

also the non-agent organizations such as the Treasury Employees Association. There is also in place the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA), the lobbying group for federal law enforcement.

Most states, if not all, have law enforcement lobbying groups. New York City has the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association.

All these are effective groups and can readily be mobilized. And of course active duty enforcement personnel can write and contact their elected officials in support of the rule of law and law enforcement agencies.

What is needed is a small organization to disseminate to each of these groups the information and program to counter NRA's Big Lie rhetoric and program. I stress that the group would not be an umbrella organization. Its purpose would be to galvanize opposition to NRA's extreme positions and to counter NRA's lies and misleading statements.

The name of such a group could be the "Law Enforcement Information Association." Its staff would be small. It could probably do the job with about ten staff members.

The organizations mentioned and their individual members can be mobilized to contact their congressmen/women and senators and state and local elected officials by telephone and in writing and to meet with them and convey one simple message:

"Support the rule of law and the law enforcement agencies responsible for carrying out the laws of the land and reject NRA extremism."

It can be done. It should be done.

Thank you.

CONGRESS CAN DO BETTER IN 1996

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, this is a new year and a new year of the 104th session, a brand-new opportunity for those of us in the House to begin to look backward and reflect and look forward hopefully to do a better job.

One has been told that the month of January is represented by the mystical god that has two heads; one that looks backwards and one that looks forward. You and I know if we look backward too long we live in the past and no progress is made.

If we look back at 1995, we see Democrats and Republicans yelling at each other. We see people who are willing to take their views to the extreme at the expense of America, yet they say they do it in the name of saving America. If we look back, we see people saying we made commitments to the American people that we would do these things.

Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we do not look back too long. If we look back long enough, we know that what we did in 1995 was not always honorable; was not always those actions that are worthy of those who represent the people and who say that we represent "We the people."

Hopefully, we look back just long enough to say we will try to do better and try to be more responsible. And I ask, Mr. Speaker, is it responsible as we look at 1996, and this is the third day, is it responsible to families and

communities to know what we are doing in this shutdown? Is it responsible for those who would have home loans to find that they are unable to execute those loans because they cannot get anyone to provide the insurance? Is that responsible?

Is it responsible, Mr. Speaker, to deny the students and their parents the opportunity for student loans when they did not cause this impasse? So why are we making them hostage to this?

Is it fair to the taxpayers to deny them their services, which they no longer have that opportunity, not only to consider, Mr. Speaker, the more than 280,000 workers who are now being shut out of the opportunity of providing services that we say we are going to pay them later. Is that fiscally responsible? It certainly is not civilly responsible and it is not humanly responsible. We are not being responsible as human beings, much less as leaders of this great body of this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, in 1996 we can do better than that. We certainly can honor our veterans, Mr. Speaker, our veterans who have served this country well. I am told as we call our veterans hospitals, particularly ones in Salisbury, that people are threatened to lose their jobs. Nurses are not being paid fully for the work that they are doing. Some of the people are not able to work at all and those who are working are not being paid fully. And so what? Veterans are being denied even the health care that they should have.

This is unfair, Mr. Speaker. Further, when we call our regional office in Winston-Salem that provides the claims, there is no one to answer the telephone. Only a skeletal crew. So if a veteran wants to process a new application, wants to find out what the status of his claim, there is no one, not even to answer the telephone. Is that being responsible?

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity in 1996 to go forward with honor. And we also have an opportunity in 1996 to look at reflectively our action, our activities, our commitment and our involvement in serving the people in this body and to act if we have been responsible. I submit, Mr. Speaker, we have not.

Finally, I called my State EPA or environmental secretary just to find out what are the implications for health and water and safety and what would be North Carolina's vulnerability as the shutdown proceeds. I was told there are 287 Federal workers who receive some Federal funds who are providing water and air protection. In fact, 135 of them are paid in part or fully by EPA.

Through the execution of a letter, they were able to forestall the sending home of 135 employees who had responsibilities for inspection of the air, the water in our rivers; 135 people could have possibly been sent home today if they could not have gotten that extension, and they do not know how long that will last. They are sorry they were

not able to get 125 of the coastal management because they are part of the Commerce budget.

Then there are eight persons in marine fisheries and, in talking about the safety of marine fisheries, those persons will be denied an opportunity to provide that the waters are safe for the fish that people have to eat.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I think that 1996 is an opportunity where we can make a lot of resolutions, but we ought to resolve ourselves that we will be both fiscally responsible, humanly responsible, but we also will be legally responsible in providing for the welfare of this government, for the people deserve no less.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. CAMPBELL] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. CAMPBELL 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 Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS 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 Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DAVIS 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 Connecticut [Mr. GEJDENSON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GEJDENSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

VICTIMS OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, hostage-taking should have no place in a democracy. There is nothing wrong with this Congress or any Congress having an open, honest debate about a budget plan. If this year's budget debate takes 2 more days, 2 more weeks, or even 2 more months, there is nothing wrong with that. Open democracy and debate is what this institution is all about.

But it is terribly wrong, and it is totally wrong, for Speaker GINGRICH and Gingrich Republicans of this House to