

I'm very proud that so many of my constituents were also interested in learning what proposed health care reform bills would do and exactly what they say. That's why I posted on my Web site the House Majority Bill 3200 with information about the approved amendments.

I also posted on my Web site an alternative bill that I support, H.R. 3400, the Empowering Patients First Act, developed out of suggestions by my colleagues in the Republican Study Committee. For those constituents without computer access, I provided hard copies of these bills to eight libraries and my four district offices.

Besides reading legislation, I also engaged in a lot of listening and dialogue. I visited with local doctors in my district to get their perspective about health care.

At the recommendation of one of my constituents, Dr. John Vitarello, who is a cardiologist who practices at Frederick Memorial Hospital in my district, I toured the cardiac catheterization "cath" labs at Washington Adventist Hospital on August 27. I was invited to tour the lab by Dr. Mark Turco, an interventional cardiologist. Dr. Turco is also a leader of the three-member physician team from Washington Adventist Hospital which volunteered to supervise and assist a joint training venture for physicians in Frederick Memorial Hospital so they could also perform innovative procedures in cath labs that shorten patients' recoveries and hospital stays compared to traditional surgical repairs.

While I was there in scrubs and mask, I observed a procedure called an endograft. An endograft is an innovative procedure in this case used to repair an aneurysm in the patient's aorta.

In the image-guided endovascular repair, a stent graft, a woven polyester tube with a metallic skeleton, was compressed inside a carrier catheter. While viewed on an x-ray monitor, the endograft was inserted through a small incision in the patient's groin and threaded through the catheter through arteries to the site of the aneurysm. The stent graft was then placed across the aneurysm and released. As the stent graft expanded, it gripped the normal arterial wall on both ends of the aneurysm, bypassing the bulge from the inside.

As I observed this procedure, I marveled at both the advances of our medical research and technology as well as the dedication in caring for human lives represented by this joint venture between Frederick Memorial Hospital and Washington Adventist Hospital. This procedure cuts down the recovery time for patients as well as the time required for patients to be in the hospital.

One of my greatest concerns about health care reform is that we don't curtail the innovations in health care that are invented predominantly here in the United States.

There is also a lot of concern about competition in health care. Competition is important. Competition always does two things: It drives down costs and increases quality. However, there is also a lot of cooperation in medical care today. Here, I observed physicians at one hospital helping physicians at another local hospital to increase the availability, the competition, for innovative medical treatments that benefit patients with improved outcome and less time in the hospital.

I am 83 years old. I have seen in my own career and life and that of my family that innovation in modern medicine, American style, moves at an astonishing speed. It is this innovation that has so improved the quality of our lives as well as extending the lifespans of Americans.

By far, the most enlightening and informative exercise was three nights of teletownhalls that I held during the break. On two nights, Dr. John Vitarello joined me as a guest for these townhall meetings. Over 180,000 telephone calls were placed; almost 20,000 people were home and listened to some part of the townhall.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the prescription for health care reform in the present bill will make it worse and more expensive. These changes are the opposite of what we need and Americans want.

HONORING BILL HEFNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. KISSELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is truly with mixed emotions that I rise tonight on the floor of the House of Representatives. It's a sadness in noting that last week we lost Congressman W.G. Bill Hefner, a Congressman from North Carolina for 24 years from 1974 to 1998. And we truly give our condolences and our regards to his daughters Stacy and Shelly and to his wonderful wife, Nancy.

But the legacy of Bill Hefner did not end last week, as we're going to see tonight as we spend some time remembering and talking about and telling stories of Bill Hefner, that his memory will go forth because of the things he did, the person he was, and the Congressman that represented his district in North Carolina so well.

Now, I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, that tonight I shall refer to Congressman Hefner as "Mr. Hefner" quite often because I was raised in a time and a place when the ultimate respect that you could give to someone is to call him "Mister." And while his wonderful, loving, lovely wife, Nancy, convinced me that I could call her "Nancy," I could not bring myself to call Bill Hefner anything but "Mr. Hefner" because that's the respect that people in the district had for him.

And, Madam Speaker, as some might be saying, you know, Why is a freshman Congressman from North Carolina the first one to speak tonight? It's because Bill Hefner, Mr. Hefner, was my Congressman from the Eighth District of North Carolina. And with all of the reconfiguring that took place from time to time in my home county, Montgomery County, North Carolina, was always in Mr. Hefner's district. And it was the way that Mr. Hefner represented us and, once again, who he was that we want to talk about tonight.

Madam Speaker, I believe that one of the greatest ways we can remember is by telling stories, and tonight we're going to talk about Mr. Hefner. And I have several colleagues and friends of not only myself but who knew Mr. Hefner at the time, and they have been so generous with their time to be here tonight to help us remember.

And I just want to start out very briefly by just letting the story of Bill Hefner be told a little bit.

Bill Hefner was born in Tennessee. He went to Alabama. He was a son of a sharecropper. He saw that his way out of poverty was through a gift that he had been given by God, and that's through the singing of gospel music. And he was very good, and he received an invitation to come to North Carolina.

And this was the time period of the late 1950s and early 1960s where television was much different than it is today, when there was only just a few stations there in North Carolina, and they often filled their time in the afternoon with gospel singing.

And Mr. Hefner was so good and his group was so good that they were asked to be part of three television stations in North Carolina. Now, we didn't have that many stations, so this was a great majority of the stations that were represented, and he became known to the people in North Carolina with his group, The Harvesters.

He eventually was successful enough and a good businessman that he bought a radio station. And at some point in time, a former Congressman came in and was interviewed by Mr. Hefner, and Mr. Hefner went home and told his wife, You know, I believe I can do that, because Mr. Hefner had never been elected to a public office, never sought public office. He was the president of his PTA and that was his background, but his background was much stronger. He had the background of knowing the people of his district.

So he went out, Madam Speaker, and he ran for Congress. And without any political background other than knowing the people and caring about the people and having a sense of who the people were, he was elected in a landslide.

So that's the background as to this man W.G. Bill Hefner that I want everybody to be aware of.

Now we want to fill it in with some personal stories, and I would like to

start out by recognizing DAVID OBEY from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. I thank the gentleman for the time.

Let me simply say that I see Bill in two ways. First of all, I see him as a legislator. He was a good, solid legislator, a member of the Appropriation's Committee, and I watched him day after day conduct his business with grace and with courage. It was not popular to oppose some of the tax and budget proposals that President Reagan was pushing, for instance, in the 1980s. I know in my district at the time, 70 percent of the country favored those changes. Bill Hefner had courage enough to point out that the numbers just didn't add up and that he carried on his conviction, and eventually facts proved him to be correct.

Bill was also a person who respected this institution. He respected the Congress, he respected the country, he respected his party, he respected the other party, and he respected virtually every person in this institution, and it showed in the way he dealt with others in this body.

But my greatest and fondest memory of Bill is rooted in his gospel singing. I happen to like bluegrass, and I belong to a bluegrass band called The Capitol Offenses, and I learned to love gospel music. And on many occasions, Bill would sing and I and members of my band would back him up. And I have to say, he was one of the best singers we ever performed with. He knew a wide range of gospel but he also had a solid voice, and he had fun doing it. He loved it, and anyone who listened to him knew that he loved it.

He was a man of courage. He had a terrific sense of humor, and he could find a lot of ways to get things done by simply charming people in this place. If logic wouldn't work, if substance wouldn't work, there was always the Hefner charm to push things over the edge.

□ 2045

I was greatly saddened to learn of his death last week. I have to say that I am proud to have served in the same institution with a man of his courage, with a man of his integrity, and with a man of his good humor. I'm certain that he will be missed by his family and his friends. I very much am grateful for the fact that I was able to know him and to work with him for all of those years. I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, Mr. OBEY. I would like to add there about Mr. Hefner and his showbiz background. One of the descriptions that was given of Mr. Hefner at one time that I think he enjoyed the most was that it would be recognized that he had a showbiz background, but he was a workhorse, not a show horse. That summed his career up very appropriately, and he did enjoy that comparison.

His humor and his ability to charm were pointed out to me one time on the

House floor. Evidently, there was quite a serious debate taking place between two sides of the aisle, and Mr. Hefner somehow got the attention, Madam Speaker, of the Speaker at the time, and got the attention of the full House and looked at his watch and supposedly said, How much longer is this going to go on? Because I have to get home to watch the "Andy Griffith Show." And in North Carolina there is no higher calling than to go watch the "Andy Griffith Show."

At this point in time, I would like to yield to CHET EDWARDS of Texas for the time he may consume.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I consider myself blessed to have known Congressman Bill Hefner. He was a good, decent and caring person, and I will miss him dearly. While this man of faith has gone on to a better place now, his work here on Earth will continue to enrich the lives of millions of American citizens. There are untold thousands of our troops and families who are living in better housing today because Bill Hefner was their champion. He not only worked hard for his beloved Fort Bragg, North Carolina; he fought for a better quality of life for servicemen and -women and their families wherever they might live in the world. As chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Chairman Hefner saw to it that the service and sacrifice of our troops would be honored in a meaningful way.

While Members of Congress sometimes take ourselves too seriously, Bill Hefner was a voice of self-deprecating humor and humility. He took his work seriously, but never himself too seriously. In doing so, he helped us keep our proper perspective on ourselves and our work here. He used to joke that he had worked hard for over 20 years to take a perfectly safe Democratic seat in North Carolina and turn it into a marginal one. That was a reflection of his humor and his humility, because the truth was that any political challenges that Bill Hefner might have ever faced were because he was a person of courage.

As Mr. OBEY pointed out, in 1981 he was one of the very few Southern Democrats who voted against the popular Reagan tax cuts because he felt they would lead to large Federal deficits and ultimately undermine programs important to everyday working Americans. As long as I knew him, he always did what he thought was right for his district, for our great country and for average working families.

In an age of special interests, Bill Hefner's cause was to fight for the interests of everyday, hardworking families, the kind of people who fight our fires, protect our streets, defend our shores, educate our children and make our factories run. He believed to his core in the dignity of hardworking everyday American citizens.

Even after he retired from Congress, Bill would often call me, and he called

when he was concerned that the views of working Americans were not being considered in Washington, D.C. Whether in office or out of office, Bill Hefner lived his faith by always being his brother's keeper.

Bill Hefner was a special personal friend and a mentor to me. While I cannot fill his shoes or come close to it, I'm a better Congressman and a better person for having known him and having learned from him. I cherish the many, many personal conversations we had right here on the floor, Madam Speaker. I will always be grateful to the very sage advice he gave me on a golf course one day when he and I happened to be partnered against then-President Clinton and the President's partner, when on the 15th hole in a very close match, the President had about a 3½-foot putt. I was not going to give it to the President, and Chairman Hefner called me over and put me under his arm and said, Son, let me just tell you something. Right now we have this line item veto in existence, and the Military Construction bill is sitting on the President's desk for signature, and you represent Fort Hood. I gave the President his putt, and the Fort Hood soldiers got their barracks thanks to the sage advice of Bill Hefner.

The moment of so many wonderful moments, but the moment I shall never forget, was on June 4 of 1998 when Bill Hefner stood in this very same spot. We were debating an issue of the school prayer constitutional amendment. And I, consistent with my belief in the constitutional principle of church-State separation, was opposing the Istook constitutional amendment. During that process I was personally attacked by one particular faith-based group that claimed by not wanting to amend the First Amendment to the Constitution I was somehow un-American and even worse yet, I was accused of being un-Texan. Leave it to Bill Hefner, the man of the South, the gentleman from North Carolina who sang gospel music his entire life, a man of deep faith, leave it to him to come to this very spot to stand up and defend the integrity of his colleague who had been challenged. That was Bill Hefner, a man of deepest integrity. And that is why I will always revere him and what he stood for.

To Stacey and Shelly, his daughters, and to Nancy, his widow, I would simply say that if my two sons had every right to be half as proud of me as you have a right to be proud of your father and your husband, I would consider my life a success.

May God forever keep our friend, our colleague, and a great American, Bill Hefner, forever in His loving arms. Thank you.

Mr. KISSELL. Madam Speaker, to kind of point out the legacy of how Mr. Hefner influenced people continues today to reflect that, I had not been sworn in but a matter of hours before I got a phone call from Representative

EDWARDS telling me what a great influence that Bill Hefner was on him and how that mentorship and role model is not forgotten. It continues from year to year to year.

At this point in time, I would like to yield to our friend from South Carolina, Representative JOHN SPRATT.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I came here in 1983. And as I did, Bill Hefner was just coming into his own. Speaking of his name, you want to call him only "Mr. Hefner." I will never forget one night we got on an airplane, as we did many nights, US Airways, and someone spoke to him as Congressman this and Congressman that. And the stewardess said, I didn't know you were a Member of Congress. What's your name? He said, Bill Hefner. She said, I don't believe I've ever heard of you. He said, well, you probably know my brother Hugh. He was always ready for a quip like that.

I rise to salute this wonderful guy with great sadness learning of his passing. I didn't know him well, but I knew him when I came here because from the time I was a boy I had watched the Harvesters on WBTV in Charlotte, North Carolina, right after Arthur Smith. He was the lead tenor on the Harvesters, and they were good. And they stayed that good harmonizing for the next 50 years. You couldn't beat them. They were just top rate.

HOWARD COBLE got into a little fray with Bill sometime back because he went into his district and spoke against him in an election. Next election, Bill returned the compliment. This time, he was not speaking, though, he was singing. He went in and made three to four gospel singing experiences and packed the houses and everything, and HOWARD called him up and said, I was awfully surprised to see you come directly into my district. He said, HOWARD, you came into my district. Let's just have this understanding. If you come back, next time, I'm not coming in by myself. I'm bringing the whole quartet and we're going to sing you right out of that seat, too. From there after, they had a mutual accord that the one would stay out of the other's district. That's the kind of guy this is that we're talking about, a wonderful guy.

He put on the airs of being a populist sometimes, but he was a lot smarter than he put on, and a lot richer for that matter. He looked at the Reagan tax cuts that probably would have profited him and a lot of his constituents, and said, it's not the right time. It will only add to the deficit. And he was proven only too right. We were debating in our caucus one morning years ago another tax cut that was not nearly the same size, and he finally got up and said, I don't know why we are spending so much time talking about this tax cut. It ain't going to benefit anybody but two people in this caucus. One of them is Norm Sisisky, and the other is JOHN SPRATT.

I got up and I said, point of personal privilege, Mr. Chairman, this poor-

mouthed populist owns the second largest Cadillac dealership in North Carolina and a radio station in Concord. He loved it. He never let me forget it. He never jumped me again for benefitting from tax cuts either.

He became a voice that people listened to because he could get up and speak to something and go right to the pith of it. It's really a gift. He had that gift. As I said, he was a lot smarter than he let on being.

One of my favorite recollections of Bill's debate, we were debating the B2 bomber. He got up and said, you know, if this bomber is so stealthy as everybody says it is and you can't see it, you can't find it, radar can't even see it, what I would suggest is we save ourselves \$50 billion. Let's don't build it, but let's tell the Russians we have built it, and they will go crazy trying to find it. That's the kind of humor he brought to the people's House, talking like that all the time with a humorous cover to it but a for-real serious substance to it as well.

He was a great guy. This place has been known through the centuries as the House of the people. Bill Hefner helped this House earn its reputation as a House of the people. We will miss him greatly. He served here with real distinction. He deserves every word of praise being said about him tonight.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, Mr. SPRATT.

Madam Speaker, if we had opened this up to everybody who knew Congressman Hefner who could have been here tonight, we couldn't have come close to getting this in within an hour. There are so many people that he affected, and I certainly appreciate the colleagues that are with us tonight.

Next I would like to recognize a fellow Congressman from North Carolina, Mr. DAVID PRICE.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I thank my colleagues for scheduling this time tonight for us to remember our friend and colleague, Bill Hefner, to honor his memory.

I first got to know Bill when I came to this body in 1987. He was already a fairly senior Member. He became an important mentor to me and a valued friend and colleague. As many have said already, Bill came from a humble background. He never lost touch with working people. He had a natural empathy and understanding of people who were struggling in life, great sympathy for the underdog. He was a man of great compassion, and that compassion was not feigned. It was something that came naturally to Bill, an innate sense, I think, in Bill, of fairness and decency. There is not going to be a speaker here tonight, I promise you, that doesn't refer to Bill's sense of humor. He was the funniest man probably that ever served in this Chamber. He could cut through tense moments in these overheated debates in a way that was a marvel to behold.

Sometimes, as Mr. EDWARDS said, he showed great courage in the way he

dealt with those debates. I have a memory very similar to CHET EDWARDS. This one comes earlier when I had been here only a year or so. It was a debate of the so-called "Grove City" bill which was a proposal that unfortunately would have put an adverse interpretation on civil rights laws. And it was a bill the effect of which was being greatly exaggerated by a prominent figure of the religious right of that time. He said that if this bill was passed, churches would have to, and I'm quoting him here, to hire a practicing active homosexual drug addict with AIDS to be a teacher or youth pastor.

Well, Bill Hefner was watching this go on, and like all of us, he was getting his switchboard flooded with calls coming in alarmed about this from well-meaning people who didn't know what to make of this. I wrote a book a couple of years later and remembered, looked back at this episode because it impressed me so much at the time. In my chapter on religion and politics, I quoted Bill Hefner, what he said coming to this floor and cutting through that debate, and the words I'm going to read don't do justice to the effect he had just in his commonsense way. Bill said, I find reprehensible not those thousands of people who have made the phone calls, but the people that have instigated this misinformation. If it means I lose my position in the U.S. House of Representatives if I do not cave in and base my vote on what people believe to be true but what I know not to be true, I say to my colleagues, this job is not worth that to me. I remembered that and looked it up. And it still stands for me as a memory of effective debate in this House, effective not just rhetorically but because of its being said from the heart and its being said with true conviction.

Bill was a member of the Appropriations Committee, chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Construction, a champion of our servicemen and -women, of their housing and of their quality of life. An elementary school at Fort Bragg bears his name, as does the Salisbury Veterans Administration Hospital.

Bill was a mentor to many of us. He gave me pep talks on more than one difficult vote. He could put everything in perspective. I valued that mentorship, that support, and that encouragement.

□ 2100

He helped me get on the Appropriations Committee, and then he helped me figure out how to get things done once I got on the Appropriations Committee.

He was a mainstay of our delegation, one of our most influential Members, yes, but also a Member who helped us all stick together, whom we all liked and respected. We enjoyed his company. And I think it's fair to say that Bill's role in our delegation has never quite been filled since he left.

I remember very well the dinner that was given for Bill shortly before his retirement. The Harvesters Quartet, pretty elderly gentlemen by that time, they were gathered from all over the country, they came in and sang one more time. And Bill's friends and associates and colleagues got up one after the other and told many stories like those we heard tonight. It was one of the most enjoyable and heart-warming evenings I have ever experienced in this city or anywhere else.

So I'm pleased to join tonight in honoring Bill, in recalling our friendship, our common labors with him. He served North Carolina and this Nation faithfully and well in ways that continue to inspire.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, DAVID. And I think, as was just pointed out, that while we have memories of Mr. Hefner and how he could turn serious conversations with humor and charm, that when necessary he stood up for his beliefs and effectively stated those in a way that spoke of the core being that he was.

Madam Speaker, I would like to next recognize another gentleman from North Carolina, Representative BOB ETHERIDGE.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Representative KISSELL, for organizing this Special Order this evening for a good friend and, as all of you already heard, a 12-term Member of this body.

Bill Hefner, who passed away on Wednesday, September 2 of this year, provided a selfless service to our State of North Carolina and to this Nation, as you heard from a number of my colleagues already. But in his passing, we've lost a good friend; North Carolina has lost an outstanding citizen and a man who was instrumental not only in this body, but in his community, in his State, in everything he did; Nancy has lost a devoted husband; and Stacy and Shelly have lost a loving father. He was a grandfather, also, who loved children. You've heard he was a native of Tennessee.

The first time I remember meeting Bill Hefner was more years ago than either one of us want to admit. I was running for State superintendent, and if you run in North Carolina, it's an elected office. So you run, and anybody who has a good size group, you wanted to be there. And I went to the Eighth District, they were having an Eighth District rally. And it was the largest group I went to I think all year, other than one where all the educators get together, and Bill Hefner was doing his own singing at his own rally. And I note that's the most unusual political rally I had ever been to.

I heard of Bill, but I hadn't met him. I learned very quickly he knew how to politic in a unique way. Those people who left that gospel sing that he was singing at, it made no difference to them whether he was Democrat, Republican, liberal, or conservative; they loved Bill Hefner. He was their man.

And there were people at that rally I didn't see at any other rally I went to all year. It was because he had a message. They believed in him, and he made a difference in their lives.

Yes, he was president and owner of a radio station, and he made a difference. And he was a bright person, much smarter than he wanted to admit. And yes, he had more resources than he would ever acknowledge. You would think he was the poorest guy in the room if you were around him, but he did okay.

He was the leader of the Harvesters Quartet, yes, but the last time I remember hearing Bill sing—I enjoyed the meeting as Congressman PRICE talked about—he came to my district, held a gospel sing, and he called me ahead of time to let me know he was going to be there. He said, Now if you can be available, you might want to show up. He said, I might say a good word for you. Well, I recognized if Bill came to your district, you better show up—he filled up the Civic Center. And Bill enjoyed that as much as he loved his family, as he loved being in this body. And he was a businessman at heart because as soon as he finished on that stage he was selling those cassettes. He had a delightful time and the people loved him. But that was Bill Hefner. Bill Hefner enjoyed what he was doing, whether he was legislating or whether he was singing or telling a good story.

As I came to know Bill over the years—and I only served with him here two—I understood that his political service really was an extension of his gospel singing, which really was what he loved to do. He cared about people. He cared about what he did. But he cared about his religion. And both of those were powerful ways for him to serve his fellow man.

Many of the members of the North Carolina delegation, as you already heard from Congressman PRICE, learned the ropes of effectively advocating for our constituents here in Washington from Bill. When I first came—any Member who is a freshman here, you get a lot better services now than you did when I came 14 years ago, even though people tried to help you—Bill was the first one to offer. He said, If you need a place to meet with folks, you can use my office.

Well, you know, somebody who is coming up here, hadn't been to Washington much even though I served at the State level, that meant a lot. He opened the doors of his office; I used it to meet constituents and other people. But that's what Bill Hefner was about; he was about making you feel at home. He led by example, both as a public official and later as a private citizen.

He was known for his passionate support of our military veterans, as you've already heard this evening. He only represented Fort Bragg in the last few years it was in his district of his years here in Congress, but he represented them every day as a Member of this

body. And that's why you have a school on that base named for him and you have military hospitals named for him, because they knew that Bill Hefner was a friend of veterans, he was a friend of the small business owners, and as you've heard this evening, he really was a friend of the working poor as well as the working class.

His life of service will continue to inspire all that knew him. And his love for North Carolina can be seen through his work on our highways, in our schools, in our veterans hospitals, and yes, in the laws that he helped pass in this body.

He retired from Congress almost a decade ago, but his work and influence will not be forgotten. He was a respected legislator, a dedicated public servant, and a great North Carolinian. It is fitting that we honor Bill Hefner and his family this evening.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague Representative KISSELL for organizing this Special Order in honor of a good friend and twelve-term Member of this House of Representatives. Former Eighth District Congressman Bill Hefner, who passed away on Wednesday, September 2, 2009, provided selfless service to our State of North Carolina and to this Nation. In his passing, I lost a friend and North Carolina lost an outstanding citizen; a man who was instrumental in his community, county, State, and country.

A native of Elora, Tennessee, Bill moved to North Carolina after graduating from the University of Alabama and became the president and owner of radio station WRKB in Kannapolis from 1954 to 1967.

I met Bill Hefner at a political rally in North Carolina decades ago while he was with the radio station. He was the lead singer in the 'Harvesters Quartet', a gospel music group, and he led that political rally with his voice because he just loved to sing. As I came to know him through the years, I understood that his political service was an extension of his gospel singing. Both were powerful ways for him to be of service to his fellow man.

Many members of the North Carolina congressional delegation learned the ropes of effectively advocating for our constituents while in Washington, DC, from Bill Hefner. Bill led by example, both as a public official and later as a private citizen. Congressman Hefner was known for his passionate support for military veterans. In fact, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salisbury, North Carolina, was named in his honor in 1999. He was a friend to veterans, small business owners, the working poor, and the middle class. His life of service will continue to inspire all who knew him. His love for North Carolina can be seen through his work on our highways, our schools, our veterans' hospitals, and in our laws.

Bill Hefner retired from Congress almost a decade ago, but his work and influence will never be forgotten. He was a respected legislator, a dedicated public servant, and a great North Carolinian. It is fitting that we honor him and his family today.

Madam Speaker, I join his family and our State in mourning a great legislator and a tremendous human being. I yield back.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, BOB.

Madam Speaker, continuing the North Carolina trend, I would like to recognize Representative BRAD MILLER from North Carolina.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I also rise to honor Congressman Bill Hefner, and I appreciate Mr. KISSELL organizing this tribute tonight.

Congressman Hefner had a down-home style that never changed. Some folks in Washington thought it didn't really fit with their idea of what an influential Member of Congress, an effective Member of Congress is supposed to be like, but that was always their problem, not his problem. He never changed.

Everyone who spoke tonight has spoken of the Harvesters, his gospel music group that he continued to sing in. His political rallies continued to be gospel sings, the Harvesters performing. Now, that sounds like something out of the 1930s from the movie, "O Brother, Where Art Thou?", but this was still in the '90s that he was doing this. That was long past the era that was dominated by political consultants, smart guys who read polls and produced TV ads. And political rallies at that time were supposed to be three people who were sitting in front of their television when a political ad came on. During that period Bill Hefner was still doing political rallies that were gospel sings and packing large halls.

And it wasn't just at political rallies. He had the Harvesters come perform at veteran hospitals, including the one in Salisbury that is now named after him, and was very popular with the veterans who were in those hospitals. And he did become a great advocate for veterans, a great advocate for our men and women in uniform. He visited military installations, saw the conditions in which our military were living, and became a crusader for better housing for our troops.

Bill Hefner ran for Congress on the promise to be a spokesman, a representative, a voice for the common man. He remained faithful to that promise. He never changed. He was the same guy when he ended his service after 24 years, one of the most influential members of the Appropriations Committee, a subcommittee chairman, a cardinal. He was the same guy as he was when he was elected.

He understood working Americans because he was one. He may eventually have done very well, but that's where he started and that's where his heart always was. He always understood what life was like for ordinary Americans.

I am proud to be here tonight to honor Bill Hefner. And I am very grateful that he is an example for all of us who still represent North Carolina in Congress.

Mr. KISSELL. Madam Speaker, at this point in time I would like to recognize Majority Leader STENY HOYER.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, ladies and gentlemen of the House, and my

friend, LARRY KISSELL, who is doing a wonderful job representing the District that Bill Hefner loved and whose people loved Bill Hefner, I came to Congress in 1981. Bill had been here for 6 or 7 years when I got here. He was on the Appropriations Committee; I went on the Appropriations Committee not too long after coming here.

Bill Hefner has been regaled by all of his friends from North Carolina. And I know Chairman OBEY, who served with Bill on the Appropriations Committee as I did for well over a decade, can tell, I'm sure, numerous stories late into the night about Bill Hefner. And what warm memories I have of Bill Hefner sitting on the aisle back here. And all my colleagues remember he would sit on the aisle and you would go by and Bill would sort of look up with a twinkle in his eye and he would tell you story after story after story.

I remember one night I was going to give a speech and I wanted a few jokes, so I called Bill Hefner up and he gave me a couple of jokes, and I used them, and they worked very well. So I can say Bill Hefner was my writer, I suppose. But he was a wonderful, wonderful representative, and he was a representative in the best sense of that term. He represented his people. He represented North Carolina. He represented his country. He represented the men and women in our Armed Forces whom he loved and whom he served with great fervor and affection. Bill Hefner loved his country, he loved his colleagues, and his colleagues loved Bill Hefner.

It's been talked about how he loved to play golf. I like to play golf as well—I'm not very good, but I love to play, like so many other hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of people in this country who like to say we play golf. We play at it, I suppose. But Bill was a good golfer. And he had a tournament down at Pinehurst every year. And I used to go down and play at Pinehurst with Bill. And you not only went down to play golf, you just went down to have this warm, gracious, outreaching human being make you feel good about serving with him in the Congress and make you feel good about North Carolina and your country.

Bill Hefner was a great resource of North Carolina. He then moved further south and became a county commissioner for a little bit, my good friend is telling me.

Bill Hefner will be missed. Bill Hefner used to tell me, he said, You know, STENY, I was elected in my district; it was a safe district then, and I've worked very hard and I've turned it into a marginal district.

I think you all heard him say that. That was one of his favorite sayings, LARRY.

□ 2115

Now, the good news for you, Mr. KISSELL, is you're going to do the opposite. You're going to take a district that could have gone either way, and

you're going to turn it into a safe district. I appreciate that, but nobody would have appreciated it more than Bill Hefner. My friend BRAD MILLER, a friend of Bill Hefner's and a colleague from North Carolina, told a story.

Bill Hefner was a singer. He was a real talent. He loved to sing, and he loved to entertain, and he loved to be a comedian, and he loved to make people, as I said, feel good. He accomplished that with great frequency and with great ability. We'll miss Bill Hefner. Bill Hefner was what's good about our country, which he loved so dearly.

As I said, he loved the men and women who served in the Armed Forces, and he served them so well as chairman of the Military Construction Committee. I remember I had the opportunity to travel to Germany and to some other NATO allies in Europe with him in the 1980s, and it was clear that he was extraordinarily knowledgeable about the needs of our men and women stationed overseas in terms of the quality of their lives. He mirrored IKE SKELTON or IKE SKELTON mirrors Bill Hefner in terms of his commitment to our men and women in the Armed Forces.

So I am pleased, LARRY KISSELL, to join you, your colleagues from North Carolina, my chairman—I served on the committee for 23 years—Chairman OBEY, and my good friend CHET EDWARDS, who now chairs the same subcommittee that Bill Hefner chaired. Bill was also a member of the Armed Services Committee, of course. So I thank you for letting me know that you were doing this Special Order to rise in memory, respect and deep affection for a wonderful American, for a wonderful advocate of his faith, for a wonderful family man, and for a wonderful Member of this body.

God blessed America when he gave us William G. Hefner. I yield back.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, STENY.

Madam Speaker, I am going to conclude now, but you don't finish when you talk about Bill Hefner, because, as we've seen tonight, the legacy will not end. It will continue for all the good things he did, but I want to talk a little bit about the personal side of Bill Hefner and what he meant to me.

There are all of these things we've heard tonight, and as I mentioned earlier, he was my Congressman. I must say that, while those many years he represented us, I wasn't involved in party politics. I never ran for public office like Mr. Hefner, and there came a time when I felt that maybe that was what people like me should do because that's what Bill Hefner had done. He was a man of the people. He recognized the working people, and he stood up for those people.

I said, you know, we have seen in our district, the wonderful Eighth District of North Carolina, that, if you go out to the people and if you tell them who you are and if they recognize in you the knowledge that you know who they are and if they know that you respect

them and that you are concerned about them, as we saw for 24 years, those people will reward you by sending you to Congress. So it was with knowledge of what Mr. Hefner had done that I ran for Congress. I come from a very small town, Biscoe, North Carolina—1,500 people—and needless to say, it wasn't exactly a turning moment in North Carolina politics when I announced that I would run for Congress. It is with the legacy, though, of Mr. Bill Hefner that people look to the person for what he says and not who he is and not where he comes from.

One time in my home county, Montgomery County, which is also a small county, President Bill Clinton was coming to visit our local hospital. He was accompanied by Mr. Hefner, and together they went visiting there in the hospital. I heard this story, and I think it kind of sums up everything about Bill Hefner. They went into the room. The President and Mr. Hefner went into the room of a patient's.

Mr. Hefner said, I'm Bill Hefner, and this is President Clinton.

The gentleman, the patient, said, You're Bill Hefner? I've been wanting to meet you all my life. You're a wonderful Congressman. I've even sent you a little bit of money, and I love the way you sing. You're the best singer ever.

He never once recognized that the President of the United States was also in the room. It was all about Bill Hefner. Bill Hefner's favorite song was "If I Can Help Someone."

Mr. Hefner, Shelly, Stacye, and Nancy, please know that you have helped many people. Thank you so much, and God bless Bill Hefner.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE RULE OF LAW AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MARKEY of Colorado). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me for this hour.

For many weeks now, I've been coming to the floor with my colleagues to talk about something that, I think, is the glue that holds our Republic together, and that is the fact that the rule of law does and should prevail in this Nation. By "the rule of law," it means that we are able, as a people, to establish a set of rules. Whether they be legal rules, whether they be ethical rules, whether they be rules of this House or rules of this Nation, we agree to abide by those rules, and those rules cover every element of our lives. There is the rule of contract. We don't violate criminal laws. We have laws that govern this House. We have rules that govern this House, and they're the glue that holds a society together.

When we see the society having people or events that cause the glue to weaken, I think it's our duty and our responsibility as Members of this House to step up and say, hey, this is out of control; this has got to stop; the rule of law has to prevail. We have rules. We have responsibilities to keep those rules, and we as a Congress should hold each other to those rules.

The Congress of the United States, like many other bodies in this country, has a set of rules, and we police ourselves up. We're not the only group of people who does this. The medical associations do it. The bar associations do it. They have, within their own memberships, committees that police up the activities of their own members. The whole purpose is so that they can correct issues before they get out of hand and, if something is out of hand, so that they can have the strength of their convictions of their associations to stand for what is right even if it's difficult and to do the right thing even if it's difficult.

I've been raising issues on the floor of this House with the help of my colleagues now for about 10 weeks. Of these issues, there is one in particular with which I've had some amount of fun. Actually, I've created what's called the Rangel Rule to put a spotlight on some issues that involve the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee; but over this August break, after talking about all of the things that were not resolved by our present Ethics Committee concerning Chairman RANGEL, more things have arisen which raise the issues to such a level that they just absolutely cannot be ignored anymore.

We have an Ethics Committee, and the American people should demand that, if we are going to set up a system where we police up this House, then we need to get behind the business of policing up this House. If it has to do with a Member who, by his own admission, has either through error or intent broken the rules of this House, then the Ethics Committee should not be deadlocked on political lines but should resolve this issue. If it's not going to be done, then the leadership of this House should take control of this House. The Speaker of the House was given the authority to be in charge of this House of Representatives, and it's her job. It's the job she signed onto. It's the responsibility she took to make sure that this House runs by certain rules. When blatant issues come forward and when newspapers across this Nation are crying out that some kind of justice needs to be done on an issue, if we're not going to do it, we're failing the very foundation of our Republic.

Tonight, I am joined by my colleagues—and there may be many of them here tonight—and we're going to talk about some of these issues that involve our friend. I want to say that specifically. I have no personal animosity whatsoever against Mr. RANGEL. In

fact, I will tell you he has been nothing but kind to me since I've been in this House, and I've tried to be kind back, but there is an issue that needs to be resolved, and it should not be resolved just by saying on the floor of this House "I'm sorry." It should be resolved by following the rules established by this House, and that's what this is all about. It is not personally aimed at anyone. It is about this institution and about the fact that the American people are more and more distrusting of this Congress for reasons just like the reason we're talking about tonight. They see things that upset them and that would upset them in their workplaces if they were to have that happen, so they ask: Why aren't the people we sent to Washington resolving this issue? What is wrong with those people? Now we need to ask those questions of ourselves. So I want to make it clear that this is not personal. This is about the rule of law and about the responsibility of this House.

I am joined by my good friend VIRGINIA FOXX, who is going to talk to us. She is from North Carolina. She is going to talk to us a little bit tonight. I yield her as much time as she may consume.

Ms. FOXX. I want to thank my colleague from Texas for having begun this dialogue and this talk tonight about the rule of law.

I often say when I'm speaking to groups, particularly of young people, that what has made our country so great are several things, but underlying all of those is the rule of law. I think the three most outstanding are the rule of law, our Judeo-Christian heritage, and our capitalistic society—our economic system. We couldn't have our ability to worship God as we please and our capitalistic economic system if it weren't for the rule of law undergirding those.

When you look at other countries in this world, at other countries in this hemisphere, you will see that Mexico, for example, has been in the news a lot lately. They have many, many natural resources, as we do here, but what has created the problems for Mexico is that it is such a corrupt system. They do not operate by the rule of law. Most Americans just accept what we have in this country as something that exists everywhere. It doesn't. If we allow the rule of law to be torn down, then we really undermine our entire country and our entire culture.

I want to tell a little story, because I agree with Congressman CARTER on everything that he has said tonight. None of this is personal. This is all about the very strong and positive feelings that all of us have for the House of Representatives and for our government.

□ 2130

And I may get choked up in telling this story, but it was a great thing that happened today, because it allows me