

Colin Powell, the "Congressional Conversations on Race", which is spearheaded by a bipartisan steering committee made up of equal numbers of Republican and Democrat Members.

The goal is to "evoke the potential among Members of Congress, seeking spiritual insights to provide creative moral leadership on racial issues." They have already sponsored many events to bring about a dialogue on race, and will continue to do so, understanding that the "serious of experiences to deepen Members' understandings and to strengthen their leadership in the realm of race relations" is a worthy goal.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get involved with this wonderful Institute, to go to the breakfast, if they can, because it is good for us individually and good for the country as a whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MILLER of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

A NATIONAL HOLIDAY FOR CESAR CHAVEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember a great American leader and hero, Cesar Chavez. He was a husband, father, grandfather, labor organizer, community leader and symbol of the ongoing struggle for equal rights and equal opportunity. March 31, the birthday of Cesar Chavez, has already been declared a State holiday in my State of

California. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in making March 31 a Federal holiday so that our entire Nation can honor Cesar Chavez for his many contributions.

Cesar was the son of migrant farm workers who dedicated his life to fighting for the human rights and dignity of farm laborers. He was born on March 31, 1927, on a small farm near Yuma, Arizona, and died nearly 6 years ago in April of 1993. Over the course of his 66-year life, Cesar Chavez' work inspired millions and made him a major force in American history.

In 1962, Cesar Chavez and his family founded the National Farm Workers Association which organized thousands of farm workers to confront one of the most powerful industries in our Nation. He inspired them to join together and nonviolently demand safe and fair working conditions.

Through the use of a grape boycott, he was able to secure the first union contracts for farm workers in this country. These contracts provided farm workers with the basic services that most workers take for granted, services such as clean drinking water and sanitary facilities. Because of his fight to enforce child labor laws, farm workers could also be certain that their children would not be working side by side with them and would instead attend the migrant schools he helped to establish. In addition, Cesar Chavez made the world aware of the exposure to dangerous chemicals that farm workers and every consumer faces every day.

As a labor leader, he earned great support from unions and elected officials across the country. The movement he began continues today as the United Farm Workers of America.

Cesar Chavez' influence extends far beyond agriculture. He was instrumental in forming the Community Service Organization, one of the first civic action groups in the Mexican-American communities of California and Arizona.

He worked in urban areas, organized voter registration drives, brought complaints against mistreatment by government agencies. He taught community members how to deal with governmental, school and financial institutions and empowered many thousands to seek further advancement in education and politics. There are countless stories of judges, engineers, lawyers, teachers, church leaders, organizers and other hardworking professionals who credit Cesar Chavez as the inspiring force in their lives.

During a time of great social upheaval, he was sought out by groups from all walks of life and all religions to help bring calm with his nonviolent practices. In his fight for peace, justice, respect and self-determination, he gained the admiration and respect of millions of Americans and most Members of this House of Representatives.

Cesar Chavez will be remembered for his tireless commitment to improve the plight of farm workers, children

and the poor throughout the United States and for the inspiration his heroic efforts gave to so many Americans.

We in Congress must make certain that the movement Cesar Chavez began and the timeless lessons of justice and fairness he taught be preserved and honored in our national conscience. To make sure that these fundamental principles are never forgotten, I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 22 which would declare March 31 as a Federal holiday in honor of Cesar Chavez. In the words of Cesar and the United Farm Workers, *si se puede, yes, we can.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WOLF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND REDUCING THE DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we stand on a threshold of a truly remarkable time, a time when we will be able to do wonderful things for this country and for our children.

In fiscal year 2001, we will have for the first time in decades a surplus in our budget, in the general fund budget. What we do with this surplus will tell a great deal about us, about our resolve, about how serious we are in providing a strong, fiscally sound country for those who come after us.

Some would have us spend this surplus on a multitude of well-intentioned programs and initiatives. But this is a time for restraint, not largesse. Others would have us return the surplus to the American people in the form of broad, across-the-board tax cuts. But for the average taxpayer, that would provide a small short-term gain when we have the ability to provide a much longer term and larger benefit.

That benefit can be provided if we use this projected surplus over the next 15 years to keep the budget balanced and pay down the national debt.

Under the administration's debt reduction program, our debt payments will be reduced from today's level of 14 percent of the national budget to only 2 percent by the year 2015.

The numbers are huge. We owe in public debt \$3.7 trillion. Under the President's debt reduction plan, that would be reduced to \$1.3 trillion by 2015. This would be an immense gift to the American people, and it would benefit all Americans, families, farmers and businesses. It would provide a real long-term benefit to almost every economic level of American society, unlike a broad, across-the-board tax cut

as proposed that would mean little more to the average American than \$100 a year in a tax cut.

The biggest effect of paying down our debt would be a further reduction in interest rates that would save homeowners thousands of dollars in mortgage payments. The burden of loans shouldered by our college students would be greatly alleviated. Our farmers would be able to save thousands of dollars on their equipment purchases which in turn would allow them to be more efficient and increase their yields.

With lower interest rates, industry would have more to invest in new technologies and there would be more money to invest in education, in transportation and other infrastructure improvements that would make the America of the 21st century even stronger than the last.

The importance of reducing the debt, however, can be measured in more ways than just dollars and cents. If we show courage and restraint, if we demonstrate that we too can finally live within budgetary guidelines, if we only do in Washington what American families have to do every day at home, we will restore much of the trust that has been lost in government by the American people.

We talk about bipartisanship. Now is the time to begin practicing it. I urge all Democrats and my friends on the Republican side of the aisle as well to do what is prudent, to do what is right, to do something for their children and grandchildren that will be a lasting legacy. Keep the budget balanced and use the surplus to pay down the debt.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHIMKUS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND REDUCING THE DEBT

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge fiscal discipline and fiscal responsibility as we work on the budget for the next fiscal year.

Back in the 1980s when we were running up our yearly deficits and consequently our overall Federal debt, there was a phrase that politicians used to utter in dealing with the problem which was, "The balanced budget has no constituency," which is to say that when you spend money or cut taxes, there is somebody or some group of somebodies who are going to be happy about it. It has a constituency that you can please.

Who benefits from the balanced budget? Who specifically? Well, obviously

the entire public, both present and future, of our Nation benefits from it, but in purely political terms, those folks in the 1980s and 1990s had a point. The constituencies were definitely more well defined for all of the programs and tax cuts that were being proposed and passed. I just stand up today to say that fiscal discipline and fiscal responsibility should still be a priority.

Since I have been elected to Congress, a lot of folks have been talking to me about what it means to be a Congressman, how can in essence you prove that you have done a good job. I talk a lot about my emphasis on fiscal responsibility and balancing the budget and there tends to be this look like, "Well, that's just not good enough." As they like to say, you have to have something to bring home, something to put your name on, whether it is a new bridge, a new bus stop in your district, a new swimming pool, you name it, something that you went back there and fought for Federal money to bring home. I understand that. In fact, I will say that many if not most of all of these programs are indeed worthwhile. Spending money on all of those things will help the district, help the State, help the future of the country.

But we also have to remember that we need to be fiscally responsible because, a couple of reasons: First of all, in the future, folks are going to need all of those things as well and if we spend all their money now, they are not going to have them. And second of all, when you run debt up too high, you drag down the economy, drive up interest rates and create job loss, which makes it even more necessary to spend Federal money and it becomes a downward spiral.

What I want people to recognize is that being fiscally responsible and paying down the debt does have a constituency. That is the legacy that I want to leave in my district. I think that is something to bring home, to go back to the people of the Ninth District of the State of Washington or any other district in the country and say, "Yes, maybe I didn't fight for every last Federal dollar but I fought to balance the budget for your benefit, your children's benefit and their children's benefit." I think all politicians on both sides of the aisle should have the courage and stand up for that.

As we head towards this year's budget, there is going to be a major battle. There is incredible pressure to spend money or cut taxes in thousands of different places. The thing about it is, these programs do have some value. As I have often said, I wish just once in my time as a public official somebody would walk into my office and say, "We've got this plan to spend \$5 million on fill-in-the-blank," and I could honestly look at that person and say, "That's just a complete waste of money. That doesn't do any good for anybody and there's no way we're going to do it."

Of course when you spend money, there is always an argument that it is helping people, and it does. But you have to look at the long term as well. If we spend all the money now, we will be forfeiting and mortgaging our children's future, and that is not fair. At this particular time it is particularly frustrating, because we have a strong economy. We have unemployment of just over 4 percent, we have inflation of below 2 percent. We have a strong economy so that we do not have to spend as much money. The economy is taking care of people. The government does not have to do as much. Now is the time to be fiscally responsible, because if we do not do it now, a few years from now when the business cycle turns on us, it is going to be a thousand times more difficult, because people are going to need those programs and that help or that tax cut even more. Now is the time to be fiscally responsible, balance the budget and give something back to our future.

I think all politicians in this body should be proud to go back to their district and say, "Don't judge me by whether or not I brought you back a highway or a bridge or some other Federal program. Judge me by the fact that I had the foresight and the discipline to balance the budget and take care of our economy for today and tomorrow." That is what I think we should be doing back here in Congress, despite the overwhelming pressure to spend money. Spend it, fine. The Federal Government spends a lot of money, \$1.7 trillion. No reason we cannot spend it within our means. No reason we cannot be fiscally responsible and balance the budget. I urge that we do that as soon as possible and remember that discipline when we go into the budget battles that lie ahead this year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LEGISLATION TO PREVENT GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I want the last two speakers to know that I am grateful for their emphasis on fiscal responsibility and to let them know how refreshing it is to hear Members of the