

hundreds and hundreds of hours in consultation, planning, touring, and legislating. It was the most effective mentoring possible.

There are those who have been known as “a man of the House,” and Jim Oberstar certainly was “a man of the people’s House.” But even more, he was a man of the T&I Committee, the Public Works Committee.

He rose through the staff ranks to become staff director. Then, succeeding his Congressman, Congressman Blatnik, he became a Member of Congress, and ultimately became its chair. This is something no one else has done, serving as staff director of a committee and then ultimately presiding over it.

As staff, committee member, or chair, or as a member of all the subcommittees, whether in the majority or minority, Jim Oberstar had an outsized influence on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for decades. It is safe to say that over the last 50 years no one had more influence than Jim.

For almost 20 years he was the top Democrat, but most feel he was the top member, period. He was totally seeped in policy, the history, and the mechanics of transportation. But it was not just transportation. It was aviation, marine, the waterways, and waterworks of America as well. They were all his areas of expertise.

Jim Oberstar was a partisan—and not necessarily a political partisan, but he was an infrastructure partisan. A true expert. That is why his partnership with Congressman Bud Shuster, although they were of different parties, was so effective. Bud was Jim’s partner for years on the committee, even before either of them assumed their respective top leadership positions.

Infrastructure came first, partisan-second.

One of my most vivid memories was how our Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, under the leadership of Jim Oberstar and Bud Shuster, beat Speaker Gingrich and President Clinton when it mattered on our highway bill in 1997.

Jim was a man of remarkable memory and learning. He spoke a half-dozen languages. He never stopped fighting for what he believed in and what he knew for his district, his State, or for the American people.

He was a man of faith that never wavered. But as much as he loved the job of being Congressman, his people, his bicycle, his first love was his family. I don’t think he ever recovered from the loss of his first wife, Jo, but then he found Jean. They were married 20 years. They were a remarkable team.

Jean is a knowledgeable and experienced transportation professional in her own right. She knew what Jim’s speeches were about. In fact, she could encourage him occasionally, in good humor, to shorten them just a little bit.

Over the years, dozens of members of my staff felt in a sense that they

worked for Jim Oberstar as well, because of his commitment, his skill, and his innate decency. I am hearing of their sense of loss from people around the country.

We all knew that Jim Oberstar had a lot to say. What he said was worth listening to. America is a better place not just because of what he said, but what he did in a remarkable career spanning almost 50 years.

Few people had more lasting impact on this institution of Congress and on America than Jim Oberstar. We are all richer for his life of outstanding service.

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in deep appreciation for a group of individuals who hold our future in their hands: our Nation’s teachers.

This week is Teacher Appreciation Week, during which we thank the countless men and women who strive every day to ensure that a child’s potential can become reality.

America’s ability to outcompete rival nations is contingent upon the next generation of minds possessing the education but also the confidence to think outside the box. Our future competitiveness is contingent upon our next generation of children having the skills but also creativity, vision, and know-how to build the future.

Each child’s potential is realized through the engagement of families and communities, but also teachers rising to the occasion, which they have done for generations.

So let us take a moment to recognize the compassionate individuals who dedicate their lives and professions to the cultivation of minds and the betterment of our Nation.

During this Teacher Appreciation Week let us not forget those teachers who have helped shape our own lives. They deserve our praise.

END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I have come to this floor once a week during the 113th Congress to talk about hunger—specifically, how we can end hunger now if we simply muster the political will to do so.

Technically identified as food insecure by the Department of Agriculture, there are nearly 50 million hungry people who live in the United States, the richest country in the history of the world. These people don’t earn enough to be able to put food on their table. Simply, they don’t know where their next meal will come from.

Now, let’s be clear. This has not been a particularly kind Congress to those who struggle with hunger. We are seeing nearly \$20 billion cut from our Nation’s preeminent antihunger program, known as SNAP.

SNAP is a lifeline for the 46 million Americans who rely on it to have something to eat each day. Yet this Congress decided that Americans who live at or below the poverty line can simply absorb massive cuts to SNAP.

Sadly, Republicans and some Democrats joined together to cut a benefit that was already meager and didn’t last through the month even before these cuts took effect.

These cuts are bad and hurtful, but just as hurtful is how these Americans were described and depicted on the floor of this House during the debate about cuts to SNAP. During the debate on the farm bill, some Republican Members came to the floor to justify cuts to SNAP as a way to prevent murderers, rapists, and pedophiles from getting a government benefit.

Poor people have been routinely characterized as “those people,” as part of a culture of dependency. They have been described as “lazy.”

Mr. Speaker, I am sick and tired of poor people being demonized. I am sick and tired of their struggle being belittled. We are here to represent all people, including those struggling in poverty.

Unfortunately, insults continue.

For the most part, we try to keep campaign rhetoric out of the debate on the House floor. However, today I want to highlight some rhetoric that is even more vile than even some of the language that was used on the House floor during the SNAP debate.

A few weeks ago, a Republican candidate for United States Senate in South Dakota actually equated SNAP recipients to wild animals. That’s right. We are now at a point where it is apparently okay for political candidates to denigrate our fellow citizens by comparing them to animals.

Dr. Annette Bosworth shared a viral image on her Facebook page that said the following:

The food stamp program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They proudly report that they distribute free meals and food stamps to over 46 million people on an annual basis. Meanwhile, the National Park Service, run by the U.S. Department of the Interior, asks us, Please do not feed the animals. Their stated reason for this policy being that . . . the animals will grow dependent on the handouts, and then they will never learn to take care of themselves.

The post continues:

This concludes today’s lesson. Any questions?

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What an incredibly offensive thing for anybody to say.

Mr. Speaker, I was taught to love my neighbor. I was taught to care about the people and to strive to make everyone’s life better, and what is being tolerated as political dialogue violates

those teachings and my core beliefs in humanity.

We can all do better. Some of us may need a hand up in order to get by, but that doesn't mean that they are lesser people for it. They deserve our respect, and they deserve our help while they are struggling.

It is hard to be poor, and because of many of the actions that have been taken by this Congress, it is even harder to get out of poverty.

Dr. Bosworth should apologize to the 46 million of her fellow Americans who need SNAP to put food on their tables. She should apologize to the nearly 50 million of her fellow Americans who struggle with hunger and don't know where their next meal will come from, and Republicans should repudiate her disgusting remarks.

I am an optimist. I believe we can end hunger, and I believe we can end poverty in America, if we just make the commitment to do so, but hurtful rhetoric like this simply divides us and does nothing to help us achieve the worthy goal of ending hunger now.

Hunger is a political condition. We have the food, and we have the ability to make certain that nobody in this country goes hungry, but we lack the political will; and demonizing the poor, as so many in this Chamber have done and continue to do so, is a sad commentary on this Congress.

Our government has a special obligation to the most vulnerable. It is time we lived up to that obligation. The war against the poor must stop.

IN SUPPORT OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of National Charter Schools Week. In preparation for National Charter Schools Week, I visited a lot of charter schools that are in my district that I had not yet visited, and I took some time to understand what exactly they do that is unique and different from other charter schools.

What I found is that a school, a curriculum, and a student body that was fitting in one place was very different in another charter. What I learned is that diversity actually delivers a better result for those student populations.

There was Pinnacle Classical Academy in Shelby, North Carolina, a charter that utilizes a classical learning model focused on providing their students with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st Century.

Then there was Evergreen Community Charter School in Asheville. Evergreen employs a holistic education model with a goal of teaching their students the importance of environmental stewardship and community service.

Finally, this past week, I visited Mountain Island Charter School in

Mount Holly. Mountain Island has a traditional curriculum focused on building the character of students and instilling a spirit for community within them.

Each one of those three charter schools, as well as the others that are in my district and, I think, across America, have a unique learning environment. What I have found in these schools is that these students flourish in that right environment, and there is a unique environment for every student to find success. One student's successful environment is so different than another.

While each school was different, their similarities highlight the benefits of charters. Each school utilizes a challenging curriculum that encourages not just the students, but their parents as well, to stay involved. That parental involvement is such an important part of the educational process.

After each of these visits, it is clear that our educational system would hugely benefit by expanding access to charter schools. I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 10.

I look forward to voting for it this week, in the hopes of giving all American children greater access to quality charter schools and educational opportunities of their choice and their parents' choice, so that we have a better-educated workforce and a stronger America.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEED A VOTE ON EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it has been 1 month since the Senate acted in a bipartisan fashion to pass emergency unemployment extension.

Just hours after the Senate acted, I introduced a bill, H.R. 4415, the same language passed by the Senate. It is fully paid for, would not increase the deficit, unlike the hundreds of billions of dollars in permanent tax breaks that the Republican leadership intends to bring to the floor this week.

A month later, we still have no vote scheduled for extending unemployment insurance for millions of Americans—no vote, despite the fact that over 150 Members of Congress, Democrats and Republicans, have cosponsored H.R. 4415; no vote, despite the fact that 2.6 million Americans have already lost this important benefit and 2.8 million will have lost that benefit by the end of the month, almost 3 million Americans; no vote, with 72,000 individuals, hardworking Americans, every week at risk of losing their unemployment insurance if we don't act.

Helping jobless Americans who are actively looking for work is not only the right thing to do, but we have done this before. We have done this under Democratic administrations and Republican administrations. It is not a

handout. It is simply a lifeline to help those folks who have lost their job stay above ground, above water, before they get their next job.

This should not be a partisan issue; yet, yesterday, the Republican leadership said no to letting some of these jobless Americans testify at a Capitol Hill hearing. We were locked out of the room that we had requested.

2.8 million jobless Americans, they may be invisible to the House Republican leadership, but they will not be silenced.

While they were locked out of the hearing room at the Rayburn House Office Building, I and other Members joined these unemployed Americans yesterday, went to the steps of the Capitol, and listened to them as they told their stories. This is their Capitol; it is not ours. It belongs to them, and their voices deserve to be heard.

I also asked hardworking Americans who are unemployed to tweet and email me their stories. My newsfeed and inbox was flooded with stories of people just trying to get by, struggling to pay their rent, struggling to feed their families as they continue to be denied a vote in the House of Representatives to renew unemployment insurance.

They have continued to be denied their voice in the House of Representatives, and this is the people's House. So what I would like to do with my remaining time is just tell a few of the stories that have come in. Lynette B. says:

We just received our foreclosure letter on our home. I am 49 years old, and this is certainly not where I see myself at this age. I am educated, and I have been applying to no less than three jobs per day, only to not get a reply to most of them, or else I am overqualified.

Jennifer S., this is Jennifer and her family:

I never thought I would be in this position, unemployed and worrying about feeding my two growing boys, 14 and 9. I have had to go to food pantries to keep food on the table. I am behind in my car payment and the utilities since my unemployment benefits stopped December 28.

Laura B. writes:

I need the extension, so I can afford to keep the Internet on to look for jobs and afford the gas to go to interviews. It's very hard out there, and there are so many unemployed people looking for each job, that the chances are slim.

Angela M. writes:

Please help with UI. I have lost almost everything, sold my car, pawned my wedding rings, selling furniture to keep a rented roof over my kids' heads.

Elaine G. writes:

I live with my 27-year-old daughter and sleep on an air mattress. I have no phone. I complete job applications now and ask employers to contact me through email. I expect, any day, that my car will be repossessed, as soon as the finance company is able to locate the car.

Carol C. writes:

Come June 1, I will have to leave my apartment. My car, phone, Internet will be gone.