

about patience. My colleagues may have noticed that I used a different gavel this afternoon, a gavel hand-built by Mr. Dieterle especially for this occasion. The head of the gavel is built from white ash that was cured for a year and air-dried for a decade. Mr. Dieterle rescued wood for the handle from a razed Lutheran church in Millersville and made its terminal from African padauk. Perhaps most impressively, Mr. Speaker, the striking block was made from a piece of apple wood that he has been curing for over 50 years. That is a very long time, Mr. Speaker.

This gavel should remind each of us as we gather to take up today's agenda that patience is a virtue and that it often takes 50 years to get something just right, whether that something is a gavel or a book or a piece of legislation. Dick Dieterle said that he is pretty sure the strongest man in the House will not break it. That is what happens when you take the time to perfect something. And looking at the gavel, Mr. Speaker, I am pretty sure that Mr. Dieterle's time was not wasted.

DEMOCRATS' EDUCATION AGENDA

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Democrats' education agenda which will be unveiled tomorrow. It calls for modernizing schools and reducing class size by hiring new teachers. To prepare our students for the future, we must not only increase the number of teachers, but also improve the quality of teachers.

I intend to introduce a bill this week which provides scholarships or stipends for outstanding graduate students enrolled in teacher training programs in math and science. These students would then be obligated to teach math or science for 3 years in an urban or rural public secondary school or repay their stipends.

Among 25 nations, U.S. students ranked 12th and 9th respectively in math and science skills. Almost 50 percent of these students were taught by teachers who did not prepare in those fields. We can do better. I urge my colleagues to recruit and reward future math and science teachers for American children.

THE HEROIC STORY OF CHRIS NOAD

(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, not often do we bring stories, heroic stories, before the House of Representatives, so it today brings me great pleasure to tell you about a heroic young man named Chris Noad of Dayton, Ne-

vada. Last Friday Chris was awarded the Boy Scout Gold Honor Medal, the highest life-saving award in scouting, for unusual heroism in saving a life at considerable risk to himself.

Twelve-year-old Chris came to the rescue of his younger sister Kathryn as she was being viciously attacked by a dog in their yard. Hearing the painful cries of his sister, Chris disregarded his own safety, rushed into the yard and was able to grab and pin a 120-pound Rottweiler until further help arrived, allowing his sister to escape. Fortunately Kathryn survived this attack, but that may not have been so without the truly courageous action of her older brother.

The actions taken by Chris Noad during those frightful moments can serve as an example to all of us. Doing the right thing at the right time even when it is at our own jeopardy is something we all need to remember. Large acts of bravery do not always occur by large people. You are truly a hero to your family, to your community and to the State of Nevada.

MEXICAN DRUG CARTEL RECRUITING STREET GANGS

(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, according to reports, Mexico's drug cartel is recruiting American kids in street gangs in the city of San Diego. That is right. California has become the new breeding ground for Mexican drug traffickers. Unbelievable.

While the Pentagon last year spent \$3 billion in Bosnia and Iraq, the Pentagon has announced they are going to suspend their operations on our borders. Beam me up. Let us put the seed corn where the fertilizer can reach it, Mr. Speaker. If Congress can spend billions of dollars to secure foreign borders for foreign citizens in foreign lands, then the Congress of the United States can secure the border in America for the American people. I just have one thing to say to the Pentagon. Suspend this. Are we inhaling or what?

TAXES

(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 on page 1 of USA Today, there was a very interesting chart that is here to my left. It shows the rising tax load. While that is no surprise to anyone paying taxes over the past few decades, this chart caught my eye for several reasons. It shows that the tax burden has been rising steadily since 1965 for families with one working parent and for families with both working parents. Either way, married or single, Uncle Sam takes more and more, and families pay more and more. That is a for-

mula that brings joy to the hearts of big government liberals and Federal bureaucrats and government planners of all sorts. But it does not do much for families who are trying to get ahead.

It is time to change that course. The tax burden on American families, especially middle-class families, is too high. It has been going up for years, and it is time to go the other direction. It is time for some tax relief for the middle class, the backbone of America, that plays by the rules, works hard and pays the taxes.

PUERTO RICAN STATEHOOD

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today there will be a rule taken up on the Young bill, a bill that is supposed to deal with the self-determination of the people of Puerto Rico. It is really a statehood bill. It is a bill that will guarantee statehood.

In 1993, as many of my colleagues remember, the people of Puerto Rico had a plebiscite, independence, Commonwealth and statehood. We all remember the headlines, the headlines read blaring across our Nation, Puerto Rico rejects statehood. Now we are going to come back 5 years later, and since they lost it that time, we are going to write a statehood bill to make sure that that is the option. It is wrong. I am going to give everybody one example.

My father did not see me until I was 1 year old. The reason was because he was serving in the Armed Forces of this Nation. He was born on the island of Puerto Rico. He served in the Armed Forces of this Nation. Under the bill we are going to consider tomorrow, we are going to state that my father's citizenship is statutory. Now, when my father goes and votes, and he likes the Commonwealth, he disagrees with his son about a lot of things, and that is one thing we disagree about, he is going to want to vote for a Commonwealth. He served in the Armed Forces of this Nation, an American citizen. When he goes to vote, Mr. Speaker, the only thing that is going to guarantee him his American citizenship is statehood. You want an election that is going to guarantee a false vote, that is going to be tomorrow. Let the people of Puerto Rico decide.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN INDONESIA

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to draw attention to the human rights abuses taking place in Indonesia. As many of my colleagues know, Indonesia is experiencing tremendous economic and social upheaval. In the ensuing panic, the people and government have tagged the Christian and

ethnic Chinese minority as the scapegoats for these societal ills.

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As a result, massive human rights violations have occurred. Mobs have shut down Christian church services and burned down places of worship. Between February 14 and 17 alone, rioters destroyed the property of 29 churches. Churches gathered to find their musical instruments, benches, bibles, church documents and entire buildings destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, the extremists are not the only perpetrators of human rights abuses. Government authorities allegedly participate in the violence and abuses by failing to protect the churches and communities from attackers. By doing nothing in response to these violations, the government implicitly collaborates with extremist groups and builds anti-Christian sentiment. This is outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, we should not look the other way while such blatant human rights violations occur in Indonesia. I urge Mr. Mondale to raise these issues during his meetings with Mr. Suharto and the Government of Indonesia to take steps immediately to protect these minorities from abuse.

OPPOSITION TO H.R. 856, UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to know there is bipartisan opposition to H.R. 856, the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, which we will be asked to vote on tomorrow.

Over the past few weeks, I have received a lot of conflicting information regarding Puerto Rican statehood. Some say statehood will cost the taxpayers \$3.5 billion. Others say it will result in a \$2.5 billion benefit. Which is true? I cannot be sure, and the American people do not know the truth yet either.

When I was home this weekend, I asked several folks what they thought of Puerto Rico becoming the 51st State. Most of my constituents did not even realize Congress was considering such a vote. We should not vote on such an important bill when our voters are not fully informed.

During my time in Congress, I have generally been supportive of my leadership. But I say to the Republican leadership today that they are making a grave mistake. I believe they have misjudged the will and understanding of the American people. They do not know enough about this legislation, they do not know it is coming. Americans are going to wake up Thursday morning with Puerto Rico well on its way to becoming the 51st star in the flag and they are going to say, why were we not consulted?

I urge my leadership to pull this measure and give the American people an opportunity to make an informed decision.

CITIZENS PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, in 1995 a bounty hunter was chasing a bond jumper in Texas. In Houston, he found a woman he thought to be the bond jumper and beat her severely. The woman, who was pregnant, miscarried the next day. The key fact was the bounty hunter had the wrong woman. An innocent woman lost her child at the hands of a rogue bounty hunter.

The majority of bounty hunters are professionals who do excellent work. Unfortunately, there are a few Dirty Harry wannabes out there as well, and the results can be tragic.

I urge my colleagues to support the Citizens Protection Act, a bill which provides an incentive to weed out the rogue bounty hunters and prevent this kind of reckless abuse that resulted in the death of that mother's child.

The Citizens Protection Act holds two things: It says that bounty hunters and their employers, bail bondsmen, are accountable for their actions, making them liable for civil rights actions. The second thing it does, it requires bounty hunters who cross State lines in pursuit of a bond jumper to report their intentions to State law enforcement authorities.

A bounty hunter's license, Mr. Speaker, should not be a license to terrorize and abuse innocent citizens, and I urge my colleagues to support the Citizens Protection Act.

DON'T SPEND THE SURPLUS

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, today the Congressional Budget Office announced that the Federal budget is in surplus for the first time in 30 years. This is remarkable, especially when we look at where we were in 1994.

In 1994, President Clinton's budget projected \$200 billion in deficits for as far as the eye could see. Now, back then, the pundits laughed at the Republican leadership when we said we were going to balance the budget as we cut taxes. Well, who is laughing now?

Now that we have a surplus, we need to return the money back to the American taxpayer. Unfortunately, the President has different ideas. He has proposed over \$100 billion in new Washington spending.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my constituents do not want any more wasteful Washington spending. Their message to the President is very clear: Don't spend our surplus.

HISTORIC CROSSROADS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, we are at a historic crossroads in American history. For the first time since 1969 we have a budget surplus.

As we stand at this crossroads, we see the path fork in front of us and divide in two ways. We can follow Bill Clinton to the left. Bill Clinton wants to lead us down the run down and rutted road that takes us backwards to the era of big government.

Or we can walk the road that leads to the right. This path leads us away from big government spending and leads us closer to familiar benchmarks, like personal responsibility and personal freedom.

The road to the right gives the American people the power to spend their own money, however they see fit, rather than spending it on some far-off Washington bureaucracy in the form of new government spending.

We face an enormous choice today, Mr. Speaker. We can take the road to the left and continue to make the Federal Government bigger and more bloated, or we can go to the right and give the American people more prosperity and more freedom.

We have seen where the path leads to the left, Mr. Speaker. We do not want to travel down that road again.

IS THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE WILLING TO LOOK INTO THE FACES OF AMERICAN FARM FAMILIES?

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I have a question today for the Department of Agriculture. Are you willing to look into the faces of American farm families?

Yesterday morning in Sweetgrass, Montana, on the border between Canada and the United States, dozens of farmers and ranchers from both sides of the border gathered in protest by barricading the border to gain the attention of the administration.

It is not just a protest about grain prices, even though those prices are below the cost of production. And it was not just a protest about unfair trade, even though Canada and the Canadian Grain Board is dumping grain into the United States. It was a protest about administrations in Washington and a Federal Government in Ottawa that have turned their back on producers.

My question to the Secretary of Agriculture and to our trade representative: Will you come to Shelby, Montana and will you look into the faces of these farm families, and will you sit at