

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

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

HONORING DR. DON JOHNSON

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

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well today for a very pleasant task, to honor a friend of mine, but I cannot even come and do that without correcting the comments of the previous speaker.

I, too, am on the Committee on Commerce. We held so many Medicaid hearings, I am not sure of the number, but I think it was 8 to 10, somewhere in that area. The gentleman talked of cuts in Medicaid. Let me tell the Members something. The State of Georgia is going to get a 7.2-percent increase next year in Medicaid spending, and in 1997 a 9-percent increase in Medicaid spending, so I apologize that I have to bring that up, but I would like for the American people to hear the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to talk about a great American. Next week, Dr. Don Johnson will end his reign as president of the International College of Dentistry. It is the crowning achievement of one man's tremendous career, a man I am very proud to call my friend.

Don is a Georgian through and through. He was born and raised in Atlanta. He graduated from the Emory University School of Dentistry in 1961 and has been a practicing dentist ever since. He continued to contribute to his alma mater as a member of Emory's Board of Visitors.

There are two things that have always amazed me about Don. He has been a visionary in the dental field, and he has a boundless energy to contribute to his profession.

I recently had the opportunity to go back and read an interview with Don that appeared in the Georgia Dental Association's Newsletter. I was astounded at how insightful his comments were. Don was able to see in 1986 where the dental profession needed to be in 1996. He foresaw the problems in dentistry today that were only smoldering 10 years ago.

Don is a man with tremendous energy. He has run a successful dental practice for many years, yet he has still found the time to volunteer in service to his profession. He is a former president of the Georgia Dental Association, a former president of the Northern District Dental Society, and a former president of the Hinman Dental Society. He is a fellow of the American College of Dentists, the International College of Dentists, and a member of the eminent Pierre Fauchard Academy. In 1988, he was

named the "Man of the Year in Dentistry" by the Northern District Dental Society. He has published numerous scholarly articles and presented many technical papers at dental conferences. He has done all this while running his practice and raising two daughters, serving in his church, and on top of all that he is an accomplished airplane pilot.

Mr. Speaker, It is my pleasure today to bring before you the accomplishments of Dr. Don Johnson of Atlanta, GA, president of the International College of Dentists, and a great American.

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

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

TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WORK

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago Ann McFedders, of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, wrote this: "Americans are right to be disgusted with government right now. Events of recent days are alarming. They should be a warning to all politicians, police officials, and anyone hired by government." That woman has walked the straight and narrow, do not take short cuts, do not rationalize. She said, "It is time to rethink the role of government." She was writing primarily about the horrible events at Waco and Ruby Ridge. But let me read her words again. "Americans are right to be disgusted with government right now. Events of recent days are alarming." She said, "It is time to rethink the role of government."

William Raspberry, the very fine syndicated columnist for the Washington Post, wrote several months ago about some travels he had made around the country. He said, what were the people saying to him as he went around the Nation. He said this:

It sounds very much like it doesn't work. Government doesn't work. It costs more and becomes more intrusive with each passing year, but hardly anywhere can it be said that it is performing better. The trash cans get bigger, the refuse separation rules more onerous, but the streets and alleys aren't any cleaner. Criminal justice costs keep going up, but the neighborhoods aren't safer. Schools become increasingly expensive, and increasingly ineffective. Government doesn't work.

□ 1745

Those are the words of William Raspberry. These are not the words of any conservative Republicans.

I grew up in a political family, and I have been following governing and politics closely since my early teenage

years. I do not believe; in fact, I am certain that I have never seen a time where there has been so much dissatisfaction, disgust, disappointment, disenchantment, frustration, resentment, even anger, toward government, in general, and toward the Federal Government, in particular, as there is today.

As a conservative Republican, I have two reactions to this. First, I am sorry that things have gotten to the point that they have that so many people feel this way. But secondly, I also must tell you that in a way, I believe this is a good sign for our future. If government can solve all of our problems, the Soviet Union would have been heaven on Earth. Instead, every place where the people have allowed the government or their governments to get too big, they have ended up suffering and living under horrible conditions.

So perhaps it is a good sign that so many people in such a clear, strong majority no longer believe in big government or no longer believe that government can solve all of our problems.

Why are people so angry toward government today? Well, I believe it is because the Federal Government has become one that is of, by and for the bureaucrats instead of one that is of, by and for the people. Too often today our public service has become public high living, high salaries, high pensions, plush offices, short hours. Most importantly, and perhaps worst of all, unaccountability for huge and very costly mistakes. Our servants have become our rulers. The people are really fed up today. They are disgusted with the waste, the lavish spending, the arrogance.

Paul Greg Roberts, another nationally syndicated columnist, wrote this recently. He said:

Six months after the inauguration of the new Republican Congress, it has become apparent that the most important issues facing the country are not economic. Without a doubt, high taxes, profligate government spending and welfare dependency are problems sorely in need of the attention focused on them. But the real question is whether Congress can reclaim the law from unelected bureaucrats and judges.

He also said this:

In the 20th century, there has been a coup against self-rule by bureaucrats and judges. Federal bureaucrats have usurped statutory law with regulations that lack legislative basis.

I think these words of Paul Greg Roberts are right. He went on in this column to say:

In the coming months we will discover whether the Republican Congress can do something that the Democratic Congress failed to do for 40 years: Hold government accountable to the people. This, not the size of the Federal budget, is the ultimate test of whether it matters which party controls Congress.

He said:

The problem in America is not that the budget is out of control, but that the government is.

There are so many examples that I could give of the fact that the government has come under the control of bureaucrats. One of the best came up recently in regard to the National Reconnaissance Office. It came out last year that they had spent \$310 million building a new building that nobody knew about, a 1 million square foot building, \$310 a square foot.

I would simply say this. It is time that we give the government of this country back to the people of this country and remind the Federal bureaucracy that they are working for us, and not us for them.

IT IS TIME TO REPEAL THE DAVIS-BACON ACT

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

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House this evening.

Earlier today the Education and Economic Opportunity Committee did something that the General Accounting Office suggested we do in 1979: We began the process for eliminating the Davis-Bacon Act. Davis-Bacon is not right for America in the 1990's. It might have served a role in 1931 when it was originally formatted, but today, it is an outdated law. It has to be changed.

What Davis-Bacon requires is that workers on Federal construction projects be paid a wage at or above the level determined by the Department of Labor to be the prevailing wage in the area. Since 1937, the prevailing wage provision has been extended by many statutes to involve construction, financed in whole or in part by the Federal Government.

In 1979, the General Accounting Office recommended the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act. They stated that it appeared to be impractical to administer. Davis-Bacon is impractical to administer due to the magnitude of the task of producing an estimated 12,400 accurately and timely generated prevailing wage determinations.

Mr. Speaker, what we have here is the Department of Labor trying to determine prevailing wages in specific job categories around the country for every country. It does not make any sense in 1995. Prevailing wages can be determined very effectively through the competitive bidding process.

I would like to yield to my colleague from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] to just give us an example of what happens when the Department of Labor tries to determine prevailing wages throughout the country.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a quote from George Will. He says:

Although there is stiff competition for the title, 'Dumbest Thing the Government is

Doing,' a leading candidate is the government's refusal to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act.

Mr. Speaker, guess who said this? Milton Friedman:

Davis-Bacon is not outdated; it never made sense. From the outset, it was special interest legislation designed to have the taxpayers provide a subsidy in concealed form to members of the construction unions and to the union leaders. It never should have been enacted, and it should be repealed.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, let me also just inform some of my colleagues of what is happening. In the State of Oklahoma, two wage analysts have been responsible for handling the data submitted to and generated by the Department of Labor for the 11-state region that includes Oklahoma. What has happened in Oklahoma?

In mid August the U.S. Department of Labor faxed copies of 49 WD10s. This is the form that various people voluntarily submit to the Federal government. It was indicated that several of the projects were entirely bogus and virtually all of the submitted forms contained grossly inflated or otherwise inaccurate information. The end result: Taxpayers end up paying more for construction than they otherwise would have to.

Among the bogus WD10 forms is a form indicating the use of seven asphalt lay-down machines and seven roller finishers for an Internal Revenue Service building in downtown Oklahoma City. In reality, the parking lot is very small, fewer than 30 total spaces, and is made of concrete, not asphalt. A bogus form intended solely to drive up the rates on the prevailing wage scale.

Specifically in the case of the asphalt lay-down machine operators, the bogus wage and fringe benefits were 44 percent higher than the union collective bargaining agreement and 30 percent higher than the prevailing wage rate in existence at that time. A clearly fraudulent attempt to take money from the American taxpayers.

At best, in 1995, the Davis-Bacon wage rates reflect a 7-year-old reality. The average prevailing wage study is 7 years old. At worst, they reflect a fraudulently manipulated wage well above market rates.

We do not need to reform Davis-Bacon. It cannot be reformed. It cannot be fixed. It does not make sense in 1995. It did not make sense in 1931. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from Michigan.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, for example, electricians in Philadelphia average \$15.76 per hour on private contracts, but the prevailing wage for them is \$37.97. There are many similar examples, as you point out.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, we need only use the same wage determiner as used in the Private sector, which is supply and demand. Only the market can accurately set wages that reflect reality.

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

[Mr. POMEROY 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 Minnesota [Mr. MINGE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

CONGRESS NEEDS MORE HEARINGS ON MEDICARE

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

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the debate on Medicare has spiraled out of control. To cut \$270 billion from this senior program, without proper debate and substantial information, will only hurt the future of the program.

Medicare is one of most critical issues that Congress will consider this year. It only makes sense to hold hearings, and discuss changes with not only Members but also with seniors who will be greatly impacted by these changes. It is unthinkable that senior's access to health care will be reduced or eliminated without allowing them a chance to voice their opinions.

I continue to hear from hundreds of seniors in my district, urging me to protect their benefits. They are worried their small monthly incomes will not allow them to pay higher fees for Medicare. I have even heard from older Americans who are not yet eligible for Medicare. They are telling me that health care must be changed in this country but that the budget must not be balanced on the backs of the elderly. If we increase the monthly premiums of Medicare, then we must also be prepared to address the issue of seniors who cannot pay these premiums and how elderly Americans will have access to health care. I am afraid too many will have to go without.

I have also heard from hospitals in my district, many of them in rural areas. Most of the revenue for these hospitals comes from Medicare patients. These hospitals are already struggling with soaring costs and to lose them would be devastating to the rural communities in my State. If Medicare reimbursements are cut even further they will have no other choice but to simply go out of business.

I feel Congress must make efforts to save Medicare by strengthening and improving the system, not destroying it. For many seniors, Medicare has not only improved the quality of their lives, but for many it has extended their life. With 99 percent of Americans over 65 currently having access to health care, Congress must not forget