

PREVENTING WASTEFUL FEDERAL
BOONDOGGLES

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, the Orlando Sentinel published a headline yesterday saying "Anger Over Court-house Won't Die."

The anger concerns a proposed \$60,000,000 Federal courthouse in Orlando that the judges are unhappy with. I have been told by an expert that to build what the judges want could potentially double the cost and send several million dollars in architect's fees down the drain. At \$60 million, the building will already cost \$195 a square foot.

The cost is already too high. If costs explode because of spoiled judges, it will be far too expensive to build if we have any consideration at all for the poor taxpayers who are footing the bill.

Too many times we have allowed Federal judges to demand Taj Mahal-type courthouses because the money is not coming out of their pockets. Too often they have a taxpayers-be-damned attitude. The Commissioner for Public Buildings said, "The problem here is we have some judges who think they should be architects."

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, Hazardous Materials and Pipeline Transportation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on which I served for 10 years will not let this project become another wasteful Federal boondoggle.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO
HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection and pursuant to clause 11 of rule X and clause 11 of rule I, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Mr. CHAMBLISS of Georgia, to rank after Mr. BURR of North Carolina.

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CONCERN REGARDING
EDUCATION

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, education is to be one of the new administration's top priorities, and I commend them for this. I would like to express

two major concerns I have in regard to education that I hope the President and Secretary Paige will take into consideration.

First, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) and I started a Smaller Schools Initiative within the Department of Education. We were fortunate enough to secure \$45 million in funding for this program last year and \$125 million this year. This money is supposed to be for grants and assistance to school systems to help keep small schools open and/or reduce the size of some very large schools.

At a smaller school, a young person has a better chance to make a sports team, serve on the student council, lead a club, be a cheerleader or excel or stand out in some other way. Also a student at a smaller school can get more individual attention, and not just feel like a number in some education factory. Actually, very large high schools sometimes breed Columbine-type situations, because while 99.9 percent of students can handle big schools, a few always feel like they have to resort to strange or even dangerous behavior to get noticed.

Three or four years ago I read an article in the Christian Science Monitor saying that New York City's largest high school had 3,500 students, and then it was broken down into five separate schools and their drug and discipline problems went way down.

□ 1015

Augusta Kappner, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education wrote recently in USA Today that "good things happen" when large schools are remade into smaller ones. She said, "Incidents of violence are reduced; students' performance, attendance and graduation rates improve; disadvantaged students significantly outperform those in large schools on standardized tests; students of all social classes and races are treated more equitably; teachers, students and the local community prefer them."

Students are better off going to smaller schools even in older buildings, as long as they are clean and well lighted, than they are to very large centralized high schools even in brand-new buildings.

We have done a good job reducing class sizes in most places, but too often we are making a very bad mistake in making students go to very large schools.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the so-called teacher "shortage" is a special interest shortage aided by the government. We would have no shortage at all if we simply could give local school boards the flexibility to hire well-qualified teachers, even if they had never taken an education course. It makes no sense whatsoever to say that a Ph.D. chemist, for example, with many years experience in the field cannot be hired over a 22-year-old with a bachelor's degree simply because of a few education courses.

I realize that there are special interests which want to limit or restrict the pool of eligible applicants for teaching positions, but this is harmful to our children; and it will become even more harmful in the next few years if we allow this to continue. Local school boards, or preferably even principals at schools, should be allowed to hire the best-qualified teachers, even if they never took an education course. Many people are well qualified through advanced education and/or experience to teach, but the government, because of special interest pressure groups, will not allow them to be hired.

A few years ago, two small colleges in my district almost went under. Fortunately, neither one did. But it is ridiculous to say, for instance, that a Ph.D. political scientist or English professor with 20 or 25 years' teaching experience at the college level cannot teach in high school or even elementary school if their college went under just because they had not taken an education course. Local school boards should be allowed to consider an education degree as a real plus if everything else is basically equal. But they should not be forced to hire a less-qualified teacher simply because one spent more time studying and/or working in the subject they are to teach rather than taking a few education courses.

If local school officials were allowed to hire the most qualified person, even if they did not have an education degree, this artificial, government and special interest-induced teacher shortage could be wiped out very quickly; and most importantly, our children would get a better education. We should immediately give local school boards the authority to give alternative certification to people who are well qualified through education and/or experience in the field, even if they never took an education course.

The next time anyone says something about a teacher shortage, we should just say, remove the artificial, unjustified, harmful restrictions in the State law and this problem will be solved very quickly.

A TRIBUTE TO KAREN S. LORD

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe lost one of its most noble, most gifted, dedicated, effective, and kind members of our staff, Karen Lord, to the ravages of cancer on January 29 of this year. Karen was only 33—a heartwrenching tragedy for her family, and all of us who knew and loved her.

Since 1995, Karen has faithfully served as counsel for Freedom of Religion on the staff of the commission of which I serve as the cochairman. In

this capacity, she diligently defended the principle of “religious liberty for all” and became one of the commission’s most trusted advisors on the subject. We will miss her wise counsel, her demonstrable passion, her wealth of knowledge, and her energetic advocacy on behalf of the persecuted church.

As counsel for Freedom of Religion, Karen meticulously monitored the fundamental “freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief” and always would take the initiative when violations arose. She was recognized and respected in this city, within the U.S. Government, in Europe and in Central Asia as a knowledgeable, passionate, and hard-working expert on the right to freely profess and practice one’s faith. She was intolerant of religious intolerance and was a champion to all those who were disenfranchised and dispossessed. She lived the gospel, especially our Lord’s admonition in Matthew, 25, when our Lord said, “When I was in prison, did you visit me.” “Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren you do to me.” Time and time again Karen interceded on behalf of those who were unjustly imprisoned by dictators and despotic governments. Karen always took the time and had the energy to pursue the truth, and to chronicle in a meticulous way the information about someone who was persecuted or harassed by their government, in some way put at risk because of their faith.

Karen played an active role as a member of numerous U.S. delegations to meetings of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and she was selected and served on a panel of religious liberty experts for the OSCE’s Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Whether the interaction was with nongovernmental organizations, religious believers and clergy, academics or government authorities, Karen was an active listener, an informed interlocutor, and a vigorous and respectful advocate. She was a force with whom others had to reckon, because she was so strong and she would always stand up, on behalf of those who were persecuted for their faith.

Karen surely distinguished herself as the expert on laws affecting religious communities in various countries of the OSCE region, whether the issues were in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Western Europe, or Eastern Europe. Just 3 months ago, even while she was suffering the devastation and the terrible pain of cancer, she participated in conferences in Sofia, Bulgaria and Baku and Azerbaijan, which were focused on religious liberty, rule of law and international standards for protection of the freedom of conscience. She often served as an expert at various venues in other countries with the U.S. Department of State and for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Members of the commission knew that they could depend on her and her thor-

ough knowledge and vigorous advocacy of this precious freedom of religion.

Time and again as I sat in the chair holding hearings on religious freedom, I would turn to Karen, get her advice and her informed expert opinion.

Karen was a great woman, Mr. Speaker. She was smart, she was articulate, she was a quick study, she was tenacious, and she was breathtakingly courageous. She never uttered a word of complaint. While she was suffering, while she was going through her frightening ordeal, knowing full well what that cancer was doing to her body, she would have a quiet smile on her face and a very, very deep faith in Jesus Christ. She spent much time in prayer. She suffered her agonies of cancer with courage, working on behalf of religious freedom of all people: Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Christians, Pentecostals. Believers of every stripe will miss her. Karen possessed within herself an abiding tranquility—the peace that surpasses all understanding that our Lord spoke of in the Gospel.

Mr. Speaker, we will greatly miss Karen Lord. She was a dear friend, and I ask all of the Members of the House to keep her in your prayers. Because hers was a life so faithfully lived, she is no doubt looking down from heaven. She was a wonderful person, she will be missed dearly. Our loss is surely Heaven’s gain.

PRESIDENT’S TAX CUT NOT FAIR, NOT BASED ON REALITY, AND NOT AFFORDABLE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today is a big day on Capitol Hill. The President is sending a \$1.6 trillion tax cut plan to Congress. A very big day. A big day for the White House, a big day for Congress. The only three problems that I can discern with the President’s plan thus far, despite the huge size of it: it is not based on reality, it is not fair, and it is not affordable. Other than that, it is a pretty good idea.

Now, the plan is based on an economic scenario that does not exist. The plan is based upon a rosy economic scenario. Even as the country is sliding into recession, and on the one hand, they use the excuse of a projected future tax cut, particularly favoring those at the top, as a rationale for rushing it through Congress, they say, the economy is actually going to grow at 2.4 percent this year, so we will have a surplus to spend, and more than 3 percent every year thereafter.

Mr. Speaker, they are defying the reality of the current economy. Others are saying, in fact, that growth has slowed to near zero and, in fact, that we may even slide into negative growth. So first off, it is not based in the reality of our current economy or current economic assumptions. So we are spending money we might not have,

or forgoing income that would drive us back into periods of deficits and add to the national debt.

Secondly, it is not fair. It is very heavily slanted toward people at the top. The top 1 percent, those who earn over \$320,000 per year and up, will average \$46,500 in savings under this legislation. So if one earns over \$320,000, one gets \$46,000 back, on average.

Now, if one is in the lower 40 percent of American families for income, they will get an average of \$110. So what does that translate to? Well, the family that earns over \$320,000 a year can go out and buy a nice new Yukon Denali XL with heated leather seats; not bad, nice ride, and the average American family can take and invest their \$110 in a lube, oil change and minor tune-up for their 8-year-old family jalopy. That is not fair. That is not fair.

Finally, it is not affordable. It is a lot like a very honest man, David Stockman, told us at the beginning of the Reagan administration. He said he knew we could not cut taxes, dramatically increase military spending, and balance the budget; that, in fact, it was a Trojan horse to get at all those social programs and to make Congress reduce funding for or eliminate those social programs, because they knew they could not defeat them frontally.

The American people support Social Security and Medicare and more funding for education and help with our kids getting a higher education. They know they cannot take those things on frontally, so we are back to the Trojan horse scenario, locked in tax cuts projected out over 10 years with the huge tax cuts coming toward the end of the 10 years, projected on a rosy scenario that does not exist. Then, when we go into deficits or we are threatened with deficits, they say, oh, my God we have locked in the tax cuts and people have planned their estates and things around it, so we cannot change the rules now. We will just have to cut spending, cut Medicare, cut Social Security. We cannot afford those increases in education.

Mr. Speaker, that is where this is really headed. People just need to know that when they support it.

Now, it is not fair to criticize if one does not have an alternative, and I have an alternative which has been put together by the Progressive Caucus. Our alternative is fair, it is based on reality, and it is affordable, and it is very simple. Every American would share in the surplus, from the tiniest, teeniest baby to the oldest senior citizen in a nursing home, all would share and share alike, because all have played a role in building the prosperity of this Nation. The American people’s dividend.

This year, it would average about \$300 per person, a family of four, \$1,200, no matter what their income. So for that family of four who falls into that lower 40 percent who would only get \$110 under the Bush plan, they would get \$1,200. They could afford more than