

Born poor, Mr. Lincoln was probably the greatest of truly self-made men, believing that "work, work, work is the main thing." His economic policy was designed not only "to clear the path for all," but to spell out incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to create new products, new wealth, and new jobs. He himself had applied for and obtained a patent, declaring in 1859 the patent and copyright protection of intellectual property to be one of the greatest incentives to innovation of Western civilization.

While today many Americans would dispute some of Mr. Lincoln's economic policies, it is manifestly true that his proposition—based on the right of every American to rise on his or her merits—defined the colorblind American dream of Martin Luther King. "I want every man to have the chance," Lincoln announced in New Haven in March 1860. "And I believe a black man is entitled to it . . . when he may look forward and hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally to hire men to work for him! That is the true system."

This was Lincoln's American system, where government fosters growth, where equal opportunity leads to social mobility, where intelligence and labor lead to savings and entrepreneurship. The black abolitionist Frederick Douglass pronounced a fitting tribute when he said of President Lincoln that he was "the first great man that I talked with in the United States freely, who in no single instance reminded me of the difference of color." He attributed Lincoln's open attitude to the fact that he and Lincoln were both, in Douglass's phrase, "self-made men."

Lincoln's economic legacy has had a powerful effect on world history. Without our 16th president there would have been separate slave states and free states; and thus no integrated North American economy in which emerged the most powerful, free-market, commercial civilization the world has ever known. Without pre-eminent American industrial power—which Lincoln self-consciously advocated—the means would not have been available to contain Imperial Germany in 1917 as it reached for European hegemony. Neither would there have been a national power strong enough to destroy its global successor, Hitler's Nazi Reich in 1945, nor to crush the aggressions of Imperial Japan. And, in the end, there would have been no world power to oppose and overcome the Soviet Communist empire during the second half of our century. World conquest—based on the invidious distinctions of race and class, the goal of the malignant world powers of our era—was prevented by the force and leadership of a single country, the perpetual union of the American states.

THE ENIGMA

Hovering over the whole of this history, there lingers still the enigma of the private man and the shadow of his personality. We scrutinize Lincoln; but we see him through a glass darkly. We mine his papers, sap the memoirs left by those who knew him, plumb his personal relationships. But he escapes us.

Surely we know about his humble parents, his lack of formal education, his discreet but towering ambition. But we wonder that, unlike the Adamses, the Roosevelts, the Kennedys, he left no descendants to carry on his legacy of great deeds. It is as if, like a luminous comet, he thrust himself in front of our eyes, the eyes of the world—for a brief moment—then to dissolve into the vasty deep of the cosmos from which he came.

This archetypal American, born poor of the South in Kentucky, elected of the North

from Illinois—his professional achievement the very epitome of the American dream—this man Lincoln is the elusive inspiration we should be looking for as we commemorate his birth, 186 years ago, on Feb. 12, 1809.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 1995

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, as I stated on February 13, 1995, my wife and I were recently faced with a sudden and unexpected family emergency which has required my presence at home in Los Angeles. We are expecting our second child this May, and under doctor's orders, my wife has been confined to bed rest until she has completed her pregnancy.

As a result, I regretfully missed a number of recorded floor votes during the past few days. For the record, I would like to take this opportunity to indicate my position on each amendment and bill:

Watt amendment of H.R. 667, Violent Criminal Incarceration Act of 1995 (rollcall 112)—"aye."

Cardin amendment to H.R. 667 (rollcall 113)—"aye."

Chapman amendment to H.R. 667 (rollcall 114)—"aye."

Scott amendment to H.R. 667 (rollcall 115)—"aye."

On motion to recommit with instructions (rollcall 116)—"aye."

On final passage of H.R. 667 (rollcall 117)—"no."

On final passage of H.R. 668, Criminal Alien Deportation Improvements Act of 1995 (rollcall 118)—"no."

Quorum call (rollcall 119)—"present."

Watt amendment to H.R. 728, Local Government Law Enforcement Block Grants Act (rollcall 120)—"aye."

Mfume amendment to H.R. 728 (rollcall 121)—"aye."

On ordering the previous question (rollcall 122)—"no."

On motion by Mr. ARMEY to allow committees to meet on February 14 and for the remainder of the week when the House is meeting under the 5-minute rule (rollcall 123)—"no."

Schumer amendment to H.R. 728 (rollcall 124)—"aye."

Schroeder amendment to H.R. 728 (rollcall 125)—"aye."

Hoke amendment to H.R. 728 (rollcall 126)—"aye."

On motion to agree to the committee substitute (rollcall 127)—"no."

On motion to recommit with instructions (rollcall 128)—"aye."

On final passage of H.R. 728 (rollcall 129)—"no."

On motion by Mr. WISE to adjourn (rollcall 130)—"aye."

Quorum call (rollcall 131)—"present."

On ordering the previous question on H. Res. 83 (rollcall 132)—"no."

On final passage of H. Res. 83 (rollcall 133)—"no."

On motion by Mr. VOLKMER to adjourn (rollcall 134)—"aye."

Spence amendment to H.R. 7, National Security Revitalization Act (rollcall 135)—"no."

Spratt amendment to H.R. 7 (rollcall 136)—"aye."

Edwards amendment to the Spratt amendment, as modified (rollcall 137)—"aye."

Skelton amendment, as amended by the Spence substitute amendment (rollcall 138)—"no."

Montgomery substitute to the Skelton amendment, as amended by the Dellums amendment (rollcall 139)—"aye."

Hefley amendment to H.R. 7 (rollcall 140)—"no."

Herman amendment to H.R. 7 (rollcall 141)—"aye."

Leach amendment to H.R. 7 (rollcall 142)—"aye."

Toricelli amendment to H.R. 7 (rollcall 143)—"aye."

On motion to recommit with instructions (rollcall 144)—"aye."

On final passage of H.R. 7 (rollcall 145)—"no."

FAIRNESS FOR WORKERS "ON THE ROAD"

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 1995

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, the legislation I introduce today, along with Representatives RICHARD NEAL and WILLIAM JEFFERSON, restores to 80 percent the business meal deduction for long-haul truck drivers, bus drivers, airline flight crews, railroad conductors, and other federally regulated transportation workers who fall under the Department of Transportation hours-of-service regulations. They symbolize the hard-working, middle-class American who struggles for his or her family, abides by the rules, and deserves fair treatment.

As part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, the business meal deduction was reduced from 80 percent to 50 percent. Though Congress was correct in addressing this provision in the Tax Code, it erroneously assumed that it was going to affect only the so-called three martini lunches. In fact, the diminution of this deduction has hurt many hard-working, middle-income Americans, especially in the transportation industry, who find themselves away from their homes and families for extended periods of time.

For example, long-haul truck drivers spend over 200 days per year away from home. They eat at roadside diners and truckstops and sleep in their trucks or modest motels. In doing so, they incur the legitimate and necessary business expenses required in their work and do not enjoy the expense-account lifestyles of the individuals originally targeted in the 1993 legislation.

My bill restores some fairness to the Tax Code by reinstating the 80-percent business meal deduction for certain transportation workers, and I urge my colleagues to lend their support for its enactment.