

which in the early 1990s worked in Central and Eastern Europe, offering technical assistance to the parliaments emerging from communist rule; and then for the last 6 years to the House Democracy Partnership.

So we are happy to join today in thanking Dan Mulhollan for all these years of work on behalf of the Congress and particularly for the kind of support that he has offered our international partnerships.

Dan knows a lot about Congress and has a profound respect for the institution. He has brought a particular sense of mission to the work of our commissions. As a political scientist, he recognizes how critical legislative research is to the growth of democracy, first in post-Communist Europe and now to all kinds of emerging democracies around the world.

I had the privilege of traveling last year with Dan to Warsaw to observe the 20th anniversary of that earlier task force's work. I can assure my colleagues he received a hero's welcome. His work has not gone unnoticed, and it is not going to go unnoticed by us either.

We want to salute Dan Mulhollan for his many, many years of distinguished service. We want to thank him for all that he has done, and we want to wish him well in his retirement and offer him our sincere gratitude and praise for a job well done.

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF EDGAR HAGOPIAN

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

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the extraordinary life of Edgar Hagopian and to mourn his passing at the age of 80.

Born on August 16, 1930, to Haroutun and Cariana Hagopian, Edgar dedicated his life to serving our community and our country. He was an exemplary citizen with an incredible work ethic who held an absolute love for his ancestral Armenia.

After graduating from Detroit's Cass Tech High School in 1948, Edgar studied at the University of Michigan and valiantly served in the United States Army during the Korean war. After being honorably discharged on December 7, 1954, Technical Sergeant Hagopian joined his father's business, where he had frequently worked since childhood.

Thus began a long and storied career, establishing himself not only as a successful entrepreneur but as an ardent advocate and activist for our community and Armenian causes.

Edgar served on the board of directors of the Armenian Assembly of America, the board of governors of the Michigan Design Center, the Detroit chapter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and the Michigan chapter of the Seeds of Peace. He was

an associate in the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts, and was involved with the Armenian Library. Edgar also founded the Detroit chapter of the Armenian American Business Council.

Edgar was named "Man of the Year" by the Canadian Armenian Business Council in 1995. In 2002, he was inducted into the International Institute Heritage Hall of Fame, and Edgar was awarded the 2005 Ellis Island Medal of Honor. This prestigious award was created to honor ancestral groups who, through struggle, sacrifice, and success, helped build this great Nation.

Edgar Hagopian deeply loved his community, and his community loved him. Always mindful of his humble roots, Edgar always endeavored to better our world. He was a mentor to many and an avid patron of the arts. A pensive philanthropist, Edgar led Hagopian Companies to donate in excess of \$70 million in goods and services to local charities.

Sadly, on March 27, 2011, Edgar passed from this earthly world to his eternal reward. He is survived by his beloved wife of 54 years, Sarah, and his children Suzanne, Edmond, and Angela. Yet Edgar's legacy will continue in the lives of his grandsons Alexander, Adam, and Nicholas. As he joins his brother Arthur in eternity, Edgar is also survived by sisters Mary and Ilene and his brother Steve.

Mr. Speaker, Edgar Hagopian will be long remembered as a compassionate father, a dedicated husband, a passionate champion of Armenian causes, a philanthropist, a community leader, and above all, as a friend. Edgar was a man who deeply treasured his family, friends, community, and his country.

Today, as we bid Edgar Hagopian farewell, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning his passing and in honoring his unwavering patriotism and legendary service to our community and our country.

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I would also ask us to reflect on what is perhaps the most poignant part of Edgar's legacy: We are not enriched by what we do for ourselves but by what we do for others within the short span of time God grants. Truly, Edgar Hagopian used the time he was given to leave us all better off; and now, in honor of him, let us return the favor to our fellow human beings.

THE FAIRNESS IN TAXATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a grave threat to both our economy and our democracy, and that is the disappearing middle class.

Over the last 30 years, there has been a dramatic and deliberate transfer of wealth from the middle class to the

very, very, very rich. Income inequality is now at the highest level since 1928. Wages have stagnated for middle and working class families despite enormous gains in productivity. Where has the money gone?

This chart shows the change in the average pre-tax household income from 1979 to 2005. The bottom 20 percent—that's that number way down in the corner—of households saw their incomes over those 30 years grow just \$200. Over the same period, the top 0.1 percent saw income growth of nearly \$6 million each year. The top 100th of 1 percent now makes an average of \$27 million per household per year. The average income for the bottom 90 percent of Americans: \$31,244.

Meanwhile, Republicans, who squandered a budget surplus, created a huge deficit with unpaid-for tax cuts that went mainly to the very rich, and whose policies allowed Wall Street recklessness to bring our economy to near collapse, are now demanding that the middle class foot the bill. Their solution to our fiscal mess is to gut vital programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and to make cuts in domestic spending that would cause an additional 700,000 middle class Americans to lose their jobs.

In the next chart, you can see some of the enormous cuts that they are proposing: \$1.3 billion from community health centers, the only source of medical care for many families; \$5.7 billion from Pell grants, reducing the size of the grant for 9.4 million students who want to go to college; and \$1 billion in funding for high-speed rail, important infrastructure projects that will create good jobs—thousands and thousands of good jobs.

Once again, they are showing their utter disregard for the shrinking middle class and those who aspire to it by cutting important jobs programs and assistance programs for poor families.

Part two of the Republican program for addressing our economic problem, and every other problem, is to cut taxes even more for the rich. Enough is enough. It's time for millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share. This isn't about punishment and it isn't about revenge. It is about fairness.

Currently, the top tax bracket starts at \$375,000, failing to distinguish between the well-off and billionaires. I have introduced the Fairness in Taxation Act, which would create new tax brackets beginning at 45 percent for income over \$1 million, rising to 49 percent for income of \$1 billion a year or more; and, yes, there are people in our country who made \$1 billion or more just last year. Historically, these rates are relatively modest. During most of the Reagan administration, the top tax rate was 50 percent; and in previous decades, the top tax rate was as high as 94 percent.

My bill would also address a fundamental inequality in our current law by taxing capital gains and dividends

at ordinary income rates in those brackets. Rich hedge fund managers should not be paying a lower tax rate than their secretaries because much of the income of the hedge fund manager is capital gains and dividends.

According to Citizens for Tax Justice, the Fairness in Taxation Act will raise more than \$78.9 billion if enacted in 2011, allowing us to avoid the harsh cuts that will hurt the middle class. This is an idea that Americans support. In a recent poll, 81 percent of respondents supported placing a surtax on Federal income for those who make more than \$1 million per year in order to reduce the deficit.

Passing the Fairness in Taxation Act will allow us to stop the war on the middle class, restore fiscal integrity and fairness, and fund initiatives that reflect our American values and goals.

RECOGNIZING GUS MACHADO FORD FOR RECEIVING THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a constituent of my south Florida community, Gus Machado of Gus Machado Ford, for receiving the Ford Motor Company's President's Award. The President's Award is a prestigious honor and is awarded to less than 10 percent of all dealers nationwide. It recognizes Gus Machado Ford for exceeding customer expectations in every department.

Customer satisfaction is more important than ever during these tough economic times. Its loyal and supportive customer base has allowed Machado Ford to prosper where others have seen their markets shrink. Certainly, in the past year and a half, we have sadly witnessed many dealers close up shop, and it has been a very difficult period for car dealers nationwide; but Gus has not only survived but has flourished. I applaud Gus Machado Ford for making the interests of customers its number one priority.

To further recognize his contribution to our south Florida neighborhoods, two outstanding individuals, Remedios and Fausto Diaz-Oliver, will acknowledge the significant aid that Gus has provided to others with a community event this Sunday. Gus may be best known for his outstanding company, but his hand in helping those less fortunate in our south Florida area is admirable.

In 1985, Gus organized the first golf shootout at the Doral Golf Resort. With all proceeds going to the American Cancer Society, the charity event was so successful that his shootout has become an annual event.

Along with his golf event, Gus is also founder of two additional charity events. He is the founder of the first

PGA Tour Senior Golf Classic in Miami at Key Biscayne, which donates to the American Cancer Society and to the United Way. He is also the founder of the Gus Machado Classic Charity Golf Tournament, which has raised over half a million dollars for cancer research.

In 2008, to better serve the community through his charitable contributions, he created the Gus Machado Family Foundation. Every year, the foundation celebrates the Gus Machado Community and Back to School Fair on the grounds of his car dealership. The event provides hundreds of children with backpacks full of school supplies. Along with the generous donations of school materials that the foundation supplies to our children, it also offers immunizations and ID cards for kids in conjunction with different State and local government agencies during the back-to-school community fair.

As a contributor to over 30 charitable organizations, few in our community have impacted south Florida as much as Gus has. Again, congratulations to Gus Machado for his recent commendation and for his leadership to our community.

RETIREMENT OF ERVIN HIGGS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ervin Higgs on his well-deserved retirement after 46 years of public service in the Florida Keys. Ervin's long and distinguished career was marked by a solid 35 years as property appraiser of Monroe County, otherwise known as the Keys. In his service to the Keys, Ervin has borne witness to the unique and profound changes that have taken place in our Keys community. His commitment to excellence has truly allowed him to shape the lives of countless Conchs.

It is sad to see such a fine and dedicated public servant retiring, but those who follow in his footsteps will truly have much to establish. There are few greater rewards than the satisfaction of serving one's community, and I thank Ervin so very much for having embraced this most noble of endeavors with such high principles.

Congratulations to Ervin on his retirement, and I wish him all the best on this new chapter of his life.

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LIBYA: THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, a little over a week ago, the executive branch launched U.S. military force against yet another Middle Eastern country. This time it is oil-rich Libya. U.S. naval and air forces attacked Libyan military installations across that country, wiping out air defenses, intelligence systems, tanks, and also apparently is now targeting that nation's ground forces.

Under what policy is the executive branch operating without a vote of Congress in expending millions of defense dollars and State dollars on offensive action taken inside a nation that did nothing provocative toward the United States. In fact, last year, Libya was even a recipient of U.S. foreign aid. The President's justification for this action was that it was not an act of war but, rather, a humanitarian mission to prevent a catastrophe that would have resulted from Libya's military forces under the command of Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi from taking the civilian center of Benghazi.

Our President says he did not act alone, as French, British, Canadian, and other Western NATO members participated in these attacks. The President informed Congress that future operations will be handled by NATO. Well, who exactly decided all of this? Not Congress. If this is not an act of war, as F-16s fly over and bomb and U.S. naval forces shell, what is it?

The President has further said he authorized this military action to enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973; yet on that resolution, many nations who normally are U.S. allies abstained from the vote, such as India, Brazil, and Germany.

The President said he sought the permission of the Arab League before taking action. But in fact it was 3 days into the bombing when the press reported the Arab League said it had "no objection" to the bombing. So where in these operations have been the Arab League's planes and soldiers? And I might ask, where is the African Union's engagement? Why are they silent?

It appears the administration consulted key allies from oil-dependent Europe, like the French, who dropped the first bombs, and the British. But the President didn't bother to ask Congress. We live in very strange and dangerous times. The administration says it made a couple of phone calls to Members of Congress serving in the leadership. Well, who exactly were they? And then the administration set up an after-the-fact briefing for Members of Congress in the Capitol Visitor Center. None of these gestures meet the spirit or letter of the law under our Constitution relating to military engagement abroad.

Yes, protest movements seem to be springing up across Africa and the Middle East, and we witness some Libyan rebels—though we really don't know exactly who they are or who is funding them—take to the streets to demand reform and an end to the Qadhafi government's grip on power. But we also see troops very loyal to the Qadhafi regime who are fighting to maintain that regime.

So why is America taking a military role in an internal civil conflict without a vote of Congress on behalf of the American people whose sons and daughters are engaged in these operations? Should we not be clear and vote