

## THE AFGHANISTAN-IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, like all Members of Congress during the Memorial week break, I had two occasions to give different types of recognition speeches to the families of those who gave loved ones who never came back from war; so therefore I had several opportunities in eastern North Carolina, the home of Camp Lejeune Marine Base and Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station.

Every time I would make the comment that it was time to bring our troops home from Afghanistan and that it was time to stop paying the crook named Karzai, who is the President of Afghanistan, truthfully, Mr. Speaker, I would get strong applause; and many times after the speeches, people would come up to me and say, We agree with you. It's time to stop spending this money in Afghanistan. It's time to start spending the money in America and to let the Afghans take care of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, probably a couple of weeks ago, I spoke on the floor of the House, and probably other Members had seen the article that was in The New York Times in which the CIA acknowledged that, after 10 years, they had been giving hundreds of millions of dollars to Karzai in cash. In that same article, Karzai was interviewed, and one of his comments was that of "an easy source of petty cash." Karzai wants to continue to get an easy source of petty cash—tens of millions of dollars going to Karzai in order to prop him up until the Taliban takes Afghanistan over. When I think about the number of young men and women being killed in Afghanistan to prop up this corrupt leader, it reminds me of another tragedy in recent American history—the tragedy of the unnecessary war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this past week, in being home, I watched three times on HBO a movie called "Taking Chance," which is the true story of Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl's journey to escort the body of PFC Chance Phelps, a fellow marine who died in Iraq, from Dover Air Force Base to the young man's funeral in Wyoming. It is a beautiful story of love, of pain, and of concern. I hope that Members of Congress as well as the American people will get a chance to see the movie called "Taking Chance." It's a true story. In that story about Taking Chance home, it is a beautiful understanding of the pain and the love of those at Dover Air Force Base who receive the remains from Afghanistan and who take care of those remains. It is absolutely heart-wrenching to see the love that these people have for those who have given their lives for this country.

Mr. Speaker, after seeing this movie and then reading in the papers that Iraq is falling apart, I would like to say

to Mr. Rumsfeld and to the previous administration: thank you for getting us into this unnecessary war. Mr. Rumsfeld, you were wrong. You said that Iraqi oil was going to pay for the war. No. The Chinese are benefitting.

This is another article in The New York Times in which it says that China is the biggest winner. According to this article, the Chinese buy almost half of the oil produced in Iraq.

Again, the previous administration got us into an unnecessary war. In fact, a Defense Department official from the Bush administration said:

We lost out. The Chinese had nothing to do with the war, but from an economic standpoint, they are benefitting from it, and our Fifth Fleet and Air Forces are helping to assure their supply.

Even worse, we are borrowing this Chinese money to fund this corrupt leader.

I hope that Congress will wake up. Next week, we will be debating the armed services bill. I am on that committee. I have worked across the aisle with my friends on the Democratic side to cut the funding for Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I have this photograph of a flag-draped coffin. It could have been PFC Chance Phelps' coffin—it's not, but it could have been—or it could have been the coffin of 4,400 other servicemen and women who died in Iraq.

God, please continue to bless our men and women in uniform. God, continue to bless America; and please, God, let us never forget the sacrifices made by so many in these wars that are unnecessary and in these wars that are necessary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As a reminder, Members should address their remarks to the Chair.

## SMALL BUSINESS TAX EQUITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Since 1996, when California voters legalized the medical use of marijuana, the movement has spread across America. Over the last 17 years, 19 States and the District of Columbia have been pioneering therapy involving the medical use of marijuana.

It has long been recognized that marijuana had therapeutic values which were utilized with chemotherapy patients to mitigate or to stop the constant nausea. People have used it to deal with chronic paralyzing pain. There is now a wide range of therapeutic uses, from a system of multiple sclerosis to helping some of our veterans with PTSD.

□ 1020

A million people seek treatment that is perfectly legal under their State laws. What is not legal is for these hundreds of legitimate businesses pro-

viding a product that is important to a million people to be able to treat their business expenses like every other business and be able to deduct them from their operating income for tax purposes.

Decades ago, a drug dealer attempted to deduct the cost of his yacht and his weapons as a business expense. Congress, understandably, responded in 1982 by making expenses associated with dealing in a controlled substance ineligible for a deduction. That fixed the drug dealer, but it is has now ensnared hundreds of legitimate businesses operating under State law, by the way, laws usually approved by a vote of the people. As a result, they cannot now deduct entirely legitimate business operating expenses; they cannot claim the work opportunity tax credit if they hire a veteran; and they cannot depreciate their American-made irrigation equipment. The deduction for the construction or operating costs of a facility that they may want to revitalize is not allowed. As a result, these small businesses end up paying an effective tax rate that is double or triple the 15 percent to 30 percent that would normally be associated with the profits on most businesses. Their effective tax rates often are 60 percent to 75 percent.

Washington and Colorado are about to begin operation of businesses for the recreational adult use of marijuana authorized by their voters last fall. The situation is thus to become more complex and a burden even greater for more emerging small businesses.

We don't have to penalize hundreds of legitimate small businesses across the country to deal with a drug dealer. I'm introducing bipartisan legislation, the Small Business Tax Equity Act of 2013. Any business under this act that operates under State law would be able to deduct legitimate expenses for their business.

We shouldn't impose punitive double, triple, or quadruple ordinary rates because Congress has not modernized either the Federal drug laws or the Tax Code. We should not force them to discontinue a vital service for a million Americans or drive it underground or, frankly, encourage evasion by punitive taxes that are unjustified or unnecessary.

Let's bring this out of the shadows and encourage these small businesses to be treated fairly. It's entirely possible that we will end up actually collecting more revenue, fostering more respect for the law, and ensuring a vital supply of medical marijuana for more than a million people who depend upon it.

## BAD DECISIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to talk

about a couple of unrelated topics, except that they both are examples of officials in positions of power overreacting to situations and making very bad decisions as a result.

Mr. Speaker, when I read that a 5-year-old boy in Calvert County, Maryland, had been suspended from school for 10 days simply for showing a toy cap gun to his friend on the school bus, I was shocked and saddened. I became even sadder when I read the little boy was questioned for over 2 hours by school officials before his parents were called, and the boy uncharacteristically wet his pants during this interrogation. His mother said later this boy was all boy and all about rocks, frogs, and cowboys.

This interrogation was ridiculous, and a 10-day suspension was ridiculous overkill. I wondered if these school officials who did this to this little boy had lost their common sense and human decency. I am now pleased that the situation has been partially rectified by cutting the 10-day suspension back to the 3 days he has already served, and I hope the parents' request to remove the incident from the boy's school records are granted.

Rigid one-size-fits-all solutions almost never work and frequently lead to very bad, very unfair solutions. I hope that school boards all across this country will at least come to their senses and do away with so-called "zero tolerance policies," especially when it comes to very small children, and especially 5-year-old boys who simply want to be boys.

A second topic that I wanted to mention today, Mr. Speaker, is about the Dodd-Frank law. The Dodd-Frank law has produced many thousands of pages of rules, regulations, and red tape in a misguided attempt to rein in abuses by some of the Nation's biggest banks; however, as is the case with most Federal regulations, this law ended up hurting the smallest banks in this Nation and, thus, helping the big banks to get even bigger.

Listen to these words from a columnist from the Washington Times:

It's been 3 years since the Senate passed the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation.

So far, the effects are not what Washington promised. More than 200 smaller banks have failed in the wake of Dodd-Frank.

Does it comfort them that politicians proclaim smaller banks were exempt from the market distortions lawmakers created?

Since community banks are being forced to stay below the asset threshold forced on them by Dodd-Frank, they are lending less and making less.

This further strains banks and limits job growth.

We have learned once again that whenever Washington announces new regulations, hold on to your wallet.

Increasing Federal regulations, Mr. Speaker, always end up helping extremely Big Business, but makes it even harder for our smallest businesses to survive. We have this Big Government, Big Business duopoly in this Nation, and I hope those who continue to

vote for bigger and bigger government realize that all they're really helping are the extremely big giants in any industry and they're hurting the small- and medium-sized businesses. I hope that this trend will at least slow down so we don't run more small- and medium-sized businesses out of existence in this Nation.

Now, finally, as I hadn't intended to say anything, Mr. Speaker, but my friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), spoke about the very unnecessary wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was 100 percent correct. I admire his courage in speaking out in the way that he has done.

Unfortunately, the Armed Services Committee is about to produce a bill that continues this war funding at the rate of \$85 billion for the war in Afghanistan just to continue in other overseas situations like in Iraq where we happen to have had the most deadly month in May that we've had in several years.

The situations are not getting better, and this country will be far better off when we start putting our own people and our own country first and stop trying to be the policemen for the world and start doing things that need to be done in this country.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. I rise today to bring much-needed attention to a serious threat to our Nation: climate change.

There are those of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that routinely dismiss this threat or brush it under the rug as normal or even false, but the true consequences of climate change are not lost on the American people.

Extreme weather is real. From monster tornados destroying Oklahoma, to Hurricane Katrina destroying the Jersey shore, to wildfires raging out of control in the West, climate change is not an issue that we can put off.

As Environment Task Force chair on the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, this issue is extremely important to me. In fact, it should be important to all of us because we all bear the cost. Climate change does not have geographic boundaries and it does not discriminate on whom it wreaks havoc.

If you do not believe that climate change is a threat or that the costs are real today, let me share with you a few facts:

In 2011 and 2012, there were 25 extreme weather events affecting 43 States.

In 2013, we have already started with an early and intense wildfire season in my home of southern California.

□ 1030

Extreme weather events in 2011 and 2012 caused \$188 billion in economic

damage and cost American taxpayers \$136 billion. That is nearly \$1,000 per individual taxpayer, or the equivalent of approximately a 2 percent tax increase. And these are low estimates. Literally thousands of heat, rain, and snow records were broken.

My State of California is particularly vulnerable to wildfires. In the previous decade, the average size of these wildfires was 89 acres. But in 2012, the average size was 165 acres, nearly double. And 9.2 million acres, mostly in the western U.S., were burned. And in the last 5 years, fires have been more damaging and more costly than ever before.

Other regions are vulnerable to floods, droughts, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Just recently, while storm waters were inundating homes in one part of our country, ships were unable to navigate the Mississippi River due to extremely low water levels. These are facts we cannot afford to ignore.

It is true that changes in the Earth's climate have occurred cyclically over eons. But human activity has accelerated these changes, fundamentally jeopardizing our environment. And, we do not have eons to fix it. We rely on this environment for water, air, food and so much economic activity. We cannot turn a blind eye to climate change. Instead, we need to start preparing for it and work harder to stop it. That's why I call on Congress to stop the attacks on our environment and finally pass legislation to reduce greenhouse gas and carbon pollution.

#### MISHANDLING OF COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my serious concern with Medicare's implementation of the durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies competitive bidding program.

Despite strong congressional concern about the need for further transparency, the lack of binding bids during the contract process, and the improper vetting of the financials of many firms that have been awarded contracts, Medicare still plans to move forward with implementing round two of the program on July 1.

We learned that Medicare awarded contracts under the program to dozens of firms that do not have the proper credentials to serve these contracts. In other words, leaving Medicare beneficiaries without the needed access to the durable medical equipment that allows them to live with dignity during times of disease and disability.

Unfortunately, CMS has created a situation where servicing these contracts will either violate State licensure requirements or leave contracts unfulfilled, again leaving beneficiaries and consumers without access to the