

and the poor. This bill does not save Medicare, it dismantles it. I urge all my colleagues to reject this shameful bill and to support the Gibbons-Dingell Substitute.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS
MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 24, 1995

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my colleagues a disturbing news story. The Associated Press reported today that a chilling backlash against battered women has formed in this country since O.J. Simpson was acquitted of murder. Advocates for abused women say that calls to domestic violence hotlines have dropped sharply in some States because women fear their claims will not be taken seriously.

In the aftermath of the Simpson trial, several jurors stated for millions of viewers to hear that domestic violence has nothing to do with murder. Yet over 4,000 women each year are killed by husbands or partners who have abused them. Domestic violence has everything to do with murder, everything to do with abuse, pain, suffering, loss of self-esteem, and violence against women.

The passage of the Violence Against Women Act was a great achievement in the fight against domestic violence. Public awareness remains high. Communities are working to see that this problem is eliminated and that victims of abuse have somewhere to turn or a safe place to go.

I am pleased to report that in my district the San Francisco Police Department recently announced the formation of a special unit to investigate domestic violence cases, one of only two such special units in the State of California. But domestic violence is still our problem. It will be our problem so long as it exists. We as legislators are responsible for letting women in this country know that we taken them seriously—that there are funds and resources available for their needs, that they don't have to hide their problem or be afraid to report cases of abuse.

I urge my colleagues to support full funding of the Violence Against Women Act, and to take every opportunity to speak out against this unspeakable crime against women, not just during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, but every day.

GETTING THE HOT AIR OUT OF
GOVERNMENT

HON. CHRISTOPHER COX

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 1995

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, the Seven-Year Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1995 gives taxpayers plenty to cheer about. Previous speakers have talked about the many ways in which this bill attacks wasteful government spending. I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about one boondoggle in particular which our Balanced Budget bill will eliminate: the National Helium Reserve.

Humorist P.J. O'Rourke once described the National Helium Reserve as "amazingly stupid, even by government standards." First established in 1925 so America could field a fleet of blimps in time of war, the federal helium program has now piled up a debt of \$1.4 billion and loses tens of millions more every year. It's incapable of competing with private industry, which accounts for 90 percent of the nation's helium sales and is fully capable of supplying the entire demand. But no Congress—until this one—had ever taken action to terminate this "poster child of government waste."

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to point out that the true cost of maintaining this wasteful government anachronism has been much greater than its \$1.4 billion debt might indicate. A more accurate price tag might be \$250 billion—that's the amount in new taxes the American people had to endure under the 1993 tax bill signed into law by President Clinton.

Why is it appropriate to link the helium reserve to the Clinton tax bill? The answer can be found in Bob Woodward's *The Agenda* and in numerous other press reports at the time of the 1993 budget debate: President Clinton promised Rep. Bill Sarpalius—the Democrat

who until this year represented Amarillo, Texas, the home of the helium reserve—that the reserve would be protected if Sarpalius changed his vote, and voted for the Clinton tax bill. Sarpalius did change his vote, allowing President Clinton a one-vote margin of victory on House passage of his tax bill.

Privatizing the National Helium Reserve, then, is an achievement steeped in symbolism. While I am pleased that President Clinton now supports termination of the helium program—it was one of the few specific budget cuts he mentioned in his 1995 State of the Union address—I'm disappointed that his budget proposed to forgive the reserve's \$1.4 billion debt. This is altogether unfair to the American taxpayers who for so long were forced to keep this antiquated dirigible of a program aloft. We must not simply "write off" the reserve's enormous debt.

That's why I am especially pleased that the Budget Reconciliation bill before us today rejects the Clinton Administration's approach, and instead incorporates the language from H.R. 873, the helium privatization legislation I introduced earlier this year along with more than 170 Republican, Democrat, and Independent Members of the House.

The Budget Reconciliation legislation gets the government out of the helium production business, yielding millions in annual savings. It requires the government to provide accurate annual financial statements that will for the first time reflect the reserve's true cost to the taxpayers. It provides firm dates for beginning and completing privatization of the Federal Government's vast helium reserves. Most importantly, it ensures that the reserve's entire \$1.4 billion debt to taxpayers will be repaid out of the sale of the helium stockpile.

Mr. Speaker, today's vote on the Seven-Year Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act represents an enormous victory for those of us who have fought for years to get the government out of the helium business. I'd like to thank the many members of this body—including BARNEY FRANK, KEN CALVERT, BARBARA VUCANOVICH, and FRANK CREMEANS—who have worked so hard to help make this proposal a reality, and I urge all my colleagues to join with me in voting in favor of this important legislation.