ADMINISTRATION NEEDS TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, no one talks a better game than the Department of Homeland Security. But beyond the bluster, there is reason to feel deeply insecure about this administration's efforts to protect America.

Although we hear a great deal about the war on terror, no competent general in any war would leave his home defenses with so many holes. Every line of critical homeland defense is underfunded and unprepared for an attack on American soil, and we are going in the wrong direction.

Unbelievably, the administration essentially froze homeland security spending in 2003. The President's budget cut port security grant funding by 63 percent, cut first responder funding within the Department of Homeland Security by 15 percent, and provided no dedicated funding whatsoever for rail security or protecting chemical plants and nuclear power plants.

My question is, when is this administration going to get serious about funding homeland security.

HOUSE KILLS OPTIONS RULE SHIFT

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House voted to block a rule that would require companies to count stock options against their profits. Now, Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan, a proponent of mandatory expensing and the Financial Accounting Standards Board proposal, told a Senate hearing yesterday that he would be most concerned if Congress intervened. Of the rule-making board, he said, I think they do a good job. It is a tough job. But the House yesterday intervened.

Advocates of mandatory expensing include Securities and Exchange Commissioner and Chairman William Donaldson, the billionaire investor, Warren Buffett and all four big accounting firms. The FASB proposal answered the call for accurate financial statements that came from a string of corporate scandals starting with Enron.

Mr. Speaker, who could be against that? Just allow stock options to be expensed. We could allow exceptions for start-up companies, especially in the high-tech area, but instead Congress, here in the House yesterday, blocked a rule to count stock options.

I hope the Senate will not pass this legislation.

ATTACK THE DEFICIT

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, Republican leadership still does not grasp the importance of reducing our Nation's deficits. Instead, they continue to focus on misplaced priorities.

Our Nation faces record deficits, and we ought to tackle the real problems that deficits pose. Deficits put a strain on the economy. They threaten Social Security and force families to bear the burden of our Nation's debt.

Over the next 6 years, Nevada families will pay on average more than $20,000 out of their own pockets to help cover the cost of the national debt. Instead of dealing with this, the Republican leaders have chosen this week to focus on legislation that would erode the separation of powers by removing Federal court jurisdictions to review challenges to the Defense of Marriage Act.

It is incomprehensible to me that Republican leaders have deemed this the pressing issue when millions of Americans have no health insurance, we still have not passed a transportation bill, and our deficits are skyrocketing out of control.

Let us focus on what is really important to American families, attack rising deficits with sensible approaches and let us let all of this extraneous nonsense go by the wayside where it belongs.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG CARD HELPING SENIORS

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sing the praises of the Medicare-approved prescription drug card. Seniors are now saving up to 20 percent off brand-name prescriptions, 40 percent off generics and 60 percent off mail order prescriptions.

In addition, America's poorest seniors can sign up to receive an additional $1,200 credit for their prescriptions over the next year and a half. For those lower-income seniors, savings can be as high as 86 percent off what they are paying before the card.

Now that seniors are receiving these savings, Democrats have realized they cannot claim that the cards do not help. America's poorest seniors are getting cash subsidies for their medications, so now the Democrats have taken a new approach to their mediscare tactics.

Since they know the cards are beneficial, they are now saying that they are too confusing. Well, if seniors will call the 1–800–MEDICARE number and have their prescription bottles handy, give them your ZIP code, what prescriptions you are currently taking, the name of each drug, the dose, how often you take the drug, and the cost of the drug, you will be able to receive information that will immediately be of assistance.

RICH GET RICHER, POOR GET POORER

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, two headlines speak volumes about the economic conditions of the middle class in America today: Sunday's New York Times headline, ''Hourly Pay is Not Keeping Pace With Price Rises''; yesterday's Wall Street Journal, ''So Far, Economic Recovery Tilts to the Highest Income Americans.'' And for the middle class we have a wage and benefit recession.

These headlines show that there is two-track economy, one for the very wealthy who are doing well, and one for the middle class who are struggling to keep pace with their middle-class dreams and providing for their children.

What we have today is a $500 billion deficit all financed because we are trying to wage three wars with three tax cuts and showing it cannot be done.

Republicans have chosen to put off addressing America's health care crisis, rising tuition costs, stagnant wages, and the ever-elusive retirement security.

As corporate profits boom in America by 16 percent, America's middle class are feeling squeezed by stagnant wages and rising health care costs. While sales of BMWs and at Neiman-Marcus are rising, same store sales at Target and Wal-Mart are stagnant.

With a record like this, only this administration would wave the banner, ''Mission Accomplished'' above the economy. It is time to put that banner back where it came from.

NO HONEST MISTAKE

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

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely amazing that since the revelations about Sandy Berger, who was National Security Adviser for President Clinton and has been the Kerry Campaign's senior policy adviser, since these revelations that Sandy Berger had removed classified documents at the National Archives, that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been so dismissive of this gross violation of our national security.

I can only imagine the howls from the other side of the aisle if allegations were made against Condoleezza Rice, that she had stuffed documents, classified documents in her socks and removed them from the Archives and that some of the documents were still missing.

I am sure we would hear accusations of a cover-up, a vast conspiracy.

No, we are hearing none of that from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Instead, what do we hear? They say it was a mistake, an honest mistake, more innocent than it looks. We certainly do not hear any calls for investigations.

Well, I am both shocked and appalled by these reports, and I am calling for the appropriate House committee to investigate. The American people deserve to know.

FAILED REPUBLICAN ECONOMIC PLAN

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

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, it has been 1,168 days since President Bush and the Republican Party embarked on their economic plan for our country. During that time the national debt has increased by $1,636,400,551,909.99.

According to the Web site for the Bureau of the Public Debt at the U.S. Department of Treasury, yesterday the Nation's outstanding privately held debt was $4,228,487,022,143.12. Foreign holdings, debt held by foreign governments and others, not Americans, now total $1.5 trillion. This is an increase of $740 billion since January 2001 and is now 41 percent of all privately held debt.

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PROGRESS IN IRAQ REPORTED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's New York Times front page surprisingly detailed some of the progress being made daily in Iraq. The article described dozens of small-scale construction initiatives or microprojects that have been under way throughout Iraq. This includes digging wells to supply water to hundreds in small towns and helping to restore historic sites that are essential to the local culture.

This is only a grudging glimpse of the good news that has been taking place in Iraq since the American military and coalition forces liberated the nation from Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime. I have seen firsthand the positive progress being made in Iraq to build a civil society which fights terrorist training to protect Iraqi and American families.

I am encouraged that media outlets, such as the New York Times that for too long ignored the good news in Iraq in favor of police-blotter journalism, are now showing limited signs of balanced reporting.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will never forget September 11.

HONORING STUDENTS AROUND NEW YORK CITY WHO PARTICIPATED IN CONSTITUTION EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

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

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the over 100 students from around New York City who participated this year in the Constitution Education Engagement Project. The CEEP program, of which Carl Bonomo is the founder and Dorothy McCloskey is the director, takes secondary school students from around New York City and asks them to have hearings, discussion and debates and arrive at a piece of legislation for this Congress to consider.

This year, the winner was from the Wadleigh Secondary School. Their piece of legislation, which addresses the inequities in education funding, I will be introducing in the RECORD following these remarks, as well as the list of students who participated to make this project such a success.

The legislation that they have come up with addresses problems that affect over 41 States in the United States, and that is the inequity between funding among different school districts. In New York State alone, $17,000 is spent per student in one district compared to $6,000 per student in others.

Since 1973, 45 different States have had to address the inequities in school funding. The students at the Wadleigh Secondary School are among our brightest and best. They are members of the CEEP program, which seeks to address the problems we have in our country through the legislative process.

I hope this House joins in paying tribute to their successes.

FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

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

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the proposed Federal marriage amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Marriage for thousands of years has been between one man and one woman. This body passed the Defense of Marriage Act, along with 38 State legislatures. Yet in recent years, courts and other government authorities have actually worked against these efforts to protect marriage.

Today, because of local government authorities, homosexual couples are able to be married in certain States and cities in our country. It will not be long until a couple will try to force another State to recognize this marriage; and sooner or later, they will find a Federal judge who will side with them.

Congress must take a stand now against these efforts to thwart the will of Congress, State legislatures, and the American people. Thus far, Federal law has not stopped courts from ruling in favor of these illegal unions. Organizations have challenged DOMA in arenas that further remove the decision-making process from the general public and their elected representatives, barring the majority of Americans from being heard during the process.

We should support efforts to block Federal judges from overriding DOMA, but only the Federal marriage amendment can protect the American people's will from being silenced once and for all.

OVERTIME PAY REGULATIONS

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, on August 23, President Bush's new overtime pay take-away rules will go into effect. These rules will slash wages for over 6 million Americans.

Since 2001, this administration has passively stood by while Americans lost their jobs and unemployment benefits; but here in Congress, we have a duty to fight for the safety and security of workers who need overtime wages to pay their bills and make ends meet.

If these rules go forward, the outcome will be disastrous for working families who depend on the income from overtime wages in order to live. Hardworking mothers and fathers in my hometown of Los Angeles will see their workplace more than their homes, their bosses more than their families as they are forced to work longer hours for less pay.

Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous for Congress to deny overtime pay to the nurses, policemen, secretaries and every other person who works for a living, while the administration rewards millionaires and big corporations with tax breaks. Slashing overtime wages is another example of this administration's disregard for the well-being of the middle class.

INVESTIGATION OF SANDY BERGER

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

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton's National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, has admitted to removing highly classified terrorism documents from a secure room during preparations for the September 11 Commission hearings.

According to reports, Mr. Berger knowingly, and this is an arrogant, total disregard of the law, knowingly removed handwritten notes he had made while reading classified documents by sticking them in his jacket and pants. He also removed several classified documents. Some of these documents were discarded by Mr. Berger and are still missing.