

We realized something very important over this weekend, which is that we are in charge here and we have the power, if we wish to exercise it, to change a bit the culture of the House. Many terrific ideas came out of the weekend, very practical, very much able to be implemented with the goodwill and support of the leadership on both sides which happily were in attendance for the weekend.

We will be meeting again, the organizing committee and the coleader teams tomorrow, to start to work on keeping the momentum going forward in the effort that was begun this weekend. I thank the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LAHOOD]; I thank all of my colleagues, both Democratic and Republican, for the spirit with which they approached this undertaking, and we are deeply in the debt of the Pew Charitable Trusts for their support in underwriting this experiment in making the democracy work better.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN HERSHEY

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I too spent the weekend with my family at Hershey, PA. I want to congratulate the Members on both sides of the aisle that put the event together, and really congratulate the some 200 Members of our Congress who came to Hershey with an open mind about how we can proceed in this very difficult environment where we do have disagreements, but how we can proceed in a way that continues to allow the American people to have respect for their institution.

We are going to have our disagreements, but it does not mean that we need to be disagreeable to each other.

Probably the most long-lasting part of the weekend was the opportunity for each of us to better get to know each other. I have been here 6 years, and over the last 6 years we virtually have a brandnew Congress. Some 70 percent of this Congress has been elected since 1990, and over the last several cycles we have had large classes with little opportunity to begin to understand each other.

As we understand each other better, understand where we are coming from and why we hold the beliefs that we do, I think it allows us to have better respect and more respect for the diversity of opinion that we certainly find here in Congress.

It was a great weekend, it was a good start, and there is a lot more that needs to be done, and we need to work each and every day on helping ourselves and our colleagues deal with our disagreements in a more professional way.

UNITED STATES MILITARY WEARING COMBAT BOOTS MADE IN CHINA

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that millions of Chinese dollars have popped up in American politics. I mean, check it out: China alone gets \$45 billion from American taxpayers in a sweetheart deal known as most-favored-nation trade status.

Now, to me, that is absolutely disgusting, with the 17 cents an hour labor wage. But if that is not enough to rip one of those false made-in-America labels on one of those Chinese imports, check this out: The United States Air Force just issued military combat boots to our troops that were made in China. That is right. American military personnel are wearing combat boots now made in China.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. What is next, marines in Mao suits? I think it is time to take a look at what China has done and take a look at every one of these sweetheart trade deals.

I yield back the balance of all American shoe wear that has cost jobs in this country.

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE AMERICA BETTER

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, last weekend my family and I joined 200-plus Members of this Chamber. We gathered together in Hershey, PA to restore trust and build friendships and, of course, to eat chocolate.

Now, obviously there were many friendships and relationships in existence before Hershey, but sometimes the reach across the aisle is very short. Sometimes we look around and we cannot recognize a Member, or we have not met them or we do not know their name.

Well, at Hershey, Republicans and Democrats came together to try to change the situation. Perhaps some of the tension that occurred in the last Congress was because we did not know each other well enough.

Now, we do know that we will not always agree; we quite often disagree. But we should work to maintain rigorous standards of respect and dignity, both on and off the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that, working together, we can make America better.

LET US GET TO WORK ON BALANCING THE BUDGET

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, we need to put together a budget. Every

day Republicans force poor American families to balance their budgets or plunge into poverty. Meanwhile, as the deadline draws near for our national budget to be balanced, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle submit nothing and delay action. Real people have to balance their budgets; so should we.

Consider the human face of this debate. Hardworking people have to make painful decisions on a daily basis about keeping a roof over their family's head or putting food on their table. While you waste your time on political posturing, families I represent in Williamsburg and Brooklyn, NY, study their bank statement, trying to make ends meet. They cannot postpone their budget; neither should we.

My colleagues, everyone in this Chamber supports a balanced budget, and there are already two proposals we could be working on. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Majority Leader, Americans cannot wait any longer. Let us get working.

MUTUAL RESPECT IS VITAL FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, replacing bitterness and a mean-spirited tack with mutual respect is vital to the effectiveness of this most democrat of institutions. Here in Congress, as we approach the challenges of this great Nation, we must renew our focus on the manner in which we do our work. It is here that the spirit of civility and bipartisanship must come alive if we are to build on the richness that is our heritage.

Every one of us has a vested interest to ensure that we as Members of Congress work together with abiding respect and uncompromising civility. Our ability to honor one another, while engaging in vigorous and thoughtful debate, goes to the heart of this institution and the people's faith in each and every one of us. Ultimately, restoring trust, dignity and comity will lead us to succeed on behalf of all of the American people. The people deserve nothing less, and they demand it.

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A HERSHEY'S KISS

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in thanking the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LAHOOD] and the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SKAGGS] for bringing us all together, over 220 Members, together for a bipartisan retreat.

In that retreat we all acknowledged we are going to have conservative, liberal, urban, rural differences for whatever philosophical reasons, but that we

should try to eliminate the obstacles to civility as much as possible.

One of the things my group recommended, for example, is before we give our speeches ask ourselves these questions: Is the speech fair, is it accurate, is it true? If it was the last speech you were going to give, is this the one you want to be remembered by? If your mama was sitting in the gallery, would you still give this speech?

Mr. Speaker, I think if we go through these batteries of questions and just ask ourselves to reach for a higher level, then I think it might not be necessarily easier for Republicans to kiss a Democrat or for a Democrat to kiss a Republican, but it will be easier for us all to give each other a Hershey's kiss.

BALANCE THE BUDGET

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, today there will be a lot of rhetoric, and I hope civil rhetoric, from the other side of the aisle about the President's budget. My Republican colleagues will go as far as to demand that the President submit another budget.

Mr. Speaker, the American people know that the Constitution says, and I quote, "All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives." It is our duty, it has been our obligation, and will continue to be this House's responsibility to approve all appropriation bills, including the budget.

Republicans are now demanding that the President resubmit his budget. This is a complete reversal of their approach of the last Congress. The American people certainly remember how the Republican majority virtually shredded the President's proposals in pursuit of a radical agenda.

I call upon my friends to seize the moment, steer the proper course, and use the President's proposal as an historic opportunity to balance the budget. The President wants this done, Democrats want this done, and the American public wants it done.

I believe that beneath their current political rhetoric the majority wants a balanced budget as well.

LET US FULLY IMPLEMENT THE CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY ACT

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago today, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act was signed into law with the overwhelming support of this body.

In just 1 year, the Helms-Burton law has successfully served its purpose of protecting the property rights of American citizens as well as reducing the

level of foreign investments that help keep the Castro dictatorship in power.

Despite the Clinton administration's failure to fully implement the law, dozens of companies have stopped their operations in Cuba, while many others have postponed their plans to invest in Castro's slave economy.

The European Union, in a last-ditch attempt to profit from American stolen property and exploit the Cuban worker, has filed an irresponsible challenge before the World Trade Organization against Helms-Burton that threatens to undermine our Nation's ability to dictate our own foreign policy. We call on the President to invoke the national security clause in this battle.

A year after its passage, Mr. Speaker, this body can be proud that it stood firm in support of the Cuban people's struggle for freedom. Now let us fully implement this successful law.

KIDS' HEALTH CARE MUST BE OUR PRIORITY

(Mr. McGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, just 2 years ago in my home State of Massachusetts, 23 percent of children under the age of 18, or some 160,000 kids, were without even basic health insurance. The people of the Commonwealth understood that this statistic was not only startling, it was absolutely unacceptable.

So Massachusetts passed the landmark piece of legislation that is on the verge of giving basic coverage to some 125,000 kids, or 80 percent of the uninsured children in my State.

By streamlining the administration of this program and by instituting a 25-cents per pack cigarette tax, Massachusetts has come up with more funds to protect children, and has become eligible for more Federal funding in return. Now Massachusetts is doing what every State in this Nation should be doing: covering children's health.

But the crisis is not over. One child in seven living in the United States today is uninsured. That is absolutely unconscionable.

Massachusetts should serve as an inspiration for the rest of our Nation. We in this Congress have an awesome responsibility before us. We have a responsibility to prepare our children to be the leaders of tomorrow by ensuring that they receive a healthy start today. Let us make health care for our kids a priority.

EPA'S IRRATIONAL POLICIES

(Mr. NEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, today is the end of the public comment period for the EPA first phase implementation of their irrational policies.

This chart, Mr. Speaker, is not a map that shows all the great bipartisan spirit of Hershey, but this is a bipartisan issue, because where you see red on this map, Mr. Speaker, are areas throughout the United States, Democrat and Republican representation, that are going to be in jeopardy because working families are going to be at a very high risk of losing their very livelihoods and way of life because of irrational policies by the EPA.

Today ends the public commentary period. George Wolfe, an EPA scientist, stated himself before one of our hearings that these proposals are based on a policy decision by the director instead of sound science.

It is time to stop this because, Mr. Speaker, the policies they are going to try to implement are not going to do anything to make a betterment for people, but it is going to do one thing; it is going to take away working Americans' jobs, it is going to hurt the school systems, and the communities. It is time to fight these proposals.

REPUBLICANS SHOULD LEARN TO TREAT LEGAL IMMIGRANTS WITH THE SAME RESPECT LEGAL IMMIGRANTS GIVE TO AMERICA

(Mr. GUTIERREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have announced that America can expect their budget plan in May.

I hope they mean May 1997. I should be concerned. That is 1 month after the legal deadline for submitting a budget. But I want to be positive so I will assume this delay is caused by tireless Republican efforts to craft a budget that restores programs taken away from law-abiding legal immigrants.

I will assume Republicans are crunching numbers and saying, "How can we restore critical benefits to our needy seniors, our blind and disabled, to mothers and their children? How can we treat our legal immigrant population with decency and fairness?"

That "should" be the reason for the delay, because legal immigrants deserve better than this Congress has given them.

Immigrants work hard. The fact is they pay far more in taxes than they receive in benefits. They play by the rules. They are in our Nation legally, contributing their energy, hopes, and dreams to our Nation.

May is a long time from now. It should be long enough for my Republican friends to learn to treat legal immigrants with the same respect legal immigrants give to America.

THE ELEMENTS OF A CIVIL DEBATE ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE

(Mr. GUTKNECHT asked and was given permission to address the House