

But I also come to commend the rescue workers who worked tirelessly, sometimes around the clock, in a rescue attempt to reduce the pain and suffering and to bring out of the rubble the loved ones in Oklahoma City. I want to take a moment to specifically commend a group of rescue workers from my own district in Montgomery County who went down to Oklahoma, as did many other rescue workers from around the country, to lend a hand. In the truest American spirit they did a wonderful job, and I want to thank them one and all.

I also want to join with what I believe is a rising chorus speaking on behalf of Federal workers.

Now I know this is a somewhat sensitive issue, and let me be clear that I am not here to suggest that conservative speech, antigovernment speech, disagreement with Government policy or disagreement with Government bureaucracy was the cause of the bombing in Oklahoma City. That is not my argument. But I rather hope that, if there is any legacy to the people who lost their lives in Oklahoma City, it will be a legacy of respect for Federal employees.

I say to my colleagues, "If you go down the rollcall, you see the employees from all agencies, from Housing and Urban Development, from the Department of Transportation, from Veterans Affairs, from Social Security, from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, from General Services Administration which were all in that building. These are some of the same Federal employees who have been showered with contempt, who have been described as the worst, as Government vultures, as lazy bureaucrats, as worthless Federal employees. These are the same Federal employees whom we have attempted to cut benefits for, the same Federal employees whom we have increased pensions costs on, at least attempted to increase pension costs on, and it seems to me there is a general attitude of hostility toward Federal employees."

Legitimate criticism, of course, is intrinsic to this body; contempt for hard-working Federal employees is not. I would certainly caution my colleagues of both sides of the aisle who may have occasion to be contemptuous of Federal employees and their performance to keep in mind that they do not make the laws. We do. They only try to execute to the best of their ability the laws that we make, and, yes, some do not do as good a job as we would like, and some merit criticism, but certainly the kind of contempt and condemnation that I have heard on the floor of this body is not deserving. These people, as we now know, have families, and young children, and dreams and desires, many of which were snuffed out in Oklahoma City. They are people just like us. Now is not a time for finger pointing. Now is the time for sympathy, for condolences, for words of encouragement.

But I hope there will be a legacy out of all this, a legacy of tolerance for Federal employees, support for Federal employees, a legacy of restraint on the part of Members of this House and on the part of certain Members of the media when addressing the issue of Federal employees because, while these words did not cause the bombing in Oklahoma City, they certainly showed a contempt for Federal employees which they do not deserve. Let us leave the victims of Oklahoma City with a better legacy in the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. PORTER] is recognized for 60 minutes.

[Mr. PORTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

NORTHEASTERN OHIO PLEASED WITH THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, we are here after the first 100 days have been completed, and I think most of us have had the experience of going back to our respective districts, and being involved in a number of engagements, and town hall meetings, and the kinds of things that we do in order to try and find out exactly what our constituents are saying about how they feel about what has been done, and I want to report to the Congress that I have had extraordinarily positive feedback from the people of northeastern Ohio regarding what we have called the Contract With America and regarding the direction that they believe that this contract or that this Congress is now taking our highest legislative body in the United States, the direction we are going and the direction we are trying to pursue for the people of America.

And what I hear from my constituents is that they could not be happier, they could not be more pleased, that they finally feel that they have in the Congress of the United States men and women who are willing to actually commit to what they said that they would do, that this whole notion of keeping a promise regardless of what the promise happens to be, even the fact of making a promise and keeping it as a group of elected officials elevates that group of elected officials from politicians who, as Winston Churchill observed, are defined by being concerned about the next election to a level of being statesmen; that is, people who are concerned about the next generation, and I cannot tell you how much positive feedback I have gotten from the men and women of northeastern Ohio, the west side of Cleveland and western Cuyahoga County regarding the efforts we have made and the efforts to make Government small-

er, to make it more responsible, to reduce taxes, to reduce the burden of Government on the people, and to try and bring that burden of Government to its closest and its most local area. That is the local communities.

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If you think back to George Washington's time, what was it that George Washington believed in with respect to the House of Representatives? He thought of districts not in the sense that we think of today, where we have 572,000 people in each district on average, at least in the State of Ohio. It varies a little bit from State to State. But he thought of districts as neighborhoods, that neighborhoods were in fact the building block of the House of Representatives.

Well, that is when we had a fraction of the number of people living in this country that we have today. But it was a remarkable thing that he would observe that we should be as neighbors and act that way.

Well, that is how we should act in the House of Representatives, and we have a tremendous challenge coming before us in the next 3 or 4 months, and that is the challenge of delivering a budget to be voted upon by this House and then to be signed into law by the President of the United States.

The fact is that that is going to be a tough fight and a tough battle, because in making a budget, what we do, just as a family does, just as an institution does, just as a company does, our country will be redefining, or defining and redefining its values, because it is through the budget process that we truly do define what we believe in, what our priorities are, what is most important and what our values are as a Nation.

That is exactly what we will be doing. That is why the budget process is so important, not just because it spends money, not just because of the way it describes the appropriations bills, but in fact because what we do is we tell the American people, we tell ourselves, exactly what it is that we value as a people and what direction we are going to be going in.

I can tell you as a member of the Committee on the Budget, the direction we are going to be going in is we are going to, in fact, have a balanced budget after a 7-year period. We have committed to it; we have worked on it all last week. We were here when the rest of the House was still in recess; we came back early; and we will, in fact, deliver for the American people a balanced budget after a 7-year period.

It is tough sledding, it takes a tremendous amount of work, and it takes a tremendous amount of decision making in terms of making the tough choices and making the hard decisions. But that is what we have been working on, that is what we will continue to work on. We are going to Leesburg, VA, to a conference, and then we will