

CIA agent stationed in many hot spots around the world. When someone in the White House decided to leak her name to reporters, they were not only jeopardizing Plame's life, but also the lives of other covert agents she has been in contact with.

Mr. Speaker, House Republicans should be concerned about whether or not this White House has been spreading this information. The only way we can get answers is by conducting a congressional investigation. It is time that this Congress do its job.

SPACE SHUTTLE LAUNCH

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, the Nation mourned the space shuttle *Columbia* tragedy. President Bush declared, "This cause of exploration and discovery is not an option we choose, it is a desire written in the human heart."

Today, seven more astronauts will take hold of that desire and follow their heart into space. This return to flight marks a new era of space travel with unparalleled safety measures. As the crew tests new safety techniques and delivers much-needed supplies to the International Space Station, we will all watch. We will watch with excitement and pride, and we will remember. We will remember and honor the lost crew of the space shuttle *Columbia*.

The *Columbia* crewmembers valiantly gave their lives pursuing knowledge in our name for space exploration and today, we continue our quest to get our shuttle program back.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to those who worked so hard to get that shuttle program back. To today's crewmembers, Eileen Collins, James Kelly, Charles Camarda, Wendy Lawrence, Soichi Noguchi, Steve Robinson, and Andy Thomas, may they be safe and may their mission be successful. We thank them for their dedication, their determination, and their courage. Godspeed.

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SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, early this year the President said, "There's no Social Security trust." Lately, some White House supporters in this Congress say they want to establish private accounts with money from the same trust fund which the President says does not exist. That way, when favored Wall Street interests take the money from the administration's private accounts and lose it in stock speculation, they can turn around and tell the American people, "Hey, the money was never there to begin with."

There is a line in the Bible which says, "That which is crooked cannot be made straight." Think about that line when you think about Social Security privatization.

AMERICA'S FLOURISHING ECONOMY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Fridays are turning out to be a great day for American workers for more than one reason. Last Friday, the Department of Labor announced that over 146,000 new jobs were created for American workers in June. Over the last 25 consecutive months, 3.7 million Americans have gone to work due to President Bush's tax cuts. Additionally, the national unemployment rate has dropped over the past year to 5 percent, which represents the fastest decline in nearly a decade. More Americans are working now than ever before in our Nation's history and our tax receipts continue to rise as the Federal deficit continues to steadily decline. The Congressional Budget Office now predicts that our deficit may fall to under \$325 billion. Friday's job reports continue to bring positive news for American families and prove that President Bush's tax cuts are moving the economy forward.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, it has now been 13 days since the House could have passed a \$1.5 billion emergency VA health care spending bill to address the VA health care crisis in America. Unfortunately for millions of America's veterans, the House leadership refused to pass the bipartisan bill that the Senate had already passed by a vote of 96-0. We could have already had help on the way, but the House leadership said no.

Yesterday, the VA confirmed what House Democrats said on this floor 13 days ago, the House leadership-backed VA bill does not fully address the VA health care crisis. Every day that goes by is a day when veterans are either having their important health care delayed or canceled. The House Republican leadership caused this VA health care crisis by underfunding VA health care for 2 years. Now they have a responsibility to deal with it.

Now I hear the House leadership says we might be on vacation this Friday. What is more important, Members of the House taking a vacation this Friday or addressing the needs of America's veterans?

VETERANS HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I would say that my good friend from Texas's 1-minute is very unfortunate because, CHET, you and I are working together. We are working with your colleague, Chairman WALSH, to find the right number. And so to try to say that, gee, there is a bogeyman, there is a bad person here, that is false. What we are looking for, CHET, is to get the right number.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The Chair would advise Members that they should address their remarks to the Chair and not to other Members either in the second person or by given name.

Mr. BUYER. I can address the Chair, but I think we know who we are talking to.

I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that the gentleman who just spoke will be very careful, because we are trying to work together to get the right number. I think it is an embarrassing moment. When we ask the administration for the number, they testify to a number, and then we find that it is not right potentially? We are trying to get the number right and to make sure that veterans are served properly on a bipartisan basis. Please, let us not erode that.

VA FUNDING SHORTFALL

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago the administration told Congress that the VA health care system did not need any more money. Then, feeling the heat, they said they needed an additional \$975 million. Just yesterday, the Bush administration conceded that it had made another mistake. Now they say they need another \$300 million. It is clear that either the administration cannot get it right or does not want to get it right. The nearly \$1.3 billion that the administration now admits is necessary this year is the amount Democrats have been working hard for this last year. The Republican leadership has consistently fought adequate increases in the VA health care budget. Now, more than 50,000 veterans are coming to health care appointments and being denied care. It is time to stop nickel-and-diming veterans health care and give the veterans of this country what they need and deserve.

POSITIVE ECONOMIC NEWS

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