

started to ring off the hook in the Parliamentarian's office, saying that a page was presiding over the House of Representatives.

But I thank Charlie. All too often, people who work in the middle of the night, people who are seated in front of me, do not get the recognition that is due.

And I want to thank the people of Louisiana. The people of Louisiana have been very good to me and my family. I was elected to office before I had the opportunity to serve in this great body. Nine years ago, the people of the 14th Senatorial District thought enough of me to elect me to the State Senate at the ripe age of 24.

I thank the people of Louisiana for giving me the opportunity to serve not only in this Congress but for giving me the opportunity to serve at such a young age in this Congress as well as the State Senate of Louisiana. And I am so grateful that they put their trust and confidence in me at such a young age. So I am very grateful to the many people who have supported me throughout the years.

And I want to give a special thanks to the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Before I went out into this Congress, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, that body embraced me and took me under their wings and somewhat taught me the ropes of this great body and the way this body operates.

The Congressional Black Caucus has been, and will always be perhaps, the conscience of this Congress, and perhaps it is the conscience of this country. And I want to thank the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus for their leadership.

I want to thank my wife and my son for giving me the opportunity to fly to this great place and do the people's business of Louisiana.

I want to thank, finally, Judge Leon Higginbotham, who worked so hard to keep me and Members like me in this body and in State legislatures all across this country.

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I want to thank Leon Higginbotham for taking a case pro bono and trying to defend the civil rights of so many people across this country and also want to thank the NAACP Legal Defense Fund who have worked so hard to preserve civil rights for so many Americans. I want to thank the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights. I want to thank attorney Frank Garvin and attorney Earnest Johnson from Louisiana who fought so hard to keep people like me in elected office and protecting their constitutional rights.

Lastly, I want to thank the Members of the Louisiana legislative black caucus who fought so hard for the creation of the district that I have had the opportunity to represent. I want to thank them for their hard work and for all that they have done.

This, Mr. Speaker, tonight, is not a permanent retirement. In life, people

change professions, some two, some three, some even seven times. This is a change of profession. I have enjoyed my service here in this Congress, and I am ready to move on and do other things. But this should not be viewed as a permanent retirement. It should be viewed as a temporary retirement with a certain return. I am only 33, and in 6 years I plan to join this body again and hopefully I will have the opportunity to do that.

Shakespeare once said that life is like a play, we all have an opportunity to go on stage and play our part and perform and do our very best while we are in the spotlight. Then after our act ends, we must exit the stage and let a new act begin.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that I have had an opportunity to do my job on this stage. I thank the people of Louisiana and thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank each and every last Member of this great and distinguished body. I am not bitter leaving here tonight. This body has made me better.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. COBLE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

RETIREMENT REMARKS

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

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, many years ago when my husband George and I were making decisions about our future careers, I decided that I wanted to be a tax attorney and had thought seriously of attending law school. George, on the other hand, decided that he wanted to become an elected official in the city of Chicago politics.

Well, as our lives unfolded, he became the committeeman of the 24th Ward regular Democratic organization in Chicago's west side and in 1973 its alderman in the Chicago city council. Following that he was elected to become a member of this illustrious body in the 91st Congress and served here until his ill-fated airplane crash that claimed his life on December 8, 1972.

I, of course, was suddenly a widow with an awesome responsibility of rearing our 13-year-old son alone. But apparently I was not destined to become a lawyer but instead to become a maker of laws. On June 7, 1973, I was elected to fill his unexpired term and represent the people of Chicago, IL's Seventh Congressional District in the 93d Congress.

When I arrived here, it was during one of the most exciting and challenging periods of my life and in our Nation's history. Liberalism was not the

dirty word that it appears to be today. The feminist movement was in high gear. And the Vietnam War was raging. Watergate was just about to unfold. Yes, those were heady times. The Equal Rights Amendment had just passed the House of Representatives the year before. And learning the truth about the break-in at the Democratic headquarters in Watergate and urging Congress to set a date certain for the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam were the three most pressing issues that I faced in this body.

At the same time, of course, I had to confront the most stressful and emotional issue of all, and that was the bereavement of my husband and of leaving my son behind to be cared for by my now dear departed mother who did an excellent job.

Upon this last time that I will stand in this well in this body, I am saddened for many reasons. First, because I will be saying goodbye to the wonderful, trusting, supportive constituents of Illinois's Seventh Congressional District. I thank them for the confidence they have shown in my ability to represent their interests and to advocate for their concerns in this body for nearly 24 years.

Second, I will truly miss my friend, BILL CLAY of Missouri, CHARLE RANGEL of New York and LOU STOKES of Ohio, who immediately took me under their wings and have been my mentors and staunchest supporters throughout all of these years. I will also miss CARRIE MEEK and other women in the women's caucus and the black caucus. I have enjoyed their affection throughout this time and have given affection back to them.

I do not want to leave here without saying thank you to my chairman, JOHN DINGELL, who allowed me a free hand in chairing the Commerce Committee that was entitled Commerce, Consumer Protection and Competitiveness during the 102d and the 103d Congress.

I salute our friend who is no longer here, Jack Brooks, who allowed me to chair several subcommittees under the old Government Operations Committee.

I thank, too, my wonderful administrative assistant who has been with me for 16 of these long years, Bud Myers. And Gerri Houston, my executive assistant who has been here almost the same amount of time. Benny Montgomery my acting district administrator in Chicago, and all of the staff people both on my congressional offices here and in Chicago as well as David Schooler, our counselor on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight who has been with me for a long time, and others on that committee who have served with all their dedication and loyalty for all of these years.

Each of them has made my job serving the Seventh Congressional District so much more pleasurable and so much easier than it could have been otherwise.

Finally, I want to thank each Member of this body for their friendship. I say to them, I hope that God will give them many blessings.

Before closing, let me add another thing: It has been my opinion, Mr. Speaker, that we have here an awesome responsibility to protect our democracy and to defend our Constitution. Too often in today's debate on social economic policies, in this House of Representatives, I believe we have forgotten that we have the right to uphold these two important concepts of our Nation. It seems to me that during these nearly 24 years we have been in turmoil in this country on more than one occasion, but each time democracy has stood firm.

That is why I am saddened that as I prepare to leave here, I see our country not the wonderful liberal, loving country to all of us that we were when I first came in 1973, but instead I see a resurgence of racism, of hatred, of meanness, of mean-spiritedness, and that leaves me extremely saddened.

We know this is true because we hear it on talk radio. We see it in the burning of African-American and other churches. We hear it in remarks that are unkind and unwise. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I still believe in America because after having served here all of this time, I absolutely believe with all certainty that America can correct her failings if there is a public will to do so.

So now as I leave here moments from now, I place my belief in my fellow Americans and in the Members who will come to this body in the 105th Congress. I believe that they will in fact see to it that America lives up to the words of Thomas Wolfe who said:

To every person his or her chance, to every person regardless of birth their shining opportunity, to every person, the right to live, to work, to be themselves, to become whatever their ambitions and decisions combine to make them. That is the promise of America.

That is the promise I hope of the 105th Congress.

I thank you all. I say farewell and Godspeed.

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

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

THE 104TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to certainly add my congratulations to two of my colleagues who just spoke on the floor of the House, the Honorable CLEO FIELDS of Louisiana and certainly applaud his

work and encourage his return. And then to certainly my friend and colleague, the Honorable CARLISS COLLINS, with a major place in history, I thank her for her leadership and caring for all of us.

I do believe that it is appropriate, on this last day, as I have acknowledged my colleagues and might I add also a tribute to the departing Members of the Texas delegation. So many of them have served so ably, and I thank them for their service.

This last day we had an opportunity to come together in a bipartisan manner to present to the American people an omnibus appropriations bill that would keep the Government open. As I listened to the Speaker of the House suggest that this was automatic or that this had to be the way it was and it was going to happen, I have to reflect that there was a long journey that brought us to this day. For as we started the 104th Congress, I am unhappy or sad to say that that was not the spirit in which we opened this session, for we spent an acrimonious first year of the 104th, with three times of shutting down the Government, with large attacks on Medicare and Medicaid, with proposed tax cuts of \$245 billion that would have gutted the Medicare program and given tax cuts to those who did not need it, with a fight over balancing the budget and establishing priorities, when many of us recognized that you could balance the budget but you could preserve education and the environment and you could maintain the quality of life for our senior citizens.

In fact, we spent an acrimonious time arguing over which direction this country should go.

I am very proud that the Democrats maintained a steady and evenhanded approach, which is to say that Medicare can be preserved, it need not wither on the vine, that Medicaid that provide health care for the indigent but, more particularly, for our seniors in nursing homes certainly had to be preserved, but we could also balance the budget.

This bill is not a perfect bill. There are many things that a lot of us disagree with. But I believe we have come full circle from a time when we were slashing education, cutting school lunches and school breakfasts.

Might I add, I read an article this past week that said, though our children still remain at risk, many children are better off because of the existence of school lunch programs, for some of these programs are the only good and decent nutritious meal that our children get. With all of this attention now to our children, with the understanding that they are no more stronger than what we make them, I am glad to see, albeit it was a tough time, that there has been some recognition by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that reason and moderation are the best approach.

So I am very gratified that we can say that this omnibus bill includes \$3.5

billion added to our education budget. Not a frivolous investment, I might add, some \$381 million of it belongs to Head Start, and documentation shows us that if you begin a child on an early sure footing of learning, you can be sure that that is a child that grows to love learning and is on the road to success; \$491 million dollars for Goals 2000, already a program attested to by Members by both sides of the aisle, a program started by President George Bush, and \$200 million for the school to work program documented in my own city of Houston, where young people leave high school prepared to be gainfully employed. Then I have already said in many of my town hall meetings and I have seen the faces of individuals agreeing with me, it is better to give out a Pell grant than to build a jail cell. And so we have increased Pell grants for our college students and direct student loans across the Nation.

□ 2330

Welfare reform got a lot of publicity, and many people were rising to the floor of the House and beginning to pound their fists and talk about those who were draining on America.

Well, if you tell people to pull up their bootstraps, many of them without shoes, it is going to be very hard to transition people from welfare to work without training and vocational training, and so it is important that in this legislation, unlike last year when the government was shut down, we have \$1.5 billion for vocational training and adult education.

That makes sense, but we had to work hard to get to that point, for the stridency of last year was, "We know the right way, and the only way is our way," a single focused highway to nowhere.

All of the debate that has come about over the last few weeks about the drug effort in this Nation was simply saying that we now have a better approach, and that approach, Mr. Speaker, is to support prevention programs and safe and drug-free schools.

In conclusion, let me simply say that I am glad we are at a point where we are, that this bill is passed, but it was a long journey, but it is better for America, and we are better for doing it, and America is good for us doing it for them.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO HON. ROBERT S. WALKER

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