

served as Speaker of the House in the State legislature. As a former State legislator myself, I saw firsthand the legacy that he left behind in terms of a civil but progressive agenda that he advanced in the State of Connecticut, which, as a Member of Congress for three terms, he continued that work, again, particularly focusing on the emerging issues of the aging in our country, which as a demographic is growing. He was really just someone with great vision in terms of the need to make sure that we had a society that was prepared to deal with those issues.

Mr. Speaker, as we grapple with the challenge of civil discourse in our democracy, Bill Ratchford, in my opinion, is the perfect, almost iconic example of what a legislator and a public servant ought to be. He cared deeply about the issues that he campaigned and advocated for, but he also was someone who studiously respected his opposition and believed passionately in civil discourse and debate. Again, I think that legacy, probably above all, is the most powerful one that he leaves behind us; and, frankly, we would all do well to follow his outstanding example.

TIME FOR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GRAVES) for 2 minutes.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, early reports indicate that President Obama will call for a new spending package during his State of the Union address tonight. Now, I have heard, as many of you have, that this might be masked, as he might say tonight, as targeted investments. More stimulus. Democrats speak for stimulus, but it will be hidden with calls for tepid spending cuts.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Americans know that our debt is \$14 trillion. They know that the President spent \$1.3 trillion over the budget last year, only to see unemployment stay above 9 percent. Now is the time to pivot to fiscal responsibility. It's time to shred the President's maxed-out credit cards and cut his weekly allowance. It's time to tell our kids and grandkids that we don't want them to bear the burden of our generation's fiscal irresponsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I, along with my constituents in north Georgia, hope that the early reports are wrong about another stimulus being proposed tonight. Rather than use a few spending cuts as window dressing for more spending, tonight is the President's opportunity to seize the moment, to be a leader, and get serious about spending reform.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM RATCHFORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise, as did other Members of the Connecticut delegation, to pay tribute to a great man who served the State of Connecticut and his community of Danbury in a variety of ways, Bill Ratchford.

Bill Ratchford passed away recently, and the entire State of Connecticut is mourning; but, in particular, my district is mourning. Though Connecticut's districts have been reconfigured over the years, we both share a love and affinity for Bill Ratchford's hometown of Danbury that he represented in the United States Congress and I have the great fortune of representing.

Bill grew up in Danbury. He was a child of the Depression. His father worked in one of the great hat factories in Danbury, Connecticut. His mother was a school teacher. And they instilled in Bill the value of what truly matters in life: a good education, a love for his family, and a love for his country.

Shortly after I was sworn into office, Bill came to see me, to share with me some of his thoughts about what was important about being in this place.

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Though he cared so passionately about issues, as Representative COURTNEY and Representative DELAURO mentioned, his passion especially for issues related to aging, the fact that he became, later on, the State's first commissioner on aging, what he cared maybe most about was the discourse in this place. Bill was a gentleman first, second, and third. He represented everything that people wanted government to be.

That's what we talked about when he came into my office that day, how you needed to fight for what you cared about in this place but do it in a respectful way. And I join with Representative COURTNEY in reminding everyone here that there are certain giants of this place that we can look to in trying to reorder the way in which we have conversations, and Bill Ratchford certainly was at the top of that list.

His commitment to public service built a legacy that in Danbury and throughout Connecticut we will remember for a long time. He will be terribly missed. My thoughts and prayers and those of everyone in the Danbury area are with Barbara and his family at this time.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank Congressman MURPHY for yielding, and I want to join him in the remarks that he has made.

I had the opportunity to attend a memorial service and speak at a memorial service for my friend, Bill Ratchford.

Bill and I first met in the early 1970s. Bill had been speaker of the Connecticut House and was serving as president of the National Conference of State Legislatures. I was about to be president of the Maryland Senate, and

another former Member, Martin Sabo, was the speaker of the Minnesota House. The three of us became very good friends.

Later in the week, the next week, we lost an extraordinary American, Sarge Shriver. I had the opportunity to speak at his wake last Friday night.

The reason I mentioned Sarge Shriver, Bill Ratchford and Sarge Shriver were both extraordinary public servants who believed that service to others was their most important role in life in terms of their public service. Now, privately, they were both also representatives of extraordinary family leaders, revered by their families. And his sons, Bill Ratchford's sons, and Sarge's sons spoke at their memorial services. Shaun, Scott, and Brian spoke movingly of a father who was fully engaged and adored by his sons. Of course his wife, Barbara, a very close friend of mine for some 40 years, as was Bill, was revered as a mother.

So these two families, two extraordinary leaders that we have lost recently, represented the best in America.

Bill Ratchford was my friend. Bill Ratchford brought honor on this institution by his service. Bill and I had the opportunity to serve on the Appropriations Committee together, which was arguably, at that point in time, the most bipartisan committee in the Congress of the United States. I am not sure that's still true, but it certainly was then. Bill Ratchford was respected on both sides of the aisle for his decency, his intellect, and his commitment to making America a better country.

I am pleased to join my friend CHRIS MURPHY, who has been such a giant himself at a young age, but at an age when Bill Ratchford was becoming a major leader in their country.

I thank Bill Ratchford and his family for what they have contributed to this country. We lament his loss, but we celebrate his life, which was an extraordinary life well lived and a blessing to all who knew him and to his country.

STATE OF OUR UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) for 2 minutes.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

This evening, we will hear from the President of the United States in his State of the Union address, and it is a privilege for the people of our country to be able to hear from our President what his remarks are about the State of our Union.

We look forward to hearing, Mr. Speaker, what the President's plan will be going forward to lift our country out of the high unemployment rates that we have been dealing with during these last 20 months. To have the unemployment rate in excess of 9 percent