

reach out to the African American community, to the other communities which make up that portion of America that we call Los Angeles.

Linda Wong, a Chinese American of fantastic reputation, is chief financial officer of Rebuild L.A., the organization created to make sure that we could, after the aftermath of the unrest in Los Angeles, go on to rebuild this great city. She has worked tirelessly for many years as a lawyer defending so many people, not just Asian/Pacific islanders, but many people through her public interest work as an attorney, and now she is also someone who is working as a trustee of the Los Angeles metropolitan project, which is a \$100 million educational reform movement in Los Angeles.

The honorable Delbert Wong, Chinese American resident, is the first superior court judge in the United States, a fantastic jurist, someone who would be just the epitome of what we would want to see in our courts. He is someone who is Los Angeles bred.

One last friend, Dr. Haing Ngor. Some of you may remember this Cambodian American because he is the individual who won the Oscar for best supporting actor in the film, the Killing Fields. He has unfortunately left us because of his brutal murder, a tragic death, but he too was an Asian American of renown. Throughout his lifetime Dr. Ngor never gave up his work to someday obtain peace in Cambodia.

I want to thank the Speaker for the opportunity to say to all those people who have represented this country so well and will continue to do so whether they are of a particular ethnicity, or race in this case, we are talking about the Asian/Pacific islander community, that what make America great is the fabric that keeps us together. The Asian/Pacific islander community is among the various communities that make this Nation so great, and I wish to extend to all those people my congratulations and my thanks for the greatness that comes through those people.

REPEAL OF 4.3-CENT GAS TAX ILL-ADVISED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SKAGGS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, the House later today will be voting on legislation designed to repeal, supposedly temporarily, although I think we should be skeptical of that, repeal the 4.3-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax that was enacted just a few years ago. I just want to register my concerns in opposition to what I believe is a very ill-advised move that the Congress seems determined to take. Not that any of us want to see consumers paying more for gasoline or other products. But we should be under no illusions as to what this will do that is beneficial, and,

more importantly, what it will do that is really not in the national interest, if we repeal this 4.3-cent-a-gallon tax.

The premise, of course, is that somehow the huge increase that we have all experienced at the gasoline pumps over the last couple of months, 20 cents a gallon or so, in most places around the country, is being driven by a 4-cent-a-gallon tax that was enacted several years back. I think that premise of course falls of its own weight, upon any kind of examination at all.

It makes no sense to me whatsoever, as we are trying gamely to get the Federal budget balanced, to go out of our way to eliminate one of the things that has provided a success story over the last 3 years in cutting the deficit in half; namely, that 4-cent-a-gallon gas tax that was part of the 1993 budget package. That has succeeded in cutting the deficit in half over the intervening 3 years.

Now, either we are going to have to make up that revenue of about \$3 billion for the rest of this year, or over \$30 billion over the next 6 years, by raising taxes somewhere else, or we will aggravate that budget balancing problem that is such a demanding one for us to begin with.

Mr. Speaker, I would rather see us stay the course, get the budget into balance, not give up this modest increase in the gasoline tax that has, I think, made a good contribution to that fundamental fiscal responsibility mission of the Congress over the last 3 years.

Somehow in this we have also lost sight of what was supposed to be our respect for markets and the way that they operate in a free enterprise system in this country. I think it is almost unanimously held by people that follow this part of the energy market that what we experienced with this increase in gasoline prices was the natural result of the way refiners had kept making heating oil later than usual this year and then got into a crunch as the driving season kicked in. We always see an up tick in gas prices about this time of year. So to think there was some conspiratorial element in this, I think is misplaced.

That, in a reverse twist, means even if we repeal the gas tax, I am not sure we will see a tremendous impact on the pocketbooks of most American consumers. The natural fluctuation in energy prices, in gasoline prices, will more than eclipse this change in the tax level. Just as we never noticed it when it kicked in, because gas prices back when this gasoline tax increase took effect were fluctuating by much more than 4 cents a gallon through the natural forces of the market.

I am not sure the consumers will see significant benefit in this. It really, I am afraid, is an exercise in election year appeals to some of our most understandable, but not necessarily our best instincts, that we of course love to pay a little bit less per gallon for gas.

But let us look at a little longer term. We all know that we are going to

have to face up to the real demands for energy conservation in this country sooner or later. We are going to have to face up to the fact that we cannot continue relying on huge quantities, millions of barrels of oil a day, imported from elsewhere in the world. This very, very modest effort at dealing with an energy conservation objective as well as a budget balancing objective in the gas tax increase of 1993 is now merely going to be tossed aside.

Mr. Speaker, I hate to think of how many years are going to have to pass before this Congress has the courage, and it took some courage in 1993 to vote for that very modest gasoline tax increase, before we have the courage again to realize that an essential component of sane energy policy in this country is going to be conservation and an inevitable component of that is going to be pricing.

So we are really deluding ourselves if we think this is, first, going to deal with the budget; second, going to help consumers; or, third, is not going to aggravate our energy problems in the long haul.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning business, pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House will stand in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. WICKER] at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We earnestly pray, gracious God, for all Your blessings—for peace and strength, for justice and mercy and all the values of Your word. On this day we pray for humility in our hearts whenever we seek to speak the truth and when we venture to know Your will. We hold to our views and yet we do not know all; we stand for right and we admit our limitations; we speak to the issues and yet we can miss the mark. Save us, O God, from any arrogance that would blind us from truth or from undue pride which keeps us from Your blessings so that, instead, in all things we will truly do justice, love mercy, and ever walk humbly with You. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.