

Additionally, many residents have called to offer their suggestions on how to clean up this mess. I sincerely hope that BP is giving due consideration to all of these suggestions. Clearly, BP's plan has not worked. The cleanup plan in Louisiana is abysmal. It is time for BP to look elsewhere.

Yesterday, I met with BP executives to discuss the company's slow, uncoordinated, and half-baked response efforts in Florida. At this meeting, I relayed the frustrations of many south Florida small business owners who are going through the BP claims process. These individuals are required to go through a long, complicated, and belittling process in order to receive the compensation that they serve because, for their economic loss, they had a downturn in business as a result of the premature panic from the BP oil spill.

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Let me be clear: These hardworking men and women are not looking for a handout, Mr. Speaker. They would much rather be working. Unfortunately, the disaster in the gulf has taken a tremendous toll on fishermen, on dive shops, on restaurants, on motels, and many tourist-related businesses in the Keys.

BP needs to completely revamp its claims process. In the Keys, two claims offices opened by BP are virtually useless. Individuals seeking compensation leave these offices with stacks of complicated paperwork, legal documentation, and little guidance.

I have requested detailed information from BP on its claims process. We need to demand complete transparency in this process, including data on how claims are being evaluated, how payment sums are being determined, and how quickly claims are being processed. Complicated legal documents just will not do.

On a related note, the Federal agencies need to come up with a plan in the event of a tropical storm or hurricane in the gulf. Hurricane season has just started. Experts at the National Hurricane Center predict that the 2010 hurricane season could be one of the most active on record. Forecasters are predicting anywhere between 14 to 23 named storms this season. Of course, it only takes one. Just ask the Florida residents who suffered through Hurricane Andrew, or just ask those residents in New Orleans who are still recovering from Hurricane Katrina.

In addition to a predicted active storm season, our communities are now saddled with the uncertainty of an oil spill. The ruptured oil rig is located right in the middle of hurricane alley. Scientists have suggested that the sheer strength of a hurricane could turn the oil slick into a devastating black surf. I shudder to think of the long-term economic devastation and environmental damage caused by this toxic combination.

BP and, indeed, all of our Federal agencies must prepare now for a worst-

case scenario later. BP cannot continue to sit idly by while communities are destroyed.

MAVI MARMARA

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, the events that transpired in the Mediterranean off the coast of Israel on May 31st were profoundly unfortunate and the loss of life is deeply regrettable.

We await a full and credible account of what happened aboard the Mavi Marmara, yet we know that Israel has the right and obligation to protect her citizens and borders, in this case by enforcing a legal naval blockade to allow certification of peaceful end use of goods transported into Gaza.

In the days since the incident, Israel has released all people detained and has inspected and trucked the flotilla aid cargo to Gaza, where I understand it awaits permission from Hamas to cross.

Sadly, last week's confrontation could have been avoided. Israel offered the flotilla organizers the chance to have their cargo inspected at the Port of Ashdod and transported to Gaza. Five of the six ships in the flotilla complied nonviolently, but the Mavi Marmara, loaded with over 500 people, refused.

The sequence of events that subsequently led to violence is disputed, but it is obvious, to me anyway, that the actions of the Mavi Marmara were needlessly provocative.

Israel should lead an impartial, transparent, and prompt examination of the incident. And inquiries may show how the interdiction could have been accomplished without loss of life.

It seems to me that the Israeli soldiers were right to defend themselves from the brutal assault. We saw this on video. It does not seem clear that the situation had to unfold as it did, however.

Israel announced yesterday that a highly respected team of experts will review the investigations that are now under way, with a report expected in about a month. The United States should assist our ally in this endeavor, and the world community should withhold judgment until a reliable inquiry is complete. Yet many around the world, once again, are rushing to blame Israel before fully examining all the facts.

The United States, correctly, voted against a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution that called for an independent fact-finding mission, while at the same time, prematurely condemning Israel's actions. This apparent bias cannot be allowed to inflame an already volatile situation.

I have called for increased humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza for more than a year now. Legitimate hu-

manitarian needs cannot be ignored. However, continued interference and provocations by any nation or faction in the region are unhelpful and dangerous.

The United States, the Arab states, and others must continue to facilitate vigorous and sustained diplomacy until lasting peace is achieved. Ultimately, only a just, permanent, and peaceful settlement between Israelis and Palestinians can ensure the security and the welfare of all in the region.

FREE ENTERPRISE, FREE MARKET EQUALS RECOVERY

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, in today's Washington Post, the very prominent columnist George Will has a column about how the very limited recovery that has gone on in this country over the last few months is a jobless recovery, a term that we are hearing from many, many experts throughout the country.

I can tell you that, all over this country, college graduates are having trouble finding jobs, and many are having to work as waiters and waitresses in restaurants or at other very low-paying jobs. In large part, that is because environmental radicals have forced us to send millions of good jobs to other countries for 30 years or more now, and that is the main cause of that problem. But another problem that is going on all over the country is the credit situation.

Yesterday, in the Washington Times, there was a lengthy article about the problem that is still going on, that the banks are not making loans to anyone who really needs a loan, and particularly small businesses are hurting.

Well, I can tell you exactly why the banks are not making loans to the people who need them. And that is because, while the President and the Secretary of the Treasury—and both President Bush and his administration did this and President Obama and his Secretary of the Treasury have been doing this—they are up here in Washington saying, loan, loan, loan, and the banks have all this money, but the examiners down on the local level are saying, no, no, no, and turning down what would be really good loans even in just recent times.

Unless the examiners start giving small businesses at least some flexibility, this economy is not really going to recover.

We know, for instance, that there have been almost no jobs created over the last few months in the private sector. And about the only jobs that have been created or the biggest number of jobs that have been created have been jobs in the census, which occurs only once every 10 years.

My main purpose in coming here today is to read into the RECORD a letter that I have received from one of my

constituents, Mike Connor, who started with one restaurant in 1992 and now has a chain of 15 restaurants.

He wrote this letter to me recently. He said, quote, "We, the middle-sized business owners, are going to need a lot of help in the next couple of years. As I understand the current health care reform bill, Connor Concepts, as an employer of more than 50 people, will be required to provide health insurance for all full-time employees or face a \$3,000 fine per employee."

"We currently employ around 1,200 team members in five States. We do provide health insurance for around 100 full-time salaried management and upper-management staff. Of the remaining 1,100 team members, around 800 are full-time and are not provided with health insurance."

"If we are required to pay for their health insurance or pay the penalty, we would have to pay an additional \$2,400,000. If we are forced to pay this, the five States we operate in will have an additional 1,200 unemployed. We would lose a lot of money!"

Mr. Connor continues, "Together with my team, I have built this company from one restaurant in 1992, providing jobs for 80 people, to 15 restaurants, employing 1,200. Right now we plan to continue opening one restaurant a year, employing 80 to 100 people. If something doesn't change in the next year or 2 with this reform, we will have to stop growth."

I want to repeat what he said here. This 15-restaurant chain, which is not a giant business, they will have to stop their growth if the health care reform bill goes fully into effect as it is now written.

Mr. Connor continues, "Though our team members are not provided health insurance because of the expense, they are provided with a good pay wage, excellent vacation benefits, meal privileges, and excellent working conditions. More than anything else, though, they are provided a good job, one that allows them to pay their bills, support their families, or pay for their school."

"We do provide an insurance plan team members can pay for themselves. It is an inexpensive plan that has limits on hospital stays but does take care of routine medical care."

Mr. Connor ends this letter by saying, "I look forward to working with you in whatever way I can to change this law so that I can stay in business."

Businesses, Mr. Speaker, all over this country are facing this same situation. And we have got to change this and allow the free-enterprise, free-market system to work in this country once again if we're going to ever have the recovery that our people want.

I thank you.

TRIBUTE TO BILL HANDLEMAN

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, award-winning journalist Bill Handleman, 62, of the Asbury Park Press, tragically passed away yesterday after a long bout with cancer.

A family man and a humanitarian with a great big heart and incisive wit, Bill is survived by his dear wife Judy, his three children, his mom, extended family, and a boatload of friends.

And allow me to extend our deepest condolences to the family and to let them know that our prayers are with them during this very, very difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, to know Bill Handleman in person or through his prolific pen is to respect and admire his innate goodness, his generosity, and good humor. For years, Bill's news beat was sports, and he especially liked the ponies. He was a four-time sportswriter of the year, in 1992, 2002, 2003, and 2005.

Asbury Park Press staff writer Shannon Mullen writes in today's edition, however, that "Bill soon discovered that he much preferred writing about everyday struggles of ordinary people rather than the coddled multimillionaire athletes he dealt with on the sports beat."

Bill had an extraordinary penchant for a compelling subject matter and consistently turned the seemingly mundane, especially those who were left out and left behind, into compelling human interest stories.

The Press's Shannon Mullen again summed it up well: "Bill Handleman was a gifted storyteller. His writing style was direct, witty, and spare. A lifelong student of Hemingway, he used periods like an Impressionist painter uses a brush, preferring short, incisive sentences that packed a punch. And as a columnist, Handleman relished championing the underdog." Mr. Speaker, thank God he did.

Even as he battled cancer, Bill turned out one great story after another with intriguing titles like, "A Man With a Hole in His Heart: A Coach's Story"; "No Longer Homeless: A Former Mogul Envisions the Future"; "A Different Midlife Crisis: A Man Learns that He Is Adopted"; "During the Depression, the Poor Scramble for Work and Cash"; "A Father Leaves Behind a Secret"—it was a World War II veteran story.

His stories made us laugh and touched our hearts, and they moved us to action, like the case of David Goldman. To a large extent, David Goldman ceased being invisible in his heroic battle to reclaim his son, Sean, from a child abductor in Brazil because Bill Handleman made it his passion to effectively inform, inspire, and challenge the community, including and especially lawmakers, to join David's struggle for justice.

"For 4 years, no one could hear him. He was shouting in the dark," David's father, Barry, told Mr. Handleman in one column. In the 16 months since Mr.

Handleman began telling this story, David's seemingly intractable plight went from near total obscurity to huge prominence. Public officials at every level responded to the call.

Each of Bill Handleman's approximately 24 columns not only conveyed to readers timely and critically important information about the Goldman case, but Mr. Handleman went deep behind the scenes to flesh out details of uncommon courage, sacrifice and compassion. Bill Handleman gave the community rare insights into the raw emotion and the fleeting successes, followed by frustrating setbacks, the agony and ultimately the ecstasy of David and Sean's permanent reunion.

In a candor and depth of reporting found nowhere else in the print media, we got to know David in his own words as he was thinking it. Readers of the column were there with David on countless trips to Rio, to Brasilia, to Washington, and at home with him in Monmouth County. For more than a year, Bill Handleman allowed us to see it all as David did and to walk, to some extent, in left-behind-parents' shoes. Through Bill Handleman's incisive pen, we also got to know much of David Goldman's family and close friends.

We will miss Bill Handleman. I, along with tens and thousands of others, read each and every column, often with tears and empathy and resolve to do more about David Goldman's case. David Goldman was, indeed, lucky that the columnist who embraced his quest turned out to be a consummate storyteller and the Handleman column a true game-changer. Bill Handleman did an exceptional job. We will miss him dearly.

Again, our prayers and our condolences go out to Judy and to the family.

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

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

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

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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