

them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

I join my colleagues in an earnest plea for the administration and Congress of the United States, to give their full support to the World Conference on Racism and send an official delegation to Durban, South Africa.

We have been a staunch promoter of human rights and underlying any democratic philosophy is the belief that all men are created equal. This is the core of human rights and eliminating racism should be at the core of our domestic and foreign policy. We are not calling upon the world to repent, but to acknowledge the past, refuse to ignore the present and hopefully challenge the future.

LABOR AND THE LABOR FORCE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Representative BONIOR for organizing a special order on labor and the labor force in our country. Rather than wait until the first Monday in September, I, too, appreciate the role of labor and organized in our economy.

In my District, which is largely the Mississippi Delta, I've witnessed the transition from agriculture to gaming. Ten years ago, there were no casinos in the State of Mississippi. Today, more than 22 casinos operate in my Congressional District. The Second District of Mississippi is one of the more rural areas in the country. While we grow cotton and soybeans and farm-raise 85% of the Nation's catfish, we can sometimes lose sight of the men and women who make it all possible.

When we adjourn in the House, most times you can find me headed to Mississippi. When I get home, I hear all the concerns of hard-working folk who just want to make a better way of life for their families. No, they don't complain about how they can't contribute as much as they want to a campaign or how the estate tax is threatening to take away their farm. My constituents just want to be treated fairly and thought of as men and women.

Time after time, we see corporate executives pitted against common folk who want to know that they are not being mistreated. Just like all of us here in the Congress, our workforce wants to enjoy life. There's nothing wrong with paying hard-working people a decent wage. There's nothing wrong with providing a safe working environment. There's

nothing wrong with environmental standards. There's nothing wrong with health insurance for the working poor—folks who are too rich for Medicaid but too poor for the HMO's. There's nothing wrong with forming credit unions and providing other benefits to assist our workforce, many of whom are turned away by traditional lending institutions. Mr. Speaker, these comforts are taken for granted by some here in the Congress.

In closing, I ask "What's wrong with an honest day's pay for an honest day's work?" As we carry out our duties in this House, let us not forget the men and women who have made our economy what it is.

ASTORIA HARDWARE FIRE

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory and recognition of John Downing, Harry Ford and Brian Fahey—three of New York's Bravest, members of the New York City Fire Department, who were killed in the line of duty on Father's Day, Sunday, June 17.

Every day, firefighters take risks by putting their own lives on the line in an attempt to save innocent people who may be trapped in a burning building or are otherwise endangered by a spreading fire. Heroic action taken by the men and women of the New York Fire Department is not an occasional event, but something that occurs daily. The routine risks they take are not recognized enough by the people who they protect. Unfortunately, it always seems to take a tragedy, like the one which occurred last weekend to fully recognize the heroism around us every day. I am heartened to see the outpouring of sympathy that has been expressed in New York and across the country for these brave men who fell in the line of duty.

Working on Father's Day was just part of the job for these three heroes, who were entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the lives of the people of New York City. When tragedy struck, Rescue Company 4, which included Mr. Ford, and Mr. Fahey, and Ladder Company 163, where Mr. Downing was assigned, were sent to fight a fire at a hardware store in Astoria, Queens. All three men, like their entire companies, were doing exactly what they were trained to do, the same thing they had done hundreds of times before. Unfortunately, this fire would lead to their deaths and the injury of 50 others.

Although we think of them today as heroes because of their valor in the face of death, all three men were heroes long before this fatal Fathers Day. Harry Ford was a 27-year veteran of the New York City Fire Department. Along with his wife Denise, he was the father of three children, Janna, Harry and Gerard. During his distinguished career, he earned ten bravery citations, including one for rescuing a baby from a burning building. As the senior member of his Company, he was held in a certain reverence by every member of Rescue Company Four.

Brian Fahey was a veteran firefighter of 14 years. He was also a member of the elite rescue team, whose most important job is to rescue their fellow firefighters imperiled in the process of saving the lives of civilians. He leaves behind three sons, Brendan, Patrick and James and is the husband of Mary.

In 1992, 11-year veteran John Downing had a brush with fame. A plane trying to take off from LaGuardia Airport slid into Flushing Bay, killing 19 people. Firefighter Downing was captured on the front page of the Daily News the next day, heroically carrying victims away from danger. He is survived by his wife Anne, and their two children, Joanne and Michael.

Words alone cannot express the sadness we all feel in the death of these men. I can only begin to express the sympathy I feel for their families and their friends, especially those who worked alongside them in their gallant profession. These men will continue to go on fighting fires, with this painful reminder of the great risk of their calling. To these men and women, I want to take the opportunity to say "thank you" for the job that you do, often without praise or acknowledgement. Keep up the good work. I hope we all can let the example of these three heroes, John Downing, Harry Ford and Brian Fahey serve as an example for all of us.

I would also like to pay tribute to the 50 other people who were injured while fighting this deadly fire, including firefighters, EMS workers, police officers and civilians. My sincerest thanks and prayers go out to all of you, especially Firefighter Joseph Vosilla, an 11-year veteran of Ladder Company 116, who is still in critical condition at Elmhurst Hospital, and Lieutenant Brendan Manning, a 19-year veteran of Battalion 49 who is in stable condition at New York Weill Cornell Center.

Mr. Speaker, these heroes made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. I know the entire House joins me in paying tribute to their incredible bravery. May God bless them and their families.