

Millions of Americans are unemployed today and finding it harder to get a job. According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, job seekers in Minnesota still out-number unfilled jobs by two-to-one.

Unfortunately, H.R. 27 does nothing to put people back to work. It doesn't shorten the lists of people waiting to use the resources at my one stops. It won't meet the needs of the approximately 8,000 Minnesota youth who can't get WIA job-related services every year. Instead, this bill unravels the very programs that ensure these workers have the skills and training they need to find high paying, long-term jobs.

H.R. 27 eliminates targeted programs designed to help both dislocated workers and unemployed adults find a job. It block grants dedicated assistance forcing low-income workers and welfare recipients to compete with dislocated workers for the same limited federal resources.

This bill eliminates dedicated funding for job search services, like Minnesota's Job Bank, which assists thousands of Minnesotans. This funding supports a rapid response system that meets the immediate needs of workers affected by mass layoffs. These changes threaten to break apart Minnesota's statewide workforce development system at the very time when these services are needed most to help unemployed workers find jobs.

In addition, H.R. 27 does nothing to ensure that these limited funds are used for training. It allows governors to take money away from adult education and veterans' job programs and use it to cover bureaucratic costs. Sadly, it also restricts youth funding to out-of-school youth. This will devastate the Building Lives Program, which Ramsey County uses to provide job training services to troubled teens during school hours.

Most concerning, however, is that this bill repeals basic civil rights protections for employees of job training programs by allowing organizations that receive Federal job-training funds to discriminate on the basis of religion.

I speak as a person who was brought up by a Lutheran mother and a Catholic father. I remember when my mother went to church to see her little girl receive her first communion and wasn't made to feel welcome. I don't want to go back to those days. I don't want the children I represent to know how it feels to be kept from fulfilling their dreams or meet their potential because someone doesn't like the church, mosque or synagogue you attend. Yet, this bill leads our country in that direction.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe that we must strengthen our workforce investment system to help Minnesotans get back to work. H.R. 27, however, fails to meet that goal and at the same time encourages rolling back civil rights protections. I urge my colleagues to reject this bill today.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMAL COUNTY COMMISSIONER JACK DAWSON

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Commis-

sioner Jack Dawson. Commissioner Dawson is a life-long resident of Texas and a pillar of the Comal County community.

From his first career as a computer programmer for Shell Oil to his current seat as a Comal County Commissioner, Jack Dawson has served his community with distinction.

Jack Dawson opened what is now Dawson Realty with his wife Bonnie, and he has also founded the local subdivisions first homeowners association.

Commissioner Dawson has spent his life in the service of the public. As the Board President of Canyon Lake Volunteer Fire Department, he helped to form new fire and emergency services districts for the community. He has consistently worked to improve the local communities of Comal County and the State of Texas.

Commissioner Jack Dawson has lived with his wife Bonnie Dawson in Comal County since 1976.

He is a man that understands community needs and the value of hard work.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the accomplishments of Comal County Commissioner Jack Dawson.

RECOGNIZING CORPORAL BARRON SMITH AND HIS ENDLESS COMMUNITY SERVICE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Corporal Barron Smith of the Flower Mound Police Department, located in the 26th Congressional District of Texas, for his heroism in saving another man's life.

Corporal Smith, without regard to his own life, quickly leapt into a local lake after seeing a man beginning to drown. In the summer of 2004, Corporal Smith and his wife were camping at Grapevine Lake when they noticed a group of people having difficulty swimming in the lake. As two men began to go under, Corporal Smith decided to jump in with a life vest in an attempt to rescue the individuals. One man was able to swim to a buoy just as Corporal Smith reached the second man and helped him to shore.

Corporal Smith's act of bravery represents the best of "Texas' Finest." Officers like Corporal Smith are exemplary and are ideal citizens. His continuing service to his community, on-and-off duty, makes our community safer.

I am proud of the Flower Mound Police Department and especially our attentive citizens, like Corporal Smith, who commit their lives and time to protect and serve our community at any time, anywhere.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF GUADALUPE COUNTY COMMISSIONER JIM WOLVERTON

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Guadalupe County Commissioner Jim

Wolverton for the important contributions he has made to his community.

Jim Wolverton is the son of a military family, and was born in Frankfurt, Germany. He moved to Texas at the age of two, and attended Samuel Clemens High School and San Antonio Junior College.

For nine years, Jim owned an electrical contracting business, and learned important lessons about leadership and organization. He has now put those lessons to work for the citizens of Guadalupe County, to great effect.

Under his supervision, Guadalupe County has passed legislation which greatly increased the amount of money available for health care for the indigent. He increased county services such as Fire, MES, and Libraries, and supervised the construction of a new, fourteen million dollar jail facility. He has worked with the municipalities in his district to establish quality, long-term business growth, and has worked with organizations outside the county government to ensure an adequate water supply for the residents of Guadalupe County. Jim Wolverton is an intelligent and committed public servant, and the citizens of Guadalupe County are better off as a result of his work.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have had this opportunity to honor the contributions of Guadalupe County Commissioner Jim Wolverton.

YEAR TWO OF CASTRO'S BRUTAL CRACKDOWN IN CUBA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of democratic reformers in Cuba, on the second anniversary of Castro's brutal crackdown of pro-democracy advocates.

Two years ago, with the world's attention riveted on Iraq, Fidel Castro ordered his feared State Security apparatus to round up at least 75 of Cuba's bravest and brightest, prominent and lesser-known dissidents. Among these are 28 independent journalists and 40 Varela project workers. With sickening speed, these men and women were paraded before kangaroo courts and given prison sentences ranging from 6 to 28 years. 61 remain in jail.

When the Committee on International Relations met April 16, 2003 to decry this vile abrogation of justice, I stated at that time: "Even some of the most outspoken leftists, who once saw in Fidel Castro something to admire, now admit that Castro's unbridled cruelty, thirst for blood and extreme paranoia are indefensible."

I regret to report that Castro has given me no cause to reassess that statement.

What were the so-called crimes of these brave men and women? Advocating democracy . . . writing as independent journalists . . . being men and women of faith . . .

Their real offense was to dare to question the authority of a single man, Mr. Castro. The Cuban Revolution is really about Castro's vanity and pursuit of personal power. From the beginning, Castro has shot and jailed anyone—even his close friends—who has dared get in the way of his personal ambition.

Dictatorships, reflecting the whims of a despot, always subject their people to deprivations and absurdities. The Castro regime recently let a handful of its political prisoners out