

I say to all Americans who are working: Take note of what the United Food and Commercial Workers did over the last 5 months. They stood tall. Let us defend health care coverage for all Americans and we will fight to make sure our next generation also has it.

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR ERIC COOKE

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, there have been over 500 soldiers now killed in action in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and I rise this evening to share with the Members of this body a letter that my office received today in tribute to one of these great American heroes, Command Sergeant Major Eric Cooke.

"There seem to be so few heroes today. I wanted to tell you about one: Command Sergeant Major Eric Cooke of the First Armored Division. Command Sergeant Major Cooke died on Christmas Eve when a roadside bomb ripped into his Humvee north of Baghdad on a convoy to Samara. He was 43 years old.

"Just before his death, Command Sergeant Major Cooke had written my uncle, David Hunter, that he had not signed up for the 2-week Christmas leave available to soldiers who were deployed to Iraq because he could not take the leave knowing that one of his men would not be receiving theirs. CSM Cooke said he was lucky to have a loving wife who would understand why he was not coming home for Christmas. He was career United States Army, and she understood his commitment.

"On the day he died, Command Sergeant Major Cooke heard of an injured soldier who was in urgent need of O-positive blood, so he rushed to a nearby field hospital to donate his own. He almost missed that convoy going to Samara. Command Sergeant Major Cooke had the opportunity to have an armored Humvee, but he chose to give it to his men so they would be protected during armed escort duty, patrols and raid operations. His selfless service knew no limits.

"If you or I knew the day we would die, we might change the way we were living as that day approached. Command Sergeant Major Cooke did not need to change a thing. He lived each of his days in a selfless and noble manner. Every soldier's death is a tragedy, but this one seemed especially sad.

"Command Sergeant Major Cooke was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on January 5, 2004 at 3 p.m. with full military honors befitting an American hero.

"Written by Lucy Everett Edmondson of Rocky Mount, North Carolina."

Mr. Speaker, I knew Command Sergeant Major Cooke. I met him on the tarmac at the Baghdad International

Airport on December 22, 2 days before his death. It was my only opportunity to ever be in a theater of combat operations, and it seemed relatively safe there on the tarmac. But as I looked into his crystal clear blue eyes, he told me about his 26 years of service to this country in Kosovo, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and now Operation Iraqi Freedom as well. He was looking forward to his retirement in 4 years, but very proud of his service to his country.

Indeed, Ms. Edmondson, Sergeant Major Eric Cooke was a true American hero.

TRADE AGREEMENTS, THE U.S. ECONOMY, AND JOBS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, President Bush sent to Congress this Central American Free Trade Agreement, an agreement that would expand NAFTA to six countries in Central America. He plans later to send to Congress an agreement called the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which would expand NAFTA, except for Cuba, to all the rest of Latin America.

These two agreements will double the size of the North American Free Trade Agreement in population, will quadruple the number of low-income workers in what is now the North American Free Trade Agreement, so that in the Free Trade Area of the Americas it would have that many countries, that many people, that many low-income workers.

Now, you would think that the President of the United States would understand, with the economy the way it is, that this is not the right response. Ohio, my home State and that of the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), who is here, also from Toledo, our State has lost 166,000 manufacturing jobs. One out of six Ohio manufacturing jobs is gone, likely will not return, mostly gone overseas. Companies have shut down, companies have outsourced production, companies have moved their facilities overseas, south of the border, or elsewhere.

Ohio literally has lost, in fact the country has lost manufacturing jobs every single month since George Bush took office. This country has lost some 3 million jobs since President Bush took office. And to every bit of bad economic news, every time the unemployment rate goes up, every time there is a report on lost jobs, every time there is bad economic news, the President has two answers: Tax cuts for the people who need them least. Tax cuts for the wealthiest people in our society. Half these tax cuts go to the richest 1 percent. Tax cuts for the wealthy, hoping they trickle down and provide a few jobs maybe, or give some economic prosperity to the country. That is one of his answers. The other answer is

more trade agreements, like NAFTA, like MFN/PNTR for China, like the World Trade Organization, more trade agreements that ship jobs overseas; that hemorrhage jobs overseas.

Now, in this economic report of the President, which came out last week, signed by President Bush, on page 4, issued by the President's Chief Economic Adviser Gregory Mankiw, also signed by him, he is the President's top economic adviser, it says that Mr. Mankiw predicted on behalf of the President that we would create 2.6 million jobs this year. Even the President's people, after that report came out, said, no, no, no, we cannot create that many, and they immediately disavowed parts of this report.

But it is the same old thing. When the President first took office, he said, give me the tax breaks and we will create millions of jobs. He got the tax cuts, but no jobs were created. Jobs were lost. Then after September 11, clearly a tragedy for our country, clearly a blow to our economy, but after September 11, the President said, give me more tax cuts for the wealthiest, aimed at the most wealthy people, the most privileged, the ones who needs it least in society, and we will create 2.5 million jobs. Again he said that, and again we had job loss in this country.

In this report now it says 2.6 million jobs will be created, but it is simply not happening. And again the President's response to every problem with our economy, as this economic report of the President says, more tax cuts for the wealthy and more trade agreements that hemorrhage jobs, that ship jobs overseas.

Now, as we continue, the President wants to see us do more tax cuts this year. Those tax cuts will go again overwhelmingly to the most privileged people in society. But Alan Greenspan came to this Congress last week and he said because we do not have any money, we are going to have to cut Social Security. So not only do the President's tax cuts not create jobs in this country, not only do the President's tax cuts, who overwhelmingly go to the wealthiest people in society, not only do they not simulate the economy and create jobs, but they also mean that the President and his economic advisers are making a choice; it is either tax cuts or funding Social Security.

They have made their choice. Alan Greenspan, the President's man at the Federal Reserve, has said we cannot afford to fully fund Social Security, and later he will talk the same about Medicare because we have this huge budget deficit. We have this huge budget deficit because of the these tax cuts going overwhelmingly to the wealthiest people. And Alan Greenspan and the President are saying we need this year to do additional tax cuts, again for the wealthiest people in society.

You see how this adds up? Tax cuts for the wealthiest people in society, trade agreements that hemorrhage jobs