

this measure will be merely a prelude to Congress coming to grips with the much larger issue of the aging of America and the future of our retirement programs. The steps that we must take in the future will never—in any way—be as popular as this measure, but we must have the political fortitude to make those decisions as well. That is our job, that is our duty.

WORKER TRAINING AND THE BOSTON HARBOR CLEANUP

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, Ben Franklin once said that “an investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.” The same can be said about an impressive initiative on worker training undertaken in recent years by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority as part of the current environmental cleanup of Boston Harbor.

In replacing outdated and obsolete water treatment plants with new state-of-the-art facilities, MWRA invested in retraining its existing work force in the skills needed to operate the new facility, rather than lay off hundreds of employees and recruit new workers with the needed skills. The strategy worked, and has led to lower costs for the new plant, lower costs for rate-payers, and a newly skilled work force with high employee morale.

I commend MWRA for this practical demonstration of the effectiveness of job retraining and the wisdom of tapping the untapped potential of its experienced work force.

Too often, such retraining initiatives are the exception, not the norm. We live in an era when workers are too easily under-valued and under-appreciated by employers. The MWRA example can be a lesson to the Nation that a wise course is available. I ask for unanimous consent that an article by Douglas B. MacDonald, executive director of MWRA, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Boston Globe, Mar. 19, 1996]
EVERYDAY HEROES OF DEER ISLAND
(By Douglas B. MacDonald)

The first phase of the new Deer Island sewage treatment plant has been up and running for a year. The “filthiest harbor in America” is quickly succumbing to visible signs of environmental recovery; seals and porpoises in the water, swimmers at the beaches, fishermen on the shore. Those are striking testimony that the new infrastructure of pumps, valves and tanks really can retrieve our environment from the careless ravages of a neglected sewer system. Within the new plant there is another less publicized but equally inspirational, success story; the workers themselves.

When the MWRA began design and initial construction of the new Deer Island treatment facilities in the late 1980s, it wrestled with the question of how more than 200 workers at the old Deer Island and Nut Island plants would fit into the new plant. Those workers, experienced only in operating treatment facilities with antiquated technology, might have been considered as obsolete as the old plants themselves.

Happily, neither MWRA management nor its workers ever accepted that fatalistic view. The workers were challenged, and they challenged themselves, to staff the 21st century facility arising in their midst.

The old plants were decades past their prime, underfunded and neglected. Workers had to almost hand-process raw sewage. They kept the old plants functioning with little more than their own dedication.

But from their years of working with outmoded and failing equipment, the workers had become pros at troubleshooting the nuances and complexities of the MWRA's sewer system, which takes in over 400 million gallons of wastewater each day from 43 communities. They managed to operate the old plant with countless jury-rigs, even bringing in their own tools to keep the plants functioning. Collectively, the old plant workers has over 4,000 years of experience. Their knowledge was an enormous potential asset.

Still, decisions about staffing the new plant were difficult. Managers and collective bargaining units wrestled with how to mesh the workers' pride and old-plant experience with yet-to-be-attained technological skills and computer literacy. Discussions were candid and sometimes heated.

Slowly, however, trust took root. MWRA management agreed that existing workers would be the core of the new work force. Workers who upgraded their abilities were promised jobs in the new plant. The notion that a new generation of technology must make redundant a generation of workers was rejected outright.

Armed with this guarantee, each worker developed a training plan, and MWRA invested several million dollars in courses, workshops and support for outside schooling. Programs covered everything from basic reading and math skills to advanced computer training.

Giving workers a sense of ownership in the new plant was another important step, and began with plant familiarization tours of each new building at the earliest points of construction. As the new plant was being designed, plant staff provided engineering firms with “will it work?” critiques, relying on their own knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of the old system.

Today the human side of the new Deer Island treatment plant is a remarkable story, and underscores the resilience of the American worker. For example, a 20-year veteran worker staffs a three-screen computer console, clicking the mouse like a kid playing a video game. Three years ago this man feared that computer illiteracy would land him outside the plant gate. But he and his computer-trained coworkers know from experience exactly what the computer tells them is going on with a valve 500 yards away.

This new productivity benefits MWRA and its rate-payers. Three years ago, cost projections foresaw 500 workers as the necessary staffing level for the Deer Island plant. Today, MWRA plans to run that plant with about 400 workers.

For all the money spent on the new tanks, valves and pumps, the best time and money expended to date on the Boston Harbor Project has been invested in the workers who are running our facilities. For the public we serve and for the people we employ, it was the smart thing to do and it was the right thing to do.

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, April 12, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,145,722,307,691.76.

On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes

\$19,444.53 as his or her share of that debt.

RON BROWN: A TRIBUTE TO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, now that the initial shock of the horrific jet crash in Croatia has passed, we are forced to accept the fact that my friend Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and 34 other talented professionals have perished. Today, almost 2 weeks later, it's still hard to describe the echoing sense of loss and deep sinking sorrow that still remains in all of us—man, woman, black, white, Republican, Democrat.

There has been much written and said about Ron Brown over the last few days, and that is fitting, because there is so much to say. He was many things: key strategist, mesmerizing speaker, wily politician, savvy businessman, superb lawyer. Most of all, he was an exemplary public servant for this country. On his last day, he was on the road in a faraway place aggressively promoting U.S. business interests abroad. And, in this case, he was trying to bring peace and economic recovery to the war-weary Bosnian people. He took very seriously his responsibility to preserve the American dream for the next generation of Americans, so that they will have economic opportunity rather than a declining standard of living. To him, championing the economic interests of the United States was tantamount to championing the people of the United States, and so, in a very literal way, he died serving his country.

Ron Brown was the most effective Secretary of Commerce I have known in my years in the Senate. It is fair to say that he was the most energetic and outstanding individual to ever serve in that post. Throughout his distinguished career in private industry, politics and the executive branch, Ron Brown served as a role model for all Americans. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, international business has become the new realm for competition. Ron Brown understood that and worked tirelessly to promote U.S. exports and business overseas. It was quite typical for Secretary Brown and me to meet after he had returned from a long trip abroad. Lack of sleep and shifting time zones never set him back. Jet lag wasn't in his vocabulary. It just was not in Ron's nature to take time to rest up.

Ron Brown was an especially strong role model for African-Americans. He never forgot his roots, and he took special pride in his efforts to make Commerce Department programs more inclusive and to provide equal opportunity in the work force. He took pride in his efforts to revitalize the Minority Business Development Agency and the Economic Development Administration. Most of all, he set an example for those who would follow in his footsteps with his determination, his intelligence and his optimism.

Secretary Brown came into the Commerce Department with a tremendous