constituents, Mike Connor, who started with one restaurant in 1992 and now has a chain of 15 restaurants.

He wrote this letter to me recently. He said, quote, ''We, the middle-sized business owners, are going to need a lot of help in the next couple of years. As I understand the current health care reform bill, Connor Concepts, as an employer of more than 50 people, will be required to provide health insurance for all full-time employees or face a $3,000 fine per employee.

''We currently employ around 1,200 team members in five States. We do provide health insurance for around 100 full-time salaried management and upper-management staff. Of the remaining 1,100 team members, around 800 are full-time and are not provided with health insurance.

''If we are required to pay for their health insurance or pay the penalty, we would have to pay an additional $2,400,000. If we are forced to pay this, the five States we operate in will have an additional 1,200 unemployed. We would lose a lot of money!''

Mr. Connor continues, ''Together with my team, I have built this company from one restaurant in 1992, providing jobs for 80 people, to 15 restaurants, employing 1,200. Right now we plan to continue opening one restaurant a year, employing 80 to 100 people. If something doesn't change in the next year or 2 with this reform, we will have to stop growth.''

I want to repeat what he said here. This 15-restaurant chain, which is not a giant business, they will have to stop their growth if the health care reform bill goes fully into effect as it is now written.

Mr. Connor continues, ''Though our team members are not provided health insurance because of the expense, they are provided with a good pay wage, excellent vacation benefits, meal privileges, and excellent working conditions. More than anything else, though, they are provided a good job, one that allows them to pay their bills, support their families, or pay for their school.

''We do provide an insurance plan team members can pay for themselves. It is an inexpensive plan that has limits on hospital stays but does take care of routine medical care.''

Mr. Connor ends this letter by saying, ''I look forward to working with you in whatever way I can to change this law so that I can stay in business.''

Businesses, Mr. Speaker, all over this country are facing this same situation. And we have got to change this and allow the free-enterprise, free-market system to work in this country once again if we're going to ever have the recovery that our people want.

I thank you.

TRIBUTE TO BILL HANDLEMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, award-winning journalist Bill Handleman, 62, of the Asbury Park Press, tragically passed away yesterday after a long bout with cancer.

A family man and a humanitarian with a great big heart and incisive wit, Bill is survived by his dear wife Judy, his three children, his mom, extended family, and a boatload of friends.

And allow me to extend our deepest condolences to the family and to let them know that our prayers are with them during this very, very difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, to know Bill Handleman in person or through his prolific pen is to respect and admire his innate goodness, his generosity, and good humor. For years, Bill's news beat was sports, and he especially liked the ponies. He was a four-time sportswriter of the year, in 1992, 2002, 2003, and 2005.

Asbury Park Press staff writer Shannon Mullen writes in today's edition, however, that ''Bill soon discovered that he much preferred writing about everyday struggles of ordinary people rather than the coddled multimillionaire athletes he dealt with on the sports beat.''

Bill had an extraordinary penchant for a compelling subject matter and consistently turned the seemingly mundane, especially those who were left out and left behind, into compelling human interest stories.

The Press's Shannon Mullen again summed it up well: ''Bill Handleman was a gifted storyteller. His writing style was direct, witty, and spare. A lifelong student of Hemingway, he used periods like an Impressionist painter uses a brush, preferring short, incisive sentences that packed a punch. And as a columnist, Handleman relished championing the underdog.'' Mr. Speaker, thank God he did.

Even as he battled cancer, Bill turned out one great story after another with intriguing titles like, ''A Man With a Hole in His Heart: A Coach's Story''; ''No Longer Homeless: A Former Mogul Envisions the Future''; ''A Different Midlife Crisis: A Man Learns that He Is Adopted''; ''During the Depression, the Poor Scramble for Work and Cash''; ''A Father Leaves Behind a Secret''—it was a World War II veteran story.

His stories made us laugh and touched our hearts, and they moved us to action, like the case of David Goldman. To a large extent, David Goldman ceased being invisible in his heroic battle to reclaim his son, Sean, from a child abductor in Brazil because Bill Handleman made it his passion to effectively inform, inspire, and challenge the community, including and especially lawmakers, to join David's struggle for justice.

□ 1600

''For 4 years, no one could hear him. He was shouting in the dark,'' David's father, Barry, told Mr. Handleman in one column. In the 16 months since Mr. Handleman began telling this story, David's seemingly intractable plight went from near total obscurity to huge prominence. Public officials at every level responded to the call.

Each of Bill Handleman's approximately 24 columns not only conveyed to readers timely and critically important information about the Goldman case, but Mr. Handleman went deep behind the scenes to flesh out details of uncommon courage, sacrifice and compassion. Bill Handleman gave the community rare insights into the raw emotion and the fleeting successes, followed by frustrating setbacks, the agony and ultimately the ecstasy of David and Sean's permanent reunion.

In a candor and depth of reporting found nowhere else in the print media, we got to know David in his own words as he was thinking it. Readers of the column were there with David on countless trips to Rio, to Brasilia, to Washington, and at home with him in Monmouth County. For more than a year, Bill Handleman allowed us to see it all as David did and to walk, to some extent, in left-behind-parents' shoes. Through Bill Handleman's incisive pen, we also got to know much of David Goldman's family and close friends.

We will miss Bill Handleman. I, along with tens and thousands of others, read each and every column, often with tears and empathy and resolve to do more about David Goldman's case. David Goldman was, indeed, lucky that the columnist who embraced his quest turned out to be a consummate storyteller and the Handleman column a true game-changer. Bill Handleman did an exceptional job. We will miss him dearly.

Again, our prayers and our condolences go out to Judy and to the family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES 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 Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida 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 New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY 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 Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

UNDER DISCUSSION

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.

There are three different issues that I am compelled to bring up and to discuss.

One, first of all, is with what is going on in the Gulf of Mexico. Being from Texas, we are particularly sensitive to what happens there. There have been so many days on the Gulf of Mexico coast, on the Texas coast—Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida—in all of those areas, and to see what is happening is heartbreaking.

Two things need to be done. One is to immediately do everything we can to stop additional oil from flowing into the area. At the same time, we must clean up the area before we do any more devastation. Then the other thing is we need to find out what caused the spill and what could have been done better to prevent this kind of thing from ever happening.

You know, we find out that British Petroleum had been cited 750 times, apparently, on rigs for safety violations. Compare that to others. I believe Exxon and Shell may have had one during the same period. So I mean there were indicators that perhaps BP was hurrying, that perhaps there was a test that didn't work out. Well, we've heard those rumors. Yet they still continued. There is the rumor of someone's yelling on the phone after the explosion: I told you, I told you. Are you happy? I told you. It's something to that effect. There are indications that perhaps people at BP knew that they were moving too fast and got careless. There was no reason for this. There was no reason for this. Proper measures had been taken.

One of the problems we find in America is when the government decides to get involved and to do everything itself rather than to have the supervisory, the regulatory role, that it is supposed to have. In other words, what the Federal Government is supposed to do is to make sure that everybody plays fair and to then let them play. If you have a company that is playing in Federal ocean areas, you've got to make sure they're not breaking the rules and jeopardizing your homeland.

When asking Director Birnbaum of the Minerals Management Service why the testing had not been disclosed, she said, Well, it's under investigation. So those reports are being utilized in the investigation. I publicly asked in our hearing for a copy of the reports because we know experts as well who can look at the reports and say, Well, it says right here that the test didn't work, that there were problems that arose. We don't need to wait months. Let's find out what the problem was so that we can see if we need to fix that on other BP rigs.

In the meantime, because of the problems there, thousands and thousands of American workers are being punished by this administration with the overreaction. We're not just stopping BP and double checking their work. We're going after everybody. The President said there would be a 6-month moratorium. He's going to hurt everybody because of what BP may have done or not done. That's no way to act. In the middle of a crisis, in the middle of a recession, you put other people out of work?

You know, we heard from the families here on Capitol Hill. Bless their hearts. They've been through so much with the loss of life out there on that rig. It's my understanding that, even since the hearing, they're not demanding that drilling stop. They've got too many friends who will be out of work. We need to find those who are responsible. Yet, in the meantime, what could be done?

We have heard the President very nobly say, I'm in control. The administration says they've been in control from day one.

Yet we see this week, according to this article by Loren Steffy, in the Houston Chronicle, posted on June 8, at 10:13 p.m.: ''Three days after the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico, the Dutch Government offered to help. It was willing to provide ships outfitted with oil-skimming booms, and it proposed a plan for building sand barriers to protect sensitive marshlands.

''The response from the Obama administration and British Petroleum, BP, which are coordinating the clean-up, is, 'The Embassy got a nice letter from the administration that said, ''Thanks, but no thanks,'' said Geert Visser, consul general for the Netherlands in Houston.'' '

Well, wasn't that nice. The administration has been in control, we are told, from day one. We heard that before a lot of the people covering the event even noticed that this administration was down there in charge.

Apparently, within 3 days, their answer was to say we don't want help. These people are from the Netherlands. What do they know about dikes and sand barriers and dealing with ocean water? Oh, yeah. Their country has been reclaimed from the ocean, a good deal of it. Why would we want their help? These guys are experts on dealing with ocean water problems. They've been turned away. They were turned away. What sense does that make? Oh, we're in charge. We're in control. We're running things. Yet, in the response to the Dutch, who had the capability to come in and to immediately take action to protect the wildlife, the estuaries, these important marshlands, the beaches—and 3 days after the oil began gushing into the gulf—this administration basically put British Petroleum in charge. It said you take care of it. You know, we don't have your expertise. You take care of it.

We heard from Mr. Gibbs, who nicely said—or I believe it was, maybe, Secretary Salazar, but the administration was pointing out that we have our boot on their throat. In a hearing in our Natural Resources Committee, I asked, What does that mean? The Deputy Secretary of the Interior under Salazar and others there, I didn't really feel, gave appropriate answers. I don't know. I still don't know what that means. We've got our boot on their throat. You know, I'd rather you boot me down there to Louisiana and to Florida and make sure that the oil is not getting to the shore, but when in our hearing they were asked about Louisiana's wanting to set up little barrier islands out there so the oil wouldn't get into the sensitive areas and kill the wildlife and kill off the livings of so many thousands of people, we were told in that hearing, We have that under discussion. Oil was gushing and still is, and this administration has those things under discussion.

He went on to elaborate and explain.

You see, we think it's possible that, if they build these sand islands out there, it may actually draw more oil into the areas they are trying to protect. So we're still talking about it.

Good grief. How about checking with the Dutch? They offered to help 3 days after the explosion.

Well, this article goes on. It says: ''Now, almost 7 weeks later, as the oil spewing from the battered well spreads across the gulf and soils pristine beaches and coastline, BP and our government have reconsidered. U.S. ships are being outfitted this week with four pairs of skimming booms airlifted from the Netherlands and should be deployed