

took to give them a quality education and improve their behavior for improving their lives.

Then serving in the California Senate for 20 years and chairing the Health and Human Services Committee, I could guide and fashion legislation that would benefit all Californians.

Then to be able to represent the United States of America abroad was one of the highlights of my life, never thinking that I could rise to that level, but it happened. And then crowning my public service, serving here in this House.

I want to thank my colleagues, I want to thank the staff, and I want to thank my friends for the privilege you have given me. And I would say to you, so long for now. Hope to see you again next year.

□ 1750

FAREWELL TO CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS MEMBERS

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

Ms. CLARKE. Madam Speaker, as the 111th Congress comes to an end, it is with deep sadness that I come to the floor to wish a fond farewell to several members of the Congressional Black Caucus who will not be moving to the 112th Congress. These members, Congresswoman CAROLYN KILPATRICK, Congresswoman DIANE WATSON, Congressman KENDRICK MEEK, and Congressman ARTUR DAVIS will be sorely missed.

Congresswoman CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, AKA "Auntie," as I affectionately called her, has been a friend and mentor throughout my service in Congress. A proud native of Detroit, Congresswoman KILPATRICK has led a long and distinguished career in public service. Before her service in the Michigan State House and later in Congress, she enriched the lives of young people as an educator. Throughout her tenure in the House of Representatives, Congresswoman KILPATRICK has consistently supported the development of minority businesses and brought numerous projects to her home State as an appropriator.

Also leaving us will be Congresswoman DIANE WATSON, who was also a mentor, who I affectionately have referred to as "Lady Di" due to her grace and elegance. Congresswoman WATSON began her career as a school psychologist. Upon entering politics, she's been a tireless advocate for consumer protection and health care. She was a member of the California Assembly and an ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia during the Clinton administration.

Congressman ARTUR DAVIS has also faithfully served on Capitol Hill. A former prosecutor, Congressman DAVIS has led a career in public service. He served on the House Ways and Means Committee, and has been a strong ad-

vocate for improvements in health care and education throughout the years.

Finally, hailing from the great State of Florida, Congressman KENDRICK MEEK will be leaving us. He is one half of a historic mother-to-son succession to the U.S. House of Representatives and affectionately known as my "Brother." After years in law enforcement, Congressman MEEK continued in public service by entering politics. He came to Congress at the retirement of his mother, Mrs. Carrie Meek. In the House of Representatives, he has faithfully represented the people of Miami and south Florida by focusing on policies that create jobs and improve health care.

The work of Representatives KILPATRICK, WATSON, DAVIS, and MEEK has not gone unnoticed. Their contributions will provide great assistance for not only their constituents, but for all Americans. I firmly believe that they all will continue to be change-makers along whichever paths they follow. Their role as public servants will always remain strong as they continue to enhance their communities. I wish them the best of luck in their next endeavors, and I will cherish the lasting friendship we have always shared.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS MEMBERS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, before I begin my tribute to my dear friends that are leaving, I want to make mention again of a dear friend that we lost this week, and that is the Honorable Richard Holbrooke, who served this Nation ably and who was given tribute today by H. Con. Res. 335, as amended.

Just a brief word about Ambassador Holbrooke as I begin to talk about the outstanding Members that I wish to pay tribute to. I'm reminded not only of his courage, the magnitude of his physical size, the love that he had for his family, the love that he had for the Nation, and the admiration that he received from around the world, but I'm reminded of his tenure at the United Nations. He did something that was equal to moving the Earth. He brought peace between two giants: one, the Vice President of the United States, who in fact came to speak about HIV/AIDS, and he drew also to that very issue with the then-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chairman Jesse Helms. He thought that was a great accomplishment—and we did too. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus went to the United Nations at that time. So I am rising to acknowledge Ambassador Holbrooke and will join with my other colleagues who honored him earlier today.

But I have the great, if you will, honor of honoring wonderful, stellar organizations that are coming to pay

tribute to a number of members of the Congressional Black Caucus. And I say "organizations" because I know that sororities, fraternities, the NAACP, women's organizations, so many would want to say thank-you to the following members:

First, my dear sister, Ambassador DIANE WATSON. I always call her "Ambassador." And that she is. She carried herself in a framework of peace; of wanting to bring people together; of challenging our consciousness, and doing it with integrity, honesty, and courageousness. Let me thank her for the work that she did in honoring Dr. Dorothy Height and thank her for the work she did in helping to carry forth the vision of C. Delores Tucker. And now, because of my sister DIANE WATSON and myself and the late Congresswoman Millender-McDonald, I can say that we have the Sojourner Truth statue in the United States Congress, which will always be remembered by this great work.

And her sister, the Honorable CAROLYN KILPATRICK, who took up the Sojourner Truth movement, she's the second African American woman to be appointed to the Appropriations Committee. I can tell you CAROLYN KILPATRICK never wavered from investing in people and ensuring that people had resources that came from the taxpayers' dollars. My hat is off to the former Congresswoman and chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Might I thank a colleague on the Judiciary Committee, Congressman ARTUR DAVIS. Yes, a former U.S. Attorney, but a vigorous speaker and a progeny of the civil rights movement. He was in fact the beneficiary of the civil rights movement and carried it in dignity by becoming a U.S. Attorney in the district that covered Alabama. We thank him for his work on the Ways and Means Committee, and we thank him for his service on the Judiciary Committee, and wish him well.

The Honorable KENDRICK MEEK is to all of us like a brother. We loved his mother, Carrie. And we saw in him those traits as he worked hard in the 30-somethings in the first couple of years when he was in the Congress, trying to get us back in the majority, but more importantly, speaking to the people.

He ran a fantastic open, wide, welcoming race for the United States Senate. His great days are before him. His wonderful wife and children were a fixture around this place, and we pay tribute to him because of the passion and sacrifice he made for Haitians in his area and for the many people that he represented.

So, Madam Speaker, let me say to you, sadness falls because we will be losing to great things Members like Congresswoman DIANE WATSON, Congresswoman CAROLYN KILPATRICK, Congressman ARTUR DAVIS, and Congressman KENDRICK MEEK. As my dear sister, Congresswoman DIANE WATSON, is

on the floor of the House, I will tell you that is indicative of her work; that she was here for us in the morning, here for us late at night. And so I have no doubt that she will be carrying forth the torch in California, as all the others will be doing. Having just hosted the Attorney General from California, Ms. Harris, I know that you will be a great comfort and nurturer to her.

PARTISAN POLITICS TRUMPING PATRIOTISM

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, there are some days when I find myself completely baffled by the cynicism of many people who have the privilege to serve here in Washington. Last week, for example, the United States Senate did it again, staying true to its reputation as a graveyard for good legislation. Using the filibuster once again, a minority of Senators blocked the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. This bill, which the House passed in September, would be the greatest expression of our gratitude for the 9/11 first responders. It would provide health care for those workers who incurred health hazards in their efforts to save lives in the aftermath of that horrific tragedy. But apparently, Madam Speaker, some in Congress are unmoved by the plight of firefighters and emergency medical personnel who breathed in toxic fumes on 9/11.

The only way it appears the right wing in America knows to commemorate 9/11 is through exclusion and religious chauvinism—by insisting that a Muslim community center must not be built even a few blocks away from Ground Zero. They've got no interest whatsoever in lending a compassionate hand to those who answered the call on 9/11; no apparent interest in responding to 9/11 with healing rather than dividing.

□ 1800

No wonder Mayor Bloomberg of New York calls the rejection of the bill "a devastating indictment of Washington politics, a tragic example of partisan politics trumping patriotism."

If I had a dollar for every time a colleague on the other side of the aisle invoked the bravery of the 9/11 first responders, I'd probably have enough money to offset the cost of the bill. But talk is cheap, Madam Speaker; they want to play lip service to heroism. They just don't want to invest any actual money to help the heroes. Hundreds of billions in tax breaks for the very richest Americans, that's not only okay by them; it is the one thing that animates the Republican Party more than anything else, but funds for American heroes who got sick answering the call of duty—sorry, that's just too expensive.

Actually, there is one other thing that animates them, and that is the

support for endless military occupations halfway around the world. I have yet to hear any of the so-called "deficit hawks" ask questions about how we're going to pay for that.

I will not, Madam Speaker, take any claims of fiscal responsibility seriously from anyone who is not willing to put Afghanistan war spending on the table. Between Iraq and Afghanistan, we have now spent more than \$1.1 trillion in taxpayer money on wars that have undermined our national security goals, increasing rather than diminishing the terrorist threat.

But what about the folks who were there on that one day that the terrorists attacked? Who jumped right into the debris and now suffer from lung damage and devastating respiratory illnesses? They can't get a modest fund from the country whose values they so valiantly embodied that fall morning 9 years ago.

It is an appalling set of priorities. We ought to bring our troops home at once and reinvest the money in our people, including those who showed such courage and who sacrificed so much on 9/11.

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

(Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FATTAH 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 gentlewoman 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.

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

COURAGE OF CONVICTION

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As always, it is an honor and a privilege to address this House, especially when you know the history of this place.

I would like to comment about my friend across the aisle who was talking about the 9/11 first responders. Those were heroes. They are heroes. They are really true testaments to the good in America. So many first responders were going up the stairs to rescue people as most everyone else was fleeing. They are true heroes.

What is not as heroic—in fact, it isn't heroic at all—is to bring a bill before the floor and say, Here is a bunch of heroes we need to help. We're not going to cut spending in any other areas. We know there is massive waste, fraud and abuse all over the place. We know there are entities that really have not been able to show any real benefit to the American economy, to American freedom, to American security; but we are not going to cut those, because those are favored in our eyes, too. We want you to borrow more money from the Chinese and from whoever is willing to keep buying bonds; and apparently, some people aren't willing to buy bonds at all or aren't willing to finance our continued astronomic debt.

So, even though Chairman Bernanke had assured us in a private meeting that he wasn't doing it, whatever he wants to call it, it sure sounds like monetizing the debt when you print money and buy our own debt, whether you do it directly or buy it from a third party who has just bought our debt.

Those are the kinds of things we are doing. We are saying, We see these heroes who deserve to be cared for and who deserve to have their health needs met. We agree on that. There was total agreement on that as far as I know.

What we didn't agree on was saying, So, as to these little children being born now, these little babies who are in their cribs all over the country, we're going to load them down with tens of thousands of dollars of debt before they ever even get their first jobs. We are going to load them up with debt because we don't have the financial responsibility to carve out money that is being wasted and to say this is where we need to send it.

Had that been done, I know the people on my side of the aisle, who I know and talked to about that bill that was so noble in its intent, would have voted for it as well. It doesn't even have to be that heroic. Just carve out some of the waste, fraud and abuse that this government is involved in, and pay for these things.

That was another problem with the so-called "tax extender bill" that came before the House this week. There were 36 Republicans who voted against it—not terribly heroic even though most of us knew that there could be consequences. I hear there are those who want to further take away committees. Some of us have been told we won't be subcommittee chairmen in the new Congress. It is ironic to see that those who have the most affiliation with tea party groups and the most conservatism, except for a precious few, are