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TRAGEDIES OCCURRING AMONG AMERICA'S CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMP). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Standing in this Chamber, I wonder if anybody appreciates business at all. The statements made by the last speaker would indicate that all of those national corporations are just terribly money-grubbing corporations, seeking only profit, with no concern for employees. A lot of those companies have made major contributions, not only to their employees, but to the communities in which they reside, to

the arts and other things that they have paid for and benefited from.

There was a statement made that the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH] obviously only holds meetings with corporate executives. Nobody has gone by his office when he has had Habitat for Humanity in his office, and groups that do not give any campaign contributions but care about the inner cities and developing homes for families.

I guess some of the speakers today were not in the office when the gentleman from Georgia entertained several that were physically challenged, that were working on strengthening the Americans with Disabilities Act. These are people that were concerned about access to public buildings. They are handicapped. They were there, not contributors, but they were concerned about how government functions. Mr. GINGRICH met with them as well.

Schoolchildren from the District of Columbia certainly do not have any money for campaign contributions. The gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH] did not have them in his office; he went out to their schools and into their community forums to talk about that.

So I think the record needs to reflect that. You hold up an article and suggest corporations in America are all bad. I commend corporations in America for employing people, for giving people jobs, for giving people hope. The stock market is moving forward. That is great for all America. Small investors from Main Street to Wall Street are benefitting from the rise in the stock market.

Let us talk about some other things today. One thing I want to focus on is the tragedies occurring among our children. I want to put in a special word for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Jimmy Ryce died a tragic death at the hands of a molester who sexually assaulted Jimmy and then dismembered his body. That person has been caught. Of course, the first thing that happened was the defenders, the public defenders, rushed to the aid of the perpetrator of the crime and suggested that maybe the officials had interrogated him too long, and possibly they should try and seek to get the charges dismissed against a person who readily admitted he raped and brutally assaulted young Jimmy Ryce. Now they are thinking of ways to get him off those charges. The tragedy is that it is happening far too many times in America where children are taken advantage of, children are assaulted, children are molested, and it has to stop.

We are all familiar with the Susan Smith case in South Carolina, where a mother tragically put two of her own children in a car seat, strapped them down, and sunk the car in a lake, killed two children.

I stressed before on this floor that if people are not comfortable or happy with their children, put them up for adoption, seek other alternatives, seek

psychiatric counseling. But the kind of tragedies that are occurring to our children are just that, they are tragedies.

I had a chance to talk to John Walsh. One of the things that was most frightening to me was the fact in 35 States you have to have a license to sell real estate, you have to have a license to sell mortgages, you have to have a license to be a hairdresser. Yet in over 35 States, you can be in child care without any background checks or verifications.

Tragedies are occurring to our children in the most private of settings, in child care and other things. This is not to malign the child care industry, believe me, it is not at all. But the fact remains that our children are in deep jeopardy. If this is truly a spirit of thanksgiving and holiday renewal and Christmas spirit, then we must turn to the children in our communities and figure out a way, not necessarily by government action only, but by community spirit, that we reach out and save those lost young souls who are at the mercy of some very, very sick individuals.

It is also important at this time that we all accept responsibility for our actions. It is about time that we stop trying to place the blame on other people. Oftentimes, in fact there was a killing of five young people in Gainesville, and the person who went before the judge said, "I was abused as a child so you should let me off of these charges. I know I killed five people, but it was due to the torment that my father provided me as a youngster that I committed this heinous crime." Far too often people are looking to blame others in society. "It is something else. It is something I watched on TV. It is a movie I saw." People have to accept responsibility for their actions. We in government have to.

I also want to suggest that none of us take any pride or pleasure in the closing of Government. Some suggest that the freshmen are gleefully celebrating the fact that the Government shut down and that is the way it should be. We grieve for those Federal employees that are wondering what is happening to their job.

The gentlewoman from Maryland, Mrs. MORELLA, the gentlemen from Virginia, Mr. DAVIS and Mr. WOLF, and others, are very critically concerned with the work force in this Capital, and so are the entirety of the Congress. We are not looking to make anybody's holidays miserable. We are not looking to keep people out of work, but some of us feel honor-bound to the commitment to balance the budget. We are anxious to work with the President. We are anxious to encourage the Speaker of the House to move forward with deliberation and discussion with the White House. There is not one person that sits in a back room and chuckles at the thought that Federal employees are not working and we are doing it in a malicious fashion.

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

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

EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVE ACT AND STRATEGIC AND REEMPLOYMENT TRAINING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, in light of the streamlining goals of the administration and the additional budget cuts proposed by this Congress, Federal workers are bracing themselves for difficult times. I recently read in the Washington Post that one out of every four Federal workers believes that budget cuts will affect him/her.

In the Washington area alone, studies have indicated that over 60,000 Federal jobs will be lost over the next 5 years. And the simple truth is that retirement and attrition will not help Congress and the administration reach the goal of 272,000 job cuts mandated by the Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994. RIF's will be needed. This fact further increases the anxiety of Federal workers, reduces agency productivity, and sends a chilling message to local economies with a strong Federal workforce base.

Today, I am introducing two bills that will help offset the negative effects of RIF's and restructuring. These bills will provide executives and managers with humane options for streamlining the workforce and assisting displaced employees, while controlling the disruption in agencies and assuring that they can continue to meet their missions.

I am a firm believer that loyalty must be repaid with loyalty. The Federal work force has provided outstanding service to the Nation. They have helped build, protect and preserve this land, and now this workforce needs Congress' help. It is time take on this responsibility and devise strategies that will help them through this tough period.

I believe the strategies must center around two fundamental concepts: First, creating incentives for retirement, and Second, retraining displaced workers for jobs in the private sector.

THE 2-PERCENT SOLUTION

As a member of the Civil Service Subcommittee, I have sat through a number of hearings where the 2-percent penalty associated with early retirement has been called a deterrent to early-out initiatives. Clearly, a waiver of the 2-percent penalty would cause a significant number of individuals to leave the workforce, but it would also have tremendous financial implications for the government.

The bill that I will introduce will bridge these two concerns by redefining the "2-percent" penalty. The bill would reduce the penalty for federal retirees by 2 percent for each birthday celebrated toward age 55. The end result would be that the individuals would be entitled to the annuity they would have received had they been age 55 when they retired.

For example, an employee who is 48 years old with 25 years of Federal service will suffer a 14-percent penalty under the current law. Under my bill, when this retiree reached age 49, the penalty would be reduced to 12 percent; when the retiree reached age 50, the penalty would be reduced to 10 percent. This would continue until the retiree reached age 55.

To assure that this is a cost-effective measure, agencies would establish a 90-day period to offer this incentive to employees. The agencies also would not be allowed to fill positions vacated by employees. This would reduce salary and other related expenses.

In addition, employees who receive buyouts under the "Federal Workforce Restructuring Act" or under the proposed, "Federal Employee Separation Incentive and Reemployment Act" could not participate in this program.

REEMPLOYMENT TRAINING

In a report entitled, "Improving Transition Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by Downsizing," OPM found " * * * that placement of RIF-ed workers within the Government will not be a realistic option for many employees affected by downsizing." It goes on to say that " * * * any new program to help displaced workers find jobs must logically focus on private sector as well as public sector opportunities."

I, too, believe that the partnerships must be forged with the private sector to assure that displaced workers are successfully placed. Part of this partnership will hinge on our ability to retrain Federal employees for private sector jobs.

In a study prepared by the Greater Washington Research Center for the Greater Washington Board of Trade, it concluded that the private sector—Washington area—is projected to add 322,500 jobs during the 1995-99 period.

However, many of these jobs will require strong technical and computer skills. The potential exists for skill mismatches between the Federal workers who lose their jobs and the skill requirements of jobs created in the private sector.

My bill, which I call the Strategic and Reemployment Act of 1995 will amend the current law governing employee training to allow the head of an agency to pay for retraining for placement outside of Government. This simple, but very important change to the law will help Federal agencies be more proactive in the retraining of their employees and assure their retraining and downsizing objectives are in concert with their strategic plan and mission.