

INDEPENDENT COUNSEL TO INVESTIGATE INTERIOR SECRETARY

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the announcement was made that an independent counsel will be appointed to investigate Interior Secretary, Bruce Babbitt. To this I say: It is about time.

Mr. Speaker, let us review what has happened here. When asked to explain why he denied a particular Indian gaming license, Secretary Babbitt responded that the administration instructed him to do so. Next, he denied ever having said that. Then he denied ever having made that denial. Finally, he has admitted that his original lie is the truth and that we just all have a big misunderstanding.

Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is a misunderstanding, but somewhere between all the lies, all the denials, and all the misunderstandings, a \$300,000 campaign donation was made to the Democratic Party in exchange for governmental action against the non-contributing Indian tribe.

Hopefully, the independent counsel will be able to sift through the lies and find the truth. Clearly, the American people deserve no less.

□ 1030

CASEY MARTIN

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, Casey Martin is a 25-year-old young man who lives in America, the land of opportunity. He suffers from K-T-W syndrome which is a circulatory disorder in his right leg which causes great pain when he walks significant distances. Notwithstanding that, he had the courage to become a second team all-American on the Stanford golf team. The Professional Golfers Association said that the ADA did not apply to Casey Martin and it was not designed or intended to apply to competitors in professional sporting events.

The judge felt differently and sustained what I think we in this body felt, that somebody with a disability ought to be given a reasonable accommodation to participate as fully as their courage and commitment would allow.

Gary Phelan, a disability expert, was quoted as saying that the ADA was about opportunity, not pity. Casey Martin was the victim of fate, but he was not defeated by that disability. He has competed and prevailed. It was a great day for America yesterday when he was allowed to compete fully to the extent of his ability.

PARENTAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I introduced the Parental Freedom of Information Act along with 48 other cosponsors. It is an act which will empower parents to guide and participate in the education of their children.

Teachers have told me that involved parents are the most important thing public schools need to help students learn. I believe involved parents must be informed parents.

The Parental Freedom of Information Act will ensure that parents have access to curriculum and testing materials to which their children are exposed and will require parental consent prior to any student being required to undergo medical or psychological testing or treatment while at school. Again, that is, before any mandatory medical exams or treatment or mandatory psychological testing, parents must be notified for their consent.

This legislation in no way seeks to influence the content or curriculum of tests. It simply allows parents to access the basic information which involved parents need to guide the education of their children.

Most of us agree that when parents get involved in their child's education, their children do better in school and their schools become stronger. This legislation will help remove the obstacles that prevent parents from being involved. So let us get behind the Parental Freedom of Information Act.

ON MEXICO

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, a CIA report says Mexico's powerful Interior Minister is dirty. He is tied to drug cartels and he turned a blind eye to drug trafficking. A blind eye to 7 tons of narcotics crossing the border every single day, 14,000 pounds?

After all this, the White House is officially certifying Mexico as a cooperating partner in our war on drugs. Unbelievable. Some war on drugs. The Interior Minister is dirty.

Their last drug czar was on the cartel's payroll, and 14,000 pounds a day are poisoning America. Beam me up. Evidently there is not as much testosterone at the White House as there is rumored to be. I say, let us secure our borders with the military who are falling out of chairs without armrests overseas.

Let us straighten out our country, Congress. And let us declare war on narcotics.

LOCAL RADIO

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

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, many of us take our local radio and TV stations for granted. Whenever we want to see the news, the weather, our favorite show, we can simply turn on our televisions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. But there is another commitment our local broadcasters make, a commitment to our communities.

I am pleased today to commend the good work being done by stations in eastern North Carolina. Radio and television stations alike in the area run thousands of public service announcements each year covering every topic from alcohol abuse to senior issues. In addition, many eastern North Carolina stations play an active role in worthy causes such as raising funds for children's hospitals, collecting contributions to the Toys for Tots program and gathering pledges for local food banks. Whether it is helping the needy, protecting us with storm information or covering the local news, local broadcasters have built a great legacy of public service.

I come to the floor today to salute the fine work of broadcasters in eastern North Carolina and throughout the Nation, and to let them know that their efforts are appreciated.

PUERTO RICO

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

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, three days from today, 100 years ago, the USS Maine exploded in Havana, an incident that started the Spanish American War, a war that Americans proudly entered to free Cuba from Spanish rule, a war that also liberated Puerto Rico from Spanish rule, but turned Puerto Rico into a U.S. territory.

We have now been a territory of the United States for 100 years and we have been disenfranchised U.S. citizens for 81 years. Can any Member of Congress give us one good reason why 3,800,000 American citizens should be denied the right to vote and the right to representation? Puerto Ricans are part of the great American family, but a century has passed us by and we remain disenfranchised as a colony at a time when colonies are not only unfashionable but embarrassing to a Nation that preaches democracy throughout the world and calls for a plebiscite in Cuba. Congress has procrastinated on the solution to our political dilemma for too long.

Congress has the authority and the moral responsibility to approve H.R. 856, the U.S.-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, a bill for self-determination, a bill to pave the road to enfranchisement and equality.

IN TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S
PATRIOTS

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

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, 200 years ago George Washington, in his farewell address, said that the love of liberty was interwoven into the ligament of every American heart.

Our country has changed much over the last two centuries. But one thing that has not changed is the sentiment Washington expressed: The love of liberty still burns in every American heart. On countless battlefields around the world, American patriots for over two centuries have repeatedly taught us the eternal truth: freedom is never free.

We are reminded of their ready sacrifice today, as the Speaker of the House so eloquently noted, as we reflect upon those now who serve overseas in harm's way, and also as we reflect upon the fact that 25 years ago, our first American prisoners of war returned from Vietnam. One of those brave patriots who answered the call of freedom and paid an immeasurable price serves in this body with us today: The distinguished gentleman from Texas Mr. JOHNSON.

I am honored to join the Speaker and my colleagues in paying tribute to SAM JOHNSON, and all those patriots like him, for their heroism, for their sacrifice, and most of all for their love of liberty.

DEMOCRATS' AGENDA

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

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, Democrats in the House and Senate are joining the President and the Vice President to talk about our agenda for America. That American agenda includes education, reducing class size, hiring 100,000 new teachers, health care, making sure that people in America can choose their doctor, can receive the quality care that they deserve; also securing Social Security, making sure that it is secure into the new millennium, making sure that we modernize it and to expand it so that 55- and 56-year-olds who have been excluded from their jobs, who have been laid off, can buy into a medical program for themselves and their families.

Mr. Speaker, we stand ready to serve the American citizenry. We are happy today that the Senate and House Democrats are joining the President and Vice President in announcing to America that we will work for them, but we will work in securing and making quality education for all our children.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great day for the American citizenry.

IRAQ

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the morning papers today recorded that Russia was providing weapons technology to Iraq. We have known for years that China has done the same thing. Does this mean that we must attack them as well as Iraq?

Instead, though, we give foreign aid to both China and to Russia, so indirectly we are subsidizing the very weapons that we are trying to eliminate.

I would like to remind my colleagues that bombing a country, especially one halfway around the world that is not a direct threat to our security, is not a moral act. A moral war is one that is defensive and a legal war is one that is declared by Congress. We should only pursue an act of war when our national security is threatened.

Bombing will solve nothing. It will open up a can of worms. We should not condone it. We should not endorse it. We should not encourage it.

Please think carefully before we permit our President to pursue this war adventure.

REFORM THE IRS NOW

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, just when we thought things could not get worse at the IRS, they have.

I picked up this Washington Post article last week. The title is "IRS Goof Creates Returns That Keep Returning." At first I thought it was a joke, but then I learned that the IRS did make, in fact, a huge goof, about a million packets of 1040 forms sent out to the taxpayers had preprinted address labels. That is not going to do anyone any favors.

The famous world class computer system over at the IRS will read the bar code on the preprinted label and, one might ask, will it then send it to the proper location for processing? No, sir. It will not. It will send the form right back to you. In fact, we can even imagine the making of an infinite loop, with our 1040s just making around-the-world tours, back and forth between our houses and the IRS.

Mr. Speaker, the IRS is still out of control. It is enough. It is time for some radical reform at the IRS.

THE RUSH TO WAR

(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, President Bush sent the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and others to

brief House Members prior to and during the previous Gulf War. This has not been done this time.

Most Members of this body know only what they have read or heard in news reports. Why this rush to war? Why all this eagerness to send young American men and women into harm's way? The case has not been made.

I am certainly not defending Saddam Hussein. I voted for the last Gulf War and many have forgotten how close that vote was. But last time Hussein had moved on another country and was threatening others. Many nations, including our own, have weapons of mass destruction, nuclear and otherwise. Has there been any overt action or indication that Hussein is getting ready to use his? We have not been told.

The American people are not clamoring for war, Mr. Speaker. War should be the most reluctant decision we make, and then only when there is no other reasonable choice. As ABC's Forrest Sawyer asked on Nightline last night, Are we about to do more harm than good?

RECOGNIZING SAM JOHNSON

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

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my colleague and friend, the Honorable SAM JOHNSON. Twenty-five years ago tomorrow, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. JOHNSON) left Vietnam after nearly 7 years as a prisoner of war. He was shot down April 16, 1966, while flying his 25th mission over Vietnam. SAM JOHNSON can teach us all a thing or two about valuing and never taking for granted our freedom because SAM JOHNSON lost his for 7 years.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, if I could, to read one paragraph, an excerpt from his book "Captive Warriors." It says a lot about the gentleman from Texas (Mr. JOHNSON), my friend.

"I turned my attention toward God. When the guards increased their patrols and their vigilance and my talks with Howie had to be stopped, I could still talk freely to God. I knew with certainty that He was present in that dark, cramped closet of a cell. He listened when I prayed. This I knew without doubt. He answered me. When Bible stories and verses of comfort came into my thoughts, I knew He placed them there. I was comforted and encouraged. And I began to know my creator in a way I had never known Him before.

"I know now in retrospect that God's intimate interaction with me in the Mint strengthened me and built my faith so that I would be able to trust him in the darkness of the terrible days that still lay ahead for me."

SAM JOHNSON, a great American and defender of faith and freedom, we salute him today.