

[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 California [Mr. KIM] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KIM addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND OTHER ISSUES FACING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, as the only Independent in the Congress, what I want to do is take a few minutes to discuss some of the major issues facing this country, issues which often do not get the time and exposure that I think that they need.

The very first issue that I would like to touch upon deals with how the American people get the information that they need in order to formulate intelligent decisions in our democracy. I am increasingly concerned about the rapid concentration of ownership within the media in America today. It should be a real concern to all Americans that all of our major television networks are owned by very, very powerful and wealthy corporations who very clearly have a conflict of interest in terms of what they present on the air. Rupert Murdoch, a multi-billionaire right-wing individual, owns the Fox Television Network. ABC has recently been purchased by Walt Disney whose chief executive officer earns several hundred millions of dollars a year and is one of the wealthier people in America. CBS will now be owned by the Westinghouse Corp. NBC is owned by General Electric. I think what we have got to ask ourselves, are corporations like these going to provide objective information to the American people? I think the answer is very clearly no, and I think the situation in terms of corporate ownership of the media is going from bad to worse. Fewer and fewer large corporations are controlling not only the television, controlling the radio industry, book publishing, newspapers, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, I would raise a particular concern that recently, just in the last week or so, we learned that the Jim Hightower radio show has been taken off the air by ABC. To my mind, the Hightower show was one of the more provocative and interesting radio talk shows in America. It was a progressive show. I think it was a very good antidote to the Rush Limbaugh and the G. Gordon Liddy types, and I am concerned about its disappearance from the air.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue that I want to talk about which also does not get a whole lot of discussion is the re-

ality that is facing middle-class America and the working people of this country.

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To my mind, the most important economic issue facing this country is that the standard of living of the vast majority of our people has declined since 1973. I get very tired of reading newspapers that tell us about how good the economy is, how the economy is booming, how we are creating new jobs, how the gross national product is going up. All of those figures are fine, but they are irrelevant in terms of what is happening to the average American worker.

The fact of the matter is that since 1973, 80 percent, repeat, 80 percent of American working people have seen either a decline in their real inflation-accounted-for-wages or, at best, economic stagnation. The middle class is shrinking. Poverty has increased significantly over the last 15 years.

On the other hand, what has happened is the very wealthiest the people in this country have seen a tremendous increase in their incomes.

I wonder how many Americans know that right now, today, the United States of America has by far, by far, the most unequal distribution of wealth in the industrialized world. No, it is not Great Britain with their queens and their dukes and their barons and their strong class-based society which has the most unequal distribution of wealth. It is the United States of America.

With the rich growing richer, the middle class shrinking, and the poverty increasing, we now have a situation where the richest 1 percent own more wealth than the bottom 90 percent, which is 1 percent or more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. No matter how you slice it, "That ain't fair." It is not what America is supposed to be.

Very clearly, NEWT GINGRICH's Contract With America, which will give huge tax breaks to the richest people in this country, which will, in effect, do away with taxes for the largest corporations while cutting back on all the needs of working people, low-income people and the middle class, will only make that situation even worse.

Let me very briefly, Mr. Speaker, touch upon some of the areas that I think we have got to move in if we are going to revitalize American democracy, if we are going to increase voter turnout, if we are going to make the American people feel—well, Mr. Speaker, it looks like I am not going to get to those issues. We will try again next time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHAMBLISS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Washington [Mrs. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. SMITH of Washington 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 Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan 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 California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO REFORM DAVIS-BACON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue that was previously discussed by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. BALLENGER], dealing with the Davis-Bacon legislation. There are many on my side of the aisle that would like to totally repeal this legislation and put at risk those construction workers across America whose quality of life and skilled craftsmanship directly depends on this important piece of legislation. There are many in the Republican Party who disagree with that premise but who do believe that reform of this rather outdated law in terms of its threshold level needs to be reformed and revised.

Mr. Speaker, with that in mind, over the past several months a group of us have, in fact, come up with a piece of legislation to reform Davis-Bacon. This piece of legislation I introduced today with the cosponsorship of 27 Republicans and the support of organized labor across the country as well as many of the largest contracting corporations in America.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation, in fact, does allow us to reform Davis-Bacon. It allows us to deal with the extremely low threshold of \$2,000 and raise that in a significant way. In fact, similar legislation was already introduced in the Senate in the form of S. 1183, which also enjoyed the support of the labor movement in this country.

Like S. 1183, my bill will raise the current \$2,000-and-above threshold for