

us with the rare opportunity to strengthen our democracy. Broadcasters, who will receive free digital licenses from the Government, have a responsibility to fulfill their public interest standards by allowing reduced advertising television time for candidates who comply with the rules.

Mr. Speaker, we must seize this moment and forge a bipartisan consensus to heed the American people's call to reform our campaign system.

SALUTE TO RALPH LAIRD, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROGAN] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, there are occasions when the contribution of one of our citizens merits special note on the floor of the House of Representatives, and for 20 years I have had the privilege of knowing such an individual. His name is Ralph Laird from Pleasanton, CA. He hails from my home State.

Although I am a former resident of Pleasanton, I do not have the privilege of representing that community in this House. However, I am joined by my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. TAUSCHER], who does represent that particular district.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend and colleague to join me in this presentation and salute to Ralph Laird.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my Republican colleague from southern California for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as the Representative of the 10th Congressional District in California, it is one of my great pleasures and honors to be able to recognize and praise distinguished constituents from my area. I rise today to honor the accomplishments of a gentleman from my district who throughout his life has worked to improve the lives of others. Although I have never had the pleasure to meet this man in person, I was lucky enough to learn of his service to my community and the State of California through the kind words and praise of Congressman ROGAN and through the admiration of his colleagues in the education community.

I speak of Mr. Ralph Laird, Jr., a man who has served his country in numerous ways throughout his lifetime. Mr. Laird began serving his country during World War II, in which he fought as a soldier in the U.S. Army. After returning from the war, Mr. Laird made a fortunate decision to return to California, where he chose to dedicate his life to education.

Mr. Laird has been a teacher, a coach of a championship basketball team, a vice principal, a principal, a dean, and an assistant superintendent. In my district, among other things, he has served as the principal of Pleasanton's Amador High School for 8 years and later as assistant superintendent of the Amador School District. In his spare

time, Mr. Laird has served on the Pleasanton City Library Board, coached little league baseball, been an active member of the Pleasanton Rotary Club, and served as a camp director for the YMCA.

I believe that the people of the 10th Congressional District and the State of California have been enormously blessed to have someone like Mr. Laird working on their team. Again I would like to thank my colleague from southern California for bringing to my attention the accomplishments of this outstanding gentleman. Mr. Laird has done a great service to the people of my district and to California's children. Additionally, I would like Mr. Laird and his family to know that my prayers and the prayers of the people of the 10th Congressional District are with him during this very difficult time.

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very gracious and kind comments. One comment she made is particularly true—when she referred to Ralph Laird as a gentleman. That he is. When I recently saw a very popular movie entitled "Mr. Holland's Opus," immediately I thought of Ralph Laird. For those who have seen the movie, they will remember it as the story of somebody who gave their life to educating the children of a particular community and how, over the course of his professional career, the fruits of his efforts grew from one generation to the next. His legacy are the innumerable productive men and women who benefited from his counsel and example during his illustrious career.

That is Ralph Laird's legacy, not only to the people of Pleasanton, not only to the people of California, but truly to the people of this country. On behalf of the Congress of the United States, I thank him for his service to our country, and I salute him.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. TAUSCHER], for joining me in this presentation.

IN SUPPORT OF HERMAN FOR SECRETARY OF LABOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the nomination of Alexis Herman as the Secretary of Labor. Alexis Herman is facing considerable difficulties. They have slowed down the process of confirming her nomination. If you read the accounts in the press and the media, you will find they are rather bizarre.

Alexis Herman is criticized for being too effective. She is criticized for being a great communicator. She is criticized for knowing the ways through the political maze. All of these that are normally considered virtues, all these

characteristics that are normally considered virtues have suddenly become barriers to Alexis Herman being confirmed as the Secretary of Labor.

□ 1315

What is going on, Mr. Speaker? I fear that when you compare the difficulties faced by Alexis Herman on the one hand and her difficulties, leaving the Department of Labor without any leadership for all this time, when you compare those difficulties with what is being offered in this Congress by the Republican majority, you might make a logical case for conspiracy.

The Republican majority that is holding up the confirmation of Alexis Herman, leaving the Department of Labor without leadership, has aggressively taken the lead in terms of placing legislation on the agenda which will definitely hurt working people.

The agenda of the Department of Labor is definitely under consideration here. We are proposing and will have on the floor of this House this week a bill which will change the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Fair Labor Standards Act has been in effect since the New Deal, Roosevelt, when we had abuses of labor that were abominable. And part of the way we curbed those abuses of working people where they were forced to work around the clock, on the weekend, and given the same hourly wage, one way to curb that, one way to make the employers divide up the pot and employ more workers instead of working a few long hours with no wages was to implement a Fair Labor Standards Act which says, "You cannot work anybody more than 40 hours a week without paying them time and a half for their overtime pay. You work 40 hours a week, the wage rate must be raised to time and a half."

Now we have on the floor a bill which will take that away. The Republicans are coming for the overtime of Members. They take away the cash payment. They want to say that employers who are now under the Fair Labor Standards Act should be taken out from under the Fair Labor Standards Act and given the option of giving comp time, time off, to workers. Oh, they say, this is going to be a choice that the employees will make. If they do not want to take time off, they want cash, they will have it. But we have statistics and we have studies which show that employers, people who employ people, are already swindling workers out of vast amounts of overtime pay.

One employer study group has admitted that as much as \$19 billion was swindled away from workers in cash payments last year, so they do not really have a choice. Any employer will choose to want to invest his cash, he will hold onto the cash and give the employee time off.

This is going forward, it is on the floor, it will be on the floor this week.

Now in addition to that very anti-working person, anti-the-working-families out there legislation, we have a

TEAM Act passed in the Senate. The TEAM Act in essence says that employers may organize groups which run counter to the independent unions, actually undercut the activities of the independent unions or will guarantee that unions will never be organized; they are independent.

In addition to that, I just came from a hearing this morning where an attack was being made on organized labor's contributions to political campaigns. Organized labor is being singled out, and they are being pummeled by the Republican majority because they made contributions in large numbers to Democrats. The labor unions are being told you cannot do this. They want new regulations on labor unions.

Labor unions are already the most overregulated institutions in our society. The regulations on labor unions, as my colleagues know, do not compare with anything else. We do not regulate corporations as much as we regulate labor unions, but we are going to impose more regulations on them to keep them from making contributions to people they consider operating politically in their own interests.

I have a chart which shows that all of the sectors of the American economy are giving large amounts of money to political candidates. The chart is from the Center for Political Responsiveness which shows what the financial sector gave, the agricultural sector gave, the defense industry, the energy industry. All of these are greater than organized labor.

Alexis Herman should be put in place because we need that leadership in labor, and let us stop the attack on organized labor.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DELAY). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.)

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We are appreciative of those women and men who devote their abilities to government service and who see in their tasks the opportunity to serve You, oh God, by being of service to others.

We are indebted to those public servants whose names we know and who occupy positions of great trust. But we especially remember this day those people whose names are not well-

known, but whose commitment and enthusiasm to their tasks is acknowledged and valued.

Whatever our responsibility, let us go forward in unity and in trust to do the works of justice and mercy. This is our earnest prayer. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California [Mrs. TAUSCHER] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. TAUSCHER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CINCINNATI FLOOD YIELDS TWO YOUNG HEROES

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, whenever natural disaster strikes, America gets a few new heroes, selfless individuals who come to the aid of their neighbors in need.

Earlier this month Cincinnati, my community, was one of those river communities in the Midwest that felt the effects of the worst floods in the last 30 years. And true to form, Cincinnatians were at their best, from the city and county employees who worked day and night, to the charitable organizations, churches, schools and businesses, to neighborhood folks who lent a helping hand.

One of the most heartwarming stories I heard centers around two young ladies from Oakdale School in Bridge-town: Paige Craynon, who is 9 years old, and April Pitman, who is 10. On their own, Paige and April went door-

to-door collecting items to help suffering flood victims. Then their classmates at Oakdale School joined in and brought in supplies to help those in need.

That is what America is all about, Mr. Speaker. Let me join my colleagues and my fellow Cincinnatians in congratulating Paige and April and all their classmates at Oakdale School for a job well done.

A BALANCED BUDGET CANNOT WAIT

(Mrs. TAUSCHER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, last week more than 100 members of the Democratic Caucus signed the Tauscher-Stenholm-Minge letter that called on both the President and the Republican majority to present a CBO-scored balanced budget proposal. This letter was an attempt to move the stalled budget process forward in a bipartisan manner.

As a former investment banker who spent 14 years on Wall Street, I find it is inconceivable that we could go yet another year without coming to a resolution on a balanced budget.

Today, I am encouraged to hear Speaker GINGRICH has suggested delaying tax cuts until a balanced budget is reached.

If the Speaker or any of our colleagues would like a blueprint for balancing the budget without raising or cutting taxes, I ask them to take a close look at the Blue Dog Coalition budget. Our budget deals with tax cuts outside the scope of the balanced budget plan while keeping them consistent with a balanced budget.

The coalition budget is a plan that can help us move forward toward achieving a truly bipartisan balanced budget. I implore my colleagues to listen to the American people who sent us here. Let us go to work on balancing the budget. We cannot wait any longer.

H.R. 400, THE 21ST CENTURY PATENT SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT ACT

(Mr. COBLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, opponents of H.R. 400, the 21st Century Patent System Improvement Act, have embraced a "Chicken Little" strategy distinguished by two attributes: First they announce H.R. 400 sells out the country and, second, they repeat it again and again. This dumbing-down approach only produces heat, not light.

If these same opponents took time to read H.R. 400 they would understand why it helps our national economy. The 18-month publication requirement in the bill would allow an American inventor to review a given application and decide if he should continue to develop his own idea or to pursue other