

us with the rare opportunity to strengthen our democracy. Broadcasters, who will receive free digital licenses from the Government, have a responsibility to fulfill their public interest standards by allowing reduced advertising television time for candidates who comply with the rules.

Mr. Speaker, we must seize this moment and forge a bipartisan consensus to heed the American people's call to reform our campaign system.

SALUTE TO RALPH LAIRD, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROGAN] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, there are occasions when the contribution of one of our citizens merits special note on the floor of the House of Representatives, and for 20 years I have had the privilege of knowing such an individual. His name is Ralph Laird from Pleasanton, CA. He hails from my home State.

Although I am a former resident of Pleasanton, I do not have the privilege of representing that community in this House. However, I am joined by my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. TAUSCHER], who does represent that particular district.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend and colleague to join me in this presentation and salute to Ralph Laird.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my Republican colleague from southern California for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as the Representative of the 10th Congressional District in California, it is one of my great pleasures and honors to be able to recognize and praise distinguished constituents from my area. I rise today to honor the accomplishments of a gentleman from my district who throughout his life has worked to improve the lives of others. Although I have never had the pleasure to meet this man in person, I was lucky enough to learn of his service to my community and the State of California through the kind words and praise of Congressman ROGAN and through the admiration of his colleagues in the education community.

I speak of Mr. Ralph Laird, Jr., a man who has served his country in numerous ways throughout his lifetime. Mr. Laird began serving his country during World War II, in which he fought as a soldier in the U.S. Army. After returning from the war, Mr. Laird made a fortunate decision to return to California, where he chose to dedicate his life to education.

Mr. Laird has been a teacher, a coach of a championship basketball team, a vice principal, a principal, a dean, and an assistant superintendent. In my district, among other things, he has served as the principal of Pleasanton's Amador High School for 8 years and later as assistant superintendent of the Amador School District. In his spare

time, Mr. Laird has served on the Pleasanton City Library Board, coached little league baseball, been an active member of the Pleasanton Rotary Club, and served as a camp director for the YMCA.

I believe that the people of the 10th Congressional District and the State of California have been enormously blessed to have someone like Mr. Laird working on their team. Again I would like to thank my colleague from southern California for bringing to my attention the accomplishments of this outstanding gentleman. Mr. Laird has done a great service to the people of my district and to California's children. Additionally, I would like Mr. Laird and his family to know that my prayers and the prayers of the people of the 10th Congressional District are with him during this very difficult time.

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very gracious and kind comments. One comment she made is particularly true—when she referred to Ralph Laird as a gentleman. That he is. When I recently saw a very popular movie entitled "Mr. Holland's Opus," immediately I thought of Ralph Laird. For those who have seen the movie, they will remember it as the story of somebody who gave their life to educating the children of a particular community and how, over the course of his professional career, the fruits of his efforts grew from one generation to the next. His legacy are the innumerable productive men and women who benefited from his counsel and example during his illustrious career.

That is Ralph Laird's legacy, not only to the people of Pleasanton, not only to the people of California, but truly to the people of this country. On behalf of the Congress of the United States, I thank him for his service to our country, and I salute him.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. TAUSCHER], for joining me in this presentation.

IN SUPPORT OF HERMAN FOR SECRETARY OF LABOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the nomination of Alexis Herman as the Secretary of Labor. Alexis Herman is facing considerable difficulties. They have slowed down the process of confirming her nomination. If you read the accounts in the press and the media, you will find they are rather bizarre.

Alexis Herman is criticized for being too effective. She is criticized for being a great communicator. She is criticized for knowing the ways through the political maze. All of these that are normally considered virtues, all these

characteristics that are normally considered virtues have suddenly become barriers to Alexis Herman being confirmed as the Secretary of Labor.

□ 1315

What is going on, Mr. Speaker? I fear that when you compare the difficulties faced by Alexis Herman on the one hand and her difficulties, leaving the Department of Labor without any leadership for all this time, when you compare those difficulties with what is being offered in this Congress by the Republican majority, you might make a logical case for conspiracy.

The Republican majority that is holding up the confirmation of Alexis Herman, leaving the Department of Labor without leadership, has aggressively taken the lead in terms of placing legislation on the agenda which will definitely hurt working people.

The agenda of the Department of Labor is definitely under consideration here. We are proposing and will have on the floor of this House this week a bill which will change the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Fair Labor Standards Act has been in effect since the New Deal, Roosevelt, when we had abuses of labor that were abominable. And part of the way we curbed those abuses of working people where they were forced to work around the clock, on the weekend, and given the same hourly wage, one way to curb that, one way to make the employers divide up the pot and employ more workers instead of working a few long hours with no wages was to implement a Fair Labor Standards Act which says, "You cannot work anybody more than 40 hours a week without paying them time and a half for their overtime pay. You work 40 hours a week, the wage rate must be raised to time and a half."

Now we have on the floor a bill which will take that away. The Republicans are coming for the overtime of Members. They take away the cash payment. They want to say that employers who are now under the Fair Labor Standards Act should be taken out from under the Fair Labor Standards Act and given the option of giving comp time, time off, to workers. Oh, they say, this is going to be a choice that the employees will make. If they do not want to take time off, they want cash, they will have it. But we have statistics and we have studies which show that employers, people who employ people, are already swindling workers out of vast amounts of overtime pay.

One employer study group has admitted that as much as \$19 billion was swindled away from workers in cash payments last year, so they do not really have a choice. Any employer will choose to want to invest his cash, he will hold onto the cash and give the employee time off.

This is going forward, it is on the floor, it will be on the floor this week.

Now in addition to that very anti-working person, anti-the-working-families out there legislation, we have a