The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EHLERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE ESTEBAN TORRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege for me to be able to participate in today's special order recognizing the service of my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. TORRES).

As a freshman, I have unfortunately not had the honor of serving with the gentleman from California (Mr. Torres) for very long. What I do know, though, from my brief association is that we are saluting a great individual, someone who has committed himself to improving the quality of life for all Americans and particularly America's Hispanic community.

Since being elected to Congress in 1982, the gentleman from California (Mr. TORRES) has represented his constituents and community passionately, demonstrating in his work both a fierce dedication and a keen understanding of the legislative procedures.

He has worked tirelessly to improve the American economy and to help create jobs. He has been an indispensable friend to consumers. He has successfully championed affordable housing for low and moderate income families. His environmental efforts have met with equal success, as has his work to crack down on gang crime. The list goes on and on and on.

But above all, above all, I think this is how I will remember him most, the gentleman from California (Mr. TORRES) is someone who has displayed perseverance for the people, exemplifying what voters want from their leaders in politics, and especially in Washington.

That is indeed a legacy of which to be quite proud, and the gentleman from California (Mr. TORRES) is indeed someone I am glad to call my friend.

Very shortly the gentleman from California (Mr. TORRES) will be saying farewell to this chamber. For those of us who remain behind, your good-bye will be bitter sweet, but I know how nice it will be for you to call your time your very own.

I want to join with everyone here today and wish for the gentleman that the years to come bring him good health, happiness, and time to enjoy his family. All of my best.

TRIBUTE TO GAIL BETHARD OF SOMERSET COUNTY 4–H

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Gail Bethard upon her retirement from 18 years of service to the Somerset County, New Jersey 4–H Youth Development Program. During this week, which is National 4–H Week, it seems fitting to pay tribute to a woman who has devoted so much time, so much of her life to making the 4–H program such a success.

While working as a middle school mathematics teacher, Gail initially joined 4–H as a volunteer with her husband Wilson over 23 years ago. She then became involved with 4–H on a part-time basis until she became a full-time Program Associate. Gail has overseen the youth public speaking program, which quickly became widely-recognized and respected around New Jersey. In addition, she has been a liaison for the individual 4–H clubs, assisting them with daily operations and inter-group projects.

If these tasks were not enough, Gail's involvement with 4–H expanded as she began to coordinate the annual Somerset County 4–H fair. For the past 14 years, Gail has overseen and organized the 400 plus volunteers who assist with exhibits, demonstrations, and other highlights of the three-day fair. She has, indeed, made the 4–H fair an event for all of us to enjoy.

Gail has been described by her peers as respected, a good mentor, and someone who has always been there for all the clubs. We are all indebted to Gail for her commitment to helping all of those involved with 4–H, especially the young people.

I have enjoyed her advice and assistance in working with Somerset County's great 4–H'ers. I thank Gail Bethard for her dedication to Somerset County 4–H and wish her happiness in her retirement and happy trails during her much anticipated travels with her husband Wilson.

The Somerset County 4–H program is better because of Gail Bethard and her extra-special treatment of all those she comes in contact with. She will be missed by hundreds of people who respect and love her for not just what she has done but because of who she is.

LESSONS LEARNED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, as we consider launching an impeachment inquiry, it is useful to contemplate the lessons we have learned about impeachment.

In 1775 Patrick Henry made this profound statement, ''I know of no way of judging the future but by the past.'' This Nation is a model for other nations, and we function best when we follow the guiding principle that has made us a model. That principle is that the government does what is good for the many rather than what is just good for the few.

□ 1645

Some, for political gain, want to impeach the President at any cost, at all costs. That may be good for them, but it is not good for America.

There are 3 main reasons why we should approach this matter with great care. First, we have never, never impeached a President. Second, the Constitution is very specific as to what constitutes ''impeachable offenses.'' We must not attempt to substitute our personal views for what the Constitution prescribes. Third, we are establishing precedent, dangerous patterns that will follow us for years and years to come, criterias that may govern how our citizens are treated.

Only 2 Presidents have faced impeachment: Andrew Johnson in 1868, and Richard Nixon in 1974. Johnson was acquitted, and Nixon resigned before trial. Indeed, in the 60 impeachment proceedings since 1789, no President, no President, has ever been impeached.

What are the lessons we learn from that history? One vice president faced impeachment. Spiro T. Agnew in 1973. However, the House refused to impeach him. What are the lessons we learned?

Impeachment of a President is a grave and serious undertaking for this country. It is a constitutional process, one carefully designed to allow the will of a majority of Americans to be frustrated and overturned. The President has been elected twice. We should approach this process with extreme caution, circumspection, and care. It should not be taken lightly or done frivolously.

The Constitution set out the reasons a President can be removed from office; for ''Treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors.'' Nothing I have seen or heard to date rises to the level of treason or bribery. Those are the specific reasons set out in the Constitution. The term, ''other high crimes and misdemeanors'' set out general reasons.

Basic to legislative drafting and statutory interpretation is the concept that the specific governs the general. In American jurisprudence that when a listing of items include both specific and general items, the specific items will govern what the general items mean.

Surely, none would suggest that what the President is alleged to have done is the same as treason or bribery. For the few who disagree with the overwhelming majority of the American people, politics should not be confused with punishment.

Former President Ford has recommended a punishment that may be

consistent with the offense in this case. He is being thoughtful and not political. What is best for the many of us is to be thoughtful and not political. All crimes are not ''impeachment offenses.'' If so, we could impeach the President for walking his dog without a leash. That is unlawful in the District of Columbia. That is bad conduct, thus absurdly underscoring the danger of substituting our belief of what the Constitution states. The Constitution says nothing about bad conduct as an impeachable offense.

I believe the Constitution sets out a process that Congress should follow when serious allegations of wrongdoing, allegations of impeachable offenses, have been made against the President. Under the Constitutional mandates, a process is now underway to determine if the President should be impeached. When we fail to follow the constitutional process, we fail to consider the lessons we have learned.

Just ask Richard Jewel who was first accused of the Atlanta bombings, or ask anyone else or thousands of persons, innocent persons who have been wrongly accused. We should allow that process to take its course and, throughout this process, we should be very careful to insist upon fairness, the rule of law, and impartial judgment.

Mr. Speaker, we have learned many lessons. Hopefully, we have learned the lesson that an impeachment proceeding is a very serious process.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The Chair will remind Members of the House to refrain from personal references to the President.

DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. WISE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, while I have another matter to talk about, I also want to rise in tribute to my colleague and classmate, the gentleman from California (Mr. TORRES). We came together in the Congress of 1983. I view the gentleman as being a true renaissance person in so many ways in the best sense of the word. He has always represented our class well, and I wish him good luck from one of his fellow classmates.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a couple of things: scheduling and investigations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it ought to be pointed out that as we hopefully wind into the final week of this Congress, we are today at October 6. October 1 is the beginning of the Federal fiscal year, and I think it is time that the American people understand that there is no Federal budget. There was no Federal budget passed this year. This Congress, while it can find time to do all kinds of investigations, and we ought to be investigating where it is necessary, could not find time to pass a Federal budget. So we are operating under a temporary or short-term continuing resolution until October 9. Presumably, we will either have another continuing resolution or another short-term one to carry us forward or the government shuts down.

One of the basic things that the Congress ought to be able to do is to pass a budget for the next fiscal year. Incidentally, in the 13 appropriation bills that really make up the Federal budget, as of a couple of days ago, I believe one had been signed into law, several more are finally beginning to work their way through. Most of those will not be passed in a timely manner either and, once again, we will be faced with a continuing resolution.

So if we had all of this time to conduct all of these investigations, what is it we did not have time to do? Well, the investigations curiously, many of them, and I sit on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight that has been involved in many of the investigations, many of them dealt with campaign finance reform. So it would seem logical after millions of dollars of investigations, hundreds of subpoenas and depositions and inquiries and witnesses, it would be logical that Congress would try to fix the problem, right? The problem being millions of dollars of soft money being abused by both Republicans and Democrats. That was the problem in 1996. That is what the investigation is about.

The American people will not see a campaign finance reform bill this year. It passed the House, it cannot be brought up in the other body.

One would think that with 70 percent of the American people covered by their employers in health insurance, and those 70 percent, they are in managed care plans; one would think there would be a Patients' Bill of Rights to protect those. That is one of the problems that I hear the most about. There will be no meaningful Patients' Bill of Rights for managed care plans this year.

One would think with Social Security being on everybody's lips, there would be something being done by this Congress about Social Security. Sorry, no Social Security reform this year.

One would think that with millions of Americans having lost much of their retirement in just the last 2 months because of the stock market going into the tank, one would think that that could be something that Congress could deal with. Millions of Americans are going to get a surprise this month when they go to open their quarterly statement on their 401(k) or thrift plan, retirement plan to find out how much their holdings have diminished because of the stock market decline. Sorry, this Congress is not taking that up this year.

Nor will it take up anything apparently that will deal with the Asian situation, including funding for the International Monetary Fund to stop the hemorrhage. Sorry, this Congress is too busy. But what can this Congress do? Boy, it can investigate.

That is why I find it so interesting, when there are some who want to urge the Committee on the Judiciary to be open-ended, to go beyond the matters that have been brought to it, and instead to get into Travelgate, Filegate, Whitewater, maybe even Watergate, who knows.

The irony to this is that these have been covered extensively for the last 2 years. The Senate Thompson hearings, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight hearings on Filegate and Travelgate. The Committee on Banking and Financial Services hearings on Whitewater. Our committee alone spent 22 days of hearings on these matters, including campaign finance reform, millions of dollars spent.

So when we hear the talk about, well, we need to have the Committee on the Judiciary open all of these up, this is what this Congress, all it has done for 2 years. Where are the results?

Mr. Speaker, the reality of the situation is, this is a do-nothing Congress, and unfortunately, there is a lot of diversion going on to cover that fact up. No budget, no campaign finance reform, no Patients' Bill of Rights, no Social Security reform, nothing done about the economy, nothing done about the stock market, nothing done about the Asian economy, nothing done about South America.

Mr. Speaker, if people love investigations, they will really like this Congress. Let me just suggest one more investigation. Who is responsible for this do-nothing Congress?

ELECTRIC RESTRUCTURING—LET US GET IT RIGHT

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, deregulation of the airlines, natural gas, railroads, telecommunications, and trucking industries yield annual savings equal to nearly 1 percent of America's gross domestic product. Next January, in the 106th Congress, we will attempt to craft a measure that will finally and successfully unleash competition and savings from the utility industry.

In recent years, competition has replaced regulation for the electric power industry in many other nations, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Norway, Chile and Argentina. Many took a very long term approach to this process. The United States faces a unique situation in that our electric power industry is largely already privatized. So we must focus on altering our current system and effectively fostering competition.

Now, this should not be done through a Federal mandate. Five of the 10 largest electric consumer States already have mandatory competitive restructuring. Clearly, we would be wise to make the State-mandated restructuring more efficient instead of imposing a separate, huge new Federal mandate.