

DREAM Act is not amnesty. The DREAM Act is justice.

“Amnesty” is defined as a government pardon. But how can you be pardoned if you have done nothing wrong? These children followed their parents to a land of greater opportunity, having no choice and no say in how they arrived. They grew up here, went to school here, and now want to serve the United States.

But make no mistake, these students will not have it easy. They will have to work hard, wait an entire decade, and continue to prove they meet all of the criteria for a green card, much less citizenship. They must pay back taxes, be able to read, write, and speak English, and show knowledge of the United States.

And when they have done all of that, they will finally be allowed to pursue their dreams. That is justice—the American way.

PASS DREAM ACT

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would like to express my deepest sympathy to the family of Elizabeth Edwards, who passed today, a woman who I got to know and who I admire greatly. I wish for her family loving memories, and I offer publicly my deepest sympathies.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind Members of what opportunity means in this country. Opportunity is focused in many ways: equality and justice, First Amendment rights, that you can find in the Constitution in some way. But education is also an opportunity and a right in this country.

I rise today to support the DREAM Act so that millions of children who've lived in this country, speak the language, many of them served in the United States military, who are seeking a simple education can do so and then, in turn, invest some \$1 trillion in contributions to America.

I speak today in tribute to Ms. Martinez, who is on a 28-day hunger strike, from San Antonio, Texas. Ms. Martinez, I hope, in your name, that we will pass the DREAM Act, because you have been willing to sacrifice. We should pass the DREAM Act.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members are reminded that Members should address their remarks to the Chair and not to the television audience.

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A SETBACK FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the actions of the Governments of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay for recognizing Palestine as an independent state before there are conclusive negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians.

The Prime Minister of Israel gave a 10-month moratorium on any kind of building of additional settlements or houses or anything like that in exchange for talking with the Palestinians. The Palestinians waited 9 months and didn't talk. In the 10th month, they talked, and now it ran out, and the Palestinians are again placing preconditions and are refusing to talk. The Palestinians must know that a peace agreement with Israel is the only way they can have their Palestinian state. It can't be done unilaterally.

What Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay did, I think, has set back rather than enhanced the negotiations for a two-state solution, which I support. This is something that was wrong and that should be condemned. It gives the Palestinians no incentive to sit down and talk with Israel and bargain in good faith.

A GDP SPENDING CAP

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, most Americans are looking at the events in Ireland, Spain and Greece with interest and horror when we look at how they are grappling with the problem of their national debts. Yet, at the same time, the United States of America has a debt which is 96 percent of GDP. Our spending level is about 24 percent of GDP.

Now, most States around the country have balanced budget amendments which keep them from going in the red. What a different picture it would be if our national government had a balanced budget amendment. There is another thing we could do, though, and that would be to modernize the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, which calls for deficit reduction targets.

I think, however, it would be better to have a spending cap tied into GDP at approximately 18 percent, which would, year after year, give Congress a target. If we were to fail to meet that target, then it would have an automatic trigger of across-the-board cuts so that we could get to the right level of spending. We do not want to have the same problems as Greece, Ireland and Spain.

MAKE THE DREAM ACT A REALITY

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

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific Amer-

ican Caucus, I urge my colleagues to support the DREAM Act this week.

Failure to pass the DREAM Act would disproportionately impact the 1.5 million Asian students in our country. Hardworking and high-achieving students like Soo Ji Lim and Steve “Shing Ma” Li have overcome numerous barriers in their lives and are now on track to finish college.

These students already contribute to our country, and we owe them a chance at the American Dream. We must act, and we must make the DREAM Act a reality for students like them. It is a good investment. Let's get a return on the investment.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KISSELL). 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 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.)

IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND NO DEFINITION OF “VICTORY”

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, I have to my side the faces of marines who have given their lives for this country. They are from Camp Lejeune, which is in the district I represent. These are the faces of those young men and women who gave their lives for this country.

I come to the floor today because I join the American people. I am very concerned about committing our troops to 4 more years in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a vast country. It has never been a nation. It doesn't have a government, and we are trying to build a government in Afghanistan. I want to share just a couple of comments. This is from The Washington Examiner.

It reads: “Catch-and-Release of Taliban fighters in Afghanistan angers troops.”

“More than 500 suspected Taliban fighters detained by United States forces have been released from custody at the urging of Afghan Government officials, angering both American troops and some Afghans who oppose the policy on the grounds that many of those released return to the battlefield to kill NATO soldiers and Afghan civilians.”

Recently, on November 28 of this year, there was a “60 Minutes” segment by Anderson Cooper. It was called “Good Cop, Bad Cop: Afghanistan's National Police.” I want to read just a couple of excerpts from this:

"While the Afghan Army has made some strides in recent years, the national police force has developed a reputation for drug abuse, illiteracy and desertion."

"Earlier this month, The New York Times reported that up to 19 Afghan police officers from southwest of Kabul defected to the Taliban en masse, taking their guns with them and burning down their own station house."

Just another part from that "60 Minutes":

"What is certain is that the United States has spent 9 years and more than \$7 billion building and training the Afghan police force. "60 Minutes" wanted to find out what has become of that investment."

I am going to paraphrase very quickly:

There has been very little success. The Afghan police are still 9 years behind in training, and we have already spent 9 years training them. I don't know how that adds up to anything positive.

I am going to save some of the other comments from the "60 Minutes" segment to use later on this week and to use, certainly, next year when we come back.

Mr. Speaker, I have signed over 9,747 letters to families and extended families who have lost loved ones in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I do that every weekend so I can be reminded of my mistake of voting to give President Bush the authority to go into Iraq—a war we never had to fight. It was manipulated by those within the administration, and it never had to be; and, yes, we lost young men and women in that battle.

On Afghanistan, I have joined my colleagues on both the Democratic side and the Republican side to ask: What is the end point? What is the definition of "victory"? What are we trying to achieve? You can never get a straight answer. I don't care who gives you an answer; you don't know what the end point is.

So there we are, spending \$6 billion, \$7 billion a month in Afghanistan, but we can't fix the streets in America. We can't build schools in America; yet we have borrowed that \$6 billion, \$7 billion from our Chinese friends. We owe them the money while we spend it in a foreign country, and we can't even take care of our own people.

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So, Mr. Speaker, again, the faces of these young marines—and they could be soldiers, they could be airmen, they could be Navy, but these young marines who died at 20 and 21, the only thing their parents can do in the years ahead, or their loved ones, is to show the face of a 21-year-old marine that died at 21 and will always be seen as a young man who gave his life for this country.

It's time for this Congress to come together and say to President Obama, We don't need 4 more years of spending

money—and more important than money is the blood of the American soldier and marine and serviceman that is dying for this country.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will, as I always do, I will ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform, to bless the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq, and I will ask God to please bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God. And I will ask God to please give wisdom, strength and courage to President Obama, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for today and tomorrow's generation.

NEWBOLD-BUY AMERICAN

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, the more I learn about the Department of Defense's procurement policies and the procurement policies of other agencies, the more angry I get, the more angry this Congress should get, and the more angry the American citizenry should get.

In my home State of Connecticut, we pioneered America's shipbuilding and aerospace industries. However, today, as more and more of U.S. taxpayer dollars go overseas to buy equipment and parts and machinery for the U.S. military, those shops, once bustling with workers, are now silent.

We have example after example of how our procurement policy has gone wrong. You have the big-ticket, high-profile examples, like the Air Force KC-x Tanker which went to Airbus rather than to an American-based bid. You have the 21 helicopters that we are supplying to the Afghan military today that we are buying—not from an American manufacturer but from a Russian manufacturer. And then you have the thousands and thousands of smaller examples on seemingly a daily basis in which American companies come up short. When we buy Chinese-made doorknobs for the renovations at Camp Pendleton when there is an American company that can do the same work, when we buy our copper and nickel tubing for our subs from a German manufacturer, when there is an American firm that can do the same work, we are wasting billions and billions of American dollars sending our jobs overseas.

I am here today, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the latest affront on this issue. The Army, last month, offered a solicitation for 96 machines that will make dog tags for our service men and women. These iconic placards are not only a symbol of the life and death faced by our American soldiers, but they serve a crucial function in the field. Frankly, there is little else that embodies the American military tradi-

tion than those little plates that hang off of a soldier's neck.

An American company, NewBold, which manufactures its dog tag machines in Virginia, lost its bid to a company that manufactures those machines in Italy. Now while the NewBold machine was marginally—only about 4 percent—more expensive, they offered around-the-clock technical support for our soldiers in the field. Even after they filed a protest, the Army still awarded the bid to workers in Italy.

Unfortunately, due to the loss of this contract, NewBold is going to have to lay off some people, and the 4.7 percent that we saved is going to be completely offset by all of the lost income taxes to the Federal Government due to the layoffs, the lost payroll taxes, and all of the increased social costs like unemployment compensation. This is insanity. Not only are we now relying on an Italian-made machine to make one of the most iconic pieces of our military uniform—all to save just a few thousand dollars on the contract—but it is now going to cost the U.S. economy jobs, and it is going to cost the U.S. taxpayers additional expense. We can't allow this to continue, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues.

For the last year, I have been working with a bipartisan group of Members, including the previous speaker, Congressman JONES from North Carolina, so that we can shore up the loopholes in our "Buy American" policies, so that we can make sure that more of our U.S. taxpayer dollars stay here at home. I have introduced legislation that will do just that, that will begin to reorient our money here to American-made products for our U.S. military.

I've had enough. This country has had enough. As we bleed manufacturing jobs out of this country, the U.S. Government cannot continue to exacerbate that problem by sending U.S. taxpayer dollars overseas. It's time for this Congress to deem this practice unacceptable, to strengthen the "Buy American" provisions, and to bring our taxpayer dollars back home.

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

WESTERN SAHARA

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, we have seen the issue of the Western Sahara receive a great deal of coverage in the world press. Unfortunately, the press coverage has often been biased; in