

who work so hard to feed their families, need to know that today marks the day, 170-plus days into the calendar year, when Americans can finally go to work for their families instead of paying the cost of our bloated bureaucracy and government.

What does it mean to working families, Madam Speaker? What does it mean to every American? Well, simply this: According to Americans for Tax Reform, Madam Speaker, Federal regulations during 1998 cost American taxpayers over \$1 trillion. That translates to over \$3,800 for every man, woman and child this year. Americans for Tax Reform estimates that working American will work in excess of 1 month, almost 40 days, in excess of 38 days, to pay for regulatory costs.

Madam Speaker, that is why today I am pleased to come to the floor to announce that I will reintroduce on this, the Cost of Government Day, the Congressional Responsibility Act. It is being sponsored in the other body by my good friend, the senior Senator from Kansas Mr. BROWNBACK. The Congressional Responsibility Act requires that new Federal regulations cannot take effect until Congress approves them and the President signs them, or until his veto is overridden.

Madam Speaker, in the weight of this compelling, overwhelming evidence that our government has grown too large and costs working Americans too much, I say it is important to restore what our Constitution said and our Founders, following the beautiful Preamble which serves as more than just a mission statement for our United States; in our Constitution, the very blueprint of our Republic, says this: Article I, section 1. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States.

In other words, Madam Speaker, all lawmaking authority. But as historians look back upon the 20th century, Madam Speaker, they will talk about the unintended rise of, in essence, a fourth branch of government, the regulatory branch, because to deal with emerging industries, to deal with trying to control so many sectors of our economy, the Congress ceded, delegated its authority to an alphabet soup of acronymed agencies in the executive branch, where, Madam Speaker, unelected, unaccountable Washington bureaucrats, in essence, make law.

Madam Speaker, a personal indulgence. J.D. in my name does not stand for juris doctor. I am not a lawyer; I never played one on TV. That is considered an asset in Arizona. But one need not be a lawyer to recognize that when Washington bureaucrats make law, the unelected, the unaccountable suddenly have great power in our society, to the point now where we work 170-plus days every year just to pay for the cost of government; where all Americans work in excess of 1 month, in excess of 38 days to pay for regulations.

What we say with the Congressional Responsibility Act is quite simple. Those regulatory agencies can continue to promulgate and formulate regulations, but, Madam Speaker, men and women of goodwill from both sides of the aisle, constitutionally elected by their constituents, are sent to Washington to make tough choices, and what the Congressional Responsibility Act would simply do would be to say this: Once a regulation is promulgated, have it sent to the Congress for an up or down vote. That way, Madam Speaker, accountability, responsibility, authority is restored where our Founders wanted it to be: with those elected to the Congress of the United States, with those who are accountable to the people.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join Senator BROWNBACK, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and me in sponsoring and voting for the Congressional Responsibility Act.

AMERICANS' RIGHT TO ORGANIZE: GOOD FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) and others who have come before us to talk about the right of American men and women to organize; certainly, the right to decide whether or not they choose to organize to be represented in the workplace to determine what their wages might be, what benefits they might get, what the safety factors at work might be, what hours they might work, all of those things that many of us have become used to understanding as a valid exercise in the workplace.

Madam Speaker, 74 percent of the American people believe that workers should be able to decide whether they want to join a union, and they should be able to make that decision without interference by management. People support a fair and open process that allows for equal access and equal time, for any discussion of what it means to join a union. And, they support a decision-making process that reaches a timely conclusion on that issue. That means that when workers vote freely to join a union, that decision is honored and accepted by management.

The reality, unfortunately, is far different. Threats, intimidation and harassment are all too commonly used against those who seek to form a union. In nearly one-third of all organizing drives, one or more workers are fired illegally. If workers are able to overcome those obstacles and form a union, the system allows for endless legal challenges and stonewalling by

employers. The laws designed to protect the freedom to form a union are failing, and the penalties for ignoring them are too small to be a deterrent.

This is not a level playing field, and it is well past the time that we restore some measure of balance to the system.

Madam Speaker, we talk a good deal in this Chamber about how we might improve the lives of American families. I suggest that one specific way in which we can do that is to allow for American workers who so choose to join a union. It can make a significant difference in the ability of those workers to provide for their families.

Recently in my district, 24 employees of a small enterprise that made parts for engines being produced by the General Electric facility in Lynn signed cards to join a union. An overwhelming majority wanted that right. They had been earning \$6.10 an hour, and unionized employees doing the same work were making \$14 to \$18 an hour.

Segments of the community, including me, contacted the owner of that company, Metal Improvements, and urged that it respect the desires of the workers and sit down at the bargaining table in good faith. I am happy to report that that was done. Unfortunately, in too many other instances, management mounts an endless series of challenges to the workers' rights to organize. The results can be bitterness and divisiveness that undermine productivity.

Madam Speaker, unions not only serve their members well, they serve the broader interests of our society. When social service workers who care for the elderly and the mentally ill and the mentally retarded earn only \$7 or \$8 or \$9 with little or no pension or health care, as many do in my district, they are often forced to work two or three jobs a day just to make ends meet. Their ability to do just one job well suffers. Turnover is high, and the quality of care is diminished.

Madam Speaker, by joining a union, these workers can raise their standard of living, and they ought to be able to have that right to make that decision.

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE A VOICE AT WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Madam Speaker, earlier this year a number of us heard some powerful, real-life stories and experiences of workers from North Carolina and Las Vegas, Nevada, who were trying to organize. Their stories are the stories of millions of working men and women who want a stronger voice in our workplace. Their stories are about