

harvest season, will finish his 40-hour week by Tuesday noon and then painin' from tractor back, put in another 72 hours.

So God made a farmer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds and yet stop in midfield and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bales, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark.

It had to be somebody who would plow deep and straight and not cut corners; somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed, and rake and disc and plow and plant, and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeders and finish the hard week's work with a 5-mile drive to church; somebody who would bale a family together with the soft, strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh, and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says that he wants to spend his life "doing what dad does."

So God made a farmer.

□ 1015

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, it is my honor to advocate for their interests and ensure that they have certainty and stability for generations to come.

Even though Paul Harvey wrote these remarks about our Nation's farmers, it encompasses so much more than that. Our farmers, ranchers, foresters, and producers are essential in providing food, fiber, and fuel to our Nation and the world.

Mr. Speaker, food security is national security. As we head into the holiday season, I recognize and thank our Nation's producers for their contributions to our everyday lives.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HOUSTON'S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Mrs. LEE CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the rich legacy of Houston's immigrant communities and the contributions they have made to improve the lives of all Houstonians and the United States of America.

Houston is a city built by Dreamers, a vibrant metropolis where nearly one-quarter of our population is comprised of immigrants.

I will highlight members of Houston's immigrant community who are as diverse as they are inspiring.

From Eugene Pillot, who opened one of the city's first opera houses, to Ninfia Laurenzo, whose modest restaurant blossomed into a multimillion-dollar empire featuring Tex-Mex classics.

In these times when some would demonize immigrants, who have always

been an important part of America's fabric, I choose to lift them up.

In Houston, foreign-born Latinos make up 20 percent of our population and include persons like Renaissance man Felix Tijerina, a restaurateur, philanthropist, and the 25th president of the League of United Latin American Citizens; Ellen Ochoa, the first Latina in space and a former director at the Johnson Space Center which is in the Houston area. They remind me of the limitless potential immigrants bring to our society.

Houston is also home to the Nation's largest Nigerian population outside of Nigeria. Nearly 57,000 Nigerian Americans call Houston home.

The legendary athlete Hakeem Olajuwon is a proud Nigerian American. He dominated at the University of Houston and became the number one draft pick in 1984 where he played for the Houston Rockets and led us to a pair of championships. I was proud to be at those games to cheer him on.

Immigrant contributions go beyond culture and commerce. Immigrants are vital to Houston's economy, especially in industries like healthcare, education, and construction.

Our educational institutions have also prospered from immigrant leadership like Dr. Renu Khator, an immigrant from India and the chancellor of the University of Houston. She was the first Indian immigrant to head a comprehensive research institution in the United States. She has raised a record number of research dollars and overseen unprecedented growth. Her story remains a testament to the transformative power of immigration, education, and innovation.

Yet, challenges still persist. Around 67,000 college-educated immigrants in Houston are underemployed and not living to their full potential, which is sometimes called brain waste. We must address this by reducing licensing barriers and improving English proficiency programs. We must create real immigration reform, as that solidifies pathways to citizenship and reduces the backlog.

Also, nearly one-half of all children in Houston live in a household where at least one parent immigrated to the United States, and these parents are shaping the next generation of Houstonians who will be leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

However, they face extreme challenges, specifically those with temporary or undocumented status. Barriers to naturalization and access to public services create uncertainty for many, despite their immense contributions to our city.

In my home State of Texas, State leadership is fighting to keep DACA recipients, our Dreamers, from being able to pay for Affordable Care Act insurance under the Biden rule. They should not deny access to those brought here as children to healthcare and health insurance.

Houston's immigrant communities are not just part of our city, they are

a key part of what has made our city and Nation truly great. Let us honor their contributions, celebrate their achievements, and continue to build a city and a nation where everyone, regardless of origin, has the opportunity to thrive.

RECONCILIATION CAN SAVE OUR COUNTRY

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, our country is in dire fiscal straits. Years of profligacy under both parties are now crushing our economy under the heaviest debt in our long history. Just paying the interest on that debt now exceeds what we spend on our Nation's entire defense. History warns us that nations that bankrupt themselves aren't around very long.

Now many people find hope in President Trump's creation of an unofficial Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE. Others propose a bipartisan fiscal commission.

However, in our haste to pass the buck, let us all remember that it is Congress alone that holds the purse strings. Try as we may, we cannot escape our responsibility. Congress is the ultimate bipartisan fiscal commission because, in a very real sense, the buck starts here. The Federal Government cannot raise or spend a single dollar unless and until the House says that it can. Ultimately, this responsibility rests with us. It cannot be DOGE'd and it cannot be dodged.

Fortunately, we have the ideal tools in our possession to bring spending in line with revenues if we choose to use them properly: the budget resolution and the accompanying reconciliation act.

Here is how it works. Both Houses agree on a spending ceiling by a simple majority resolution. Reconciliation instructions are then sent to every House committee with the mandate to report out statutory changes to bring spending within these limits. If they fail to act, then the House Budget Committee acts in their place, and a single comprehensive bill goes to the floor for an up-or-down vote. The bill gets expedited consideration in the Senate, and when signed by the President, all the laws necessary to balance the budget are enacted together.

There is one catch. It can only be used to enact the fiscal reforms necessary to implement the budget. It cannot be used for general policymaking beyond these fiscal confines.

The last time this process was used as it was designed and intended was during the Republican majority led by Newt Gingrich in 1995. The result was four balanced budgets in a row that produced one of the greatest waves of prosperity our Nation has ever seen.

Tragically, in 2017, the Republican majority under Paul Ryan utterly

squandered this authority. Instead of using the reconciliation process to bring mandatory spending to heel, it was abused to achieve pet political projects, first repealing ObamaCare and next for tax cuts.

The first attempt resulted in a mangled mess of incomplete fiscal measures that collapsed in the Senate. The next budget year, the object was tax reform, but since it had to fall within the narrow fiscal parameters of reconciliation, most of the tax cuts could only be temporary and will soon expire. The result was no healthcare reform and only temporary tax relief.

The opportunity cost was to squander our last chance to prevent the fiscal debacle that our country now faces.

Last month, the American people gave Republicans a rare second chance to save our country from insolvency. We must not repeat the mistakes that have brought us here. Republican leaders in the House and Senate are, once again, proposing to use the budget and reconciliation process not as it was designed, to set spending limits and adhere to those limits, but rather to chase a variety of shiny objects including tax reform, energy development, and border security.

These are all vital reforms, and they need to be enacted. Indeed, some aspects of them can be realized as a by-product of the reconciliation process. However, that process cannot produce comprehensive policy reform. It can produce comprehensive fiscal reform at a moment when our Nation faces its greatest fiscal threat in its history.

I appeal to the Speaker to follow the success of the Gingrich majority. If we repeat the mistakes of the past, then we will lose the future. We are on the threshold of a sovereign debt crisis the likes of which this Nation has never seen and that few nations have ever survived. Let us not throw away this, the last fleeting chance to avert fiscal disaster.

The American people didn't save our country last month. They gave us the tools and the trust to save our country. Let us use the tools that they have given us, and let us be worthy of the trust that they have placed in us.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor for the last time I will address this Chamber after 28 years in Congress.

My goal as a Member of Congress was to leave this place a little better than I found it, and I am proud of what we have done. There are things that you are not going to see on FOX or MSNBC News, Mr. Speaker, and it is not going to rocket around the internet, but they are simple, commonsense efforts to bring people together to solve problems.

At the beginning of each Congress for the last dozen years, I have given each new Member, hand-delivered, my thoughts about what they need to know to be able to navigate these strange waters in Congress.

Together, we have been able to achieve some interesting things, as I say, items you don't see in the news necessarily, Mr. Speaker, but that have made a huge difference.

I am proud of the work we have done with international water and sanitation that has resulted in millions of people having their lives saved and reducing the burdens on 140 million women who struggle to get water, often dirty water, for their families every day.

I am proud of the work I have done in terms of agriculture reform because it is past time that we stop subsidizing a diet that makes Americans sick.

I am proud of the work we did in the midst of the pandemic to create the Restaurant Rescue Plan: 100,000 grants that have resulted in many independent restaurants that were able to stay in business.

I am proud of the work we have done with transportation and infrastructure to rebuild and renew America. Instead of having infrastructure week be a joke, we are actually doing it.

I am proud of the work that I have done, for example, in terms of bicycling, symbolized by the bike lanes in the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue, making it easier for people to burn calories instead of fossil fuel and transform the face of our communities.

I am proud of the work that we have done dealing in terms of saving the lives of Iraqis and Afghans who put their trust in us when they were helping our people in those troubled countries. You don't have to believe in the wars, Mr. Speaker, I didn't, but I worked to make sure that the men and women who were the drivers, the guides, and the interpreters were not left to the tender mercies of al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Together we were able, with Senator McCain and Senator KENNEDY, to pass a Special Immigrant Visa that has resulted in thousands of these people who worked with us to be able to live and, in many cases, to be able to seek safety in the United States.

As I say, these are not things that people necessarily see in the news or on the internet. They are not going to raise campaign money for their goals using them, but they are the things that make the difference.

I guess my last piece of advice that I leave to the people who are coming in the next Congress is to focus on things that bring people together rather than divide them and to look for ways to solve problems rather than to create new ones.

Over the course of the last 28 years, I have seen this formula work, and I hope in the new Congress people will employ it in ways that will make a difference.

Heaven knows we need to do it.

□ 1030

HONORING REPRESENTATIVE EARL BLUMENAUER

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the last speaker, my friend, EARL BLUMENAUER.

It was a source of pride for me to be here on the floor this morning and see the gentleman's last speech on the floor of the House of Representatives. Though we may disagree on policy, and we have many times, I count the gentleman as a dear friend and colleague. It has been a great honor to serve with my colleague EARL, and this place is going to miss him.

The gentleman has made me a better Congressman, and he has made me a better person. I congratulate the gentleman and wish him the best.

CONGRATULATING THE GREENWOOD BULLDOGS

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Arkansas' 6A State football champions, the Greenwood Bulldogs, after a convincing 61-35 victory over Shiloh Christian Saturday at Little Rock's War Memorial Stadium.

The Bulldogs went back to back in winning their 12th overall State title. I commend Head Coach Chris Young and his staff and players for another thrilling chapter in Greenwood football with this perfect and magical 13-0 season.

Mr. Speaker, this title is not without tragedy. Earlier in the season, a house fire took the life of one of Greenwood's finest athletes, 18-year-old Isaiah "Ike" Arrington; his 46-year-old mother, Wendy Medrano; and his 5-year-old sister, Vivian.

This season was dedicated to the memory of Ike and his family. The motivation to make this a season to remember helped Greenwood not only bring home the trophy but record its 70th consecutive home win in the process.

I congratulate Greenwood. Their Bulldog pride is showing today, and they have made all of us Arkansas Proud.

CELEBRATING ALBANY PARK THEATER PROJECT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Albany Park Theater Project, a gem of Illinois' Third Congressional District, and to recognize their production of "Port of Entry," which reminds us all of an important lesson.

The story of our Nation wouldn't be complete without the sweat, without the tears, without the joy, and without the dreams and hopes of so many immigrants and children of immigrants.