

please forgive me," cried Noah "I did my best, but there were big problems.

"First, I had to get a permit for construction, and your plans did not meet the codes. I had to hire an engineering firm to redraw the plans. Then I got into a fight with OSHA over whether or not the ark needed a fire sprinkler system and floatation devices.

"Then my neighbor objected, claiming I was violating zoning ordinances by building the ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission. Then I had problems getting enough wood for the ark because there was a ban on cutting trees to protect the spotted owl. I finally convinced the US Forest Service that I needed the wood to save the owls.

"However, the Fish and Wildlife Service won't let me catch any owls, so no owls. The carpenters formed a union and went on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer.

"Now I have 16 carpenters on the ark, but still no owls. When I started rounding up the other animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me only taking two of each kind of animal aboard. Just when I got the suit dismissed the EPA notified me that I could not complete the ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood.

"They didn't take very kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of the Creator of the universe. Then the Army Engineers demanded a map of the proposed new flood plain. So I sent them a globe. Right now I'm trying to resolve a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that I'm practicing discrimination by not taking Godless or unbelieving people on board.

"The IRS has seized my assets claiming I'm building an ark in preparation to flee the country to avoid taxes. I just got a notice from the State that I owe them some kind of tax and that I failed to register the ark as a recreational watercraft.

"Finally, the ACLU got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the ark saying that since God is flooding the earth it is a religious event and therefore unconstitutional. I really don't think I can finish the ark for another 5 or 6 years," Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear and the sun began to shine and the seas began to calm. A rainbow arched across the sky, and Noah looked up hopefully. "You mean you're not going to destroy the earth, Lord?"

"No," the Lord said sadly, "I don't have to. The government already has."

PROUD AND STRONG SUPPORTER OF ORGANIZED LABOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 19, 1999, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) for his leadership on labor issues on behalf of working families throughout this country, and I would like to commend my friends at the AFL-CIO for organizing the seven days in June activities. This week there are over 110 organized labor rallies taking place across the Nation as a result of their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying loud and clear that I am a proud and strong supporter of organized labor in this country. I am proud to stand with the hard-working men and women who make up the labor movement in America. I am committed to fighting for a middle-class workforce where workers can comfortably support a family and not worry about losing their jobs, and I will continue to urge this Congress to fight not only for a minimum wage, but for a livable wage. I will continue to demand international trade agreements that create more American jobs, not lose them, and I will stand with my friends in the labor movement against any and all initiatives designed to compromise workers' safety, worker rights, or worker benefits.

The history of the U.S. labor movement is a strong and proud one. Organized labor embodies what is best in our constitution, namely our First Amendment freedoms of speech and association. But the Constitution only protects these freedoms. It has been the courage and determination of working women and men that have been the engine of social progress throughout this century.

The fact is nobody ever handed a working person the American dream. Job security, a living wage, the right to collective bargaining, these are things which were fought for. The benefits gained for the courage and blood of organized labor are now commonplace among most American workplaces. It is important to recognize that without the labor movement there would be no minimum wage, there would be no safety standards in the workplace, there would be no pensions or worker health plans. If it were not for organized labor, workers would have no rights, and that is a fact.

Organized labor continues to push for real issues important to real working people, and I urge working people across this country to keep organizing and to keep advocating. We can never allow our country to become a society where a privileged few enjoy all the benefits of the many who work. We must continue to work together in the next century to advance our issues, to pass meaningful labor legislation, and to continue to move forward toward a society which reflects the principles of social and legal justice for all, but this will only happen through continued

grassroots organization by dedicated working men and women.

PAUL HARVEY ON GUN CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MYRICK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, April 20 of this year a terrible tragedy occurred at Columbine High School in Colorado, and I do not represent Columbine High School. Now I do not represent Columbine High School. I represent some Littleton addresses, and I am close to Columbine, but I do not exactly represent it, but I took this tragedy very, very personally. It is something that I think all of us have a difficult time getting over.

On Wednesday, April 21, 1 day, 1 day after the tragedy, as I understand it, the chairman of the Democrat Congressional Committee was whipping his troops into line saying that this is a great time for gun control legislation to be presented to the House because it will be good for politics in the next election. I think that is shameful. We should not take advantage of this kind of a tragedy for political purposes.

I did not engage in the debate last week when we were dealing with this because I did not feel we were doing anything that was really very meaningful. Demagoguery flowed from both sides like water, and nothing much was really accomplished, and as the various amendments came up, I kept asking myself would this have done anything in the Columbine case if this amendment had been law, and most cases, sadly I have to say absolutely not.

Recently I heard a Paul Harvey broadcast which I think maybe opens up the perspective on the Columbine High School situation, and I would like to share that with my colleagues this morning:

If only the parents had kept their children away from the guns, we wouldn't have had such a tragedy. Yeah, it must have been the guns. It couldn't have been because of half of our children being raised in broken homes. It couldn't have been because our children get to spend an average of 30 seconds in meaningful conversation with their parents each day. After all, we give our children quality time.

It couldn't have been because we treat our children as pets and our pets as children. It couldn't have been because we place our children in the day care centers where they learn their socialization skills among their peers under the law of the jungle while employees, who have no vested interest in the children, look on and make sure that no blood is spilled.

It couldn't have been because we allow our children to watch an average of 7 hours of television a day filled with the glorification of sex and violence that isn't fit for adult consumption. It couldn't have been because we allow our children to enter into the virtual worlds in which, to win the game, one must kill as many opponents as possible in the most sadistic way possible.

It couldn't have been because our children, who historically have been seen as a blessing

from God, are now being viewed as either a mistake created when contraception fails or inconveniences that parents try to raise in their spare time.

It couldn't have been because our Nation is the world leader in developing a culture of death in which 20 million to 30 million babies have been killed by abortion. It couldn't have been because we give 2-year prison sentences to teenagers who kill their newborns.

It couldn't have been because our school systems teach the children that they are nothing but glorified apes who have evolutionized out of some primordial soup of mud by teaching evolution is fact and by handing out condoms as if they were candy. It couldn't have been because we teach our children that there are no laws of morality that transcend us, that everything is relative and that actions do not have consequences. What the heck, the President gets away with it. No, it must have been the guns.

I think Paul Harvey's statement illustrates the corruption that has permeated our society that leads to things like Columbine. No amount of gun legislation will solve the problems in our society. The answers are complex, and they are multi-faceted. There is no quick fix. It is time that we looked at the roots of our problems and not just at the surface symptoms.

VALUE OF THE UNIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, my father, Frank Kucinich, senior, was a truck driver and he drove a truck for 35 years, and he was proud of the work that he did, and he was also proud to be a member of Local 407 of the Teamsters Union.

I grew up with a heritage of believing in the importance of people belonging to an organized labor group, and as I was growing up, I saw how my father would attend union meetings. And I would have the occasion to go with him to some of those meetings. And I heard people talk about their desire for a better wage, not just for themselves, but for their families. I heard people talk about the desire for improved health care benefits, not just for themselves, but for their families.

I heard people talk about retirement security, not just for themselves, but for their families, and so what I saw in growing up in Cleveland, Ohio was men and women coming together to try to improve not only their lot but the lot of their families.

All across this country, working men and women are going to work every day with the intention of building a better quality of life, and the only way they can do that is to stay united, and that is what unions are all about. In unity there is strength. And across this country, men and women have been able to have a better wage level and because of that have helped to assure higher wages in the nonorganized sector.

Across this country, men and women have been able to have better health benefits, better retirement benefits because they have united, and that is something that is profoundly American. We have communicated to the world this idea that in unity there is strength, and through working men and women organizing we have demonstrated that even the humblest person should have an opportunity to have a position at the table of great power and that the humblest person in joining with others can have some control over his or her destiny and over his or her quality of life.

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I am glad to be part of a Democratic Party which supports working men and women.

WELCOME TO REVEREND STEVEN L. WOLVERTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MYRICK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. ERLICH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. ERLICH. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the Reverend Steven L. Wolverton, who served as my Legislative Fellow in my congressional office in 1997. Steve is in the gallery to the right, and I welcome him to the House of Representatives here today. He is an electrical engineer with the Federal Government, as well as a youth pastor at Lee Street Memorial Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

Steve and his wife, Vicki, lead a dynamic, growing youth ministry in south Baltimore called LifeChangers, which is dedicated to establishing role models and positive life opportunities for inner-city youth. More recently he is working with a Baltimore businessman to renovate an old department store and establish a private evangelical Christian school in the southern Baltimore peninsula. I commend him on the investment he is making on behalf of the young people of Baltimore City.

Steve is a strong believer in serving God and his country, and it is my privilege to welcome him to the floor of the United States House of Representatives. Thank you, Steve, for your inspiring life, and welcome.

CELEBRATING ORGANIZED LABOR FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 4 minutes.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in tribute to America's working men and women. I come from a working family. I come from a union family. I know what it is like to worry

whether one's paycheck is going to stretch to the next one. I know what it is like to be laid off.

I strongly support organized labor because my father was able to put a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs, a good car in our garage, food on our table, and two daughters through college and law school because of the union wages he earned in Las Vegas.

Madam Speaker, 37 years ago my family arrived in Las Vegas with all of our possessions in a U-Haul hooked up to the back of the car. My dad joined the culinary union and landed a job as a waiter at the old Sands Hotel on the Las Vegas strip. That union job was the greatest break my family ever received. It opened the doors to opportunity for all of us.

I am the first person in my family to go to college. I worked my way through college and law school. I waitressed at the Sands Hotel, ran keno at the Desert Inn, and cocktail waitressed at the Hacienda, the Aladdin and Holiday Casino, all on the Las Vegas strip. Each of these union jobs contributed to my ability to put myself through college and law school.

Let me tell my colleagues, I am just one of hundreds of thousands of fellow Nevadans who have benefited from the positive influence of organized labor in my town. Almost without exception, the major employers of the thriving resort industry in Las Vegas have recognized that their industry and the entire city has grown strong because of good wages and good working conditions that good labor contracts have created. The prosperity of Las Vegas, built by the strong minds and backs of working men and women, can serve as a model for other parts of the country.

First and foremost, trade unions build strong families. America needs families earning a decent living, wages good enough to afford that home, that car, and an education for their children. That is how we grow the American economy.

Madam Speaker, I want our workers to have jobs free from the threats of raids on our family leave and our medical leave, free from raids on Social Security and Medicare, and free from raids on the right of every worker to collective bargaining. This country is better off for a 5-day work week, overtime pay, paid holidays and vacations, health insurance, child labor laws, and a minimum wage, all won by organized labor. Organized labor is vital to the well-being of our country, our families, and our communities. It makes a positive difference for all of us, and that is why, that is why I join in this week's celebration of organized labor.

COST OF GOVERNMENT DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.