

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, last year, what did 8 out of 10 taxpayers hear when they called the IRS heartline seeking help to tax questions? Nothing, zip, nada. That is right, 8 out of 10 taxpayers could not even get a hello.

What could possibly explain this pathetic bureaucratic malaise? Is the IRS understaffed? No, one hundred and six thousand employees should be adequate, even if all they did was just pick up the phone and say hello.

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Is the problem underfunding? No; \$7.3 billion in an annual budget; clearly, that is not the problem. The problem lies with the IRS's lack of accountability.

For years the IRS has bullied, harassed, terrorized the citizens of this country while answering to no one, not even answering the phone. Now, with allegations of taxpayer abuse coming to light, layer of Washington bureaucrats after layer shifted the blame for the sorry state of affairs at the IRS until the President has finally been forced to address the issue. How did he respond? He said, quote: "I believe the IRS is functioning better today than it was 5 years ago."

Come on, Mr. Speaker. It is time for the President to get real, get serious, and join the Republican Congress and fix the IRS.

CFC-CONTAINING INHALERS SHOULD NOT BE BANNED

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I call again the Members' attention to a concern I have that the EPA and FDA will ban measured-dose inhalers containing CFC that are vitally needed by asthmatics to treat them when they are suffering from a lack of air to their lungs.

The EPA and FDA clearly are on the wrong side of this issue. There are over 70 types of inhalers today used by asthmatics at a time of critical need. We commend the EPA for attempting to ban CFC in all of our products as they have in hair spray, underarm deodorant, car refrigeration, air conditioning systems, and other things. But the amount of CFC sent into the air by inhalers used by asthmatics is minimal and marginal.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. C. Everett Koop joins us in an attempt to block the EPA and FDA from embarking on this rule that will have devastating consequences to those who suffer from asthma. Thirty million Americans suffer from asthma. Thirty million Americans need this vital medication. Thirty million Americans asked the EPA and FDA to relax this idea and not institute a ban and allow medical science to prove that when we do have adequate medication available, we will then take those products containing CFC off the market.

NAFTA DOES NOT KEEP ITS PROMISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THUNE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, they are your typical working family, husband, wife, two kids. Both parents work in an auto plant, but they are still having trouble making ends meet.

They dream of moving into a little nicer home and providing an education for their children, but it is hard to get ahead when they only make \$40 a week apiece, barely enough to put food on the table and keep their kids in clothes.

Rafael and Felicia Espinoza work for a large multinational corporation in a maquiladora plant in Reynosa, Mexico, across the border from McAllen, Texas. They make 90 cents an hour. For them, as for thousands of American workers with whom they compete for jobs, NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, is a series of broken promises.

I sat with Rafael and Felicia last Thursday afternoon in their ramshackle home in one of the hundreds of colonias that have sprung up around Reynosa in Mexico. They have no electricity, no running water. They have a propane tank to fuel their cooking stove, and they have hooked up a cheap little television to a car battery.

They told me their roof leaked. They said they suffer in the winter because the house is poorly constructed. As we talked, their children, happy as most children are when they have loving parents, ran barefoot on the dirt floor. Rafael is a proud man, but he worries about the future because a kilogram of chicken costs up to 30 pesos, about 10 percent of his weekly wage.

NAFTA has failed Rafael and Felicia in part because the Mexican Government refuses to enforce its labor laws. Companies under Mexican law are required to distribute 10 percent of their profits to their workers. Needless to say the Espinosas and their coworkers have yet to see a peso of these profits. The American company claims that it has no profits from its Mexican operations, which they say operates as a cost center, not a profit center.

The NAFTA side agreement on labor has been no help to the Espinoza family. Indeed, they have seen other workers lose their jobs by trying to form an independent union to replace the company controlled syndicate, leaders of which have been known to inform on the reformers.

They are undaunted. "I am going to continue going forward," Rafael said in Spanish, all the while looking straight at me. "There is no law that says it is a crime to have a real union. Even if they fire us, we will continue fighting until we have a union that will wake up and defend our rights under the law."

"The company says it is losing money, but we know it is not. We need the maquiladoras because of our ter-

rible necessity to be working, but they are taking advantage of us for their own interests. We know the company does not want bad publicity, so why is there such injustice? I am not afraid," he continued, "on going forward for myself and my family for my children. We will not quit."

A neighbor, Rita Gonzalez, earns about a dollar an hour. Out of her \$40 weekly paycheck, her employer deducts \$9 for a very small stove which she proudly showed off in her tiny home, one-quarter of her paycheck for the next 52 weeks for an appliance that would not cost \$200 in the United States.

While the Gonzalez family was lucky enough to have electricity, they have no running water and no indoor plumbing. Her brother-in-law, who is 25, suffered nerve damage to his face. They think it is because he worked around massive doses of lead at this American company doing business in Mexico, this American company, of course, which does not use lead in its operations in the United States.

The NAFTA agreement has failed utterly to keep its promises to Rafael and Felicia and Rita and thousands of Mexican workers. They have no effective representation in their workplace. NAFTA has failed to keep its promises to thousands of working American families. They cannot be expected to compete for a dollar an hour. And it has failed to keep its promise of a cleaner environment. The border is a disaster area of polluted water and chemical poisons.

A trip to the border exposes almost immediately NAFTA's broken promises. And those promises should be kept before we rush headlong into another trade agreement that punishes workers on both sides of the border.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain further 1 minutes at this point.

PAYCHECK PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, yesterday 158 colleagues joined me in a bill that I introduced called the Paycheck Protection Act. This legislation was introduced to address a problem that occurs throughout the country and is a shame when we begin to think about it. It is a problem that not many people know about, except those individuals who are hard-working wage earners throughout the country who happen to belong to labor unions.

Mr. Speaker, what labor unions are able to do in America today is skim off a portion of workers' union dues and put that cash toward political purposes to support candidates which the wage earner may, in fact, not support, and they do this without securing the consent of the worker who earns the cash in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, that is what the Paycheck Protection Act is all about and designed to help, those hard workers throughout the country who are union members who believe they ought to have some say in where their political cash goes, which kind of candidates they might decide to support, and which kinds of political causes they identify with.

Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting battle that is about to begin here in Congress over the Paycheck Protection Act. This is an issue that divides the labor bosses from the rank-and-file union members. The Republican party stands firmly behind rank-and-file union workers, and we hope to get this legislation passed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

MERGERS AND LOGJAMS ON THE RAILROADS

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

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Railroads, I want to talk a little about the problems that I believe many Members, particularly western Members, are going to be hearing about, if they have not already, and those are the increasing tie-ups in the Union Pacific lines dealing from the recent merger of Union Pacific and Southern Pacific.

In some ways it is estimated, if continued under the present direction, this could end up causing as many problems to our economy as the UPS strike. There are many reasons for this. The purpose of my talk is not to point fingers but mainly to look at what are the causes and, more importantly, what can be done about them.

Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons, but basically it stems from the takeover of Southern Pacific by Union Pacific, two large railroads now having to merge their operations, and the logistics have proved to be overwhelming in some cases.

The Wall Street Journal yesterday estimated that there are 10,000 railroad cars a day stuck in limbo; 300,000 cars normally operating under UP and SP have now grown to 340,000, further increasing the congestion.

What has compounded the problems, the slowdowns in deliveries, in some

cases the nondeliveries for many days, if not weeks, what has compounded the problem has been the oncoming Christmas season as many manufacturers try to get their products to market.

Also, the predicted good harvests in the Midwest, the fact that the chemical industry has had a good year, particularly along the Gulf Coast, as well as the plastics industry, all of this has overloaded a system that was going through significant transition.

Union Pacific reports some good news, that on September 1, where there were 145 trains a day caught on sidings, that number has been reduced to over 90. However, the speed at which trains have been able to move now has been significantly reduced. That, in turn, means they have to use more locomotives, more crews, to get trains to where they are supposed to go. All of this has resulted in significant economic hardship and could result in more.

Mr. Speaker, the Surface Transportation Board will hold oversight hearings. This has implications for my State of West Virginia because, of course, while we are not a Union Pacific service area, we do have a merger under consideration, an acquisition, as Norfolk Southern and CSX have applied to the STB to take over Conrail.

There are obviously significant differences. Here we are not having one system completely take over another, but at the same time this should be a warning to the Surface Transportation Board and to those who will be involved in that process, the shippers, the consumer groups, and others, to look carefully at this.

Members should be aware that there are significant issues at stake here. What is it exactly that the Federal Government could be doing today, if anything, to improve the situation? How do we deal with this logistical snafu? Also, the adequacy of the Surface Transportation Board.

This body will be renewing and reauthorizing the Surface Transportation Board next year. Is the staffing adequate to do a number of different functions, to review a merger that is presently before the board such as the Conrail-Norfolk Southern-CSX acquisition or merger, and also to review past mergers such as the Union Pacific-Southern Pacific merger in which there is a 5-year ongoing review period? Is there adequate staffing and resources to review pricing issues and also abandonment issues?

This Congress is going to get firsthand a laboratory experiment that it can view in terms of how UP, SP, and the Surface Transportation Board all work their way through this.

As I say, it becomes important because now the Surface Transportation Board has in front of it another significant merger, this one in the East, unlike the one in the West with Norfolk Southern, Conrail, and CSX. There are some similarities, and yet there are also some great differences.

I do urge all shippers and consumer groups and others who might be involved to look closely, since it is presently in the public comment period, about what role they want to play, because what we are learning today is that once this merger is done, we cannot put the genie back in the bottle and we cannot undo it.

It is important that all parties in this situation of Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Burlington Northern, Kansas City, and the others, be involved in helping resolve the short-term economic problem that is being caused, logistical problems that are being caused, and then look to see how they can be avoided in the future.

It is very likely that when the Congress comes back in another week, Mr. Speaker, there are going to be significant rail issues before it. Amtrak reauthorization will be one, perhaps the Amtrak PEB, but certainly we need to be paying attention to this as well.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THUNE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS R. BROWN

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Thomas R. Brown, Chief of Recreation Therapy Service at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in San Antonio and national advisor to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, for receiving the 17th annual Olin E. Teague Award for outstanding work with disabled veterans. The Teague Award, named for the late Texas Congressman Olin E. "Tiger" Teague, is given once a year to the VA employee or group of employees whose work benefits veterans with service-connected problems.

Mr. Brown has been involved with recreational therapy at the VA since 1976. A world-class athlete in his own right, he served from 1986-89 as Chairman of the VA's National Sports and Recreation Committee, which oversees the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Golden Age Games, and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Each year, these events inspire thousands of veterans to get out of the hospital and be active and competitive in the community. Mr. Brown continues to serve as national advisor of the Wheelchair Games, which he helped found in 1980.

Mr. Brown's work in the daily therapy of veterans at the VA Medical Center and his leadership in organizing events for disabled veterans at the national level serve as an inspiration, not only to disabled veterans, but to all of our citizens. In dealing with those who have