

CHRISTOPHER SIMMONS TO RECEIVE SCOUT'S MEDAL OF HONOR

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I come to the House floor to praise the heroic action of 8-year-old Christopher Simmons of Mount Vernon, Illinois. On April 6 of last year, Christopher and his younger brother Michael were helping their neighbor with some yard work when out of nowhere, a 95-pound dog attacked young Michael. Instantly, Christopher's quick intuitions led him to save his younger brother's life from the vicious jaws of the male boxer. Had it not been for Christopher's selfless and chivalrous behavior, this life-threatening situation could have resulted in tragedy.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to announce today that Christopher will be presented the distinguished Scout's Medal of Honor. His heroism is worthy of much praise and serves as a model to the American people.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I was hoping that we could deal with campaign finance reform this week. I come fresh from the campaign trail. Mine was a hard-fought race, too close to call even on the last day. That was just 3 weeks ago, and today I feel like a foot soldier come back from the frontlines to find that the generals do not seem to understand the battlefield.

Madam Speaker, in my race, so-called issue advocacy dominated the landscape. My opponent and I did not agree on much, but we were both dismayed at special interest outside groups with unlimited funds which interfered with our ability to communicate with voters on matters of concern to them.

These folks will be back this fall in every contested race, and they have said that eventually candidates will be incidental in congressional races. Madam Speaker, they are talking about me and all of my colleagues. We have the responsibility in this place to return the power of the elections to the citizens of our district. We must pass bilateral, bipartisan campaign finance reform such as the Shays-Meehan bill. Our credibility depends on it. We must do it now.

PRESIDENT OWES THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THE TRUTH

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, this whole presidential scandal is a sad, un-

fortunate situation, but it will not end until Bill Clinton comes forward and tells the American people the truth.

We have heard enough from the presidential political hit men and spin doctors. It is time for Mr. Clinton to come forward so that we can put this behind us and move forward.

Madam Speaker, the presidency belongs to the American people, not to one individual. Being President is more than a privilege, it is a profound responsibility, a sacred duty. The individual who sits in the White House is less important than the honor and integrity of the institution itself.

Mr. Clinton owes it to the American people, to the proud tradition of the presidency, and to the country to come forward and tell the truth so that we can return to the Nation's business. The truth.

ECONOMISTS' CLAIMS OF JOB AVAILABILITY BOGGLES THE MIND

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, economists say there are jobs everywhere. Check this out: messenger singer, press clipping cut-and-paster, sandwich signboard carrier, drive-in theater specialist, dust collector, pretzel twister, pantyhose crotch specialist.

Madam Speaker, I suggest there be a new job title called "sleeper specialist," because it is evident even when these economists are working, they are sleeping on the job.

Madam Speaker, I would like to just yield back all the boxer shorts sorters and the brassiere cup molders.

Beam me up.

Madam Speaker, if these are jobs, I am a fashion leader.

UNFORTUNATE PASSAGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS CONFERENCE REPORT

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

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, yesterday the foreign affairs conference report was unfortunately passed without a recorded vote. For weeks, arms had been twisted because the votes were not available to pass it. This surprised some and pleased many who preferred not to be recorded on this crucial issue.

But, unfortunately, the process only adds to the cynicism that many Americans hold for the U.S. Congress. Nearly a billion dollars were appropriated for the controversial back dues to the United Nations, which for many of us was not owed.

It was argued by many right-to-life advocates that the bill was worth passing because the antiabortion language was stronger than ever and would now be codified. Unfortunately, the anti-abortion language was weaker than

ever with a convenient, huge loophole for the President to continue funding countries and groups that perform and promote abortion, language now to be codified.

Events surrounding the passage of the foreign affairs conference report occurring yesterday should not make any of us proud.

WHAT HAPPENED TO \$250 MILLION?

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, yesterday the Republican majority brought together three committees, the Committee on the Budget, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Committee on Resources, to hear the General Accounting Office and the Inspector General tell us that the Forest Service had lost and could not find \$250 million.

Later today, the Republican majority will ask this Congress to give the Forest Service another \$250 million to go back to the old, discredited policies that gave us this kind of devastation of our national forests: clear-cuts and ravages of riparian watersheds that will not be corrected, will not be brought back for decades and decades after they cut the logs.

Madam Speaker, we must stop the Smith forest bill because it is not about forest health, it is about a waste of the taxpayers' money and it is about devastation of our national environment, of our national forests. We should not give \$250 million more to an agency that cannot account and cannot find and cannot tell us how they spent the \$250 million we gave them last year.

CONGRESS SHOULD SPEND HIGHWAY TRUST FUNDS ON TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

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

Mr. BLUNT. Madam Speaker, next week we have a chance to give taxpayers some tax relief simply by spending their tax dollars the way they were supposed to be spent.

We are going to be dealing in the House with a highway bill that has the potential to take the highway trust fund off budget so that it can never again be used to mask the size of the deficit. In other words, this highway bill enable us to spend highway money to really help the infrastructure and the transportation needs of America.

If we are going to maintain a highway trust fund and collect tax revenues for it, then we should spend that money for transportation needs. If we can't do that, or won't do that, then we should eliminate the gas tax and the trust fund altogether.

Many of our colleagues think we ought to continue to "borrow" from the highway trust fund to make the budget look better than it really is. We have a chance to say no to that kind of "sleight of hand" next week. Spending money for the purpose we tell taxpayers we're collecting it for is one of the kinds of tax relief that taxpayers will appreciate. One of our priorities should be "truth in taxing."

IN RECOGNITION OF STUDENT MEMBERS OF THE "KICK BUTTS CONNECTICUT" CAMPAIGN TO END YOUTH SMOKING

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

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great bunch of kids who are sitting in the gallery this morning with their parents and their advisers. These students are all members of the "Kick Butts Connecticut" campaign, which I started 2 years ago to help combat smoking in my home State. They are true heroes, acting as antismoking peer counselors for school children.

Madam Speaker, I do not have time in 1 minute to talk about all their many accomplishments, but I would like to acknowledge them each by name: Rhiann Hinckley from Memorial Middle School in Middlefield; Emily Parmenter also from Memorial Middle School in Middlefield; Josh Zelem from Amity Junior High School in Bethany; Lindsey Norman from Amity Junior High School in Orange; and Chika Anekwe from Wooster Middle School in Stratford. Two additional students who made the trip down to Washington but have already returned to Connecticut: Dan Lerman from Amity Junior High in Bethany and Shannon Mason from Hamden Country Day School in Hamden, Connecticut.

Madam Speaker, I salute these young people for their creative efforts, for their hard work, and for their dedication in the fight to reduce youth smoking. Every single day they are saving children's lives and we are all very grateful and we are all very proud.

FOREST RECOVERY AND PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House resolution 394 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2515.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2515) to address declining health of forests on Federal lands in the United States through a program of recovery and protection consistent with the requirements of existing public land management and environmental laws, to establish a program to inventory, monitor, and analyze public and private forests and their resources, and for other purposes, with Mr. COLLINS in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, the Forest Recovery and Protection Act of 1998 is the result of some 14 months of listening and learning and fact-gathering. It is the result of seven hearings in which we heard from a broad array of people across this Nation, including scientists, academics, State foresters, professional associates, environmental groups, wildlife organizations, citizens, community leaders, elected officials, organized labor, the forest products industry and the administration.

Beyond the hearing process, the committee has worked exhaustively with minority Members, northeastern Republicans, hopefully all Members of this body to refine the bill to broaden support for what we believe is a very necessary and a very reasonable initiative. We extended a hand and we worked with those who have expressed concerns with the bill and we were willing to work in good faith to find solutions.

I am delighted to stand here today and to tell my colleagues that because we have collaborated with these concerned parties we have a stronger bill and one that truly represents, we believe, diverse interests. Here are just a few of the groups, by the way, that support this bill: the AFL-CIO, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, the National Association of Counties, the Society of American Foresters, the National Association of State Foresters, the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools.

But despite our best efforts to include all interests in crafting this legislation, there are those of course who have elected to remain outside the process rather than coming to the table to seek solutions. Unfortunately, because they have not been engaged, there are some misunderstandings about this bill, which I would like to clear up.

There are a number of people who are talking about this bill, about what it is not. I would like to explain to them about what the bill does. It is a five-year pilot project providing a timely and organized and scientific strategy to address the chronic conditions of our national forests. The bill estab-

lishes an independent scientific panel through the National Academy of Sciences to recommend to the Secretary of Agriculture the standards and criteria that should be used to identify which national forests are in the worst shape and where restoration efforts are needed most.

The public then provides input on the standards and criteria which the Secretary publishes. Based upon the standards and criteria, the Secretary then determines which forests have the greatest restoration needs and allocates amounts to those forests. On-the-ground forest managers then begin planning projects to restore degraded and deteriorating forest resources.

I have been hearing information to the contrary, so I want to make this clear to everyone in this assembly. These projects must comply with all applicable environmental laws. This legislation does not in any way limit public participation under existing laws and regulations. More than that, a full, open, public process must be conducted by all recovery projects. All project planning, including analysis of environmental impacts, must comply with NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act. Recovery projects must be consistent with land and resource management plans, plans that have been analyzed by NEPA and have been deemed consistent with environmental laws and regulations. There is no short-circuiting, circumventing or limiting of laws. Public process or judicial review anywhere in this bill are always protected.

So those who oppose 2515, the original bill, must oppose current environmental laws and regulations. Those who oppose this bill must oppose restoring fish habitat. They must oppose reducing the threat of epidemic levels of insects and disease. They must oppose replanting trees and stabilizing slopes after catastrophic events, and they must oppose reducing the risk of wildfire.

Those who oppose this bill say the forest health crisis is a myth, that forest health is an excuse to log our national forests. Of course, not every acre in the National Forest is degraded or deteriorating, but over the last decade an enormous body of scientific literature has been generated about our degraded, deteriorating forest resources. Scientists agree that our forests are "outside the historic range of variability," and that active management is necessary in some areas to begin to return forests to their historic conditions.

The Chief of the Forest Service has said that there are some 40 million acres of National Forest at unacceptable risk of destruction by catastrophic fire, and listed these sources: the Integrated Scientific Assessment for Ecosystem Management in the Interior Columbia Basin says, "We found that forests and ecosystems have become more susceptible to severe fire and outbreaks of insects and disease"; the Southern