

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Politics and divisions could destroy the chances of forcing Washington to help resolve Puerto Rico's debt crisis.

Puerto Rico must have a common plan that has support across all of the parties, and most importantly, across the Island.

The Governor must find a way to work with the Resident Commissioner and the Resident Commissioner cannot view this crisis as a campaign tool for higher office.

Puerto Rico will only be helped by this Congress if and when there is a consistent and persistent call on Congress by Puerto Ricans to act. And Puerto Ricans need to specify what they expect Congress to do.

The Bankruptcy Bill is only part of it. If we still have the Jones Act and the same economy and economic prospects as we have now, we will not advance.

The people must tell Wall Street that Puerto Rico is not some store to be looted and that the Puerto Rican people will not sit and starve as Wall Street counts its profits.

If Wall Street is buying bonds at a discount, they should be paid at a discount.

But most importantly, we have to work together for the betterment of Puerto Rico. And we cannot let political divisions over statehood divide us.

I commit to putting aside my own passionate feelings about Puerto Rico's status and working with other Puerto Ricans in the Congress and other leaders in both Parties who will help us. But we must first come together, begin helping ourselves, and have a clear plan.

La política y las divisiones podrían destruir las posibilidades de obligar a Washington a ayudar a resolver la crisis de la deuda de Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico debe de tener un plan común que cuente con el apoyo de todos los partidos y sobre todo, a través de la Isla.

El Gobernador debe encontrar una manera de trabajar con el Comisionado Residente y el Comisionado Residente no puede ver esta crisis como una herramienta en sus campañas para un puesto más alto.

El Congreso sólo ayudará a Puerto Rico siempre y cuando haya un llamado constante y persistente de los puertorriqueños exigiendo que el Congreso cumpla. Y los puertorriqueños tienen que indicar lo que esperan de parte del Congreso.

La Legislación de Bancarrota es sólo una parte. Pero si todavía tenemos la Ley Jones y la misma economía y perspectivas económicas que tenemos ahora no avanzaremos.

El pueblo debe decirle a Wall Street que Puerto Rico no es una tienda para ser pirateada y que el pueblo de Puerto Rico no esperará a morir de hambre mientras Wall Street cuenta sus ganancias.

Si Wall Street está comprando bonos con descuentos, deben ser pagados con descuentos.

Pero sobre todo, tenemos que trabajar juntos por el bien de Puerto Rico. Y no podemos dejar que las divisiones políticas sobre la estadidad nos dividan.

Me comprometo como siempre lo he hecho a poner a un lado mis propios sentimientos sobre el estatus de Puerto Rico y a trabajar con otros puertorriqueños en el Congreso y otros líderes en los dos Partidos que estén dispuestos a ayudarnos. Pero primero tenemos que unirnos, empezar a ayudarnos a nosotros mismos, y tener un plan claro.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide a translation for the RECORD.

□ 1015

#### SOUTHERN PIPING COMPANY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding family business in my home State of North Carolina.

When Southern Piping Company opened in 1965, it had two employees and a loan from the Small Business Administration. The two employees were Peggy Williford and her husband, Buren, who was one of the first licensed mechanical contractors in North Carolina—SPC, a classic family business, with all three of Peggy and Buren's sons—Chris, Mark, and Tim—continuing to lead the company.

Since 1965, the Willifords and the SPC family have weathered recessions and hard times, and over the years, through good old-fashioned hard work, they have grown.

Starting with one office in Wilson, SPC has expanded their plumbing, heating, and air-conditioning business to four offices statewide, and their SPC trucks are a familiar sight on the roads across North Carolina, but the biggest story is the family they have built through SPC, today providing jobs to 450 people.

When it came to building the company, Buren Williford always had a commonsense philosophy. He said: "Successful companies look for like-minded people to do business with."

Today, Southern Piping Company is adopting a new name—SPC Mechanical—to more accurately describe its growth and success. The Williford family still practices the old-fashioned principles of integrity, safety, and giving back to their community, for example, by offering young employees scholarships to attend nearby Barton College.

This year represents a landmark for the Williford family. They have now been in business for 50 years. It is my pleasure today to recognize the accomplishments of Peggy and Buren Williford.

#### RECOGNIZING CONNIE JEAN HUMPHREY

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise to recognize my longtime chief of staff, Connie Jean Humphrey, who is retiring after a long and distinguished career on Capitol Hill.

It is an honor and a privilege to recognize Connie's many years of service and achievements. She has proven herself as a talented and dedicated public servant, who has made innumerable contributions in the service of my constituents residing in Texas' 15th Congressional District along the Rio Grande Valley.

Connie has compiled a long list of accomplishments throughout her career and as a senior member of my staff, and she has earned an impeccable reputation on Capitol Hill among her peers and my colleagues in the Texas congressional delegation with whom she has worked very closely in support of our mutual objectives for our great State of Texas.

Connie brought an array of talents and experience as my chief of staff. She has a thorough understanding of Federal policy, particularly in the areas of health care, education, transportation, the environment, and on women's issues.

She is fluent in many other policy areas important to my constituents in the valley, and she has been an invaluable source of guidance and counsel during my appointments on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, as well as on the Financial Services Committee.

Connie approaches her position as the leader of my office with the training and detail-oriented scrutiny of an attorney, who graduated from the University of Maryland, and with the policy expertise of a congressional aide who served in staff leadership positions for nearly three decades.

She was instrumental in helping me lead the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2010, which is aiding organizations like Workforce Solutions, based in McAllen, Texas, and is committed to the success of the employers and workforce of the Rio Grande Valley by matching them with skilled, productive employees and upgrading the skills of their current workforce.

Connie has been particularly effective in helping me address urgent needs in deep south Texas. Latino students aspiring to attain the dream of a college education are that much closer to realizing their hopes, thanks to Connie's involvement, resulting in passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act and the student loan and healthcare reconciliation bill of 2010, among the largest investments in higher education since the GI bill, particularly for Latino- and minority-serving higher education institutions in our country.

This crucial legislation also created an unprecedented healthcare system that complements the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 that Connie also played a major role in helping shepherd through the Education and the Workforce Committee, and that is now providing millions of Americans with affordable health care who previously had no coverage.

Mr. Speaker, it is with much more than coincidence that the high school graduation rate in my congressional district has accelerated—from 55 percent to 85 percent—during Connie's tenure as my chief of staff.

This sharp increase has lifted up a generation of young Latinos, who are making significant contributions to our communities and regional economy; and it is a direct result of Connie's advocacy and leadership contributing to the passage of each of these four aforementioned bills.

These public laws constitute my collection of framed legislation in my congressional office that I was very proud to pass as either chairman or ranking member of the Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee with Connie at the helm of my office.

I am also indebted to Connie for her tireless efforts in helping me facilitate two new international land bridges designed to stimulate commercial activity, economic growth, and stability to the Rio Grande Valley.

Her intimate knowledge of transportation policy was a key element in the process culminating in the approval of Presidential permits that paved the way to open the Donna-Rio Bravo and the Anzalduas International Bridges.

Similarly, Connie was influential in securing \$300 million in Federal investments for floodway levee improvements along the Hidalgo County, Texas, and Mexican borders.

We still remember the impact of Hurricane Dolly in 2008 that brought between a foot and 15 inches of rain to the Valley. Hurricane Ike followed shortly thereafter, with storm surges as high as 20 feet and caused almost \$20 billion in damages.

My district would have been more highly susceptible to damage and our residents even more imperiled if the levees were breached by a hurricane or heavy rains without this assistance. As a result, hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of property were spared during the landfall of Hurricane Alex in 2010, when the Rio Grande River crested to a record of 59 feet.

In the wake of economic crisis, Connie led my team in preparing our communities to apply for assistance that ultimately received over half a billion dollars for Hidalgo County alone under the ARRA.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened to lose Connie as a trusted and beloved member of my staff, but I am happy for her as she embarks upon a new endeavor as the senior vice president of public and community relations and special coun-

sel of the Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, where she will continue to serve my constituents and be uniquely positioned to help the hospital deliver and expand the reach of health care to underserved communities and economically disadvantaged families.

I wish to, again, thank Connie Humphrey for all of her hard work, steadfast commitment to the people of south Texas, and for her skillful management of my staff and congressional offices.

On behalf of the 15th Congressional District of Texas, I congratulate Connie for her excellent service and for a job very well done.

#### 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday was a special and historic day. It marked 25 years since the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law.

The ADA has had a profound impact on our country and its citizens. It speaks to the best about our country; toward forming a more perfect union, it aims to provide equal opportunity for those who have a disability.

This anniversary, I feel, allows us to reflect on something that unites us; that is it is estimated that one in five Americans is living with a disability. Disabilities affect individuals in every congressional district in this country, in every State, in every neighborhood. It touches the lives of everyone—race, gender, income. No demographic is exempt from disability.

This law provides hope for those who have a disability and offers promise that opportunities exist for self-fulfillment.

On both a philosophical and practical level, it stands for the proposition that providing reasonable accommodations to those with a disability is how a civil society addresses an imbalance borne through no fault of the individual.

The law and its legislative, regulatory, and judicial progeny enables us to address issues such as public transportation, housing, education, and social services in a more thoughtful, proactive, effective, and humane way. While there is no doubt that substantial progress has been made, I am not here on the House floor to say that our work is done—because it isn't.

Thanks to the law, about 50 million Americans have been helped, and that doesn't include their families and loved ones who can point to how laws do matter and can make a positive impact.

Let's focus on the challenges that we still confront that relate to access and opportunity on holding up the standard of self-sufficiency for individuals with a disability and looking at how public policy can be shaped to help achieve this standard for disabled Americans.

The crux is often that time between ending in the classroom and looking for employment opportunity.

Just yesterday, I met with Abilities in Motion, a Berks County organization in my district that provides outstanding services to individuals and families in Berks County.

During our discussion, I heard from individuals and parents who, through grit and determination, were able—and are able—to navigate the complex maze of programs and services and funding streams to coordinate caregivers, transportation, and employment in the postacademic world.

Let's focus on streamlining and better integrating these programs and funding streams, and let's focus on encouraging job opportunities for disabled individuals who want to work and build a meaningful career.

□ 1030

Let's also focus on improving transportation options so that individuals who want to work are able to get to work without difficulty.

Let's continue to set forth and advance good policy, like the ABLE Act from the last Congress, which will encourage individuals and families to save tax-free dollars to help finance the costs associated with disabilities.

I am grateful for the tireless work of Abilities in Motion and other organizations that serve families and individuals in my district, such as the National Federation of the Blind, The Arc Alliance, the Disability Rights Network, and the Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council. These organizations, their employees, and their volunteers work day in and day out to improve everyday lives.

Last, let's also thank the families who sacrifice for their loved ones who have disabilities, and let's recognize the courage and the hard work of those who have disabilities as they endure every day to become self-sufficient. It really speaks to what is great about this country.

Everyone out there who suffers from a disability and who wakes up every day with optimism and purpose, you are to be commended. You are the American success story.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 25 years, the ADA has increased accessibility and has empowered millions of Americans with disabilities. It is important to acknowledge the progress, but it is also important to recognize that there are still challenges that we should address from a public policy perspective. We must continue our efforts, in a bipartisan manner, to advance policy that keeps us a step ahead and that meets the needs of disabled Americans today and tomorrow.

#### RICKETY PATCHWORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.