

passes. But still, the veterans will still be without care because this bill that is passing here has to go to the Senate. The Senate could make some changes and then it comes back to the House. So you will have a health care bill out there standing by itself that has passed, gone to the President, signed into law that does not protect veterans on TRICARE. You should be very concerned about that, and I think the American people should be concerned that our veterans, who are in two wars today, are not going to be protected because you are delaying the enforcement of the rigorous understanding of what this bill is about.

So just simply passing this today under suspension will not mean that the veterans are protected. It still has to go to the Senate and comes back to the House before it is signed by the President.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I will go ahead and close with these final remarks.

Next year will be the 30th anniversary of my graduation from the United States Military Academy. When I am back there seeing these men and women who have served this country in so many distinguished ways, through times of peace and war and turbulence, the one thing that I want to be able to look in their eyes and say that we did as a Congress, not simply me, is that we served their needs, their family needs, the needs of their soldiers, the needs of veterans in general.

And it is clear from the overall legislation that we are seeking to amend before it even becomes law, although I think that is constitutionally in question if we are not actually going to vote on the Senate bill, we need to slow this process down and stop the Senate bill from being forced through this House, this reconciliation process, and go back to square one and do this step by step and get it right the first time rather than having to make corrections.

I thank the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee for bringing this critical fix forward. There are many more. Let us get to those.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to make two points clearly and very forcefully: veterans and veterans' health are protected and will be protected. We are glad to bring our record before the world where this party that I belong to has been in terms of protecting veterans and veterans' health. I just want to say a word about that because I have been here now for some years; and a few years ago the party that I belong to, when we had the power, took the steps to make sure that the health of veterans was protected, indeed, enhanced. What we did was to pass billions of dollars' worth in programs to make sure that veterans in this country were protected as to their health care needs. That is

absolutely clear. No veterans need to be worried about their health care. No one covered by TRICARE needs to be worried about whether that will be in effect. No one.

This is done simply to reassure in terms of the language. It is not to fix a flaw. It is to reassure. Indeed, it is being brought for the very reason that we feared that some people might decide to misstate what the reality was. The reality is that we are simply reassuring. There is no flaw to fix, period.

So no one in any place, any veteran or anybody and their family needs to worry about our dedication or the impact of this legislation. That is point one.

Number two, I think what is being done here, what is being said here is pretty clear. The argument isn't really over veterans' health. We are all dedicated to sustaining that. It isn't over TRICARE. We are dedicated to improving TRICARE wherever possible. What we hear on the other side instead are speeches and words about the reconciliation bill. You don't like it.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEVIN. I am not sure that I want to carry on much longer a debate over the health care bill, but sure.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. I would point out that TRICARE for life was excised from the Senate bill.

Mr. LEVIN. Look, the Senate bill, we wanted to be 100 percent sure that nobody would misstate its impact. So don't misstate it. That's the purpose of this.

Instead, after you talk about veterans' health, you begin to talk about the reconciliation bill. Now we will debate that tomorrow, but we should not use any question about coverage for veterans as a reason to attack the reconciliation bill. I support it. I think it will have a major positive impact. You used all kinds of words about a different Nation, about rushing headlong. That has nothing to do with this bill. I think you are completely wrong about this being a different Nation. You raised it, so I will say a few words.

What this is going to do is continue the path of this Nation, to make sure that health care can be afforded, to make sure that health care is spread to everybody. It is not a different Nation; it is continuing the best in our Nation. And so we are not rushing headlong. We have been talking about health care for a century in this country. I said at the Rules Committee, my first political experience as I remember it was as a kid passing out leaflets for the dad of JOHN DINGELL. His father had introduced a health care bill how many decades ago, and before him, others. Going back to Teddy Roosevelt, no huge radical.

So now decades later we come to a moment when we can step up to the plate, and you call it a different Nation. No, I say it is in the best traditions of the United States of America. And so this is simply a bill to reassure;

don't use it as an opportunity to talk about something else. We want to say clearly to the veterans of this country and to the families of those veterans, to everybody who is part of that family, that their health care is going to be protected. That is the purpose of this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4887, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMENDING AGRI-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAMS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN WAR-TORN COUNTRIES

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1075) commending the members of the Agri-business Development Teams of the National Guard for their efforts, together with personnel of the Department of Agriculture and the United States Agency for International Development, to modernize agriculture practices and increase food production in war-torn countries, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1075

Whereas the Agri-business Development Teams of the National Guard began as a pilot program started in Missouri, and the Missouri National Guard worked with the Missouri Farm Bureau and the University of Missouri to draw a blueprint that could be followed by other Army National Guard units;

Whereas the Agri-business Development Teams consist of National Guard members who have a civilian background in farming or a related agricultural business;

Whereas the Agri-business Development Teams now consist of units from 11 States;

Whereas before deploying overseas, members of an Agri-business Development Team collaborate with land-grant universities, which spend weeks teaching and preparing strategies for the farms to which the Agri-business Development Team will deploy;

Whereas in Afghanistan, the goals of the Agri-business Development Teams include improving irrigation systems and providing sustainable methods for fertilizing, planting, harvesting, marketing, and storing agricultural crops, modernizing slaughter facilities, setting up markets to trade crops and livestock, developing a juicing and canning facility, and improving livestock health through mobile vet clinics, all of which can help divert cropland from poppy production;

Whereas the Agri-business Development Teams also are partnering with the Department of Agriculture to have a directory of 50-60 experts in a variety of agricultural areas in Afghanistan; and

Whereas the Agri-business Development Teams have been quick to use alternative energy sources, such as wind, solar, and small water dams, which in the absence of a national energy grid in Afghanistan are more reliable and easier to protect from enemy attack: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the members of the Agri-business Development Teams of the National Guard and the National Guard Bureau for their efforts, together with personnel of the Department of Agriculture and the United States Agency for International Development, to modernize agriculture practices and increase food production in war-torn countries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1075, a resolution commending the Agri-business Development Teams of the National Guard; and I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUTKEMEYER) for introducing this resolution.

The Agri-business Development Teams, often called ADTs, are one of the unsung successes of the mission in Afghanistan. Agriculture makes up about 45 percent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product and employs over 70 percent of its population. Although Afghanistan once supplied food for the region, 30 years of war has degraded the agriculture economy of Afghanistan so much that substantial assistance is required to rebuild it and ensure that Afghanistan has food security.

□ 1400

The first Agri-business Development Team was from the great State of Missouri, and I have particular pride in the great work that they do. These teams are made up of National Guard members who have expertise in agriculture from their civilian lives. These volunteers spend 1 month training for deployment in Indiana and then they are sent to Afghanistan for 11 months. Each team has about 58 personnel, with 12 agriculture experts, although all members of the team have some level of agriculture expertise. Right now there are teams from nine States deployed, including one from Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I might mention that the Thanksgiving before last I spent with the Missouri Agriculture National Guard team in Afghanistan. And I must tell you that they did a fantastic job. I am very proud of them. I was proud to have visited with them, break bread with them on Thanksgiving Day, and tell them that we in Missouri are downright proud of them.

From the start, the Missouri National Guard has been a leader in the program, and the fourth Missouri team is now preparing to go. I have a list of the Missouri Guard members who have gone to Afghanistan and returned, and I would ask that their names be included in the RECORD.

MISSOURI AGRIBUSINESS TEAM ONE

Allen, Jon Matthew, E3.
Allen, William Noel, Jr., E4.
Allison, James Gregory, O5.
Brandt, Curtis Herbert, E6.
Briscoe, Aaron David, E4.
Bruce, William Eugene, E5.
Bunch, Billy Wayne, E4.
Choate, Richard Austin, E4.
Dignan, Kyle Patrick, E5.
Douglass, Earl Brian, E4.
Dunlap, Douglas Kevin, O3.
Elkin, William Anthony, O2.
Garner, Nathan Lee, E4.
Gideon, Chad Ryan, E4.
Godsey, Larry David, E8.
Gustin, Brian Eugene, E7.
Hall, Shannon DeWayne, E5.
Harper, Stephen Timothy, O1.
Hoaglin, Robert Lee, Jr., E5.
Holderleath, Jason Jacob, E4.
Huitt, Mark Douglas, E6.
Kellison, Aaron Curtis, E3.
Kidd, Jimmy Wade, E4.
Lyons, Jeffery Joseph, E7.
Murray, Rickie Dean, E5.
Neher, Jeremy Lee, E4.
Norman, Michael Timothy, E4.
Oyer, Chad Edward, E4.
Pennington, Nicholas Ryan, E3.
Peterson, Erik Sven, E4.
Pettibon, Matthew Travis, E4.
Pierce, Russell Wayne, E7.
Richards, Clayton Shawn, E6.
Roth, Robert Edward, O3.
Rufener, Damon Carl, E6.
Salmon, Joshua Nathan, E6.
Saunders, Berry James Allen, E5.
Seek, Michael Lee, O3.
Simmons, Randall Scott, E8.
Stegmann, Matthew Herman, E7.
Sutton, Darrell Craig, E4.
Thornborrow, William Jose II, E5.
Vesco, David James, E4.
Vogel, William Joseph, Jr., E9.
Wagner, Ted Curtis, E4.
Williams, David Roy, E6.
Winston, Bryan Joseph, E4.
Wymore, John Darren, E6.

MISSOURI AGRIBUSINESS TEAM TWO

Ashton, Daniel James, O2.
Banuelos, Scott Alexander, E5.
Bennett, Alan Lee, O3.
Boyle, David Lee, O5.
Brainard, Jonathan Gregory, E5.
Branson, Timothy, E3.
Brody, John Anthony, E4.
Brown, James Edward, E4.
Coplin, Richard Keith, W1.
Cunningham, Heather May, E4.
Dam, Russell Jens, E6.
Davenport, Zachary Dale, E4.
Davidson, Sean Michael, E4.
Dipley, Jennifer Lindsay, E5.
Flaxbeard, Zachary Thomas, E3.
Frink, Richard Allen, E8.

Funken, Jennifer Ann, E6.
Green, John Allen, E5.
Green, Ronald, E7.
Hafner, Gerald Wesley, E5.
Hartman, Timothy Ray, O5.
Hill, Scott Douglas, E6.
Hill, Timothy Michael, E4.
Jones, Anton Claxton, E6.
Keilholz, Nicholas Allen, E1.
Lane, Andrew Christian, E4.
Larsen, John Kenneth, E4.
Latour, Andrew Dennis, E4.
Ledbetter, Jason Robert, E5.
Lee, Daniel, E1.
Litherland, Sean Nicholas, W2.
Love, Richard Anthony, E4.
Matlock, Kyle, E4.
Mullins, Matthew Dean, E9.
Olson, Julie Ann, E4.
Patty, Ryan Heith, E4.
Percy, Jacob, E4.
Powell, Nathaniel Elliot, E3.
Reppert, Michael Leslie, E3.
Sears, James Grant III, E1.
Smith, Stephen Ryan, E4.
Steinbrook, Michael Lee, E6.
Stewart, David Liekweg, O2.
Thomas, Michael, E3.
Trigg, Timothy William, E6.
Udovich, Anthony Steven, E5.
Walters, James Wilson, Jr., E9.
Wilkinson, Denise, O4.
Wilmoth, Scott Allen, E4.
Wilson, Tony Lynn, Jr., E4.
Withrich, Jason Allen, E7.
Wunderlich, Janet, O3.
Beaver, Jonathan A., SSG.
Brandau, Scott W. SRA.
Herring, Adam S., SRA.
Jacobs, Matthew E., SRA.
Mackey, Seth E., SSG.
Moe, Eric J., SRA.
Pearce, Douglas D., SRA.
Polley, Terry P., TSG.
Robison, Richard C., SSG.
Salcedo, Daniel A., SSG.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to include an exchange of letters in regard to House Resolution 1075.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

Washington, DC, March 16, 2010.

Hon. IKE SKELTON,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning House Resolution 1075, "Commending the members of the Agribusiness Development Teams of the National Guard for their efforts, together with personnel of the Department of Agriculture and the United States Agency for International Development, to modernize agriculture practices and increase food production in war-torn countries." As you know, this measure was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

This resolution contains provisions within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. In the interest of permitting your Committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important resolution, I am willing to waive this Committee's right to mark up this resolution. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the resolution, the Committee on Foreign Affairs does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the resolution which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Please include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record

during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

HOWARD L. BERMAN,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, March 16, 2010.

Hon. HOWARD L. BERMAN,
*Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Rayburn House Office Building, Wash-
ington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding House Resolution 1075, "Commending the members of the Agri-business Development Teams of the National Guard for their efforts, together with personnel of the Department of Agriculture and the United States Agency for International Development, to modernize agriculture practices and increase food production in war-torn countries." This measure was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

I agree that the Committee on Foreign Affairs has certain valid jurisdictional claims to this resolution, and I appreciate your decision to waive further consideration of H. Res. 1075 in the interest of expediting consideration of this important measure. I agree that by agreeing to waive further consideration, the Committee on Foreign Affairs is not waiving its jurisdictional claims over similar measures in the future.

During consideration of this measure on the House floor, I will ask that this exchange of letters be included in the Congressional Record.

Very truly yours,

IKE SKELTON,
Chairman.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of House Resolution 1075. I am pleased to join my colleagues, Representative BLAINE LUETKEMEYER and the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Representative IKE SKELTON, both from Missouri, as well as the many cosponsors of this resolution, in expressing the gratitude and pride of the United States House of Representatives for the work of the U.S. National Guard's Agri-business Development Teams. The efforts of these brave men and women, along with their colleagues from the Department of Agriculture and the United States Agency for International Development, are critical to creating economic opportunities for nations such as Afghanistan.

We know all too well that Afghanistan has been devastated by nearly three decades of war. And such efforts, in addition to what our combat forces are doing, are instrumental in bringing security and stability to the country.

I would like to take a moment to recognize all those who serve, our military and civilians. I am proud to stand here today and say "thank you." Thank you for making the choice to serve. Thank you for sharing your skills and expertise with the Afghan people. Thank you for protecting America's interests and representing

the best she has to offer. And I thank your families as well for their sacrifices.

I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri for introducing this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend and my colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. I thank my friend from Missouri for yielding the time. And I also want to commend my colleague who introduced the resolution. I was a proud cosponsor of this resolution.

On a previous trip to Afghanistan, I too had a chance to spend some time with the National Guard Agri-business Development Teams. And we can't thank our troops for the mission that they are carrying out in Afghanistan enough. And it is especially true for the citizen-soldiers that we send over there, our Guard and Reserve units. But the Agri-business Development Teams are performing a very vital and important function in the development and assistance that is taking place in Afghanistan, a country which, after all, is an agrarian nation.

I am especially proud that one of the leaders in the National Guard is a gentleman by the name of Colonel Marty Leppert, who as a kid grew up on a dairy farm outside of Reedsburg, Wisconsin, in the heart of my congressional district. And I commend USDA and USAID, but especially our military leadership for recognizing the value of identifying our soldiers with agriculture backgrounds, and utilizing that expertise in the development of these ag development teams working with Afghan farmers. That is going to be the key to a successful resolution and the economic development that has to occur in that country.

I commend my colleague for offering the resolution.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER).

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in support of House Resolution 1075, commending the Agri-business Development Teams, or ADTs, on their work. I want to thank Chairman SKELTON along with Ranking Member McKEON, as well as the rest of the Missouri delegation for their support and efforts in helping the Missouri ADTs. In addition, I would like to thank the senior Senator from Missouri, KIT BOND, for his support of the ADT program from the very beginning.

There are many people who made the efforts of the ADT a great success. First, I want to commend Colonel Marty Leppert, Chief Tony Romano, and the entire team of men and women dedicated to using their skills and knowledge to improve the situation in Afghanistan. They have met a massive challenge with determination to see their goals achieved.

The National Guard's Agri-business Development Teams started as a pilot

program in Missouri. The Missouri team partnered with the Missouri Farm Bureau, the University of Missouri, and Lincoln University to draw a blueprint that is being followed by other Army National Guard units from around the United States. In addition, ADTs get resources and guidance from the National Guard Bureau, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Agency for International Development.

The National Guard ADTs have a big mission. They help to modernize agricultural practices and increase food production in a war-torn country. ADTs are made up of Guard members who have a civilian background in farming or a related agricultural business, and they are using those skills to teach Afghan farmers sustainable farming practices. This task is not easy, but the units from 11 different States have been working long hours with farmers and community officials.

The farming practices used today by the Afghans are very primitive, almost medieval-level farming. The teams that have been deployed work with Afghan farmers to provide basic agricultural requirements. Their goals include: improving irrigation systems, providing effective methods for fertilizing, planting, harvesting, marketing, and storage of agricultural crops. In addition, they have established modern slaughter facilities to help contain spreading diseases, set up markets to trade crops and livestock, developed a juicing and canning facility, and improved livestock health through mobile vet clinics.

They have been quick to use alternative energy resources such as wind, solar, and small water dams as well. Maintaining a reliable water source still remains one of the biggest problems. The Guard units are using sustainable methods for pumping water and working on watershed management to capture snow melt and rainwater runoff for irrigation. Since a national energy grid and 24/7 energy is not available, these alternative energy sources actually provide a better solution.

There is no easy fix for the situation in Afghanistan. There are problems with local customs, tribal leadership, and issues of property rights that must be solved on a routine basis. If a team wants to construct a building or dig a well, it has to find out which village elder has authority to grant permission to use the land. In many villages, property usage and ownership is decided in meetings with family elders. However, our young men and women labor vigorously and diligently in search of solutions to these many challenges.

The work in Afghanistan is important, where agriculture makes up 45 percent of the gross domestic product and employs more than 70 percent of the population, but where farming practices are inefficient and outdated. Many Afghan fields are used to grow opium poppy plants, which provide the

raw material used to make heroin. It is my hope that establishing a viable agricultural industry will provide farmers throughout Afghanistan with alternatives. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, in my judgment this is the way that we are going to be successful in Afghanistan, by turning the Afghan people and their economy around and earning their trust to be able to work with us in running the Taliban out of the country.

The bill we consider today recognizes the good work that these men and women are carrying out every day. I encourage other States to look at ways they can contribute to the mission of the National Guard ADTs.

I urge my colleague to join me in passing this legislation.

Mr. SKELTON. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Once again, I commend the National Guard for their service to this country and to the cause of freedom. The freedom they work and fight for is embodied in the constitutional system that we enjoy in this country. Few votes we have taken in this body will affect our constitutional system of freedom more than the vote we take tomorrow on health care.

Now, the American people have spoken loud and clear on this issue of health care. They do not want a government takeover of health care. And the latest health care plan that we will be voting on as early as tomorrow afternoon is still a government takeover of health care despite what others have said, because, number one, it includes billions of dollars in new taxes and over a trillion dollars of new government spending. It will cause millions of employers to cancel the health care they offer their employees and force these individuals into a government-run health care plan.

It creates a health care czar to impose health care price controls that will lead to a shortage of care and even more individuals falling into government-run insurance. It will mandate private citizens that they purchase health care whether they need it or want it.

Democrats are planning to abuse the legislative process to pass purely partisan legislation with no bipartisan support that will change one-sixth of the American economy. Democrat leaders are even considering a process that will allow their health care bill to become law without an up or down vote. That would be the so-called "Slaughter solution," named for the chairman of the Rules Committee, Representative LOUISE SLAUGHTER of New York.

This would declare that the House deems the Senate version of the ObamaCare to have been passed by the House. House Members would still have to vote on whether to accept the rule, but then they would be able to say they only voted for the rule and not for the

underlying Senate bill. But remember, a vote on the rule is a vote on the bill. Legislative tricks and unconstitutional procedures should not be used to jam through Congress a partisan bill that will impact the life of every American and affect one-sixth of our Nation's economy.

The American people have been trying to get the message across that they want Congress to start over on health care through an open and honest dialogue and process. It is time to work step by step on health care reform that will lower costs for families without increasing the size of the Federal Government.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that when you add the 4,872 pages of legislative text to the 1,347 pages of committee reports, you have a total of 6,219 pages of bill text. Now, we got the final version of this 72 hours from the potential vote tomorrow afternoon. And if a Member was to take all 72 hours, allowing for 8 hours of sleep each day, because otherwise they may just get burned out, that leaves 48 hours of solid reading of this 6,200 pages. That works out to 129 pages an hour, or 2 pages a minute.

I haven't seen a lot of Members, frankly, spending their time reading 2 pages a minute for this 6,000 pages, and yet that is what we are being asked to vote on as early as tomorrow afternoon. I don't think that's really what the American people deserve for how this body should do its business.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1415

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN).

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to be here and to speak on behalf of this resolution that honors the members of the Agri-business Development Teams that have been operating. These are joint missions that combine some of the best of our military capabilities, the best of our civilian capabilities, and they are operating in some of the most important areas we need to succeed.

We've seen the success of these teams on the ground in Afghanistan. We have heard from our military leaders how essential they are to our success. We are very pleased that our Missouri National Guard has been one of the leading groups that has done this. They have worked with our universities, with our rural electric co-ops, and many of our civilian capabilities have been brought to bear from our farming communities in Missouri to help bring more advanced agricultural methods to Afghanistan and to be sure that we succeed in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would like to yield 2 minutes to my colleague from the State of Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

I totally support H. Res. 1075 and the support of the National Guard and the Agri-business Development Teams.

The National Guard is doing a phenomenal job in Iraq and Afghanistan. The chairman could give me the exact number, but I don't know the percentage of the National Guard troops that are in Afghanistan, but it's extremely high. We count on the citizen soldiers to help us in times of war, and they are there not just from the State of Missouri but from the State of Texas as well.

And I had a chance to be with some National Guard troops in Afghanistan during the Christmas season. They're doing a phenomenal business in helping those Afghans change from growing poppies that is turned into cocaine and heroin that is sold primarily in Europe and teaching them to farm wheat and soybeans. In fact, Texas A&M University has developed some type of soybean that yields ninefold what a typical soybean yields, and they are being planted in Afghanistan so that farmers can sell legitimate crops on the open market.

This bill is an important bill because it recognizes our National Guard, but also this bill is a bipartisan bill. It is supported by both sides. And legislation in this House, to be successful, should be supported by both sides, unlike the health care bill that we're going to vote on tomorrow afternoon. It's only supported by a portion of one side with no input from the others. And I think that we should have a bipartisan vote in support of the health care bill as well, which, unfortunately, we are not.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, in answer to the gentleman from Texas, my understanding is that right now as we speak—though the number is increasing—there are some 80,000 American troops in Afghanistan today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. I would like to inquire how much time our side has remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 9 minutes remaining.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you.

I will yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me just continue where I left off a few moments ago talking about this huge bill tomorrow that affects our Nation's freedom so much on health care, and let me just point out that our side of the aisle, the Republicans, have introduced 70 bills that offer free market solutions to health care reform that do not take over America's system of health care.

For instance, one solution, H.R. 3400, is the Empowering Patients First Act. This particular bill would do three things, Mr. Speaker:

Number one, it gives access to coverage for all Americans. It makes the purchase of health care financially feasible for all by extending the income tax deduction on health care premiums to those who purchase coverage in the

Hinchey
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
LaTourette
Lofgren, Zoe
Markey (MA)
Matheson
Meeks (NY)

Mollohan
Nadler (NY)
Payne
Richardson
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Simpson
Stark
Towns