

remarkable youngster from my district. His name is Christopher Deufel, and he is the first place winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Broadcast Script Writing Contest for the State of Minnesota. Christopher is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Deufel and is currently a senior at Austin Senior High School in Austin, MN.

His interests include reading, debate, and swimming. He is also president of both his high school student council and the National Honor Society. Christopher is planning to attend St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, where he intends to pursue a degree in either physics or economics.

His essay, entitled "Answering America's Call," was a genuinely patriotic piece of writing, and I am honored to share several passages for the House today.

We answer America's call by maintaining the ideals of democracy. Our Nation was founded on the ideals of compromise and equal opportunity. From Henry Clay to President Roosevelt, our leaders have sought solutions to our daily problems. These solutions do not come easily; they require foresight and effort, but there are solutions and it is our responsibility to answer this call. Often it seems that our society is out of focus. From big cities to rural towns, violence and poverty are issues we face daily. Too often we become immune to the problems affecting us. The desensitization of our culture is a growing problem. Acceptance of our current difficulties is acknowledgment that we have given up. Achieving social change can't be deduced to a simple formula, but two things will reverse some of the detriments we have created. Active participation and the willingness to cooperate can motivate even the most stubborn.

Another way we can answer America's call is yet the most obvious. The right to vote has empowered the people with a voice and mechanism for change. The influence we wield goes deep into the concept of the ballot box. The informed citizenry is one of the most potent forces in a government. We work together to bring our Nation into focus.

I see the world around me and witness both the good and the bad. I know I don't live in a perfect world, yet I will not complain about the changes that need to be made, but I will work to make those changes.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the balance of the text for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

Susan B. Anthony fought for the right to vote; Neil Armstrong took a walk on the moon; Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of the bus.

Through the framework of time Americans have risen to become the mechanisms for progress and change. There will come a time in our lives when we are called upon to protect and preserve the ideals of America.

By utilizing our rights, maintaining the ideals of Democracy, and exercising our influence, we answer America's call.

Patrick Henry professed that if a law is unjust we are compelled to violate this law. This was the premise that motivated the Son's of Liberty to begin the quest for freedom. We are endowed with certain rights that give us checks upon our government. Our constant questioning and evaluations of law have created a system of justice and dignity.

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As the time arises for each of us to make a difference, we will have the power and tools to bring a positive change. As magnanimous as a bid for the presidency, or as mundane as lending a helping hand, we all can make a difference.

When I was 5 years old my parents took me to visit the Vietnam Memorial. While I was still too young to fully understand, I was quite aware of the solemnity and power of that place. It represented thousands of Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice as they answered their call.

Ever since I can remember I've felt the urge to make a difference. Each day as I settle into my chair at school, I imagine where I will be years from now. Some days I'm a doctor, others I'm a journalist, and there are days when I'm even the President.

I see the world around me and witness both the good and the bad. I know I don't live in a perfect world, yet I will not complain about the changes that need to be made, but I will work to make those changes.

As I continue onward, I carry hopes and dreams with me. Like others before me I will try to preserve justice in our Nation. And each day as I strive to realize this vision, I answer America's call.

COLA EQUITY FOR FEDERAL RETIREES

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

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about one of the budget procedures attached in both the President's budget and now under consideration by the House Committee on the Budget that continues a delay on the cost-of-living allowance for Federal workers of 3 months.

As you know, in this last Congress a terrible mistake was made when Federal employees were singled out, not Social Security recipients, Federal employees were singled out for delays in the cost-of-living allowance to Federal retirees for 3 months. Military retirees were treated to a 6-month delay. It was a terrible mistake. There was no COLA

equity, and I think Members on both sides of the aisle recognize this is not the way we want to do business.

Then comes the administration budget for this year that continues a deferral for Federal retirees, and at this point, as I understand, under the Committee on the Budget's recommendations, the military retirees will receive no COLA delay, Social Security will receive no COLA delay, but Federal retirees once again are singled out for a delay in the cost-of-living allowance, and that will be continued. A terrible mistake has been made once and they want to continue this, or at least some Members at this point are looking at this as a way to try to bring down the deficit.

The difficulty with this of course is that Federal employees and retirees have already given over \$150 billion toward the deficit in terms of benefits since 1980. They continue to be willing to give on a fair and reasonable basis. But this last year has seen an assault on Federal employees and retirees as we have never seen before.

Of course, they are undergoing the downsizing that every other organization and State and local governments are going through across this country. But at the same time, they have been threatened with the loss of benefits. They were going to raise the retirement contribution, basically a 2.5-percent pay cut this body passed at one point, but fortunately was killed over in the other body. There was an effort to take their retirement and figure it on the high 5 years instead of the high 3 years. There were going to be caps on the health benefit plan. There were going to be caps on making them pay for parking that civilian employees get for free. But we defeated most of that at this point. Then, of course, we had the terrible furloughs in November and December.

In every other organization throughout this country people are recognizing your employees are the essential component of being able to deliver the service to your customer. But here at the Federal level, we do not understand that. We end up treating our own employees and retirees as if somehow this is just another pocket to be picked, instead of one of the strongest assets this Government has.

I hope as we entertain the budget deliberations this year, that we will not look to the Federal retirees to give unfairly and single them out for COLA adjustments. Many Federal retirees do not get Social Security. If they are under the Civil Service Retirement System, they do not get Social Security. They worked for the Federal Government and as a result of that gave up their rights to Social Security. Why should their cost-of-living allowance be attacked, and other retirees who by reason of the fact they did not work for the Government would continue?

COLA equity is the byword. Everybody is willing to pay on a fair, level playing field. But this Congress owes it

to our Federal retirees and employees for fair treatment. We have not been fair in this last year. We can begin anew. I hope the Committee on the Budget in their final deliberations will look for COLA equity across the board.

STALEMATE WITH FREEMEN SHOULD END

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

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I have watched and deliberated and thought about what is happening in Montana with the Freeman, and more and more it is bothering me. It bothers me, because all of us have to live under the laws of the land. A lot of the laws, we do not like; a lot of the rules and regulations, we want to change; but there is a way to go about it.

The New York Times reported that the leader of the Freeman has collected over \$676,000 in Federal farm supports over the past 10 years. It is all right for him to denounce the Federal Government, but the fact is, he is living off the Federal Government.

These Freeman that occupy this property in Montana, they do not own that property. Somebody else owns that property. And what about the people that own that property? They are about to lose that property because they have a big mortgage to pay. They need to plant a crop. They need to cultivate the land. They need to do something with that land. And yet they cannot even get on that land because we keep continuing to delay.

Now, I realize our reluctance. I realize maybe some mistakes were made in Waco, maybe some mistakes were made at Ruby Ridge. But the Federal Government, the Government, finally has to act or react. They cannot keep postponing and delaying, knowing that by doing nothing we are not complying with the laws and we are infringing on the majority's rights.

Sure, we want to protect the minority's rights, and, my goodness, I have supported much legislation to protect the minority's rights. I realize a lot of people in the West feel very strongly when it comes to individual rights and property rights, and much of the land in the West is owned by the Federal Government; it is not owned by the individuals. But the fact is, fair is fair, and I think a lot of people in the West would also say that this has gone on long enough, that we need closure, and we need it now.

Talks have broken down again. Just yesterday we thought we were going to have some type of conclusion to these talks, but that is not true at all. The fact is, a lot of these people have broken the law that live on this property in Montana.

Let us give this ultimatum that these people need, to get off this property and need to get off it now, and give that property back to the home-

owners, to the people that own that property, to let them pursue their goals and objectives. That is the American way, and that is what we ought to do as Americans. By doing that, we will be doing something for our country and for individual rights.

THE MINIMUM WAGE AND MEANINGFUL REFORM OF WELFARE

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

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address my colleagues and to focus a little bit on the subject of the minimum wage, because I would like my colleagues to know that in the 1994 campaign I promised to support a modest increase in the minimum wage, provided that that increase in the minimum wage was coupled with meaningful reform of the welfare system.

It seems to me we ought to increase the minimum wage so that the minimum wage can keep pace with inflation, so that we can restore some of the purchasing power to the minimum wage, and so that, most importantly, we can make work more attractive than welfare.

I would like to quote for you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, the distinguished minority leader of the House of Representatives, the Congressman from Michigan, Mr. BONIOR, who said last night on the Ted Koppel ABC Nightline Show, "If you are going to move people off of welfare, you have to make work pay."

I agree with that premise. The real problem I have though is that we need to again combine a minimum wage increase with real reform of the welfare system, and many of our Democratic colleagues, who are led by Mr. BONIOR, while supporting a minimum wage increase on the one hand, adamantly oppose reforming welfare on the other.

So I want to take this opportunity to remind our colleagues that there is a definite linkage, it is sort of a natural linkage, between increasing the minimum wage and reforming welfare. It is something I think that this Congress, the 104th Congress in our country's history, has the opportunity to do, if only we can put partisan politics aside.

I also want to remind my colleagues, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, that President Clinton, who in 1992 as candidate Clinton promised to end welfare as we know it, has already vetoed two welfare reform proposals sent to him by this Congress, that is to say, two welfare reform proposals that passed the House, passed the Senate, but which he vetoed.

These were commonsense welfare reforms that put a time limit on receiving welfare benefits, that end welfare as an entitlement, that require able-bodied welfare recipients to work, at least part-time, or enter a job training program in exchange for their welfare benefits, which creates subsidized jobs

for those welfare recipients who cannot find work in the private sector, and which increases child care and transportation assistance for welfare recipients so that they can make that difficult transition from welfare to work, especially single mothers, who many times struggle against heroic odds.

So I hope we can put the partisan politics aside. I hope we can get our congressional Democratic colleagues to acknowledge the premise that the minority leader was saying last night, "If you are going to move people off of welfare, you have to make work pay."

It is my belief we ought to increase the minimum wage so that the minimum wage, that is to say, an entry level job which pays a minimum wage, pays more than welfare benefits in the aggregate. That is the only way we are going to be able to reform welfare. It is a natural linkage.

So, again I say to my Democratic colleagues, when you stand up and thunder on the House floor about your desire to see the minimum wage increase, which, by the way, is something that congressional Democrats did not do during the 2 years that they controlled this whole town, when they controlled both the Congress and, of course, the Presidency, but if you are going to talk about a minimum wage increase, let us at least do it in the context of reforming the welfare system, so that, as the minority leader said last night on "Nightline," we can in fact make work pay more than welfare.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me acknowledge the National Day of Prayer and to appreciate the words of our guest chaplain and to acknowledge that this is a country that allows all of us to be able to pray in peace and in freedom. I would encourage all those who utilize that tool as their spiritual connection to applaud and appreciate this particular day.

□ 1030

I could not help but also, just as an aside from my remarks, listen to the gentleman from Tennessee and his carefully prepared comments about the standoff in Montana, and I would only echo his very eloquent statement that freedom in America is paid at a price, and that price is the obedience to the laws of the land in a nonviolent manner.

We recognize and respect protest. It has been a part of this Nation from its earliest history, recounting the throwing of the tea into the Boston Harbor and on down into the abolition movement, the women's movement of the