

2000. This act would provide our schools with \$1.3 billion annually for emergency school renovations.

As one of the most powerful nations in the world, Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy that America's schools are in such desperate need of repair. The schools in my district are indicative of what is happening nationwide. For example, the roof in the gymnasium at Belmont High School in Los Angeles has multiple leaks. Garbage cans must be scattered throughout the gym to catch the rain. Two other high schools in my district, Venice and Lincoln, have extensive water damage that has left dangerous wiring and piping exposed to the children.

Americans value their children, Mr. Speaker, and they are the future of our nation. We must not abandon them and sit idly by while our schools fall apart, hampering our children's ability to learn. We must pass The Safe and Successful Schools Act and invest in the future of America.

CHERYL MILLS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, hearings on the White House e-mails being conducted by the Committee on Government Reform have provoked serious questions as officials and former officials with impeccable reputations have had their integrity questioned without evidence of wrongdoing traceable to them. Cheryl Mills, the young White House lawyer who spoke so memorably during the Senate Impeachment hearings, did it again during the Committee's hearings today. Her words concerning what inquisitorial hearings do to young people and others considering public service deserve consideration by Members of the House who, after all, serve here because of the value they themselves attach to serving the public and their country.

I submit her full statement for inclusion in the RECORD.

OPENING STATEMENT BY CHERYL MILLS, COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 4, 2000

Mr. Chairman, Representative Waxman, Members of the Committee on Government Reform:

My name is Cheryl Mills. For almost seven years, I served in the White House Counsel's Office under President Clinton. During my tenure, I served first as Associate Counsel and later as Deputy Counsel. When I arrived on January 20, 1993, I was 27 years old; I was 34 when I left last October.

I came into government because I believed that the opportunity to serve this country was a valuable one. I believed that giving of my time, my energy, and even my soul, to try to make a difference was important. I believed that the gift of one's labor and one's love for this country was one of the purer things I, like other young people, had to give.

When I left, it had become hard for me to believe anymore. I left increasingly cynical about Congress' commitment to improving the lives of Americans. I left deeply troubled by the culture of partisanship in Washington that with each passing day was threatening the very essence of what is good, and what is right, and what is joyful about public serv-

ice. When I left, it was no longer obvious to me that serving in government, with a Congress committed to oversight by investigation, was worth the high toll it exacted.

And the greatness of that injustice, is not in its harm to me. I am but one person. Rather, it is the damage that it does to the ideals of all the young people who decide never to serve. The young people who decide that no one should have to love their country enough, to have their integrity, their service and their commitment to doing the best they can, impugned by some who sit in this body. The young people who decide that their desire to serve their country and a President, is not outweighed by the risks to their reputation, their livelihood and their family. The young people who decide that too many who toil in this body have forgotten that their exalted positions are but loaned to them by the young—on the understanding that they will seek what is best for our country, not what is least.

I left because I knew that only distance and time would allow me to see again the many Members who serve honorably in Congress every day. Members who choose to work hard for their constituents on the issues that will enrich their lives. Men and women who get up each morning not thinking about how they can bring someone down, but about how they can lift us all up.

Mr. Chairman, I left because I was tired of playing a role in dramas like today, when so many issues that mattered to me that were not being addressed. You have held four days of hearings, and spent countless more dollars on depositions and document productions, but yet you have not chosen to use your oversight authority to hold one day's worth of hearings about: a man who was shot dead by an undercover New York police officer while he was getting into a cab, after refusing to buy drugs from that officer; any of the 67 cases and counting that have been overturned because officers in Los Angeles Police Department planted guns and drugs to frame people, shot an unarmed man, and quite possibly shot another man, with no criminal record, 10 times—killing him; why African American youths charged with drug offenses are 48 times more likely than white youths to be sentenced to prison.

Not to mention all the other ways in which you could spend your time making the lives of the individuals you serve better, as opposed to tearing down the staff of a President with whose vision and policies you disagree. You could choose from a myriad of issues—health care, prescription drug benefits, family medical leave, education reform, social security, judicial reform. Nothing you discover here today, will feed one person, give shelter to someone who is homeless, educate one child, provide health care for one family, or offer justice to one African American or Hispanic juvenile. You could do so much to transform our country—but instead you are compelled to use your great authority and resources to address . . . e-mails.

The energy your staff will spend poring over hearing transcripts to create a perjury referral for you to send to the Justice Department could be spent poring over the latest statistics in the Justice Department's report on the unequal treatment African American and Hispanic juveniles receive before the law. And the resources that the Justice Department will expend reviewing your allegations—causing those public servants and their families considerable pain—could instead be spent investigating why America's justice system unfortunately is still not blind.

I know I say all this at some personal peril, as my words here today will no doubt make me an even greater target of your ire.

But when I got your letter last week about attending this hearing—despite having advised you of my long scheduled commitments—a letter in which you simply dismissed my prior engagement, stating that you would not "indulge my schedule," I got tired and mad all over again.

And if I had not had the chance to attend a dinner that night in honor of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, I probably would still be mad. Because, I would not have had the chance to have my faith renewed by the example of what other men with your power have chosen to do throughout history to enhance the lives of others. I would not have been reminded of how Robert Kennedy's work on behalf of issues like race, and justice, and poverty, embodied the true spirit of his greatest words: "It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope; and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current, which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

Had I not gone to that dinner, I would not have been reminded that the smallness of any person, can never overshadow the greatness of those whose acts are bigger than life. I would not have been reminded that today, too, will pass. And, that we who love our government are strong enough, and not too weary. We can outlast a culture of investigation and intimidation and idleness on behalf of issues that can truly improve the lives of Americans.

Mr. Chairman, I believe in your humanity, and in that of those who serve on your staff. That each of you has good and bad days; make good and bad judgments, render good and bad decisions. Won't you believe in the humanity of others with whom you disagree? Won't you believe that as with your mistakes, they too can make mistakes that are not conspiratorial? That they too can make a bad judgment, without that judgment being pernicious? That they too can do their best each day and expect more than a biased shake or a perjury referral from this Committee? That they too can be human, without this body using its awesome power to exploit their humanity for political gain? Can Tony Barry, a man who has served his government since 1992, expect that?

I give my last quotation to Robert Kennedy because to me, it is particularly fitting today. He said: "The Constitution protects wisdom and ignorance, compassion and selfishness alike. But that dissent which consists simply of sporadic and dramatic acts sustained by neither continuing labor or research—that dissent which seeks to demolish while lacking both the desire and direction for rebuilding, that dissent which, contemptuously or out of laziness, casts aside the practical weapons and instruments of change and progress—that kind of dissent is merely self-indulgence. It is satisfying, perhaps, only those who make it."

I decided that smallness government cannot win. And that it will note the weapon to defeat my ideals. That it is not powerful enough to alter my belief in the good that so many Members who serve in this body do.

I decided, that in the final analysis, I am not too tired to stand up for all of those who believe, even through the drama, that public service is worth the price.