

order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Madam Speaker, last year I filed an appeal, along with several co-plaintiffs, to overturn the decision made by U.S. District Court Judge Franklin Burgess to allow whaling by the Makah Indian tribe.

Today a three-judge panel from the Ninth Circuit United States Court of Appeals in Seattle heard the case, and I hope they will make the correct decision and stop the outdated and unnecessary practice of whaling by the Makahs.

Everyone who understands this issue knows that this is the first step toward returning to the terrible commercial exploitation of these marine mammals. In the papers filed by the Makahs with NOAA, they refused to deny that this was a move toward renewal of commercial whaling.

It is important to understand that the International Whaling Commission has never sanctioned the Makah whale hunt. Under the International Whaling Convention, of which the United States is signatory, it has only been legal to hunt whales for scientific or aboriginal subsistence purposes. The tribe clearly has no nutritional need to kill whales.

In the face of strong IWC, the International Whaling Commission, opposition to the original Makah proposal, the U.S. delegation ignored years of opposition to whale-killing and cut a deal with the Russian government in a backdoor effort to find a way to grant the Makah the right to kill whales.

The agreement is to allow the Makah tribe to kill four of the whales each year, that is, to allow the tribe, the Makah tribe to kill four whales each year from the Russian quota, under the artifice of cultural subsistence.

Before this back room deal, the United States has always opposed any whaling not based on true subsistence need. Cultural subsistence is a slippery slope to disaster. It will expand whale-hunting to any nation with an ocean coastline and any history of whale-killing. Much to the delight of the whaling interests in Norway and Japan, who have orchestrated and financed an international cultural subsistence movement, America's historic role as a foe of renewed whaling around the world has now been drastically undercut.

In fact, there are hundreds of ethnic groups, tribes, and bands around the world who have a history of hunting whales. To allow a cultural past as a qualification for hunting whales would drastically increase the number of whales killed worldwide. Almost all cultures on seacoasts engaged in some whale-hunting historically.

The treaty signed by the Makah tribe in 1885 only gives them the right to hunt in common with the citizens of the territory, now the citizens of the United States. This provision was to ensure equal rights, not special ones. The Makah tribal government should

not be allowed to kill whales when it is illegal for anyone else in the United States to do so. Besides, it is just plain dead wrong. It is shameful that the current administration supports a proposal that flies in the face of the values, interests, and desires of the majority of U.S. citizens.

As I have been saying for years, allowing the Makah tribe to continue whaling will open the floodgates to commercial whaling worldwide. Just count on it. Whales do have commercial value, and there are interests just waiting to cash in, as they did in the glory days of worldwide commercial whaling, when the whales were hunted practically to extinction.

Now that we have allowed whaling to begin again, what can we say to Japan and Norway, whose whaling we have opposed for years but who definitely have aboriginal rights going back many centuries?

I support the Makah elders and others who oppose this hunt, and will continue to fight in the courts and in Congress to stop the spread of the barbaric practice of killing whales.

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

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE 11,000 MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM ON FOOD STAMPS

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 of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am on the floor tonight because we have approximately 11,000 men and women in uniform that are willing to die for this country on food stamps. Yes, Madam Speaker, we have passed legislation that will help increase their salaries, but still we have men and women in uniform on food stamps.

Members can see what I have before me is a Marine. He represents not only the Marine Corps, but every man and woman in uniform. Standing on his feet is his daughter Megan, who is 2 years old, and in his arms is a baby girl named Bridget.

I think about Megan and Bridget and all the children that are children of men and women in uniform, and the fact that when this Marine is deployed to go overseas to Bosnia for 6 months, there is no guarantee that he is going to come back. There is no guarantee that any of our men and women in uniform who are sent into harm's way will for sure come back.

I look at that little girl's face, and I am thinking, as she is looking at the camera when this photograph was made, how tragic it would be if the fa-

ther did not come back. But almost as tragic is the fact that we have approximately 11,000 men and women in uniform that are on food stamps.

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These are men and women, like this Marine, that are willing to die for this country when called upon. And yet we can't find \$59 million over a 10-year period of time to give men and women in uniform on food stamps a \$500 tax credit. Madam Speaker, I think that is a shame. I think that is unacceptable.

Last year in the tax bill, we as a Congress passed tax credits for the steel industry, the timber industry, and for the electric industry. There are other tax credits that we as a Congress passed. Of course, the President vetoed the bill.

I am calling on my colleagues in the House tonight, both Democrat and Republican, to join me in saying to the leadership, both Republican and Democrat, this year we are going to pass some type of legislation. Mine just happens to be the only one; it is H.R. 1055. It is called the Military Family Food Stamp Tax Credit Act.

Madam Speaker, you went on the bill today. I thank you for that. I can tell you and my colleagues in this body that it is unacceptable that men and women in uniform are on food stamps. We need to do everything that we can to say to them that we are going to work and try to make sure that no one that serves this great Nation is on food stamps.

Madam Speaker, I am planning on coming down about one night every week and bring this to the attention of my colleagues; we have legislation that we can do something about men and women on food stamps.

Real quickly, Madam Speaker, as I end my time, from 1982 to 1990, our United States Army and Marine Corps forces were deployed 17 times. From 1990 to 1999, they had been deployed 149 times. Can you think about how many times men and women in uniform were called away from their family and their children?

Madam Speaker, I thank you for being one of the Members who have joined us in supporting this legislation.

H.R. 3573, THE KEEP OUR PROMISES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, every year since coming to Congress in 1995, I have made a point to bring to our attention the sacrifices made by our veterans to defend our country. Each year, we call for our Nation to honor those who have served.

Yet each year, we continue to ignore the promises made to our veterans and military retirees concerning health care benefits. In my mind, it is impossible to honor someone while at the

same time refusing to honor commitments made to that person.

It is time to stop honoring our veterans with just words, ladies and gentlemen, instead let us honor them with action.

Retirees that entered the military prior to 1956 were promised that if they served 20 years, they would receive free health care for life for both themselves and their dependents. For those who signed up after 1956, they were told that they would receive free health care at military facilities or supplemental health insurance.

Today both groups are pushed out of the military health care system entirely and enrolled in Medicare, the same plan they would have received had they never served a day.

On September 28, I introduced the Keep Our Promises to America's Military Retirees Act, H.R. 3573, along with the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS), as a nonpartisan restoration of the health care benefit we owe our retirees.

A companion bill, S. 2003 is being introduced by the Senator from Georgia (Mr. COVERDELL) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON).

The pre-1956 retirees would be enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan at no cost, just like we told them, no matching premiums, no deductibles, no copays. The post-1956 retirees would be enrolled under the same rules as civilian Federal retirees.

As we consider this legislation, we need to be keenly aware that there is more at stake than just these benefits. Today's young people take note of the level of importance we place on military service.

If we renege on our promises to veterans, we have stated in a very loud voice that we hold their sacrifices in contempt.

Why should anyone sacrifice life, limb, career or temporary personal freedom, when their reward will be the contempt of those that they defend? They will not. And when the next challenge to national existence erupts, there will be few or none willing to carry America's banner.

As of the State of the Union address, there are 236 Members of the House who have signed onto this legislation. It is the fairest, most practical means of any available to redeem the promises we made to our retired veterans.

We have a clear-cut majority, very evenly split between our two parties, ready to bring this bill forward.

There are certainly cost issues that have to be addressed. I urge leaders on both side of the aisle to move quickly to bring this bill up before all appropriate committees of jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker, we have an unanticipated budget surplus. If we cannot restore the promises we made to these men and women now, we never will.

Madam Speaker, let us pay off our past due promises before we take on any new spending. It is now our turn to defend the lives of the men and women who spent a lifetime defending ours.

CREATION OF A BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION TO CELEBRATE ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Madam Speaker, today's agenda for the Congress was quite a small one. I think it is one item that we ought to pay close attention to, that is the creation of a bicentennial commission for Abraham Lincoln to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's birth.

Madam Speaker, I think it is very important that we pass the bill today. We are going to have a chance to take a look at the age of Lincoln, the man Lincoln and all the things surrounding Abraham Lincoln.

Our country owes a great debt to the wisdom and the courage of Abraham Lincoln. There are people who try ranking the greatest Presidents, always starting with Lincoln, then they debate who the second, third and fourth might be. But Lincoln and Washington are clearly ranked first. I think that the Lincoln discussion would lead us into some very profound considerations of issues that need to be discussed that normally are not discussed.

The President had a commission on race that was created for just one year, a very limited budget; and they unearthed a few important items and just got started and then they had to stop. I think a discussion of Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, the considerations of what went into holding the Union together and why it is considered such a moral high point for America needs to be thoroughly discussed.

There was a time when people stood for great principles, and I often talk to young people of African American descent who are always looking for the negative side of things who want to declare that Abraham Lincoln did not really care about black people, Abraham Lincoln was not our friend, and you would have a chance to show them how ridiculous that was. The same people say that white folks never are concerned with the welfare of black folks or white people in power are never concerned with other people at all, that principles of Judeo-Christian heritage and all that is a big laugh.

We will have a chance to examine that. We will see how white people on one side had great principles and cared a great deal about fighting slavery, while others, of course, took advantage of it and enjoyed it; but there were some who had great principles and who were not themselves affected.

White people, who were not slaves, were the people who determined that America should not have slavery. It is important to understand that in the battle of Gettysburg, the crucial battle in the Civil War, almost no blacks participated.

They were not allowed in the army of either the Union or the Confederacy at

that time so it was not their fault; but it was a battle that really decided the war and it was white people fighting white people on the basis of principle, principle on the basis of understanding, some understanding, that the Nation would never be able to be a great Nation if half are slave and half are free.

At one point there were States that declared themselves slave States and other States that were free States and there were bloody clashes among the border States, the free States versus the slave States and all that history has gotten lost and nobody needs to hear and understand that history more than young African Americans. All Americans need to hear it and understand it, but young African Americans need to understand there are principles that have been fought for and large numbers of people died for them who did not have a vested interest. They could have all made a deal and if they did not stand for principle, if the Judeo-Christian ethic was not in place in the hearts of so many, the status quo would have prevailed.

So I think we cast a very important vote today and I would just like to note that in passing.

The real big issue of the day, however, is the budget. The budget was released by the President yesterday and there was a big hearing in the Committee on the Budget today; and I think that that is an item that not only is the biggest item for this Congress but also it may be the biggest item for the next 10 years, for this decade. The way we handle this budget this year may set the tone for the whole century.

Consider the year 2000. We are about to discuss a budget of the last and only superpower in the world; and unquestionably, the United States of America is a superpower, an economic superpower, to begin with. We cannot debate it. We are an economic superpower as a result of an appreciation of science and technology and genius and the art of government. We have governed in a way to maximize the advantages of science and technology. Our systems have allowed us to emerge at this particular time as the richest nation ever in the history of the world, by any relative standards, any way we want to try to create a scenario.

Rome, at the height of its greatness, was just a village compared to the wealth and might of the United States of America at this point in history. So our budget is a budget for a people, a nation, that is at the very center of the globe in terms of power and decision-making. Our budget is a budget for people who probably are at the center of the universe.

I also happened to read today that some of the leading scientists have reached agreement and have concluded that there is no other life anywhere in the universe. There cannot be any life similar to the life on Earth. They may continue to debate that and theories of physics and theories of the universe