

engaging in cultural divisiveness and the always dynamic political rhetoric. I believe that Congressman Gutierrez had the right to denounce the violations for the following three reasons: (a) anyone of Puerto Rican descent or with family alive or deceased on the Island should care about their people; (b) given the fact that around 46 percent of the population depends on federal assistance, any American that pays federal taxes is a shareholder for the well-being of the people of the territories; (c) lastly, any member of the human race has the right to denounce negligent human treatment, as we are doing for Libya.

It is disappointing when politically biased commentaries like the ones made by Mr. Rafael Rodriguez on his recent op-ed calling Congressman Gutierrez "a paradoxical obstructionist" are made. I believe Congressman Gutierrez was trying to shed some light on the dark shadows of social deterioration that our people are facing. This social deterioration is the result of desperation and fear that plagues our people. It is said that in Puerto Rico you cannot live, you can only survive (unless you are part of an elite that controls the political and economic channels). It is this elite that believe they have the right to dictate what the people want or need. It is this elite that hide behind the face of congressional processes to manipulate the political outlook of the Island. It is this elite that engage in manipulating the information instead of exposing the truth and generating trust. It is this elite that continues to enlarge the gap between Puerto Ricans on the mainland and those that remain on the Island. It is this elite that call those who are trying to defend the true elements of democracy and human respect obstructionist.

The issues of the Americans in Puerto Rico and the territories are continuously overlooked by the congressional collective. Even Presidents neglect to mention the people of the territories in their State of the Union speeches. So we are very hypersensitive about our place in the world, which in turn fuels the political philosophy frenzy that has become our white whale, the status of the Island. Although I have my own personal philosophy for the Island, I'm bound to protect the neutral integrity of the organization that represents the voice of the entire community inside the beltway. It is our mission to enhance the social and economic well-being of our 8 million plus constituents and nothing is more divisive than the status issues. We are in favor of a fair and executable process for self determination, and we also believe that for that process to be legitimate we have a principled responsibility to act civilized and respect all views. Change can only be accomplished when trust is at the core.

As the future of our Island we call on all students, educators, and administrators to hold each other to a higher standard. Respect those that want to express their frustrations and protect those that want to exercise their right to an education. To all local government institutions, we encourage dialogue, tolerance, professionalism, and personal restraint; for it is your duty to protect a functioning society. To our elected officials, engage in integrative processes for the benefit of your constituents and not for personal political gain. Only then will we be able to call ourselves both American citizens and responsible citizens of the world.

HONORING KARMA GAETANO HADJIMICHALAKIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize Karma Hadjimichalakis.

Up until recently, Karma was the principal lecturer in business economics and finance at the University of Washington Foster School of Business. She was the faculty director of the Pacific Rim Bankers Program, and she was the Evert McCabe Faculty Fellow. She was also my professor while I was earning my Executive MBA.

Last Monday, February 21, Karma passed away after a long illness, and as her student, I wanted to acknowledge her incredible accomplishments, both professional and personal, over the course of an extraordinary life.

Born on January 21, 1944 in Utica, New York, Karma was educated at nearby Elmira College and earned master's and doctorate degrees at the University of Rochester. She joined the faculty at the University of Washington in 1970, initially in the department of economics, and then at the Foster School of Business.

The turning point in her career was a 2-year stint as Visiting Economist at the Federal Reserve Board from 1980 to 1982. In her work with the banking section of the Fed's Division of Research and Statistics, Karma developed the ability to provide penetrating analysis that paints an accurate assessment of the current economic situation. In other words, she learned to find meaning in the disparate data.

Karma's time at the Fed also led her to realize that teaching was her true calling. She returned to the University of Washington with a new insider's expertise in the inner workings of the Federal Reserve System and monetary policy, and she spent the next 3 years applying her economic knowledge with wonderful results.

Karma won more than 45 major teaching awards at the Foster School, including the first PACCAR Award for Excellence in Teaching, the school's highest faculty honor. Her twice-annual economic forecast lectures became a standing-room-only tradition. And her 1995 textbook, "Contemporary Money, Banking and Financial Markets: Theory and Practice," co-authored with her husband, Michael Hadjimichalakis, became an influential classic.

Former students universally spoke of themselves as "privileged" and "blessed" to have had the opportunity to study under Karma. They told of her ability to decipher data with real-life examples to make macroeconomics fascinating, even fun. They spoke of her profound impact on their lives. As one of Karma's students, class of 2002, I wanted to add my own testimony to her impact.

When I was a student, learning under an experienced and dedicated professor such as Karma was one of the best parts of the University of Washington's eMBA program. In all of her classes, Karma went above and beyond the call of duty, not just to present the course

material, but to make herself available to us outside of the classroom, to answer our questions and ensure our understanding and application of the course work. She challenged my study of economics and how to craft successful public policies in a free market economy. Quite simply, they don't come any better.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Karma Hadjimichalakis for her four decades of excellent teaching, communicating knowledge with absolute generosity, boundless energy, and endearing warmth. Karma's impact on thousands of students will endure for decades and in ways we will never completely know. And she will always have a special place in my heart.

ATTACK ON MIDDLE CLASS AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a very serious and dangerous attack on middle class Americans being waged by the Republicans in the Congress and in Statehouses across the country.

The Wisconsin Governor's assault on public employees is getting most of the media attention, but it is just one of the fronts of the extreme right wing and anti-worker agenda trying to be carried out in this country. In fact, there is a well-financed and coordinated national attack against working families and the unions that they may belong to, the goal of which is to take away power from the middle class and give it to the wealthy special interests that have backed Republicans in their elections.

Here is how it is playing out: The Republicans are taking a real problem, a serious problem—budget deficits and long-term debt in this country—and they are assigning to it a fake cause. Under the guise of cutting deficits they say that working people's union rights and workplace protections must be eliminated. In fact, this attack against working people is designed to remove the vital check on special interest corporate power from overrunning our democracy.

This is an extreme agenda that they have always pursued, but they are now using their newfound political power to relaunch the attacks, to attack the guarantee to a decent wage, to attack the rights to ensure a safe workplace so when the workers leave home in the morning they know they will return safely at night.

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They attack the rights to have access to affordable health care and secure retirement. And yes, they're even attacking the rights of working people to join together to bargain for a better life and better conditions in the workplace.

So at the same time that the Governors of Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and

New Jersey are demanding more public and private union employee sacrifices, Republicans in Washington are using the budget fight to roll back the rights and protections of American workers.

Their spending priorities in their so-called continuing resolution of last week show their hand. They voted to take away workers' ability to repeal unjust and unfair and illegal actions in the workplace by getting rid of the National Labor Relations Board. They voted to undermine the wages of construction workers on Federal projects. They voted to roll back workplace health and safety protections guaranteed by Federal law.

While protecting subsidies for corporate interests, they have sought to cut education funding and critical support for workers in need of job training, and yes, even kids in Head Start.

These rights and services helped to build and sustain our Nation's middle class in the last century making the United States the greatest economic power in the history of the world. We have the greatest workers in the world because of these rights. But now the rights and economic strength of America's middle class are at risk. It's under a systematic assault in the statehouses controlled by Republican legislatures and Republican Governors and in this House of Representatives controlled by the Republicans—a systematic assault that goes beyond after the unions, after the workers have agreed to givebacks, to furlough days, to give back health care benefits, pension benefits. They want more. They want their union. They want their rights in the workplace to be terminated. It's un-American.

There's a reason that we have collective bargaining in this country, because we know that workers should have a right to bond together to improve the workplace, to improve their working conditions. And when they do, those rights flow to the rest of middle class working families in this country. In even the non-union workplaces, those rights are there. That's how we achieved an 8-hour day, that's how we achieved vacation time, that's how we achieved health care, that's how we achieved overtime whether you're in the union or not.

But now they want to take away the rights of unions to organize in the workplace, the rights of workers to organize.

But the Republicans have asked for no sacrifices. In all these cuts, they have asked for no sacrifices of the well-off and the well-connected. In fact, these cuts are being made in the name of the well-off and the well-connected so that they will be able to push for lower wages, for lower benefits, for lower health care for our workers, for lower take-home pay. And what does that do to the economy? It makes America poor.

How do you build a strong middle class community on the back of low-wage earners? You can't do it. It's never been done.

But the fact is, many years ago America decided we wanted a strong and a vibrant middle class, and we did that by forming a union and by giving people the right to have a say at work. We know study after study where workers have a say in the workplace, they work harder, they're more productive, they're more innovative, they're more open to new ideas.

But what do we say to workers with the Governors of Wisconsin and Ohio and Indiana? Do what we tell you to do, do it for less pay, do it for less benefits, and do it because we told you so. That doesn't sound like America to me. It doesn't sound like a powerful country that has the best and most productive workers in the history in the world. That sounds like something that we're not familiar with in this country. That sounds like an autocratic system that just demands and takes but never gives.

EPA "DUST" POLICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, "Houses were shut tight, and cloth wedged around doors and windows, but the dust came in so thinly that it could not be seen in the air, and it settled like pollen on the chairs and tables, on the dishes."

Ma and Pa Joad did everything they could to save their farm from slipping away into the dust bowl, but ultimately they lost to a force far greater than any effort they could muster.

Mr. Speaker, though this is just one line ripped from the pages of "The Grapes of Wrath," farmers and ranchers today are facing a modern day dust storm—the wrath of the EPA. Just when you think you've heard it all, bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. come up with some hair-brained idea that leaves you scratching your head in wonderment.

The Environmental Protection Agency has apparently run out of things to regulate and tax so they are considering new guidelines for regulating "particulate matter emissions"—more commonly known to you and me as "dust."

Now, I know what you are thinking, this just cannot be true. What kind of crazy scheme is this?

Well, the EPA "Dust Police" would specifically regulate farm dust. Farmers would be required to have dust collectors on their harvesters, planters, combines, and haying equipment.

But my personal favorite is the crackdown on dust created from driving a pickup truck down a dirt or gravel road. I am not making this up. The Federal Government is considering farm dust regulations that are caused from driving on a dirt road.

So I thought, well, maybe this is just some backdoor attempt to rid America of our majestic four-wheel-drive pickups that liberals loathe so much

and find some way to force these battery-operated toy cars on the rest of us.

But the new proposals don't just apply to dust created from driving. No, they are fair and they are balanced in their overreaching authority. Farmers and ranchers are going to have to somehow limit the dust created by livestock on their property as well.

So, say Bessie the cow kicks up too much dust running over to your pickup truck at feeding time. The EPA is going to fine you for Bessie's misconduct. You need to move your cattle to another pasture during the daytime? Well, don't do it on a dry day because they may kick up too much dust.

The Dust Police solution is to manure dusty dirt roads with water, or—get this—pave them with asphalt. Now, this is another can of worms.

Every farmer and rancher will have the "Water Police" raining down on them by the time the first drop hits the dirt. I would think EPA would be aware of the fact that we already have a shortage of water on ranches and farms in our country. But make no matter to them, they still want you to control it.

And what about this paving the asphalt over these roads? Really, they can't be serious. Aside from the sheer magnitude of this undertaking, the idea is completely unfeasible and it's cost prohibitive.

The absurdity of these types of Federal regulations is what makes normal Americans all across our country frustrated with Washington, D.C.

I will say there is a little good news on the horizon. We're not all out of touch here in Congress. My colleague, Representative KRISTI NOEM from South Dakota, filed an amendment to the continuing resolution last week to eliminate funding to the EPA to enforce the dust regulations. I'm proud to say that this passed the House of Representatives, and it's now down the hallway with the Senate. Let's see what they do.

This type of Federal meddling is exactly what causes businesses to go out of business, lay off workers, and in many cases fail. These types of expensive regulations will finally shut the barn door on the American rancher and farmer for good.

I understand that dust may seem like a serious threat to someone who has never been outside the EPA's marble Potomac palaces or elite castles of academia. But let's use some common sense here. Farmers and ranchers are the best environmentalists in our country. No one respects the land or animals more than those who actually live on it and depend on it for a living.

Instead of burying us in ridiculous regulations that do nothing to improve the quality of life or the environment, the government should look for incentives to encourage farmers and ranchers to produce more, not less. We don't need the EPA-inflicted dust bowl to devastate the American heartland.