

There are no easy answers. No silver bullets. Just steps on a journey which we should take together because we all have a vital interest in finding the answers.

The cultures of politics . . . and of science . . . and of enterprise, must work together if we are to match and master the challenges we all face.

I started by talking about the end of history. Of course it hasn't ended. It's moved on.

Francis Fukuyama who coined that phrase describes the future in terms of the need for a social order—a network of interdependence which goes beyond the contractual. An order driven by the sense of common human interest. Where that exists, societies thrive.

Nowhere is the need for that sort of social order—at the global level—more important than in this area.

The achievement of that has to be our common goal.

Thank you very much.

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT RENEWAL AND MODIFICATION

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 1997

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by my colleague, Mr. RANGEL, in introducing legislation to renew the Work Opportunity Tax Credit [WOTC]. This program was first enacted last year after extensive consultations between the Congress and administration. It replaces the old targeted jobs tax credit and is designed to address the major criticism raised against that program by requiring employers to prescreen for eligibility based predominantly upon participation in means tested public assistance programs. The WOTC helps provide transitional assistance for those going from welfare to work by giving businesses incentives to offset the added costs of hiring them.

Unfortunately, the participation and outreach by employers has not reached the level we anticipated, and falls far short of what is needed if we are to achieve the goal of moving millions of Americans from welfare dependency to self-sufficiency. Many companies are fast concluding that the hiring and training costs are too high, and the risks of working with those on public assistance too great, to justify their participation in WOTC.

After nearly 6 months the business community has told us that there is good news and bad news. The good news is that under WOTC nearly two-thirds of those hired come from welfare—under TJTC nearly 60 percent were youth and only 20 percent were from the welfare rolls. The bad news is that the new rules we adopted last year are too restrictive and need to be modified if WOTC is to be effective in achieving the goals of welfare to work. The legislation we are introducing today addresses these concerns.

Many people want to know why we need to pay companies to do their part for welfare reform. To answer that question, we have only to look at the challenges faced by employers who hire public assistance recipients. These individuals often lack a work ethic and basic job skills; they cost more to train; and, because of low self-esteem, they see failure in the work place as a viable and even likely op-

tion. Additionally, businesses that hire public assistance recipients have to assume indirect costs such as accommodation of complex work schedules, child care, transportation needs, and contact with multiple social service agencies. Any business, especially one that is willing to assume the additional costs of hiring and training welfare recipients, must remain profitable if they are to play a role in welfare reform.

To respond to the real world concerns expressed to us, Mr. RANGEL and I propose the following modifications to WOTC which will improve its effectiveness and viability.

First, our bill would modify the minimum number of hours of work required for WOTC eligibility. Currently, those eligible for WOTC must complete 400 hours of work in order for the employer to receive any tax credit. However, since many entry level workers tend to switch jobs voluntarily as they seek their place in the work force, they do not meet the 400-hour requirement. In those cases, employers never see a tax credit to offset the costs that they incurred in hiring and training these workers. A more equitable sharing of the costs must be developed, or the pool of employers willing to take this risk will continue to decline.

The current tax credit provided to employers for hiring those eligible is 35 percent of the first \$6,000 in wages, but only when the employee completes 400 hours of work. Those who qualify include persons on AFDC for 9 consecutive months out of the previous 18 months; 18- to 24-year-olds who live in empowerment zones [EZ] or enterprise community [EC]; 18- to 24-year-olds who are members of families on food stamps for the last 6 months; veterans on food stamps; vocational rehabilitation referrals; low-income felons; and 16- and 17-year-olds in EZ's and EC's are eligible for summer employment.

We propose to create a two-tiered credit: 25 percent of the wages earned from the date of hire for those who work between 120 hours and 399 hours, and 40 percent of wages earned from the date of hire for those who work at least 400 hours. This would result in a more equitable distribution of the risk due to the fact quite often entry level employees use the training and experience by their first employer to advance into jobs that are better paying, provide longer hours, or which are more conveniently located.

The second change to WOTC that this legislation provides would be to redefine the period during which a person must be receiving public assistance in order to qualify. The current interpretation requires an employee to have spent 9 consecutive months out of the last 18 months on welfare in order for a business to receive the hiring tax credit. We propose to change that requirement to any 9 of the previous 18 months. Such a change would allow for the short periods of time off welfare or food stamps which often results from a failure to comply with regulations such as filing updated paperwork or appearing for an interview. It makes no sense to deny employers willing to hire those on public assistance a tax incentive merely because the job applicant was off welfare for a short period of time.

The third and final change we propose is a 3-year extension of the WOTC Program. This will provide employers with the continuity they need to justify the investment of time and resources necessary to have a successful welfare to work WOTC Program.

These changes, taken together, should help to level the playing field which is currently so tilted against those on welfare that most employers are unwilling even to consider hiring them because of the extra costs and difficulties involved. Without a strong public-private partnership built on an improved WOTC Program, employers will be inclined to stand on the sidelines and leave the welfare to work challenge to others.

TRIBUTE TO SILVIO CONTE

HON. BOB LIVINGSTON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 1997

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of our former colleague, the late Representative Silvio Conte of Massachusetts, in the hope that his spirit of fellowship will serve as a lesson to us all. In that spirit I would like to submit this article, which appeared in the April 4, 1997, edition of Roll Call into the RECORD. In this day of partisan rancor and personality bashing, I suggest that we all could learn something about civility from the career of Sil Conte.

It is said that no Member of the House, perhaps in this century, brought as much enthusiasm and joy to this job than Sil Conte.

While Sil Conte was a fierce partisan on the floor, that's where it began and ended. Sil Conte did not look at his political opponents as enemies. He simply viewed them as people of good will with different ideas. And he viewed them as friends.

Sil Conte loved his job. He loved debating issues and ideas. He liked to joke and he took everything with a grain of salt. He had fun. Most of all, he loved the institution of Congress.

To quote the article:

Maybe the answer is for Members not to take themselves so seriously. Silvio Conte never did. And he actually liked his job. He didn't revile serving in Congress, and he certainly didn't detest members on the other side of the aisle because their party designation was different from his.

So, Mr. Speaker, I submit this article into the RECORD in the hopes that it will promote among the Members not just an air of civility, but that it will foster a love of this greatest of democratic institutions, this people's House, this Congress. Maybe then, we will feel Sil Conte's joy of politics.

[From the Roll Call, Apr. 14, 1997]
JOY IN MUDVILLE

In honor of the late, great Rep. Silvio Conte (R.-Mass), they call it the "joy of politics" award. Conte was a man who relished a good joke, who loved to win but never bashed his opponents in the face to do so, and who cherished the institution of Congress above all. And you can see from the photographs on page three of today's Roll Call that Members of Congress from both parties last week were having a blast at the fun—and eminently civil—event celebrating Conte's legacy. Civility doesn't mean boring, and it also doesn't mean an end to the partisan clashes that liven up the otherwise humdrum Congressional business of passing the nation's laws and overseeing their implementation.

But instead of joy, there is much rancor these days on the House floor—as a very unConte-like event last week demonstrated

yet again. The finger-pointing, epithet-throwing fracas between Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Texas) and Appropriations ranking member David Obey (D-Wis) demoralized Members just back from Easter recess, making the much-ballyhooed bipartisan retreat to Hershey, Pa., last month seem like just another empty feel-good session. These are senior Members of Congress, leaders in their respective parties. If they can't get along, who can?

The truth is: There's no joy in Mudville. Civility has struck out. Deadly serious disdain for the other party is the prevailing emotion, and total, no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners warfare is the mode of combat encouraged, at least tacitly, by leaders in both parties. The crusade of Democratic Whip David Bonior (Mich) against Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga), Gingrich's own history as a backbench guerrilla warrior, and the revolutionary fervor of the GOP class of 1994 all contribute to this toxic atmosphere. It's no wonder that the recommended reading in the House Republican Conference these days is the Army's field manual.

It's also no wonder, then, that DeLay and Obey won't even apologize to each other for the incident—the most they say is that they regret it occurred. More regretful than the combatants themselves are many other Members in both parties who have tried to launch a grassroots civility movement inside the House. The Hersheyites, led by Reps. Ray LaHood (R-Ill) and David Skaggs (D-Colo), are trying to put the contredemps behind them with a full schedule of meetings, briefings for other Members, and reform proposals in the works. To that end, Rep. David Dreier (R-Calif) will even host a hearing next week on whether changes in the House schedule—such as moving highly partisan one-minute speeches to the end of the day—can improve the 105th Congress's civility quotient.

But the civility hounds face daunting obstacles that we're not sure scheduling changes can fix. Members who so obviously detest each other will continue to do so—whether they spar on the House floor at 10 a.m. or 10 p.m. Hearings into Clinton White House fundraising this summer will raise the decibel level. Budget posturing will bring extremists from both parties into a pitch of rhetorical excess. And the list of challenges to civility goes on.

Maybe the answer is for Members not to take themselves so seriously. Silvio Conte never did. And he actually liked his job. He didn't revile serving in Congress, and he certainly didn't detest Members on the other side of the aisle because their party designation was different from his. Conte's secret was that he had fun on Capitol Hill. It's time to put the joy back into politics.

TRIBUTE TO THE RETIREMENT OF
JOHN T. WILLIAMS

HON. ED BRYANT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 1997

Mr. BRYANT. Mr. Speaker, according to Patricia Pair of The Shelby Sun Times, one of Germantown, Tennessee's newspapers, John T. Williams "has had a full, interesting life." Friends and colleagues call him John T., which is to say he's called nothing but John T.

John T. became a public figure when he served as mayor for the town of Trezevant, TN. There, he chartered the town's first Boy Scout Troop. After a few years, John T.

moved his family to Paris, TN, where he helped charter the community's first Chamber of Commerce. In fact, John T. served as the Paris Chamber of Commerce's first president, and is one of two living charter members of that organization.

In 1953, John T. sold his insurance business and moved his family to Jackson, TN. During that period, John T. was appointed by then President Dwight Eisenhower to serve as a U.S. marshal for the western district of Tennessee, serving from 1955 to 1960 with distinction and honor.

But serving as U.S. marshal was not to be John T.'s last task in government service. He ran for Congress, hiring as his campaign manager someone whom we all know as a U.S. Senator but in those days was still a little-known FRED THOMPSON. After his congressional bid and tutelage of young THOMPSON, John T. served on the civil service commission for the city of Memphis, and would go on to lend his vast skills and services to former Congressmen Robin Beard and Don Sundquist, as well as myself.

John T. has been an institution in numerous communities across west Tennessee. His record of public service stands as an impeccable example for all public servants. Along with those who have had the opportunity and pleasure of working and associating with John T., it has been an honor to have had him as one of my employees. John T., though we'll always have with us your many feats of volunteerism and helping hands, enjoy your retirement. You certainly have earned it.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON
THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 84) establishing the congressional budget for the U.S. Government for the fiscal year 1998 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I support the Balanced Budget Agreement of 1997. I want to commend the chairman of the Budget Committee, Mr. KASICH, and the ranking member, Mr. SPRATT, Members on both sides of the aisle for their hard work in putting together this bipartisan agreement, and especially my "Blue Dog" colleagues in the coalition. Most everyone around here knows that this legislation couldn't have been developed without the centrist foundation we provided in the Blue Dogs' commonsense balanced budget plan.

Mr. Chairman, the American people want this to get done, and I intend to lend my support to passing this resolution through the process. A balanced budget is long overdue. I'm not happy with all of the details, but the moment is at hand and we need to pass this now.

I would rather be supporting the Blue Dog budget, but nobody got everything they wanted in this process, and I understand that.

However, I am very disappointed by the Republican leadership's refusal to allow the coalition Democrats to offer the alternative resolution we wanted to offer, which was the Republican bill plus strong budget enforcement language. As it is, I am concerned that this resolution lacks the strong budget enforcement language necessary to ensure that the spending caps and deficit targets are met and that we do in fact reach balance by the year 2002. It's one thing to say you will balance the budget by 2002—it is clearly another thing to actually do it. A strong enforcement mechanism is necessary to require the Congress and the President to take action if this plan goes off course, and the budget fails to meet its targets for spending and revenues. We should have had the opportunity to strengthen the enforcement provisions of the resolution we are now supporting. I am sure a majority of Members would have voted for stronger enforcement if they had been given the chance. Hopefully, this shortcoming can be remedied by the conference committee.

Two years ago when the Blue Dogs first offered their own alternative budget, I told people it was the sensible, middle ground and the foundation for a bipartisan agreement. Two years later, after a lot of hard work by all the Blue Dogs, as well as other Members and the President, we have essentially arrived right where the Blue Dogs started—on the sensible, middle ground, where compromise and bipartisanship have finally delivered what the American people have wanted for a long time—a balanced Federal budget.

Again, I wish this Congress was going to get a chance to vote on the Blue Dog budget, but I recognize that democracy requires compromise, and that's what it will take from all of us to keep this process moving in the right direction.

This budget resolution is only a broad outline, and I know the Blue Dogs will continue working with Members on both sides of the aisle when the real work begins on a Medicare bill, a Medicaid bill, a tax bill, a possible budget reconciliation bill, and all of the 13 appropriations bills.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON
THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 84) establishing the congressional budget for the U.S. Government for the fiscal year 1998 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I have had the privilege of serving in this body since 1981, and one of the first bills that I supported 16 years ago was a balanced budget. This is a goal that I have worked for year after year—and it is a goal that has eluded us until now. So I am gratified that the Congress has taken a dramatic first step this week toward achieving that goal by passing the budget resolution.

It has taken us years to come this far—and it is a testament to the hard work and dedication of many current and former Members of