

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF
JANINE BENNER

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today is the last day on Capitol Hill for Janine Benner, my deputy chief of staff. Janine and her husband, Greg Dotson, a key member of the Commerce Committee, are a true Capitol Hill power couple—not the type that you see in the society pages of the Post or holding forth on the Sunday morning talk shows. When you see them on television, they are sitting next to a Member of Congress, helping them on a bill or an amendment to look smarter and do their job better.

Ms. Benner joined our offices as a legislative assistant in 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, and leaves having seen Congress at its best and worst—the near meltdown of the economy, wars, and the shutdown. She has seen landmark legislation and made important contributions to many. She knows that we often make it harder than it should be, but that didn't stop her or discourage her.

History will judge what Congress has accomplished in her 12 years, but there's no doubt that Ms. Benner made it better with her countless daily actions behind the scenes and helping in meeting with thousands of people, listening, learning and helping them understand the mysterious ways of their government and how to be more effective.

Janine Benner was a colleague and mentor to hundreds of professionals and interns, not just in our office. She worked with them helping them learn and encouraging them to weave the tapestry of legislative activity. She brought her Ivy League education, passion, and commitment—especially to the environment—to help fine-tune opportunities on Capitol Hill to coax more value for the American people.

She led our staff efforts dealing with climate change and global warming. Janine helped manage and guide livability initiatives to make the Federal Government a better partner. She was a part of our initial work in 2002 in Johannesburg that led to our efforts with the Water for the Poor legislation and, more recently, with Water for the World, to help bring sanitation and safe drinking water for people around the world. She returned from the United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen in 2009, being a part of that hopeful and frustrating process with a renewed commitment to deal with energy and climate change and found ways to make a difference.

She organized and participated in my bipartisan 3-day backpacking trip around Oregon's magnificent Mount Hood with my colleague, GREG WALDEN, and his family and staff, working together to learn and build trust that led to the Mount Hood Legacy Stewardship Act that protected that Oregon treasure.

No Hill staffer knows more about the challenges, dangers, and opportunities dealing with natural disaster. She dove in behind the scenes working in the detailed minutia that brought about the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004. No Member or staff did more to make that happen and with ongoing efforts.

She continues to nudge the Federal Government to be more productive. She spent years to refine and modernize procedures for the Corps of Engineers.

Whether it's in Copenhagen or Johannesburg, flying over the Klamath Basin or hiking around Mount Hood or being in a Capitol Hill lockdown yesterday, she brought experience, good humor, and intellect not to just some bills enacted or amendments passed; she helped improve Federal agencies like the Corps and FEMA that need more attention. She took time off and did amazing volunteer work in key Oregon campaigns with spectacular results.

Besides being a good citizen, she is a proud mother to her darling daughter, Dahlia. She and Greg could live anywhere in America. They could make more money and not have questions about whether they're going to be paid or whether their employer was going to take away their health insurance, but they've chosen to serve the public, help Congress, and make the world a better place. It was an honor to be able to work with her. There is no one who better exemplifies the dedication, confidence, and commitment that holds this place together.

Thanks, Janine.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS CHOOSING
CALLIGRAPHY OVER OUR
MONUMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I came down to this well yesterday to talk about how for 20 years I have run back and forth to the Lincoln Memorial and how the day before yesterday I was shocked to run down there and see the place in chains. I had planned on making a run last night, and then tragically this shooting occurred here yesterday.

But it turns out there's some things that I didn't know about the Lincoln Memorial. In this shot, I had become so agitated, I had asked a tourist to take a picture. And it is an amazing picture of, again, the Lincoln Memorial without people, because what I have come to learn is that it has always been a place with people.

I didn't realize that in the last government shutdown, President Clinton elected not to close down the Lincoln Memorial. I didn't realize there had been 17 shutdowns in this country since 1976, and not one President elected to close down the Lincoln Memorial. That means President Ford, President Carter, President Reagan, President Bush,

and President Clinton each, when given the discretion in how they would handle a shutdown, chose not to hold Americans hostage in somehow gaining political favor by a shutdown that would hurt them on their tour to Washington, D.C. In fact, what I came to learn is that in the history of the American Republic, the Lincoln Memorial has never been shut down.

So, my simple question would be: Why?

I think it's interesting that Dr. Martin Luther King came to its steps, and he talked about how the American Dream for many pieces of America and many people in America was in chains. And yet this President, for some reason, chooses to chain the Lincoln Memorial in a way that has never been done in the history of our Republic.

I don't know why he would do so, but what I can say is that it turns out he has a history of holding people hostage in a political equation that I think is very, very harmful, because in the sequester, he chose to end public tours to the White House. That means an eighth grader who may be making their one trip to Washington, D.C., over the course of their life is no longer afforded the chance to visit the White House as school groups have done, literally, since the time of Jefferson. Always that has been the people's house—not a palace, but the people's house.

What I came to learn here that I didn't know over the last 24 hours is that the White House, as it turns out, spends \$277,000 on a calligrapher. Now, you can either keep the White House open for tours for eighth graders across this country or you can spend \$277,000 on calligraphers. Now, what's a calligrapher? A calligrapher is a person who writes in very fancy prose on a very fancy invitation to rich folk to come to the White House. That's what a calligrapher is. And he would elect to do that? Or to take an extra trip on Air Force One? Or not to raise private money to open up the White House for tours?

It turns out, I've come to learn, in many cases, it's costing more to chain these public, open-air monuments, whether the World War II monument, whether the Lincoln Memorial, whether the Jefferson, in many cases costing more to rent barricade equipment than it is to take people out of furlough to have them there in ways that have never been okay.

So it is okay to agree that we disagree. It's okay to say you want to spend more, the House wants to spend less. HARRY REID wants to spend more, we want to spend less. I think the Congressional Budget Office numbers are on our side. What they show is that in just 12 years, we're going to be at a point in this civilization where there will only be enough money to pay for interest and entitlements and nothing else. And in that regard, what we see is simply a prelude to much greater problems in this country if we don't get our financial house in order.