

for working on Sundays, employees would be taking about a 17 percent cut in pay and benefits, the source said.

"They basically put this crazy offer on the table and said it was because of their financial problems," said David Martinez, who has worked at Flexel for 16 years. He began with the company when it was owned by Du Pont. "We came through with a lot of suggestions of things that they could save money on. They just basically put that offer on and never negotiated anything in good faith."

Workers were told the new policies would be instituted Friday, and many think the mandatory meetings today will announce that plan.

Martinez said employees haven't received pay raises in more than four years, which has added to their disenchantment with management.

Wages were frozen in December 1991 at the average salary of \$13.66 an hour, according to a report in 1993.

Martinez alleged poor corporate management was the reason for the company's woes.

Martinez cited the purchase of a machine to make rubber gloves that is boxed and sitting in the warehouse unused as an example of poor decisionmaking by Flexel.

In previous years, management said the company experienced financial difficulties because of unfair competition from Mexico. Mexican companies export cellophane to the United States without paying a tariff.

In 1991, Lindsey Walters, president of the Atlanta-based Flexel Corp., said Mexican cellophane plants increased their penetration of U.S. markets to 18 percent from 3 percent during the previous four years.

OUTRAGEOUS THAT LONG ISLAND'S VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS MUST TAKE VACATION TIME FOR FIGHTING THEIR WORST EVER FIRE

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, many of us in this Nation for many years have heard about the values of volunteerism. Our own President of the United States came up with a program where he thought we ought to pay volunteers in a program called national service. Tonight I want to address the floor for the purposes of talking about some tremendous individuals who work for the Federal Government. They are the postal workers of this Nation, the men and women who deliver our mail and the people like in my own village of Quogue, Long Island, where we go down to the mail and the employees in the post office are our friends there. They are our neighbors. They donate time to their communities, and a large number of these postal workers on Long Island also happen to be volunteers in the local fire company, volunteer firefighters.

Last evening I addressed this floor and talked about the recent fire on Long Island in which over 5,000 volunteer firefighters made a tremendous contribution. They saved our property, they saved our communities. At threat during that fire could very well have been the local post office in Eastport, the local post office in Speonk, the

local post office in West Hampton, Long Island, NY. All of these facilities, had they burned, would have cost the taxpayers many, many dollars to replace these fine postal facilities.

I am forced to come to the floor this evening because of an outrageous incident that I have learned involving the U.S. Postal Service. The postal employees who are our friends, many of our relatives, our neighbors, on Long Island who donated their time to fight the worst fire in Long Island history are now being told by their supervisors at the Postal Service in Washington that they are going to have to take vacation time to cover their absence from work to fight the worst fire in Long Island history. Mr. Speaker, I find that outrageous. I find that the worst example in government of bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo gobbledygook that serves no reasonable purpose. We have small employers on Long Island, delis, Main Street merchants, who can ill afford the loss of an employee for a full week, and yet these smallest of businesses are paying their employees who had to leave the business to go fight the fire.

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These volunteer firefighters are the best example of volunteerism, of courage, of bravery, and I find it outrageous that the United States Postal Service, the supervisors in Washington, have deemed them not worthy of being paid while they fought to save our communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous. I attempted to reach the Postmaster General of the United States, but I was told he was in Hawaii, and he has been there for about a week, and he is jetting home to Washington as we speak. I am hopeful that we can convince the Postmaster General and the hierarchy of the United States Postal Service that when men and women give up their time, thousands of hours to train themselves to stay up in the latest techniques in fighting fires, that they ought to be paid when the community is at risk, such as our communities on Long Island were at risk. I find it outrageous, as I have said repeatedly, that the United States Postal Service in Washington does not deem the volunteerism of its own postal workers in this time of need as worthy of reimbursement for their time away from the post office.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the United States Postal Service to rethink its position, to pay the employees of the Postal Service who gave of their time to save our communities during the fire, and I ask them, again, to reconsider their position.

THE TRUTH ON MEDICARE

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to discuss a couple of items tonight. A previous speaker on the other side of the aisle actually stood in the House Chamber just minutes ago and said that there is no problem with Medicare, that Medicare is not going bankrupt. I just find that unbelievable, that somebody would be still arguing about the April trustees' report, when it was offered by Clinton appointees, including Secretaries Shalala, Reich and Rubin, who are all appointed by Clinton. They are his right arm, for crying out loud. Drawing partisan lines on a trustee report that really is a Democrat report. I am flabbergasted, after a month back in the district talking to senior citizens, that somebody is at that stage of the debate.

The stage on this side of the aisle, number one, is that this is a bipartisan problem. People that get Medicare, they do not care if they are Democrats or Republicans who are writing the legislation. They want health care.

We are not going to get into a partisan debate on Medicare. What we are going to do is try to preserve and protect it so that it will be there tomorrow, and we are going to try to slow down the rate of increase. Medical inflation on average is about 4.5 percent. Medicare growth has been 11 percent. We are going to increase the benefit to each recipient from about \$4,800 to \$6,400. So the door is open. Any ideas from either party are welcome, but we are going to solve this problem in a bipartisan way. We are going to simplify Medicare, and protect and preserve it.

The gentleman from the 9th District of Georgia [Mr. CHAMBLISS] joins us, and I yield the floor to him.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I too am just somewhat flabbergasted by the comments made by the previous speaker from the other side of the aisle regarding the cuts in Medicare. He made one statement that Medicare is more solvent today than it has been in a long time. We had problems with it in the past and the reaction of this Congress was to make minor adjustments in the Medicare program.

Well, what the Democrats consider as "minor adjustments" is raising taxes. That is not what the American people want. The American people want a solid program with solid funding, not a program that is a runaway program that requires raising taxes to fix it.

Congress must act responsibly. We are charged by the American people to take a program like Medicare, to reform, revise, and improve that program to where we take money from the taxpayers and we spend it wisely. When it comes time for folks to receive the benefits of Medicare, they ought to be able to receive those benefits without the necessity of raising taxes.

Mr. KINGSTON. If the gentleman will yield, we actually raised the taxes on Medicare in 1993. All that did is postpone the bankruptcy I think three to six months. So raising taxes is not the solution.

On the subject of taxes, I wanted to say this. We are going to have some important tax debates coming up on flat tax and consumption tax. The average American family in the 1950's paid 2 percent Federal income tax. The average American family today pays 24 percent Federal income tax. During that period of time, the State and local and other Federal taxes have increased to the extent that middle class families now are paying about 40 to 50 percent taxes, while the real wages have fallen. One of the biggest crises in America today is that the middle class are working their tails off just to stay in place. In many cases they are not even breaking even. So tax increases year after year are anything but the answer. We have got to increase the real wages and increase opportunities and jobs for people.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. It was interesting too that the previous speaker stated that we as Republicans are providing tax cuts to middle class America, and those tax cuts are being given at the expense of Medicare recipients. That is absolutely not true. What he did not tell the folks is that Medicare is a trust fund. Payments that are received by the Federal Government from taxpayers for Medicare go into a trust fund. Those funds can be used only for Medicare beneficiaries.

Tax cuts have no relationship to Medicare trust funds. The tax cuts being given to middle class America are being given to those folks you just talked about, the folks who are hard working, scraping by day-to-day to make a decent living for their families. Those are the folks that are going to receive the benefit of the tax cuts that are going to be put in place. That has absolutely no relationship to Medicare.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I think the point the gentleman has also made on taxes is that in reality we have not passed a tax cut. We have not really passed anything, because the House, while it has done all kinds of work, all kinds of reform legislation to reduce the size of government and the micro-management out of Washington, legislation which has increased personal responsibility and increased personal freedom, these great pieces of legislation have not moved in the other body, nor have they been signed by the Executive Branch. Here we are coming into a rude awakening October 1st.

AMERICANS WANT CHANGE NOW

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

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I went home for the August recess and a funny thing happened before I went home for the August recess. I listened to all these political pundits in Washington, read Wall Street Journal articles that said this is the most revolutionary House of Representatives ses-

sion since Reconstruction. I heard people telling us day in and day out we were too radical, revolutionary, too extreme, we were moving too fast.

Then I went home, and I held 30 town hall meetings across my district. I made over 100 speeches across my district. I talked to editorial boards, I went on talk radio, I went on TV. I worked my district for over 30 days and talked to more people in my district than I bet any other elected official has ever worked the district in 30 days in northwest Florida, and the message I got from them was quite different than the message I get from reading the Washington Post or listening to Peter Jennings.

They said what are you doing up there? Nothing is happening. You guys need to push it forward. You need to push change. We sent you up to Washington, DC. in November to make a difference and make a change. Now, do something.

I will tell you, it was a rude awakening. It shows how there is an incredible disconnect between Washington, DC. speak and what people in middle America are saying, and in the area that political pundits consider fly-over space between Washington, DC and Hollywood, CA.

Let me tell you something: The same voter anger that was out there in November of 1994 is still out there in August and September of 1995, and the Americans want us to move forward with our revolutionary agenda.

Now, they say it is revolutionary. I am going to tell you, I do not think it is revolutionary to balance the budget. I do not think it is so radical for the Congress to only do what middle class Americans have done for over 200 years, and only spend as much money as they take in. I do not think it is radical to cut burdensome regulations. I do not think it is extreme to give people their money and their power back.

What is so extreme and revolutionary to adhering to the Constitution? If the 10th amendment tells us that the Federal Government can only do what the Constitution specifically says it can do, and then the rest of the powers are reserved to the people and to the States, that ain't revolutionary by 1995 standards. Let us quit lying to the American people. That may have been revolutionary back 230 years ago, but let me tell you, it is constitutional mainstream thought today. The American people have realized it. I am just wondering when everybody else inside the beltway is going to realize it.

I will tell you, my feeling is if that is revolutionary, then count me in. We have got to cut taxes. We have got to balance the budget. We have got to slash regulations. My residents are telling me get us out of the United Nations and get the United Nations off American soil. They say cut corporate welfare. They say get the IRS off our backs. They say do something, make something happen, make a difference.

Well, let me tell you something. I came up here and I was fired up. I said

man, I cannot wait to get up to Washington, DC. I have not felt this fired up in over a year since before I came up here and campaigned to get into Congress the first time.

Then the first day back, I have Commerce Secretary Ron Brown come to my committee and testify under oath, under oath, that there is not a penny of corporate welfare in the Department of Commerce budget and that we should not abolish the Department of Commerce.

Let me tell you something, that is perjury. Plain and simple, that is perjury. The Department of Commerce is stocked with corporate welfare. Everybody in this body knows it. The corporations that get their windfalls from it know it. Bill Clinton knows it, Ron Brown knows it, the administration knows it.

We need to abolish the Department of Commerce. There is a plan coming before this house that is passing through committee that it needs to be abolished. We need to stop handing out corporate welfare, and we need to get Ron Brown, Bill Clinton and the Democrats in this House to support our bill. Abolish the Department of Commerce.

Then we need to move on and abolish the Department of Education bureaucracy, set up in 1979 as a political payoff to the teachers union. We have gone from spending \$14 to \$33 billion on education in the last 15 years and what has it gotten us? Declining test scores, an increase of violence in schools and dropout rates, and an increase in all the things we do not want. It is micro-management from Washington, DC.

When are they going to learn inside the Beltway that Washington, DC cannot micro-manage every single problem across America? We were sent up here to make a difference. We need to stay focused and make a difference, because Americans want change.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we are going to deliver to them.

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

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

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I will continue my dialogue with my friend from the First District of Georgia, Mr. KINGSTON. We want to talk for a minute about the process we have been going through here in Congress for the last couple of weeks before the recess and a couple days since we have been back, and that is the appropriations process. We have been taking the money that is received by the government from the taxpayers and deciding exactly how that money ought to be spent, which departments ought to receive what amount of money, what programs ought to be funded, and what programs ought not to be funded.

One thing that we have done, we have made severe cuts in Federal spending. We are going to continue to make severe cuts in Federal spending. We are