

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker and my fellow colleagues, today is the day with General Petraeus to recognize that with all the rhetoric on this floor, that we should listen to the troops. They are the ones that are sacrificing. They are the ones that I believe have firsthand knowledge of what is occurring in Iraq.

I have a letter that I am going to read:

Dear Congressman YOUNG:

I am an Alaska Army National Guard soldier serving in Iraq voluntarily on one of the 10 'surge' Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams, based at Camp Taji. My team works in the Taji and Abu Ghraib districts, and soon, Tarmiya. Our surge military forces, along with the greatly improved Iraq Army, Police and local Critical Infrastructure Security Forces have won the battles. Al Qaeda is gone from our districts. Now we need the time to win the war. The security situations are set and 180 degrees turned around from pre-surge. I've seen it happen and am living it daily. Do not let the United States lose this part of the Global War against Terrorists. This campaign in Iraq needs to play out and be a visible win for our country. Me and my fellow Servicemembers and the Civilians of DOD and State are here to make it true. We need your support. Thank you for your time and attention. WE ARE WINNING.

Most Sincerely,

Mike Bridges, Colonel,

Deputy Team Leader, EPRT Baghdad  
5.

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VETS FOR FREEDOM

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, this morning I was honored to join with Senator MCCAIN and other Republican and Democratic Members of both the House and Senate to welcome over 400 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan that were here for a rally in support of all those who are risking their lives on the front lines in this global war against terror.

This morning's rally marks the single largest gathering of Iraq and Afghan veterans since the war began. Make no mistake, these heroes were gathering in support of victory, not a politically driven withdrawal, which would ensure defeat.

These veterans are so committed to success in Iraq and Afghanistan that they have formed a nationwide group, called Vets for Freedom, with a mission of educating the American public and Congress about the importance of achieving success in this global war on terror and what the failure to do so would mean for our Nation's security.

Every Member of this body should, this week, meet with these veterans,

talk to them, learn of the benefits of their firsthand experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the words of the Vets for Freedom, it is time to put "long-term national security before short-term partisan political gain."

Again, I thank the Vets for Freedom, as well as General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, for their great service to this country.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

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

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, according to the Energy Information Agency, the United States imports about 60 percent of its oil today and that number is expected to go up to almost 80 percent in the next 10 years. As a country, we need to reduce our dependency on foreign fuel sources and start implementing alternative energy sources and programs that can be found here in the United States, like coal.

Imported fuel such as crude oil and natural gas are costing the country millions of dollars a year and accounts for about one-third of the United States trade deficit. Imported fuels also account for about 17 percent of an increase in America's energy consumption from 2004 to 2005.

Now liquid coal can be developed for \$50 a barrel. Compare that with \$107 for oil today. Not only does this innovative fuel cost us less, but also coal is one of the most abundant natural resources in the United States. As Congress continues to explore the use of alternative energy sources, we need to look closely at coal to liquid.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

APRIL 7, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI, Speaker, The Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on April 7, 2008, at 10:33 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 73. With best wishes, I am,  
Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,  
Clerk of the House.

UNITED STATES-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110-103)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United

States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit legislation and supporting documents to implement the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (the "Agreement"). The Agreement represents an historic development in our relations with Colombia, which has shown its commitment to advancing democracy, protecting human rights, and promoting economic opportunity. Colombia's importance as a steadfast strategic partner of the United States was recognized by President Clinton's support for an appropriation in 2000 to provide funding for Plan Colombia, and my Administration has continued to stand with Colombia as it confronts violence, terror, and drug traffickers.

This Agreement will increase opportunity for the people of Colombia through sustained economic growth and is therefore vital to ensuring that Colombia continues on its trajectory of positive change. Under the leadership of President Alvaro Uribe, Colombia has made a remarkable turnaround since 1999 when it was on the verge of being a failed state. This progress is in part explained by Colombia's success in demobilizing tens of thousands of paramilitary fighters. The Colombian government reports that since 2002, kidnappings, terrorist attacks, and murders are all down substantially, as is violence against union members.

The Government of Colombia, with the assistance of the United States, is continuing its efforts to further reduce the level of violence in Colombia and to ensure that those responsible for violence are quickly brought to justice. To speed prosecutions of those responsible for violent crimes, the Prosecutor General's Office plans to hire this year 72 new prosecutors and more than 110 investigators into the Human Rights Unit. These additions are part of the increase of more than 2,100 staff that will be added to the Prosecutor General's office in 2008 and 2009. To support these additional personnel and their activities, Colombia has steadily increased the budget for the Prosecutor General's Office, including by more than \$40 million this year, bringing the total outlay for that office to nearly \$600 million.

In negotiating this Agreement, my Administration was guided by the objectives set out by the Congress in the Trade Act of 2002. My Administration has complied fully with the letter and spirit of Trade Promotion Authority—from preparation for the negotiations, to consultations with the Congress throughout the talks, to the content of the Agreement itself. In addition, my Administration has conducted several hundred further consultations, led congressional trips to Colombia, and last year renegotiated key labor, environmental, investment, and intellectual

property rights provisions in the Agreement at the behest of the Congress. By providing for the effective enforcement of labor and environmental laws, combined with strong remedies for noncompliance, the Agreement will contribute to improved worker rights and higher levels of environmental protection in Colombia. The result is an Agreement that all of us can be proud of and that will create significant new opportunities for American workers, farmers, ranchers, businesses, and consumers by opening the Colombian market and eliminating barriers to U.S. goods, services, and investment.

Under the Agreement, tariffs on over 80 percent of U.S. industrial and consumer goods exported to Colombia will be eliminated immediately, with tariffs on the remaining goods eliminated within 10 years. The Agreement will allow 52 percent of U.S. agricultural exports, by value, to enter Colombia duty-free immediately, with the remaining agricultural tariffs phased out over time. This will help to level the playing field, as 91 percent of U.S. imports from Colombia already enjoy duty-free access to our market under U.S. trade preference programs.

My Administration looks forward to continuing to work with the Congress on a bipartisan path forward to secure approval of this legislation that builds on the positive spirit of the May 10, 2007, agreement on trade between the Administration and the House and Senate leadership, and the strong bipartisan support demonstrated by both Houses of Congress in overwhelmingly approving the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement last year. The United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement represents an historic step forward in U.S. relations with a key friend and ally in Latin America. Congressional approval of legislation to implement the Agreement is in our national interest, and I urge the Congress to act favorably on this legislation as quickly as possible.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, April 7, 2008.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

#### NATIONAL MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 265) honoring military children during "National Month of the Military Child," as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 265

Whereas more than 2,750,000 Americans are demonstrating their courage and commitment to freedom by serving in the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas 50 percent of the members of the Armed Forces, when deployed away from their permanent duty stations, have left families with children behind;

Whereas no one feels the effect of those deployments more than the children of deployed service members;

Whereas as of March 15, 2008, approximately 3,400 of these children have lost a parent serving in the Armed Forces during the preceding 5 years;

Whereas the daily struggles and personal sacrifices of children of members of the Armed Forces too often go unnoticed;

Whereas the children of members of the Armed Forces are a source of pride and honor to all Americans and it is fitting that the Nation recognize their contributions and celebrate their spirit;

Whereas the "National Month of the Military Child", observed in April each year, recognizes military children for their sacrifices and contributes to demonstrating the Nation's unconditional support to members of the Armed Forces;

Whereas in addition to Department of Defense programs to support military families and military children, various programs and campaigns have been established in the private sector to honor, support, and thank military children by fostering awareness and appreciation for the sacrifices and the challenges they face; and

Whereas a month-long salute to military children will encourage support for those organizations and campaigns established to provide direct support for military children and families: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) joins the Secretary of Defense in honoring the children of members of the Armed Forces and recognizes that they too share in the burden of protecting the Nation;

(2) urges Americans to join with the military community in observing the "National Month of the Military Child" with appropriate ceremonies and activities that honor, support, and thank military children; and

(3) recognizes with great appreciation the contributions made by private-sector organizations that provide resources and assistance to military families and the communities that support them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Guam?

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, I stand before you in support of House Resolution 265, honoring military children for their personal sacrifice and recognizing the month of April as the National Month of the Military Child.

Currently, 2.75 million Americans are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. Of that number, 1.7 million who have served or who are currently serving have been deployed, nearly 600,000 members have deployed more than once, and close to 260,000 are currently deployed.

These are important points for us to take note of and reflect upon today because today there are nearly 1.2 million military children in families whose parents proudly serve in the uniform.

Unfortunately, 50 percent of the servicemembers who are currently deployed away from their duty stations are separated from their spouses and their children.

Long-term and multiple deployments have shown undesirable effects on both servicemembers, their families and their children. They sometimes experience severe emotional, psychological and fiscal problems over the course of these deployments. Over extended periods of time, anxiety and strain become a part of the daily lives of both spouses and children who sacrifice unduly.

Approximately 3,400 military children have lost a parent serving in the Armed Forces during the preceding 5 years. Military children are making personal sacrifices in support of this Nation.

During National Month of the Military Child, we need to ensure that we support all the American children who faithfully share their family in order to protect our way of life.

House Resolution 265 encourages public and private sector support for both military children and their families through direct contributions to scholarships, grants and donations, action which promotes family readiness.

So it is appropriate to celebrate the children who are loved by these brave men and women in uniform. The health and the well-being of these children is important to the overall readiness of our forces.

We therefore appreciate the leadership shown by our distinguished colleague from Northern Virginia (Mr. MORAN) in sponsoring this important resolution.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 265, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 265, as amended, which honors military children during National Month of the Military Child.

Today we are a Nation at war with more than 2.75 million men and women in uniform and more than 280,000 deployed worldwide. The men and women