

□ 1650

When Warren Hellman saw an opportunity to enrich our city, he acted upon it. He strengthened and beautified Golden Gate Park. He worked to end homelessness. He supported the San Francisco Free Clinic, many of those people availing themselves of the services there being homeless. Concerned about dwindling local news coverage in the Internet age, he helped form the Bay Citizen online journalism site. Warren served on the board of Mills College and the University of California at Berkeley's Haas School of Business. He was in a leadership role in everything that he did.

I mentioned that he was an athlete. He endowed aquatic sports at U.C. Berkeley, where he had played on the water polo team as a student. Whether it was bicycling, swimming, running, skiing, you name it, Warren was the best.

He was a lover of music, a lover of family, and a lover of life. The 3-day concert he founded—well, it used to be called Strictly Bluegrass; but as the program expanded and more entertainers wanted to participate and the audience turned out for them in the hundreds of thousands, it was changed to Hardly Strictly Bluegrass. So it wasn't strictly bluegrass. It is held each year at Golden Gate Park and has allowed hundreds of thousands of fans each year to enjoy the music that he loved—mostly bluegrass. And it was all free. Warren was involved in every aspect of the festival, including personally recruiting musicians he admired; and an invitation from Warren was one that was warmly responded to by the biggest names in music. It is so fitting that Speedway Meadow, the site of the festival, was renamed Hellman Hollow just last week. Just last week. So I know this pleased him and his family immensely.

I mentioned his interest in education and the arts. He and his wife, Chris, were really such magnificent patrons of the San Francisco Ballet. It's hard to match or surpass the contributions they have made intellectually and by way of encouragement in every way and certainly philanthropically.

With the passing of Warren Hellman, San Francisco has lost a beloved champion. We honor his memory and his enthusiasm by celebrating his many contributions. I said that he was good at everything he did; and that included being a friend, a friend to so many who will miss him so much. I am proud to call Warren a friend; and I hope it is a comfort to Chris, his wife, and his family whom he cherished. And he couldn't talk enough about them. He was so very proud of them and rightfully so. I hope it is a comfort to them that so many people mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time.

Tomorrow there will be a public service to honor his life and legacy. It will represent an outpouring of people from every aspect of San Francisco life, every economic strata, from homeless

people to the most privileged and successful in terms of their measure of success. But it will also represent people in the public and private and non-profit sectors. This was a very special person, and I want everyone who follows the work of Congress and the pride that we all take in representing our districts and our constituents to know how proud we all were of the life and leadership of Warren Hellman.

COMMUNICATION FROM CASEWORK SUPERVISOR, THE HONORABLE XAVIER BECERRA, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BROOKS) laid before the House the following communication from Michael Nielsen, Casework Supervisor/Office Manager, the Honorable XAVIER BECERRA, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
December 12, 2011.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives that I was served with a subpoena, issued by Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles for witness testimony.

Prior to my required appearance, however, the defendant in the case pled no contest to a lesser charge, thereby alleviating any need for my testimony. After consultation with the Office of General Counsel and as a result of developments in the case, no determination regarding compliance with the subpoena is required.

Sincerely,  
MICHAEL NIELSEN,  
Casework Supervisor/Office Manager.

CONGRESS, THE ADMINISTRATION,  
AND THE GIPPER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it's sometimes hard to reconcile the speeches we hear here on the floor with the legislation that we've passed. People have been speaking from the other side of the aisle here for the last 30 minutes about how the Republicans in the House apparently don't want taxpayers, working Americans, to have the 2 percent of the Social Security tax back that doesn't get paid into Social Security when actually this House has taken the responsible position not wanting to raise taxes in a down economy so workers will have the money that they currently do in their paychecks. It makes sense.

I've been saying ever since this first came up that the idea of a 2 percent tax cut is not a holiday and that actually the President corrupted the true payroll tax holiday idea that was brought forward 3 years ago. That was my idea. It was a stimulus idea that

Moody's, when they rated the different proposals, said would stimulate the 1-year GDP more than the other proposals, and it would have. The people that earned all of the money would have gotten it for 2 months in a row.

Some lazy reporters have tried to say, Well, that's just like this. Absolutely not. Unfortunately, it requires reading and not all reporters are willing to do that because it's clear my payroll tax holiday that I told the President about in January of 2009, he liked the idea and the only thing he did was take the name of it—that sounds familiar—and use that for what was not a holiday. It's not a holiday when you're avoiding 2 percent of the taxes you normally do. A holiday is when you don't pay the taxes. There are a number of differences. For one thing, the 2-month proposal by the Senate just pushes off what has to be done, and that's dealing with the rest of the year. We want to deal with the rest of the year. We want to provide certainty.

The bill I proposed did not create any uncertainty. It dealt with the issue that people could not shove bonuses into those 2 months, that it was a tax holiday for all of the income tax, Social Security, those taxes that would normally be taken out of the check. It would have averaged, we were told, between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month for 2 months. Instead of \$80 a month, you would've had \$4,000 to \$5,000 over a 2-month period. That would have stimulated the economy.

Not only that, this proposal that the President has had, it hasn't stimulated the economy. We just don't want to raise taxes on people in a down economy.

□ 1700

But it does hurt the Social Security trust fund. This President's proposal pits working Americans against our seniors. It didn't have to be this way. Before this President ran up an extra \$4 trillion in debt back when we were at \$11 trillion instead of 15 trillion, just a few years ago, the proposal was completely paid for, and the only people that would have missed the money were the Wall Street bailout folks that wouldn't have gotten their money because it took money from TARP and left it in the pockets of those who earned it. It made sure that there would be no shortfall in the Social Security trust fund. It made sure there would be no shortage in the Medicare fund, it addressed that. And the only people that would have been hurt—and I don't think they would have been hurt—but the only ones that would have missed the money were those getting the bailouts.

Well, this President liked the name, liked the idea of leaving some money in the check. But instead of \$4,000 to \$5,000, they decided to leave \$160—2 months.

HARRY REID has been saying that he wants to give Americans \$1,000, and that's what the Senate was doing. The

only way we can keep HARRY REID from being a liar—and I don't want to make him a liar—and so what we have to do is have the Senate pass what we've passed, at least send conferees to the conference, so that we can work out a compromise, because right now all he's got is \$160, not \$1,000.

So, I hope my colleagues here in the House will urge the Senate, please help us keep HARRY REID from being a liar. He said they provided \$1,000 in tax cuts to working Americans, and the only way that will happen is if they'll adopt the House proposal or send conferees to the conference. That will leave that much for the whole year, not just 2 months.

Now, there was \$700 billion originally allocated for TARP. The Obama administration got \$350 billion of that, plus it was projected it would get maybe \$100 billion, \$150 billion of the original \$350 billion. There's still \$120-plus billion dollars in assets in that slush fund that need to be liquidated, and they need to take care of things like Social Security and Medicare. There's another \$50 billion or so in the TARP that is still cash money that should be used. If anything is going to be used, use that to stimulate the economy by letting people keep their own money in their paycheck.

This 2 months proposed by the Senate is not going to stimulate the economy. As nonpartisan groups have said, it is actually going to create vast instability, and there is no comparison to that and a paid-for, complete holiday for working Americans to keep everything in their paycheck. That would have been a stimulus. We made inquiries of people in our district. What would you do with it? We heard from people who said we want a car that's more fuel efficient, but the big gas guzzler we've got is worth less than we owe on it. We can't get out from under. If you let us keep 2 months of our own taxes for the full 2 months, all of that, then we will be able to get rid of this clunker and be able to get a more fuel-efficient car. Others said, we got behind on our mortgage last summer when gas went to \$4 a gallon because Speaker PELOSI's and HARRY REID's policies, the bills, the legislation they passed were stifling the ability to provide for more of our own oil and gas. It spiked up to \$4 a gallon. They said, we got behind then, but if you let us keep 2 months of all of our taxes, we don't need any more government programs, we can get out of problems with our mortgage ourselves. But, no, there are people in this town that like the GRE, the Government Running Everything. And the way to do that is keep coming up with programs. So, they created more programs.

One other thing I want to touch on that has hit the news in the last 2 days, but unfortunately many have not noticed. This administration is in the process of trying to provide the Taliban a Christmas present. Now, 2 weeks ago, we found out that a fourth

category on the terrorist watch list was being created called former military detainees. Having seen how this administration works, having known we have an Attorney General that represented terrorists before he became Attorney General, having an Attorney General who has no clue how Fast and Furious came about, according to his testimony, having an Attorney General that was involved, was around when the Marc Rich pardon took place, we knew that we needed to look carefully when these kind of indications came forth. And what we found was the administration said, oh, no, no, no, we're not about to release detainees. Not much.

What's come out in the last 2 days is that this administration is negotiating with terrorists, negotiating with the Taliban directly and about to work out a deal. The administration is saying—and Reuters had a story on this—but the administration apparently is saying, in essence, we need to have a show of good faith to these terrorists, the Taliban, that we are complicit in the killing and the murdering of over 3,000 Americans. We need to show them good faith by releasing Taliban murderers from their detention, and then they'll have a much better feeling about us.

And then we're also in the process directly of negotiating with the Karzai administration, Afghanistan, and the Taliban, trying to work something out where the Taliban will have a place. This administration has forgotten they killed Americans. They're saying, well, we think that they're softening up now. They don't want to kill Americans as badly as they did back on 9/11. They probably won't plot, train, and kill Americans like they did before if they just see how wonderful our administration is and how kind and generous we are just to let them have murderers back out of detention who have made no indication that they don't want to kill Americans any further.

This administration is doing this. And they need to understand the people that they are about to give this Christmas present to don't believe in Christmas. They believed in killing Americans. They believed in killing innocent people. They believed in plotting and training to carry out such a plot to kill Americans, and there is no indication that they think otherwise.

But this administration is so intent on getting out of Afghanistan and turning things over to the Taliban again that we're going to be right back where we were 20 years ago as the Taliban was working toward the ultimate 9/11.

And not only that, they will then know everything Osama bin Laden said about the Americans being too weak, not being up to the fight, that eventually they'll cave in and start helping us to destroy them. That's what appears to be happening with this administration. We can't do that. The lives of Americans that have been lost in Afghanistan cry out, Do not concede defeat to our enemies that have killed us.

Afghanistan is an issue that needs to be dealt with, but not by giving those who terrorized us all that they want. They were wanting an office outside of Afghanistan, and this administration said, well, we think we can work that out. We'll pay for the office, we'll take care of that if you just promise us you won't use that to fund-raise for terrorism, okay? That's like North Korea saying, if you'll just build us a nuclear power plant, we promise we won't use it for nukes, and the Clinton administration and Madeleine Albright believed them. And now they've got nukes, and we helped them with it.

And now this administration can't learn from past mistakes. It's about to do that with the Taliban. In meeting with warlords a year and a half ago from northern Afghanistan, a small group of us learned that after the Taliban was initially defeated in about 3 or 4 months with merely embedded troops, that the United States asked the warlords, the Northern Alliance, to disarm. And they did. And now, here it was a year and a half ago, they're saying look, you may not be aware, but your administration, the Obama administration, is indirectly negotiating with the Taliban right now. We know. And you're negotiating with them and Pakistan in a corrupt Karzai administration. And who is going to be hurt out of all of this are your allies, those who fought with you, who defeated the Taliban initially, and now you're about to turn things over to the people who will kill your allies.

□ 1710

Do you want that message going around the world, that to be an ally with the United States means you ultimately will be abandoned and the enemies of your allies will be allowed to kill your allies? It would be hard to get allies if you do that. This administration is looking at an election year. This is no time to give in to terrorists.

When President Bush said, I hear you, and in essence said, and soon those who did this will hear from us, I can't imagine that he ever believed a President and an administration would say, We hear you now, terrorists, and we're not going to hurt you. We'll fix you up an office outside Afghanistan. We'll make it where you can take over areas of Afghanistan. We'll work with you. We'll release your murderers from prison. I don't think that's what President Bush was talking about when he said they would hear from us, but it sure looks like that's about to be what happened according to the stories now circulating.

Those warlords were right. They said, Look, we were not meant to have a big central government. We can't have it without being corrupt, not right now. At least let us elect our regional governors, our mayors—at least. Don't have the Karzai administration appoint the regional governors, appoint the mayors, and pick corrupt police chiefs. Let us elect those. The power in Afghanistan is in the regions, in the

tribes. To have a government that's centralized right now means corruption. Let us do that regionally, and give us back weapons so we can defend ourselves against the Taliban who is already moving.

And in answer to this administration's wonderful gestures of kindness and we'll release your murderers, we had them kill SEAL Team 6, a big number of our people. And that wasn't enough. In September, they killed one of the warlords just as a handful of us were about to go have a meeting with them again.

The message is clear: The Taliban have learned nothing. There's only one thing they understand—that's force. And it's like career criminals that I dealt with as a judge. If you want to be protected, you've got to put them where they can't hurt you anymore. There are murderers that have been put where they can't hurt us anymore, and this administration is now talking about releasing them.

So we have a twofold front of problems. One is the economy, where the Wall Street executives that contribute four-to-one to Democrats over Republicans, contributed four-to-one to the Obama campaign over the McCain campaign. They've been enriched and engorged with TARP money. It's time to end TARP.

It's time to allow workers to have a break. It's time that the Senate quit playing games and acknowledge that a full year of certainty is a whole lot better than 2 months. Appoint the conferees; send them to confer. It's how things get worked out. It's the way that procedurally things were meant to happen so it can be above board.

The rules require that they must be open sessions of the conference committee. That's the way you resolve things, under regular order. It needs to be done that way. I know the Senate would like to do closed-door meetings and give away programs behind closed doors, but it's time to do this thing the way the President promised 4 years ago that he would if he were President—make it open; make it clear. The American people will see who's negotiating for whom. That will help America.

And I know, in closing, for my comments, that with the Christmas season, though there are so many who want to end the ability to say Merry Christmas, they want to end the ability to do much of anything that really is acknowledging our roots, I think it's important to look where we came from. So I would close with this message from Ronald Reagan.

He basically reiterates things that have been said back to the time of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln:

The themes of Christmas and of coming home for the holidays have long been intertwined in song and story. There is a profound irony and lesson in this because Christmas celebrates the coming of a Savior Who was born without a home.

There was no room at the inn for the Holy Family. Weary of travel, a young Mary close

to childbirth and her carpenter husband Joseph found but the rude shelter of a stable. There was born the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace—an event on which all history would turn. Jesus would again be without a home, and more than once. On the flight to Egypt and during His public ministry, when He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath nowhere to lay His head."

From His very infancy on, our Redeemer was reminding us that from then on we would never lack a home in Him. Like the shepherds to whom the angel of the Lord appeared on the first Christmas Day, we could always say, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." As we come home with gladness to family and friends this Christmas, let us also remember our neighbors who cannot go home themselves.

Our compassion and concern this Christmas and all year long will mean much to the hospitalized, the homeless, the convalescent, the orphaned—and will surely lead us on our way to the joy and peace of Bethlehem and the Christ Child Who bids us come. For it is only in finding and living the eternal meaning of the Nativity that we can be truly happy, truly at peace, truly home. Merry Christmas, and God bless you!

Ronald Reagan, December 19, 1988, his last Christmas message as President.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who don't want people to mention the word "Christmas," and there's an easy solution. For those who don't want to mention Christmas, don't want to observe Christmas, then if they take the holiday, just agree to give back the money, because the money earned on a holiday shouldn't be taken for those who don't think it should be a holiday. That's easy enough.

But in the spirit of Christmas and the things we know about government—those of us who believe what's in the Bible—we have an obligation to protect people, as the government, as pointed out in Romans 13. It coincides with providing for the common defense. It's time to do that, to make sure Americans are safe, that they're provided with a defense so they can take care of the poor, the needy, the orphaned, the widows. They can help their fellow man. That's our job as a government. Our job as individuals is to have that same spirit of assisting and helping and being servants.

We're elected to be servants in this body. We're not elected and charged with taking from some people and giving to our favorite charitable cause. We're to do that with our own money, not with people's money that may have some other better charity they prefer to give it to.

We need to get the economy going. We need to bring down the cost of energy. That would be a great Christmas present. And since we know that the market and the energy industry adjust to announcements, how about a great announcement from our President: We're not going to let murderers go free, so you don't have to worry, you'll be safe. We're going to take the battle to those who want to murder us. We

are not going to negotiate further with terrorists who want to kill us. We're going to make sure that we quit bailing out our friends, our cronies. We're going to make sure that those who know better what to do with their own money have the opportunity to do that. We're going to give some security and some confidence for the following year because here's what we're going to do. And we're going to work together.

And it would be wonderful if the President would say: You know what? I demanded the Congress pass a bill that had not even come out when I started criticizing them for not passing it.

□ 1720

Then I started criticizing them for not passing a bill I'd forgotten to ask a Democrat to file for me. So I'm not going to do that anymore. I want to work with Congress. I want to get this country back on track. So instead of traveling around the country demeaning Congress for not passing bills that were not filed, I'm going to work with Congress.

And I hope that will be our President's New Year's resolution. Don't release murderers, and deal honestly and openly with the American people and with Congress.

We can get some things worked out. I've just been talking to Democratic friends today about things that we agree on. We can do that and give the American people a present.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to engage in personalities toward the Senate or its Members.

#### REFLECTIONS FROM THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for the balance of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time this afternoon. It's been a big day, freshmen in this body coming up on the end of our very first year. In fact, all of us here, here with my colleague from Wisconsin, all of us here, freshmen, finishing up our first year, and it's a big day.

And I've got to tell you, I feel good about the quality of the work product that's going on today. I feel good about the fact that there are serious issues before this body, and we have said, let's slow down and make sure we get it right because families have their futures on the line.

I'd like to ask my friend from Wisconsin how he's seen this day go.

Mr. DUFFY. I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia yielding. I think it's important to note as we have listened to a debate that went on all day today that there really is no difference within this House whether we should