

hiring process I was given a package of benefits that I was entitled to. This included a pension package that the company said they would control and have for me upon my retirement. As I worked for the company, and union contracts were renegotiated, the pension package was still included. Now it seems, Delphi wants to take back the pensions and the contracts that were signed in good faith, while I and thousands like me, worked to make huge profits for the company. I felt my pension and benefits were secure all those years that I worked here."

Mr. Lauder of Somerset New Jersey wrote, "I have lived in the same area all my life except for the 4 years I served my country in the U.S. Navy on a military leave of absence from GM. I have worked at this facility for 32 years, starting at age 18. The hazards of these plants are well known. The industrial atmosphere that we work in holds many perils, such as dangerous machinery, extreme temperatures, hazardous chemicals, asbestos, et cetera. We were not always aware of some of the hazards and the effect on our health, but over the years, the unions and more responsible government representatives fought for information and equipment to protect us.

These are the types of jobs the American blue collar workforce took to feed, clothe and educate our family in the hopes of creating a better world for them. The deal was that we would do our part to help the corporations rake in billions made off of our sweat and labor, and when our time was up we could look forward to a modest pension and medical benefits."

□ 2000

"A living wage was also part of the deal so we could better the lives of our children so they could grow into healthy, educated, and productive individuals, to be contributors and not burdens on our society.

"That used to be the 'American Way,' the basis for the betterment of our great country and the world. Now it seems the Robber Barons are back."

You can hear the pride and the patriotism that comes through in this testimony from these workers.

Writes another worker: "I've been on this job for 16 years and have been a loyal and dedicated employee from day one. Over the years there have been changes, but this kind of change is a harsh one to swallow. Delphi would like to take away our negotiated benefits and leave my family and me with nothing. I have a son who would like to start college next year. My wife and I have explained to him that this just may not happen right now because of the bankruptcy proceedings that are under way. Please imagine if this was the situation you were in, how would you feel and what would you do?"

Another, Mr. Hagopian from Somerset, New Jersey, writes: "This whole bankruptcy was planned. If you let this happen," the Delphi deal, "every other

U.S. company will do the same thing . . ."

You can hear the pride and patriotism. It comes through so clearly. Now, I ask will those who engineer the plans to strip these workers of their pensions and their benefits ever understand what these men and women are going through?

A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE IRAQI PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I want to salute tonight the brave men and women who are fighting in Iraq to bring democracy to the Middle East and hopefully help turn around nations, particularly Arab nations, that the U.N. has said when you add up the gross domestic product of all 22 Arab nations, their gross domestic product is smaller than Italy's. This is a U.N. report that pointed out that in the last 10 years these Arab nations collectively have had declining productivity and that they have not brought forward any inventions or innovations to contribute to world prosperity.

We are in Iraq to help the Iraqi people have a new beginning and hopefully change the face of the Middle East.

I have been to Iraq 11 times, and I have had good visits and I have had bad visits. I have had visits where I have had tremendous hope and then the recognition that we have made some mistakes. In April, 2003, there was tremendous hope. But then we proceeded, unfortunately, to disband their army, their police, and their border patrol, and that resulted in the requirement of American troops and British troops and very few coalition forces to defend 24 million people in a country the size of California.

So what I saw when I went back after April, 2003, when I went in August and then in December and then early in the spring of the next year, things were getting worse. But I began to see it turn around in June of 2004 as we transferred power to the Iraqis. A significant decision. It took it away from Defense and gave it to State Department, and State Department had a better sense of how to help this government, not how to fight the war.

The war is still being fought by our own troops. But as well, we started to train their police, their border patrol, and their army, and they have become very confident.

And what I then saw in 2005 were three elections in Iraq. I was there for the first one. I remember asking if I could stick my finger in that ink jar, and this Kuwaiti woman looked up at me and she said, No. She said, You are not an Iraqi.

That gave me a chill because she did not say I was not a Kurd. She was a Kurd. She said I was not an Iraqi.

And then what I saw was another election. I was there a week before, after now creating a government that was elected, creating a constitution and ratifying this constitution. This constitution was ratified with 79 percent favoring it, and then they proceeded to elect a government at the end of last year.

I can tell you why I know it was a success. The press did not talk about it. Seventy-six percent voted of 100 percent. In other words, of all adults, not the two-thirds that bothered to register, not 76 percent of two-thirds; 76 percent of all adults.

And now we have seen a very dicey moment. The Sunni insurgents are playing their trump card. Not their last straw, not their final gasp. They are playing their trump card, and they may succeed if the Shias give in to sectarian violence. And we are trying to make them understand that they are the majority and they can run this country. Do not allow the Sunni insurgents to get them to do what would be the stupidist thing, to give in to the violence, to give in to a civil war, and then fail.

We are going to leave Iraq when the Iraqis ask us to leave or if they give up. If they give up to the sectarian violence, we will move our troops away from harm's way and we will take them out. But they are so close and they have done so much. I have met such brave Iraqi men and women.

Quickly, one Iraqi man, Al-Alusi, after the election he lost his two sons. His security had been taken away because he had gone to Israel, and he came to visit me later in 2005, and I said, You cannot go back. You are a marked man. You are a dead man walking.

He looked at me with some surprise and said, I have to go back. My country needs me.

Which is to introduce one point I would love to make: When I ask Iraqis what their biggest fear is, it is not the bombing. Their biggest fear is that you will leave us, that you will give us a taste of democracy and then you will leave us.

Let me just conclude by saying this: That very man who went back to Iraq is now an elected member of the assembly. He is a very brave man, and he is typical of the Iraqis who are grasping very hard to have a democracy and to have a better future.

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

(Mr. KILDEE 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 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 Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS 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 Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEVIN 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 Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan 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 New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OWENS 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 (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCDERMOTT 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 Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL 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 Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE FEDERAL BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is budget week here in the U.S. House of Representatives, and sometimes we hear people say, Oh, no, I just dread it when we get around to talking about this budget. And then we will hear others say, I love to just really tackle this budget issue. I love looking at where we spend our money. And I kind of ap-

preciate that attitude because we are the stewards of the taxpayers' money and it is our responsibility to be a good steward and to be diligent in the work we are going to do as we work on this budget and decide what should the priorities of our government be? What should be our concerns? Where should we be looking for ways to achieve a savings?

And over the past several months, actually over the past 3 years, we have come to the floor regularly to talk about waste, fraud, and abuse and find ways and point out ways and to continue to seek ways that we can achieve a savings for the American people.

And from time to time over the past few years, we have talked about lots of different reports. Many different reports from different government agencies, from the General Accounting Office, from some of our friends who are in the media that have pointed out programs that maybe have outlived their usefulness, programs that are wasting money, programs that cannot achieve a clean audit. And some of our colleagues, we have worked on ways that we can go in and investigate and highlight and look at what this drain is on our tax dollars. And we have House committees, certainly the Government Reform Committee, that continue to hold hearings. Oversight and investigations from our Energy and Commerce Committee are certainly looking at ways to achieve a savings and find ways to review how our agencies are spending their money.

We have clear data showing places where the Federal Government is bleeding funds. And the President's budget this year has included more than 100 programs that could and should be targeted, Mr. Speaker. So the target for spending reductions is clearly enormous. We have got 100 programs, 100, that we can look at through so many different agencies and so many different spots in the Federal Government. Now, certainly, out of 100 programs, we are going to be able to find a way to achieve a savings.

One of the interesting things is no matter what part of this country that you are in and no matter whose district that you are in, whether it is a Democrat or a Republican, there is consensus among the American people that we have a problem. Government does not have a revenue problem; government has a spending problem. Government does not have a revenue problem; government has a priority problem. It is time that we begin to fine tune our focus and decide what the priority of government ought to be.

The taxpayers pay far too much of their paycheck in taxes. They are tired of every time somebody comes up with a good idea, they say well let us just go raise the taxes. And, Mr. Speaker, I tell you what, if it were not for the leadership in this House, we would see those taxes going up. If our friends across the aisle had their way, they would be raising taxes, not cutting programs. That

is not where we want to go. We know it is tough to eliminate waste.

I often quote Ronald Reagan, who is pretty close to my favorite President ever, I will have to say that, but one of my favorite remarks he ever made was that when you look at Federal programs, there is nothing so close to eternal life on Earth as a Federal Government program. When you get the thing, it is just the dickens to get rid of it. It is so tough to get rid of it, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes in my townhall meetings in Tennessee, I will have constituents say, Why is it so tough to get rid of these programs? We see the waste. We know the waste is out there. Everybody knows these programs are wasting money. Why is it so difficult to call them into accountability? Why is it so difficult to get rid of these programs?

And to that, Mr. Speaker, I will have to say if you listen to our colleagues from across the aisle this morning when they gave their 1 minute speeches, then you can see why it is so very difficult for us to downsize this government. Those colleagues across the aisle, Democratic Members, Member after Member, came to the floor this morning, as they do on many days, and they decried our efforts to make reductions in Federal spending.

Mr. Speaker, we spend trillions of dollars to support all sorts of social spending programs; yet any reduction or even holding the line on spending, not increasing anything, just holding the line, all of a sudden it is called a "draconian cut." It is amazing how it works.

Most Americans do not get a massive salary increase every year. But we have colleagues that think if they are not giving every agency an increase every year, then they are getting a cut. It is the most incredible, most incredible, program that you have ever seen. If you do not get an increase, then you are getting a cut.

□ 2015

It does not work that way in real life, only in the bureaucracy. We have to look at this and see that it happens year after year after year.

You know, I don't think that asking the Federal Government to reduce its spending, I don't think asking bureaucrats to be accountable, I don't think asking agencies to be accountable and get clean audits and know where they are spending their money is evil. I don't think it is uncaring. But many of our colleagues across the aisle will come down here and demonize those of us who simply want the spending increases to stop.

I have talked a lot about the Great Society government that was created over 40 years of Democratic control of Congress, and I will have to tell you, yes, indeed, they built an enormous monument, a monument of spending to their party's vision of what government ought to be; a vision in which government solved society's ills and