

We will continue to support firefighters, career and volunteer. We will continue to fight for more funding to provide even for paid personnel where there are shortages. But this kind of a policy drives a wedge between career and volunteer fire and EMS people that is just, I think, unthinkable.

In fact, one of the leaders of the IAFF said it well: "Many of the smaller communities rely solely on volunteer stations and they stand to lose a lot. This is all about men and women who really just love being a firefighter. Volunteering on their days off, whether in their own county or nearby, keeps their skills fresh. This just unnecessarily drives a wedge between the careers and the volunteers, and that eventually hurts the public."

Madam Speaker, I was up at the World Trade Center 2 days after the disaster, and I saw thousands of firefighters from around the country working together with the New York City career firefighters. Does this mean that those career firefighters from other departments that went to New York City would lose their union cards if this were enforced because they were volunteering to help their brother firefighters in time of need?

I plead with my friends in the IAFF, for the sake of your own members, change this policy, so that we all can work together for the good of America's domestic defenders.

METRO AIRPORT JANITORS HAVE EARNED A FAIR WAGE

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

Mr. BONIOR. Madam Speaker, in the Detroit Metropolitan area, we recently celebrated the opening of a \$1.2 billion Midfield Terminal at our regional airport. Now, after millions and millions have been spent to build this terminal, and after billions and billions have been spent to bail out the airline industries, our airport is literally a mess because of \$3.55.

Now, \$3.55 may not seem like a lot of money, but to workers like James Hughes it is a lot. What is even more insulting is that his pay and benefits are being cut without negotiations with his collective-bargaining agent, the Service Employees International Union Local 79.

When the new Midfield Terminal opened and the contractor in charge of custodial services turned its back on James Hughes and his coworkers, they turned their backs on the SEIU Local 79, and they turned their backs on all the passengers who fly through Detroit's airport. They said to James Hughes and his coworkers, we will not pay you a living wage. In fact, we are going to cut your pay from \$10.90 an hour to \$7.35 an hour, and we will not give you the same health care benefits that you had before. This is an absolute outrage.

Well, you know what? James Hughes and his fellow janitors, they said that they are not going to pick up the trash, and the SEIU janitors walked off their jobs and let the garbage pile high.

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This new symbol of prosperity is supposed to be embodied in this new terminal. It is supposed to be clean and new, and it is supposed to be a sign that things are turning around at Detroit Metro. Well, instead, it had become a symbol of greed, a symbol of cronyism, a symbol of nepotism, and a symbol of corruption at this airport. It seemed that contracts, whether they are no-bid contracts handed out to political friends and family members or broken contracts with our janitors, remain a persistent problem at our airport and in Wayne County.

Well, it is high time that it stopped.

On Thursday, the janitors who had previously cleaned Northwest's former home in the Davey Terminal, they are going to be holding a rally. They have had enough of this. They are tired. They are sick and tired of being sick and tired, and they will be standing up for justice. They will be standing up for dignity and respect, and they will be standing up for what is right.

A living wage is something that every worker ought to be able to have. A wage enough so they can feed their families, pay their rent, pay their mortgage, a pay that one should be respected for.

Madam Speaker, one cannot help but be reminded of the time when garbage piled high up all over Memphis, leaving a stench in the air. The mayor there at that time refused to treat city sanitation workers with respect. He refused to honor their work with a fair wage, and he listened more to his political cronies than he did to the elected representatives of the people. So the young Memphis janitors, represented by AFSCME United, they held rallies, they marched the streets, and then they brought in Martin Luther King, Jr., to fight their cause.

The second time he came was the tragic day in April which no one will ever, ever forget. Yet, sometimes we forget why he came to Memphis. He was there because he saw his brothers and sisters in a struggle. It was a struggle for civil rights, for social justice, and for economic equality; and he died fighting against poverty and supporting sanitation workers who were on strike in Memphis.

Now, nearly 34 years later, in a different city, at a different moment in our history, janitors and sanitation workers are still struggling for the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Fredrick Douglas once wrote, "There is no progress without struggle." Well, these workers have been struggling for generations, and progress has become painfully, painfully slow to come. The time is now for those who care about working families to join them in their

struggle. The time has come for justice for janitors. I am here to say tonight, Madam Speaker, that I am proud to stand with the men and women of SEIU local 79 and their great President Willie Hampton for their fight for living wages and adequate benefits. It is time we move forward. It is time to act. And on Thursday, February 28, we will.

SUPPORT H.R. 2820 AND SUPPORT OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, we hear lots of lofty words and phrases uttered in this Chamber when it comes to honoring our military men and women and paying our debt of gratitude to our veterans who have served this country so nobly. But I have found that talk is cheap, and if one wants to know what is really important to the people who occupy this Chamber, one watches where the money goes. How do we use our resources?

I want to call to this Chamber's attention two things that have happened recently which negatively impact our Nation's veterans. We are in the process of imposing upon many of our veterans an annual deductible of \$1,500 in order for them to receive health care at our veterans' facilities. Madam Speaker, \$1,500, a new burden being placed upon our veterans.

In addition to that burden, there is an additional burden. In the past, veterans have been able to go to our hospitals and receive prescription drugs by giving a \$2 per prescription copay; \$2 per prescription. But, sadly, in early February of this year, that copay was increased dramatically by 250 percent. So now veterans do not pay \$2 when they get a prescription filled, they are required to pay \$7 for each prescription.

Now, at a VA hospital in my area, the average veteran gets over 10 prescriptions per month. If we take 10 prescriptions per month and we charge \$7 copay per prescription, that is \$70 a month, and many of our veterans get their medications for 3 months at a time. If we take 70 times 3, that is \$210. But what does this mean to the veteran who is living on a fixed income, a veteran who has served this country honorably and nobly, a veteran who has paid the price for the security needs of this Nation? This new burden for a veteran who takes 10 prescriptions a month amounts to \$600 per year. This is totally unjustified.

Madam Speaker, I would point out that we are doing this at a time when this House voted just a few days ago to eliminate the Alternative Minimum Tax, a tax that was placed on wealthy corporations, profitable corporations during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, because back in those days,