

State voted Republican during the last election cycle. The Legislature now has an obligation to pass a map that properly reflects the demographics and voting patterns of Texas.

"As stated previously, redistricting is a painful process, but it is also necessary. For the party in the minority, it is a difficult but important debate. It has been for years. However, the minority this session chose to walk away from the debate and crossed a line that should never be crossed. The rules of the House relating to a quorum were created to maintain a balance, protecting both the majority and the minority parties. This rule has been abused and a harmful precedent has been set. If 51 members dislike a piece of legislation, they may simply walk away. No debate. No vote. No representation.

"There will always be a majority and a minority. We will continue to redistrict State and congressional maps for decades to come. Such emotionally charged issues are simply part of the process, and because of this, rules and respect for the rules are required. Without them, the system breaks down. Not just for the 150 Members of the Texas House, but for every citizen of Texas."

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MILESTONE

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. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor this evening to mark the fact that we now have 100 cosponsors of House Resolution 193, a bill reaffirming support of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This legislation seeks to educate on the horrors of the crimes against humanity of genocide and, by educating, helping to prevent genocide from happening again. It is common knowledge that history repeats itself, and some of the worst crimes against humanity are no exception to this rule.

Mr. Speaker, as the cochair and founder of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, I have been involved in genocide recognition efforts for the past decade. The caucus is 125 members strong and has been instrumental in the education of my colleagues on the issue of Armenian genocide. We have organized floor speeches every year on April 24, we have circulated a yearly letter asking the President to use the word "genocide" in his yearly April 24 address, and, most importantly, we were very close in the year 2000 in passing legislation officially recognizing the Armenian genocide.

That resolution in 2000 did not come to the House floor for a vote due to a decision by the leadership. If it were not for that decision, the legislation would have passed overwhelmingly, in my opinion.

As I mentioned, the Armenian Caucus sends a yearly letter to the President asking him to use the word "genocide" in his yearly April 24 commemoration. President Bush, like President Clinton before him, made a campaign promise to give the Armenian genocide its due recognition, but then they both recanted. Both presidents avoided the use of the word "genocide" in their statements.

This year, 168 Members of Congress, well over one-third of the total number of Members serving, asked President Bush to use the word "genocide" last month. He instead characterized the worst crime ever to befall the Armenian people as a "great calamity." I must say I reject this characterization as simplistic and also demeaning, and I hope my colleagues in the House will do the same. If they do, they have the chance to act by joining the 100 Members who have signed on to H.R. 193 and take a stand to properly recognize the worst crimes against humanity.

I use the plural "crimes," because this legislation is not only about the Armenians. In the bill it states, "the enactment of the Genocide Convention Implementation Act marked a principal stand by the United States against the crime of genocide and an important step towards ensuring that the lessons of the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide and the genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda, among others, will be used to help prevent future genocides."

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have not come together as a world community to eradicate the horrific crime of systematic destruction of an entire people. Every generation in the last 100 years has seen the brutal realities of genocide, but none have fully learned from it. Passing House Resolution 193, in my opinion, will help to educate and hopefully help to stop the crime of genocide in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that we have obtained cosponsors that will bear great credence to this bill. H.R. 193 is currently under consideration in the Committee on the Judiciary, with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman SENSENBRENNER) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) on as cosponsors. Also among the 100 cosponsors are the minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), and the former minority leader and presidential candidate, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT). All of my colleagues on a bipartisan basis will be instrumental in passing this bill, but it is nice to see some early support from a very diverse group of Members on a bipartisan basis.

The title of House Resolution 193 includes the word "genocide," but the heart of the bill is about humanity. It takes humanity to overcome the ignorance that spurs the evil crime of genocide, learning about another culture instead of fearing it. It takes humanity to bridge the gap of hate that exists between a warring people.

We have seen this work in the last century. One of the worst crimes ever to be committed, the Holocaust against the Jews, is the best example of how some good can come from a terrible evil. At the end of World War II, Germany was vanquished as a Nation and its citizens were forced to accept the reality of what Hitler had done. The fact is, Germans as a people accepted that something horrific had taken place, and they accepted it. Last year, the Holocaust Museum in Berlin became a reality. Sixty years after the Holocaust, peace was made where war had begun.

The lessons of the relationship of the Jewish and German people should be applied to the rest of the victims and perpetrators of the crime of genocide all around the world. This is especially true, Mr. Speaker, in Armenia and Turkey. It has been 88 years since the beginning of the genocide, and after 33 U.S. State legislatures, over a dozen governments around the globe and vast documentation in our national archives, the Turkish government still will not recognize the Armenian genocide. They have instead established a deliberate campaign of revisionist history to try to commit the last act of genocide, the destruction of culture and history.

I ask that the Turkish government give up its futile effort and for my colleagues to join me in recognizing the worst crimes against humanity.

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

(Mr. ROHRABACHER 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 Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STENHOLM 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 Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINOJOSA 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 Texas (Mr. GONZALEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE LARRY COMBEST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) is recognized for

60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, over the next hour we will be paying tribute to our colleague and friend, Representative LARRY COMBEST, who announced in November of 2002 that he was retiring from Congress at the end of this month.

It is a real privilege and honor for me to participate in this special order, because LARRY has been a friend and a mentor to me for more than 10 years now since I first became a Member of the House and joined the House Committee on Agriculture. He served as our chairman for 4 years. He has very graciously traveled to my district to meet with my farmers and community leaders and talk about matters of concern to them and has truly been a great help to many of us here in the Congress.

LARRY COMBEST has also faithfully served his own constituents, his home State of Texas and his country, for the past 18 years.

His greatest legislative accomplishment lies in his shepherding through of the landmark 2002 Farm Bill, which President Bush signed into law last year. He and other members of the committee began work on the bill 3 years ago when the agriculture community was in the throes of a severe economic depression. Under LARRY'S leadership, the farm bill was eventually signed into law, reflecting his goal of providing a dependable safety net that farmers could rely on when tough economic times arise, as they inevitably will.

President Dwight Eisenhower once remarked, "Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you are 1,000 miles from the cornfield."

LARRY understood the fundamental concept that legislators in Washington cannot craft effective farm policy if they are not in touch with the day-to-day struggles of rural America. With this in mind, the Committee on Agriculture, under LARRY'S leadership, held 10 field hearings across the country before actually sitting down to craft the farm bill. They drew high attendance and over 200 witnesses.

For his tireless work on behalf of the farm community, he received countless accolades, among them the Gerald W. Thomas Outstanding Agriculturalist Award for Public Service, the Lubbock Area Foundation Hero of the Year Award, and the Legislator of the Year from the National Association of Farm Service Agency Employees.

While LARRY was a consistent voice for agriculture, his work in Congress

did not end there. He is a senior Member of the Committee on Small Business, where he has earned a reputation as a fiscally responsible Member of Congress who serves as a reliable steward of taxpayer money.

□ 2030

As evidence of this commitment, his first day in Congress he cosponsored the balanced budget amendment. He has also been a leader on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and has lent previous experience in the military affairs and in intelligence matters to the Congress, and that has also been widely recognized and acknowledged.

In recognition of his efforts, he has been the recipient of many recent awards, including the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Service Award, Leader of the Year in Service to Agriculture by Progressive Farmer Magazine, the Independent Bankers Association of Texas 2002 Trailblazer Award, and the Heritage of Odessa Foundation's 2002 Award for Excellence in Community Service in Government.

Additionally, each year the National Federation of Independent Businesses recognizes LARRY as a guardian of small business, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has consistently honored him with their Prestigious Spirit of Enterprise Award.

In addition to his abundant legislative accomplishments, LARRY remained attentive to the needs of his constituents, never forgetting where he came from and who sent him here. His office has an excellent reputation for case work which flowed from his enthusiastic spirit of service. Voters recognized this about LARRY, expressing their confidence in his representation by ever-increasing electoral margins.

I am honored to follow him as chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and am committed to ensuring that the farm bill that he guided through Congress is implemented according to its original intent. He has been a valued colleague.

After nearly 2 decades of distinguished public service, it is an understatement to say that LARRY COMBEST can return home with his head held high. But those who know him doubt that will happen; for, in spite of all that he has accomplished, LARRY has maintained his humility, a character trait which is increasingly rare in this city.

I know he is anxious to return to west Texas, to his friends and family; and we wish him and his wife, Sharon, all of the best. His consistent voice on behalf of rural America will be terribly missed.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture who has served long in this body and served the entire time the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) served.

Mr. STENHOLM. I thank the gentleman very much for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is with very mixed emotions that I join in tonight's Special Order to recognize the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) on his departure from the halls of Congress. I say mixed emotions because, while it is more than fitting for the House to recognize him for his many years of service to this body, both as a staff member and as a Representative, I am sorry to see the departure of a colleague, a neighbor, and a friend.

Many times over the past two Congresses I would, sometime during my speech, say, well, at first it was the first Congress in the history of our Nation, then it was the second, this would have been the third Congress in which one State, Texas, had the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture. At no time in our history has this ever happened. Not only were we from the same State, but we were neighbors and we were friends.

That is the spirit in which I come tonight. Since LARRY came to Congress in 1985, we have had many occasions to work together for the mutual benefit of Texas, our Nation, and particularly our Nation's agriculture.

In fact, it was a year ago this month that the 2002 farm bill was enacted into law, and about a year and a half of the time and effort of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) went into writing that bill. It was a collaborative effort, very typical of the bipartisan manner for which the Committee on Agriculture is recognized.

As much as I would have enjoyed being the chairman during that period of time, that was not to be; but LARRY made sure that, as ranking member, I was a full participant throughout the legislative process, and I greatly appreciated the opportunity of riding shotgun and working side by side with him in that endeavor.

I do not believe it would be an overstatement tonight to say that without LARRY'S devoted work on that farm bill in a bipartisan way, it would not have become law. I think that is a very fair and accurate statement. Many times we might stretch it a little bit; but knowing as much about the inner workings of what happened in that bill, without the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), we would not have gotten it done. I think the colleagues on the gentleman's side of the aisle agree and those on my side agree.

LARRY'S departure from the House of Representatives marks the end of a very distinguished record of service to the folks of the 19th Congressional District of Texas. LARRY throughout this time has been a man of great character and sound judgment who has served his constituents well. I personally will miss his company, his counsel, and the true spirit of bipartisanship with which he conducted himself throughout his tenure in Congress.

Sadly, such bipartisanship and good will has increasingly become a rare

commodity in the halls of Congress, but not on the House Committee on Agriculture.

LARRY, Cindy and I wish you and Sharon all the best as you embark upon a new chapter in your lives. I hope and trust there will be many more occasions for our paths to cross in the future. It has truly been a pleasure to work with you. We will miss you; but we know, suspect highly, that those paths will cross again in some constructive way. Good luck and God speed to you and Sharon.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman.

It is my pleasure to recognize the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker. I imagine that most of us in this House particularly admire or respect someone for various reasons: their use of power, their talent in persuasion, their deep commitment to a cause or an issue. I admire LARRY COMBEST because he has the right balance of things. He knows what is really important in politics and in life. He maintains his dignity, his honesty, and his commitment while giving us his best for nearly 20 years.

He served this Nation and the State of Texas in an extraordinary way in standing firm for the farmers of this country, for rural America, and for business interests. LARRY's quiet and often serious demeanor fooled me for a while, but we often get to really know each other in this House either by working on a particular issue together or by traveling together. That is how I got to know LARRY and his wonderful wife, Sharon. You don't really know LARRY until you have experienced the love and closeness that LARRY and Sharon share.

This Congressman from west Texas has much to be proud of; but LARRY would probably say, I am just doing my job. I will miss LARRY in this Congress, we all will, but we could not do better than to pattern our service after his.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS).

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who crafted and delivered a strong farm bill to the farmers of the Twelfth Congressional District of Georgia.

Although I serve on the Committee on Agriculture now, I did not have the opportunity to serve on the committee under the leadership of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST). I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) for his support for the Georgia farmers that I now represent, and for his commitment to the benefit of American agriculture.

In his 4 years as chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) worked to improve Federal risk-management programs and Federal farm policy. His work went beyond that of the livelihoods of farmers. He worked to improve rural infrastruc-

ture, university research, broadband access, child nutrition, conservation efforts, and even food to aid other countries.

Mr. Speaker, LARRY COMBEST is well respected among the farmers I represent. His masterpiece, the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, is farm policy that my producers support. The legacy of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) will be remembered and appreciated for years to come.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Imagine for a moment the late 1990s where many farmers were going broke. There were auctions, and farmers had to sell out farms that had been in their family for generations.

Imagine running for reelection in 1998, being reelected, and being asked to serve as chairman of the Committee on Agriculture to pass a new farm bill to try to keep a viable agriculture in the United States, a huge challenge. Every commodity group is coming forward to suggest that they should have more money from the Federal Government, but being chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, LARRY COMBEST was still under pressure to limit total spending.

I think it should be repeated that where we ended up on the subsidies for agriculture were actually less under this farm bill that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) guided through. Subsidies for farmers ended up less than what they were for the prior 3 years.

LARRY COMBEST came to Congress as a leader in Texas agriculture. He came with the knowledge of how farm programs work. I had my disagreements with some of the provisions of the farm bill, like I suspect every member of the Committee on Agriculture might have written it a little bit differently if they had their personal desires. But what we ended up with is a help for American agriculture, faced with a situation of challenging subsidies in a world atmosphere. Let me give a couple of examples.

Europe, for example, subsidizes their farmers five times as much as we subsidize our farmers. Japan subsidizes their farmers between 20 and 25 percent as much as we subsidize our farmers. We ended up with a farm bill that is going to help assure, at least, that we have a strong, viable agriculture in the United States.

On LARRY COMBEST's retirement, I wish him Godspeed and thanks for the effort.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman.

It is my pleasure to recognize the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia, the chairman, for taking this time to

pay tribute to our departing Member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST).

Mr. Speaker, my connections with LARRY go back some distance. We were raised in towns about 30 miles apart in the Texas panhandle and our families knew each other, but I really got to know him when I went to work for him as his administrative assistant in 1985, shortly after he was first elected to Congress.

Of course, LARRY was not just any freshman Congressman. He had worked for Senator John Tower and came to Congress with that background, experience, and network all working for him. Needless to say, I learned a lot and benefited tremendously from my time as part of the Combest team.

For the last 8½ years, LARRY and I have represented adjoining districts, and even shared in the representation of several cities and counties. I have continued to learn from him and to benefit from our work together.

Mr. Speaker, LARRY COMBEST's public record of accomplishment is well known in Washington and in Texas. From leadership positions, such as chairman of the select Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and then chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, he has made a bright mark on the public policy agenda of the last decade.

The farm bill, which he shepherded through the 107th Congress, was landmark legislation, important not just to agriculture but to the country's economy and to the health and standard of living of all Americans.

But along the way, as he was leaving his mark on public policy for the Nation, he was providing outstanding representation to the people of the 19th Congressional District of Texas. Every day he was their advocate. Every day he was their voice. Every day he was their biggest fan.

Of course, none of us do this job alone. Other than the handicap of a certain AA in the middle of the 1980s, LARRY has been fortunate to have an outstanding group of dedicated public servants assisting him. And I think it is important to mention those that have been with LARRY nearly 20 years: Lynn Cowart, Patti Murphy, Jenny Welch, Mary Whistler, Jay Ibarra, Jimmy Clark.

Any Member of the House or Senate would be fortunate indeed to have such dedicated, loyal, capable staff members.

In addition, LARRY has been fortunate to have outstanding help on the political side. Jane Anne Stinnett has been the director of LARRY's team since the beginning of his political career. I have never met anyone who works harder or cares more in such a selfless way. She is a remarkable lady, and it is a combination of LARRY's good fortune and good judgment that led to Jane Anne playing a key role in LARRY's political and public life for 20 years.

Lisa Nowlin has also played an important part in LARRY'S political world, as has Ken Towery. Mr. Speaker, it is impossible for me to catalog the career and contributions of Ken Towery, from Pulitzer Prize winner to chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Among other things, he has helped guide the tremendously successful political career of LARRY COMBEST, among others.

It is said that first-rate people hire first-rate people, while second-rate people hire third-rate people. If that is true, LARRY COMBEST ranks at the top because he has truly had first-rate people working with him throughout his career.

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Finally, one cannot speak about LARRY COMBEST without acknowledging the central role played by his wife, Sharon. Their partnership made all of LARRY'S other accomplishments possible.

Mr. Speaker, LARRY COMBEST has been a caring mentor, an outstanding representative, a thoughtful leader and a good friend. Like so many other Members and friends, I will miss having him around Washington, but I will also know that his impact on the lives of so many people in Texas and throughout the Nation will last for many years to come. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his excellent statement.

At this time I am pleased to recognize the chairman of the department operations, oversight, nutrition, forestry, dairy, et cetera, et cetera, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I am so honored to be here tonight to pay tribute to our friend, LARRY COMBEST. A lot has already been said, and I do not want to be redundant and repeat some of the things that have been said, but I would like to mention a couple of things.

One is that he is probably one of the best dressers in the U.S. Congress. I have been with him at meetings with farmers, and he is always appropriately but the best dressed person there. And I think anybody who knows LARRY knows that I am saying exactly the truth.

The other thing I should mention about LARRY is the first time I ever met him was for a retreat for Republicans at some god-awful Xerox center about 50 miles west of here. It was my first chance to spend any time with LARRY, and the one thing that was very obvious to me in our first real meeting and discussion, he is an incredibly good listener. Now, in this town that is a quality that is not developed in many of us, not the way it should be. But LARRY is an amazing listener. He listens to what people have to say, and it

is reflected in the success that he has had in his congressional career.

He came from west Texas. The district that he represents is one of the biggest energy-producing districts in the country, and yet he took the time to listen to our farmers and to other people on the importance of biofuels and ethynyl and biodiesel and came to the conclusion that it made an awful lot of sense long term for our energy policy. He did not put his own parochial interests above what was in the best interests of American agriculture.

So much has already been said, but it was because of that deep feeling that he was able to go to the Committee on the Budget a few years ago and get an unprecedented \$73.5 billion out of the fiscal year 2001 budget so that we could create that farm bill. And he taught us so much about what it takes to make a farm bill, but it was his character that pushed it all the way through, and I mean that. Because passing a farm bill is much tougher than I ever thought. What he did was he demonstrated one of those things that we need to learn more about here in Washington and that is he was firm on principle but flexible on policy; and, ultimately, it was his vision of this farm bill that really won the day.

Now, LARRY, we are going to miss you a lot. I am going to miss you more than you can even imagine. We will miss you a lot more than you will miss us. Certainly you deserve a little respite from this rat race. I can only say that I hope that you will not forget us rats.

Thank you very much and God bless you.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Rural Development and Research and a whole host of other responsibilities.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, on the last day of this month this body will lose a Member who has for almost 18½ years been a critical part of several committees. The Committee on Small Business has been noted, serving as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. But for me personally his chairmanship of the House Committee on Agriculture probably provides me with my greatest memories and has had the most tremendous impacts on my legislative judgment, certainly on my constituents in Oklahoma.

I think back to 1996 when, in the heat of debate, at one of the most critical points of that farm bill, of sitting in a room with the then-Speaker and the late Bill Emerson and the soon-to-be-Chairman COMBEST as we discussed agriculture and southern crops and watching LARRY make quite clear what the needs were of his constituents and what he felt like the needs were for agriculture in the United States and changing the course of the farm bill that day.

Then in 2002 under his chairmanship and leadership with the gavel, setting

about as he said at the time to go forth and listen to our farmers, yes, to listen to the experts and, yes, to listen to all the academic input, but to create a farm bill for the producers, a farm bill based on the things that they thought should be in a farm bill. Many at the time thought it was a pretty amazing concept, not always the way things are done in Washington, D.C. But, lo and behold, hearings across the country, hearings beyond belief here in the Nation's Capital, and the result of that was an amazing farm bill.

And, oh, yes, the chairman's patience in conference committee, dealing with the, shall we say, other side of the building and dealing with some of our own membership, patience that would make Job extremely proud. And the result of that was a farm bill that locked in a tremendous amount of resources that, had we dug around that farm bill in 2003, would not have been there. Yes, a farm bill based on what our neighbors back home told us they wanted, crafted in a way that could build almost two-thirds majorities in both the House and the Senate placed on the books.

But, ultimately, I think when LARRY and Sharon return home to west Texas, the final observation will be that they have been good servants of their constituents; and that is what it is all about, representing those folks back home to the best of your ability in a way that they would be proud of.

That, Mr. Chairman, you have accomplished. That is a goal I think we should all work towards.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

At this time it is my pleasure to recognize the chairman of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I am delighted to be here. It is an honor to have served in this Congress these last 7 years with the gentleman from the 19th District of Texas (Mr. COMBEST).

Mr. Speaker, when I came to Congress I knew it was important to me to be associated with people who understood and cared about agriculture and who cared about farmers and ranchers of America; and it was my honor to become acquainted with Chairman COMBEST. He has been a role model and mentor for me since that time of my arrival 7 years ago.

Those of us who represent agriculture in the House of Representatives are a minority. There are not enough of us, and what it takes is people who go beyond their numbers, who more than 1 out of 435 can make a difference. And the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) has done that. He has done that because he is knowledgeable and understands the issues. It is in his blood. That is where he comes from. It is who he is. Agriculture, farming and ranching is LARRY COMBEST.

It is because he is a leader, because he cares about using that information

and knowledge on behalf of those engaged in everyday activities trying to earn a living on the farms and ranches of America.

His leadership in the Committee on Agriculture is extraordinary. It is just something that we have relied upon. As we have worked our way through a farm bill in this last Congress, it is clear to me that because of his leadership things happened. He has a commitment to what he believes in, and he believes in farmers and ranchers of America. He wants to see our family farms survive and prosper. He wants that way of life to continue. He has a commitment to serving his constituents and helping American agriculture be here today and tomorrow.

And, perhaps most importantly, he has integrity. I have never known anyone who I could trust more than LARRY COMBEST. His word can be taken for what it was, his word. What he said is what he meant. His advice was honestly given. I have never known him to mislead anyone. And it was that character and that integrity that made it possible for us to do things in agriculture on this House floor because people trusted him, they respected him, and they honored what he was about.

As he returns home to Texas, it is with some sadness that we see my friend LARRY COMBEST leave. We all invest in other people in this place. Oftentimes I suppose we spend too much time worrying about things that are not so important. But the thing that is important is the relationships, friendships, and understandings that we have with other Members of Congress; and I consider it a high honor to have been associated with LARRY COMBEST during his term as a Member of Congress.

His relationships with other Members of the House will not end with his departure. His friendship with President Bush has really been beneficial to those of us who care about rural America, and we look forward to his continued involvement in issues that matter to us and to farmers and ranchers across the country.

Public service is something that we all talk about, something that we engage in as Members of Congress, but we all have a lot to learn from LARRY COMBEST who exemplifies the role of a true public servant, who did what he thought was right, who fought the fight and made a difference on behalf of the people of Texas and on behalf of the people of America.

Mr. Speaker, I wish LARRY and Sharon the absolute best in their future years. I thank them both for their friendship. I honor and respect them, and I hope the fish bite. Thank you, LARRY.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, at this time it is my pleasure to recognize the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight, like many others, proud of our colleague and chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, LARRY

COMBEST. They say that you make a living by what you get but you make a life by what you give, and by that measure LARRY COMBEST has enjoyed a very rich life. He has given back so much to his community, to our State of Texas, and, of course, to the Nation he loves so much.

At times like this it is tempting, I think, to focus on his achievements because there are so many ways, so many ways he has made a difference for the better in this country. But I think you need to be most impressed by LARRY COMBEST's attributes, his qualities as a man.

He has so much integrity, remarkable amount of integrity. He is so thoughtful about the issues. He does his homework so much. He is like the rural community he represents, incredibly hard working. His advice truly is honest. And he not only has principles and values, he lives his principles and he lives his values each day. He is a wonderful role model for younger Members of Congress, for his colleagues, his peers, for all who have worked with him. He is just a remarkable man.

And as much as we are going to miss him, the fact is we are overjoyed that he and Sharon will be sharing their time together. They have given so much back to America. We are anxious to give them time together. God bless.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I thank all of those who participated in this today, and I wonder if I might prevail upon the man of the hour to say a few words to us himself.

A lot has been mentioned about the possibility that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) might spend some time fishing in the next few months. That will be a well-deserved recreation for he and his wife, Sharon. But I find it especially refreshing, given that he represents a district that includes, as I understand it, the town of no trees, and I do not think he has much by the way of national forestland. So I am glad he will get the opportunity to enjoy it all across the country.

So at this time I am pleased to yield to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), the former chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture and my friend.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I am touched deeply by the gentleman's comments and the fact that you will take this special order to do this. One never expects to find themselves in this position, and we have seen it over the years as others make their departures, and you never know exactly how it feels until that time comes for yourself. But I appreciate so much the gentleman's kind words opening this and those of my friends and my colleagues that had very kind things to say.

It is the friendships, I think, that one can develop here that is important. It is not just the work. It is the friendships that you can develop and the growth and the years that you can watch occur to your colleagues and to your friends and to your staff.

I appreciate so much the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) mentioning so many people that have been involved in the making of the success of the office, not my success, but the success of the office that the people of the 19th District through 10 elections gave us the opportunity to sit in because they are important. He knows them well. As he mentioned, as a former chief of staff, he is one of those that should definitely be mentioned when you think about hiring the best. You all see that every day in the work that he continues and that he does in this House, his thoughtfulness, his integrity, his intelligence, his character.

Sharon and I fondly remember watching him and his now-wife and mother of their children when they were dating and attending their wedding and watching Mary Kemp and Will as they grew up and as they were born and as they have turned into young adults; and they are dear, dear friends and very dear in our hearts.

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And to others, I am just sorry that when GIL GUTKNECHT was here we did not have a little Rodney Dangerfield episode. I encourage any of my colleagues who have never had the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) do Rodney Dangerfield that it is worth your time.

To, obviously, all of those who put in the hard work on the committee and those who came tonight that were not part of the committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) are dear Texas friends for coming and sharing with us. They are both dear, dear friends, dear people to us, and their families.

That will be the thing, I suppose, more than anything that is missed. It has been a wonderful ending to a career that we have seen an opportunity to visit with a lot of groups. I always find that the person whose name is on the letterhead is the one who gets the award or the one who gets the acclaim, but certainly not the one that solely is responsible for any of the work that is done. I think back to the most recent thing, of course that has been the farm bill, but back to the years on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a wonderful dedicated staff of public servants. Most of their work no one will ever know.

We wrote a piece of work over a 2-year period of time that was called IC-21, the Intelligence Community for the 21st Century, and it created a lot of turf battles. It did not get far, but I told the staff as that was completed that the good news was and the thing they could rest in was that someday the intelligence community would look like that product. And following September 11, it is becoming to look more like it, because it was a work in what should be done.

Certainly the most recent effort, the farm bill, was a tremendous dedication

by a lot of people. The committee and all of the members of the committee were so dedicated to producing a product and laying aside any partisan bickering and certainly laying aside even parochial interest for the better of the whole. And it was a success. It was something that took a lot of work.

I have often said to those groups that I have had a chance to meet with that I only wish that they knew the work that was put in by the committee staff. It is something they will never have an appreciation of, the time that they spend away from family; literally the nights that were spent on the floor, on couches, in chairs, wherever they could grab a quick nap, wherever they could get a little rest and then plod on from there. They never quit. They never gave up. They did it with wonderful smiling faces. American agriculture, I think, has never seen such a capable staff assembled, nor do I suspect they will ever see one that is more capable ever assembled in the future. They did such great work.

Bill O'Conner, chief of staff, who was in and around the committee nearly 20 years ago when I started, and who knows a great deal about the institution, about agriculture, and about the process. And it was many, many long hard hours under his leadership and direction that that staff continued to work. And everyone worked together. Tom Sell, who was the deputy chief of staff, one of the great young men that I have gotten to know over the years. It does not hurt also that his son and I share the same birthday. Noah and GIL GUTKNECHT and I have the same birthday, and it is something we will obviously always remember.

I could tell a story about every member of that staff and the work that they put into the end product that became the farm bill. There were some, Alan Mackey, who literally was so wracked with pain that it was difficult at times for him to even get out of bed, but was always there, every day, long, long hours every day. Dr. Elizabeth Parker was undergoing chemo at the time and set a new style for women's hair fashions in the Committee on Agriculture. She was there every day. Debbie Smith, whose home was less than a quarter of a mile away from those hit by a tornado, spent 3 days up here and never went home to see how things were because it was at a critical time here.

So many others on both the majority and the minority. There was an effort put into this in a bipartisan fashion, as my dear, dear friend CHARLIE STENHOLM said that was not for politics but for the good of the cause of American agriculture.

There are so many people over the years that I could spend a lot longer than any of my colleagues want to spend mentioning the staff and the work they do. They make us look awfully good. All of us know that. They are the ones that produce the work that really makes a difference, that

keep the fires burning. I will be very remiss in not mentioning every one of them, and I could, and you are all in my thoughts; but I will particularly mention Lynn and Patty, who were there the day the door opened and will be there the day the lights are turned out, and have just kept things going, and so many in the district.

It has reminded me a great deal over the past several months of a particular translation from Corinthians that says, "What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God how can anyone boast as having accomplished anything on their own?" And I think we have to always recognize there are a lot of others, including much more powerful than we, who direct our lives and who direct the things that we do.

And I will just close with this, Mr. Speaker, again giving my appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, but saving the best for last, I want to thank Sharon. This is, as all my colleagues know, a family effort. This is not something we, anyone, does alone. It takes a tremendous amount of sacrifice and dedication on the part of our spouses. Mine is extra special.

I have very fond memories of this place, but one of the things that she and I have talked about is that we hope that we have spent our last night apart, as so many nights we spend apart from our families when we are in Congress. And to those of you who we will miss greatly not being here, the fact that 24 hours of every day I will spend with her, I can take missing you all a little bit. We are looking very forward to the next phase in our lives, spending it together.

It was quite ironic, I think, when we made the announcement publicly that we were going to make this move. We just simply could not quit. Everyone was just so interested, particularly the media, about what was wrong. There has to be a problem. You cannot just walk away from this. And I think she summed it up quite well when she said, isn't it really sad that people do not think you can leave that to spend more time with your wife? And it is, I guess, if people think that with all of the wonderful opportunities that we have here, that that is more important to us than those that we care about.

And so we are looking forward to this next phase, I will assure you, as much as we were 18½ years ago when we came here preparing for this phase; but it will be done in a different setting. We intend to continue in our service. It will be in an unpaid capacity, and it will be done out of dedication and love for each other and for people. But this has been a wonderful opportunity, and I am proud of the accomplishments that this House has made over the years and that I have been able to just sit here and be a part of it.

We will continue to watch you occasionally, to see how you are doing. But come about middle of the summer, when it is really hot and humid here,

we will be somewhere under the cool trees in the mountains of Colorado, maybe spending enough time there that I could almost become a constituent of my good friend Governor Bill Owens. We will not be there quite that long, we will always have a home in our beloved Texas, but we are looking forward to that adventure in our lives.

So next week, when you are out doing your Memorial Day parades, we are going to start the fishing trip. Thank you very much.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for sharing those wonderful remarks with us, and I thank him also for sharing nearly 2 decades of his life with the American people and with all of us here in the Congress. We thank Sharon for sharing you with us because it has been a blessing for all of us. So we wish you the best.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to note that we have a large contingent of staff members of the House Committee on Agriculture and other friends and supporters of LARRY in the gallery. I mentioned earlier that the RECORD will remain open for an additional 5 days for Members to submit statements for the RECORD, and a number already have.

I would also note that the vice chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Horticulture, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES), the former chairman of the Subcommittee on Specialty Crops and Foreign Agriculture Programs, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. EVERETT), have submitted statements for the RECORD, and I know others have been submitted and will be in the coming days because, LARRY, many of us want to let you know how highly we regard you and we wish you happy trails and abundant streams. May God abundantly bless you and Sharon in all of your future travels.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLE). The Chair will remind all Members not to refer to occupants of the gallery.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, LARRY COMBEST is a good friend. I will miss him and his wife Sharon very much.

All of his friends who remain in the House of Representatives wish him happiness in his new endeavors.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues on the House Agriculture Committee in saying farewell to an old friend and statesman, retiring Congressman LARRY COMBEST of Texas.

I've known LARRY since I first came to Congress and joined the Agriculture Committee in 1993 and I have the utmost respect for his continual dedication to the Nation and our farmers and ranchers.

LARRY COMBEST's long and distinguished career has included the chairmanships of the