

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Two minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1839

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on November 29, 2010, I regret that I was not present to vote on H.R. 5877 and H. Res. 771.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both bills.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for votes in the House Chamber today. I would like the RECORD to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 581 and 582.

IMPENDING CRISIS IN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about an impending crisis in our health care system. If this Congress can't figure out a way to reimburse the doctors that take care of our older Americans, our fellow citizens, our mothers and fathers and grandparents that are on Medicare, this Nation is going to be in a world of hurt. It is time that we put aside petty politics, figure out how we're going to reimburse the doctors and keep the Medicare system going.

There are millions of Americans, certainly hundreds of thousands of seniors in the district that I represent, that depend on Medicare to have their health care needs met. You take away their doctors, you take away any chance they have of getting medical care.

Let's get moving on this and provide a permanent fix to reimbursing the doctors, and let's help our seniors stay on Medicare.

THE CHILDREN'S TRUST SIXTH ANNUAL CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN AWARD CEREMONY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, the Children's Trust hosted its sixth annual Champions for Children awards ceremony just recently in south Florida. It honored the exceptional individuals who dedicate their time and services to the children of south Florida.

The Children's Trust is an altruistic humanitarian organization committed to the children and families of our south Florida community. It operates on a simple motto, Madam Speaker: "Because all children are our children."

It is this belief that has motivated the Children's Trust since its inception in the year 2002. It has collaborated with children and parents throughout our community in an attempt to strengthen the family bond and to help facilitate opportunities to allow the children of south Florida to achieve their full potential.

I encourage all throughout our community to take an interest in this great organization because, indeed, all children are our children.

INSULT MOSQUE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the people who want to build a mosque at Ground Zero now want American taxpayers to pay \$5 million to help build that mosque. Those who beg for American money to build an insult mosque on Ground Zero disrespect the 3,000 people of all faiths, nations, and religions that were murdered by a radical Islamic faction on 9/11.

Ground Zero is sacred American soil. It's where America was ambushed by killers from the sky. A taxpayer-funded mosque at the site comes across as a memorial and tribute to the radical terrorists that murdered in the name of religion. Such a plan is unwise, insensitive, and shameful.

Those who wish to build a mosque should instead build a monument and a memorial to the victims of 9/11—victims that include Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Otherwise, Ground Zero is off-limits.

And that's just the way it is.

DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that as Diabetes Awareness Month comes to a close, we must continue to work together to protect future generations from this disease.

Cases of diabetes among Americans is growing at an alarming rate. Today, nearly 24 million children and adults suffer from this disease, that's nearly one in every three Americans, and another 57 million Americans are at risk.

Madam Speaker, in addition to the alarming number of people affected by diabetes, the costs associated with this disease are far too great. The American Diabetes Association estimates that the total cost associated with diabetes care costs approximately \$174 billion annually.

With health care costs rising and the number of diagnosed diabetics at an

all-time high, we must work to prevent diabetes through education and awareness, as well as work to lower the cost of care associated with this disease.

□ 1850

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. KILROY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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.)

HONORING LEOPOLDO CIFUENTES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of a friend who passed away just a few days ago, a larger than life personality, a generous and extraordinary man, Leopoldo Cifuentes.

Scion of a distinguished Cuban family, his grandfather purchased the famed Partagas cigar factory in 1875. The Cifuentes family symbolizes Cuban tobacco and cigars, the best in the world. And Leopoldo Cifuentes symbolized his remarkable family.

When the Cuban Communist tyranny confiscated all businesses in Cuba in 1960, including the tobacco business of the Cifuentes family, young Leo came to the United States of America, a country he loved and admired deeply. He married Dagmar Hidalgo Nunez, an extraordinary woman, in 1962.

That year Leopoldo Cifuentes volunteered to join the United States Army. Years later, he received an honorable discharge and the commendation of the then Army Secretary Cyrus Vance. Leo and Dagmar subsequently moved to Spain, where much of their extended family resided. Their children, Leopoldo, Jr., and Mayte, were born there. As Leopoldo and Dagmar's family grew, so did Leo's business success. But he never stopped loving the United States of America, nor the country of his birth, Cuba. Leopoldo Cifuentes, along with his son Leo Jr., and his nephew Rafael, have been bulwarks in the fight for Cuba's freedom.

Madam Speaker, just this last July, when I visited Spain to meet with recently arrived former Cuban political prisoners, Leo, Leo Jr., and Rafa helped me to lend a hand to our heroes, the just-released-from-the-gulag former political prisoners. And that's typical of their generosity and their patriotism.

I send my deepest condolences to Dagmar, Mayte, Leo Jr., Rafa, and the entire wonderful family of Leopoldo Cifuentes. I will never forget him.

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.)

DESTROYING THEIR PROPERTY AND INSULTING THEIR INTELLIGENCE

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, the trip taken by the U.S. delegation to the NATO summit in Lisbon was an expensive one indeed. The decision made there to extend our military occupation of Afghanistan into 2014 and possibly beyond will exact untold, unsustainable, unacceptable costs.

A war that has already tragically cost us 1,400 American lives will now take many hundreds more. A war that has already drained the Treasury of \$370 billion will drive us further into debt and stall our economic recovery. And a war that has undermined our national security goals will continue to make us less safe.

Here we are patting down holiday travelers at the airport while we escalate a war that is fomenting, rather than fighting, terrorism. That's the current state of our national security policy. Talk about missing the forest for the trees.

This decision to stay the disastrous course in Afghanistan represents a broken promise plain and simple, a promise that was to at least begin ending this war in July of next year. Meanwhile, as the timetable extends, the tactics seem to grow more violent.

Remember shock and awe in Iraq? Well, we are now engaged in what one American officer called, "Awe, shock, and firepower" in the form of enormous tanks now rolling into Afghanistan for the first time during this war. As if Afghans needed another reminder of the 1980s Soviet invasion, which was heavy on tank artillery, and left an indelible mark on the national consciousness.

The optics here, Madam Speaker, are very bad, and the rhetoric is disturbing as well, with one official boasting to the Washington Post, and I quote him, he said, "We've taken the gloves off." And another saying that counterinsur-

gency, and I quote him, "doesn't mean you don't blow up stuff or kill people who need to be killed." Of course, the problem is that we are killing a lot of people who don't need to be killed, innocent civilians caught in the cross-fire.

How exactly are we supposed to win people's hearts and minds when we are destroying their homes and exterminating their families? When will we understand that this kind of warfare, this entire war is the best propaganda tool the Taliban could ask for? And besides, Madam Speaker, tank deployment flies directly in the face of the COIN doctrine that is supposed to be guiding our Afghanistan strategy. We have all heard General Petraeus wax philosophical about U.S. troops moving within communities, helping forge a bond between the people and their government. Except that tanks and night raids are about just the opposite—removing our troops from Afghan communities in favor of launching deadly explosives from a safe distance.

But apparently NATO officials have come up with a creative way out of that contradiction. The Post reports that an Afghan farmer asked a general at a public meeting, "Why do you have to blow up so many of our fields and homes?" He was told that when villagers travel to town to submit a claim for property damage it helps better connect them to their government. Can you imagine a response more galling, Madam Speaker? Now we are not only destroying their property, we are insulting their intelligence, too.

This must end, it must end now. And Madam Speaker, we must bring our troops home. Our troops should have come home a long time ago.

□ 1900

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.)

MIAMI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL'S VENTILATOR ASSISTED CHILDREN'S CENTER CAMP

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am so pleased, so pleased, to recognize the Miami Children's Hospital's Ventilator Assisted Children's Center Camp and congratulate them on their 25th anniversary.

This extraordinary camp serves children who depend upon medical technology to breathe. It gives them a chance to just be kids for a week.

Founded in 1986 by Dr. Moises Simpser, the camp has grown from serving 50 to over 250. This one magical week is the work of hundreds of volun-

teers and a year's worth of planning and preparation. The VACC Camp is the first of its kind in the Nation, and families come from across the country to participate.

For this 1 week every year, children who are usually all but confined to their hospital rooms and their homes can experience camp activities and a near-normal life. Packed with activities and field trips, this week is a week of firsts: First-time dancing, first-time bowling, first-time swimming. VACC Camp is not about what the campers cannot do; it's about what they can do.

Through a partnership with Shake-A-Leg Miami, the camp even developed a special sailboat that campers can steer with their chins, regardless of how much medical equipment they require. Other field trips include cruising on Biscayne Bay, shopping at Bayside Marketplace, a day at the beach, and lunch at the Hard Rock Cafe. Often this is the one time a year that these children have a chance to go outside in the fresh air and feel the sunshine on their faces.

At camp, volunteers make the week unique by putting on carnival nights and themed dance parties. But above all, the camp offers a chance to escape wheelchairs, medical tubes, and breathing equipment by going swimming. The process of getting each child into the pool takes over 20 minutes and five to six volunteers.

VACC camp is unique for the opportunities that it provides to its campers and their families. Caring for a child who is dependent upon technology to breathe puts an incredible amount of pressure on even the strongest of families. Parents are responsible for intensive 24-hour care without a day off.

Of all the difficulties of caring for a sick child, one of the most trying is social isolation. VACC Camp serves not just the kids but also their siblings and their parents. With programs like Parents' Dinner Out, this camp is a time to have fun and take a day off. What a luxury.

VACC Camp is an opportunity for these children and their parents to see that they are not alone, to build a community and a support structure.

Camp is a life-changing week for the families and the selfless volunteers who make it happen. Sponsored by Miami Children's Hospital and supported by hundreds of volunteers, VACC Camp is completely free for the families. The camp depends not only on the medical professionals who use their vacation days but also on its many teen volunteers. Local high school students interact with campers to make the week truly special and fun, and they leave the week with lifelong friendships. Camp is as much of a life-changing event for these high school students as it has been for the campers themselves.

I am so appreciative, Madam Speaker, of the hard work and the countless volunteers who come together to make this camp a magical week year after year.