

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil," said the political leader and writer Edmund Burke, "is for good men to do nothing." Individual responsibility for our own actions and instilling a sense of shared values play a crucial part in solving our country's problems. We need to look for common ground combining the great themes in American values—personal responsibility, freedom, individualism, respect, trustworthiness, fairness and caring. We must return to the ideas of our Founding Fathers who spoke unashamedly of virtue. They understood that without a virtuous people the country does not function well, and that without virtue individuals cannot realize either their own or the common good.

## FAMILIES

Central to our efforts to take back our streets, our neighborhoods and our homes is strengthening the family. As Barbara Bush said, "Your success as a family—our success as a society—depends not on what happens at the White House, but on what happens inside your house." Like many Americans, I believe that the breakdown in families is at the root of many of our social ills. I am struck by how, in discussions of wide-ranging public policy questions, we often come back to strengthening the family as the best way to remedy the ills. Questions dealing with values, morals, and character should be addressed first in the family and then in society.

## THE COMMUNITY

We need to develop and encourage community institutions that reinforce and strengthen the traditional values. Many familiar institutions work at this everyday—churches, scout groups, service clubs, to name a few. People can contribute in many ways—volunteering at a local Boys or Girls Club, helping out with a church youth group, setting up afterschool programs for "latchkey" kids, or supporting the character education programs that have sprung up to help young people think and talk about moral behavior and core values. In the words of the African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child."

## THE GOVERNMENT

Public officials deal with improving values in a variety of ways—from the White House conference on ways to teach character, the Congress struggling to find ways to keep pornography off the Internet, to public calls for teenage curfews and school prayers. Many politicians push government programs to strengthen values, including family and medical leave, earned income tax credits for the working poor, income tax credits for children, anti-crime efforts, and reforming welfare by emphasizing work and responsibility.

I believe that government can solve few of the core cultural issues that bother most Americans, but it can play an important secondary role. Congress can, for example, support local anti-crime efforts or help states improve anti-drug programs, and we should make sure that in the current budget-cutting climate important programs with proven results are not gutted. Lawmakers must also be careful to look at how broad legislation impacts on families, children, community, and values—for example, making sure we assess whether a certain tax policy would tend to strengthen families or weaken them.

## CONCLUSION

In talking with many foreign visitors, I find what grips their imagination about America is not our affluence or military power, or even our clogged freeways and high crime rates. What really impresses them are

the values upon which our system is built. These values include not only liberty and individual freedom but also individual responsibility and a sense of community purpose. One visitor said to me the other day that when we as a nation depart from these values, we do so at our peril.

I am encouraged by the increased discussion in our country over character and values, and the consideration of what kind of people we want to be. This country has a marvelous power of self-correction, and my hope is that the process is now underway. A collective effort on the part of individuals, families, communities, and public officials can result in tremendous change. We often think of steps we should take to make America more prosperous. It is even more important to think of ways to make America safe, moral, and just.

## A TRIBUTE TO JIM HARKINS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 1996*

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, as chance would have it, the end of 1995 brought about not only the elimination of the Interstate Commerce Commission but the retirement from the Regular Common Carrier Conference [RCCC] of a friend to many of us, Jim Harkins.

While Jim has had a long and distinguished career in the freight transportation industry, including stints in the railroad industry and with a major shipper, many of us first came to know him in his capacity from 1967 through 1985 as executive director of the Traffic Department of the American Trucking Association and of the National Motor Freight Traffic Association. It was probably from Jim that many of us who know anything about freight classification learned it.

In 1985, Jim became executive director of the RCCC. In that capacity, he has been an articulate, knowledgeable, and effective spokesman from the less-than-truckload segment of the motor carrier industry.

Although Jim is leaving RCCC, I am sure that we will continue to hear from him on matters related to freight transportation in this country. I also hope that Jim and his wife Lucille will have more opportunity to enjoy a relaxed life in Maryland and Florida with their four children, and of course, their grandchildren.

It has been indeed a great pleasure for this gentleman from West Virginia to have worked closely with Jim Harkins. On behalf of the many members of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, and the full Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, who know Jim, I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

## MEDICARE REFORM

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 1996*

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member highly commends to his colleagues the following two excellent editorials which appeared in the Norfolk Daily News on January 2 and 3, 1996.

[From the Norfolk Daily News, Jan. 2, 1996]

## MEDICARE OUTLAYS MUST HAVE LIMIT

Medicare was not conceived as a welfare program. But those who now argue for taxpayers to make up any differences between actual costs of Medicare and the premiums that beneficiaries pay are treating it that way.

If a similar philosophy prevails early in the next century when there are too-few workers to sustain benefits at projected levels without turning to Uncle Sam, then Social Security will also be in that "welfare" category.

It is important not to accept either of those programs as general welfare obligations of the U.S. Treasury, financed by taxpayers either through higher taxation or by more borrowing. Social Security and Medicare were conceived as programs that would depend on contributions by the beneficiaries themselves, who could afford to pay the equivalent of insurance premiums during their working years, and, in the case of Medicare, pay modest premiums during retirement.

In the case of Social Security, that has worked. It has been a struggle, however, to make sure that political promises to beneficiaries were matched by legislative action to adjust "premiums"—in the form of payroll taxes—to keep the system solvent. The struggle continues.

More than a difference in total outlays is involved in the contest between the White House plan for Medicare, which proposes spending of \$97 billion less than would otherwise be projected and the plan proposed by Republicans in Congress, which projects spending about \$200 billion less.

The difference is that the GOP plan puts a ceiling on the outlays, and fixed specific dollar amounts that would not be exceeded. That would bar further tapping of taxpayer resources. The White House plan takes a different approach, though also claiming to slow spending growth. It projects some savings but includes no provisions to enforce them. Greater demands on the system than projected would simply be made up by shifting the extra costs to taxpayers at large.

That has become the traditional way for the prevailing majorities in Washington to handle federal programs: Enact a formula for benefits, then tax or borrow to meet the overall demand. Setting and enforcing a ceiling on expenditures has been something to resist.

If that pattern were to be followed in the future in the government's other major insurance program—Social Security—trillions in debt limits would not be enough. The budgeteers would have to begin thinking in quadrillions. Better to fix limits right now.

[From the Norfolk Daily News, Jan. 3, 1996]

## PLENTY OF BLAME TO GO AROUND

At the Social Security Administration office in the Washington suburb of Woodlawn, Md., 100 of the federal workers idled by the budget impasse staged a small demonstration. "Furlough Newt," proclaimed one of the placards displayed. Another said, "Give Newt the boot, not the loot." Still another was less focused on the speaker, but put the blame on Capitol Hill: "Congress we have a contract with America, too."

If the majority ruled among the elected policymakers in the federal establishment, the conflict which found the government partially shut down would have been resolved quickly. But a congressional majority is not enough. One man's veto—the President's—can mean that a super-majority is needed in Congress if legislators are to work their will.

Speaker Gingrich has attempted to use the congressional majority's power to get the