

of hard work and dedication to his family, to his community, and to his craft.

James Cavender began his business career by opening a Dairy Mart in Pittsburgh, Texas, 4 years after I was born there. He opened his business in 1957.

Eight years later, Mr. Cavender took another chance and opened a retail western wear business for men and boys. Thirty-five years, 40-plus stores, and some 800 employees later, Cavender's Boot City, Cavender's Western Outfitters has become synonymous with the Texas cowboy.

Mr. Cavender's success is built on the following motto, "take care of the customer and everything else takes care of itself".

James Cavender is a family man. His company's operation reflects that. His wife, Pat, sons, Joe, Mike, Clay, are all involved in the day-to-day business of Cavenders. The family remains in tune with their customers by continuing to live a ranch lifestyle.

On May 9, Junior Achievement will honor the business success and community service of James Cavender. Junior Achievement is a volunteer organization that teaches children how they can impact the world around them as businesspeople.

Our young people who are interested in impacting the lives of others by entering the business world will find no better role model than James Cavender, a man who through honesty, determination, has attained great success as a businessman, but, more important, as a citizen of East Texas, of Texas and of these United States.

We honor James Cavender. God bless you, and God bless America.

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

IRAQ—THREE YEARS AND COUNTING

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to claim Mr. PALLONE's time to address the House for 5 minutes.

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

There was no objection.

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, a little over 3 years have passed since the invasion of Iraq, and it seems that we are no closer to victory than we were the day U.S. troops rolled into Baghdad.

So where are we in Iraq? This is a question many are asking. Just this morning, a suicide bomber attacked police headquarters in Fallujah, killing 15 and wounding 30 others. According

to AP reports, 13 of those killed were Iraqi recruits and two were Iraqi police.

In Baghdad over the past 2 days, 34 bodies have been discovered throughout that city. The hands of the men had been bound. All showed signs of torture, and all had been shot in the head.

Another 12 bodies, all Sunni Arabs, were found in the streets over the weekend.

This is appalling news, Mr. Speaker; and, sadly, it is simply a continuation of the sectarian violence sparked by the February bombing of the holy Askariya Mosque in Samara. The elevated violence has claimed hundreds of lives, and many experts and scholars worry if this is deteriorating into a full-out civil war.

We can only hope that will not be the case, Mr. Speaker, but the signs are troubling, and insurgents are targeting Iraqis as well as U.S. troops. Iraqis are attacking other Iraqis, and no one seems to know how to stop the violence.

It is clear that the administration's pre-war intelligence was finagled or flubbed, and war efforts are being bungled. Constant miscalculations and inability to view the situation for what it really is continues to place our troops in harm's way every minute of every day.

Is it any wonder that well-respected military officers out of a sense of patriotic duty feel compelled to speak out against Secretary Rumsfeld and others in this administration, drawing light to the constant bungling?

In March, military General Paul Eaton, retired, said, "Mr. Rumsfeld has put the Pentagon at the mercy of his ego, his cold warrior's view of the world and his unrealistic confidence in technology to replace manpower. As a result, the Army finds itself severely undermanned."

Retired military General Paul Eaton: "Secretary Rumsfeld has shown himself incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically, and is far more than anyone else responsible for what has happened to our important mission in Iraq. Mr. Rumsfeld must step down."

Retired Lieutenant General Greg Newbold: "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent statement that we made the right strategic decisions but made thousands of tactical errors is an outrage," he says. "It reflects an effort to obscure gross errors in strategy by shifting the blame for failure to those who have been resolute in fighting. The truth is our forces are successful in spite of the strategic guidance they receive, not because of it."

Major General John Batiste in April said, "the current administration repeatedly ignored sound military advice and counsel with respect to the war plans. I think the principles of war are fundamental, and we violate those at our own peril."

And Central Command Commander General Anthony Zinni in April said, "I think we are paying the price for lack of credible planning, or the lack of a plan. We are throwing away 10 years of planning, in effect, for underestimating the situation we were going to get into and for not adhering to the advice that was being given to us by others."

Mr. Speaker, all of these are troubling remarks. All of those men speak from personal experience at ground level. Their concerns and protestations were ignored by higher-ups in the Pentagon and in the Oval Office.

The price for speaking the truth in public? Ask General Shinseki. He got fired for daring to speak out on the number of troops that would be needed to maintain the peace once major combat operations were under way.

So, thus far, we have 2,404 U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq and another 17,762 injured; 27,000 Iraqi civilians have died, and the world does not even know how many there have been injured.

From my own State of Ohio, 107 brave soldiers have died, and 664 have been injured. And the only thing this administration sees fit to do is throw money at the problem and wait for a new President to figure it out sometime after 2008's elections are over.

Our esteemed colleague from the other body, JOSEPH BIDEN, this week suggested that he agreed with some experts who have proposed decentralizing Iraq, similar to what was done in Bosnia in the mid-1990s. He writes, "America must get beyond the present false choice between staying the course and bringing the troops home now and choose a third way that would wind down our military presence responsibly while preventing chaos. The idea, as in Bosnia, is to maintain a united Iraq by decentralizing it, giving each ethno-religious group, Kurd, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab, room to run its own affairs while leaving the central government in charge of common interests."

Mr. Speaker, is it not time to at least consider a new direction to stem the rising violence?

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CONGRATULATING DODIE DITMER ON HER RETIREMENT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise here on the floor of the people's House to congratulate Dodie Ditmer on her retirement from the Communication Workers of America after over 43 years of service to the union and to our Nation.

Dodie was born in Clairfield, Tennessee. She was one of eleven children. She later married Gregory Kent

Ditmer, and together they have one daughter, Tamara Kaye, and one granddaughter, Emily.

On February 13, 1963, Dodie became an operator at Ohio Bell in Dayton, Ohio. She became a member of CWA Local 4311 on that same day. She was appointed as a steward in the union in 1964, going on to be elected local president from 1973 through 1988. On May 1, 1988, Dodie was appointed to CWA staff representative. Dodie also has the distinction of becoming the first woman to be appointed as assistant to the vice president of district 4 in October of 1994. She also served the union as director of education and the COPE political director.

Dodie returned to Dayton, Ohio, in August of 2005 to work with the IUE-CWA and various other locals. Dodie has served the membership extensively on various union, community and political boards and committees.

I have had the great privilege of working with Dodie across the years. Together, we have fought and won many battles on behalf of working men and women, and I have always appreciated her thoughtfulness, her candor and her good humor. I am confident that she will not retire quietly, but I think that she will continue to be an active person in her community.

Ohio has many outstanding citizens, and Dodie Ditmer is certainly one of Ohio's finest. I congratulate her tonight on her retirement, and I wish her Godspeed in the days, weeks and months to come.

PROPOSED TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH COLOMBIA, PERU AND OMAN

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

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the House on the matter of the three proposed trade agreements that we are about to consider, namely, Colombia, Peru and the Sultanate of Oman trade agreements.

Every Member of this body knows or should know the history of job loss in this country, and you would think, as my colleague from Texas said, that when you find yourself in a hole, you would stop digging, but not us. Here we go again.

Just like the other so-called free trade agreements, the Colombia, Peru and Oman trade agreements contain no meaningful language or effective labor or environmental standards for workers in those countries. These so-called free trade agreements seek to reinforce the status quo in the host countries.

Mr. Speaker, what we have here is identical language to the problematic and inadequate language that was contained in CAFTA and NAFTA before that.

Instead of enforceable labor provisions with teeth, these free trade agreements suggest only that those Nations adopt and enforce their own

labor laws. They offer no assurance that existing labor problems will be resolved, and they allow labor laws to be weakened or eliminated in the future, with no possibility of recourse.

Now, some may wonder why the President and the administration chose these three countries for the next round of free trade agreements. It seems to me, after looking at the agreements, the Bush administration went out to the nations with the very worst examples of labor laws, protections and enforcement in the world, and some of the well-documented and more troubling aspects of these agreements consist. First of all, in Colombia, in 2004, over 200 trade unionists were killed, making it the most dangerous country in the world for workers seeking to exercise their freedom to form unions. More than 3,000 union members have been killed in Colombia since 1985, and only five people have been indicted in those cases.

In Peru, the U.S. State Department has indicated that child labor remains a serious problem. This is our own U.S. State Department. They estimate that 2.3 million children between the ages of 6 and 17 are engaged in work in that country. Now, when we talk about free trade, that is not free trade. That is asking the American worker to compete with children who are being paid very low wages and being exploited in these other countries.

In Oman, their 2003 labor laws remain in serious violation of the International Labor Organization's most important and fundamental rights: freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively. There are no independent unions in that country.

Mr. Speaker, while trade sanctions and serious remedies are granted to the commercial trade and investment provisions of these free trade agreements, the labor and environmental standards are totally ineffectual.

It is interesting to me that the negotiators can get good protections for intellectual property rights and other commercial rights, but when it comes to labor and environmental standards, it is just not happening.

I want to address the House especially within the context of the immigration problem that we are running up against in recent days. We have folks that are tunneling into our country from Mexico. They are swimming across rivers. They are hiding in containers from foreign countries and dying in the process of trying to get here, number one, to get out of the countries that they are in because they are in a troubled state and they know they have got no rights; secondly, to give their families hope in coming here.

It seems to me, if we wanted to stop some of the immigration problems, we could include in our trade agreements provisions that protect those workers in their own countries. Then maybe they would not be lining up to come to

this country with hopes of getting out of that situation.

Secondly, we also talk a lot that we have got a major effort in Iraq, and the President of the United States has described it in many cases as an effort to export democracy. Well, I have got news for you; you do not export democracy through the Defense Department.

This is where you export democracy, in our trade agreement, through our Commerce Department. Democracy is all about opportunity, and we should in our trade agreements give these foreign workers an opportunity to stay in their own country, to buy goods from us that would create a good dynamic by creating jobs in this country. Democracy is about opportunity, and if we are really serious about exporting democracy, it starts right here. It starts with our free trade agreements.

This is just a terrible series of trade agreements. It offers no opportunities to these foreign workers. We are going to exacerbate the immigration problem because, as long as these people do not have a right to earn a decent living and have decent working conditions in their own country, they are still going to be coming here.

So we can help on two fronts by adopting fair labor standards in our trade agreements, and I urge my colleagues to reject the Peru, Colombian and Oman trade agreements.

LOCKOUT AT MERIDIAN AUTOMOTIVE PLANT

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I first of all commend my colleagues, LINDA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. STRICKLAND, for continuing the fight for free trade in this country, fighting for jobs, fighting to protect American jobs and protect American communities. There are not nearly enough voices in this Chamber for fair trade policies, and I thank them for their courage and their outspokenness.

Two nights ago, I stood on Route 32 in Jackson, Ohio, a small community in southeast Ohio, with more than a dozen workers outside a plant where many of them had worked for more than two decades. Husbands stood with wives; mothers and fathers joined the group. Some people brought their children. Generations of steelworkers from southern Ohio gathered to talk about their community and to talk about their family values and to talk about change.

That night, we talked about their families and the children they have raised on a steelworker's union salary. We talked about the retirement security they helped invest in over the years and always assumed would be safe with the company that they thought they could trust, and we talked about the uncertain future they now face as they stood by the side of the road outside of the plant.