

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

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

REFUSE TO SUPPORT LESS PAY FOR WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Ms. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1 is a disgrace to American workers. In the last several days workers from all over my district have come to Washington to ask me to vote against this bill. Those working constituents do not want their pay reduced by a Congress out of touch with the American work force.

Let me repeat that. Those working constituents do not want their pay reduced by a Congress out of touch with the American work force.

Mr. Speaker, a vote for this bill is a vote for a pay cut for the workers.

H.R. 1, the Working Family Flexibility Act of 1997, is also known as the pay reduction act. Today millions of workers depend on overtime pay just to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads. How cruel to consider this overtime pay as optional. Today too many people depend on overtime pay to survive. Their survival is not optional.

Mr. Speaker, it is employers, not employees, who get greater flexibility from this bill. This bill does not contain necessary safeguards to ensure that the employee decision to accept comptime is truly voluntary. The overtime provision in the Fair Labor Standards Act protects workers from excess demands, from overtime work, and by requiring a premium pay for overtime provides an incentive for businesses to create additional jobs.

There is no doubt that the American workers prefer pay for their overtime work instead of comptime. A recent poll by Peter Hart found that the American worker prefers pay for their overtime instead of comptime by a margin of 64 to 22 percent. Unfortunately too many workers do not get paid for overtime. The Employment Policy Foundation, a think tank supported by employers, estimates that workers lose \$19 billion a year in overtime pay due to violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Why should we give managers more control and give workers less money? A worker who was forced by management to take comptime instead of overtime pay is being required to take a voluntary pay cut.

Mr. Speaker, I refuse to support less pay for workers.

SUCCESS AT HERSHEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, before I talk I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS].

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I simply want to state that with regard to the recent retreat at Hershey, two things: First, while my colleagues were enjoying a retreat, I was on a work weekend. That was my district, and my schedule called for me to meet a group of tourists from Washington, DC, and so I did my duty. I wanted you to know that I worked hard that weekend making sure that you were hosted well.

But the second notation I want to make is that universally with every member of the Hershey staff, waitress, busboy, every single person who worked there and who dealt with the Members of Congress and their families, the mood and the comment was absolutely unanimous to the effect that they were met with courtesy on the part of the Members and their spouses and their children, that everybody was well behaved, that the requests were all met handily. In short, they were glad to have the Members of Congress and their families at the retreat at Hershey.

For me it was a good exercise in doing my job, but more than that, it was good to see all of the Members at the resort area in Hershey.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Pennsylvania did his job well, as did Governor Ridge. It was an honor and a pleasure to be with him. Thanks very much. Maybe New York will be the hospitable State the next time we have a meeting.

Mr. Speaker, my friends, I would like to talk just a second about the bipartisan retreat. It was a wonderful experience. I am not going to duplicate the comments that my bosses, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SKAGGS], the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LAHOOD] and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. SAWYER] have mentioned, but I would just like to add one or two comments to something which was really I think really a definitive moment in the history of this Congress.

Here we were, 220 of us, approximately 550 people up there, talking as we should talk, talking to citizens, talking as concerned citizens. Maybe one of the most impressive things as far as I am concerned was the inclusion of the spouses. You know, many times life, whether it is in politics or business, whatever it is, it is sort of a solo act; but here we were as families talking and expressing ourselves and sharing ideas. It was enormously healing.

You know bit by bit, whether it is again in a family or a business or something else, we sort of drift apart, and all of a sudden we realize that this thing has been apart and we are looking down into a chasm. We have got to pull it back together, and I think that is what happened: Very, very important.

I got a letter prior to going there from some people out in Washington

near Seattle, St. Stephen the Martyr Roman Catholic Church, and let me just read a little bit about it because this is sort of the genesis of what we were doing out there.

It said: "Dear Congressman, as the new term of office begins it is our desire that all of our elected leaders strive to work together."

Now, this was not prompted at all. "Regardless of political alliance, the potential for stalemate and impotence in leadership decisions exists due to separate party agendas. It is necessary in the best interests of your country, of my country, that there be teamwork and compromise and strength of purpose. You are paid by us. We expect you to behave with dignity and integrity."

Now, I am not going to read the rest of this letter, but you get the gist of it. I mean, these people are involved right here with us every day. They see us, they send us here, they expect us to deal in the same manner that they would deal with their parishioners, or with their family or with their fellow citizens, and that is why this thing was so special.

Let me just say one other thing. I had a wonderful opportunity this morning to go down to the Mall and see the opening of the World War II memorial. Bob Dole was there, the first public appearance I think he has made since the election. He gave an enormously effective and emotional speech, and I hope that other people will be able to read it or listen to it. One of the things he said is that "you know we here represent young people who died for a future they will never realize."

You know, I just thought of that because of the responsibility it puts on all of us. Here were those young people in with World War II, as there have been in other wars, who risked their lives, lost their lives for a future they would never be able to experience themselves.

It gives us a tremendous sense of obligation to do what is right here, and so I was proud to be a part of this experience. I hope it is not a flash in the pan. I hope it will continue. I hope the whole spirit of Hershey will be a spirit that we can look back on and say it was well worth our while.

COMPTIME/CHUMPTIME BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Ms. MCKINNEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come to the floor this evening because I wanted to talk about the bill that we just passed here, H.R. 1, the comptime bill, flexibility time bill, what the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] called the chumptime bill.

I would first like to commend CBS Evening News for their March 18 Eye on America story reported by Sandra

Hughes. I called CBS and requested a transcript because I want to read that transcript now.

The opening shot, for those who did not see it, was a door opening and a woman by the name of Etta and her family walking out, and a narrator says: "Just after dawn, just east of Charleston, the daily struggle begins for Etta Williams." And Etta sees her kids off to school, and a narrator says: "Even though she was working up to 60 hours a week as a cook at the local Pizza Hut, Etta says she had to go on food stamps to feed her family because her manager was not paying her for all the hours she worked."

Etta says: "They go in, they take your hours, they delete it from your pay."

The narrator says: "This minimum wage mom has joined a dozen other employees suing Pizza Hut saying the company deleted countless hours from their weekly paychecks."

Etta Williams continues: "It is stealing from the poor, stealing, and they are getting rich off of it."

The narrator says that we tried to talk to her manager at Mount Pleasant, SC, Pizza Hut, and the employees called the police.

Then there is a segue to Gregg Dedrick who is a senior vice president eloquently situated in a nice plush office, and he says: "I would say it is unfortunate she feels that way. I think we are a fair employer, we want to pay people a fair day's pay for the work they do, and we have processes in place to resolve those discrepancies."

The narrator then says: "But a former manager at a Pizza Hut in Walterboro, SC, told us a far different story. 'Pam Chapman is that former manager who says: I have to live with this. The thought of going and taking hours actually stealing from the employees.'"

Pam Chapman admitted that every week she entered the computer and deleted hours from workers' payroll. Pam Chapman says: "I have been through 3 previous managers and every last one of them did the same thing."

Then CBS concludes the story by saying all of this comes on the heels of a CBS news investigation into similar allegations at Albertson's grocery stores. In that report which was played as a recent Senate hearing on overtime workers in four States who are suing the grocery store chain claimed they were cheated out of millions of dollars in back pay.

□ 1815

Jenni Perry was a bookkeeper. Jenni says, "I was told by my store director to change, falsify, whatever you want to call it, time cards."

Then CBS goes on to say, "We wondered just how common these kinds of wage complaints are, so we asked the United States Department of Labor. They sent us this, and it was a great big, huge book, a printout, really, about this thick. Last year alone, more

than 12,000 companies were fined a total of \$100 million for not paying employees for all the hours they worked."

Etta Williams ends by saying, "It is not only stealing from me, they are taking away from my children too," which is why Etta Williams decided, in order to protect her family, she was going to have to stand up for herself.

Now, the bill that we passed today has very real implications for the millions of Etta Williamses that are out there across this country, and for the benefit of my constituents, I want to make it clear to them what this is about.

This bill is not family legislation and it needs to be vetoed by the President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Missouri [Mrs. EMERSON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. EMERSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

BIPARTISAN RETREAT IN HERSHEY A SUCCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am one of the fortunate Members of the House of Representatives who got the unique opportunity of attending the bipartisan retreat. I must admit, Mr. Speaker, when I was initially invited, I felt, well, this will be just another feel-good session, or it will just be another one of these innocent, well-designed things that would lead to failure.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it was not. It was tremendously successful. I am an experienced educator and an experienced civic-minded person. I have been on many retreats. In my opinion, this was one of the better ones that I have been fortunate enough to attend.

First of all, I think that it is time the House of Representatives realized that it does take getting away from the 435 seats that we sit on the floor of this House, many times. It takes that because the institution itself has divided us geographically from the way we sit on this floor. This retreat did a lot.

I want to commend my colleagues, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SKAGGS], the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LAHOOD], the gentleman from New York [Mr. HOUGHTON], the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH], the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. SAWYER]. Because of the efforts they put forth in planning this and making it happen, we owe them a debt of gratitude.

I welcomed the opportunity to meet outside of work with many of my col-

leagues, many of whom I had never met before, even though I had seen them passing in the hall. The event was well planned and well organized. Discussion group leaders were extremely helpful, and the sessions were productive. It was wonderful to see so many of my colleagues together with their families.

The presentation by Dr. McCullough, a great scholar, a great writer, was extremely revealing and very provocative, because I have been here 4 years and that was the first time I heard a scholarly approach to the historical perspective of this House.

He gave us a reason to feel that we should be proud of all of the merits that perhaps the American public does not realize as to what this House has done. He did it in such a way, he did not pander to us, he dealt with facts and said we should be very proud. I think that prouddness, Mr. Speaker, coming from each one of us, would certainly inhibit some of the incivility we have seen on the floor.

Will it increase civility on the floor? I think it will. I think it improved the respect that we have for each other. I think it gave us a strong perspective of why the House is so important and why our decisions that we make here every day are very important and how they benefit the people of this country.

The design of the workshop was superlative. It was not thrown together. It had goals, it had objectives, it had ways to reach the goals that we sought so well. It had an evaluation so that we could say to the committee, that is what we saw this year; when you have this again, maybe these are some improvements that we would like to see.

I think it was a very, very good use of the money of the people who sponsored it. It was a team-building kind of device. Industry and business, they know how to do these kinds of things, that is, to take you away from the workplace and have you face your colleagues, to have you dialog and to have you meet each other's families. I think this Congress as an institution could take a lesson from business and industry, and this retreat did that. It created that kind of team-building.

There were many good readings which I liked very much. They sent each one of us some pre-readings, and if we read it, it set the tone of what we were there for, and they had research studies that showed. So it was not just a fun thing, even though we did have fun, but it was based on very sound research, and we had very good scholars and good speakers behind it.

It was issue-oriented, family-friendly. It just did me proud as a grandmother to see the families there with their children and the children enjoyed it so much. Was the retreat good? Yes. Was the retreat successful? Yes. The retreat gave us an objective or an outcome that it would take us years to reach if we had not moved out of these 435 seats.

So I want to say to the people who sponsored it, we want it repeated again next year. It was the best.