

his deep appreciation for truly one of the greatest Americans of all time, former governor of California and President of the United States, Ronald Reagan.

I want to share with my colleagues just a couple of thoughts because my colleague has been kind enough to take this time.

I will never forget, while a member of the State Legislature, one day listening to television as I heard for the first time Ronald Reagan giving a speech for then candidate for President Barry Goldwater. And I rolled over and said to my family, "By golly, he ought to run for governor of California." And by golly, not very far after that, he did run and was successfully elected.

During that period of time, it was my privilege to work very closely with the governor. And people should know this about Ronald Reagan, two items I would mention. The first is it was my privilege to work with him on what is now known as the Child Development Act of 1972. It was the first quality preschool day-care act in the country and now serves as a model for the country, a Ronald Reagan-signed bill in 1972. And 25 years later the Federal Government discovered it might be an issue.

Another item: In the southland in my district in California, air quality is by far the most serious challenge we faced in the last 20 or 30 years. It was Ronald Reagan who signed model language developing a regional district that has developed the toughest clean air standards in the entire country, leading the country.

Above and beyond that, let me say that the gentleman is correct at pointing to this great man as President of the United States.

TRIBUTE TO RONALD REAGAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I wanted to further say to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) that the job that Ronald Reagan did as President, my colleague has expressed almost the wonderment of that very well. But the thing that we must all remember is that the East-West confrontation is now a thing of the past, and indeed we are on a pathway for long-term opportunities for peace, not just for the United States but for the world; and if it were not for Ronald Reagan's leadership, I cannot say that we would be there today.

So while I will be happy to yield to my colleague, I very much appreciate his commentary in working with us at this very serious time in his life congratulating him on his 90th birthday.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, if I could just say, I was one who sort of came of age politically under Ronald Reagan, and he was and always will be to me a tremendous teacher of true principles,

and he seemed to have a tremendous understanding of the American people.

We certainly wish our current President, George W. Bush, the best. And we all, I think, could be better students of what Ronald Reagan tried to teach; and if we learn nothing else, it is that we need to continue to relearn those simple principles, I think we will all be better served.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I certainly very much appreciate the consideration of my colleague.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Let me just say that tonight we are going to hear, my colleagues, all kinds of great things that Ronald Reagan accomplished as President of the United States. But I want to tell my colleagues real briefly a little personal aside that happened to me.

My mother and stepfather, who died 2 years ago, both were working class people. My mother worked as a waitress for 18 years at L.S. Ayres & Co. Tea-room. She used to bring her tips home to help keep the house afloat. And my stepfather was what they called a sand hog in a foundry. Not very glamorous jobs.

When I entered politics, I told them one day I wanted to be a congressman to serve in the United States Congress. And, of course, they both had great aspirations for me, but they, in the back of their minds, thought I would never make it.

So I promised my mom and my dad that, if I ever made it to the United States Congress, I was going to take them in the front door of the White House to meet the President of the United States, not the back door, but the front door.

And so, the time came when I was elected; and it just so happened that Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States and a man whom I think was one of the greatest Presidents we ever had. The day came when I was going to take my mom and dad over to the White House and go in the front door to meet the President. And unbeknownst to me, Ronald Reagan's staff, because the President had asked them to, had called and said, we want to know something about Dan Burton, his background and everything before he comes over so we can talk to his parents.

And when we went in the Oval Office to meet the President of the United States, this little waitress and this man who worked in a foundry all his life getting up at 5:30 in the morning, he walked in and he shook their hands and he started telling them what a great guy I was, and told them all the things he knew about me and what a great asset I was to the United States Congress. He did not need to do that, but it sure was great for me and it was great for my mom and dad.

And so, I thank President Reagan very much for making my mom and dad feel like they were two of the proudest people in the United States one day in my life.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I say to the President, our colleagues and all Americans join together in joining Ronald Reagan, our great President, a very happy 90th birthday.

FAMILY FARM EMERGENCY ENERGY ASSISTANCE ACT

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

Mr. SHOWS. Madam Speaker, the unusually cold winter and the dramatic increase in heating costs are hurting everybody in my State of Mississippi.

Clearly, we need to encourage more domestic production of oil and gas.

But in Mississippi, we need immediate action, we need help today, especially for our region's agriculture industry.

Some farmers and ranchers have seen their gas bills double and triple over the last year. And this is through no fault of their own.

Our own local economy depends on agricultural production, which is a major employer in many of our communities.

These days the industry has been devastated by the dramatic rise in the cost of gas. This may not be a natural disaster, like a tornado or a flood, but this is a disaster just the same. This is an economic disaster that threatens the very existence of farms throughout our region.

Today I introduced a bill that will provide both immediate and long-term emergency assistance to our farmers and ranchers. My bill, the Family Farm Emergency Energy Assistance Act, will authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide grants that would not have to be repaid to help local agricultural producers deal immediately with financial pressures caused by this crisis.

This bill would also make low-interest loans available to help deal with the energy crisis for the months ahead.

This important legislation needs to be enacted quickly. Our farmers need help, and they need it now.

I am calling upon our leaders in Congress to move this emergency assistance bill quickly to passage. I will not rest until the Family Farm Emergency Energy Assistance Act becomes law.

EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, yesterday was the eighth anniversary of the signing of the Family and Medical Leave Act.