

make me wonder if there is collusion of some kind going on behind the scenes. Why else would this Federal agency be so lax in enforcing its own regulations?

Madam Speaker, this inaction of the Office of Pipeline Safety will not be excused by this Congress. We cannot forgive the lack of pipeline safety and enforcement. As an original cosponsor of H.R. 4792 with the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), who we will hear from later, I beg of the Speaker to use her influence to get some real safety regulations. They are not being adhered to. People's lives are in jeopardy.

Madam Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a newspaper article regarding a pipeline rupture in Paterson, New Jersey.

[From the Herald News]

GAS LINE RUPTURE FORCES EVACUATION IN PATERSON

(By Robert Ratish and Eileen Markey)

PATERSON.—Workers digging up a roadway on Governor and Straight streets hit a natural gas line Monday morning, releasing fumes and forcing the evacuation of 82 residents in 15 to 20 buildings.

Police cordoned off four blocks surrounding the break for about three hours while crews from Public Service Electric & Gas Co. worked to shut off the gas. Meanwhile, those who live in the neighborhood waited outside until emergency crews deemed the area safe. "You could hear a roaring sound. It sounded like a train," Councilwoman Vera Ames said. She said a thick smell of gas filled the area surrounding the break.

There were no injuries, and no buildings were damaged.

The break occurred as workers with the Passaic Valley Water Commission were using a backhoe to break through the street. The crew had been shutting off a water line leading into a building, said Chief Engineer Jim Duprey.

Duprey said the accident occurred because PSE&G failed to mark the road properly for underground lines. "When Public Service went to mark out, they indicated there was no piping in the area that was excavated," he said.

Before digging, the commission called a hotline maintained by the state Board of Public Utilities as required by the 1995 "One Call" law, Duprey said. The hotline allows agencies to make one call and have all of the appropriate utilities mark underground lines.

A spokesman for PSE&G said the utility was investigating whether the gas line was properly marked.

After hitting the line, a PVWC worker flagged down a passing officer at about 10:35 a.m., police said. Police were advised to turn off the lights on patrol cars and not leave any engines running for fear of sparking the gas fumes.

"It was very dangerous. The pressure was just phenomenal," Mayor Martin G. Barnes said.

Roger Soto, a service technician at PSE&G, stopped at each building on Harrison Street telling workers to stay outside their buildings.

"We want to make sure that no one is operating any equipment or any kind of engine," he said. "We're just securing the area, making sure everybody is safe."

The chief of emergency management, James Sparano, said even police and fire equipment posed a danger. "You'll notice even our emergency vehicles are staying way back—anything can spark it," he said.

As firefighters and emergency medical technicians stood by, 22 young children attending Bethel Christian Childcare on Auburn Street were evacuated to School 6, where they stayed until it was safe to return.
* * *

WASTE, FRAUD AND ABUSE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WILSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, as my colleague earlier this evening talked about, today we had a hearing in the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Education and the Workforce doing oversight hearings on the Department of Education. Let me just put this in context for my colleagues.

In 1998 and 1999, the Department of Education failed its financial audit. That means that the independent auditors who came in and took a look at the financial records of the Department of Education indicated that the way the numbers were presented and the background, the records that the Department of Education has, the procedures that it has in place and the interim controls that it has in place, gave the auditors some reason of doubt that the way the numbers were actually presented in the financial statements perhaps did not accurately reflect the expenditures and the flow of revenue throughout the Department.

Coming from the private sector, I know that when the financial auditors come in and put some disclaimers in or do not give an organization a clean bill of health, it sets off a number of alarm bells. Because, basically, what the auditors are saying is that in this environment, without the proper financial controls in place, an environment is created that is ripe for waste, fraud, and abuse. Over the last 18 months, as we have been taking a look at this problem within the Department of Education, we have come across a number of cases where the predictions from the auditors have actually been borne out, and it is very, very disappointing.

Today, we talked about basically what some would characterize as an embezzlement scheme of roughly \$1.9 million out of the Impact Aid funds that were diverted into individuals' or small companies' checking accounts. And, again, this was not caught by the internal controls within the Department of Education, this was caught by a car salesman who grew suspicious with somebody coming in and buying or attempting to buy a very expensive automobile.

We know about the theft ring. Three people have pled guilty, another three have pleadings before the court, and there are a number of employees within the Department of Education that are suspended without pay. This is a \$300,000 theft ring. The material prod-

ucts they brought in were anything from a 61-inch television to computers to VCRs to a whole series of other electronic equipment. It also includes up to \$600,000 of false billable overtime, time that was billed, time that was paid, but time that was never worked.

We also know of at least one other major theft ring within the Department of Education that we are not at liberty to talk about because there are not public documents that have been released at this point in time. We also know that within the Department of Education the Inspector General has estimated that improper Pell Grant payments amounted to \$177 million in one recent year.

We know that real decisions have real impact on real people. The \$1.9 million embezzlement from the Impact Aid funds impacted directly two school districts in South Dakota. Another example. Thirty-nine students were recently awarded Jacob Javits scholarships. These are scholarships that are given to students who have excelled at the undergraduate level. The Education Department at the Federal level comes back and says that they have done such a good job, that the Federal Government is now going to fund 4 years of graduate school. That is great news for those young people; that is great news for their parents; and that is great news for the undergraduate university that has fostered an environment that has allowed these kids to excel.

Just one problem: The Department of Education notified the wrong 39 students. Two days later they had to call back these young people and tell them, sorry, they were not the students that won.

We know that the Department of Education has made \$150 million in duplicate payments in this current fiscal year alone. A duplicate payment is a vendor supplying an invoice for products and services that they have provided the Department of Education. A duplicate payment means they get paid once and they get paid again.

We have some serious problems at the Department of Education. At the same time that we have been looking at these kinds of problems within the Department of Education, we have also had the opportunity to travel around America and see what is working in education. We have been in roughly 21 different States, and what we have seen is some great education, reform and educational results happening at the local level.

What the Federal Government needs to learn in this issue is where we are only providing 7 percent of the money, but in some States we estimate that we are providing 50 percent of the paperwork, it is time for the Federal Government to step back and let the people who know our children's names decide what is best for our schools and for our kids. It is time to step back and to make sure that we get 95 cents of

every Federal dollar invested in education, that we get 95 cents of every dollar back into the classroom.

It is time for us to remove the red tape which really restricts innovation at the local level. It is time for us to allow local school districts to decide whether they want to use money on technology, to hire teachers, to pay teachers more for teacher training or for investment in other projects. Allow people at the local level to make the decisions.

There is a lot of good things happening in education in America today. The focus needs to be on the local level and not here in Washington.

TRIBUTE TO GILBERT WOLF

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend and a great American, Mr. Gilbert Wolf. On April 1 of this year, Gilbert Wolf retired as Director of the National Plastering Industry's Joint Apprenticeship Trust Fund and Administrator of the Plasterers and Cement Masons Job Corps Training Program. After 49 years in the industry, Mr. Wolf has left a legacy of superior skills training directed toward young people entering the construction trades.

A plasterer by trade, Mr. Wolf began his own career as an apprentice and went on to become a journeyman and then apprentice instructor. In 1969, he was instrumental in securing a contract with the Department of the Interior to train economically disadvantaged youth to become plasterers and cement masons. After a successful operation in three Job Corps centers, Mr. Wolf was awarded additional contracts with the Department of the Interior and labor. The Plasterers and Cement Masons Job Corps Training Program, under Gilbert Wolf's guidance, now boasts participation in 41 centers throughout the United States.

Training and motivating youth in careers in the construction industry has been Mr. Wolf's major focus for over four decades. He spearheaded several national events to bring the need for youth training to the forefront. Competition was one of his favorite themes. The result was three international apprenticeship competitions over a 5-year period; two Job Corps national competitions and countless skills demonstrations at trade shows and construction industry events throughout the United States. These events consistently showed the public the need for and the importance of solid skills training.

The Smithsonian Institute's famous Festival of Life became the setting for another national skills demonstration by Job Corps students from around the country. Mr. Wolf led the committees who organized the 2-week long festivals and won a spot on Good Morning America.

Mr. Wolf also coauthored papers on historical preservation and restoration with the Department of the Interior and the National Trust for Historical Preservation. A partnership with the NTHP brought opportunities for Job Corps students to learn and to work on important historical landmarks and to develop specialized skills.

Mr. Wolf also coauthored the Incentive Apprenticeship Training Course, which guides instructors through the process of training a number of people at multiple levels.

Gilbert Wolf is also credited with pushing hard to increase the number of women and other minorities into skills training and the construction industry. He was the first in the Job Corps to hire a woman as an instructor in a non-traditional trade.

When asked what has kept him going in this industry for the last 49 years, Mr. Wolf responded, where are the future skilled crafts people coming from, and who will train them? Passing a legacy of knowledge from one generation to the next is the backbone of our building industry. Young people are our only chance to keep building a strong America.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I want to express my own personal deep appreciation for the fact that Gilbert Wolf has been a mentor to my brother Roger and a valued friend to me. This Nation would be stronger and we would all be better people if more of us were more like Gil Wolf. I wish him a long, healthy, and happy retirement.

PIPELINE SAFETY

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

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, in June 1999, a gasoline pipeline ruptured in Bellingham, Washington, and the ensuing fireball killed three young men. Following that tragedy, the House of Representatives did nothing.

Several months ago, a fuel pipeline ruptured by the Patuxent River in Maryland, spilling over 100,000 gallons of fuel, creating an environmental disaster. And following that disaster, the U.S. House of Representatives did nothing.

Several weeks ago in New Mexico, in Madam Speaker's own State, entire families were incinerated in a terrible tragedy due to a ruptured natural gas pipeline. And to date, despite many of our best efforts, the U.S. House of Representatives has done nothing.

□ 1930

This Chamber, despite this continuing toll of human loss and environmental loss, has not moved one bill through committee, has not moved one bill to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote despite many of our bipartisan efforts to accomplish a meaningful bill this year.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to call on the House leadership to bring for-

ward to this Chamber a meaningful, comprehensive, pipeline safety bill with real teeth. And we have several to choose from in the House. We have a bipartisan bill cosponsored by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF), a Republican from the Second District in Washington, and myself, H.R. 4558. I am a prime sponsor on a bill, House bill 4792, bills that will achieve something we have long needed in this country and that is statutorily codified inspection criteria to require that pipelines in this country are inspected on a regular basis to try to prevent these tragedies.

Now, why is that so important? It is important because the tradition in the last several decades here has been of abject failure. What has happened before is that when tragedies of this nature have occurred, the U.S. Congress has passed bills that have essentially deferred to an administrative agency, to the Office of Pipeline Safety, and have directed the Office of Pipeline Safety to adopt meaningful inspection criteria, to adopt meaningful training criteria for operators.

And what has happened despite those continued grants of discretion to the administrative agency? Well, what has happened is total failure.

In 1992, this Chamber required requirements to identify high-risk pipelines. And yet, in a new millennium, we still do not have a regulation or rule requiring that. We have the National Transportation Safety Board. It found "in 1987, the Safety Board recommended that the Office of Pipeline Safety require pipeline operators to periodically inspect their pipelines to identify corrosion, mechanical damage, or other time dependent defects that may prohibit their safe operations. Yet, 13 years after our initial recommendation was issued, there are no regulations that require pipeline operators to perform periodic inspections or tests to locate and assess whether this type of damage exists on other pipelines."

Thirteen years and yet we are on the cusp of a failure if we do not pass a bill that has a statutorily required maximum period between inspections.

Now, the other Chamber, Madam Speaker, has passed a bill that again requires and gives discretion to the Office of Pipeline Safety to act. Well, frankly, we need a tougher bill. We need to break this chain of failure in the U.S. Congress. We need to bring to the floor of this House a bill that will have a statutorily codified inspection regime to make sure that these pipelines are in fact inspected.

I believe we can obtain a bipartisan resolution and get a bill to conference committee relatively quickly to do that under the leadership of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Chairman SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), the ranking member.

There have been lots of discussions, and I believe we can find a bipartisan