

was an avid pilot, scuba diver and skydiving enthusiast who made more than 200 jumps during the 1960s. But where he really made his presence known was in his philanthropic work.

Mr. Acopian was a self-effacing man who believed passionately in supporting the community quietly but with unmatched generosity. He was passionate about education. He made significant donations to Columbia University, to the Acopian Engineering Center at Lafayette College and to the Acopian Center for Ornithology at Muhlenberg College located in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

He was passionate about his faith, building the Saint Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, and giving generously to the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, as well as to local churches in Armenia.

He was passionate about nature, creating the Acopian Center for Conservation Learning at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and the Acopian Bog Turtle Preserve, as well as endowing the environmental education program at the American University of Armenia and the Florida Institute of Technology.

He was passionate about the locality in which he lived, Easton, Easton, Pennsylvania. He gave generously to the Children's Home of Easton, a sanctuary for underprivileged youth. The State Theater of Easton and the Easton National Canal Museum. His contributions made children's lives better, raised appreciation for the arts in his community, and helped to preserve important local history.

As an immigrant to this country, Mr. Acopian was eternally grateful for the opportunities that had been afforded to him here. He showed that gratitude, in part, by providing \$1 million towards the construction of the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C., that is right, \$1 million to the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. His generous donation was the single largest contribution to that fundraising effort.

I must tell a story, former Senator Bob Dole came to the Easton area several years ago and said that one day in front of a few hundred people he received a check for \$1 million for the World War II Memorial. He picked up the phone and called this man, Mr. Acopian. He said, Mr. Acopian, this is very generous. Is there anything you would like because of this very generous gift? Mr. Acopian wanted anonymity. He said no, there is really nothing I want, Senator. After a few moments, he thought about it and said, Senator, there is actually one thing, Senator, I do want. He said, I would like to have a seat at the dedication. Bob Dole said, well, heck, yes, he can have mine. That is the way Sarkis Acopian was. He sought anonymity, but Bob Dole blew his cover.

His greatest passion, however, was for his lovely wife of 59 years, Mrs. Bobbyle Seitz Mixon Acopian. To-

gether the couple had two sons, Gregory, who is married to Karen; and Jeffrey, who is married to Helen, both of whom still reside in Easton. He is survived also by six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

IRAQ AND THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2008 BUDGET REQUEST

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, the devastating blast in the Baghdad market over the weekend was the worst suicide bombing since the American occupation began nearly 4 years ago, 121 killed and 226 wounded. The Iraqi Interior Ministry says approximately 1,000 people have been killed over the last week alone.

This so-called "surge" that the President is force feeding us is getting off to quite a start, isn't it? Indeed, The New York Times reported on Sunday that Iraqis are saying that the security situation has gotten worse, not better, with the escalation of American troops.

The National Intelligence Estimate released last week offers little hope that sectarian violence will abate or that Iraq can repair its political rifts between Sunni and Shi'a. Under these circumstances, with American soldiers thrown into this unwinnable occupation with no hope of turning the situation around, there is only one solution, bring our troops home.

I have introduced a bill, H.R. 508, with Congresswoman LEE and Congresswoman WATERS and 30 others, which will do just that. H.R. 508 will end the occupation within 6 months of enactment. H.R. 508 will prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq. It will restore the sovereignty of the Iraqi people, even as we continue to provide nonmilitary assistance and to support a short-term international stabilization force will be available, if requested by the Iraqi government.

What a difference from the White House approach. Staring at the colossal, tragic failure of his Iraq policy, what did the President do today? He submitted a budget that asked Congress to sign off on \$145 billion to continue waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, he wants us to make his tax cuts permanent, and he says the budget will be balanced by 2012. So where is the money going to come from? Why, of course, it is going to come from the most vulnerable members of society, that is where.

Actually, over time, the very troops and their families, who are sacrificing life and limb in Iraq today, will be paying for this debt.

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The President's budget seeks deep Medicare and Medicaid cuts at just the moment when we need to be expanding

access to affordable health care. Actually, it is simple, Madam Speaker. The money is there for the folly of occupying Iraq. The money is there for wealthy people to get tax breaks; but when old and when poor people need nursing home care, or kids need immunizations, suddenly it is time to tighten the belt.

It is a disgrace, Madam Speaker, this ongoing occupation of Iraq. It is not only morally indefensible; it is fiscally irresponsible. So many of our own communities need investment. So many of our own poor and middle-class families are taking on more and more risk, struggling to get by, getting squeezed economically. But we are spending our grandchildren's money on a fantasy that is getting young soldiers killed, igniting a civil war, inciting jihadists, inspiring hatred of the United States around the world, harming national security and making Americans less safe.

There is a solution: One, end the occupation; two, return Iraq to the Iraqis; three, spend our foreign affairs budget on humanitarian endeavors, not on war and conquest. Spend it on economic development, on democracy promotion, on building schools and hospitals.

In addition, bring our troops home. Bring our soldiers home. Bring our tax dollars home where they can be put to work meeting the needs of Americans, strengthening American communities.

GLOBALIZATION

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, when we look at the issue of globalization, inevitably the question of wealth and equity comes up. We see reports of massive payouts for executives, and the natural inclination is to question the fairness of this.

But the acquisition of wealth, we need to remember, is not a zero-sum game. If one worker brings in a big new client and gets a bonus as a result of that, that does not mean that someone somewhere else has to take a pay cut. The question we must ask ourselves is not are some individuals getting wealthier at a faster rate than others. The question is whether everyone is becoming more prosperous: is everyone's standard of living going up. If all individuals who wish to climb the economic ladder have the opportunity to do so, we are then on the right track. And the economic data show that that is exactly, absolutely the case in America today. With a workforce of 146 million, there are more Americans working today than ever before.

Unemployment is at an incredibly low 4.6 percent. Two million new jobs were created in the last year alone. Average weekly earnings grew by 4.8 percent over the same time period. And as we had reported last week, gross domestic product growth grew at an

annualized rate of 3.5 percent last quarter, propelled by a dramatic rise in what? Exports. We have been exporting goods and services from the United States, and that has played a big role in the GDP growth.

These are excellent numbers, Madam Speaker, and they demonstrate the strength and vitality of the U.S. economy. But to really understand what they mean for individuals and working families, we have to delve in a little deeper. We have to look at the broader context and the bigger picture. Let's focus on the issue of wages.

As I have stated, earnings are on the rise. This is obviously extremely important to working families trying to make ends meet. But even more important than growing wages is growing purchasing power. A bigger paycheck is meaningless if the government increases taxes and takes a bigger portion of that paycheck. That is why Republicans have focused so heavily on the issue of tax relief.

Because of the tax cuts we have passed in 2001 and 2003, after-tax income is up nearly 10 percent. That is extra disposable income that Americans have to pay college tuition, get their car fixed, or take a family vacation.

It is extra income, Madam Speaker, that Americans would not have without the tax relief that Republicans provided. Now, the cost of consumer goods also plays a major role in a family's purchasing power. That is why keeping our economy open to imports is so important.

A tariff on inexpensive clothes from Bangladesh, for example, is a tax on the American family. A tariff is a tax. A tariff on affordable furniture from China is a tax on the American family. What is more, tariffs and other protectionist barriers constitute a regressive tax because they hit and hurt working families the hardest.

It is not Italian leather bags or antique Belgian furniture that gets slapped with tariffs. It is the low-cost everyday items that families need to buy. The more we open up our economy, the more we increase the purchasing power of Americans who need it most.

Wages are rising, and that is essential. But we must remember that increased wages cannot be accompanied by a reduction in the purchasing power of those wages through greater protectionism and higher taxes.

Republicans have pursued an agenda of economic liberalization and embrace the great benefits of globalization. As a result, we can look at the question of whether everyone is growing in prosperity. And we can answer the question with a definitive and decisive, yes, they are.

Madam Speaker, I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue on this path. I call on them to reject any calls to reverse the course to saddle Americans with greater taxes and cut off their access to the goods

they need at prices that they can afford; to reject any efforts to impose the regressive taxes of protectionism. Our economy cannot afford it, Madam Speaker, and we must recognize that those who are struggling most can afford it least.

SUPPORT FOR INCREASED SCHIP FUNDING

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I rise to call upon this Congress to assist States facing overwhelming shortfalls in funding their State health insurance programs.

In 1997, Congress created the SCHIP programs to help States provide health care coverage to the growing number of uninsured children throughout the United States. Ten years later, more than 6 million children have been enrolled in this program. They are going for annual check-ups to the doctor, and they are getting their prescription medications that they need. And they are also receiving care when they are extremely sick.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, this program's success is threatened by inadequate funding, and hundreds of thousands of these children stand to lose this health care coverage they have grown to rely upon.

Federal funding has failed to keep up with the program's expanding enrollment. An inefficient allocation of these funds means some States are sitting on more than \$1 billion of SCHIP funding, while 14 States, including my own State of Georgia, face severe shortfalls on the order of hundreds of millions of dollars.

This inadequate funding has forced some States to consider stopping all SCHIP medical services. Without help from the Congress, Congress will be unable to continue to provide health care for the 300,000 children enrolled in its Peachcare SCHIP program. Without increased Federal funding, these children will no longer receive their immunizations. They will no longer get their teeth cleaned, or their eyesight checked. And worse still, they will not be able to afford emergency room care in the event of a tragedy.

Madam Speaker, terminating coverage for these children would lead this country further away from decreasing the number of uninsured children in the United States. Congress must act expediently to allocate Federal funding to those States facing SCHIP shortfalls. It must reauthorize the program to ensure that all six million enrolled children continue to receive health care.

It must increase Federal funding so that more uninsured children can be enrolled in this program and get the health care that they deserve. I look forward to working with my colleagues from Georgia and other affected States

to rectify this increasingly dire situation.

CHIEF ERNIE MENDOZA

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, peace officers are a noble breed, daily risking their lives to protect and serve the rest of us. They are what separate the evil of the lawless from us.

Two weeks ago on a dark, cool misty Texas night, Needville, Texas, Independent School District Chief of Police Ernie Mendoza, was coming home from his job. He had been supervising a basketball game at one of the local schools. As chief of police of Needville Independent School District, it was his job to protect students during school and during events.

However, on the same road was 29-year-old construction worker Guillermo Paniagua. Guillermo was drunk and driving his pickup truck. He was headed toward the chief's car. And within moments Guillermo's truck crossed the center stripe of the road, slammed head first into the chief of police's vehicle. The crash instantly killed this dedicated police chief.

The chief had devoted 25 years of his life as one of Texas's lawmen. It was something that meant a lot to him. He was proud to serve his country as a peace officer. He was a 1983 graduate of the Waco Police Department where he worked in this small central Texas town.

Then he moved on to the big city of Houston, Texas, where he worked with the Houston Independent School District Police Department, one of the Nation's largest school districts. And then in 1996 he accepted the position with the Needville ISD Police Department where he became chief of police.

ISD police officers have the responsibility to protect children and teachers while they are in school. They maintain law and order and discipline. They keep the kids safe from day to day. And Chief Mendoza was one of the best. He strived to be a positive role model for the kids he protected, and he made peace officers look good.

He took the time to talk to kids and was well liked throughout the school. But it all ended a mile from his own home and the indifference of a drunk driver. Like most drunk drivers, Guillermo had only minor cuts and bruises. He was not injured. But those bruises did not keep him, the coward, the killer, from running from the scene in the darkness of the night.

He was quickly captured by the Wharton County, Texas Sheriff's Department, and now he faces first-degree felony murder charges, and failure to stop and render aid.

You see, when you drink and drive and kill somebody, that is a felony, as it ought to be. Chief Mendoza's wife and four children are now deprived of