

all about. When you work hard and you build something real for the Nation's might, you expect a fair deal. And that was supposed to be the American Dream, for the many, not just the privileged few. Today a real industry, auto production, gets stomped on, chewed up, spit out because Wall Street robbed the kitty. They stole our hard-earned money and continue to beg, borrow, and steal from American citizens. Sales in business after business, including the auto industry, have gone down because the bailout recipients didn't make loans. Credit is frozen. People can't buy cars. The Big Three is suffering. So what does Wall Street do? It gets its friends, its shills, on the op-ed pages and other media to shift the blame.

So who gets the blame for the strangled auto industry? Is it Detroit that's the problem? No, my friends. It's Wall Street that's the problem. And it's time that we put America back on its feet again. And as Mr. Meyerson suggests in his very last sentence, pass the anti-trust laws we need in order to scale down these banks and give America back to the American people.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 24, 2009]

BREAK UP THE BANKS
(By Harold Meyerson)
THIS WEEK IN BANKING

Our leading financial institutions announced that they had actually made a profit in the year's first quarter through the creative manipulation of rules and regulations, lobbied Congress to preserve their ability to raise credit card interest rates just for the heck of it and opposed the administration's plan for restructuring Chrysler, which would save some jobs and honor pension obligations, in the hope that they can redeem the company's bonds at a higher level than they're trading at just now. And, to round out the picture, the Wall Street Journal reported this week that lending at the 19 largest TARP recipients was 23 percent lower in February—by which time these banks had received hundreds of billions of dollars in public funds intended to enable them to lend more—than it had been in October, before the floodgates of tax dollars had been fully opened.

This is what our major banks are up to at a time when it is our largess that is keeping them afloat.

The week began with a burst of creative accounting. Citigroup, into which we've sunk more dough than any other company, with the possible exception of AIG, claimed a profit for the first quarter of this year because its bonded debt has lost value, which under the rules of accountancy enabled it to register a one-time gain equal to that lost value, because Citi could, in theory, buy back its own bonds for less. J.P. Morgan Chase, whose fire-sale purchase of Bear Stearns we taxpayers backed, declared a similar profit because of a similar decline in the value of its bonds.

As events would have it, the very same Citigroup and J.P. Morgan Chase are the lead negotiators for the banks that are objecting to the Obama administration's efforts to restructure Chrysler. Chrysler's bonds, which these banks hold, are trading at 15 cents on the dollar, the amount the government offered to pay the banks in its initial proposal to restore the company to viability. Yesterday, the government upped that amount to 22 cents, plus a 5 percent eq-

uity share in the company. Citigroup and J.P. Morgan Chase, however, insist that they and their fellow banks are entitled to more, though that "more" could only come at the expense of Fiat (the auto company that is providing the new car lines and technology without which Chrysler will fold) or the company's retirees (to whose health-care fund Chrysler is legally obligated) who built the company, or the taxpayers who are keeping Chrysler alive.

Instead of playing Scrooge (and a publicly subsidized Scrooge, at that), what the banks should do is lend Chrysler their accountants. Maybe they'd show that the company turned a profit last year.

The banks' lobbyists, meanwhile, have been hard at work, too. Bills to limit credit card fees and penalties—my favorite fee is the one banks charge some customers for making (not missing, making) a payment—are moving through both houses of Congress, but the Senate version has yet to receive any support from Republicans. A bill that would enable bankruptcy judges to modify mortgage terms has also hit a wall in the Senate, with Republican leaders claiming the backing of all 41 of their members to filibuster the bill when it comes to the floor.

President Obama told representatives of the major banks yesterday that he backs the limits on credit card charges. The question here is whether the administration and congressional Democrats will use this issue to go after the Republicans, whose decision to align themselves with the banks, particularly on the issue of credit card fees, is incomprehensibly dumb even by their standards. Socially liberal bankers may be a financial mainstay of the new-model Democratic Party, but if the Democratic Senate and House campaign committees don't run against the Republicans for backing the moral sewer and economic disaster that is our modern banking industry, they will be derelict in their political duties.

And that should just be the beginning. The Democrat in the White House and the Democrats on the Hill are committed to legislation that regulates our dysfunctional wards in the banking industry, but regulations by themselves won't solve the problem of the banks being too big to fail—and so big that they dominate campaign finance and, with it, much of the business of lawmaking. We need to amend our antitrust laws so we can scale down banks to the point that they no longer imperil our economic and political systems. As things stand now, it's we who are serving their needs, not they who are serving ours. It's time to turn that around.

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PTSD/TBI GUARANTEED REVIEW FOR HEROES 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. Mr. Speaker, our Nation has asked many of its military personnel to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world.

Unfortunately, many of these servicemembers are returning with symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, known as PTSD, and traumatic brain injuries, known as TBI.

A 2008 study by the RAND Corporation found that nearly 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have symptoms of PTSD or major depression. This study also found that many

servicemembers say they do not seek treatment for psychological illnesses because they feel it will harm their careers. When some servicemembers suffering from PTSD or TBI are not properly treated, they wind up self-medicating or experiencing changes in behavior that lead to serious legal issues and the threat of separation from their service without benefits or treatment.

One disturbing example involves a lance corporal who is stationed in my district at Camp Lejeune. The marine had been facing involuntary administrative separation due to misconduct. His fitness reports prove that he was an outstanding marine prior to his deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan.

His medical board reports, and it states, and I quote, "His service in the Marine Corps caused his PTSD and, indirectly, his incidents/legal problems. The Marine Corps' failure to treat him in the past and treat him appropriately has done nothing but worsen the problem."

If this marine would be administratively separated from service, he will not have a chance to be eligible for TRICARE benefits. He would have difficulty obtaining a job, and it is unlikely that a university would accept him as a student.

Fortunately, the Marine Corps has decided to give this marine another chance, and he will be transferred to a naval hospital for PTSD treatment. However, this is not an isolated problem. Many servicemembers have already lost their benefits due to an administrative separation from their service.

For this reason, I have introduced H.R. 1701, the PTSD/TBI Guaranteed Review for Heroes Act. H.R. 1701 attacks the issue from two angles.

First, the bill creates a special review board at the Department of Defense for servicemembers who were less than honorably discharged. And, second, the bill would mandate a physical evaluation board prior to an administrative separation proceeding if the servicemember has been diagnosed with PTSD or TBI by medical authority. Ultimately, the legislation would help preserve the benefits of the servicemember upon leaving the service.

At a news conference last week, I was grateful to be joined by representatives from the National Association for Uniformed Services, the National Military Family Association and the Military Officers Association of America, who spoke in support of this legislation.

The Air Force Sergeants Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Marine Corps League have endorsed this bill. If our government and the military fail to address problems associated with PTSD, the situation will only grow worse in future years.

In 2007, President Obama and Vice President BIDEN joined Senator Kit Bond and others in writing President Bush about the need to ensure that any discharge a servicemember receives "is

proper and provides for their subsequent care for all service-connected injuries, visible and invisible.”

Given his previous interest in the issue, I hope President Obama will make H.R. 1701 a priority for his administration.

I am very pleased to have Congressman GENE TAYLOR of Mississippi as lead cosponsor of the bill, as well as Congressman BILL PASCRELL and TODD PLATTS, both cochairmen of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force. I hope that many of my colleagues in the House will join us as cosponsors of this important legislation for our Nation's military heroes.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform; I would like to ask God to please bless the families of our men and women of uniform; and, God, please bless the families who have given a child dying in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I close by asking God to continue to bless America.

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 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.)

DURBAN II HATE-FEST IN GENEVA

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

Ms. ROSLEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last week's Durban II hate-fest in Geneva reminded us once again of the anti-Semitic, anti-Israel bias that pervades the United Nations, and reinforced why the United States and several other responsible nations were right to stay away.

Given what amounted to a keynote speech, Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reminded us of his regime's goals when he savagely attacked the U.S. and Israel and called for radical political and economic upheaval on his terms.

He added, “World Zionism personifies racism” and said that Israel is a “totally racist” regime.

But such statements by Iran's Ahmadinejad come as no surprise. The Iranian leader frequently pushes for Israel's destruction, saying that this sovereign state should be wiped off the map, calling it a disgraceful blot on the face of the Islamic world and proclaiming that anyone who recognized Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation's fury.

On May 8 of last year, he said Israel is a “stinking corpse” and is on its way to total destruction. A few months later, on August 20, he referred to Israel as a “germ of corruption” that will be “removed soon.”

A year prior, on June 3, 2007, Ahmadinejad stated, “With God's help, the countdown button for the destruction of [Israel] has been pushed.”

In October of 2005, he asked “Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism? You had best know that this slogan and this goal are attainable and, surely, can be achieved.”

Mr. Speaker, his words and actions do not merely reflect his own views or those of a few powerless extremists, but, rather, Iran's supreme leader, for example, said, “This cancerous tumor of a state should be removed from the region.”

Rafsanjani, the former Iranian leader who continues to hold significant influence and who some mistakenly call a moderate, has threatened Israel with destruction by nuclear weapons, going on to say that even the use of one nuclear bomb inside Israel will destroy everything, while it will merely harm the Islamic world. Ahmadinejad's hatred for Israel, for the Jewish people, for the Great Satan, that is the United States, for freedom, for democracy and all that the United States and Israel represent, transcends rhetoric into policies and actions that threaten vital U.S. security interests and pose an existential threat to Israel.

Foremost are Iran's sponsorship of violent Islamic groups and its pursuit of nuclear, chemical, biological and missile capabilities. Responsible nations cannot accept the prospect of an emboldened nuclear Iranian regime. We must close loopholes in existing U.S. and international sanctions so as to deny the regime all remaining lifelines and compel it to abandon its destructive policies.

Likewise, we must learn history's lesson that we will not achieve peace by embracing Islamic militant groups like the Iranian proxy Hamas, or by recognizing a Palestinian Authority government that includes Hamas.

The proposed supplemental, which will be before the House in a few weeks, would provide hundreds of millions of dollars for assistance in Gaza. And this would amount to a bailout for Hamas, enabling them to divert their funds from reconstruction to the purchasing of arms.

We have tried unconditional funding to an unaccountable Palestinian leadership again and again, and it has not worked. There is no reason to expect a different outcome now.

Mr. Speaker, just today the Palestinian Authority leader Abu Mazen again refused to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. But the proposed supplemental before us would allocate \$200 million in additional direct cash transfers to the Palestinian Authority.

In short, as we craft policy to protect our Nation, we must reward those who

stand with us, compel those who threaten us to change their course, and demand accountability in exchange for our hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

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

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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 California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HUNTER 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 South Carolina (Mr. INGLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

FIRST 100 DAYS OF OBAMA PRESIDENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, we celebrate today, shortly, I think in 2 days, we celebrate 100 days of President Obama's Presidency. His rankings are way up there, and we all respect him on his first 100 days, but I am going to talk about those 100 days because I have a little bit different viewpoint than others might. I highly respect the man but, in turn, you can view the world differently, and I certainly view the world differently than Mr. Obama and the majority party.

I am going to talk, and I hope I will be joined by some of my colleagues, a little bit about the way I look at the last 100 days and actually farther back than 100 days, the way I look at the last 6 months of what's going on in this country and where we are going and what concerns I have.

Now, I want to make it very clear that I am not doing this to get on Ms. NAPOLITANO's hit list. I am just doing this to express my opinion.

The first thing, when you start trying to look at this new administration and the direction we are taking the country, you have got to start, I think, with our foreign policy. And I think, literally, the first thing or almost first thing that the President of the United States did when he became President of the United States was to order the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay to be closed down and, of course, we are now having the debate as to what we are going to do with the prisoners that were there.