

OPENING CONGRESS TO THE PEOPLE

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

Mr. BUNN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I was delighted yesterday to see the promises that we have made be delivered on.

Yet we have got a number more to do. One of the keys that happened yesterday was opening the process and shining light on what Congress does. I have to admit, I was amazed last month when I showed up as a new Member and I had my temporary identification, I asked a police officer, "Where am I allowed to go in this building?"

He said, "Just about everywhere you want but a committee room."

I said, "What do you mean? Aren't the committees open to the public?"

He said, "They're not only not open to the public, but at least some committees are not even open to other Members."

We have made a change to that. We are going to let people see what goes on here and I believe we are going to deliver on all the promises that we have made to America.

CONTRACT WITH AMERICA: THE PEOPLE'S CONTRACT

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

Mr. HEINEMAN. Mr. Speaker, My name is FRED HEINEMAN, from the Fourth Congressional District in North Carolina. You will never detect a southern dialect in my speech because I was born and bred in the Bronx. The people of North Carolina did not concern themselves with where I lived or whether I was a Republican or Democrat when they recruited me from the NYPD to be their chief of police. Nor did any citizen ever ask me if I was a Republican or Democrat when I responded to a 911 call. Likewise, I did not ask them if they were a Republican or Democrat when I responded to their call for assistance.

As a freshman Member of Congress I am privileged to serve with my colleagues who come here from professional life, to wit: three doctors, a dentist, a veterinarian, several lawyers, and others in various professions. I am sure that they were not asked what their political commitments were when questioned about serving their clients.

Having conducted a cursory study of the background of my colleagues across the aisle, I find I am privileged to be in the company of professionals who I am sure are committed to working for the good of the people. So I see 435 legislators coming from various backgrounds to deal with the business of the people of this country as well as to impact profoundly on the rest of the world. Must we change and be other

than ourselves when we come to Congress? Can we resist our commitments when we were first elected to this body and work for the people without regard to politics. I look at the Contract With America as the people's contract and for them to join us in the fulfillment of the people's agenda for change.

I look forward to bipartisanship.

A SUCCESSFUL BEGINNING

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

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Yesterday was a truly exciting day not only for people all across America but especially for the people of the First Congressional District of Florida. I think like people across the country, we have become too cynical about our Government. We live in a cynical age in American politics, an age where we are viewed as an arrogant capital. But yesterday that arrogance was stripped away as we kept the promise that we made throughout this campaign. It was a campaign not about ideology, not about being a right-wing fanatical or a left-wing liberal, it was about commonsense approaches to our problems that are facing us. We addressed the issues, we had a commonsense approach to make Congress abide by the same laws that we make businesses abide by, and by enacting commonsense reform that is going to allow this Congress once and for all to move into the 21st century, creating a second American revolution that will not only build on the Contract With America but the original contract established in the Constitution of the United States.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS EQUITY ACT

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I along with Representative BUNNING, Representative KELLY, Representative THURMAN, and over 100 others introduced the Senior Citizens Equity Act, 1 of the 10 pieces of legislation proposed as part of the Contract With America.

The Senior Citizens Equity Act recognizes that it is time we change our laws so that our Nation's seniors are treated fairly.

First, this legislation sharply curtails the impact of the Social Security earnings limitation on our seniors who continue to remain productive in the workplace. For far too long we have penalized working seniors who earn little more than minimum wage, by taxing them at rates higher than those of millionaires. It is time that we ease this burden for those seniors who need to work to supplement their pension and Social Security income.

This bill would also repeal the \$25 billion tax increase on seniors that was approved by the last Congress. That new tax imposed exorbitantly high income tax rates on senior citizens simply because they drew Social Security benefits and earned as little as \$34,000 a year. It also set a dangerous precedent. For the first time in the history of the Social Security Program, Social Security funds were directly tapped to pay for Government programs.

Some argue that we cannot repeal this tax because it will increase the deficit. But Americans know that the Federal budget deficit is not the result of them paying too little in taxes—but rather, it is the result of the Government wasting too much.

Finally, this bill includes provisions that enables Americans and their employers to make their own preparations for future long-term care—and to do so without the Federal Government taxing the money set aside for that purpose. The costs of long-term care are high and it is time that Congress begin to help Americans prepare for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this legislation to the attention of my colleagues and urge its quick discussion and adoption. The senior citizens of this country deserve no less.

□ 1040

INTRODUCTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO OUTLAW RETROACTIVE TAXES

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a Constitutional amendment to outlaw retroactive taxation. It is the same wording that I introduced last session under House Joint Resolution 248. Last session it was cosponsored by 146 Members.

I introduced it in response to President Clinton's retroactive tax increase which reached back even before he was sworn into office. Even the new Russian Constitution protects those citizens from the Government retroactively raising taxes on their people. I think it is time, Mr. Speaker, that the American public, the American taxpayers have the same protections.

Even someone accused of a crime is given the right that there will not be laws passed which come into play retroactively. Taxpayers should have that same right.

MAKING FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS SECURE

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, a little later this morning we will be having a press conference in which I will call upon Attorney General Janet

Reno to please give to the Judiciary Committee as rapidly as possible the findings from the task force she has set up as to what we can do to make women's lives much more secure as they attend family planning clinics. People forget that women get all of their health care almost from family planning clinics during their reproductive years, and the domestic terrorism that has been going on is absolutely unacceptable.

The people saying that if women want this they have to go out and hire private armies to secure it is ridiculous. This Constitution guarantees equal protection of the law. It never says you get your constitutional rights only if you can hire an army to enforce it for you. That is what the Federal Government is there for.

So I certainly hope that we can get those recommendations back from our law enforcement community and we can move on it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. EHLERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. EHLERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HOYER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WISE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GEPHARDT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

REPUBLICAN REFORMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make a couple of observations this morning. Much has been said on the other side of the aisle about the fact that the Democrat Party was unable to offer amendments to the rules changes that were offered yesterday. That was true, but the truth is in the 200-year history of this Congress, when the opening day activities begin, the majority party submits a rules package to the Congress for their approval and there has never been any opportunity to amend that opening day document.

We this year, because we had campaigned for years and years in the minority to open up this House to openness and fairness, and accountability, had proposed a number of major changes to the rules of the House. What we did is we took the old rules of the 103d Congress which had been proposed year in and year out by the Democratic Party, and we brought those rules to the floor with certain changes. And there were eight significant changes that we wanted to make. They were reforms that the American people have been asking for this Congress to enact for many, many years, because we had failed to enact those reforms, this Congress had dropped in esteem in the eyes of the American people to something like 20 percent. And that is embarrassing to a Member like me that holds this body in the greatest esteem.

So we offered these changes, and we also offered, every Member, not just Democrats but Republicans and Democrats alike, the opportunity to vote on each one of those changes that we were going to make from the rules that we had been operating under the Democrat leadership all of those years. They were changes like reducing the committees and subcommittee reorganization, and staffs. We eliminated three full committees. We eliminated more than 20 subcommittees and that resulted in reducing this congressional bureaucracy by more than 600 jobs.

Why is that significant? We never like to put people out of work. But the truth is over the last several decades this Congress had just grown and grown and grown. The number of committees and subcommittees and staff had proliferated to a point that this is where gridlock really existed. A lot of press and the media used to say that gridlock was caused between Democrats and Republicans, because we Republicans controlled the White House and the Democrats controlled both bodies of this Congress.

That was not entirely true, and it became evident when the Democrats won control of the White House and President Clinton was elected. And then that was supposed to end all gridlock, but lo and behold, gridlock continued. So it was not Republicans and Democrats.

So then the media blamed it on conservatives and liberals. What it boiled down to it was not Republicans and Democrats, it was not liberals and conservatives, it was the bureaucracy of this Congress.

One good example of this is when President Clinton offered up last year his health care reform package, and lo and behold, that package was sent to three different committees in this Congress, referred jointly to three different committees and dozens and dozens of subcommittees.

What did that mean. That meant that bill was dead on arrival because of all of the little fiefdoms that had to begin to look at that piece of legislation.

We in this rules package yesterday made one great significant change to that and the Speaker of this House now is going to take any piece of legislation that comes before this body, if it is offered by the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] or the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO], it is going to be assigned to one primary committee. That can be the Committee on Commerce, it could be the Committee on Rules, which I am the chairman of, but it will go to one primary committee. If there is another jurisdiction involved such as maybe a tax significance of some kind, then the Committee on Commerce will send that little portion over to Ways and Means with instructions to act on it and get it back. But it means that this bureaucracy, this gridlock is going to be broken because we have shrunk the size of this Congress. And incidentally, we are not through doing it yet; we are going to continue.

□ 1050

But we also have set the example for what we intend to do to this Federal Government. There was an election back on November 8, and I am going to tell you that election really surprised this Member of Congress. I have been here suffering in the minority for 16 years, and I never in this world thought that I, JERRY SOLOMON, would