of people with Alzheimer's and other age-related diseases that will require nursing facility care at some point. Simply put, longer lives increase the likelihood of long-term care.

At least half of all nursing home residents have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, and the average annual cost of Alzheimer nursing care is $42,000. And that is modest.

Unfortunately, for many people paying for long-term care out of pocket, it would be a financially and emotionally draining situation as assets worked over a lifetime to build could be lost paying for a few months of long-term care.

Congress must take action to encourage private initiatives, such as expanded use of private long-term care insurance to help families plan for the long-term care needs of their elderly relatives, and they need to in a wide variety of settings that are currently available.

That is why I am proud to have this support of 125 of my colleagues for my bill, H.R. 1111, the Federal Civilian and Uniformed Services Long-term Care Insurance Act of 1999.

This legislation, developed in consultation with the Alzheimer's Association, makes long-term care insurance available at group rates to active and retired Federal civilian personnel, active and retired military personnel, and their families. I hope that my Federal and military long-term care bill will serve as an example for other employers that would lead to increased societal use of long-term care insurance. Having coverage eases the pressure on Federal entitlement spending while protecting the hard-earned assets of American families.

In addition to meeting the needs of Alzheimer's patients, H.R. 1111 also seeks to ease the financial burden on spouses or other family members who often provide the day-to-day care for people with Alzheimer's disease.

As the disease gets worse, people often need more and more care. This can be hard for caregivers and can affect their physical and mental health. It can affect their family life, their jobs, their finances.

In fact, 70 percent of people with Alzheimer's live at home and 75 percent of home care is provided by family and friends. What a strain.

Under H.R. 1111, participating carriers would give enrollees the option of receiving their insurance benefits in cash, as opposed to services, to help family members who must rearrange their work schedules, work fewer than normal hours, or who must take unpaid leaves of absence to provide long-term care.

In addition to meeting the financial needs of people with Alzheimer's disease today, we must continue our research into treatments and cures for Alzheimer's. This is something that the National Institutes of Health is doing as we end this ''decade of the brain'' and the fact that we are working to double the budget of NIH by 2003, and this year we will have made that second installment.

So, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues, I look forward to working with all of them to ensure that the Federal Government continues to fulfill its investment in medical research well into the next century so that some day Alzheimer's disease will be history.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, let me say that what I wanted to do during some part of this hour this afternoon was to talk about the unfinished business of this Congress.

Last night, myself and several of my colleagues on the Democratic side took to the floor to basically point out how frustrated we are with the fact that a year has passed, the first year, if you will, of this 2-year congressional session in the House of Representatives, and yet the main issues that the American people seek to have us address, whether it be HMO reform or the need for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare for senior citizens, or campaign finance reform, gun safety, minimum wage, the issues that our constituents talk about on a regular basis when we are back home and when we go back home after the budget is concluded here in the House, we will be hearing about these issues again, and yet every time we try to bring these issues to the floor or pass legislation, we are thwarted by the Republican majority.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) yield?

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I will not yield at this point.

I just want the gentleman to know I intend to use the hour for the Democratic side.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PALLONE. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I tried to get my colleagues to yield a few minutes ago. And typically on this floor we have that courtesy between one another so we can debate the issues rather than just to hear the rhetoric, which is what we heard for that last hour. They were not willing to do it. And so, as much as I would like to and I know my colleague would yield as a courtesy to our colleague from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH), maybe next time they will know that this is a two-way street up here, even if they only have a five-vote majority.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by my colleague from Texas.

Let me just say that before I get to this unfinished agenda, which I have to say is my real concern, because most of the debate that has occurred and most of the arguments that we have heard over the last few weeks about the budget, although, obviously, we need to pass a budget, do not deal with these other issues which are really the most important issues that face this Congress that have not been addressed by the Republican majority.

I did want to say I was somewhat concerned by some of the statements made in the previous hour by Republican colleagues about the budget. Because I think I need to remind my colleagues and my constituents that the Republicans are in the majority in this House and in this Congress, in both the House and the Senate, and the bottom line is that the budget, the appropriation bills, were supposed to have been completed by October 1 of this year, which is the beginning of the fiscal year.

The fact that they are not completed, in my opinion, is totally the fault of the Republican majority. They are going to say, well, they passed bills. But many of the bills they passed and sent to the President they knew would be vetoed. They knew that there was not agreement between the President and the Congress on the legislation.

Rather than spend the time, particularly during the summer, trying to come up with appropriation bills and a budget that could actually get a consensus and could pass, they spent the summer and most of the last 6 months prior to that trying to put in place a trillion dollar tax cut which primarily went to wealthy Americans and also to corporate interests, to special interests, and they spent the time on that.

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They put in place and passed this trillion-dollar tax cut, primarily for the wealthy, knowing the President would veto it and the President did veto it, and the reason he did so is because he knew that if it passed and if it was signed into law, there would not be any money left from the surplus to pay for Social Security and Medicare.

Now, after they wasted all their time on that, they put forth these appropriation bills, many of which they knew would never be approved by the President, and they started this charge a few weeks ago or a month ago, suggesting that the Democrats wanted to spend the Social Security trust fund.

I just want to say one thing, if I could, because I know we have said this many times and it really is not the main reason I am here this afternoon, but the Republican leadership has broken so many promises on the budget, not only the promise not to spend the Social Security trust fund but the promise not to exceed the caps. If you remember 2 years ago, we passed the Balanced Budget Act. At that time we said that there were going to be certain caps in place every year on the amount

of spending that we would do, and we also made a commitment that we were not going to use the Social Security trust fund because we were going to have a surplus and it would not be necessary to do so. Both of those promises have been broken.

I just wanted to give some information about that. First, the Republican appropriation bills busted the outlay caps for fiscal year 2000 by billions of dollars. I am quoting now from the Senate majority leader, the Republican majority leader LOTT who acknowledged on September 18 when he stated, ''I think you have to be honest and acknowledge that we're not going to meet the caps.'' That was in the Washington Post, September 17, 1999.

Indeed, according to the latest CBO estimates of October 28, the Republican spending bills have busted the fiscal year 2000 outlay caps by $30.7 billion, although they declare about $18 billion of this is emergencies and thereby exempt from the cap.

So when we talk about the Republican leadership, they are the ones that are going on the spending spree with these appropriation bills. In many cases the President has vetoed the bills because they spend too much. And, of course, they spend it on the wrong things.

Secondly, on October 28, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, and my colleague from Texas knows, we have mentioned this many times to the point where we get tired of repeating it, but the CBO certified then that the GOP leadership had broken their promise not to dip into the Social Security trust fund. Specifically, on October 28 the CBO sent a letter to Congress certifying that on the basis of CBO estimates of the 13 completed GOP appropriation bills, the GOP bills spent $17 billion of the Social Security surplus, even after their 1 percent across-the-board cut is taken into account.

I know we heard from the other side about across-the-board cuts, how this is holding up the budget and all that. The bottom line is their own appropriation bills, their budget that they put together and sent to the President, spent a significant amount of money of the Social Security surplus. I am not looking to stress that, as my colleague from Texas knows. It is just that they keep bringing it up and they keep bringing it up, they do not pass the bills, they cannot get the budget passed. Now we are here and finally we think in the next day or two it is going to be passed, but we have all these other things that are so much more important that have not been addressed.

I yield to my colleague from Texas.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. I thank my colleague for yielding. I appreciate both of us being able to do this this afternoon. Typically this time of day we would be voting and not just talking about issues. But in following up our Republican colleagues for their hour that they had talking about both education, how important it is to them, and you and I will spend most of our time talking about the unfinished agenda, the issues that we would have liked to have dealt with that necessarily did not even have Federal dollars attached to it.

For example, their talk about the 1 percent cut. They were saying how we can find 1 percent in every agency. I am sure we can. But I also know that some of the appropriations bills that they have put in, they have projects in there that should be cut first and not across the board. My argument is if you just cut 1 percent across the board, if you have a wasteful project in there, you still have a 99 percent waste. Maybe it is a carrier we do not need that was added because of the Senate or someone. Maybe there is a certain project in a district. If it is 100 percent waste, if you only cut 1 percent, they are still getting 99 percent of it. That is what bothers me about that. They are saying we could find 1 percent. Sure I could find 1 percent but I would not cut, for example, title I funding in public education. Sure, I would not mind cutting the Department of Education, some of their other programs, but I know title I money goes to the classroom.

Just in the last couple of days because of the budget negotiations between the President and the administration and the Congress, we have added substantially new money to title I. That did not come out of their committee. In fact, their appropriations bill for education did not even come out of the committee from what I understand. It was the last issue they dealt with. So hearing someone stand up here and talk about they are for public education, in fact my colleague from Colorado who was part of that other hour, we had a quote last year saying that public education is the legacy of communism. One of the things I wanted to ask him when I asked him to yield just so we could say, is that a direct quote or was that said, so we could have the American people know where we all stand on public education and the commitment to public education.

The 1 percent cut I think ideally, in theory it is not bad, but again if you have a wasteful project you are still having 99 percent waste. Let us go back in and cut that budget down and eliminate those wasteful projects so we do not have to cut the important things, so we do not have to cut health care for children or education for children.

The other concern I have is they continually talk about dipping into Social Security. The gentleman mentioned that, as of October 28.

We have some numbers that, of course, since we have so many different numbers that we have but this poster, I think, will show that the issue of Republicans and Social Security and what they did. You can tell that it is $21 billion like you quoted. As of October 27 or 28, it is $21 billion. To say that the White House or as Democrats we are trying to spend the Social Security surplus is ludicrous. Again, I think we ought to be able to have this debate on the floor and have our colleagues say, tell me, where did this $21 billion that is going to be borrowed out of the Social Security trust fund, it is not being taken out of the fund, it is being borrowed like it has been for decades. Should we stop that? Of course we should. But do not stand up here on the floor or spend millions of dollars on ads around the country saying that Democrats are spending the Social Security surplus when we are not. In fact, I think we could come back with a budget that would meet what we have in the budget surplus very easily and still address the needs of our country, the needs of the Department of Defense. In fact, I think it is appropriate that their 1 percent cut that they talked about, and again from Houston we do not have a whole lot of defense installations but we do have a concern about the defense of our Nation. That 1 percent cut, the effect of the Republican across-the-board cut on defense, and I am quoting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

> Of great concern for us today is the across-the-board reductions proposed by some Members. This would strip away the gains that we have made or what we have just done to start readiness moving back in the right direction. In other words, Mr. Chairman, if applied to this program, it would be devastating.

And so that is the direct quote from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Our Republican colleagues who come up here and talk about, well, we can find 1 percent, sure. I could find 1 percent in the Department of Defense, but if we take a meat ax approach to it, we are going to cut about 35,000 service personnel. We cannot even staff the carriers in the Navy vessels we have now, much less adding a new one, yet they want to cut across the board. We would hope the Pentagon or the Department of Education or whatever agency would only cut that waste. But you and I know, it is our job to go in there and pinpoint those projects that really are not in the national interest and to do it instead of saying we want you to cut that 1 percent, leaving that up to the agencies.

The other concern, we talk about dipping into Social Security, we have another pretty good quote that follows up on that. When they talk about cutting, at one time it was a 1.4 percent across-the-board cut in military spending. The response from the Republican majority leader is, ''Instead of having two colonels hold your paper, you'll have only one.'' Granted I do not want two colonels up here holding somebody's paper, but I know when our troops are out in the field, whether they are in Bosnia, Kosovo or anywhere else that they go for our country, I want them to have the resources that they need to do the job, plus I want to pay them. I want to pay them a decent amount. Again on a bipartisan basis, this Congress passed a pay raise for our military personnel, so

hopefully some of the enlisted personnel will be able to get off public assistance if they have family.

That is why I am glad to follow up my colleagues. I would like to debate the intensity on education particularly, but since they would not yield to me earlier, and again I would love to yield to them to talk about public education and what the Department of Education does. This year alone, this Congress passed a reauthorization for title I funding. Title I funding goes to help the schools. They have the poorest and the hardest to educate children. This Congress passed on a bipartisan basis the reauthorization.

In 1994 when I was on the Education Committee, we passed on a bipartisan basis a reauthorization for title I. So instead of coming in and cutting and saying education funding is wasteful, let us go in and say, okay, let us take out what you consider wasteful but let us make sure we do help with smaller class sizes, that we do help children who English is not their first language, that that is what we do on the Federal level. We do not provide the education opportunity on the Federal level. That is for the local and the State. But we can assist local and State agencies, our local school boards, because they are the ones having to make the decisions, our State agencies are making the decisions. But we can do it on a national basis. If we go in and always attack the Department of Education and want to abolish it and they do not do any good, that is what we hear from the other side so often. But let us go in and say, cut out what you do not think is a priority in education.

The problem is that sometimes what they want to cut out is our meat and potatoes. They do not want title I, they do not want bilingual education. That is what bothers me again about having an hour to listen without having a chance to do the debate.

I know you and I really want to talk about the unfinished agenda, which in some cases will not cost one dime more of Federal tax dollars.

I also have some of our things that are left buried for this year.

Mr. PALLONE. If the gentleman will yield before we get into that, and I do want to get into our unfinished agenda, I was reading through my papers here. I came across this editorial in the New York Times that appeared soon after the Republicans started running the ads in some Democratic districts accusing Democrats of spending the Social Security trust fund. In light of the remarks you made about the across-the-board cuts and some of the pork-barrel spending that could be eliminated, I just wanted to, if I could, quote a couple of sections of this, because I think it really responds and sums up all the things that you were saying. This is entitled ''Social Security Scare-Mongering.'' This is not us, this is the New York Times speaking.

It says,

Republicans are trying to make political headway using the Social Security weapon against Democrats. They are advancing a ludicrous claim that deep Republican budget cuts are needed to stop a Democratic ''raid'' on Social Security.

The Republican argument rests on a fallacy that spending budget money today compromises the government's ability to meet its Social Security obligations in the future. Instead of squabbling over dollars in this year's budget, Congress can do more for Social Security by producing sound budgets that make the right investments while keeping the economy growing. A prosperous economy is the best guarantee that workers in the future will be able to afford paying for their parents' retirement.

In January, President Clinton called for setting aside nearly two-thirds of the total projected Federal surplus, from Social Security and other sources, to help retire Federal debt over the next 15 years. That was a sensible proposal intended to increase the savings rate and lower future interest rates. But the argument this year is over whether a small amount of the $140 billion Social Security surplus in the current year should be used to avoid spending cuts in other programs. In fact, no damage would be done to the economy, to Social Security or to the Federal budget itself if that happened.

Asserting that it is merely trying to save money for Social Security, the Republican leadership in Congress wants to cut spending by 1.4 percent across the board and block the White House's initiatives for money to hire new teachers and police officers. The Republican leaders' approach has been so wrongheaded that yesterday it provoked a revolt in the party rank and file. But it is not necessary to slash programs to ''save'' Social Security. More to the point, there are better places to save money, by cutting billions of dollars in pork-barrel projects and eliminating some of the expensive tax breaks for special interests that have made big campaign donations to the Republican Party in recent years.

President Clinton is right to veto spending bills that do not meet priority needs in education, the environment, law enforcement and other areas. As the White House notes, the Republican budget schemes approved so far have already tapped the Social Security system's surplus, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

That says it all. It is just a bunch of bogus claims about Social Security, spending cuts across the board instead of attacking the real spending-bloated projects that need to be attacked. As I would point out, and I know you are going to get into the unfinished agenda, the biggest thing is that they have not addressed the need to deal with Social Security and Medicare long-term. We would never have been able to address that if the President had not vetoed their huge tax cut, because there would not be any money in the surplus left to deal with Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Let me just continue a little bit before we get into our unfinished agenda, and talk about the proposed 1 percent across-the-board cut, what would be cut. For example, work study, a 1 percent cut across the board for work study would cut $9 million out of it. For title I again for the educationally disadvantaged, $78 million. We have more children and more children, so many children who are not served by title I already, that it would go backwards literally.

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The 1 percent cut would cut, for example, FAA operations, $59 million; Coast Guard operations, $25 million; Federal aid for highways, $262 million.

So there are so many things that they would cut. EPA grants for wastewater and drinking water treatment, $32 million. I could just go on and on down the list. Again, military personnel, their 1 percent cut would be $739 million. Again, that was quantified to say it would be 35,000 military personnel that would not be there if we did that across-the-board cut.

So again, I would say yes, 1 percent is not bad across the board, but let us not cut the good with the bad, let us cut the bad out, and that is our job as Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the unfinished legacy, so to speak, of this Congress is, first of all, prescription drug benefits that we were hopefully going to get as a Medicare drug prescription benefit. It was killed this year. There are actually a number of different proposals, at least on the House side. We have one by the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) and a host of other Members, that would not cost a dime of Federal dollars, it would just let the Federal Government, through HCFA, to negotiate, just like HMOs do now, just like the VA does, like anyone does for bulk purchasing. And to save money for seniors on prescription medication. That was not even considered on this floor except when we brought it up as an issue.

The Patients' Bill of Rights, which is again, near and dear to our hearts, because we spent so much time in talking about it; again, both of us serving on the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee on Commerce, and the gentleman chairs the Health Care Task Force of the Democratic caucus. The Patients' Bill of Rights was killed for this year, and now I am sure it is on life support maybe, because we passed a good, strong bill out of here. But when we saw the Speaker's appointments to the Republican Conference committee of 13 Members, only one of them voted for the bill, only one voted for the bill, and that is frustrating. Now we have a weak bill that the Senate passed, and we have a very strong bill that the House passed; and yet here in the House, even though we had a strong bill, only one Member of the conference committee, of the majority, voted for the bill.

So I am worried that not only has it been killed for this year, but we may see it killed for next year.

The other thing I think we have talked about, and we have talked about all year and we were hoping we could get something done with it was the minimum wage increase. We have had the greatest economy, literally, in our history, the longest running, and inflation is not a problem; and yet sometimes the folks in the lowest level of workers are the ones who are being left

behind. So there has been serious talk over the last 3 weeks on the minimum wage, and there was effort to do something, but we have been here since January, and that bill has been talked about and has been introduced.

So a dollar for the people who are not on social services, but are working, a dollar increase over 2 years only seems to be beneficial not only for the country, because that dollar, those folks are not going to take that $1 an hour more and go buy stock with it, although that would be great, they are going to pay more on rent, buy more food, so that dollar will circulate within the economy. Again, a dollar increase in the minimum wage, I am sorry it did not pass this year. Maybe, again, we will do it next year. I do not think any of us would serve in the Congress if we were not optimists to say we could do better the next year.

Campaign finance reform. Again, a very good issue that the House passed, a very tough bill; and now it is sitting somewhere over in the Senate, and there will not be any campaign finance reform bill for this year. Again, maybe next year. I feel like sometimes I am a football coach saying wait until next year; we will do better next year. But we are not playing football; we are dealing with people's lives here, and that is important.

Smaller class sizes for our public schools. Again, 94 percent of public education money is spent by local and State governments; only 6 percent on the Federal level. We are not talking about a large Federal commitment. But we also know that our local school districts and our States use Title I money; they use this Federal education money to help leverage what they do for the classes and the schools that need it the most and the children that need it the most.

Again, my wife is a high school algebra teacher and most of the smaller class sizes we talk about, kindergarten through elementary school, kindergarten through third grade or fifth grade, but one cannot teach algebra to 35 students; we need a smaller class size, hopefully 20 students where one can really deal with the complications.

The last issue, and I know I like to talk about this too because a lot of people think sometimes as Democrats and Republicans, well, the Democrats, they do not really want tax relief. Sure, I would love to have tax relief. I do my own taxes and let me tell my colleague, I would like to simplify and make it a lot easier. But there are things that we could do for targeted tax relief that we had as part of our legislation, and again, it was not even seriously considered. The only thing that was considered was that $800 billion over a 10-year period that would literally take the heart out of Social Security and Medicare efforts. Not only that, but also in military spending and everything else that is the responsibility of our country.

Let me just finish by saying a couple of weeks ago, and I have used this before, the reason the managed care issue was so important and why it passed this House on a very bipartisan vote is it was illustrated by Newsweek, ''HMO Hell,'' and the number of people who are going through that. And they are frustrated because they have some type of insurance, whether it is through their employer, whether it is maybe they pay part of it through their employer; and yet when they go receive that type of care, when they go get that care, they are somehow eliminated from it or delayed.

Our bill would eliminate the gag rules where a physician or a doctor or a provider could talk with their patients. It would make the determination of medical necessity not by a bureaucrat or someone answering a phone, but by someone who actually knows that individual patient. Outside, an independent appeals process, a swift appeals process which will make sure that people do not have to go through HMO hell. Emergency room care. Instead of one having to drive by one's closest emergency room, if someone has an emergency, maybe one has heart trouble or chest pains and going to the hospital on their list, one can go to the closest hospital and find out if it really is an emergency and if one needs to be stabilized. That would help stop having to go through HMO hell.

The last one is accountability. That is probably more important than almost any of them, because everybody ought to be accountable in their jobs. The gentleman and I are accountable to our voters every 2 years. I tell people my contract is renewed every 2 years, so we are accountable. Because if we make a vote up here that our constituents do not like, then they have the right to vote against us. Hopefully, if we do something they like, they vote for us, so it comes out even. But on accountability, the people who make the medical decisions need to be accountable and, ultimately, that means the courthouse.

Now, part of accountability is a good, strong independent appeals process, but we found out in Texas that we have a good appeals process, but the reason it is successful is we have that backup. If the appeals process breaks down, one can go to court. During over 2 years of our Texas law, we have had 250, 300 maybe appeals, just hundreds of them filed and over half of them are being found in favor of the patient, but we have had less than five lawsuits. In fact, three of those five I understand is by one attorney in Fort Worth, Texas, for whatever reason. So there have not been many rushing to the courthouse.

So if we had strong accountability, we would then keep people from having to go through HMO hell, and that is a bill that I know the gentleman and I talked about all year and last year and maybe even the year before. Because we have not passed it this year, after the New Year holiday, after we celebrate the holidays and the new millennium, hopefully we will come back and be able to pass a real strong HMO reform bill, patterned after a lot of what our States have, particularly in Texas.

That is why I think the unfinished agenda is so important for us. We do not want to just point at the other side and say, hey, you are doing wrong; let us see what we can all do right. We could do right on managed care reform; we could do right on prescription drug medication; we could do right on a minimum wage increase; we could do right by education, for smaller class sizes; and we could do right by passing a strong campaign finance reform bill, again, that would eliminate the soft money that we hear is so bad. Although again, the gentleman and I do not benefit from that as individuals, because we are under the caps like everyone else is, but that soft money that goes to the party structures and whoever else, and even the independent expenditures from people who maybe if they do not like how the gentleman voted on a bill or they do not like how I voted, they can spend literally millions of dollars trying to defeat us without knowing who is actually spending it. That is why we need campaign finance reform. People should have the right to know who is doing it.

There are a lot of things that we did not do this year, and I appreciate the gentleman setting aside this special order again, even though it is in the middle of the day instead of late at night to talk about the unfinished agenda. We did not do very good this year, but we will do better next year, we hope.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to thank the gentleman for what he said, and particularly for raising those tombstones. I just wanted to comment on some of the tombstones and some of the remarks the gentleman made because I think they are so appropriate. I really like the tombstone presentation, because I think it says it all. I mean, what do they say? ''Rest in peace, killed by the GOP, 1999.'' That is basically what we face.

We know that in another day or so, once this budget is passed, that we are going to go home and the Republicans want us to go home, not having addressed this unfinished agenda, these major issues that the public cares about. When we go home, that is all we are going to hear. I know my colleague from Texas faces that, and when I go home nobody is going to tell me, thank you for passing the budget. They expect the budget to be passed. That is routine. But they want us to address these major concerns that have not been addressed.

I just wanted to say a couple of things about them. The gentleman mentioned the campaign finance reform. I know that is not one that I hear too much about because I know most people think that is more of an inside situation, but it really is not. The reality is that when we have all of this money being spent that is unregulated, it really does corrupt the system. I just

know from my own campaign, in my last campaign in November of 1998, I think I spent and my opponent spent about $1 million each that was regulated money, if you will. In other words, hard dollars, Federal dollars that people contributed and people disclosed, and it was a hard-fought race.

But there was about $4 million to $5 million that was spent against me in independent expenditures, TV ads on New York stations, the last 2 or 3 weeks of the campaign, by a group that never identified itself. I think it called itself Americans For Job Security. They do not have to file anything; they do not have to disclose where that money came from. And to this day, we are only speculating about where we think the money came from. It was undoubtedly millions of dollars in corporate money that was coming from special interests, and we have no idea where it came from. It really corrupts the system when we have that kind of phenomenon. That is why we need to pass the Shays-Meehan bill and we need to have real campaign finance reform.

The other thing the gentleman mentioned, and I appreciate the fact that he brought it up, is the targeted tax cuts, because I started out this afternoon by talking about this trillion dollar Republican tax cut that went primarily for the wealthy and for corporate interests, and I am glad the gentleman came and pointed out that we as Democrats want tax cuts as well, but we want them targeted for middle-class families, for child care, for education needs, those kinds of things, not these huge, trillion dollar tax cuts that just go to help the wealthy.

I brought with me some information about that Republican tax cut, and I will just briefly mention it. Just to show how it was skewed toward the wealthy and corporations. The Republican plan means $46,000 per year for the wealthiest taxpayers that they were going to get back, but only $160 per year for the average middle-class family, and $21 billion was lavished on special interest tax breaks for big businesses.

The other thing about that trillion dollar Republican tax cut is that it basically used the entire surplus and would prevent us from paying down a significant chunk of the $5.6 trillion national debt.

The President keeps pointing out that we are now actually reducing the debt, paying back some of the bonds, not collecting the same interest that we were before. If we use all of that and give it back in tax breaks, one cannot pay down the national debt. But most important, that Republican tax plan just took all the money away that could be used for Medicare, for prescription drugs, and also to shore up Social Security.

The other thing the gentleman mentioned, one of the tombstones was about the small class size. I think we should mention that two of the reasons, and I think the gentleman mentioned it, two of the major reasons why we stayed here for the last 6 weeks and insisted on a better budget than what the Republicans were sending to the President, two of the major reasons was because we wanted to fund that 100,000 teachers program where the money goes back to the municipalities so they do not have to pay it in local property taxes and also for the COPs program which was similar. The Republicans, as the gentleman knows, did not want to pay for that. Their budget did not include those programs. Now, the budget that we are going to adopt tomorrow does at least include those.

So I guess we would have to say that at least in one of those cases, we have had success.

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But unfortunately, we have not had success on so many other things, the HMO reform, the Medicare prescription drugs, and so many of the other things the gentleman mentioned. But we did at least, in staying here for the last 6 weeks and insisting that they put in the 100,000 teachers and cops, at least we did accomplish something.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ). I am so pleased she is joining us here this afternoon.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Jersey for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to reiterate what the gentleman just talked about, this whole issue of why have we been here 6 extra weeks. Because I go home to my district and people ask me all the time, why is this fighting going on in Congress?

I try to explain to them that the strategy of the other side, of the Republicans, was to fund what they wanted up front in the appropriations bills and then leave the appropriations that they do not like to fund to the very end, and say, we have spent too much already. We cannot fund these other issues.

Of course, the one they wanted to leave for the end was the HHS and education bill, health care, human services, the education pieces of the budget. In fact, initially out of the Appropriations Committee, as I recall, they wanted a 40 percent cut in that.

I tell people all the time when I am back home, the reason we are in Washington still is because the Democrats did not want to see education and health care services cut. We would stand up and we would fight for that.

Of course, as we saw, we are getting the next installment, if you will, of the 100,000 teachers. I think that is great. It is patterned after the COPS program. Something that we have seen since President Clinton initiated that and we voted for it and we have been funding it, we have been seen the crime rate drop across the Nation.

It is really interesting because, of course, then we had COPS III in this year's budget. The Republicans did not want to fund it anymore. I would go back home and even my own police officers would say, what is wrong with those guys? Why do they not understand that the reason that crime has gone down is because we have had these extra bodies to put out in the communities to not deal in a negative way with neighborhoods, but to do a positive campaign, have a presence in the neighborhood, and it really has brought crime down.

And it is amazing to me that they would want to cut off that program, but of course that is what they had in mind, just as they did not want to do the second installment of the teachers.

We know when we look at the education system, a young child, and I had a forum in my district, and I remember the Vice President, Mr. GORE, came out. One of the students stood up, and she must have been, gosh, I think about 12 years old. We asked her, what is the most important thing in the classroom? What do you think is the most important thing? And she said, the most important thing is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. This is a young student. And I believe that. Trained teachers, teachers that are teaching to 20 students versus 40 students, it makes a big difference.

Of course, I am from California, where we have had at a State level an initiative to bring down the class size by hiring more teachers, et cetera. We have seen an incredible difference. I have first grade teachers, where we have implemented this in first and second and some of third grade, I have had the first grade teachers tell me, my students are learning to read. The difference is that I only have 20 to teach, and I can spend the quality time with them and understand the individual problems that they have in learning to read better than when I used to have 40 children in the classroom and it was more of a disciplinary problem, and I had to watch what was going on, and I could not spend individual time with students because there were so many, 39 others running amok.

The first grade teachers will tell us the difference is that they have a smaller class size and they can understand the individuals. Gosh, when we look at this Columbine situation and the school safety issue, and we look at what these students are really telling us, when we look at what is happening, it is a need for attention.

When you have a smaller class size, a teacher can see, are there problems with this child? Might they be having problems at home? Do we need to get some help for them? Can I sit down and talk something through with them? It is much harder to do for 40 kids in the classroom than it is on an individual basis.

I hope that people will understand why we have been here fighting as Democrats, and it has been because we care about what is happening in the public school system. We want to fix it.

We want to help it. That is through a myriad of programs, not just more teachers, but the teacher training grants that we have approved, the technology, which is such a need in the classroom.

I hope they will also understand that we have also been fighting to keep safety, to keep the crime rate down, to keep this safety issue out there by fighting for the COPS program.

These have been just incredibly important issues as to why we have been here, in addition to the health care factor that the gentleman mentioned earlier, and of course, the prescription drugs, and things that we just have not been able to get through because the leadership of this House, the Republican leadership, has closed an eye to it and do not want to push this type of thing through.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the gentlewoman for coming down. What the gentlewoman has said is so true. I do not really understand, we see my colleagues on the Republican side talk about education, but when it comes to actually trying to provide the funding that is going to go back to the local towns and help with property taxes to pay for education, they do not want to do it.

The gentlewoman remembers that we were here a year ago trying to adopt a budget, and again, one of the major sticking points was their unwillingness to fund this 100,000 teachers initiative. I know when I go back to New Jersey, and basically in all the school districts, they say it is great. They like it on a bipartisan basis, because frankly, it not only means more teachers and smaller class size, but also it saves them money that they do not have to hire the teachers because they get the Federal dollars.

The other initiative that is part of the unfinished agenda which the Republican leadership has refused to deal with is the school construction initiative. We have been talking about that now for several years, as well. That was sort of the second part, to bring down the class size and then provide some Federal dollars to help with school construction. That was for renovation in urban areas for older schools and also in the suburban areas where we have split sessions, and they cannot afford to build new schools to help pay for that, too. Yet that is not going to be in this budget because they say that is too much. They do not want the Federal government involved.

I do not know how the Federal government helping local schools pay for school modernization is somehow ideologically a problem, but this is what we hear from the Republican side of the aisle.

Ms. SANCHEZ. If the gentleman will yield further, they do say that. They say that they do not think at a Federal level we should be involved.

We have proposed to them programs that work wonderfully; for example, school construction bonds, the whole issue of at a local level an entire community has to decide that, yes, in fact they need new schools and they are willing to pay for new schools. They have to pass a bond issue; if they would do that, if they would do the work, and then of course the building of the schools and all of that is still under local control.

We have a lot of propositions here in the House that would say, you pay the principle on the bonds and we, those people who purchased those school bonds, will get a tax credit on their income tax form, $1 for $1, where they do not have to send the money to Washington. Instead, they get the tax credit on their income taxes. What does that mean? It means that the Federal government basically picks up the interest cost on the bonds. That is about a 50 percent match.

It has two of these Republican types of issues with it; one, keep it at a local level. They have to approve it locally, they have to work it locally, and the local community wants it, needs it, and decides to do it. And secondly, do not send your money to Washington, do not send us the money, keep it as a tax credit. It fits right in there their philosophies of less money to Washington, but still this whole issue of constructing schools is just something that they do not want to do, at a time when I look in California and we have such a need.

One of the districts I represent, Anaheim City School District, it is growing at twice the rate in school enrollment of children as the five fastest growing States in school enrollment across the Nation, twice as fast. It grows by about a thousand students a year. That is a new elementary school every year. Yet, they have the same number of elementary schools they had as when I was going through the school system 25, 30 years ago.

It is amazing. They go year round, four-track. They never have a summer anymore. They do not have a traditional school, they have different tracks going. They send their kid for 8 weeks, and then he is off for a week. Then they send him for another 8 weeks, et cetera.

Every time that the teacher finishes that 8 weeks, she has to pack up her classroom, put it in storage, go away for a week, come back, unpack the classroom in a different school building. Imagine if you are a professional, imagine if we had to pack up our offices every 8 or 9 weeks here, how much work we would really get done.

They have gone to double sessions, so not only do they have this year-round school going on, but they have an a.m. and p.m. session with their kids, which means some kids start to eat lunch at 9 in the morning, and some kids do not get lunch until 2 p.m. in the afternoon. They have sessions at which kids, they have only so much room outside for kids to sit down at the picnic tables.

Besides that, they have portables all over the green grass area, so the kids really cannot go out and play anymore because they now have portable classrooms. In fact, I have a school system that, if you took the number of portables they have on the school sites, on the current permanent school sites, and you took them off and you actually made the equivalent of new school sites, you would have 27 new school sites versus the 26 existing school sites. That is how crowded it is getting in California.

Mr. PALLONE. We have the same problem in New Jersey, maybe not as severe. But I know that the State legislature now is struggling to pass some sort of school bond modernization initiative. Obviously, if we could get money from the Federal government, it would make such a difference.

Again, we talk about the school modernization, and that is nowhere to be seen in this budget. We just have to press for it as part of this unfinished agenda when we come back.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY), who has been down here many times talking about these issues.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for hosting this special order, because we are at the end of the session. I think it is time to take a look back at what has been accomplished over the past year, or in this case, unfortunately, what has been left needing and deserving of action.

Let us just go through the issues, ending with the budget issues, which are still being wrangled about even as we visit on the floor this afternoon.

A Patients' Bill of Rights. I think if we look at issues that enjoy very broad support across the country, and indeed, a very significant bipartisan support in this Chamber, it would be the drive to give health insurance policyholders greater protections that their medical care decisions will be made between the doctor and themselves, not by some intervening HMO official.

That seemed to be a very clear-cut issue. After significant discussion in this Chamber there was a vote, and it was a strong bipartisan vote to give patients meaningful protections relative to their HMOs. Unfortunately, we saw the Speaker turn around and do everything possible to sabotage that bill in the conference committee, refusing to appoint to the conference committee even those who had been supportive of the legislation; in fact, sandbagging, so this bill which enjoyed the strong vote out of the House was doomed to failure in conference committee. The result, of course: no legislation on the Patients' Bill of Rights.

Mr. Speaker, we started the year with a very, or actually at the end of the school year we had the terrible tragedy of Littleton. It drew our attention to certain essential gun safety actions, very measured but prudent steps we could have taken: child safety locks; dealing with the gun show loophole, making the sale of guns at a gun show context somewhat similar to

what it would be under a licensed dealer, be it a retail vendor, a hardware store, or what have you.

Again, there was broad national support for those measures, and yet, it was stymied within the Chamber and no further effort to bring it forward, even though the Speaker in this instance, unlike the Patients' Bill of Rights, said he did intend to have a response move forward; ultimately sabotaged by his own people, and nothing happening on the gun safety issues.

An issue that I have seen coming on and coming on very strong is the need to address the soaring cost of prescription drug medications. That is especially true, and certainly it had been my hope that this would be the Congress where we could take steps forward to address this issue in one of two ways. I think the best way to address it would be to fold in some type of prescription drug coverage in the Medicare program. I hoped that that could be achieved.

In the alternative, in the event that questions about the financing of that would prove too tough to deal with, we could address pricing differentials, because it is very clear that right now the drug companies are selling below cost to their favorite customers, like the HMOs or Federal agencies, and coming back and having people paying these prescription drugs out of pocket.

Our seniors on fixed incomes so often need these prescription medications for their very health maintenance, and unfortunately, this is going to be a Congress leaving town without having done one thing relative to prescription drug needs of our seniors. I just think that is what has become another in a long string of failures.

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We are heading into an election year. We had a chance to address campaign finance reform. No campaign finance reform coming out of this Congress. Another in a long litany of failures.

In addition, one of the things that I had hoped we could really achieve, especially in this situation, would be to strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund, extend the life of its solvency. Move now to address the needs of baby boomers in retirement. We had the plan. We had the opportunity. Unfortunately, not one hour on the floor of this House has a measure been discussed to lengthen the life of the Social Security trust fund.

We did see, I will say with Social Security, I think, some very clever sleight-of-hand by the majority. They tried to deflect the discussion from the Social Security Trust Fund and its long-term solvency to whether or not funds from the Social Security revenues were being spent on the funding of government. All of their argument did not have anything to do with strengthening Social Security. None of their arguments go to lengthen the life of the trust fund so much as one day. But they drove the point: The Democrats were going to raid Social Security for wild spending programs, and they were going to put a stop to it.

Mr. Speaker, we know the score, and I have got the score revealed here on this chart. This is from the Congressional Budget Office. About $14 billion in general fund surplus to support additional spending. And now we know that even as the deal is being put together on the final spending of this Congress, we are going to be into the Social Security program at least $17 billion and, quite potentially, much larger than that. So although they did not lengthen the life of the trust fund one day, they spoke a lot about not spending any of the Social Security surplus. The Congressional Budget Office makes it very clear, Social Security money is being spent under their budget plan.

I think, in total this constitutes really an abysmal year in terms of lack of action on the one hand coupled with action that is not helpful on the other hand. I would hope that next year we could put forward a much better record of accomplishment for the American people. Because in the end, I think a congressional session like this should not be about setting up the next election. The elections are about having us work together, putting aside the overheated, overblown campaign rhetoric and getting into the Chamber and rolling up our sleeves, bridging our differences and forcing solutions for the American people. That is what they expect out of Congress.

So perhaps, and I would have to say there is some unlikeliness to this, but even though the 2000 elections are going to be looming large next year, it would be my hope the majority leadership would concentrate on the task at hand and that is doing the people's business. Let the 2000 elections take care of themselves. I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I just wanted to say with regard to the remarks that the gentleman from North Dakota made, there is no question that we have to put on the pressure with this Republican Majority when we come back to try to deal with this unfinished agenda.

The one thing I wanted to mention very briefly is that we have already put in place a rule to bring up a discharge petition on the price discrimination and the prescription drug benefit. We have one bill that would basically deal with the price discrimination by putting in place a Federal remedy, and another that would provide for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. We are going to make sure when we come back that we get the petition signed and that we force that issue to the floor, which we have had to do with every one of these issues, unfortunately. Take that extraordinary means of a discharge petition, which should not be the case, but unfortunately that is what is necessary to get the Republican leadership to move in the House on every one of these issues. HMO reform, campaign finance reform, gun safety, every one that we could mention we have had to go that route.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the gentleman. We have had various petitions and, hopefully, there will be another way when we return in January to try to get the prescription drug issue to the floor.

I just want to wrap up my comments with respect to what the gentleman from North Dakota said about Social Security. Let us face it. Next year is going to be a very difficult election year with control of the House, in particular, up for grabs. I think it will be very difficult to move legislation through. This would have been really the ideal year to take a look at the Social Security issue and shoring it up.

Why? Because we have the time to do it. Because we have a surplus for the first time to be able to take a look at where the monies are spent. And because there are still inequities. Just looking at the 2013 year where we will have the switch over and there will be a deficit fund gathering for Social Security. But there are still inequities in the program that we have, like the notch babies. All of these issues. They do not affect a lot of the population, but they affect people who have been working very hard all of their lives and somehow along the line got something done, a law passed here that was against them for really no reason.

We really need to take a look at this restructure of Social Security, make sure that it is solvent, make sure that we are putting the monies aside today for tomorrow when we will need them. And it is a shame that this Congress was unable or unwilling, that the leadership in this House, the Republican leadership, was unwilling to address the Social Security reform issue.

Mr. Speaker, with that I yield back to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman from California bringing that up, because I guess we can take some solace in the fact that at least we stopped this tax break for the wealthy and for the corporate interests. Because if that had passed and the President had signed it, then there would not even be the money available in the surplus as it grows over the next few years to even address the Social Security and the Medicare prescription drug issue. So I guess we have to kind of be happy for small victories, so to speak. At least that did not happen. I agree completely.

The President started out the year in his State of the Union address last year saying he wanted 1999 to be the year when we addressed the solvency of Social Security and Medicare. Basically, the Republican leadership made that impossible, but we just have to try and work harder next year. We are going to be down here on the floor every day in January and February making the point that these issues, this unfinished agenda, have to be addressed.