

the only time that I know that Members from both sides of the aisle and their families have had a chance to take a 2-day period to understand how we could better work together to solve the problems that we are all sworn to try to solve for the American people.

I think it succeeded, if for no other reason that human relationships were established that had not been established before. There has been tremendous turnover in the House. We have many, many new Members who do not know one another, and certainly older Members who do not know younger Members who have come in the last few years. I think those relationships were begun.

David McCullough, the noted historian, gave a speech on the first afternoon that we arrived in Hershey that I will never forget, and I urge all Members to get a copy of the speech and read it. He reminded us of how difficult it was in the early history of the Congress to work together, how many times altercations broke out between Members, how difficult it was to find consensus, and how negative people were about the future of the Congress and the country.

We have come a long way; we have a long way to go. Hershey is a beginning. From the Democratic side, I pledge our best efforts to carry the spirit of that meeting forward with tangible results in trying to work together better in a variety of ways. I thank all the Members who came, and I urge the House to entertain the idea of having a succeeding event for Members who could not come so that everyone can begin to show progress in this very important regard.

I think the Speaker for allowing me to speak, and I look forward to being able to work on the projects that were begun in Hershey.

THE MID-EAST SITUATION

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

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor this morning with a heavy heart over reports that violence has again claimed innocent lives in Israel. In the shadow of this tragedy, it concerns me deeply that President Clinton has reportedly agreed to United States participation in Yasser Arafat's meeting in Gaza this weekend.

Although Israeli representatives will be excluded from this meeting, Chairman Arafat has invited other diplomats worldwide to criticize recent developments in Israeli-Palestinian relations. This meeting will obviously provide a platform for one-sided presentation of very complicated issues that are the subject of ongoing negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Rather than encouraging counter-productive rhetoric, Mr. President, you should be protecting the traditional

United States role of Mideast peace broker. The United States participation in the Gaza meeting will jeopardize that role.

Mr. President, now is the time to stand firm on principle. I urge you not to send a United States representative to the Gaza meeting this weekend.

CHILD AND TEEN SUICIDE

(Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, child and teen suicide is a national tragedy in our country. The national suicide rate among 10 to 14-year-olds has increased by 120 percent since 1980. One in 12 high school students attempted suicide in 1995, and each year more than 270,000 teenagers attempt to end their lives. More than a desire to die, these children say their attempt was a cry for help.

This tragedy impacts all Americans. In affluent Palos Verdes a 15-year-old girl took her life by jumping off a cliff because she felt hopeless and anguished. In east Los Angeles a 15-year-old boy, devastated over his parents' separation, hung himself.

Child and teen suicide is a painful and critical tragedy which cannot be ignored. Members of Congress and indeed all Americans must work together to save our children. It is literally a matter of life and death.

ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES TOLLS ON INTERSTATES

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

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, if we needed proof that the President is really a tax-and-spend liberal just look at this headline in the Washington Times: Clinton Proposes Tolls on Interstates.

The Clinton administration has proposed that the Federal Government do away with a 40-year restriction on States charging tolls on Federal highways. The White House claims this is a modest proposal, but it appears that the bridge to the 21st century has a toll booth on it.

Mr. Speaker, the American people do not need another tax. Over half of the family income goes to taxes at all levels, and to suggest that American families need to pay more taxes for the highways that they have already paid for is too much. The President says he wants to balance the budget, but he has submitted a budget that does not balance. He says he wants tax relief, but he just announced a new tax increase.

Mr. Speaker, the President should go back to the drawing board and start with a real balanced budget, one without a tax increase on hardworking Americans.

FREEDOM FOR VIOLENT CRIMINALS IN FLORIDA

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, against the wishes of Florida officials, the Supreme Court has allowed 500 violent criminals in Florida to go free. When they restored time off to relieve overcrowding, the court said promises were made.

Now, check this out:

Mitchell Sexton stabbed his father to death and he was released. Norm Eastman beat a 2-year-old to death. He was released. John Yearby beat a homeless man to death with a baseball bat. He was released.

Now, if that is not enough to overturn your convictions and add insult to injury, ladies and gentlemen, listen to the news: All victims will be notified of these violent offender releases.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. In my opinion, America has murder, rape and violence in record numbers because some of our judges are so dumb they could throw themselves at the ground and miss. Maybe, just maybe, if judges start supporting the rights of innocent victims, we would not have so much murder.

ISRAEL AND THE UNITED NATIONS

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as we discuss our relationship with the United Nations this session, I believe one of our priorities should be to seek an end to the isolation within the United Nations of our Democratic ally Israel. Participation in the Security Council as well as all committees of the United Nations is predicated on a country's participation in a regional group. Due to the objections raised by a number of rejectionist States, Israel has been denied membership in its natural geographic group. Israel is therefore shut out of the entire committee system where the real day-to-day work of the United Nations is conducted.

One solution is to move beyond mere geography and look to the shared values of the democratic nations of western Europe. This group already spans 3 continents. Together with Congressman STEVE ROTHMAN and other colleagues, we have sent a letter to the ambassadors of the western European nations asking them to end Israel's unjust isolation by providing a legal home for their fellow democracy, the State of Israel.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET MERRY-GO- ROUND

(Mr. HILLIARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans in this House are continuing to delay our Nation's budget. Their leader now says it will not be ready until May, over 3 months past the legal deadline.

It is the radical Republicans in Congress who are always saying that Congress must adhere to the rules which govern everyone, until the rules pertain to them. Then, like spoiled little kids, they make their own rules to suit themselves or they will not play the game. I hope that they realize that this Republican merry-go-round must soon end. The American people do not want Republicans to play games with their lives like Republicans did when they closed down this government.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time that your party act like grownups and follow the rules. The budget submitted by the President is a balanced budget. Where is the Republican budget?

BIPARTISANSHIP AND THE BUDGET

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

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, last year I had the privilege of campaigning for the U.S. Congress as a Republican from California, and in my district I made no bones in going to groups where I spoke to both Democrats and Republicans and telling them that I intended to come to Congress and work in a bipartisan fashion with the President to balance the budget.

A month ago I had the honor of sitting in this Chamber for the first time and seeing a President of the United States deliver in person a State of the Union message. In that message he told us and he told the country that he would submit and we would balance the budget. I believed the President then and I still believe that he intends to work toward that goal. But, Mr. Speaker, as we know, the budget that the President submitted to this Congress does not balance, and that fact has been made clear by the Congressional Budget Office, which is bipartisan.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we passed a resolution calling on the President to again submit a budget to this Congress that is balanced and, Mr. Speaker, as a Republican I pledge to this House and to the country that when the President does take that action, I will work with him and work with my colleagues across the aisle to ensure that we fulfill that obligation to the American people.

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORMATION OF CONGRESSIONAL CHILDREN'S CAUCUS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to say to the American people that we do care, and I am very proud to announce the formation of the Congressional Children's Caucus, comprised of Democrats and Republicans who are concerned about children, and I think one of our early charges is to ensure that our children all over America have health care.

Mr. Speaker, 1 in 7 children are uninsured. We find that 9 out of 10 children without insurance have working parents every single day.

As a local elected official, I offered to our local community the importance of preventive health care to work with our families to ensure that our children were immunized and that our children saw the kind of health care that will give them a better quality of life.

Now, according to the report issued by the Census Bureau, one-third of American children do not have private health insurance, and yesterday the Children's Defense Fund said unless action is taken now 12.6 million children will be uninsured by the year 2000.

We must have a child health care insurance, and we must ensure that we care. Let America know that we care.

BECAUSE WE ARE BEING FLOODED BY COCAINE FROM MEXICO WE MUST TAKE STRONG STEPS

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

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, we have an important vote coming up today on decertification of Mexico, and this is not a battle over whether we are friends or not friends. Like it or not in Mexico and like it or not in America, we are going to have to work together like close friends have to work together, and part of working together is trying to address joint problems.

There is a feeling sometimes that we are trying, as Big Brother, to force our will on Mexico without reducing our own demand. We are working aggressively to reduce our demand. In America we have drug dogs in our schools, we are building more prisons than we ever dreamed we needed to, we have upped our treatment and our prevention budgets by 50 percent. But the reason we are doing this is an example front-page headline in Ft. Wayne last week: "I-69 Crash Linked To Cocaine And Pot."

A youngster on cocaine and marijuana flipped his car, landed on a pickup driven by another young person, which then landed on a car driven by another person, which forced it into another vehicle and veered into the median, which then hit a pile up into a sixth vehicle.

Because we are being flooded with cocaine coming in from Mexico we have to take strong steps.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE SHOULD TOP OUR LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Children's Defense Fund released its annual state of America's children. The news is heartbreaking; 1 out of every 7 American children are living today without health insurance; 1 out of every 7 kids. It is a national disgrace. The vast majority of these kids live in families where one or both of their parents work. Their folks work hard and they play by the rules, but they are caught in the middle, not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid, but unable to afford private health insurance for their families.

It is time for the Republican leadership to focus on this problem. There are 10 million reasons why we must do this: For the 10 million children in this country who are living without health insurance. But we only need one, the fact that the American people are counting on us to make this world a better place for their families.

We cannot have healthy families without healthy kids. We need to address this crisis, we need to move this issue on to the top of the legislative agenda.

REPUBLICAN AGENDA DOES NOT ADDRESS THE NATION'S UNINSURED CHILDREN

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, following up on my colleague from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO], I want to reiterate again this report that came out from the Children's Defense Fund that was in today's Washington Post. Once again there is another article in another major newspaper on the number of children in this country who do not have health insurance.

According to the General Accounting Office, this is an all time high. Not only one out of seven children, as was mentioned, do not have health insurance, but if we do not make this a top priority, we are going to have even more serious problems. The Children's Defense Fund report says that unless action is taken now 12.6 million children will be uninsured by the year 2000.

This news is only for the Republicans. Since last spring Democrats have been developing legislative plans to provide health insurance to the Nation's 10 million uninsured children, but to date there is not a single Republican plan to address this situation. Nor does it look like the GOP has any intention of giving this issue the attention it deserves. The House Republican agenda announced last week made no mention of a plan to insure the Nation's uninsured children.