

We all remember the firefighters who lost their lives in the Twin Towers. And we remember the havoc in New Orleans during Katrina.

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, in light of the Republican leadership's unwillingness to move legislation on interoperability, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.P. 1251 offered by Mrs. LOWERY of New York.

The SPEAKER pro tempore: Under the settled guidelines previously cited, that request cannot be entertained.

IPAN

(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, Hans Blix, former chief U.N. weapons inspector, cautioned the U.S. before it attacked Iraq that Iraq was not an imminent threat. He was right. Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction. Now, America is more vulnerable than ever because of this administration's pathological deceptions.

Yesterday, Dr. Blix said Iran is not an imminent threat and we should open up direct talks with Iran, not attack Iran. He is right again.

Last week, Intelligence Committee staff reports deliberate distortion of the degree of Iran's uranium enrichment was exposed by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Nevertheless, according to credible reports, the administration has had covert operations in Iran, selected 1,500 bombing targets, and is preparing a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which will set the stage not only for a war against Iran, but also for \$5 a gallon gasoline.

Meanwhile, the State Department and the Department of Defense will not even appear in classified briefings to discuss the plans for a war against Iran.

Wake up, America. There is another war being planned.

BIOFUEL ACT

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

Mr. ETHEPIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on this House to pass legislation to end America's dependency on foreign oil.

Earlier this week, I attended the opening of Piedmont Biofuels in Pittsboro, North Carolina. This plant is already producing thousands of gallons of B-100 biodiesel made from soybeans grown in my home State. This plant is a model for the future of our energy independence.

The technology exists today that can turn our crops into biofuels. What we don't have is the infrastructure to facilitate the use of these fuels.

My colleagues and I have introduced H.P. 572, the BIOFUEL Act, to ramp up this infrastructure immediately.

The legislation will facilitate the increased production of vehicles that run on biofuels and provide tax credits and incentives to gas station owners who update their equipment to be able to sell these fuels.

The legislation also increases research and development into biofuels, investing in cutting-edge technology that will utilize energy from sources such as agricultural waste and byproducts.

Now is the time to end America's dependency on foreign oil. The answer to our energy needs is growing in our fields.

THE DO LESS THAN DO NOTHING CONGRESS NO PROCESS UNTIL ACTION TAKEN ON 9/11 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Mr. MOPAN: Mr. Speaker, one duty we share as Members of this body is a solemn responsibility to make certain that we do everything possible to ensure the safety of the American citizens that we are elected to represent. Unfortunately, when it comes to homeland security and learning from the tragedy of September 11, this Republican Congress has failed miserably.

The independent and bipartisan 9/11 Commission put forth a report with recommendations for keeping our Nation secure. Despite their suggestions, the Bush administration and the Republican Congress have failed to pass or implement all of the recommendations for homeland security. In fact, the commission recently gave the administration and this Republican Congress five Fs and 12 Ds on homeland security.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats have been fighting to pass the 9/11 Commission's recommendations and to ensure the safety of our ports and airports. However, Republicans are preparing to adjourn for the campaign season without taking up these security measures.

So I ask unanimous consent to take up and pass and implement all of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. Mr. Speaker,

The SPEAKER pro tempore: Under the settled guidelines previously cited, that request cannot be entertained.

PAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE WE SHOULD INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE TODAY

(Ms. EDDIE BEPNICE JOHNSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BEPNICE JOHNSON of Texas: Mr. Speaker, when are the House Republicans going to allow a minimum wage bill to come up on the floor where we actually vote on the minimum wage? It needs to become law.

As health care, groceries, energy, housing costs skyrocket for average consumers, House Republicans would rather help their CEO friends than average Americans who are just trying to make ends meet.

Today, full-time workers who earn the minimum wage are only bringing home \$10,700 a year. The average corporate CEO makes that much money during his first 4 hours of work for the year. This is simply not fair. Yet for months, House Republicans have refused to allow a clean minimum wage vote on this House floor. Do House Republicans really expect that a family can live on less than \$11,000 a year?

The Democrats want to take the Nation in a new direction, one where the needs of all Americans are addressed. We want a clean vote on the minimum wage.

And Mr. Speaker, in light of the Republican leadership's unwillingness to move legislation on the minimum wage, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.P. 3429, the legislation to increase the minimum wage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore: Under the settled guidelines previously cited, that request cannot be entertained.

HIV AIDS

(Ms. WATEPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATEPS: Mr. Speaker, recent estimates indicate that there are 40,000 new AIDS infections each year in the United States.

African American men and women were disproportionately overrepresented among new AIDS diagnoses in 2004. African American women accounted for 67 percent of new AIDS diagnoses among women, and African American men accounted for nearly half, 44 percent, of new AIDS diagnoses among men. Today, African American women represent a staggering 71 percent of all the AIDS diagnoses among women.

Though African Americans comprised 17 percent of the teenage population, age 1 to 19 years of age, by the end of 2004, they represented 70 percent of all the HIV/AIDS cases among teenagers, age 1 to 19 years of age. Just more than one in ten, 11 percent, and 15 percent were represented by Latino and whites, respectively, in the same age groups.

The Congressional Black Caucus has decided that we are going to increase our efforts. Since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the Congressional Black Caucus has and will continue to assume a leadership role in addressing the issue through AIDS education and other actions. We are increasing our efforts to insist on personal responsibility, mandatory testing, outreach, and education, advocating for increased funding, more legislation.

I have introduced H.P. 608. This is a bill that would require routine testing of those entering prison, with counseling and treatment and referrals and follow-ups for those who are leaving.