This undertaking was one that Allen Meier would have participated in himself and is a fitting tribute to him because few human beings embodied the devotion and dedication present in this good man.

A member of a pioneer Oregon family and native of Portland, OR, Allen Meier acquired early on an internal drive to succeed. He served in leadership roles with the American Import Bank in San Francisco and on the board of the trustees of the Meier and Frank Co.

Yet the business community was not Allen's only community. With infinite vision and wisdom, Allen understood the importance of community involvement and volunteerism. His community participation was exhibited in his service to SCORE, KCBS call for action, the Temple Emanu-El, and the San Francisco Academy of Sciences as a docent.

As a loving husband, a caring father, a World War II veteran, and a community leader in San Francisco, Allen C. Meier was a master of both devotion to his family and his community.

For his loving wife Janis and three daughters, Lynn, Muffie, and Mary, the many loving nieces, nephews and cousins, as well as the innumerable friends of a lifetime, Allen Meier will be missed all the days of our lives. May his sweet memory live on in what the robing room represents.

AN ECONOMIC AGENDA

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, May 8, 1996, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

AN ECONOMIC AGENDA

One of the key questions facing policymakers today is what can be done to help improve the standard of living for the average American. I hear from people all the time who tell me they are working harder and longer than ever, but they feel squeezed and are just barely getting by. I believe we must make a determined effort in this country for a higher rate of economic growth. That must become one of our nation's top priorities. Higher growth will come from more saving and investment and from greater productivity, and it will do much to improve the outlook for working Americans.

STATE OF ECONOMY

All of us know that the overall economy is doing reasonably well. Growth and inflation are both around 2%. Many jobs are being created and the unemployment rate is low. The deficit is going down. Stock prices are at an all-time high. But at the same time, there is tremendous unease about the economy. Layoffs and downsizing are continuing as the inevitable result of global competition and technological change. There is job insecurity, enormous income inequality, and significant pressure on families.

I believe President Kennedy was right when he talked about a rising tide lifting all boats. We must have stronger economic growth.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic growth is the rate at which the overall economy grows from year to year. In 1994 our nation's total output of goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) was $7.1 trillion and in 1995 GDP was $7.25 trillion, for a growth rate last year of 2.0%.

The U.S. growth rate has slowed since the decades after World War II. Economic growth averaged a robust 3.9% per year in the 1950s and 4.3% in the 1960s, but it has dropped to 3.2% in the 1970s, 2.7% in the 1980s, and, with the 1990–91 recession, 1.8% so far in the 1990s. We need to do better. Many economists believe that we should be striving for growth of around 3.5% per year over the long term. They believe that the structure of the economy has changed in recent years to allow that kind of growth without reigniting inflation.

Growth in the material standard of living is obviously not the sole measure of success as a society. But strong, balanced, and sustained economic growth helps in many ways. Jobs multiply and wages rise during periods of solid growth. Prior to the 1970s when we had strong economic growth, wage growth was also solid. But as the economy has slowed, wage growth has flattened out. Strong economic growth also makes it easier to balance the budget, as the growing economy boosts revenues and reduces social safety net costs, and it makes it easier for Americans to tackle a variety of domestic problems. Strong economic growth alone cannot solve the nation's problems, but without it they are likely to become increasingly difficult.

We need, in short, an economy that will provide employment for everyone willing and able to work, and an economy that will provide opportunity for a consistently higher standard of living for those employed. The only way I know to get that is with strong private sector growth. That growth will come from higher levels of investment and superior public services.

PRO-GROWTH AGENDA

I believe there are several parts to a pro-growth agenda. First, we must balance the federal budget. Large federal borrowing drains the pool of national savings available for productive private sector investment and it drives up interest rates. Progress has been made on the deficit, as it has been cut in half over the last four years. We need to build on that progress, put aside our partisan differences, and balance the budget.

Second, we need to reform the federal tax system so economic growth becomes a much more central objective. That means it has to do a much better job of encouraging saving and investment. How it should be restructured to achieve that is a matter of debate. We may need a variation of the flat tax, a lower tax on capital, or a system of taxing consumption instead of investment, but we must put at the top of our national agenda a search for a tax system that enhances growth.

Third, we must expand our trade opportunities and open foreign markets to U.S. products. Jobs in exporting industries tend to be higher-paying, so our companies must have fair access to the rapidly growing markets overseas. We need to continually review and adjust U.S. trade policy to make sure it is working in our national interest and is helping to expand our economy and good-paying jobs.

Fourth, we need to curb excessive and costly government regulations. Many federal regulations provide important health and safety protections. But overall we need to make sure their benefits exceed their costs and they are carried out in the latest burdensome way. Regulations should recognize that a vibrant private sector is the best engine for economic growth and jobs.

Fifth, I also think we need higher levels of public investment in infrastructure. Federal, state, and local governments need to invest in more and better roads, bridges, highways, water systems, sewer systems, harbors, ports, airports and all the rest that helps make the private sector more productive. We also need to promote investment in research and technology, which boosts economic growth.

Finally, we need greater attention to upgrading the education and skills training of our workers. Improving educational performance is an absolute priority in today's world so all Americans—not just those at the top—can prosper as the economy grows. Education is, of course, primarily a state responsibility, but it is a national problem. Access to higher education and more skills training is a must.

I do not suggest that such changes will come about easily. We must be prepared to deal with the human problems that emerge. We should do all we can, for example, to create a system of portable pensions and portable health care to cushion the transition for people who have to move from one job to another. We must find ways of providing profit sharing and stock ownership plans for employees, not just for the top corporate management, so everyone has a greater stake in the success of our companies.

CONCLUSION

In sum, our objective is simple: higher growth in the American economy. That basic goal needs to become the much more central focus of what the federal government does on a variety of fronts—whether it be our budget or tax policy or our trade, regulatory, and public investment policy. In the end I think what is important for working people is for this economic system of ours to grow and to create more good-paying jobs. We don't know all the answers about getting higher growth, but we know some of them, and we should get about the business of implementing them.

LET'S FILL THE EDUCATIONAL GAS TANKS, NOT LET THE KIDS RUN OUT OF GAS

HON. CARDISS COLLINS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make my point for the children in school today who may be struggling with economics as put forth by Representative ARMEY over the weekend. The Gingrich-Armey Republicans have now suggested that a reduction in a Federal tax on gasoline should be offset by further cutting Federal spending for education.

All across America students and teachers are probably scratching their heads this morning trying to figure out how any person in their right mind, much less a person in an apparent position of responsibility such as being a Member of the U.S. Congress, could conceive of such a crazy robbing Peter to pay Paul scenario.

If we were to seriously consider such a crazy alternative—then we would probably be dumb enough to believe some of the statistics reported by Representative ARMEY in a national television talk show last weekend. In fact, Mr. ARMEY said that the Gingrich-Armey proposed gasoline tax repeal might make Americans happy because it would save the average motorist about $27 a year.

If Mr. ARMEY would do his own math on comparing the proposed gasoline tax repeal

with a raise in the minimum wage, he would see that the average American minimum wage earner would benefit to the tune of about $36 per week by an increase from $4.15 to $5.25 per hour. That's about $1,872 a year. Now I ask you, what American in their right mind would prefer $27 and a reduction in funding for education to $1,872 a year. As the young people say these days, ''I don't think so.''

A proposed rebate by repeal of $27 per year wouldn't even be a drop in the bucket to most Republicans, pocket change to those who usually avoid any comparison with the average American unless it is an election year. Even as an election year ploy, the Gingrich-Armey Republicans ought to be able to do better than $27 a year. But to suggest that even that pittance be offset on the backs of children takes GINGRICH to grinch in a fast minute.

Mr. Speaker, our educational system is already in danger of running out of gas because of all the cuts that the Gingrich-Armey Republicans have already shoved down the throats of the kids on the playgrounds, parents, and the members of school boards across America. We need to increase Federal support to education, not reduce it.

The Gingrich-Armey Republicans want our educational system to run out of gas in the middle of the superhighway. Once again, the Gingrich-Armey Republicans have shown that they are completely out of touch with the American people.

HONORING THE LANCASTER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Lancaster Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, ''These firemen must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return.''

Preparation includes twice monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in firefighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee Fire Training School in Murfreesboro where they undergo further intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

H.R. 3413, COMMUTER RAIL SAFETY ACT OF 1996

HON. WILLIAM J. MARTINI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will improve working conditions for train employees, while improving safety for rail commuters.

On the morning of February 9, 1996, hundreds of New Jersey commuters experienced the worst commuter rail accident in the history of New Jersey Transit. The accident claimed the lives of 3 people—including 2 train engineers—and injured 162 others. In combination with other safety factors, the accident was possibly a result of operator fatigue because one of the train engineers was working a split shift on very little sleep.

On a split shift, a train employee may work up to 12 hours, provided that employee is given a continuous rest period of at least 4 hours. The operator of one of the trains involved in the New Jersey Transit accident reported to work at 6 p.m. Thursday evening and operated trains until 1 a.m. Friday morning. He had a rest period from 1 a.m. to 5:40 a.m., when he resumed operating trains until 8:40 a.m.—the time of the accident. Several of New Jersey Transit's train engineers at the time of the accident regularly worked split shifts, often splitting a late evening shift and an early morning shift.

While there is no way to know whether or not operator fatigue, due to what is known as a ''split shift'', played a major role in the New Jersey Transit collision that occurred in February, one thing is certain—the split shift was not sound policy.

In response to the deadly New Jersey Transit train crash, I am introducing the Commuter Rail Safety Act of 1996. This legislation addresses the suspected cause of the tragic February accident—operator fatigue. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which oversees our Nation's railroads, I feel it is my obligation to take additional measures to ensure the safety of train employees and commuters.

Under the Commuter Rail Safety Act, commuter train operators will no longer be forced to work risky shifts whereby they work several hours in a late night shift, take a 4-hour break, and then begin working an early morning shift. This provision addresses the problem of diminished alertness during morning hours that results from having been on duty during the nighttime. Furthermore, by doing away with overnight duty on commuter trains, my legislation eliminates the problem of employees not having an adequate place for rest in the middle of the night. In many instances, an employee working an evening/morning split shift is forced to sleep in a chair, in a noisy train station, or in an unoccupied railcar.

This legislation still allows split shifts that begin the initial tour of duty in the morning, 4 to 8 a.m., for such shifts do not interfere with an individual's natural sleep cycle—circadian rhythm.

The second provision in the Commuter Rail Safety Act is to provide train employees with 8 hours notice of their next job, with the only exception being shorter notice in the event of an emergency.

Currently, a train employee might be given anywhere between 1 and 3 hours' notice to report for duty. We feel that this practice fosters fatigue due to the resulting irregular and unpredictable work schedules. By allowing 8 hours' notice, this bill gives employees more preparation time for duty—preparation time to rest!

Third, this bill provides train employees with 8 hours of undisturbed rest, with the only exception being the 8-hour notice for duty.

While most rail carriers currently provide 8 hours of so-called undisturbed rest, many see no problem in calling an employee during this rest period. Daily interruptions experienced by train employees, including constant phone calls updating employees of their next job or asking them to fill in for industry's scheduling mistakes, are unnecessary and create undue stress on those employees. It is critical that all train personnel who are responsible for the safety of hundreds of commuters each day be adequately rested.

Last, this legislation establishes criminal consequences for any rail employer or employee who intentionally fails to report rail accidents or injuries to the appropriate Federal and State authorities. In fact, it goes so far as to prevent an employer from discharging or discriminating against an employee who properly reports such an event. This provision prevents coverups of safety violations on the part of employer and employee and is a critical part of this safety legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Commuter Rail Safety Act has one focus—safety for train employees and commuters. It is my hope that, with the Commuter Rail Safety Act, we will be able to prevent tragic accidents, such as the NJ Transit collision, from happening in the future. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE JOSEPH AND MICKEY WAPNER

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. ANTHONY C. BEILENSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are honored to pay tribute to our good friends Judge Joseph and Mickey Wapner, who this year are being recognized by the Brandeis-Bardin Institute for their significant contribution to Jewish life. We can think of few couples who together have been so involved for so long in Democratic Party politics and Jewish community activities as have the Wapners. Allow us to share a few examples.

Beginning in the 1960's, Mickey established a pattern of total devotion to the causes and people in whom she believed. In 1960 she was speakers bureau coordinator for the John Kennedy for President campaign; from 1967 to 1970 she was west coast director of public relations for the American Jewish Committee; from 1966 to 1968 she was a member of the California Commission on the Status of Women. In 1970 Mickey was named assistant