the case of two United States Border agents who were convicted in Federal court for shooting and wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our borders in 2005. Now, Mr. Speaker, more than 2½ years and more than 45 speeches later, I stand before this House to thank President Bush for heeding the calls of the American people by commuting the sentences of Agents Ramos and Compean.

The agents entered Federal prison on January 17, 2007, to begin serving sentences of 11 and 12 years respectively. Both men are now due to be released from prison on March 20, 2009, after serving 26 months.

Like the millions of Americans who have followed the case over the past several years, I am so relieved to see the unjust imprisonment of these distinguished law enforcement officers finally come to an end. As these men sat in Federal prison for 2 years, my heart

ached for them and their families. While I firmly believe that these agents never should have been prosecuted, I am very grateful that President Bush has used his authority to close this ugly chapter in their lives. I will do everything in my power to see that Ramos and Compean are able to reclaim their lives and in due time will be fully exonerated with a pardon.

The prosecution and imprisonment of Agents Ramos and Compean has been a black mark for the United States justice system. Its legacy will not be forgotten by those of us in Congress who have criticized the indictment of these two men.

The facts of this case have shown, as Judge E. Grady Jolly stated on December 3, 2007, during the agents' appeal, and I quote Judge Jolly, "The government overreacted here, and for some reason this one got out of hand."

The truth of why this indictment was able to move forward and get out of hand still deserves to be investigated. The truth of why this indictment was able to move forward and get out of hand still should be investigated. I repeat that, Mr. Speaker, because it should be investigated. However, it is clear that President Bush understood one of the most troubling aspects of this case, the agents were charged under a statute intended for violent criminals carrying guns, not for law enforcement officers acting in the line of duty. This statute, which carries a sentence of no less than 10 years, was enacted by Congress to discourage criminals from carrying guns. It was never intended to apply to law enforcement officers who are required to carry firearms on the job. This was clearly a sentence Ramos and Compean should never have been ordered to serve.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and prayers are with the agents, Ramos and Compean, as they are finally able to return home to their families and their children. And may God continue to bless America.

#### AMERICA "CAN LEAD ONCE MORE"

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, I rise to give my 288th Special Order on the subject of the occupation of Iraq. The first 287 cited the terrible death and destruction that the occupation was causing and the damage that it was doing to America's moral standing in the world. But this Special Order, number 288, is different from all the rest. That's because we woke up this morning with new leadership in the White House, President Obama.

President Obama is meeting with his military advisors today. He is planning for the withdrawal of our troops from Iraq, something that the American people have been demanding for many years. And today, the Senate is meeting to confirm the nomination of Sec-

retary of State HILLARY CLINTON, who firmly believes that America should emphasize peace and diplomacy over war.

President Obama has pledged to withdraw our troops within 16 months. He must not hesitate for a moment to make good on that pledge. He must make sure that the withdrawal is complete, that it is safe, and it is meaningful. There must be no residual forces, no military contractors left behind. And if his advisors urge him to change his mind about withdrawal, he must not waiver or go wobbly. I don't think President Obama will. Just listen to yesterday's inaugural address.

President Obama said that it is time to "leave Iraq to its people." I've said for years that Iraq must have its national sovereignty and must have it back soon, so those words were very welcome to this Member of Congress.

He said, "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward based on mutual interest and respect." After showing the Muslim world nothing but shock and awe for nearly 6 years in Iraq, those were very healing words.

He said that "earlier generations faced down fascism and communism with sturdy alliances," and he called for "greater cooperation and understanding between neighbors," a clear repudiation of the previous administration's disastrous decision to go it alone in Iraq and elsewhere in the world.

He also said that America must choose "hope over fear," and that we must reject the false choice "between our safety and our ideals." This was another clear repudiation of the previous administration, which used fear to get us into Iraq in the first place and then used it to tear the Constitution to shreds.

President Obama also said that "power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please." He said our security comes from "the justness of our cause" and the qualities of "humility and restraint." President Obama understands that the true source of America's power is our moral authority.

The President also said that "we'll work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat." And he promised to work with the poor people of the world "to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds." These are good words. They echo some of the most important parts of my national security plan known as SMART. SMART calls for ending nuclear proliferation, and it calls for giving poor people a better life because it's the best way to stop terrorists from recruiting absolute new followers. It's just the right thing to do.

In the most dramatic moment of his speech yesterday, President Obama promised that America will "lead once more." That pledge has already inspired millions of people around the world. But now the challenge is to put the President's words into practice. It won't be easy. We know that there will be powerful forces that will try to push

him in the wrong direction. That's why he will need the support of the American people, he will need the support of the Congress to put our country back on the right track.

He must get that support, the support in the House, and I hope that it comes from both sides of the aisle. By working together, we can build a more peaceful, more congruent world, and we can show that America can lead once more.

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

#### LIVING BENEATH OUR MEANS

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, it has been said, and all too often ignored, if you live beyond your means, you will be forced to live beneath your means.

Living and consuming on borrowed money always end. Lenders, even in an age of inflation, have their limits. When living extravagantly, it seems the good times will continue forever, but when the bills come due and the debt, with interest, needs to be paid, the good times end.

The fiction that the appreciating prices of houses and stocks and other assets serve as savings is always self-limited and ends with pain. Without a source of newly borrowed funds, once the value of stocks and houses depreciates, the individual comes to the realization that hard work and effort are required to produce sustained wealth. Working minimally is replaced with working maximally to survive, as well as to pay for the extravagance of previous years. The consequence is more work and a diminished standard of living.

A nation that has lived beyond its means for a long period of time must go through a similar process. Once the national debt grows to an extreme proportion, as ours has, there is no possibility of it being paid off in the conventional sense. Default and liquidation are required, but sovereign states that enjoy the ruthless power to tax and create new money always resort to paying their pays by deliberately depreciating the currency. This makes it hard to identify the victims and the beneficiaries.

Today's middle class and poor are suffering and the elite are being bailed out, and all the while the Federal Reserve refuses to tell the Congress exactly who has benefitted by its largesse. The beneficial corrections that come with a recession, of debt liquidation and removing the malinvestment,