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House of Representatives

On the Passing of Jack Kemp

HON. CHRIS SMITH OF NEW JERSEY

Excerpts of remarks on the House floor

Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Speaker, the country lost a great and extraordinary American on Saturday. Jack Kemp was a man of deep faith in Christ, husband to the equally remarkable Joanne, father of four, and grandfather of seventeen. And he was, for those of us who knew him so well, above all, a family man. He was also a former star quarterback, HUD Secretary and Congressman, and will be deeply missed by all of us who knew, respected, admired, and loved this special person.

I first met Jack when he campaigned for me in Trenton back in 1978 in my first bid for Congress. A decade later, as HUD Secretary, he actually helped us get the first demonstration project for Trenton's Weed and Seed program, one of only four in the country. Twenty years later, Weed and Seed continues to help disadvantaged youth in Trenton.

By his contagious enthusiasm, balanced energy, personal integrity, dedication to high moral principles and sheer determination, Jack Kemp changed America and, in the process, changed the world.

Jack Kemp believed in the politics of inclusion and worked tirelessly to extend hope and opportunity to all, regardless of age, gender, creed, disability or dependence, including and especially unborn children.

In a 1993 speech, Jack Kemp said, "Every single year, there's a tragic silence of a million newborn cries that will never be heard. Talents that will never be developed. Potential we will never see. Books never authored. Inventions never made. The right to life is a gift of God, not a gift of the state." Jack Kemp was always proudly pro-life.

In the early 1980s, Jack Kemp wrote the Kemp-Kasten anti-coercion law to protect women everywhere, especially in China, from the horrific crime of coerced abortion and

involuntary sterilization. He always cared for the weak disenfranchised and the vulnerable.

Jack Kemp's speech on the Martin Luther King holiday in 1983 was among his most remarkable and enduring. He eloquently spoke of Dr. King's courage and legacy and the necessity of healing and reconciliation, and that the King holiday, like the civil rights struggle itself, was a necessary continuation of the American Revolution.

Jack Kemp not only wrote landmark laws but was the quintessential ideas man as well, and his often outside-the-box thinking became the inspiration for innovative reforms, including urban enterprise zones, the Reagan tax cuts, and the realization of homeownership that had been denied to so many. Jack Kemp was truly one of a kind, one of the all-time greats.