

Unfortunately, some view all “government” as oppression. Possibly necessary oppression, but oppression nonetheless. This too is mistaken. A commitment to subsidiarity provides a useful antidote to such fundamentally flawed, pessimistic and cynical thinking.

We as Representatives and we as citizens should live in a polity which is constantly probing, analyzing, imagining, how to conserve what is good about the past and present while making the future a better, more fulfilling place for those that come before us.

Mr. Speaker, the Preamble to our Constitution states: “We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Establish justice. Insure domestic tranquility. Provide for the common defense. Promote the general welfare. Secure the blessings of liberty. Today, the United States has 304 million people living in 50 States, over 3,000 counties, and thousands of other cities, towns, villages, and local entities. My own State of California alone is almost 156,000 square miles, possesses over 36 million people, and contains over 800,000 private nonfarm business establishments. Yet, we know that “our country is not a thing of mere physical locality.” It is so much more. How are we then to govern ourselves spread across this vast, spacious, and diverse republic? It would do no harm to renew our commitment and endeavor to further understand the dimensions of subsidiarity.

As Michael Sandel has reminded us in great detail, this self-governing Republic has constantly been asking itself what the good life, the good society, and the good citizen is, should be, and can be, since its founding—a time before automobiles, telephones, televisions or the Internet. Let us never lose this perspective. After all, commonsense and reason adamantly demonstrate that unlimited vice and unfindable virtue will lead to greater resources being needed, greater unsustainable commitments being made, and greater constrictions being placed on our individual liberty. The strengthening of, and a reappraisal for, subsidiarity will help us all avoid such a fate.

Mr. Speaker, you and others may have seen a great and inspiring movie which had the simple title “Amazing Grace.” William Wilberforce, who lived from 1759 to 1833 and was the great English abolitionist protagonist in that fine and very moving film, not only helped end the African slave trade in the British Empire, but he was also part of 69 various societal groups as part of his effort at a societal-wide “reformation of manners and morals”

in England. It later became known as the Victorian Period, but he saw 13 and 14-year-old prostitutes on the streets of London, and most of society walking by and saying that is the way it has been, and that’s the way it is going to be. He said it doesn’t have to be that way, we can change it. When he did that, he engaged these nongovernmental entities in his effort to make those changes because he understood the principle of subsidiarity as it expressed itself through so many different organizations, and understood that if he was going to change the government, he had to change the culture. He had to change the people’s hearts and minds, and that you just couldn’t do it with government, you had to do it in fact with all of these organizations, from the families all of the way up to government.

So let us today, in a different century and in a different country, nonetheless think anew how to encourage all citizens to view ourselves as not just cogs in a Federal wheel but as vibrant members, as “little platoons” ourselves, of our respective spheres of life, wherever today may find us.

As Americans, Mr. Speaker, we have much of which to be proud. It was recently written that “the United States is creating the first universal nation, made up of all colors, races, and creeds, living and working together in considerable harmony.” Let us hope that is true. Let us always be committed to “living and working together in considerable harmony.” If we are concerned about liberty, justice, social or otherwise, and the common good, which all philosophies of human interaction and political life, no matter how libertarian or communitarian, presuppose, then we must commit ourselves to thinking with renewed vigor and energy, the presence and possibilities of subsidiarity.

It is not an easy task for we are Representatives at the Federal level, but I think if we exercised humility and a proper understanding of the organization of our society and the tremendous capacity of individuals to do good when properly directed, and properly self-directed, then we can rise to that challenge.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CUMMINGS (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. ALLEN, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. ELLISON, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HOLT, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. SARBANES, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCHENRY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, May 22.
Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, May 22.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. INSLER, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. TANCREDO, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. GOHMERT, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. BROUN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 6022. An act to suspend the acquisition of petroleum for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6051. An act to amend Public Law 110-196 to provide for a temporary extension of programs authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 beyond May 16, 2008.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o’clock and 24 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, May 16, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table and referred as follows:

6624. A letter from the President and CEO, Bay Area Council Economic Institute, transmitting the Council’s report entitled, “Human Capital in the Bay Area: Why an Educated, Flexible Workforce is Vital to Our Economic Future”; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

6625. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting a copy of proposed legislation to amend Section 145 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (AEA) to ensure that in national security or public health and safety emergency situations the Department of Energy (DOE) has the authority to share Restricted Data with persons not in possession of a DOE “Q” or “L” security clearance; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6626. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department’s Report to Congress on Postmarket Surveillance of Medical