

Tom Oosterhoudt, will be manning the emergency operations center tonight from 10 to midnight when the winds of Hurricane Ivan will be whipping by Key West.

The Florida Keys, as all of us know, are the southern-most point of Florida. Their abundance of nature and beaches, fishing, and coral make them one of the largest destinations for tourists, and they come from every corner of the globe to bask in the year-round beach weather. Conservationists and nature lovers come to enjoy the many birds and plant species that are found in no other place.

However, because of these three hurricanes that have threatened to strike, the Florida Keys have been evacuated at various times in these weeks. And for an economy that is heavily dependent on tourism, these hurricanes have been economically devastating.

My district office staff helped out today at Florida International University, the shelter for the Monroe County residents who had to evacuate their lovely keys. This week alone Key West lost 20 to \$30 million in lost sales tax revenues. This is just in 1 week.

So I call on all Americans to plan a visit once again to the Florida Keys now that the hurricanes have almost passed. I invite them to discover the beauty and the wonder that Hemingway and President Truman fell in love with and which encouraged them to make the Florida Keys one of their homes. Come to our beaches, swim in our coral reef, fish in our waters, enjoy the sun; and while there, of course, a mandatory visit to a bar in Key West; swim in Sombrero Beach in Marathon, and ride a jet ski in Key Largo.

As the Florida Keys representative in Congress, I welcome people to come and visit the Florida Keys and all of south Florida once again, and they will see why I am so proud to represent such a beautiful and diverse place.

H. RES. 717, RECOGNIZING 58TH BIRTHDAY OF WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLINE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution to honor the 58th birthday of the 42nd President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton.

I came to Washington the same year that the President did. We both were elected in 1992 and took office in 1993. Those 8 years were the best anyone could imagine. Under his leadership, the United States ran a budget surplus for the first time since Lyndon Baines Johnson's administration. The economy had its highest productivity level in decades, and nothing has been seen recently that even remotely compares to this.

This President had the leadership to push through Congress an assault

weapons ban that stopped dangerous and unnecessary automatic and semi-automatic guns from our neighborhoods. Rather than leaving important policy decisions to others, he took the lead in some unpopular positions to place this country in a position to lead the world. Under the Presidency of Mr. Clinton, our country achieved new heights of respect.

I wish former President Clinton my best wishes on a speedy and successful recovery.

Once again I want to wish a happy birthday to William Jefferson Clinton. I speak for my constituents and many millions of Americans in expressing my gratitude. We thank him once again for his leadership of service, and this country truly misses him.

HONORING LU PALMER AS A FORCE IN COMMUNITY LIFE

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Lutrell "Lu" Palmer, a noted and respected Chicago leader and national leader. I am saddened to announce that Lu Palmer has been called to glory by our God in Heaven. He made his transition early Sunday morning at his home.

Lu Palmer's life was a life of courage, commitment, and compassion. His extraordinary sacrifices made on behalf of the voiceless, the disinherited, and the disadvantaged are legendary. Lu Palmer sacrificed a successful career as a columnist for the Chicago Sun Times because he would not compromise his principles and write what the editors wanted. He resigned rather than cave in to those who tried to silence and censor his voice.

Mr. Palmer's radio commentaries on WVON entitled "Lu's Notebook" were heard on radio each and every day. And again, although his commentaries were very popular and eagerly anticipated by thousands of listeners, his sponsors tried to again silence his voice by withdrawing their sponsorship, thereby removing his "Lu's Notebook" from the radio waves. Lu Palmer remained steadfast. Lu Palmer still would not be silenced.

Mr. Palmer's community activism created a campaign which ultimately elected Harold Washington as the first black mayor of the city of Chicago. His "We shall see in '83" motivated a movement the likes of which were and still are unprecedented.

Mr. Speaker, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to capture Lu Palmer's life in the brief time that I have. The impact that Lu Palmer has made on the local and national arena will require much more than what is encapsulated here. All over the country, Lu Palmer has conducted seminars and has participated in workshops where his expertise and his messages have been that of imparting valuable

information and providing direction for untold masses of people from Boston to Marquette University, to Carlton and St. Olaf's College, to Valparaiso, to Missouri and Colorado and Mississippi and Georgia, and to countless other States and college campuses and meeting halls. He transmitted a powerful image to and for the enrichment and uplifting of African Americans.

In Chicago, alone, Lu Palmer led such fights as the removal of asbestos from Chicago public schools and the fight against the wrongful draft of African Americans in the armed services. Behind the scenes, he helped in the mobilization to unseat the notorious Edward Hanrahan as Cook County state's attorney after the murders of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, and he also provided assistance in the mobilization against police brutality in the 1970s.

Lu Palmer also provided vital research to the groups that fought overcrowding of schools in African American neighborhoods and did the same for groups that coalesced to have the first African American selected as the superintendent of the Chicago School Board. This group ultimately became CBUC, Chicago Black United Communities.

In 1981, the organization launched a historical march toward a black mayor, and it was very successful. It was Lu Palmer who solidified Kwanzaa as an African American observance. On his above-mentioned radio program, he presented the 12 principles of Nguzo Saba on a daily basis, to the extent that listeners began to understand, absorb, and seek more clarity and participation in the African-based cultural rhythms.

Thousands and thousands read Lu Palmer's articles and columns in mass media newspapers, but even more heard his insightful and incisive commentaries on "Lu's Notebook."

Mr. Speaker, Lu Palmer made his transition. We have lost a giant. And, Mr. Speaker, my condolences and the condolences of my family are extended to Georgia Palmer and to her entire family. We mourn the loss of Lutrell "Lu" Palmer. We will miss him.

Carry on, brother. God bless.

THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in 1994 Congress passed the Federal Assault Weapons Ban as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The law banned the sale to civilians of 19 types of semiautomatic weapons, but many manufacturers have been able to skirt the prohibition by offering knock-off models. Domestic gun manufacturers were required to stop production of semi-automatic assault weapons and ammunition clips that hold more than 10 rounds, except for military or police use.

The assault weapons ban will expire or "sunset" today unless Congress passes legislation to renew the law. President Bush has stated his support for the assault weapons ban. Unfortunately, the House refuses to act until the President calls on Republican congressional leadership to do so.

The Assault Weapons Ban is supported by virtually every Federal, State and local law enforcement agency, including the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major City Chiefs Association, and the International Brotherhood of Police Officers. The ban was supported by Presidents Reagan, Ford, Carter, and Clinton, and by Republicans Tom Ridge and Rudy Giuliani.

Prior to the ban, ATF found criminals prefer assault weapons over law-abiding citizens eight to one. In the 5 years before the ban, assault weapons made up almost 5 percent of ATF crime gun traces. Since the ban, assault weapons have made up only 1.5 percent of these traces—a drop of 66 percent from the preban rate.

As recently as December 2003, an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found that 78 percent of adults nationwide support renewal of the ban. Additionally, 57 percent of people with a gun in their household support the assault weapons ban. The ban does not include hunting rifles and shotguns, which is probably why a majority of hunters support extending the ban today. The greater the availability of assault weapons, the cheaper their price, and the more wind up on the streets.

We need to take action immediately, and I urge my colleagues in Congress to step up and do the right thing by extending this ban.

CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON LEE URGES HOUSE GOP LEADERSHIP TO SCHEDULE IMMEDIATE VOTE TO RENEW ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN THAT EXPIRES TODAY

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, September 13, 2004, the ten-year federal ban on assault weapons is set to expire unless Congress takes immediate action to extend it. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has continued to urge the House Republican leadership to schedule an immediate vote to renew the ban. The Congresswoman has received many calls in support of an extension by local enforcement officers and gun control advocates who have been lobbying for congressional action on the ban. Extension of the ban is supported by more than three-quarters of Americans nationwide. The Senate approved a renewal of the ban earlier this year, but the House has not voted on the matter because the House Republican leadership refuses to allow a vote.

"For ten years, the assault weapons ban has helped keep semi-automatic assault weapons off the market, off our street, and out of the hands of gangs, terrorists, drug dealers, and most importantly our children," Congresswoman Jackson Lee said. "It is imperative that the House Republican leadership schedule an immediate vote to renew and strengthen the assault weapons ban so that these deadly weapons are not allowed on our streets again. These are not the weapons people use for hunting deer or wild game. These assault weapons are designed to kill as many people as quickly as possible."

The ban, which was approved in 1994, prohibits the domestic manufacture, import, and sale of 19 types of semi-automatic assault weapons such as AK-47s, TEC-9s, and Uzis, as well as dozens of other weapons, which are designed to kill quickly and violently. Unlike weapons firing single rounds,

assault weapons are designed to spray many bullets into a single area, as opposed to a single target, increasing the chances of hitting innocent bystanders who are in the crossfire.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), there has been a 66 percent reduction in the number of traced crimes committed with assault weapons since the ban went into effect. A study of FBI data by the Violence Policy Center reveals that one in five law enforcement officers slain in the line of duty between January 1, 1998 and December 31, 2001 were killed with assault weapons. "This serves as further proof that the assault weapons ban not only needs to be renewed, but intensified," Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee stated, "I am a cosponsor of a bill to renew the ban for another ten years as well as another bill to strengthen the ban by adding weapons to the prohibited list and making it permanent."

Congresswoman Jackson Lee continued, "The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution allows people to 'keep and bear' firearms. The important question is where we should draw the line. People should not be allowed to have shoulder-fired rocket launchers, nor do they need a semi-automatic weapon that can fire off 30 shots in a matter of seconds for recreational hunting. We need to renew and strengthen the federal ban on assault weapons."

The assault weapons ban is supported by virtually every federal, state, and local law enforcement agency, as well as organizations including the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major City Chiefs Association, and the International Brotherhood of Police Officers.

THE REPUBLICANS' COZY RELATIONSHIP WITH CORPORATE INTERESTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to remind the American people about the Republican Party's cozy relationship with our Nation's corporate interests. This relationship has been extremely beneficial to America's corporate elite, but has been extremely harmful to America's middle class. It is necessary for me to remind the American people of this relationship because Republicans are now doing everything they can to run away from the relationship.

Republicans are hoping the American people forgot that Vice President CHENEY worked behind closed doors with corporate executives from the oil and gas companies to write an energy bill that benefited them with billions of dollars while doing virtually nothing to help middle-class Americans with rising prices at the gas pump.

Republicans are hoping the American people will forget President Bush misled the American people into supporting the war in Iraq and rushed to war with absolutely no plan to win the peace. Last month the President finally admitted that he miscalculated

in Iraq, but now Republicans would like the American people to forget such comments.

They would also people to forget that the war in Iraq has now cost the American taxpayer \$200 billion in which billions of dollars have gone to another corporate friend of the Bush administration, Vice President CHENEY's old company, Halliburton.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans are hoping the American people forgot that while their own Medicare director was negotiating a final Medicare prescription drug bill, he was interviewing for jobs with the very pharmaceutical companies that benefit from the new Republican Medicare law. This same director, Tom Scully, illegally kept critical information about the costs of the Medicare bill from Congress, which most likely would have killed the controversial bill before it became law. But Republicans would like the American people, particularly the 40 million seniors who depend on Medicare and who deserve a real prescription drug benefit, to forget that the new law benefits the pharmaceutical companies and only provides a minuscule benefit to senior citizens.

Republicans also would like the American people to forget that they have been doing the work of America's corporate and special interests for the last 4 years to the detriment of the best interests of America's middle class.

Mr. Speaker, Senator KERRY and congressional Democrats will take our country in a new direction and put the middle class first. Despite what President Bush and congressional Republicans promise over the next few months before the election, they will continue to put the narrow interests of the few ahead of the middle class.

Let me talk about some of these special interests this evening, Mr. Speaker, if I can. Let us just look at the record of the Republicans over the last 4 years. Republicans have accomplished many of the goals that corporate interests have set forth with no concern about how these goals would impact middle-class America. I want to just talk about the economy first, and then I will maybe yield to the gentlewoman from Florida, who I see has come down here to join me.

On the economy, the Republican mission has been accomplished for companies seeking tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas, but not for America's workers. The Bush administration needs to create more than 900,000 jobs in 2 months, over the next 2 months, in order to actually create its first net job.

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Now, one would think that the administration would be doing everything possible, looking at every creative solution, to get Americans back to work; but, instead, what we see is the Bush administration taking the side of the corporate interests. They