

The goal was to build a village within the city that would include various businesses to support local tourism. Following the acquisition in 1987 of some 35 acres of land along US-41, the first of what would be many new small businesses began with the Pamida Discount Center, a 40,000 square foot department store that created 50 new jobs. A fifty room hotel and 165 seat restaurant was then added in 1989 and the Country Village Plaza began to take shape. Since then, many new businesses have opened including other restaurants, grocery stores, a bowling center, banks, laundromats, bookstores and many other shops.

PCBM Management itself has grown considerably, as well, to now six subsidiaries and is recognized in the area a leading real estate development company. The company has grown to over 120 employees who oversee annual sales of nearly \$3.5 million and in 1994 made the Inc. 500 as well as the Michigan private 100, a list of the state's fastest growing companies. Further, in 1995, PCBM was recognized by the Michigan Jobs Commission for its long standing commitment to Michigan and to Ishpeming.

As good as this company is, it was the foresight of and guidance by Paul Argall that has provided the foundation for its growth. A strong family man, an active member of his church and other charitable organizations, Paul deserves not just the title of Small Business Person of the Year, but the thanks of so many people in the Ishpeming area.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Ishpeming area, the Upper Peninsula and the entire state of Michigan, I congratulate Mr. Paul Argall and PCBM Management Company on a job well done.

RECOGNIZING JAMES R. NUNES

HON. BILL BAKER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, for more than three decades, James R. Nunes has served as an officer of the law. Since 1979, he has been chief of the Pleasant Hill, CA Police Department in my home district. Now, after 37 years as a police officer, first with the military and then with three different cities, he is retiring from the force.

Throughout his career, Chief Nunes has worked to make our streets safer, our communities stronger, and our children's future brighter. He knows the meaning of long nights, hard work, and personal sacrifice. His many community activities further reflect his commitment to the citizens of the East Bay, and are indicative of his devotion to the building of a better society.

Those who work for public safety know that a secure society does not come cheaply. It is the product of vigilance, perseverance, and foresight. These are the qualities that have typified Chief Nunes' service. It is my sincere hope that Chief Nunes will enjoy a well-deserved retirement from the force. His contributions have been both formidable and enduring, and I know all of my colleagues will join me in wishing him every good thing in the days ahead.

MEMORIAL DAY 1996—ANOTHER VIEWPOINT

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to place into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the following thoughts by Robert Sniffen, a U.S. Navy veteran who has served as a veteran's advocate for the past 27 years. He has held veteran-related positions in the U.S. Department of Labor and in the Center administration. He has also served as the national service and legislative director of AMVETS. Currently, Mr. Sniffen is chairman of the board for San Diego Veterans' Service, a southern California non-profit organization dedicated to the needs and concerns of California's veterans.

Memorial Day will soon signal the traditional salute to pay homage, tribute, and honor to our nation's men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifices on behalf of the freedoms we all enjoy. Beautiful, emotion charged ceremonies, largely attended by veterans and their families, will be encapsulated into micro-second broadcast news clips and short print articles including photos for public consumption.

For those who deal daily with the survivors of military service, Memorial Day is also an appropriate date on which to inform and educate the public as to the status of the needs, issues, and concerns of veterans who have survived military service.

To date, potential legislation is floating upward in Congress to establish a Commission to evaluate programs of the federal government that assist members of the armed forces and veterans in readjusting to civilian life. It will be known as the "Commission on Service Members and Veterans Transition Assistance". Of the hundreds of pages of veteran legislation introduced before Congress, this "Commission on Veterans" is the most vital. Veteran organizations and veteran advocates must hold both presidential candidates responsible for obtaining such a commitment, before the November elections. Veterans must demand action now, or this landmark legislation will never see the light of day.

If fully enacted, the Commission will conduct a bottom-up review of programs intended to assist veterans. Veteran advocates view this potential landmark legislation as a G.I. Bill of Rights review, as well as the reading of the fine print that violates the Sacred Government Contract made with each military inductee. Those who support veteran entitlements should contact their Congressional representatives and seek their support in creating this new Commission, which will evaluate and upgrade the earned entitlements of our military personnel and our veterans.

Across America, our military personnel and veterans are disproportionately suffering the ill effects of military down-sizing, base closures, industry collapses in the defense and aerospace industries, and corporate down-sizing to increase profits. Military families and veterans are receiving food stamps; homeless veterans continue to roam the streets they fought to protect; thousands of fully qualified veterans are grossly disadvantaged economically, facing the ravages of unemployment and under-employment. Still others are shut out of the market place due to lack of re-training. There is little call for infantry or weapons skills in the high-tech information era. Training and re-training veterans must be a top priority.

Meanwhile, only three million of the twenty-eight million living veterans actually access medical treatment from the veterans medical system. Budget and deficit reductions and streamlining of the VA programs through reorganization will adversely impact senior veterans, whose numbers will grow as rapidly as their current and future medical needs explode.

While most veterans are successful and arise each day to run America, some veterans need help to reintegrate into a civilian society, as well as to overcome adverse economic factors.

Thousands, currently in the military, are shifted daily from the military pay line, to the unemployment line, becoming a family "at risk" who, then, may soon become the "new" homeless.

Veterans are being told by the Washington beancounters and Congress that veterans must sustain their share of budget cuts. It is believed that most Americans would agree that our veterans "paid in full" at the entry and exit doors of military service.

As the American public makes way for the beaches, mountains, and resorts on Memorial Day, veterans and their families will pause to salute our fallen heroes. Veteran organizations and their leaders will ensure that the tributes occur as their solemn duty. It is these Americans who will give appropriate thought to the survivors and non-survivors. All Americans should give greater reflection to questioning our nation's commitment, to those who have contributed most to America's ongoing survival.

Many this Memorial Day will be asking, "Why has the contract with America's veterans been broken?" "How do we reinstate adequate programs for veterans in a country that now seems to approve the popular notion of budget cuts, even at great expense to those who served, survived, and now, more than ever, need our help?"

America is Number One, Thanks to Veterans, and other governmental agency slogans, such as Putting Veterans First are again singing, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," while the budget cut "ax murderers" blindly cut veterans' programs.

Thus, wherever one finds themselves this Memorial Day, these are thoughts worth considering—and acting upon. As Memorial Day proceeds, veterans not active in a veteran's organization may wish to consider membership in a group of their choice, and thought should be given as to methods of citizen support for veteran programs, i.e., through volunteer participation, assistance with monetary needs for local veteran organizations that serve veterans, and letting the appropriate political leaders know that veteran programs should be the first saved—and the last cut—in current and future budget considerations.

We need to remember those men and women who are in eminent danger in Bosnia, Korea, Liberia and other potential conflict sites for future veterans that will need to be honored at future Memorial Day ceremonies.

Amidst the flood of broadcast and newspaper media of the business world's "tribute" to another holiday sales/marketing opportunity, American needs to "refocus" its moral compass, directly upon those political leaders and candidates, to determine who will recognize and reverse the governmental failures over the many years before the next veteran-related holiday arrives in November of this year.

Memorial Day 1996 is, indeed, an excellent occasion to remind ourselves that this year we should salute our fallen dead and also pay a living tribute to those who did survive—only to return at a time when most Americans had lost respect and support for those who make democracy possible, worldwide and locally.

Thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and rejoinders that "Freedom is not Free" is designed to provoke countrymen to take positive addition to reverse the demise of the importance of protecting, rather than slashing costs—that are the aftermath of this Memorial Day * * * and future Memorial Days to come.

Let us all utilize this sacred, heartfelt day of tribute as the starting point in reinitiating dedication to keeping our commitments to veterans and their families, by insisting that government revitalize, not kill veteran's programs, as Memorial Day 1996 approaches.

The very future of America may depend upon these veteran-related issues.

REPEALING THE 4.3 CENT GASOLINE TAX

HON. TOM A. COBURN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, due to circumstances beyond my control, I was not physically able to cast my vote for H.R. 3415, which repealed the 4.3 cent gasoline tax implemented in 1993. At this time, I would like to take this opportunity to submit my opinion on this issue for the record.

Tax relief—in order to be truly effective—must do two things. First, it must be meaningful relief; people must be able to reap the benefits of Congress' actions. Second, it must be paid for with real dollars, not with creative bookkeeping or irresponsible offsets.

I am committed to tax relief. The American people are overburdened with federal, state,

and local taxes but don't see the returns for their investment. In fact, May 7, just two weeks ago, marked "National Tax Freedom Day" where people stopped handing over their paycheck to Uncle Sam and started working for themselves. Clearly, tax relief is important, necessary, and well deserved.

I do not support the 1993 decision to raise gasoline taxes 4.3 cents a gallon to finance irresponsible government spending. Dollars collected from fuel taxes should be spent only on infrastructure, not on pet projects or wasteful, duplicative federal programs. It stand to reason that ideally, the gas tax should be repealed.

But it troubles me that tax relief—in this case, repealing the gas tax—has become a political football. I do not believe people will truly benefit from this token gesture. I question the timing of the gas tax repeal: if gas taxes were too high, why didn't Congress attempt to repeal them six months ago, when the price of gasoline was at an all-time low? I find it curious that this issue has only been addressed during an election year . . . and if repeal of the tax is truly necessary, then why is it temporary? Shouldn't tax relief last beyond the 1996 elections? And how are we planning to address the loss of revenue to the federal treasury? Auctioning the spectrum is neither a real nor a responsible option. The criteria for tax cuts—meaningful relief which is paid for—have not been met.

While I disagree with H.R. 3415, I am also opposed to the Administration's "solution." Selling 12 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve won't lower gasoline prices—in fact, it will COST the American taxpayers \$144 million dollars. The President's

response to rising gasoline prices is politically motivated as well. This is a superficial, cosmetic action which will do nothing to truly lower gasoline prices.

Furthermore, I strongly believe that neither Congress nor the President should be in the business of regulating gasoline prices, just like the federal government should not regulate the price of other commodities like wheat, corn, or sugar. Instead, the market should be allowed to function. History shows that fuel prices traditionally rise in the spring but fall and level out after a few weeks. 1996 is no different. Already, consumers are watching prices go down, although not as quickly as they might like.

Mr. Speaker, had I been able to cast my vote on this piece of legislation, I would have voted "no." I cannot support a politically motivated tax cut which will not significantly aid the American consumer. This is a tax cut package tied up with pretty ribbons—but when the taxpayers open it, they see an empty box, not the true savings Congress has promised.

I feel this is another example of election-year politics, not genuine reform. I want to tell the people of Oklahoma's second district that Congress reduced their tax burden, but I want them to be able to see the difference in their bankbook at the end of the month. I cannot vote for a gimmick which makes politicians look good but doesn't actually help the people who put them in office. I don't believe that temporarily repealing the 1993 gasoline tax will do much to lift the tax burden from the shoulders of the American people; therefore I cannot support it.