

A good wage job is the foundation for the economic security of all Americans, and particularly so for people of color who have historically been denied opportunity in our country. Rhetoric about "family values" is disingenuous if large segments of our Nation are not given the chance to earn a good wage and provide for their children, spouses, and increasingly parents, whose retirement income is not sufficient to sustain independent living.

This is quite evident in my city—New York City—the Nation's largest metropolis and home to the panorama of racial and ethnic groups that represent the emerging face of America. In this great city, and in many others across the country, the economic devastation has hit close to home. Last year one of our city's leading nonpartisan, not-for-profit social policy and advocacy organizations—the Community Service Society or "CSS"—issued a landmark report on the crisis of Black male unemployment.

For those of you not familiar with the Community Service Society, it is an organization that has a 160-year history of working to alleviate conditions of poverty affecting low-income New Yorkers. CSS' roots in working to raise living conditions for city residents can be traced back to the settlement house movement in New York City and its role in founding the Columbia University School of Social Work. It is an organization that has played an invaluable role historically in the life of our city and continues to be a voice of conscience today.

The study revealed some 50 percent of Black men in New York City were removed from the labor market. Fifty percent! By any standards it should be unacceptable for half of any group to be without work. Now to be fair, the latest CSS report indicates some improvement in jobholding for Black men but they have steadily lost ground relative to other groups in the city. It is a tragedy that should evoke shame and outrage in the 21st century.

CSS also issued a report that revealed the degree to which young people in our city, age 16 to 24, are not in school and out of work—tagged "disconnected" for the manner in which they are excluded from civic life. In total, the report calculated that there are 170,000 disconnected young people in our communities—a population that surpasses our state capital of Albany and many mid-size American cities.

We know there are a number of factors fueling this crisis. Many of our public schools serving the population of young people the CSS report identified as disconnected are not equipped to prepare them for the realities of today's work world. And while we all advocate for higher standards, improved test scores absent any connection to a good wage job is a hollow victory. Many of us, including myself, understand the importance of retooling vocational and technical education so students who do not see college as an immediate option will have the opportunity to earn a living.

Likewise, we are aware of traditional barriers that have obstructed Black Americans from economic opportunity. In the spirit of bipartisanship I recently accepted an invitation by the mayor of our city, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a Republican, to serve on a city commission that will identify ways to eliminate

barriers to employment in the construction trades for minorities, veterans and women. Joining me on that commission is the CEO of the Community Service Society, David Jones.

It is an important first step in taking an industry-by-industry, sector-by-sector audit of impediments that are driving these dramatic disparities in employment. And the onus for change is not wholly on the private sector. The public sector must do a better job in ensuring equity in employment. For instance, the Fire Department of New York, a great and storied agency by most measures, has failed to be forward thinking in its hiring practices. In its most recent probationary class, minorities are only 14 percent of the new recruits. White males comprise 92 percent of the department. It is for that reason that the Justice Department has launched an investigation into the FDNY's hiring and promotion practices. So we know that government must also take corrective action.

Now, against this backdrop we have a White House that is moving in the opposite direction of widening opportunity. In fact, President Bush's budget proposal has several elements that will only widen the gap I have described. The President proposes to cut the Workforce Investment Act by \$61.5 million, end the program to reintegrate young offenders in communities, and reduces federal student loans by \$10.7 billion over 10 years. Our president has also proposed eliminating the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, a cut that means an estimated loss of \$65 million to New York State.

And New Yorkers most affected by these proposed cuts are clear on their priorities. In a survey of low-income New Yorkers commissioned by the Community Service Society, and tied to their labor market research, respondents expressed support for job training and education, and the upgrading of vocational and technical education.

It is a significant snapshot of the opinions of the city's working poor—the first of its kind in the nation that I know of that seeks to ferret out the views of the economically disadvantaged.

None of this is good news for New Yorkers or most residents of our nation's large urban centers. And most certainly for Black Americans in general, and Black men specifically. Combined with the risk that the President's misguided Social Security proposal poses for Black seniors, President Bush's budget has placed us on the cusp of an economic disaster of cataclysmic proportion in the Black community.

We are not alone in New York City facing this crisis. Many American cities, big and small, are experiencing the same problems to varying degrees. We cannot sit by idly and see families devastated and communities destroyed while economic opportunity passes us by. That is why I have asked several of my colleagues in the House to join me on this Special Order to educate the American public and sensitize the White House to the economic imperative facing our constituents.

HONORING MR. RANDY TEAGUE

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor Mr. Randy Teague of Mabank, Texas for his longtime support of agriculture in and around Henderson County of Texas. From 2000 to 2004, Mr. Teague served on the Henderson County Beef Committee, serving as its chairman in 2004. He has been an organizer of the Henderson County Livestock Show since 2000, and is a member of the Henderson County Show Board.

A father to three children, John Carter, Clara Jane, and Cash, Mr. Teague married his wife, Amy Morris, in January of 1999. Along with his agricultural activities, Mr. Teague is the Chairman of the Nominating Committee at the First Baptist Church in Mabank. He is also a supporter of the Kaufman County Women's and Children shelter, the Gold Card Luncheon Program for Mabank High School, the Special Olympics, and the Make a Wish Foundation.

As a father, a husband, a devout churchgoer, and a community leader, Mr. Randy Teague has embodied the values of family, faith, and hard work that lie at the core of American society. As his representative in Congress, it is my distinct pleasure to honor him today on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

SALUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW LOTWIN ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Lotwin on his retirement after 20 years of distinguished service in the United States Army. I had the good fortune to have Lt. Col. Lotwin serve as a Military Fellow in my office for a year, and the further good fortune of developing a lasting friendship with him and his wonderful family. I can say without reservation that Lt. Col. Lotwin truly exemplifies what it means to wear the uniform of our great nation. His patriotism, intelligence and integrity and service are an example to all.

Lt. Col. Lotwin began what would become a distinguished military career more than twenty years ago when he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point. During his military career he also received master's degrees from the University of California at Los Angeles and Webster University, and studied national security at Georgetown University. He also served as a faculty member at the United States Military Academy and at other prestigious military schools and conferences.

Throughout his career, Lt. Col. Lotwin specialized in intelligence issues, military procurement and relations with Congress. He served as a program manager in the Joint Program