

wasteland if we do not address these issues.

So our attempt to put new resources in rural development is to acknowledge the crisis that exists in rural America. So I ask my colleagues as they consider the bill to understand that this resource will also be for farmers, it will be for their families, their neighbors, and their communities.

I would think that most of the farmers that I know, when we explain it to them, they will say, well, we are willing to share for the benefit of all of us who live in rural communities, because we know in the long run, unless these communities are viable and sustainable, that they will not have the resources. Their taxes go up when they have to pay for water resources. They lose their most productive citizens when they have to go somewhere else to work, when we do not have the infrastructure or the digital divide being addressed.

Those kinds of things add to the viability of the rural community, and farming is an essential part of it, but it is not the only part. So we want to make sure that our rural communities and our farmers will have an opportunity for a future. I just stress to my colleagues, they have an opportunity tomorrow, as we consider that amendment, to see the value of using that amendment to share with all.

Finally, there are about 6.6 percent of our citizens who live on farms, and there are more than 94 percent in the rural communities that are non-farm-workers. So this is an opportunity to allow the farm bill, or an opportunity to provide some leadership on this and speak to the larger group of people who can be benefited.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MCKINNEY 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 Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Washington 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 New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

DISPLACED WORKERS RELIEF

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, we have all been affected by the tragedies of September 11 in one way or the other. As a Nation, we see things in a new way. We are looking through a veil of shock, of anger, and of grief.

Congress has already moved with breathtaking swiftness to approve \$15 billion for an airline bailout, a bill, by the way, that allows the top executives in the airline industry to keep their current salaries while their companies receive huge Federal payments, and while their workers are losing their jobs.

But so far, when it comes to the airline workers, Congress just cannot seem to find time to help. But one thing has not changed: This Congress is still overlooking the needs of American workers.

Mr. Speaker, more than 100,000 airline employees have already been laid off as a result of the terrorist attacks. It is clear that in the coming weeks, the number of layoffs will increase. Yet, no action has been taken to help workers in the airline industry.

Mr. Speaker, it is disgraceful that we have done nothing to help the pilots, the flight attendants, baggage handlers, and the other employees who have lost their jobs as a result of September 11. It is certain that many of these workers will depend on unemployment benefits for longer than usual. Some will not be able to return to their jobs in the airline industry and will need training to qualify for new jobs. Displaced workers and their families will also need health care coverage while they are getting their lives back to normal.

That is why I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 2955, the Displaced Workers' Assistance Act. This legislation provides meaningful assistance to those workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11.

The Displaced Workers Assistance Act makes displaced workers eligible for an additional 52 weeks of unemployment insurance, and displaced workers who normally would not be eligible for unemployment insurance would receive 26 weeks of federally-financed payments. Those workers who cannot reasonably expect to return to their jobs within the airline industry would be eligible for retraining.

Finally, H.R. 2955 would ensure that displaced workers and their families have health insurance by reimbursing the cost of their COBRA payments, or for workers who do not qualify for COBRA, it would cover them under Medicaid.

Just as the airlines need our help because of the tragic events of September 11, so do the airline workers, those who find themselves without jobs, without the skills they need to obtain new jobs, and without health insurance for themselves and their families. These are the very people that made the airline industry successful in the first place.

We have used their skills, we have used their dedication, and now we need

to make sure that they are safe, as well as the airlines. As we help the industry overcome its losses as a result of the September 11 attacks, let us not forget the airline workers.

THE DISPLACED WORKERS ASSISTANCE ACT

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, last month the House of Representatives voted to help our Nation's airlines keep flying. We also promised relief for American workers. I will state that we promised, we promised help for American workers.

I am here today to remind Members of that promise, and to remind Members that it is not the money that keeps our planes in the air, it is not the money that keeps our economy growing, it is hard-working Americans. We must refocus our efforts. This is not about an industry, this is about hard-working Americans being able to feed their families, being able to feed their families.

Laid-off ground crews and flight attendants deserve a guarantee of health care coverage and an unemployment benefit. Also, it is our duty, I state, it is our duty to provide additional training to those whose duties will forever be changed, and I state, forever be changed.

We all realize that over 100,000 have been laid off. In my immediate area, it is expected that 12,000 will be expected from L.A. International Airport to be laid off.

I am also proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 2955, this Displaced Workers Assistance Act. That is what the bill is. Mr. Speaker, we must bring this bill, we must bring this bill to the floor. We must stand in solidarity with the airline industry workers and hundreds and thousands of those other hard-working Americans across the Nation impacted by this massive layoff and jobs lost.

Hard work will be our Nation's strength, and I state, will be our Nation's strength. Hard work will fuel our self-reliance.

Mr. Speaker, let us get to work on behalf of the airline employees. Let us get to work on behalf of the working people, on behalf of the working people affected by this tragedy across the Nation.

On September 11, our enemy struck us at the heart. Our enemy struck innocent Americans, and I state, innocent Americans in their workplace, in their workplace, not on the battlefields. Those who died in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, in the hijacked planes, died at work, died at work. At the top of the tower were restaurant employees preparing for the day, financial analysts devoted to keeping our economy strong, government employees securing our Nation

from the Pentagon. Eight pilots and 25 flight attendants were sacrificed for the terrorists' causes, and were struck down while doing their job, not to mention the 80 police officers and the 329 firefighters who also lost their lives.

It is impossible to imagine an event with greater capacity to compel America to unite in action, to unite and to take action. No citizen was untouched. No citizen across the United States or the world was untouched. Working people around the country all wanted to know what they could do to help. They continue to ask, "How can we help our Nation?" Firemen and women, police officers, medical crews, labored around the clock in dangerous and dramatic conditions. No doubt that their work was straining and heartbreaking, but they did it. Why? Because they believed in helping America.

We, too, as Members of Congress must do all that we can. I state, we, too, as Members of Congress, must do all that we can. We must work for the American people. We must commemorate their hard work and the sacrifices. We must never forget that for some of those, it was the ultimate sacrifice.

We must provide relief, and I state, we must provide relief related to the workers: the flight attendants, the pilots, the ground crew, security workers, as well as workers in the hospitality industry. We must do what is right for America. We must help working families. We must support this legislation. We must come together. We must bring it to the floor.

Only together in solidarity in working can we bring our Nation back to its strength. We must all come together.

□ 1915

RELIEF FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMONS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge quick action to address a crisis in our country. The number of workers displaced from the airlines and related industries since the devastating terrorist attacks of September 11 have been steadily growing and now stretches beyond 100,000.

Our air infrastructure is, in many ways, the backbone of our economy; and its strength is essential to the economic health of the United States. The September 11 tragedy and subsequent shutdown of the airways had a severe financial impact on carriers and led to massive layoffs. In response, this House passed, with my support, a \$15 billion package of cash assistance and loan guarantees to help the airlines weather this recent storm.

It continues to be my strong hope that by promoting the continued viability of air travel this aid will also help other businesses relying upon the airline industry, businesses like air-

craft manufacturers, travel agents, rental car agencies, hotels and restaurants, all of which have been affected by the recent shutdown in air travel.

Unfortunately, the airline assistance package is unlikely to help the thousands of workers who have lost their jobs in recent weeks, and we must not turn our backs on them in this critical time. If we truly hope to boost our Nation's economy, we must ensure that these men and women receive unemployment benefits, health care, and the training needed to minimize the transition time between jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of legislation which will give these workers a helping hand at a time when it is desperately needed. These measures introduced by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART) would allow displaced airline industry employees to petition the Department of Labor for special benefits akin to those provided under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program.

Specifically, eligible employees would receive unemployment benefits for 78 weeks instead of the usual 26, and even those who would not otherwise qualify for unemployment would be entitled to 26 weeks of benefits.

In addition, laid-off workers would receive up to 78 weeks of job-training assistance to ensure they could reenter the workforce as quickly as possible.

Finally, displaced workers would be provided up to 18 months of federally subsidized COBRA premiums, and those workers without COBRA would receive temporary Medicaid coverage.

Just as importantly, the assistance would be available to all airline and airport workers, including transit workers, as well as employees of airline suppliers, such as service workers and airplane manufacturers.

Mr. Speaker, we took an important first step by providing financial assistance to stabilize the airlines, restore confidence in air travel, and protect the millions of workers still employed in the airline industry. However, our work cannot end there. We must act quickly on behalf of the workers and their families who have been impacted by widespread layoffs. They desperately need our help to pay bills, buy groceries, maintain access to health care, and learn the skills they need to quickly find new employment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in telling these hardworking Americans that we have heard their plea and they can count on us to respond.

AIRLINE WORKER RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 60

minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I can pretty much assure the Speaker that I will not take the whole hour, but the gravity of why I am here allows that time is of no moment.

Time stood still on September 11 for this country and the world. Indeed, time ended for the countless victims that we know so well now lost their lives and many are still missing. Time stood still for the families of those victims and continues to stand still.

When that kind of tragedy occurs, in spite of our hope that we will get back to normal, the reality is that we will be normal; but it will be a different kind of normal, and those persons that were lost, Americans and persons from other parts of the world, will have their memories best served if those of us that have the immense responsibility of assisting in getting to the different normal were to take our time and make sure that we do everything that we possibly can to protect the interests of those victims, their families and the various workers and the industries and entrepreneurs that make this great structure of ours function.

Toward that end, last week I filed a bill that I come to the floor to speak about tonight, the Displaced Workers Relief Act, which is H.R. 2946; and in addition thereto, the minority leader and myself filed yet another measure that deals with virtually the same subject, but expands the definition of eligible employees.

I am proud to report to America this evening that 100 Members of the United States House of Representatives have signed on in that short period of time to the bill that was filed by my Republican colleague, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART), and myself as the initial movers of 2946. Among that 100, are 10 other Republicans. And, hopefully, in time, more will see the wisdom of this particular measure or will come forward with measures of their own so that we will not be standing still while the lives of others are lost.

There are so many creative notions as to what ought be done, and this is minuscule by comparison to some that have been introduced on either side of the aisle. In the other body, Senator JEAN CARNAHAN filed the legislation that our minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) and myself and other cosponsors filed.

It is not that all of us do not understand the seriousness of where we are in this country, but there is such a great need for us not to obfuscate, for us not to be about the business of trying to one-up each other, of our being prepared to sit down. I am fond of saying that we probably should be locked up here in the Capitol, all 540 of us that represent the people of this great country, until such time as we have come up with appropriate legislative answers that will address our needs and the needs of our constituents.