RECOGNIZING THE WOMENS CLUB OF ALTOONA, PA, FOR 60 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 5, 1995

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of a group which has been a positive influence for 60 years in Altoona, PA. Since 1935, the Womens Club of Altoona has played a significant role in community service throughout Altoona and Blair County. This is a club in which members dedicate themselves to the betterment of the community by providing scholarship aid to students, assisting and giving to charitable organizations, and volunteering many hours to programs and events for the young and elderly throughout the region. They have provided support and assistance which government services cannot afford to sustain or otherwise would not even exist. This club provides a sense of guidance, awareness, responsibility, and caring toward the community; characteristics vital to keeping our cities and towns on the right track, especially in this period of time in which we see communities breaking down around the Nation. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the women who have been a part of this organization, and say to them that they are an asset to our region and I hope that they will continue to play a visible role throughout the community. I wish them the best in celebrating their 60 years of service in Altoona and Blair County.

THE REPUBLICAN CONTRACT: THE CALL AND POST NEWSPAPER RESPONDS

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 5, 1995

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, we are moving closer to the conclusion of the first 100 days of the Republican Contract With America. Over the past weeks, we have debated on the House floor various provisions of the contract. During this same period, newspapers across America are providing their readers with detailed analyses of this plan put forth by the Republican Party. One such newspaper is the Call and Post, a black weekly newspaper which serves residents of my congressional district.

In recent editorials, the Call and Post takes a close look at the Republican Contract With America, and its impact on the African-American community, in particular. The newspaper criticizes the Republican Party for its drastic cuts in programs including housing assistance, nutrition and child care services, low-income energy assistance and the student loan program, along with many others. The Call and Post editorial writers are also critical of Republican efforts to dismantle affirmative action programs and the Voting Rights Act. Their editorial states in part, ''Our early vote on the Republican first '50 days' is that, on balance, it has been disastrous for those in America who do not have stocks and bonds, or six-figure incomes.''

Mr. Speaker, I want to share these editorials from the Call and Post newspaper with my colleagues and the Nation. I agree with the editorial writers that the Contract With America is mean-spirited, ill-advised and particularly harmful to the African-American community, other disadvantaged populations, and the poor. I hope that Members on both sides of the aisle will take a moment to read the Call and Post analysis of the Contract With America.

[From the Call and Post, Mar. 2, 1995]

AFTER 50 DAYS

When Newt Gingrich was leading the charge against the Democrats in the last election, he promised in his ''Contract with America'' that the House of Representatives would, within the first 100 days of operation, vote on measures which would carry out a massive restructuring of government.

The ''100 days'' symbolism was significant. It hearkened back to the ''New Deal'' pronouncement of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who, within his first 100 days of office, had put into place legislation designed to bring the nation out of the depths of the great depression—legislation and more importantly, a focus of government which was radically different than what had gone before.

Now, after 50 days of ''Newtonian'' politics, we have seen dramatic results. The first, and easiest, step the Congress took to fulfill the ''Contract with America'' was requiring Congress to abide by all the laws it imposes on others, such as civil rights statutes, wage and hour requirements, and occupational safety laws. There was little controversial about this measure: Ohio Sen. John Glenn had been fighting for the measure for years. It ended Congress' stature as America's ''last plantation.''

But the remainder of the contract has not been so easy, or so uncontroversial. It appears that the Republicans themselves—who have gained power on the push for term limits—now are debating whether, and how much, they want to impose this on themselves. The U.S. Term Limits organization, which has been the national arm for this movement, has attacked the Republicans—including specifically several Ohio Republican legislators—for hypocrisy on this issue; a measure particularly of concern to the group is sponsored by Florida Congressman Bill McCollum, which would replace all state-enacted term limits statutes with a federal one.

In the area of criminal justice, the Republican majority in the house has passed a measure which panders to the national hysteria about punishment for crime. It violates all the Republicans historic concern about the intrusion of the federal government into the rights of states by allowing federal money for prisons building to only those states in which incarcerated serious felons serve at least 85 percent of their sentences. And it also has severe constitutional questions in its willingness to allow a ''good faith'' exemption for warrantless searches. No less a constitutional authority than outgoing sixth circuit appellate court judge Nathaniel Jones has expressed serious concerns about this measure, saying that it would ''gut the fourth amendment from the Constitution.''

It is in the area of spending for human and social services that the Republicans have done the most mischief already. The House has already passed a bill cutting spending already appropriated by the House in 1994 by more than $17 billion—with $7.2 billion of that coming in one area, housing. Other human services programs have already been affected.

And the Republicans are planning even deeper cuts in the future, as the plan calls for block grants for human services spending.

If you're a young struggling mother trying to feed your children, you're probably in trouble: the rescission bill cut already-appropriated funding for Head Start and the Women's, Infants and Children's (WIC) program.

If you're a poor family struggling to survive through a cold winter, you're already in trouble: they have cut the low income housing energy assistance program.

If you're a poor child in school and needing the resources of the federal government just to get a decent meal, you're probably in trouble: massive cuts are contemplated for school feeding programs.

If you're a poor student seeking a better life through college, you're probably in trouble: the House is looking to cut grants and loans for college students.

In short, if you're one of America's poor trying to achieve a better life—or even merely survive in the one you have—you're probably going to be further impoverished by this round of budget cuts being proposed by the House Republicans in their ''Contract with America.''

It is clear that, after 50 days, the Republican legislative leadership, especially in the House, is planning a frontal assault on the New Deal's ''contract'' with the poorest of America's citizens. By the time their plans are completed, the goal is to take from them the resources to house them more adequately; feed them moderately; and educate them appropriately. None of the rhetoric they have used recently—about the need for budget tightening; about shared sacrifice from everyone; about how the private sector will step up and help—can erase that stark fact.

In fact, part of the Contract with America is designed specifically to shield some Americans from the sacrifices others must make: the Republicans are pushing a reduction in the capital gains tax which will provide windfall tax savings to some of the nation's wealthiest citizens.

President Clinton, who is threatening to veto parts of the contract, has said of the Republicans, ''what they want to do is make war on the kids of this country to pay for a capital gains tax cut.''

We believe, sadly, that this harsh language is correct. Our early vote on the Republicans first ''50 days'' is that, on balance, it has been disastrous for those in America who do not have stocks and bonds, or six-figure incomes.

We can only hope that President Clinton will demonstrate the courage of his convictions to veto some of the most destructive expressions of the GOP leadership's demonstrated desire to turn back the clock on help for America's poorest citizens.

CONTRACT ON BLACK AMERICA

The ''Republican Revolution'' and its makeshift constitution otherwise known as the ''Contract With America'' has been criticized by President Clinton and other prominent Democrats as a threat to the children of the poor, and rightfully so. However, the general tenor of the actions of Congress have the appearance of a contract ON Black America.

We have already cited the cuts in low income housing, heating bill subsidies and Head Start, that were appropriated by the last Congress and now cut retroactively to pay for a capital gains tax cut that will benefit wealthy individuals and corporations. These cuts will affect all low-income Americans, but like everything else, they will be disastrous in the Black Community.