guilty. We are very pleased with the leadership that ACORN is taking in addressing the needs of those who cannot speak for themselves.

They understand the need for transparency; they understand the need for audits; they understand the need for new leadership in many of their areas. And they are doing it. And I'm grateful for the fact that we have congressional oversight. But I'm not going to demonize an organization that helps those that cannot help themselves.

Very quickly, it is important for the President to be addressing the question of: What do we do in Afghanistan, counterinsurgency or counterterrorism? I believe we should surge up diplomacy, fight the terrorists, and gain the friendship of the Afghan people, and let the Afghans fight the fight alongside of us—and not send 40,000 troops into Afghanistan.

□ 1830

WHAT HAPPENED TO AUGUST?

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, before I return to my district this weekend, I thought I might ask the question on this floor once again, what happened to August? What happened to August? What happened to those town hall meetings? What happened to the pleas we heard from average, everyday Americans coming to town hall meetings by ones, twos and threes, coming with families, not coming bused, not coming organized, but just coming out of a concern about what we were about to do on this floor.

And yet I returned here after that period of time, and I have heard deafening silence from the White House about August. I have heard an absolute repudiation of August by the Democrats in the House and in the Senate.

No. We are talking about health care reform as if August did not exist, as if the American people did not exist and as if their concerns were not our concerns.

What happened to August? What happened to August?

HATE CRIMES BILL

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, today we had a conference report after just voting to send the matter to conference last night on the Defense authorization bill.

This authorizes what is being done in the military. On the backs of our soldiers is put the hate crimes bill. That is unbelievable. As if our soldiers don't have enough to do, we are going to put social bills like that on their shoulders and say, If you don't pass this to help the soldiers, then we are going to say, gee, you're against the soldiers.

It's outrageous. They deserve better treatment. They deserve a straight-up vote on the Defense authorization without a hate crimes bill that will be, when coupled with 18 U.S.C. 2(a), the mechanism to muzzle ministers. I stood with dozens of African American ministers out here who knew they would be muzzled under this bill. It's not the right thing to do.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DAHLKEMPER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

DANCING WITH CZARS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, we have 45 czars in America, and the dance card keeps growing. The President has the right to get advice from as many people as he wants to. And that's not new with our Presidents, and that is not a problem. Advisers are one thing, but policymakers are another thing altogether.

If someone is putting a policy in place, if someone is to govern and rule over the rest of us, they must be confirmed by the United States Senate. That's what the Constitution says and demands. After all, article II, section 2 states in part that the President may appoint ambassadors and other public ministers with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The American people have been asking a lot of questions about these czars. Who are these czars? What do they do? Is this a shadow government? What are the Cabinet secretaries doing? Why aren't they in charge of implementing policy instead of these czars? Do Cabinet secretaries report to our shadow government czars? Is that what happens? And why haven't we had transparency or confirmation hearings on these czars?

Now, Madam Speaker, here are some of the czars that we have. It's not all 45, but it's some of them. And let me list some of them for you. We have the Afghan-Pakistan czar. We have the AIDS czar and the auto recovery czar. We are getting a behavioral science czar. Now, what's that about, spanking of kids? No. It is actually about the study of human behavior and how the government can influence human conduct. Sounds a bit like the book ''1984'' to me.

We have a bailout czar. We have a border czar. Is the border czar supposed to secure the border or open up the border? Who knows? Nobody is telling us.

We have a climate change czar, a copyright czar, a counterterrorism czar. We have a cyber security czar and a communications diversity czar. Let me repeat that one. A communications diversity czar. Ironically, this communications diversity czar is now barred from talking or communicating with the media. Now isn't that lovely? That's kind of odd in my opinion.

We have the disinformation czar. Now what does that person do? It sounds like he should be called the government propaganda czar to me.

We have two economic czars. We probably could use a few more of those. We have an education czar. We have an energy CIA. There's a food czar, the government performance czar, the Great Lakes czar, the Gitmo closure czar and the health care czar.

We have an info tech czar—well, we had an info tech czar, Madam Speaker. His last day in D.C. Government was March 4, but on March 12 the FBI raided his office and arrested two staffers. That position is still open for people who want to apply.

We have an intelligence czar. We have a Latin American czar, a Mideast peace czar and a Mideast policy czar. We have a pay czar and a regulatory czar. We have a religion, or God, czar; a safe school czar and a science czar. Now there's a beaut. Our science czar wrote a controversial book promoting population control.

We have a stimulus czar. And then, of course, there's the TARP czar, the technology czar, the trade czar and the urban affairs czar. We have the war czar, the water czar and, of course, there is a weapons czar.

Now, Madam Speaker, we know very little about those czars or what they do. We don't know who pays them or whether they paid their income tax. So Congress should defund these czars and no taxpayer money should go to pay for them or their salaries or their staffs.

After all, Madam Speaker, since we continue to dance with the czars, it would be nice to know who brought us to the dance.

And that's just the way it is.

COMMENDING OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 731 to commend our first responders for their tireless efforts to ensure our safety as they serve on our Nation's front lines. These brave men and women are often the first ones on the scene and the last ones to leave.

Firefighters in Lorain, Elyria, Barberton, Akron, Brunswick, Strongsville and throughout my district and our Nation deserve our deepest gratitude. In spite of all of the cuts that our firefighters are facing, they continue to put their lives on the line to save ours.

Far too many communities in the 13th District of Ohio have had to lay