

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in fire-fighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee fire training school in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

A TRIBUTE TO JACK MERELMAN

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 1996

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jack Merelman. Mr. Merelman is retiring from his position as director of Federal Research Membership Services to the California Counties Foundation.

Jack Merelman was raised in our Nation's capital, served in the U.S. Army and attended the University of Maryland for his bachelor and law degrees. He embarked on his public service career in 1953 when he joined the staff of the Organization of City Attorneys. In 1958, he became the general counsel for the National Association of Counties.

Mr. Merelman has participated in the development of major program policies in Sacramento and Washington, DC. He was legal counsel for the County Supervisors Association of California and the director of legislation for the National Association of Counties in Washington, DC. The California State Association of Counties engaged his service as both executive director and Washington representative, through which he received the California State Association of Counties President's Award.

Jack Merelman is closing a career of public service that spans five decades. His many accomplishments are to be commended, and best wishes extended for a rewarding and gratifying retirement.

EXCELLENCE IN ARTS EDUCATION—A LEGACY OF INTEGRATION

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 1996

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to be able to add my congratulations for the recent naming of Dallas' Booker T. Washington High School

for the Performing and Visual Arts as a "Blue Ribbon" school. In addition to the "Blue Ribbon" designation, this special school has also received national acclaim as a prototype for subsequent magnet schools through the United States.

The Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts was created about 20 years ago, as a result of a court order mandating that the Dallas schools desegregate and the realization by the Dallas Independent School District of the specific need to educate gifted artists with both the potential and aspiration for careers in the arts. Located in the Dallas Arts District, near the heart of the city, the magnet school attracts students from throughout the metropolitan Dallas area. The multiethnic student body includes approximately 650 students in grades 9 through 12. The instructional staff consists of 54 teachers. Approximately 88 percent of the faculty have more than 10 years of teaching experience while more than 83 percent have advanced degrees. The school is accredited by the Texas Education Agency and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The arts school was created to provide a program of excellence in the arts which meets the needs of the students and the community. Intensive training in the performing or visual arts allows students to explore the demands of an artistic career. A rigorous academic program offers all courses required for the State's three graduation plans. Students are selected through audition, interview, portfolio, or other demonstration of artistic aptitude.

Congratulations to the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas on the 20-year evolution of a great idea.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 1996

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 178) establishing the congressional budget for the U.S. Government for fiscal year 1997 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002:

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 178, the Fiscal Year 1997 Republican Budget Resolution. The American people must clearly understand that the Republicans' Fiscal Year 1997 Budget Resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 178, which eliminates 130 programs and the Department of Commerce and the Department of Energy, is a continuation of their attack on the most vulnerable among us, children, seniors, veterans, and hard working families across the country.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have decided to ignore the message of the American people to protect the quality of life, to protect the environment, and to protect education.

Instead, they have intensified their attack on those in the dawn of life, our children and those in the twilight of life our seniors. Programs and services that are critical to helping to ensure a reasonable quality of life for the most vulnerable are being gutted, once again, so that the GOP can give a tax cut to the wealthy.

Medicare is cut \$158 billion threatening access to quality health care for millions of seniors. Provisions that were designed to help control the escalating cost of health care services for seniors are being repealed. Medicaid is cut \$72 billion. Poor children, disabled persons, and low-income seniors are at risk of losing their health care coverage. Medicaid is converted to a block grant, and States are left to determine eligibility, and the duration and scope of health services to be provided. In addition, State funding match requirements are reduced.

By cutting over \$4 billion from financial aid, the Republican budget reduces the opportunity for hard working families to help their children get a college education. In addition to eliminating, student aid funding provided by the State incentive grant program, and fellowships and scholarships, the direct lending program is also eliminated.

By dramatically cutting funding for housing and the earned income tax credit, the Republican budget will make it increasingly difficult for low-income hard working families to make ends meet. These families are already struggling, the added burden could destroy them.

Banking and housing programs are cut \$5.3 billion. Welfare-related programs are cut \$53 billion and converted to a block grant. The job opportunities and basic skills program and the child care services program are among the programs slated for elimination.

Mr. Chairman, the Republican budget threatens the stability of families across the country. Families do not want a handout, all they need, from time to time, is a helping hand to help them get back on their feet.

Mr. Chairman, these GOP budget tactics and misplaced priorities should come as no surprise to the American people. The Republicans touted last year that if they did not get the cuts in funding that they needed in the fiscal year 1996 budget, to give a \$245 billion tax cut to the rich, the crown jewel in the GOP's Contract With America, they would shut the Government down. And, as each of us recalls, they did just that, our Republican colleagues held the American people hostage, shut the Government down, and denied them access to critical services. That GOP tantrum cost the American people \$1.5 billion, and it needlessly increased the deficit.

The GOP touted last year that if they did not get the cuts they wanted in fiscal year 1996, they would cut programs and services further in fiscal year 1997, and they are doing just that. You may also recall that our Republican colleagues emphasized throughout the fiscal year 1996 appropriations process, that the fiscal year 1996 cuts were just a downpayment on their budget gutting mission to give a tax cut to the rich.

This outrageous fiscal year 1997 budget is extremely harmful to America's families and citizens, no one is safe from the tre-