

MOURNING THE PASSING OF
PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, folks from across the country came to Washington this week to mourn the passing of President Ronald Reagan. Even in death, the former President continued his fascinating connection with Americans of all types.

Although I never met Ronald Reagan, he was one of my inspirations for entering politics. I was 18 at the time of his 1980 presidential campaign and it was the first big election to which I really paid attention. I remember being drawn to what this man, a half a century older than me, was saying about having faith in our country, its people and their future. He was optimistic, cheerful and came across as a thoroughly likable guy.

It was simply astounding how he could establish a bond with even the most unlikely audience. In 1984, I was a senior at The Ohio State University and a member of the marching band. We were asked to play at a rally that President Reagan would be holding at St. John Arena. At first we all thought it would be an official band appearance, but then we were informed that since the President's visit was actually a campaign event, we could not appear as The Ohio State University Marching Band. If we wished, though, we could volunteer on our own, and appear without our uniforms. There were roughly 200 members in the band at that time and, as I recall, roughly 200 of us jumped at the opportunity to play at the President's campaign event. Think of it. A couple of hundred college kids were treating the appearance of a 73-year-old Republican President as enthusiastically as the Michigan game—we would not have missed it for the world.

President Reagan could connect with college kids and he could connect with Democrats, particularly those like my dad, an Italian immigrant who worked as a machinist. He came to America so he could have a better life and his kids' lives would be better still. He knew exactly what Ronald Reagan was talking about.

He was The Great Communicator. President Reagan swept aside the filters and "analysis" of the news media and spoke from the Oval Office directly with the American people. He had the gift of explaining issues and his positions on them in simple, effective terms—a gift all too few of us in politics today possess. President Reagan spoke in a way that made Americans feel like they were almost partners with him.

Perception is reality, and Ronald Reagan knew that. His message of hope and optimism put a new face on the Republican Party, and brought an end to the dour Nixonian era of GOP politics. Young people like me began looking at the Republican Party in a different way. Because of Ronald Reagan, we could take pride in being Republicans.

I was struck by the attitude I saw in Washington this week. Certainly, there was sadness and grief over the loss of one of the giants of our time. But in keeping with the make-up of the man himself, there was more. As often as

not, people also smiled when they spoke of Ronald Reagan, often displaying that same sense of hope and good cheer that he himself had radiated throughout his life. For all his accomplishments, it's that same sense of hope and optimism that I'll think of whenever I remember Ronald Reagan.

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SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I'm honored to join my colleagues in support of H. Res. 664, honoring the late Honorable Ronald Wilson Reagan, 40th President of the United States. As is the case for so many speaking in this chamber today, Ronald Reagan was one of my personal heroes.

Although we are all deeply saddened by the passing of President Reagan, Americans today are still touched by his legacy and his steadfast belief in the promise of this great Nation. By using his famous wit, he knew how to make us believe in ourselves again. Each of us has our favorite examples of the Reagan wit. My favorite quote is, "Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

To Ronald Reagan, "America is a shining city upon a hill for all to see and to follow and reach to, something toward which mankind should strive." Reagan brought convictions and determination as well as a genuine, hopeful and optimistic outlook to the office of President. Ronald Reagan never doubted his convictions. He never lost faith in America. His reassuring tones were comforting even in difficult times. With Reagan as president, it was indeed morning again in America.

Just prior to Ronald Reagan assuming the presidency, many people wondered whether this country's best days were behind us. Reagan insisted: "America's best days lie ahead." By the time he left office, the United States was enjoying the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history. President Reagan's most long-lasting legacy is his role in winning the Cold War. While the common doctrine of the time called for containing Communism, Reagan boldly predicted it would soon be "left on the ash-heap of history."

During the journey that was the Reagan revolution, he restored prosperity, confidence, optimism, faith and pride in America. While we will miss Ronald Reagan, his contributions to the world will be felt for generations to come. He came to Washington to change the country and ended up changing the world. As he said in his farewell address to the Nation from the Oval Office, "A final word to the men and women of the Reagan revolution, the men and women across America who for eight years did the work that brought America back. My friends: We did it. We weren't just marking time. We made a difference. We made the city stronger, we made the city freer, and we left her in good hands. All in all, not bad, not bad at all."

Summing up an American icon, a giant, like Ronald Reagan is an enormous task. I am

grateful for the vision Ronald Reagan taught me and the lessons about the power of convictions, the value of principled leadership, and the goodness and the decency of the human spirit. We'll miss the twinkle in his eyes and affable smile which have left this earth. However, the contributions he made to his country and to mankind remain with us, as vast as the great continent that the United States spans, and God willing, will outlast us all.

As an American, I want to join in offering my support of H. Res. 664, honoring the late Honorable Ronald Wilson Reagan, 40th President of the United States.

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SPEECH OF

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in offering a tribute to former President Ronald Reagan. He is rightly remembered as a larger-than-life figure—a man who conquered first Hollywood, then California, and then Washington, DC, and whose message of freedom and democracy spread around the world. Though I did not know him well, I did know his daughter Maureen very well, and she is also missed.

President Reagan was naturally possessed of the qualities that make a great leader. As Governor of California and later as President, he used a blend of humor, kindness and boldness to communicate with the American people, to challenge and defeat the Soviet adversary, and to promote his uniquely American vision of how things should be.

While I disagreed with a number of his policies, I always admired his ability to convey his ideas and his power to persuade.

The enormous outpouring of emotion and love for this man comes as no surprise. When we think of Ronald Wilson Reagan, we will remember his infectious optimism and grace, and his belief that there is always a better day ahead for America.

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SPEECH OF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, along with all of my colleagues here today, I rise to honor President Ronald Reagan. I was first elected to Congress in 1988, on the same day that President George H.W. Bush was elected. Because Members of Congress officially take office on January 3, while a new President does not take office until January 20, my first 17 days as a Congressman were during the last 17 days Ronald Reagan served as President. So when people ask me who was the President when I first came to Washington, I reply that it was Ronald Reagan. I had the opportunity to see Ronald Reagan in person only

one time, with his wife Nancy, during the inauguration of President George H.W. Bush. I remember thinking that together they had a larger than life presence.

Although I differed with Ronald Reagan a great deal on domestic policy, I nevertheless admired him for the strong leader that he was. He had an affable manner that allowed him to interact well with people who both supported and opposed his policies. He was a strong leader who had a lot of charm, strength and enthusiasm.

The gulf between the Republican and Democratic policies can sometimes seem vast. But the bridge that spans that gulf is our common heritage as Americans and belief in this great nation. Ronald Reagan had the gift to make that bridge seem very small. I am pleased to honor him today.

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SPEECH OF

HON. ANNE M. NORTHUP

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, last week our nation honored the life of one of the most beloved, and most important, presidents of the twentieth century. During the 1980s, President Reagan did what many considered the impossible.

As we faced great challenges at home and abroad, he helped us believe that it was "morning in America," and that we would overcome our difficulties. With the will of the nation behind him, President Reagan's steadfast leadership led to the defeat of communism and a robust economic recovery.

When President Reagan took office a quarter century ago, communism was on the march, threatening to bring the free world to its knees. But President Reagan's policy of "peace through strength" starved the Soviet bloc and made it safe for freedom to flourish in new nations. "No weapon in the arsenals of the world is so formidable as the will of free men and women," he said.

Here at home, our country was in the worst recession since the Great Depression, with high unemployment, inflation, and interest rates. But President Reagan trusted the entrepreneurial spirit and cut taxes from 70 to 28 percent, creating 19 million new jobs and twenty years of growth. His economic policies formed the foundation upon which American families prosper. "We believe that no power of government is as formidable as the force for good as the creativity and entrepreneurial drive of the American people," he said.

By rallying the will of our country, by reminding us of our remarkable abilities—of what it means to be Americans, President Reagan reunited us as a confident and hopeful nation. And with a focused vision, he set us on a course that preserved our liberty and allowed our domestic economy to prosper again.

In life, President Reagan was a guiding light for our nation. Even when times were tough, he rejected the idea that America's best days were past, insisting that there is no limit to what our nation and our people can endure—or accomplish. And he was right.

Today we face a new enemy of liberty, in the war on terror. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the confident optimism and clear vision that President Reagan gave to this nation will light our path.

May God bless President Ronald Reagan.

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SPEECH OF

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of President Reagan over the weekend. My thoughts and prayers go out to Nancy and to the Reagan family and friends. This is an extraordinarily difficult time for any family, but I hope they can find some comfort in the joy and inspiration that President Reagan brought to so many around the globe.

Ronald Reagan was a true American original, a Midwestern boy of humble beginnings who chased his dreams of stardom in Hollywood and evolved into one of the foremost political leaders of the 20th Century.

His legacy is so profound and pervasive that it's easy to take for granted. But we should not forget that it was Ronald Reagan who restored strength to the Office of the President. It was Ronald Reagan who reshaped the federal government and ushered in two decades (and counting) of lower taxes and economic growth. It was Ronald Reagan who bolstered America's strength as a world military power. And it was Ronald Reagan who reminded us that America was indeed that "shining city on the hill," and we had bountiful reasons to be proud to be Americans.

His love of country was a guiding force throughout his life and his political career—he knew America was great because America was free, and his sought to shine the light of freedom on corners of the globe darkened by the stain of totalitarianism. His demand for Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall" is not only a seminal moment in Cold War history, but a reminder that America's democratic ideals are ultimately stronger than any barriers erected by forces of oppression.

Quite simply, President Reagan's words and actions helped change the world for the better. And I can't think of a greater accomplishment than that.

We lost more than a man on Saturday, when President Reagan ended his long journey into the sunset.

We lost a true giant, and a great American.

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SPEECH OF

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the passing of Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States of America.

As a Vietnam veteran and an officer with the CIA from 1969–1979, my world was changed dramatically and for the better when Ronald Reagan won his historic presidential race in November 1980.

At the time I was serving on the staff of Senator John H. Chafee (R-RI). Politically, it was a watershed year. Not only did the Senate go from Democrat to Republican control for the first time in 26 years, but also some very well known Democratic Senators were swept from office in the "Reagan Revolution." They included Senator Frank Church, former Chairman of the Committee to Investigate the Intelligence Activities of the United States, and Birch Bayh, second Chairman of the newly established Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, where I went on to serve for four years as staff director, gained new leadership under Chairman Barry Goldwater and Vice Chairman Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Goldwater had a long-standing and close political relationship with Ronald Reagan. In fact, many have said that a speech delivered by Reagan during Goldwater's historic 1964 presidential campaign propelled Reagan into the national political spotlight.

Goldwater was excited to work with President Reagan and CIA Director William Casey to institute a new approach to intelligence oversight. First, it focused on bipartisan consensus in intelligence where Vice Chairman Moynihan was a valued partner.

It also departed from the adversarial process of Senators Church and Bayh, and focused on rebuilding the morale and intelligence capabilities of American intelligence. Rather than adopting Church's belief that the CIA was a "rogue elephant," Goldwater expressed his supportive feelings by talking about the "intelligence family."

Sadly, in 1984 these positive developments were disrupted when the CIA was discovered to have been covertly involved in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors, without proper notification to Congress. In the ensuing firestorm, Barry Goldwater wrote a pointed note to CIA Director Casey expressing his concern over the lack of communication. The letter was quickly leaked to an eager press, excited that Senator Goldwater was at odds with the Reagan Administration.

At the time these events were unfolding, President Reagan was scheduled to appear at the Washington Hilton for the White House Correspondents Association annual black-tie dinner. Many observers felt that the press would use the opportunity to embarrass the president over the intelligence "flap." But, in what was to become a classic response of the President to a difficult situation, Ronald Reagan opened his remarks by saying:

"What's all that talk about a breakdown of White House communications? How come nobody told me?" Laughter. "Well, I know this: I've laid down the law, though, to everyone there from now on about anything that happens, no matter what time it is, wake me, even if it's in the middle of a Cabinet meeting." Laughter. The official presidential documents recorded that the President received twenty-six more laughs.

[Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981–1987*, p. 333]

It was to the point. It was funny. It was self-deprecating. It defused for a moment what was a gathering storm for the Administration.