

THE NATIONAL TRAGEDY IN
OKLAHOMA CITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] is recognized for 2 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join some of my colleagues this morning who have extended the sympathies of their constituents to our colleagues from Oklahoma, to their constituents and, most importantly, to the families of those who lost their lives in the Federal building there. We have a natural political governmental connection to those folks because they carry out the work of public policy whether it is helping a child get a Social Security number at birth or whether it is the senior citizen applying for Social Security benefits at the end of life, housing in between and the rest, and they indeed were great public servants and will be sorely missed.

At this time of national tragedy, Mr. Speaker, of course we must focus on the personal heartbreak, and I hope it is some source of consolation to the people of Oklahoma City that the world grieves with them, that more than anything in life we wish that would never have happened, that the innocent victims, that would be all people involved there, would not have had to pay the price that they are paying.

For as long as I can remember, Mr. Speaker, the word "Oklahoma" was fraught with a spirit of the greatest optimism whether it was on the musical stage or whether it was on the football field, and that spirit once again is very conspicuous in the activities in Oklahoma City as people unselfishly and tirelessly fight the battle of time to try to save lives and try to save dignity. I hope again, as this source of some consolation to those who lost their family members in Oklahoma City, that this should engender a spirit of national reconciliation. Many colleagues have talked about the tone of remarks and what was intended and what was not. Let us remove all doubt that in our public debate and in our rhetoric that we will take the high road, that we will not use words that hurt or can endanger, and that we know a better way, and that when we proceed to have our differences discussed, we will have absolutely no doubt in our mind that none of our words could have contributed to an act of violence.

Once again I want to extend the condolences of the people of San Francisco. We have suffered our share of natural disasters. It is impossible to fathom a criminal act that would take life, and we send our deepest, deepest sympathy.

THE GREAT TRAGEDY OF
OKLAHOMA CITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well to join the gentlewoman from San Francisco in saying that the people I represent in Denver, CO, also send their very, very strongest sympathy and condolences to the tremendous tragedy that has been inflicted upon the people in Oklahoma City. As my colleagues know, I have many Federal employees in Denver, CO, and I think they have felt really under the gun literally of late. People have been so free with bashing bureaucrats 24 hours a day, like they were faceless, they were nameless, they are familyless, and maybe this will kind of calm us all down, and bring us to our senses, and point out that these are human beings, that they are trying very, very hard to do something that this country has done better than almost any other country on the planet, and that is provide very distinguished, high quality service through the Federal Government.

Now that is not a politically popular thing to say. That is not an applause line on today's talk show circuit. But let us talk a bit about the Federal Government and its long distinguished history.

When I was at Harvard Law School, if someone said, "You could work for the U.S. Justice Department," they would get goose bumps because the U.S. Justice Department was out on the front lines making sure that there were not huge trusts that prevented competition. It kept some competition alive so the consumers got a good deal and that some big fish did not eat all the little fish, and we were proud of that. They were also out there making sure this country kept its promise, that when we said America believed in liberty and justice for all, it was out there making sure that people were not putting up racial barriers, or religious barriers, or gender barriers, or any other kind of barriers, that, if one is an American citizen, they have a right to have their dream become reality, that if they had the talent and the will to do something this Justice Department made sure that they got that chance. It made sure that people were not putting barriers in their way to vote. It made sure that all sorts of environmental things were beginning to happen for the first time, that we started trying to take care of this planet.

I say to my colleagues, "Of late, when you go to law schools and say you can work for the Federal Government, people say, 'No, no, I don't want to do that.' Now what has happened in these last few years that our young people are hesitant to sign up for Federal service when it has had such a long distinguished period?"

I think that is something we, as Americans, have to ponder because Federal service will never be better than the people that run it, and we

have had a history of having the most nonpolitical Federal service in the world, that we have believed these people should take very rigorous exams, and that is what they do, and that these be competitive exams, and that they compete for these jobs and, their loyalty is to you, the taxpayer, not me, a Congresswoman, or not the President of the United States, or not the Supreme Court. Their loyalty is to the citizens of America to try and make this work.

Now things are never perfect. They never always work as well as we all hope they are, but they are continually trying to work and make it better, and I would put our public service up against any other public service of any other national government when we look at the high quality, the lack of scandal. I mean tell me the last time we saw a bribe or something like that occur where we really brought disgrace to the Federal service? It has not been the Federal servants that have been doing it, it has not been the civil servants that have been doing it. They have been exemplary in almost all cases. So to see this incredible reign of terror rain down on their head because they were such easy targets really seems very unfair.

So, as our hearts go out to the people who have suffered this great tragedy, let us hope that we learn from this, that we learn from this that we lower our voices, that we once again take pride in the fact that we have a phenomenal Park Service because of the Federal Government, that we have a strong Immigration Service because of the Federal Government, that we have a Social Security System that works very well because of the Federal Government, that we have many, many things we, as Americans are proud of. We have a justice system because we say we are a government of laws and not of men, that people are not to take their law in their own hand.

So let us be a little more thoughtful, and let us also continue to extend sympathy for people that have lost things that can never be replaced.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 11 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 5 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 11 a.m.

□ 1100

After recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. COMBEST].

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Clyde H. Miller, Jr., conference minister, retired, United Church of Christ, Denver, CO, offered the following prayer: