

as well as post-traumatic stress disorder.

So I wholeheartedly urge the passage of this resolution in the hope that we will not only recognize those who blazed the trail for us but that we will increase awareness of the need to continue the advancement of civil rights and liberties for all Americans.

I urge the VA specifically to recognize the unique struggle of many minority veterans and to, accordingly, ensure that they receive all of the benefits and care that they have earned and that they deserve. Passing this resolution is the least we can do for these veterans who have done so much for our country.

I urge the passage of this legislation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 238.

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. FILNER. 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.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SARAH MOORE GREENE ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, today is the 100th birthday of a great lady and Tennessee icon, Sarah Moore Greene.

Ms. Greene has been both a national leader and a leader in our hometown of Knoxville. By the way, she still attends many events, and is always dressed like a fashion model. She has served on the national board of directors for the NAACP, and has been a delegate to numerous Republican national conventions.

My father served as mayor of Knoxville for almost 6 years from early 1959 through the end of 1964. During that time, Knoxville received the All-American City award from Look magazine, primarily because it had the most peaceful integration of almost any major city. Sarah Moore Greene and my father led the effort to peacefully integrate our city.

Mrs. Greene has touched thousands of lives in good and positive ways through her years as a teacher and through her work in the community. She has helped countless numbers, young and old, but her special love is her children, both the hundreds she taught and the thousands who have attended the Sarah Moore Greene Elementary School.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation is a better place today because of my friend Sarah Moore Greene, a great American.

SORROW AND OUTRAGE AT THE DEATH OF CUBAN DISSIDENT ORLANDO ZAPATA TAMAYO

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my deepest sorrow and outrage at the death of Cuban dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo. Imprisoned since 2003, he had been on a hunger strike for several weeks. He first heard he was seriously ill last week, and yesterday, he died at the prison clinic.

Zapata Tamayo paid the ultimate sacrifice for his commitment to changing Cuba's system. He commands our respect. No one has starved himself to death in a Cuban prison in over 40 years. Surely, the Cuban Government could have and should have intervened earlier to have prevented this tragedy. His death is on their conscience.

I have always felt and continue to believe that, if we are truly going to do a better job of standing with the Cuban people, then we need to be closer to them and in greater numbers. We need to travel freely to the island to meet and to learn from them and they from us. I hope that day comes soon so we can tell all of the Cuban people that we remember the sacrifice of Orlando Zapata Tamayo.

[From the Washington Post]

ACTIVISTS: CUBA DISSIDENT DIES AFTER HUNGER STRIKE

Havana—An opposition political activist imprisoned since 2003 died Tuesday after a lengthy hunger strike, members of Cuba's human rights community said.

Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who was jailed on charges including disrespecting authority, died at a clinic at Havana's Combinado del Este prison, according to Vladimiro Roca, a leading dissident who said he spoke to Zapata Tamayo's family.

Zapata Tamayo, 42, was not among the island's best-known dissidents. He was arrested in 2003 on charges of disrespecting authority, said Elizardo Sanchez, head of the Havana-based, independent Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation.

He was sentenced to three years in prison, which Sanchez said was lengthened to 25 years, in part because of his political activism while behind bars.

Sanchez said Zapata Tamayo staged a hunger strike for weeks before his death. His family first announced last week that prison doctors said he was gravely ill.

Relatives were transporting Zapata Tamayo's remains to his hometown in

Holguin province, said Roca, a former fighter pilot and son of a legendary communist leader who served nearly five years in prison himself for his opposition political beliefs.

Word of Zapata Tamayo's death was first reported on Cuban exile radio stations in southern Florida, which broadcast an interview with his mother, Reina Luisa Tamayo.

Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, a Republican from Florida—and the nephew of Fidel Castro's ex-wife, Mirta Diaz-Balart—said on the floor of the U.S. Congress on Tuesday that the dissident's "condition and fate are the Castro brothers' doing."

Hours later, as news of Zapata Tamayo's death spread, the congressman issued a second statement declaring that his "murder by the tyrant Fidel Castro and his cowardly jailers will never be forgotten."

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, of Florida, said in his own statement that "freedom-loving people everywhere should hold the Cuban regime responsible for the fate of Orlando Zapata Tamayo."

"His reported death today is a sad reminder of the tragic cost of oppression and a dictatorship that devalues human life," Nelson said.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Kendrick Meek, also of Florida, noted that Amnesty International declared Zapata Tamayo a "prisoner of conscience" in 2003.

"The Cuban government's stunning lack of respect for human rights was highlighted by Orlando as much in his life as in his death," Meek said in a statement.

EMPOWERMENT

(Mr. NEUGEBAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, just last week, I was traveling across my district to ask the people in the 19th Congressional District, How do we move America away from this entitlement mode, which we seem to be moving toward, and back to an empowerment mode so we can create jobs?

With 9.2 percent of the American people unemployed, people want to know what we are going to do about jobs. What they do know is that the government can't continue what it has been doing, which is taxing too much, spending too much, and borrowing too much—mortgaging the future of our future generations.

I asked a number of businesspeople, Why aren't you hiring more people? Why aren't you expanding your plants?

The overriding answer was, Congressman, it's too uncertain right now. Congress is talking about raising our taxes, imposing insurance on us, talking about more regulation, raising the cost of energy in this country. If you continue down that road, we can't create new businesses. In fact, in many cases, we will have to lay off people if we move in that direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have to do is quit doing what we have been doing and get back to making America the great Nation it is by empowering the people. That means taking less taxes and letting businesses do what they know how to do, which is to create jobs. Take away the uncertainty of the business environment in this country

today, which is causing many businesses across the country either to lay off or not to hire people.

Mr. Speaker, we need to empower America. We need to quit entitling America.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE REFORM

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I am on the floor tonight to request that President Obama include in tomorrow's discussion at the health care summit the issue of medical malpractice reform and defensive medicine—the kind of reform that will relieve Kansan families and business owners from facing higher health insurance premiums. We have to reduce health care costs, and this is a commonsense way to do so. If we do not control those costs, then any reform effort will fail, as the cost of health care and, therefore, the cost of insurance will increase.

Defensive medicine, where doctors order every possible test under the sun for fear of being sued, costs us more than \$650 billion each year, or 26 percent of our annual health care spending. These costs increase insurance premiums for doctors, and health care expenses simply get shifted to the patients.

Mr. President, if you are serious about improving patient care and about reducing costs, add medical malpractice reform to the agenda at your health care summit tomorrow.

□ 1630

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

CORRUPTION IN AFGHANISTAN THREATENS OUR TROOPS

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, the United States is reaching a bleak milestone in Afghanistan. The death toll for our troops is now 996, or it was when this paper was written. It is inevitable that we will reach the 1,000 mark. How much further are we going to go in this?

Under these circumstances the American people have the right to demand

that the Afghan Government do everything it can to stop violent extremism in their country and to keep our troops safe. So far the Afghan Government has not lived up to its responsibilities.

Our Ambassador in Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry, wrote a cable to the State Department in November in which he said that President Karzai "is not an adequate strategic partner" and "continues to shun responsibility for any sovereign burden, whether defense, governance, or development." He also wrote that when it comes to corruption, Karzai has a record of "inaction and grudging compliance."

This is outrageous, Mr. Speaker, because this government corruption undermines our very efforts in Afghanistan and puts our troops at risk.

When the Afghan people see the corruption in their government, they ask, and they should ask, Why should we help the Americans defeat the Taliban when our government isn't any better than the Taliban?

The Washington Post just recently, well, yesterday, I think, revealed a deplorable example of the Afghan Government's shady dealings. It was Monday that the article came out. It was written by Andrew Higgins and entitled "Kabul Bank's Sherkhan Farnood Feeds Crony Capitalism in Afghanistan." The article described the cozy relationship between the Afghan political elite and the Kabul Bank. The Afghan Government has poured tens of millions of dollars of public money into that bank. At the same time, the bank has made shady multimillion dollar loans to members of President Karzai's family, his government, and his supporters to buy luxury villas in Dubai. The article calls this "a crony capitalism that enriches politically connected insiders and dismays the Afghan people."

President Karzai's older brother and his former Vice President both have Dubai villas, but they're registered under the name of Sherkhan Farnood, the chairman of the bank. Presumably this is done to hide the goodies that the political big shots have gotten. The bank has plenty of money, including more than \$1 billion in deposits from Afghans. But "the vast majority of this money flows into the hands of a tiny minority, some of it through kickbacks and insider deals"—that's from the article—for the country's political, security, and business elites.

The bank also helped pay for President Karzai's recent reelection campaign, which was filled with charges of fraud. The bank's support for Karzai wasn't surprising. Why should it be? The bank is partly owned by Karzai's older brother and the brother of his vice presidential running mate.

And at a time when most Afghans are desperately poor, the Kabul Bank is spending \$30 million to build a fancy new headquarters.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have a right to ask, Is this what our soldiers are dying for? Is this what

we're spending tens of billions of our tax dollars for? So that well-connected elites in Afghanistan can enjoy luxury villas in Dubai?

We cannot allow this to continue. I have been demanding that we change our mission in Afghanistan to focus on SMART Security for a long time now. One of the cornerstones of SMART Security is an emphasis on better governance. Improving governance in Afghanistan is just as important, Mr. Speaker, as any military operation. Actually, it's more important.

That's why President Obama must insist that President Karzai and his cronies clean up their act and do it quickly. Without honest government, we will never defeat violent extremism in Afghanistan and the death toll for our troops will not stop.

RECOGNIZING KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY'S PROUD CAMPAIGN

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. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to recognize Kansas State University's Proud campaign. K-State Proud was founded in the fall of 2006 as an effort for students to help other students. This year's event will be celebrated this Saturday, February 27, during the Missouri-Kansas State men's basketball game. This is a great concept that reflects our Kansas values of family, community, and stewardship.

There are many people who take college experience for granted. Leaving home to pursue an education is not a given for many families. Certain amounts of financial, emotional, and spiritual support are needed to ensure a student's success. Sometimes bad things happen and students' families fall on hard times. And it's heart-breaking to see a student's dreams and hard work jeopardized by events beyond their control.

The K-State Proud campaign was started in an effort to keep these struggling students in school. It was started by students, for students. Students continue to organize, plan, and execute K-State Proud's activities. This year's co-chairs are Anna Zeiger, Reed Pankratz, and Robert Swift. That is what makes this effort so unique. There are no benefactors or trust funds paying an annuity that funds the tuition or living expenses for a struggling student. This program allows these kids to collect money from their peers and to distribute to those most in need. As a society, we should take a step back and look at what K-State Proud has accomplished. They have had a genuine compassion for complete strangers. They do more than pay lip service to the concept of charity. They put their money where their mouth is.

For a \$10 donation, the donor receives a K-State Proud t-shirt to be worn for the designated K-State basketball game. Special thanks should be