

true friendship with Senator Ted Kennedy from Massachusetts, as we all know who passed shortly before Senator BYRD, and for whom Senator BYRD had nothing but the utmost and kindest words of praise, and truly defined a friendship that perhaps has not been in American politics for some time.

□ 1630

This was a defining quality and a wellspring of immeasurable joy that irrigated ever greater horizons for Senator BYRD. His penchant for setting records and then breaking his own was the inevitable result, but ultimately, we are the ones who reaped the great benefit.

In his later years, when anyone questioned age as somehow detrimental to service, Senator BYRD reveled in ticking off the names and ages of the ancients in the Old Testament and their continued service to the Lord: Moses was 120, Senator BYRD would say; Noah lived to be 960; Methuselah at 969 years old; and he would call out, While I am but a spry 85.

At 92, with the longest record of service in Congress well established, Senator BYRD enjoyed public service so much that it is possible he also had the longest, happiest life on record. If only we could have captured the energies produced by his immense job satisfaction. If only we could package them and share them with others.

Senator BYRD was cautious about the use of superlatives. He felt they were tossed around too casually, and although I do not doubt that he is now grimacing a bit at me for saying this, the fact is it is just not possible to speak about Senator BYRD without using superlatives: longest serving, hardest working, most revered, best loved. And the list goes on and on. Yes, he was passionate about people. He was passionate about politics. He was caring. He was all concerned about the lives of all of us in West Virginia.

As we all know, we go through personal trials and tribulations in our family—the loss of a loved one, sibling problems, loss of a job. Senator BYRD, when he was physically able, would so surprisingly show up in West Virginia offering that comforting arm around the shoulder and always telling those afflicted with tragedy to keep the faith in God, to don't let them get you down, keep plugging along. Senator BYRD himself, who never had a bad word to say about anybody despite some of the words that were said about him, was forever the true gentleman.

Many in this body had their own personal remembrances of Senator BYRD. He touched so many of us, encouraged us, taught us, even argued with us. And I can recall the last time perhaps, except for the miners' memorial that he attended this past April in honor of our 29 fallen coal miners, the only time before that he was probably in his home area of Raleigh County, Beckley, West Virginia, was a dinner in which he was

a surprise guest that honored yours truly. And my wife, Melinda, and I fixed up our house, and my wife even set up the "big daddy suite" in our home in West Virginia. That big daddy suite is still there waiting, as it always was, for Senator BYRD to pay a surprise visit.

We are all better for the life of Senator ROBERT BYRD. We owe him generous helpings of gratitude and admiration, and we shall all miss him.

Again, to Senator BYRD's family, we offer our prayers, our never-ending thanks for the fact that they shared Senator BYRD's extraordinary life with a grateful State and a grateful Nation.

Now, our former senior Senator, our late senior Senator is indeed with his beloved wife, Erma, who was always a twinkle in his eye. For 69 years, they were married before her passing some 5 years ago. The Senator is with his beloved Erma, smiling down upon all of us.

We say thank you, Senator BYRD. Thank you for all you've given our great State. Thank you for all you have given our Nation, because we shall miss you.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING DR. JOSEPH GRUNENWALD UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM CLARION UNIVERSITY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in warm congratulations for Dr. Joseph Grunenwald upon his retirement from Clarion University in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Grunenwald faithfully served Clarion for more than 30 years, earning him such honors as the title of president emeritus from the Pennsylvania State system of higher education. He's one of five in the organization's 27-year history to receive this honor, which is awarded to those who exhibit an exemplary record of service. Under his leadership, Clarion's enrollment reached record levels, and the university saw marked improvement in its academic, community, and business programs.

In addition, Dr. Grunenwald serves on the boards of numerous community organizations, attesting to his sincere dedication to the welfare and advancement of Clarion. He is a true example of community service and steadfast effort and deserves to be praised and honored. I am sure that Dr. Grunenwald

will continue to serve his community and foster positive progress.

Congratulations to Dr. Grunenwald. I wish you success and fulfillment in your years of retirement and look forward to working with Clarion University's 16th president, Dr. Karen Whitney.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF SENATOR BYRD

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was detained when my colleagues were on the floor of the House paying tribute to Senator BYRD and did not want this time to go without acknowledging my deep sympathy to his family and to my good friend from West Virginia and to acknowledge how special this man was to the institution we call Congress and to the freedom that this Nation stands for.

I cannot account for my personal encounters with Senator BYRD, but I can tell you, as someone who respects and loves this institution, what a man who understood the Constitution and rules that were not for selfish reasons, to keep people from being in power, but really it was to empower people.

He had no qualms in standing up against Presidential authority that was wrong in the Iraq War. He had no qualms in fighting to ensure that resources came to his great State. He loved the institution. He was a holder of knowledge, and what we will lose with his passing is that special sensitivity to the rules and to the responsibility we have to not play politics with this institution. We are here to serve America, and Senator BYRD did serve America.

May God rest his soul and may he rest in peace. Senator BYRD, we will miss you.

□ 1640

SEAMAN WILLIAM ORTEGA

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Navy Seaman William Ortega. This fallen American hero gave his life on June 18 after a bomb exploded while he was in a patrol vehicle and while he was conducting combat operations against enemy forces in the Helmand Province in Afghanistan.

Seaman Ortega, 23 years old, was a hospital corpsman to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton. His battalion is nicknamed the "Thundering Third."

His family stated that Seaman Ortega cherished becoming an American citizen. He enjoyed being named "student of the month" at school and winning first place at the local youth fair.

Throughout middle school and high school, he made the Honor Roll. He was involved in clubs, and he excelled in every sport that he played. After graduating from South Dade High School in 2005, Seaman Ortega went on to study at Florida Career College where he obtained a degree in Web site design.

Then Seaman Ortega joined the military because of the core values military life has to offer. He wanted to give back to a nation that had given him and his family so much opportunity. So, as a hospital corpsman, he was a Navy medic who treated those who were injured in combat.

His sister Aracely Ortega described him as an "awesome brother and an awesome friend." She also said, "He had a lot of respect for this Nation, and he paid the ultimate sacrifice, unfortunately."

For his brave service and sacrifice, Seaman Ortega was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the NATO Non Article V Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

He is survived by his parents—William and Marianela Ortega—and by his five sisters, and hundreds gathered, over the weekend in Miami, to pay respect and to pay tribute to this American fallen hero.

Our grateful Nation grieves with his family during this difficult time, and our grateful Nation will never forget William Ortega, a true American hero.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, Democrats in Congress will continue to take America in a new direction, creating good American jobs, lowering taxes for the middle class and small businesses, and building a strong new foundation for the economy and for Main Street.

We continue to see signs of economic recovery resulting from the economic policies of the Democratic Congress and the Obama administration responding to the Bush recession and the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. More must be done to create and save jobs, but the latest signs of recovery include the HIRE Act, a bipartisan bill to create 300 jobs; American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act, tax incentives to spur business innovation and tax cuts; the Small Business and Infrastructure Jobs Tax Act extends aid to States to provide subsidies to employers, including small businesses; and the Home Star bill, which creates much-needed jobs in the manufacturing sector by providing tax rebates to homeowners who install energy-saving products.

Last week, the U.S. Department of Energy announced \$29 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to develop and expand weatherization training centers across

the country. These projects will provide green job training for local workers in energy efficiency retrofitting and weatherization services.

Congress and the President have worked together to enact an array of broad-based tax cuts for working and middle-class families and small business owners—ending an era of Republican tax breaks focused only on the wealthy. These tax cuts are injecting consumer demand into the economy and spurring job creation.

All totaled, Congress has enacted more than \$800 billion in tax cuts, with another \$285 billion making their way through Congress, such as permanent estate tax relief and the R&D tax credit to spur business innovation.

REPUBLICAN RECORD OF FAILURE

Congressional Republicans threaten to take us back to the failed policies that created the economic crisis—siding with the special interests: Wall Street banks, credit card companies, Big Oil, and insurance companies.

These economic and fiscal policies created the Bush recession—the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression—with job losses of nearly 800,000 a month—and nearly doubled our national debt.

Republicans have voted against every major piece of economic legislation—from the Recovery Act to Wall Street reform—choosing the special interests over American workers, their families and small businesses.

Democrats in Congress will continue to take America in a New Direction, working to create American jobs and a strong new foundation for the economy, protecting Main Street and the middle class. We're getting results.

During the last 3 months of the Bush administration, we lost on average 726,000 jobs. In the last 3 months, we have created an average of 186,000 jobs. The current unemployment rate is 9.9 percent.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HALVORSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

OUR POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my continuing and growing concern over our policy in Afghanistan.

As General Petraeus appears before the Senate and as we are being asked to consider tens of billions of dollars in supplemental funding for the war, I believe that now is the time for us to ask tough questions and to demand straight answers.

Of all the problems that President Obama inherited from the Bush administration, Afghanistan is the one that keeps getting more complicated. In just the past few weeks, two brave, young soldiers from my congressional district in Fall River, Massachusetts, lost their lives in Afghanistan. So this

is a big deal, and we need to get it right.

Last December, President Obama told the American people that we would begin to withdraw our forces next July. The American people deserve to know if that plan is still in place and how we are going to get there.

Much has been made about General Stanley McChrystal's comments in Rolling Stone magazine about the Nation's civilian leadership; but frankly, Madam Speaker, this is much bigger than a few ill-considered comments. Indeed, there are other parts of the article that I find to be much more disturbing.

For instance, General McChrystal, himself, referred to the biggest military operation of the year so far, the offensive in Marja, as a "bleeding ulcer."

General McChrystal's chief of operations said that Afghanistan "is not going to look like a win, smell like a win or taste like a win. This is going to end in an argument."

Before the Marja offensive began, General McChrystal personally went to President Karzai's palace to get his consent on the operation. According to the article, "Karzai's staff, however, insisted that the President was sleeping off a cold, and could not be disturbed. After several hours of haggling, McChrystal finally enlisted the aid of Afghanistan's defense minister, who persuaded Karzai's people to wake the President from his nap."

A senior adviser to General McChrystal said, "If Americans pulled back and started paying attention to this war, it would become even less popular."

A senior military official said this, "There's a possibility we could ask for another surge of U.S. forces next summer if we see success here."

So the administration has determined General McChrystal's exit strategy, but it is the exit strategy for the rest of our brave soldiers that I am more worried about it.

Madam Speaker, I voted in 2001 to go to war in Afghanistan—to hunt down al Qaeda and to eliminate their threat, and I would cast that same vote today in a heartbeat. Though, what we are doing in Afghanistan today is far beyond that original authorization. We are engaged in extensive, expensive nation-building in Afghanistan.

Frankly, given the level of unemployment and the severe economic situation we face in the United States, I would rather do a little more nation-building here at home. We have borrowed \$350 billion—added to the debt—for the war in Afghanistan.

My Republican friends have refused to support extending unemployment benefits for our out-of-work Americans because they say we can't afford it. We are told we can't afford to help States' avoiding laying off teachers. We are told we can't afford to improve our roads and bridges or to help more families afford a college education. We are