

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleague and good friend, our conference chairman, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE), in recognizing Kathryn Lehman as she leaves her work here after 15 years.

We are dramatically benefited by the people who help us do these jobs, and no one has been more involved in more places over those 15 years than Kathryn has, working, as has already been said, in the Speaker's office, in the Conference office, in the whip's office. During the 4 years that I was the chief deputy whip, it was never quite clear to me whether Kathryn was working for me or I was working for her, but I always knew that we were all working to get our job done.

She is leaving now to go to Holland. We recently lost a great former Member of the Congress, our good friend Tiller Fowler, and Tillie would be pleased, I think, that Kathryn is filling some of the gap that is left there by Tillie's passing.

I am sure that our conference chairman will miss Kathryn. I know that our conference will miss Kathryn on a daily basis. I really do deeply and truly know that we will miss Kathryn's wise counsel, her good judgment and, maybe most of all, her reliable sense of humor. When things are the toughest and the challenges are the greatest, Kathryn always had an understanding of how fortunate we all really were to be involved in that challenging moment, to be making those decisions on the House Floor, to be part of this great process in the greatest country in the world.

Kathryn, we will miss you.

IRAQ IS ANOTHER VIETNAM

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we acknowledge the 30th anniversary of the conflict in Vietnam, it is important to be reminded of the crisis in Iraq: 12,000 wounded soldiers, 1,500 dead, 143 Iraqis and others killed over this past weekend; no stated policy from this administration, and the continuous flow of injured and fallen soldiers coming home to loved ones.

Iraq is another Vietnam. Iraq deserves the attention of this Congress and of this administration. It is time now to address the fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction. Whether or not we are liberators, no one seems to care. This government is in conflict. The Shiite government is refusing to seek Sunnis. The insurgents will continue, the bloodshed will continue, the hostages will continue.

We must, we must have a solution to this terrible tragedy in Iraq. We are not creating freedom; we are creating terrorists.

REAL ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR AMERICA

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, America is on a really great economic track right now. Since 2000, Congress and this great Nation both have had to contend with a recession, with terrorism, but we have dealt with this by enacting tax relief and working to decrease regulatory burdens on America's workers. What we are seeing is real growth.

Now, the first quarter of this year we have seen a 3.1 percent growth in the GDP. It is good and solid. To put it all in perspective, going back to October and December of 2004, the fourth quarter of last year, look at what we had going on here. Germany, 1.5 percent growth, Italy and Japan both at eight-tenths of one percent growth. During that time, America had 3.9 percent GDP growth. Do we know why? It is because we have fought to lower taxes and reduce burdensome regulation both together, while other nations have kept raising their taxes and imposing more regulation.

What does this show? It tells us that if we want more of something, we tax it less, we regulate it less.

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHRYN LEHMAN

(Mr. GOODLATTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to join the House Republican Conference chairman, the whip, and shortly the chief deputy whip and the vice chairman of our conference in congratulating Kathryn Lehman on an outstanding career here in the Congress and to wish her Godspeed as she leaves this great institution and goes out into the wide world to seek other challenges and opportunities.

Kathryn has served the House of Representatives longer than the vast majority of the Members who serve here today. She has an incisive legal mind, and I came to know that many years ago when I was first elected to serve here and had the privilege of being appointed to serve on the House Committee on the Judiciary, where Kathryn was serving as a counsel for the then senior member of the committee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and shortly thereafter became chairman of the committee.

Kathryn was the staff director and chief counsel for the Subcommittee on the Constitution. She advised the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) and subsequently Speaker Gingrich, with regard to the procedures that the House needed to follow with regard to the very somber process of impeachment of a President of the United States. Since then, she has gone on to

serve in our leadership. A number of Members who we can see here today recognize that she has not only the great sense of humor that has been recognized already, but a great ability to step back and see the big picture at a time when many of us get tied up in the heat of the moment. That is something that is a valuable, valuable asset for this Congress and this Republican Conference.

Kathryn, we thank you, and we wish you the very best.

FAREWELL TO KATHRYN LEHMAN

(Mr. CANTOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise this evening to bid farewell to an individual that I have come to know over the last 4 years since I first started serving in this House. She is not only a friend, she is a neighbor. She is an individual that I look to as a colleague and counsel.

As has been mentioned before, Kathryn Lehman has been a critical asset to this institution over the length of her career here. She has worked for the majority leader when he was majority whip. That is where I came to know her, and it is then that I began to see the incredible addition she was to the leadership team of this House.

She has provided tremendous insight into not only the history of this institution, but also to the intricacies of the legislative process, and her ability to really grasp how to get things done in this town, and certainly in this building.

So it is with much sentiment, I think, that I say goodbye. I know it will not be a permanent goodbye. Kathryn is one who is a true believer, and I could tell that when I first met her, that she has the common sense and conservative values that are really what make this country great.

I guess we could claim her as an adopted Virginian. She lives in the legacy of those great public servants of the 18th century that founded this Nation and that left us such a legacy to contribute to our democracy, to stand up for the principles that we believe in.

So Kathryn, I want to thank you for all of your wise counsel. I will continue to seek that counsel. We will miss you here in the House, but we wish you all the best, and Godspeed.

KATHRYN LEHMAN: A BEHIND-THE-SCENES PROFESSIONAL

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, several years ago, I went to a ribbon-cutting on a new road and the road had taken many, many years to build, yet all the politicians who participated in the ribbon-cutting were newly-elected. But in

great political fashion, we all stood up there and took the bows for it. That is the rules of the game.

Another part about that is you do not see the staff up there cutting the ribbon, taking the bows, getting the applause. Kathryn Lehman is one of those staff members who has not been in the forefront of the limelight and yet, should. She has worked for every significant Republican leader in this House of Representatives for the last 10 years or more. Every critical decision of this House, every major piece of legislation was worked on on a team in which she was a staff member, anything from the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HENRY HYDE) to the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, and, most recently, our conference Chair, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE). The legislation that we moved all had the invisible fingerprint of Kathryn Lehman.

I, as vice chairman of the Republican Conference, have had a chance to work with her. I can tell my colleagues she is intelligent, she is well versed, she is in the background, and she is a pro. One thing I will say, though, that is also significant about her, she works hard and, at times, when she has that rare opportunity to play and relax, she plays hard. I remember one occasion with her, getting the chance to see her shoot skeet. We were with some people who were pretty hotshot skeet shooters, and I looked over there and she was shooting a 28 gauge, which means you have to shoot a clay pigeon practically with a BB gun. It is impossible to do. I think out of 25 she hit 24 of them, and maybe I bumped her on that 25th.

But she is kind of a true renaissance person of today, somebody who knows how to enjoy life, get out and relax and mix and mingle with different types of people; yet, when it comes time to work, she is a hard-core, very straightforward professional.

We will miss her, Democrats and Republicans alike. She has been an institutionalist, somebody who has made this place better because of her presence.

Kathryn, we wish you the best. Have fun over across the street or whatever street you are going to be on.

□ 2000

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today and pretty much every day for most

Americans of this year, they will see 6.2 percent taken out of their paycheck to pay for their Social Security retirement. If they are self-employed, they will see 12.4 percent taken out. That is everyone who earns up to \$90,000 every paycheck, day in day out they are paying that tax.

And in paying that tax, they will create a \$170 billion surplus to pay for future retirement benefits for themselves. But, now, the President has revealed his true agenda. After talking about privatization for months, something which would, in fact, worsen the financial condition of Social Security, he has now changed the debate to talking about how he is going to reduce the retirement benefits of middle-class Americans.

Now, things are a little bit different from the President. I mean, we will disregard all of his unearned income and all of the things that he has been given and all of those earnings. Let us just talk about his salary, \$400,000 as President of the United States. So that means that the President of the United States pays Social Security tax until 3 a.m. on March 24.

Now, that does not seem quite fair. Other working Americans are going to pay that tax all year long. But, let us look at some of Mr. Bush's friends. Tom Freston and Les Moonves of Viacom. They stop paying Social Security tax at 4 a.m. on January 2, because they earn \$77,000 a day.

Now, it really is not going to matter or even be noticed by George Bush when they are reduced or Mr. Freston or Mr. Moonves at Viacom, you know, not even their accountants will notice it, but it is certainly going to be noticed by those middle-class Americans.

The President's cuts, which he cast as being fair and progressive, will fall most heavily on middle-income working families in this country. You know, a median, what they call a median earner, \$36,000, say a public school teacher, will see, if they retired 40 years from now, a young teacher, they will see a reduction of 16 percent in their Social Security benefits, from \$19,000 down to \$16,000. I think they are going to notice that; it is going to hurt a lot.

What the President's folk call a high earner, \$58,400 a year, well they will see a 25 percent reduction. In fact, the reduction for people who earn \$58,000 a year will be equal to or worse than if Congress did nothing about Social Security, because it is not going to be bankrupt like the President says. Social Security will never be bankrupt. Stop saying that.

It will have to, if nothing is done and we have a very bad economy, reduce benefits by, say, 20 percent according to the Republican Congressional Budget Office or 25 percent, so they can pay benefits into the indefinite future, starting 40 or 50 years from now. That is not a crisis. That is not bankruptcy.

But the President would guarantee reductions, at least that big, for many

working families to save the program. But that is not all. That is not all the President has in mind. Because, he said, this is based on the Pozen plan, some financial guru out there who he says is a Democrat. Who cares if he is a Democrat or Republican. He is some rich guy, financial guy. And what Mr. Pozen proposed is you not only reduce retirement benefits, you reduce survivor's benefits, and you reduce disability benefits.

That is what the President said he endorses last week during his speech. He is going to reduce middle-income retirees' Social Security benefits 25 percent. And if they should be so unlucky as to become totally disabled, incapable of working, he is going to reduce their disability benefits by 25 percent; or should they have even more misfortune and die, their survivors will get a reduced benefit of 25 percent to, quote, save the program.

The President is not done there, though. He is not only reducing survivors benefits, retirement benefits, disability benefits. He wants to push these people into so-called voluntarily private plans after he has reduced their benefits; and the so-called private plans, the President's privatization has a little something called a claw-back, which is the government is allowing you to divert your Social Security money, but it is considered to be a loan, which will be repaid at the time of your retirement, death, or disability at the rate of 3 percent plus inflation.

Now, if your investments did not do too well, your survivors are going to be writing the government a check; or if you get to retirement and you did not do too well, well, you are going to see your Social Security benefits reduce up to 97 percent under the President's privatization plan.

There are better ways to secure the financial future of Social Security, which I will talk about on another evening.

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

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

FAREWELL TO KATHRYN LEHMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.