

others and there is kind of a standard that is set. If you have the Government coming in for the sake of politicians and just setting an automatic raise, you sort of disrupt all of that process.

It also gives the employee the idea that this is all I am going to make, so we take away the incentive that they have for improving themselves, which the minimum wage, as it stands right now as a starting wage, as a training wage, is in fact an indicator or a starting place for the employees.

So what I am really saying is no employer really wants his employees to stay on minimum wage. If they stay on minimum wage and they think that is all they are going to get until the politicians come and help them, they will not be committed to productivity, they will not be committed to improvement or achievement, and they will just sit there. When that happens, there is a staleness that takes place, and those employees that want to stay on minimum wage and they figure that is all they are going to do eventually need to be moved off the work force, because they are not responsive to the customer. Again, the customer is the king. He is the boss, and they are the people we are trying to please.

There is also the employee who is remaining when the cutbacks come. They have to work under more stress and confusion, and that hinders and hurts the operations.

Now, if you think through all of that and you assume all of that for the sake of this discussion as being true, coming from someone who is actually in the pits of working with consumers and with employees and trying to deal with all these forces, if those things are true, then what you have is a question of why in the world then do we do it?

I have finally concluded that the liberals, the liberal politicians, are using this as a front, using the emotionalism of this issue as a front to charge more taxes, to take more money away from businesses, and that is wrong also. That has an effect.

So these are the reasons for my being against raising the minimum wage.

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

[Mr. MONTGOMERY 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 Pennsylvania [Mr. WALKER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WALKER 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 Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania 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 Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. METCALF 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 Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. NEUMANN 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 Indiana [Mr. MCINTOSH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE CIVILITY PLEDGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. BLUTE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, we tonight gather for a special order of a different kind, not like many of the ones that deal with substantive issues that we hear every day here in this Chamber of the people's House of Representatives. Tonight we are going to deal with an issue that I think is very important with how we conduct our business here in the House of Representatives, and that is on the civility of the House debate as it has evolved over the course of our history, but also as it has evolved within recent years, which has caused many of us to be very troubled with the nature of the discourse here in the House of Representatives.

We are being joined with Members from both parties, in both the Democratic Party, the Coalition, and also with the Mainstream Alliance of which we are Members on the Republican side, Members who are commonly referred to as Blue Dogs, Blue Dog Democrats and Blue Dog Republicans, joining here together to talk about an issue that we think is very important, that we think the American people should understand why it is so impor-

tant that we conduct our business here, conduct our debates, in a way that brings credit upon us and upon this institution.

Thomas Jefferson once remarked that it was very material that ordered, decency and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body. Frankly, there have been too many incidents here in our body over the last few years that have brought, I think, discredit on the membership of this body and further eroded the public's confidence in the way we conduct our business.

After all, we pass the laws that the people have to live up to. If they do not respect the institution, then it becomes more difficult for them to respect the laws that we ultimately pass, which they think is very important.

Certainly some of the incivility we have seen in the House of Representatives and in our political cultures relates and emanates from the general society's growing trend toward incivility, toward lack of respect for one another. U.S. News & World Report had a cover story called "In Your Face, Whatever Happened to Good Manners?"

So we are a reflection of the larger society. We think it is important that we be responsible and address our own problem in this area. We think that by doing this, we can improve this institution's reputation with the American people.

We have authored, the Blue Dogs jointly, Democrats and Republicans, a civility pledge that some of the Members will talk about later, but basically it commits Members of the House of Representatives to treating each other in a respectful manner during our differences of opinion. We believe that one can have tremendous disagreements, that one can have a vigorous debate on the issues that our great country faces, the divisive issues we face, without the type of acrimony and the type of personal invective that we see all too often in this House.

We are making the effort tonight, we have been doing it for a couple of months, we have over 70 cosponsors, but we wanted to have this special order to bring focus to this issue, to try to get more support within the House for this effort, and we think ultimately if we are successful, we are going to return this body to the place where it really should be, the people's House, where we can disagree without being disagreeable.

At this time I would like to yield to someone who is a great leader of this House, he is someone who in his day-to-day conduct represents the kind of civility we are talking about, and that is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power of the Committee on Commerce, Congressman DAN SCHAEFER from Colorado.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for giving me this opportunity to speak to this body and to the American people very briefly on exactly what it is we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, a quick survey of congressional history shows that lawmakers often have received low marks for their patience and civility. In past decades, physical violence marred the political landscape, but more recently, in civil language has increasingly come into political debate.

Serious violent episodes took place in the House during the years before the Civil War. In 1832, Representative Sam Houston had to be formally reprimanded for attacking Representative William Stanberry, who in turned tried to shoot at Houston. Six years later, a duel between two freshmen Congressmen ended in the death of one of them.

Then, in the 1850's, a pistol hidden in a House Member's desk accidentally discharged and instantly there were a full thirty or forty guns in the air.

The altercations didn't cease with the end of the Civil War. Resort to fists, pistols, knives and fire tongs, in addition to verbal weapons was reflective of the time. A contested election in 1890 led to three days of tumultuous debate that a reporter said looked more like a riot than a parliamentary body.

I'm glad to say we have moved past using physical violence to settle disputes, but we can improve our current inflammatory rhetoric. Last spring, in an effort to restore civility and respect back to the House of Representatives, I formed the Mainstream Conservation Alliance—known as the Republican Blue Dogs. This group of Republicans, along with the Democrats' Blue Dogs, are working together to reach across the aisle to find bipartisan solutions in the best interest of all Americans.

Given the enormity and the importance of the many difficult issues facing us, dissension is inevitable—but hostility is not. This civility pledge goes a long way in restoring the respect this chamber and all Members of Congress deserve. I encourage all of my colleagues to sign the civility pledge written by my friend, PETER BLUTE.

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would yield to the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Health and Environment of the Committee on Commerce, who earlier today showed what bipartisanship in forging leadership positions together can mean in the passage of the Ryan White Act reauthorization bill, Chairman MICHAEL BILIRAKIS from Florida.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, my compliments and commendation to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. BLUTE] for his great work on this matter. I thank him, of course, for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to serve as a United States Representative. I consider it an honor and a privilege to represent the residents of the Ninth Congressional District of Florida. I have heard from many of my constituents who believe, rightly so, that the debate in the house has become very partisan and inflammatory.

While we each hold strong beliefs and values, these can be expressed in a con-

structive manner to facilitate debate, rather than in a manner which relegates debate to caustic, partisan attacks.

As a Member of the mainstream conservative alliance, I gladly signed the civility pledge, and intend to continue to debate the issues before us honestly, fairly and in a constructive manner. As the pledge states, we should "respect the people who elected us through proper conduct, including honoring and showing consideration to one's colleagues regardless of ideology or personal feeling."

I believe Members of this Congress all want the same thing. We want to educate our children, take care of our senior citizens, protect our environment and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed in our society. We may differ on the means to achieve these goals, but I believe we all agree on the goals themselves.

I have consistently made it a point, when speaking on the floor of this House, to debate constructively and without resorting to personal attacks. Regardless of ideology or party affiliation, we must all respect each other, this institution and our constituent by promoting civility, comity and adherence to the House rules above party loyalty.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to accept the trust of my constituents and respect them by honoring this venerable institution. I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in this pledge.

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Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished gentleman from Florida and congratulate him on his great work on the health issue and for passing that important bill today with regard to our fellow citizens who unfortunately have been afflicted with that terrible disease AIDS. The Ryan White Act reauthorization is a very important bill.

At this time I recognize for 5 minutes one of our freshmen leaders here in the 104th Congress, someone from the great State of Tennessee, ZACH WAMP.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. BLUTE. One of the greatest honors that has been bestowed on me since I got here was being elected as a freshman as the cochairman of this Blue Dogs group over here on our side of the aisle, a group that does seek bipartisan solutions, willing to work with people on the other side, trying to find the principles and values that we might come together on and leave partisan politics and shallow rhetoric aside so we can try to get together and do the people's business.

Many of us, as myself, are former Democrats who joined the Republican Party. I know for a fact in my life there are many, many good people in both parties across the country. And, in fact, neither party has an exclusive on integrity or ideas.

Right down here on the dais, in this great room in the House of Representa-

tives, are the words ingrained in the wood, "Peace, liberty, tolerance and justice." I think we need to remember peace and tolerance more often as we do our business here in the House of Representatives.

Not a day goes by, Mr. Speaker, that I am still not just fascinated by this opportunity that I have to serve in this incredible Capitol of ours that really has not changed much since Abraham Lincoln was the President of our country. And as I show young people through this place, I am constantly just enthralled at the magnitude of what this opportunity really means.

I think we owe it to our predecessors, we owe it to the American people to put this institution above our own careers, our own ambitions, our party's agendas. Anything that may demean or degrade this institution needs to be set aside.

The fabric of the American quilt is woven with diversity, diversity of religion, color, culture, and ideas. The thing that is different about America is that we in this country can passionately and aggressively argue the issues of the day but remain civil and come back as a Nation, come back as people at the end of the day, having argued passionately, taken sides, we can come back at the end of the day in a civil and respectful manner. And I think that is an important lesson for our children. It is an important lesson for our colleagues. It is an important lesson for the leadership of either party.

Because, frankly, if the leadership of either party thinks they are always right and the other party is always wrong, they are tragically mistaken. And the American people know better. The American people expect us to find ways to work with each other, and I think we need to do this for them.

The shallow and harsh rhetoric that has pervaded this institution in recent months needs to be set aside, from both parties. And now that the emotion of the new Congress, after 40 years of one party rule, is kind of mellowing out, I think some Members of both parties need to cool their jets just a little and get along with each other and remember that while we can disagree, we have to put this institution above the passion of the moment.

I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by talking about a word that I think is the greatest need in our country and in our world today and that word is reconciliation. I think if people, men and women, young and old, all across this country and this world would reconcile with each other, we would be so much better off. That is the No. 1 problem that separates people. It causes anxiety and division.

We are, in fact, Mr. Speaker, all God's people, and I think it is important that we remember as we come together tonight as Democrats and Republicans and talk about this issue of civility, that we remember the two great commandments; put God first and treat everybody else the way we

want to be treated. And if we treat in this body everybody else the way we expect to be treated, the meanness would go away. Kindness would permeate because we would expect to be treated with that same respect and dignity. And we need to do that.

I look forward to the days ahead where we can work with our friends on the other side of the aisle, do the people's business and disagree. By George, I am not going to sacrifice my principles for anything. But if we agree on principle, we need to come together here on the floor of this House.

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for his leadership on this issue.

At this time I yield 5 minutes to another leader of the movement for more civility here in the House of Representatives. He is someone who has already shown how to work on both sides of the aisle to forge consensus on issues like telecommunications reform, securities litigation reform, private property rights. Those are very difficult contentious issues, but he has worked very closely with Members of both sides of the aisle in a very constructive way, and that is BILLY TAUZIN from Louisiana.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Massachusetts, and I commend him and all of the Members of the Republican Blue Dog Alliance and the Democratic Blue Dog Coalition for initiating this effort of a civility pledge in this House.

As Mr. BLUTE pointed out, over 70 Members have now signed that pledge. It is a simple pledge. It simply pledges that we agree to respect the people who elected us, through proper conduct, including honoring and showing consideration of one's colleagues, regardless of ideology or personal feeling.

It says that we pledge to promote civility and comity and adherence to House rules over party loyalty, and to follow these guidelines as the presiding officer in making rulings, and as Members in adhering to those rulings.

Now, we will be urging others Members of this body to sign up. We hope to get the entire membership to sign this pledge and to introduce it formally as a resolution of this House. It is so important that we begin that process here in this House.

Now, Mr. BLUTE referred to the article in U.S. News and World Report in which U.S. News and World Report wrote about the American uncivil wars, "How crude, rude and obnoxious behavior has replaced good manners and why that hurts our politics and culture." In the article, U.S. News reports that a poll that they conducted in February by Bozell Worldwide reveals a vast majority of Americans feel that the country has reached an ill-mannered watershed. Nine out of 10 Americans think that incivility is a serious problem. Nearly half think that it is extremely serious. Seventy-eight percent say the problem has worsened in the past 10 years, and their concern goes beyond annoyance at rudeness.

Respondents see in incivility evidence of a profound social breakdown. More than 90 percent of those polled believe it contributes to an increase in violence in our country; 85 percent believe it divides the national community, and the same number see it eroding healthy values like respect for others.

One of the contributors to the article, a Martin Marty, who is a philosopher of religions, wrote that civility should be the glue holding dialogue together. The alternative to civility is, first, incivility, and we have seen too much of that. And then, he says, the next alternative is war. It is the violence that this Chamber saw before the Civil War and after that Civil War when Members actually assaulted one another. And it is the violence we see on the streets as respect for one another has worsened in our country.

I am ashamed to tell my colleagues that when Americans sized up civility of different groups in our country, politicians came out almost dead last. We came out behind police officers, who 86 percent thought to be civil; athletes, 74 percent thought to be civil; government workers scored a 71 percent civility rating; lawyers got 60; journalists got 56; and politicians received a 55 percent civility rating. Forty percent thought all politicians had reached a low of incivility.

It is time we begin to change that, Mr. Speaker. The civility pledge we have introduced is just the beginning. Recently the CRS, the Congressional Research Service, issued a report for Congress entitled "Decorum in House Debate." It tracked the history of incivility in our Chamber. It told us about the violence that had preceded this Congress and other Congresses. It told us about how speech had worsened from time to time, and how disrespect and nonharmonious relations had contributed to a worsening and a polarization of attitudes in this Chamber and in America.

And then it issued a series of recommendations on how we could begin to change things. It literally listed a series, including the recommendation that the Chair should be more responsible in advising Members about breaches of decorum. The Chair should be a teacher, advising Members in the middle of a debate: You are about to step over the line, calm yourself down; you are about to breach the rules of this House; you are about to insult this institution that you fought so hard to be a Member of; you are about to bring it down in the eyes of the American public and destroy its credibility with our Nation; you are about to treat this institution as some kind of second class organization, when it is bigger than you, more important than you, and you should leave it a better place than you took it. The Chair ought to be more responsible in doing that.

The CRS report says that after the Chair, the Members ought to take more responsibility for one another. We

ought to be more calming of one another's tempers and emotions. We should be advising Members when we think they have gone beyond the pale, when they have gotten out of hand.

And then our leadership ought to take a role in that regard. The leadership, for example, should restructure the 1-minutes in the morning, which have become theme-team efforts just to excite and aggravate, to get sound bites for television, rather than a healthy discourse on the issues.

The leadership ought to take responsibility by issuing Dear Colleagues to Members, advising them on what the rules require of all of us to respect this institution and one another.

The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct has established a separate Office of Advice and Education. That office ought to hold briefings for Members on what our rules require, particularly the new Members as they come in and the older Members who constantly violate those rules and have to have their words taken down.

There ought to be joint hearings of the House Committee on Rules and the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct in which we can examine the lack of decorum in our Chamber. The joint leadership could appoint Members from both aisles to informally serve as a task force on decorum to assist in maintaining respect in this Chamber.

The majority leader ought to make sure that he appoints Members to the Chair during House proceedings who really know the rules and will helpfully advise Members when they are about to violate those rules. Perhaps we could have a bipartisan summit, if it gets intolerable during this election season, and maybe we could consider stronger sanctions.

A former Member, Representative Larry Wynn of Kentucky, upon his retirement, wrote: "The growing rancor between Republicans and Democrats in the House of Representatives is deeply worrisome." Many House Members, including me, fear that this may be an ongoing trend rather than a temporary phenomenon.

It is important now for both Republicans and Democrats to recognize that a continuation of this rancor will undercut the legislative process. It is my firm belief that the majority of Members of both sides of the aisle would like to reduce the level of tension and the partisan clashes and get on with the business of this country. It is up to us all to cool off, to sit down, to talk and come up with some suggestions for restoring greater civility, tolerance, and pragmatism in our procedures. If not, not only Members of this House, but the country will suffer.

And so, Mr. Speaker, our little group, the alliance, the Blue Dog Republicans, and the small group on the other side, the Blue Dog Coalition, are nowhere near a majority of this Chamber, but we have begun what we hope is a groundswell. We hope other Members will sign up to our civility pledge. We

hope tonight is just the beginning of this discussion. We hope to have future discussions about civility and incivility in this Chamber.

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We hope as a result of what we begin tonight this House will be a place where people come to honor and respect this institution and the people who sent us up here by being more respectful of one another, by being more tolerant of the different views in this House, and by debating the issues instead of insulting and questioning the motives of one another as we enter serious debate for the sake of our country.

Our two little groups are dedicated to that, to put our party hats aside and to act like Americans in this Chamber, and to act like respectful Americans who came to this Chamber with an incredible amount of honor and respect for the folks who sent us here. If we can behave in that regard after we get here, we will not only honor this institution, we will honor this country and the people who made it so great, and who have made this institution the most and I think the greatest democratic institution in the world. We owe that to the American public and we owe that to this House.

Tonight we begin that process, but we will not stop here. We will rise occasionally when the debate gets too heated and try to calm things down. We will try to get some of these recommendations adopted into our procedures in the House. We will talk to our leadership and see if we cannot get some of these improvements made. Most importantly, we will continue to counsel with one another across this aisle about the importance of being good Members of this House and good Americans when we come here, simply that and nothing more, to honor the folks who sent us here as we honor this institution.

Thank you very much, Mr. BLUTE.

Mr. BLUTE. I thank the gentleman very much.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. DICKEY].

Mr. DICKEY. Thank you, Mr. BLUTE. What I would like to do if we can is hold you three here. I am kind of tagging along. I was here on another matter of businesses, and your discussion is most intriguing and I think constructive. I would like to, if we can, just go through a couple, a few things and ask you all questions specifically, and then you all ask each other questions and let us make some dialog here.

I am sitting here thinking while you all were talking as to why we do what we do, and it appears to me that we somehow may be deceived by thinking that the people who are listening to us want us to be this way. It may be that we are doing that. If that is the case, I think it is misguided because what we are probably trying to do is to show our independence.

Folks think we get up here and deal with each other, and that we say we are going to do one favor for you and one favor for you and so forth, and we would not dare say anything bad about each other or disagree because we are up here swapping out and that sort of thing. I think maybe some of us got elected by saying we do not want to be a part of that up there, so we come here and to prove that. We might have in the back of our minds an unconscious goal of trying to offend people and say back home, "Look, for sure I don't get along with Mr. TAUZIN. I'm not dealing with him because we're arguing, we're fighting."

But I think what we have got to learn is that we need to learn how to disagree with each other without disliking each other. There are two perspectives.

Then I would like to talk to you all and let you tell me what you all think, since you have been on this thing a little bit more.

There is a little store out from Camden, AR, about 4 miles that is called Harvey's Grocery. I have gone there ever since I have run, and I am close friends with Bobby Hildebrandt, his two sisters and his mom. She just had her 87th birthday. We sat around, and we just sat there with Miss Minnie, and she is that old.

You sit and you say, "Well, what do you think are we doing up there?" They are saying, "Why are you all so childish? Why are you so partisan?" Folks are offended and put off by our bickering when we might be thinking we are pleasing them. We just may be missing it this way. What they are seeing, they are left out of this deal when we are bickering.

Of course it is adverse to what is said in the Bible, too, ZACH, if we are not able to show love to each other. But we have got to get the balance of being independent, having honest discussion and dialog without tearing each other up.

Mr. WAMP. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKEY. I certainly will, ZACH.

Mr. WAMP. To me, the greatest tragedy of all, Congressman DICKEY, our young people in this country are watching what we are doing. I know, as the gentleman from Louisiana said, when the parties come down on the 1 minutes in the morning, sometimes the 1 minutes from the people on my side of the aisle, they are doing it, I am going, "Oh, why does he have to do that? Why does she have to do that?"

The people back home know better. They have designed these games to trash the other party and to play the blame game, and the American people are tired of the blame game. They want solutions. They sent us all up here to work together on some solutions, and the greatest tragedy is our young people are looking at it and saying, "Well, I know one thing, I don't want to go into that business. I would rather play basketball for a living or go make some money and be a professional."

All those are good aspirations, but I yearn for the day when there is a young man or woman in this country who wants to be Thomas Jefferson, who wants to be a leader, who wants to go and help other people and to run this country and to say, "I am so proud to be American, and I am so proud of my people in Congress and what they are doing and how well they regard each other, and is not it interesting how they disagree on the issues but they come back and respect each other. They do not trash each other."

We owe it to our kids. Our kids do not want to be involved in politics. It is a mean, dirty business and it should not be. We are disconnecting them from their own future, JAY. That is the greatest tragedy of all.

Mr. BLUTE. If the gentleman would yield on that point, I think he says it very well. The issue is that none of us here thinks that we should have less debate—this should be made very clear—that we should have less debate, that we should examine these very difficult, divisive issues that we have to deal with on a day-to-day basis any less.

I think most of the people supporting this, certainly Mr. TAUZIN, are some of the finest, toughest debaters. They bring information to the table and boy, the clash of ideas is very important, we all believe that. But when you move beyond that clash of ideas and I think show a lack of respect or mutual admiration really of your colleagues, regardless if they are the most liberal or conservative views that are totally opposite of yours, if you get down below that level, I think that is when what happens, what you are saying. The people watch it, they tune out, they turn off.

But a great high-level debate which has the clash of ideas is something that we need. Our system was made to be adversarial, there is no doubt about that. In the Federalist Papers Hamilton wrote that ambition should be made to counteract ambition. So the ambition of one ideology or one idea would be counteracted by another ideology or another idea, and that would be the way that we would have checks and balances, keep an eye on each other.

So this is an adversarial system, just as our justice system is adversarial. You are a distinguished attorney. When you go into court, it is an adversarial system. It is tough. It is information, it is defining an issue and then exploiting perhaps weaknesses in the argument of the other side. But it is not meant to disparage, bring down, ridicule the other person. I think if we get into that, that is when the young people say, "Boy, I don't want to be in a profession that engages in that type of activity."

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. TAUZIN. I think part of the problem, too, is that we fail to separate the politics of how we get here.

Mr. DICKEY. That is right.

Mr. TAUZIN. And how we return here in reelection campaigns with the art of governing. There is a huge difference between those two activities, yet we confuse them. Our politics have gotten meaner. Negative campaigning is the way in which candidates are now elected. Citizens are left with choosing the lesser of two evils, because they learn so many horrible things about all the candidates that they cannot really believe in any of them anymore.

Time magazine wrote an article once that said that if Burger King and, say, McDonald's—

Mr. DICKEY. How about Taco Bell?

Mr. TAUZIN. Or Taco Bell, I should not fail to mention Taco Bell—had instead of talking about the good quality of their products, of their tacos and their hamburgers, if they had instead for 10 years got on television and talked about how rotten and awful and cancer-causing these products were, people would not be choosing between Taco Bell and Burger King and McDonald's. They would turn off on the whole mess. They would not go to fast-food restaurants anymore.

The point is, our politics has led us to that. Our negative campaigning and our politics has led us to the point where the American public has kind of turned off on so much of the process by which we get elected.

Then we come to this Chamber and we confuse our role again. We think we are all campaigning still, and we get into these heated fights, these partisan debates, these acrimonious accusations. There is questioning of motives, this attribution of ill intent, all these things we do as though we are still campaigning and running negative ads against one another.

The art of governing is something else. The art of governing is putting the election behind you and debating ideas, and seeing which ideas have force and which have power and which can compel a majority to support them, and which make better common sense for the good of all the people of our country.

In that clash and debate of ideas, we ought not have this, the politics of negative campaigning, but somehow it has infiltrated into this room, and our negative campaigns go on for 2 years. We ought to somehow call that to Members' attentions, and as Americans ask one another to separate the campaigns and the negative, ugly politics from the art of governing.

Mr. BLUTE. If the gentleman would yield on that point. I think does it not begin by ceding to your opponent here in this well or on the clash of ideas over these very divisive issues, it begins by ceding one thing to your opponent up front, that their motivation is, in their view, in the best interest of their constituents.

Mr. TAUZIN. Yes.

Mr. BLUTE. And the American people.

Mr. DICKEY. Yes.

Mr. BLUTE. They are patriotic. They believe their philosophy is something that will help people. I think to some extent we have gotten away from that, and we think of our opposition in a debate format as someone who actually is out to hurt the people. That is just not the case.

Mr. DICKEY. There is a biblical principle, and that is, find first what you have in common with somebody.

Mr. BLUTE. Right.

Mr. DICKEY. Both of you talked about something that is excellent. BILLY is talking about the fact that we are bringing the politics on this floor. How can we be statesmen if we continue to try to play to the polls and to the negative things? We have some duty, as he was talking, we have some duty to educate and try to lead our constituents away from the negative that they see is sometime enjoyable. Sometimes they see that.

Let me mention two other things. One is, generalizations are so harmful. Just to say all people from Arkansas are like that in a debate, and particularly when it gets heated, all you Republicans are that way, all Democrats are that way, and someone will say, "Wait a minute, I'm an exception." That is not finding something in common with somebody, that is finding something negative, and I think we all do it.

The other perspective I want to bring to you all, before you interrupted me and just carried this debate too far, is the people who sit up here, that have sat up here for years, ask them the next time you have a chance, just go and say, how is it different? They will, the ones I have talked to and the ones that answered me, their countenance kind of falls and they say, "It's not near like it used to be. There's too much bickering." There is even one person who said, "We have never heard the profanity like we have here."

You see? That is dragging us all down, and what Billy is saying is so true. If we are constantly complaining about each other, you see, not talking about issues but each other, it is going to be destructive and we are not going to be doing what we need to do for the people of America.

Mr. TAUZIN. If the gentleman will yield, let me draw a distinction. I think the American public expects us to vigorously debate ideas.

Mr. DICKEY. That is right.

Mr. TAUZIN. And I do not think there is anything wrong with your characterizing my idea. You can characterize my idea as you see it. When you go from characterizing my idea to attacking me personally—

Mr. DICKEY. And questioning your motives.

Mr. TAUZIN. And questioning my motives or my intent, it has gone beyond the pale. It has gotten out of the debate and gotten into the negative

politics, is my point. If we could all, I hope every day, listen to the speeches on the floor of the House and all of us start thinking, is that really a debate over the idea? Or is that a debate challenging the motives or the intentions of the individual?

And every time you find that difference, kind of go up to that individual and say as a friend, as a colleague, "Maybe you stepped over the line. You went too far. Go back to debate the idea, please. That person over there got elected just like you, by people just like your people back home, who love this country and sent you over here to do a good, honest day's work in debating ideas, not challenging people's intentions and motives."

Mr. BLUTE. If I could just interrupt for a second, Jefferson had a great line. I do not have the exact line, but he said that we should always believe that our opposition is at least, there is a 10-percent chance that they may be right, that we may be wrong. We should always leave that opening for us all as we debate. If we do that, it is a wise statement, then we kind of keep a broader mind.

Mr. WAMP. Another interesting dynamic, if my colleague would yield, please, is that many of the new Members feel that the seniority system in this institution that had grown out of touch over a period of time needed some reform, that the seniority system did not serve us too well, because whoever was around the longest got to be in charge, and some things just inherently were not fair. They did not reward hard work and effectiveness, they really rewarded the seniority of Members.

I think in the passion of the day, even some of my freshmen colleagues failed to recognize that while the seniority system is moving aside, I think after the last election, half this body about had been here less than 3 years, and after the next election, based on the turnover we anticipate, it may be two-thirds of this body will be here less than 5 years. So the seniority system is being moved out.

As the seniority system moves out, we have to recognize that the respect has got to stay. We cannot move it all out and replace it with some kind of bomb-throwing mentality, that we are going to storm this place and rock this place. This place is unreal. It is magnificent. It sends chills up and down your spine when you walk the hallowed Halls of the U.S. Congress.

□ 2100

We got to leave it that big. It is that big, and it deserves that.

Mr. BLUTE. The gentleman would yield, and I think he is right on target here. It is not just the history. It is the actual individuals who serve here. I have been shocked in my 4 years to see the quality of the individual, but also some of the histories are fascinating. For example, the guy in the office next to me is SAM JOHNSON from Dallas, TX,

who is an American hero. And then to think that he spent 7 years of his life for his fellow citizens in a North Vietnamese prisoner of war camp, the Hanoi Hilton, facing torture and abuse and solitary confinement for 2 years. Now that is incredible.

Mr. Speaker, but then we look over on the Democratic side and see someone like SAM GIBBONS, who landed at D-day, and that was a long time ago. I have read about it in the history books, but to be able to sit next to someone and perhaps engage in a conversation about, boy, what was that like?

I mean, this is an incredible place. JOHN LEWIS marched with Martin Luther King.

Mr. DICKEY. And got beaten up.

Mr. BLUTE. Stood up for his people, for their civil rights. That is a tremendous history. And I think from my own area, the Kennedy family and their great history and contributions to America. You have got PATRICK KENNEDY and JOE KENNEDY. I mean, this is an incredible place. We should have on both sides of the aisle high quality individuals, men and women from all kinds of different backgrounds.

I just think that we should reflect that high quality in our debates.

Mr. DICKEY. Mr. Speaker, let me introduce one other thought to this discussion, and that is good humor. I know you all have it, and we kid each other a lot. But you know, if we could get our personalities in this thing and do jokes some, you knows, there are some good things that can be said in the heat of a debate. We can laugh, and there is nothing wrong with it.

Now some people, if you bring good humor to debate here, they say that is not congressional, you see. But if we use it as part of a dose of medicine, it is awfully good.

Now, I want to suggest something here that might seem a little trivial, it is, that we have V chips. You understand that we all have V chips. When we get over the line and we bring the politics in, somehow we cut off like we do on television.

We can do it. One of you all mentioned that we can go up to our colleagues, particularly those on the same side of the aisle, and say you have gone over the line a little bit, the V chip went off, you see.

But what do you all think of good humor and how have you seen it work to help and, BILLY, you probably have story after story.

Mr. TAUZIN. Of course, I can tell you countless stories, particularly from my Louisiana experience in the Louisiana legislature, about how Members who have spent time with another and have come to know and love, and respect one another in the same way that PETER has talked so admirably about some of my Democratic colleagues who have such a history of contribution to our country, who in the heat of debate gently, with humor, brought each other back to a point of civility when things were getting out of hand.

Mr. Speaker, I recall once we were debating the institution of a board of contractors so that the Government would not appoint all the contractors. The board will end up doing it. One of the oldest gentlemen in the House stood up and said, "Now, BILLY, you know you can't take politics out of politics any more than you can take kissing out of loving."

And I said, I know you cannot take politics out of politics, and I certainly would not want to take kissing out of loving. We just are trying to take a little kissing out of politics.

The humor of that moment of course made a point, but it also kept what otherwise was sometimes heated debate in line, and it is a useful tool. But I think the most important tool of all the tools that are available to us is a recognition that you came here the same way I did. I ought to respect you, and I ought to respect your ideas because you speak with not your own voice. You speak with the voice of 500,000 or 600,000 people who sent you up here to be their voice. And if I cannot respect you and your voice, I am disrespecting them in their homes. If I have that attitude, that is the most important tool in my arsenal to make me a little more civil in this body.

Mr. DICKEY. Is it not true that you respect my voice a little bit more because we are closer to Louisiana right on the border? Is that not true? Do you not listen to me a little bit more because it is home folks talking?

Mr. TAUZIN. You are bigger than me.

Mr. BLUTE. I just noticed that we are surrounded by Southerners here. But of course we do not have any accents up there in New England, of course.

You know, some of the finest moments that I have experienced here were interparty tributes. For example, I recall when our colleague, RAY LAHOOD, I thought did a nice job when he took the floor, Republican, to pay tribute to a Democratic colleague, BILL RICHARDSON, upon his successful diplomatic effort to liberate American citizens from Saddam Hussein's Iraq. That was a great example I think of mutual respect.

Perhaps the other one that I enjoyed so much was when our distinguished colleague from Illinois, HENRY HYDE, recognized JIM BUNNING on the day he was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame. We all know how important that was.

Mr. DICKEY. And there is nothing wrong with crying, letting a tear fall every now and then.

Mr. BLUTE. But again, you know, we need to have vigorous debate. I mean, again the people who were promoting this civility resolution are some of the hardest, toughest debaters, and I have heard ZACH out there. JAY gave a speech earlier on the minimum wage, on his position on that minimum wage. It was very focused on the issue. You did not characterize the other side as

wanting to kill jobs, but that you felt the result would be that there would be jobs lost, and I think that is what we want.

We want a vigorous debate, tough, tough minded, tough characterizations, but we need to keep it within a limit so that we do not turn off the American people because, frankly, they need to hear and be educated about some of these very complicated issues.

Mr. TAUZIN. You know, PETER, if you yield, I think you are right. Some of the most stirring moments have been when Members have done that, have risen to congratulate Members on the other side of the aisle, and not only a good collegial way, but in a way that I think Americans said, hey, maybe these people are not just a bunch of kids. They are Americans first. Maybe they are not just Republicans and Democrats. Maybe they do care about something other than their reelection. Maybe they care about this country, and maybe they respect one another enough once in a while to say something nice about one another.

And maybe, just maybe, just thinking aloud with you, PETER, maybe that is one thing we in our two groups ought to try to encourage more, that we do more of those kinds of speeches on the floor when another Member, particularly from the other side who has had a success, who has had a tragedy, who has had something happen that is to them and to the folks that sent him here, that we rise on the floor and show our admiration, our feelings of sympathy, whatever it may be, to literally demonstrate that we do, to the American public, that we do respect one another more than our words sometimes indicate.

Mr. BLUTE. I think a great example of this was the political relationship between somebody who I have a great deal of respect for, who brought me into Republican politics. That was our former President, Ronald Reagan, and his relationship with Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, who had tremendous differences over policy. I mean, they literally hated each other's views and direction they wanted to take the country, but, boy, they also communicated a mutual respect, a mutual admiration, and even a certain friendship.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mixed with good humor, if you remember.

Mr. BLUTE. And with some great humor exchanges between them which communicated to the American people that the Government at least could ultimately decide on things, move forward on that key question that we respect each other as Americans first and then we have differences on policy.

Mr. WAMP. If the gentleman would yield, and the theme and the message there is what you said earlier. We are reflective of the American people. I said as a candidate that I thought that Congress was a mirror image of America. Whoever is sent here is in fact a mirror image of what is out there.

Mr. Speaker, if we are mean and shallow and harsh, the country is mean and shallow and harsh. If we are kind and respectful and dignified, the country is kind and respectful and dignified. That is how important this is. This is a critical issue.

I think we should take the initiative, Congressman TAUZIN, to actually discourage the leadership of both parties from engaging in these short speeches, just openly critical, playing the blame game. I think we ought to as a group, we ought to take the lead on that to say, you know, it is time because it does not matter who wins or loses in the political blame game here. What matters most is that this institution is sinking in esteem and that our young people are seeing the wrong thing, and we need to take that off.

I like your V-chip idea. We ought to V that right out. We ought to get that right off the page here. Both parties would not be any better or any worse off if we did away with that because each party gets equal time, and they are basically just blaming each other. I do not think the people out there in the hinterland, whether they agree or disagree with people, much care for that kind.

Mr. DICKEY. Mr. Speaker, I do not think we respect ourselves when we do that. I think we walk over here saying, boy, but there is a feeling that settles in that I miss the point by doing that.

Mr. BLUTE. Some of the debates I think we all agree that we walk into here coming from our offices, we cringe at the level that it has sunk to because we may have been en route here.

Mr. TAUZIN. If the gentleman will yield, you know, Americans like a good fight. We are not talking about not having some good healthy fights over issues. We are not talking about, you know, some little-pinkie gentility in this Chamber. We are not talking about being less than healthy, hearty debaters on the issues that face America.

There are some enormous divisions in this body and in America on many of these issues. There is an extreme need for us to debate those things in a healthy fashion so that we either come to closure or realize we cannot, one or the other, and then we let the American people settle it in the next election.

That is all healthy. We ought to have those vigorous, hearty, healthy debates. Americans ought to see a good battle on this floor of ideas, not of personalities. You ought to see a healthy fight when it comes to what is right and what is wrong in terms of legislation, but they ought to never see, they ought never see us behaving like Boy Scouts without a troop leader.

Mr. DICKEY. I agree with that. Now you know, let us say something that is positive here. We are having an enormous change in our Nation. You know, ZACH was talking about it is a mirror image. But what the people of America see when they see us debating here is a

change that cannot take place in any other government in the world. We are changing. I mean, we have cut \$40 billion out of the budget this year, you see, for this year. We have cut spending like we have, and how have we done it? We have done it through debate, and there are some people that are still suffering. There are still some people that are still bitter, and reconciliation is a real key.

But let us change topics a second. What can we do, what permission do we have from our voters to get to know each other than on this floor, and how is the best way to do it? Now, I think we have thrown aside the trips that we take for pleasure and all the things, all the excesses that way. But what are some of the things, because that is what happens, is when you sit there and you know that you have been at a prayer breakfast with so and so, or you have been on a committee with so and so. But what can we do to promote our getting to know each other better away from the floor?

Mr. WAMP. Amazingly, as a freshman, it shocked me when I got here how from the day you are here as a new Member they separate you, Republicans over here, Democrats over here. Republicans get this training, Democrats get this training. The freshman class did not even meet as a freshman class. It was the Republicans over here the Democrats over here. And so the only way to build bridges is one on one, interactively. We even sit over here, they sit over there.

Mr. Speaker, I mean, that is amazing to me because, as BILLY said, we all had to fight the same fight to get here, and we all represent the same number of people or thereabouts, and so I think you have to.

I am in a weekly small group, bipartisan, Democrats and Republicans. We meet every week to just walk through the problems with our lives here and to hold each other accountable while we are separated from our families, while we are here. It is a great thing, and it is bipartisan. Some of my greatest relationships here: MIKE DOYLE of Pennsylvania and BART STUPAK of Michigan, are Democrats, are in my small group. Some of my greatest relationships now have been built with my friends from the other side of the aisle.

I think these small group efforts sometimes, if you exercise, you need to physically keep your body alive, you develop relationships exercising with friends from the other party. You mentioned the prayer breakfast. There are some retreats that are now planned in a bipartisan way so that people can build relationships because, once you build a relationship with somebody, you are not going to trash that person's ideas or ideology.

Mr. DICKEY. Let me ask you this. Do you not think that getting to know somebody away from here helps you with a perspective, too?

Mr. WAMP. Amen.

Mr. DICKEY. I mean, these trips are bad as we have seen the excesses, but

getting away and looking back together about what we are doing here helps in the relationships, and I think it will help the dialogs if we do more of it.

Mr. TAUZIN. If the gentleman would yield, I think he has touched on a good point. The point is that we have separated one another by party in this place. We are led by party leaders who serve a dual function.

□ 2115

One of their functions is to represent their party on this floor, and party positions. The other function is to be the leadership of the House. They are two different functions. I think sometimes that gets confused. As leaders of different parties, I think they probably would like to keep us separate in that role.

But there is a bigger role they play, the leadership of the House, and perhaps we could appeal to them every once in a while to literally look for ways that would bring us a little closer; maybe, as this report indicates, to hold summit conferences, where we could talk about this obligation to this House, to one another, and to the folks who elected us; where we could literally get to know one another a little better.

I am always amazed when we do have these kinds of meetings, whether it is a prayer breakfast or whether it is a joint meeting, a gathering, a coalition of mainstream Republican members, how once we learned a little bit more about one another, not only does our respect deepen, because everybody comes over here with so much experience and talent, and when you learn about it, you say, "Wow, I did not know that about you. I did not realize you had that much to offer." We are surprised sometimes about what quality people you find here. It does get harder then to debate with them and be ugly to them.

Mr. DICKEY. That is the excess. The excess of congeniality can be harmful, too. That is the balance.

Mr. BLUTE. If the gentleman will yield, many of the senior Members, reflecting back on their long careers here, mention that "In the old days we used to get along, we used to do other things, so that our wives knew each other, our husbands knew each other, our spouses." So yes, I think in recent years there has been a separation, as the gentleman from Tennessee, ZACK WAMP, said.

I remember when my freshman class in 1992 came, we did not get a chance to do anything together, either, between the freshman Democrat and Republican class. We called it separated at birth, that we were just kind of put in different camps, and it was months, really, before we ever got a chance to say, "Hey, you got elected this year, too. How did you get elected? What issues did you talk about?" Then you find out that many of them were the same issues, because we are reflecting, I think,

politically what the American people are thinking they want. They want change, they want reform, and they want reasonableness in our public policy and in our public debate.

Mr. DICKEY. Where are you all going with this?

Mr. TAUZIN. There is another thing we ought to mention before we conclude this special order tonight. That is that we all share some responsibility for the decline of civility in this place, for the decline of civility in politics in general.

A recent study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs, a non-partisan foundation group, did a study of the 1996 Presidential race coverage. They found that it was so negative. They found that it was highly negative coverage, heavy but misleading coverage of the horserace, and much less attention on the meat, the debate that was going on between the candidates.

We are in an election year right now. We see too much of that, I think, in the coverage of this Chamber. C-SPAN now brings this debate to so many people's homes, and I think when we look at television coverage of our campaigns and we see that negativism, we think maybe they ought to see it on C-SPAN, too, and we emulate it here.

I think all of that contributes generally to the decline of civility, not only in our politics, not only in this Chamber, but in the society at large. I think ZACH probably said it best: We should be a better example for America. If we expect our children and our citizens to lead a more civil life, to not run each other on the road, and to insult one another and eventually drive-by shoot one another, we ought to start by being a little more civil in this Chamber, where they watch us every day on C-SPAN.

Mr. DICKEY. Where are you going with this now?

Mr. BLUTE. We are closing out our special order now.

Mr. DICKEY. After this, what is the next thing?

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue this. We are going to continue to pursue signatories. We have 70 cosponsors. We think, as the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] said, every Member should sign it. It is basically fairly basic stuff most people, I think, can agree with. It takes, I think, a commitment to try, and all of us have to do it.

Sometimes we get angry, sometimes we get upset at mischaracterizations on the debate floor, but it means thinking about, you know, let us keep this in check. I think this special order is a step forward, but also the pledge. We are also trying to get more people, so if you could help us with that, that would be very, very helpful.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, there is nothing like peer pressure. If we all work to get each other to sign this pledge, and having signed it, to feel embarrassed when we violate it, we will have done one

major step towards restoring civility in this Chamber. That is our first goal.

Our second goal is to see some of these recommendations of CRS enacted: The leadership reforms, the role of the Chair in educating the Members, the role of Members to help one another stay within the lines of decorum and, eventually, maybe some of the ideas you expressed tonight; maybe getting us together in a bipartisan way once in a while, just to know one another a little better and to learn to respect each other a little more.

Mr. DICKEY. Thank you for including me.

Mr. BLUTE. We would like to thank all of the Members who came out tonight on both sides of the aisle to participate in this special order. We think it is an important issue, and we believe that the American people think it is an important issue. We are going to move forward on this.

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about civility and decorum in the House of Representatives tonight because I believe it is a very important subject. I want to thank my friends and colleagues, PETER BLUTE and PETE GEREN, for organizing this special order tonight.

The Blue Dogs were originally organized to reach across the aisle and find bipartisan, commonsense solutions to our problems. As a member of the blue dog organization, I am dedicated to seeking new ways of cooperation between members of both parties to develop a solution-oriented approach to Government. A very important part of seeking a new level of cooperation is to create a more civil and co-operative environment for the exchange of ideas.

Since the establishment of this great institution, it has been recognized that courtesy and decency among Members of Congress was necessary in order to enhance the ability of the membership to hear opposing views in the process of reaching a consensus. Further, without the presence of civility and mutual respect, the process of legislating becomes much more difficult. Hostility limits creative thinking and the sharing of views so important to good government.

But all of these logical and worthy reasons for improving decorum pale in comparison to the reasons I would like to touch on this evening. You see, when people talk about civility and decorum in Congress, we commonly hear about past confrontations involving canes, guns, and even duels. Fortunately today we don't face quite such drastic measures, but I would submit that the general lack of comity and decorum on this very floor has a wide reaching impact that I urge my colleagues to consider every time they speak on this floor.

The reason for this is television. Whenever a Member of this body stands in this well to speak, he or she is not speaking only to other Members of this body, but they are also speaking to thousands of Americans throughout our country. All of us were elected to represent the American people. We owe it to the people we represent to conduct ourselves in a respectful and proper manner. If you think about it, we are all ambassadors of our districts.

As public officials and leaders, I believe we have a responsibility to conduct ourselves in a

manner that is respectful to the American people. Every poll shows that the American people hold Congress in low regard. It is no wonder they hold us in such low regard when every time they turn on the television, they see an argument taking place.

Before running for Congress, I was a judge. I had a wonderful career in the law, where respect and dignity are highly valued. When I announced to my family that I was going to run for Congress, my mother was really shocked, and maybe a little disappointed. "Why do you want to go down there and join that sleazy institution?" she asked me. Well, I will tell you the same thing I told my mother. I came here to try and do everything I could to make Congress a place the American people can once again be proud of.

We teach our children to resolve their differences peacefully and civilly. We teach them to listen to others and to air their grievances in a positive, respectful manner. Many schools in our Nation today have conflict resolution programs that are aimed at teaching our children to resolve their differences through civil negotiation and compromise. It is time we start to practice what we preach. I passionately believe that one of the most important responsibilities bestowed upon every Member of Congress as a leader, is to set an example. We have set the wrong example for our children and for the American people. How can we expect our children to heed our appeals for respectful and compassionate conduct if we do not conduct ourselves in the same manner?

Many of the issues that we debate here on this floor have great national import. Members hold firm and passionate views about these issues. And they should. There is plenty of room for vigorous and energetic debate. And we should have that. But no matter how passionately one feels about a particular issue, it is no excuse for name calling or other uncivil conduct. I cannot emphasize enough my belief that we must—must set an example for the American people, especially for our children.

In closing, let me say that the issue of conduct on this floor goes beyond any single legislative fight. It even goes beyond the issues of decorum and comity in debate. This issue is about respect. Respect for ourselves and our views as well as respect for the views of those who may disagree with us. We owe it to ourselves to conduct business in a professional and courteous manner, but most importantly, we owe it to the American people.

So I would urge my colleagues to think, every time they step onto this floor to speak, to think about the example they want to set for the people of our country, especially the children.

A DEBATE ON INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MICA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. FIELDS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FIELDS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to also thank the gentleman to my right for their special order tonight, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank