

Well, I think that Americans all over the country would be very, very well advised to give that message unequivocally to every member of this body and every Member of the Senate: Keep your paws off of our pensions. Clearly, the future, the retirement future of the American worker is at stake, and they deserve no less.

Final comments, Mr. BARRETT.

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. There is a couple of comments that I want to make and I think that they are important enough that we should continue for a few more minutes on this.

As you indicated early in your comments, this issue first came to the American public's attention in the early 1970's, and maybe we could go to that graph for a second, the very first graph, the one that you had in front of us. We had seen it once before, but I want to look at it again just for a second.

□ 2330

This issue first raised its ugly head in the early 1980's. As we saw in the period from 1982 to 1986, there were \$16.5 billion that was bled out of pension funds. That is when Congress stepped in and decided that it should do something so that the American workers and really corporate stability in this country would not be negatively impacted by corporate raids based primarily on the value of a company's pension fund. So Congress came in and enacted a 10-percent excise fee.

As you can see from that chart, the amount of reversions as they are called, I call it bleeding, dropped from \$16.5 to \$5.5 billion. In 1991 again, early 1990's, Congress again acted and basically on a bipartisan basis understood that this is not good for the American worker, increased the excise tax and basically we saw it drop to a trickle, where essentially now corporations that take funds out of their pension fund are doing so for legitimate purposes, for health benefits, maybe for some other employee stock option or basically for health benefits.

I think it is extremely important after we know what happened 12, 13 years ago and saw what a scandal it was 12 or 13 years ago to have people who worked 30 or 40 years of their lives, dedicated to a company, to see their pensions taken away, to put that in context to what is being proposed today, is being proposed today as we can see from this chart, is more than double what occurred in the early 1980's and essentially double of that which happened during the entire decade.

Again, you have to give credit where credit is due. This is a situation just as Willie Sutton used to say, "You rob banks because that's where the money is." What we are seeing right here in this Congress is the majority is going after those pensions because that is where the money is, and they are not going to kid around with a \$100 million, \$200 million, even \$1 billion. They are

going for \$40 billion that belongs to the American workers, that the American workers have put into those funds.

I think it is wrong. I think the majority leader was correct when he said earlier this fall, "Keep your paws off that pension money." That is what we should be doing. We should be keeping our paws off that pension money. Fortunately, the Senate, at least in its first go around, recognized that, and I think that demonstrates the extreme nature of this body when it comes to this issue.

As we have talked about for the last hour, we have tried over and over and over again to get a hearing, to get notification of workers as to what is going on, to go before the Committee on Rules and ask them to have a separate vote on this very important issue, and time and time and time again we have been told, "Get away, kid, you bother me."

The Senate works a little differently. The Senate does allow free-standing amendments, and when there was some light shed on this issue, when the U.S. Senate had the opportunity to look at this issue and had to be accountable to the American people, what did they do? They voted on a 94-5 vote to take this provision out of the Senate bill.

We have not had that luxury here in the House of Representatives, because we cannot have a vote on it. That is why it is so important for the American people to let their Members of Congress know that they do not want Congress to put their paws on their pension money. The only way that is going to happen is if the American people contact their Congressmen and women.

I want to thank you again for putting this together.

I will turn it over to the gentleman from Florida [Ms. BROWN].

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman again.

Mr. Speaker, I would tell the American worker that this reverse Robin Hood that is going on in Congress, robbing from the working people again, robbing from the retirees to give to the rich is the legacy of the 104th Congress.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, in closing, we have spent the last hour trying to highlight what truly is the most substantial threat posed to workers' pension security ever considered by a Congress. It would be the complete elimination of protections on pension funds, keeping corporations from basically taking workers' pension money.

The Republican majority has projected \$40 billion would flow out of pension funds, and they think that is a good thing, I think it is a bad thing. It is a very bad thing for the American worker.

I want to thank each of you for helping us highlight this issue tonight.

ADDRESSING THE FEDERAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BILBRAY). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] is recognized for 24 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I realize the time is late. The Committee on Rules has been meeting all evening, and we have just produced a rule which will bring to the floor a debt ceiling extension.

This debt ceiling extension will extend the debt so that the American Government can meet its obligation to the debt holders. This is a bill that I have never voted for in my 17 years in the Congress because I have always objected to what I would call the irresponsible, reckless spending of this United States Congress.

A lot of people like to blame that on a President but the truth of the matter is, a President cannot spend a dime. Only Congress can spend the taxpayers' dollars.

I often look back to the early days of Ronald Reagan, who was a hero of mine, because Ronald Reagan attempted to do what we Republicans are doing right now, and that is why I call this year the second beginning of the Reagan revolution.

In 1981 when President Reagan took office, it was his intent to downsize the Federal Government, to shrink its power, and to return that power to the States, to the counties, to the towns and villages and cities, to the local school districts, and to the private sector where it belongs.

Because, ladies and gentlemen, over 200 years ago we formed this republic. A lot of people think this is a Federal Government, but it is not. We are a republic of States that was formed primarily for the sole purpose of defending these States against outside military aggression that would threaten the sovereignty of the States.

Unfortunately for these States over the years, we have lost many of the States rights. The Federal Government has usurped those rights, and this Federal Government has just ballooned into a bureaucracy that really infringes on the very freedoms of the people that we would try to protect.

When you look at the deficits that we have piled on the generations to come, we now have a national accumulated debt of almost \$5 trillion, \$4.9 trillion.

When we look at the debt service, in other words, the amount of interest that it takes just to pay the interest on that debt each year, it comes to almost \$250 billion.

□ 2340

When you look at the whole pie of the Federal Government, one big round pie, and you take a slice out of it of \$250 billion, that is a huge, huge slice. And if we had allowed these deficits to continue to accrue like they have over the last 10 or 15 years, the annual debt service, that is, the amount of taxes we have to raise just to pay the interest would have grown if we had adopted President Clinton's budget projections.

We would have added \$1 trillion to that debt over the next 5 years. That is, we would have gone from \$5 trillion to \$6 trillion.

What happens to the interest, then, that we have to pay, if we added another trillion dollars? The interest would have grown from \$250 billion up to \$350 billion, a larger slice of the pie, and less money then available to take care of those people that truly do need help.

I yield to my good friend, a member of the Committee on Rules, from Miami, FL, and who does yeoman work here in the Congress, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART].

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I thank the gentleman. I appreciate you very much yielding.

I am very proud of the work that the Committee on Rules has been doing over not only these 10 months but very specifically these last two nights. We have been working, like tonight, until just before midnight in the Committee on Rules, bringing to the floor, first, the legislation we brought to the floor today to keep the Federal Government running, functioning, until December 1, and that is an important, important task while we work on trying to resolve that issue for the next fiscal year, and hopefully at some point getting, obtaining some collaboration, some cooperation from the White House down Pennsylvania Avenue, just a few blocks, and, of course, then the work that we did tonight where we fashioned the rule, the guideline, the framework with which we will bring to the floor tomorrow the legislation that you, Mr. Chairman, just referred to now, which is the legislation that will permit the Government of the United States to meet its fiscal responsibilities until December 12.

I think it is important, and obviously we discussed this in the Committee on Rules, as we focus in on these important pieces of legislation, which are obviously not only important but extraordinarily so, that we not, while we focus in on the trees, to use that analogy, we not lose sight of the forest. And that is very much related to what, Mr. Chairman, you were referring to just a few minutes ago.

I have to admit that I felt great uncertainty just months ago that we could actually in this Congress frame and pass a framework, a glide path toward balancing this budget in 7 years. Now, unfortunately, during those 7 years more debt will be accumulated, but at least what seemed very, very difficult and, in fact, is very, very difficult, is being done by this Congress, and that is we are in the process of passing a framework, a glide path that leads to an end of deficit spending by the year 2002.

And that sounds sometimes, Mr. Chairman, technical. Sometimes it sounds that is an issue simply of numbers, but there is no country in the history of the world that has been able to accumulate without end public debt

and has not ultimately gotten to a position where its economy falters because of it.

It is true that we are the richest Nation in the world. We are, in fact, the most powerful Nation in the history of the world, but unless we would have done what the American people decided in the election of 1994 had to be done, and that is get the economic house in order and balance the budget in the Federal Government, I fear that we would have reached a situation in 7 or 10 or 15 or 20 years where we would have passed beyond the point of no return.

So, Mr. Chairman, these tasks that involve our committee and that I am so proud to be able to be a part of under your leadership, day in and day out, where we work these long hours and sometimes, as the hours pass, we never forget, but it is always important for us to keep our eye on the big picture of why we are doing this work, and it is for our children and their children, and that this economy will remain an economy because of what we are doing now and because of the tough decisions that we are engaged in now. And it will remain an economy where a child that is being born today will not only be able, after he finishes school, to find a job, but also to create a job if he or she wants to, and that is what we are doing.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your work along with the rest of the leadership in this Congress in permitting the situation to come about where that child who is born today will be in an economy that will be the most competitive and the wealthiest economy in 20 or 40 years.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. SOLOMON. I want to thank the gentleman from Miami, FL, for the great work he does on the Committee on Rules with me. He is a new member on that Committee on Rules this year. You have certainly been like a right arm to me, LINCOLN. I know the people you represent in Miami certainly appreciate it.

They appreciate something else, too. I do not know how many people know it, but LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART has been a fighter of communism for all of his life. I have been involved in it for some 40 years myself, ever since the outbreak of the Korean war back in 1950, and I know that one person that has stood firm against Castro and this atheistic, deadly philosophy of communism has been the entire Diaz-Balart family, and, LINCOLN, we deeply appreciate that.

It was because of standing up way back in those days that Ronald Reagan and the rest of this country and our allies were able to bring down the Iron Curtain, and now we see democracy spreading out all over the world instead of communism spreading out throughout all of the world.

One point the gentleman was making was that when great nations become debtor nations, when they become fis-

cally irresponsible, they usually fail shortly thereafter. And as I was talking just before the gentleman came in, when we talk about this escalating debt and the debt service that is required to pay to support that debt every single year, that pie continues to grow bigger and bigger, that slice of that pie, and I was about to say that if we had followed the Clinton programs of expanding that debt by another trillion dollars over the next 5 years, the debt service would have grown from \$250 billion to almost \$350 billion.

And if inflation had set back in, as it usually does when you have fiscal irresponsibility in this Congress, like in the days of Jimmy Carter when interest rates rose, inflation rose to 9, 10, 11, 12, even 13 percent, interest rates followed. That is, the amount of money small business has to borrow, the rate it borrows from the banks, went to 21.5 percent.

What kind of business can support itself paying out that kind of interest? None.

□ 2347

Mr. Speaker, consequently, we could not allow that to happen. That is why we have put ourselves on this glide path to a balanced budget. This bill that we will bring up tomorrow, this increase in the debt service, goes a long way toward keeping us on that glide path, because for one thing, it gives regulatory relief to business and industry in America. It shrinks the size further of this Federal Government, which means less tax dollars to support it, which means more money in the pockets of people in business and industry in America, so that this country can survive and compete and be profitable and create jobs for the high school graduates, for the college graduates.

That is really what we are about. We are not going to be deterred. We are going to complete this job. It is going to be tough, it is going to be difficult, but we will do it.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2586, TEMPORARY INCREASE IN THE STATUTORY DEBT LIMIT

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-328) on the resolution (H. Res. 258) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2586) to provide for a temporary increase in the public debt limit, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. RAMSTAD (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today, on account of serving as a pallbearer at the funeral of David Hetland, field director of his district office.