

they inherited almost \$175,000 in taxes that they will have to pay over their lifetime as their portion of the national debt. This is because we have failed as a nation to balance our budget.

Children born today and children born tomorrow will have an even higher amount of debt that we will impose upon them if we fail in our obligation as policymakers.

What is the effect of this great debt that we keep accumulating year after year? The effect is that more and more of our tax dollars that could be going for important services such as public safety, hospitals, infrastructure, Medicare, Social Security, and some of the key programs that we support on a bipartisan basis, will be drained. A greater percentage of what we send to Washington is going to go to pay the interest on the debt rather than to serve the people that we have been elected to represent.

I heard a number of speakers a few minutes ago in this body talk about the fact that our national debt today is over \$5 trillion. I suspect there are very few Members of this body who know how many zeros go after the "5" to make so great a number. But here is a very cogent example: If a person opened a business on the day that Christ was born almost 2,000 years ago; and if their business skills were so terrible that on that first day they lost \$1 million; and if every day thereafter they lost \$1 million to the present day, we would not even hit 1 trillion dollars.

Yet we as a nation are now laboring under almost \$5.5 trillion worth of debt. What does that mean in real terms? It means that every single day that the sun rises on this building, the American taxpayers are forced to pay \$750 million in interest on this burgeoning debt.

One of the bipartisan things we have been able to agree on is that we will balance the budget by the year 2002. If we pass a balanced budget in this Congress, we will not have a balanced budget in 1997. We will not have one for 5 more years.

As of today, America has not had a balanced budget in 28 years. Now we are talking about having our first balanced budget after 33 years.

What would it take for us as a nation to pay off this debt? We would not only have to have a balanced budget, we would have to balance it to the point where we had a \$200 billion surplus. Not for 1 year, not for 2 years, but for almost 30 years.

We have not balanced the budget in almost 30 years. We would have to not only balance it, but have a huge surplus every year for 30 years to pay down this debt. And I use that example just to accentuate how much we owe as a nation and how we cannot continue to allow this debt to cripple our children's and our grandchildren's future.

We owe it to future generations to be responsible. We need to pass a balanced Federal budget. To insure it remains in balance,

we need to place that obligation in the Constitution. This is why I rise in support of these two worthy measures, and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting them.

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#### REPORT ISSUED ON ARTS AND HUMANITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. CAPP] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CAPP. Mr. Speaker, our former colleague, Dr. John Brademas, has issued a report on the condition of the arts and the humanities in this country. I want to thank Dr. Brademas and the committee and the support they have received from President and Mrs. Clinton for this very thoughtful, excellent report.

Truly, the strength of our country is dependent on the way we engage education and the way we give responsible cultivation and stewardship to the arts and the humanities. I urge that this report be taken seriously and that Congress give proper support to two superlative agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I think that our vitality as a Democratic society, as a learning society, is dependent upon the respect we exhibit for our cultural arts, our literature, our historic records and the other products of the creative spirit. I commend Dr. Brademas and the committee for this report and I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to support its recommendations.

#### HEALTH INSURANCE FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years congressional Democrats have been focusing their attention on addressing some of the most important health care challenges facing this country. Last year Congress took a small but important step in the right direction when it passed the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance reform bill. Because of that bill, citizens who change jobs will continue to receive health coverage, insurance companies may no longer deny individuals health coverage when they switch jobs due to preexisting medical conditions.

Although congressional Democrats were happy to see Republicans join us in passing this important piece of legislation, we did emphasize at the time of the bill's passage that we believed much more needed to be done. And as a result of this belief and as a result of the GOP's refusal to consider any other health issue other than portability,

Democrats immediately set about to build on the momentum the passage of the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill created by pushing for legislation that would make health care available to every child in this country.

There are now about 10 million uninsured children in the United States. To combat this problem, Democrats incorporated a children's-only health care plan into their family-first agenda. The plan was not only developed because Democrats believe our children deserve better health care, it was developed because of the recognition that today it is increasingly harder for even those parents with jobs to secure health insurance for themselves let alone for their children.

Unfortunately, we have not made any progress on this issue because the Republican majority has refused to allow our plans to move forward. We are 2 months now, 2 months, into the 105th Congress, and the Republicans who are the majority do not have anything of major importance for the Congress to consider. Unlike Democrats and the President, they do not have a plan to ensure that all children have access to health care nor do they appear to have any intention of letting our plan move forward.

The American people sent us here to develop legislative solutions to societal problems, such as providing health care to uninsured children. Every day we waste is a day another sick child goes without health insurance and we cannot continue to let this happen for moral as well as financial reasons.

A couple of days ago I brought the House's attention to a report that was issued by the New York City public advocate, Mark Green. It basically talked about the growing number of New Yorkers who are living without health insurance.

I know today that I am joined here on the floor with one of my colleagues from New York, Mr. SERRANO. The report, as the New York Times put it, quote, is filled with disturbing information that has implications for the entire country.

We are going to be talking with my colleagues from New York and from Texas about this report this afternoon. And although it does deal with New York City, I need to stress that the phenomena and the conclusions and findings that it comes to really apply all over this country, to every State and every city.

With respect to children, the report found that between 1990 and 1995, the proportion of uninsured children in New York City rose 6 percent. In 1990, 14 percent of children had no health insurance. By 1995, that figure was 20 percent. One out of every five kids in the largest city in the country has no health insurance.

Overall, the report found that the number of uninsured children under age 18 in New York City rose from 277,500 in 1990 to 323,800 in 1995, a one-sixth increase, more than twice the increase in the adult population.