

days after Paula Jones refused a settlement in her celebrated suit, she received notice that she and her husband would be audited for 1995 taxes. Since 1994 is the current audit year for the IRS, the administration's denial that the audit is related to the suit is suspect, to say the least.

Even if it is coincidental, do not try to convince the American people. Most Americans, justifiably cynical and untrusting toward the Federal Government, know the evidence exists that since the 1970's both Republican and Democratic administrations have not hesitated to intimidate their political enemies with IRS audits and regulatory harassment.

Even though the average IRS agent does not carry a gun, the threat of incarceration and seizure of property is backed up by many guns. All government power is ultimately gun power and serves the interests of those who despise or do not comprehend the principles of liberty. The gun in the hands of law-abiding citizens serves to hold in check arrogant and aggressive government. Guns in the hands of the bureaucrats do the opposite. The founders of this country fully understood this fact.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

THE STRONG NATIONAL ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Chamber today to talk about a very important issue to all Americans, and that is our economy, and specifically what I would like to address is some of the questions surrounding why is our economy doing so well.

There are lots of economists, people on Wall Street, who are marveling at the low unemployment rates, the low inflation rate, the very, very strong stock market. Indeed many people are saying that this is the best economy since World War II, possibly one of the best economies in our Nation's history. Why is that? What is going on? What are the causes for this?

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In particular, I want to address an issue that a lot of people have been bringing up, is it indeed secondary to the consequences of the policies and programs of the Clinton administration?

I have had the opportunity to hear both the Vice President and the President speak on a number of occasions, and, indeed, taking advantage of the situation with this strong economy and

taking some credit for the good times that exist right now.

I would like to just, first of all, begin by extending my opinion that I personally believe the single biggest reason why the economy is as strong as it is right now is because of the hard work of the American people.

It has, in my opinion, little to do with the policies that are emanating from Washington DC, but very much everything to do with people all over this country who are willing to get up in the morning, work hard to make a living, and, in particular, those people who are willing to take a risk and invest some of their hard-earned money in a new business, start a new company or, more importantly, many of the entrepreneurs all over this country who deny themselves pay raises and instead reinvest their money back into their business, and, in so doing, they create new jobs and make the country a better place to live.

Getting back to the issue I was talking about earlier regarding what impact have the policies of the Clinton administration so far on all this, as we all know, the economy began to turn around in 1992, even before the election when Bill Clinton was elected.

There were lots of economic indicators that we were coming out of the recession of the early nineties and that the economy was going to be turning around.

After being elected, the administration put forward its economic stimulus package to help jump start, quote-unquote, the economy, even though it was beginning to take off, and that was defeated in this House. That was one of the centerpiece issues of the economic package.

The other centerpiece piece was their health care plan, and their health care plan additionally was defeated. Their rationale for their health care plan helping the economy, of course, was by lowering health care costs, our businesses would become more competitive.

One of the most compelling reasons why this economy is going so well is revealed in this chart next to me on the left. What is shown here is interest rates, long-term interest rates, and this very much impacts the ability of businesses to borrow money, their competitiveness, their ability to be profitable and reinvest money back into creating new jobs.

After Bill Clinton was elected, interest rates went up and up and up, and that is because budgets were being presented and passed by this House that increased spending, deficits as far as the eye can see.

This line right here demonstrates the November election of 1994. You can see on this chart that interest rates dropped dramatically, almost 2 points, following the election of 1994, when, for the first time in 40 years, you had a Republican Congress that was going to hold the line on spending, you were going to get the budget balanced. And

when the Government is not out there borrowing \$200 billion every year, the cost of borrowing money goes down, and that not only helps businesses to do better, it helps moms and dads to make ends meet better because they can get a home mortgage for less money, they can buy a car for less money.

Now, interest rates went back up over here, and that was after the government shutdown. Now they have leveled off since then. In my opinion, yes, if you wanted to say who is responsible for this strong economy, it is the hard working American people.

But if anything coming out of this city has played a role in these economic good times that we are in right now, it has been Washington holding the line on spending, getting the budget balanced, and that was a consequence of the Republican Congress coming in and holding the line on spending.

There another dividend of the Government spending less. Interest rates go down, yes, and that makes it easier for businesses to be successful and for families to be able to refinance a home mortgage. But when the Government is not spending so much money, it helps keep the inflation rate low. That is why we have this good situation, a situation that has not existed since the 1950's, the last time there was a Republican Congress, where you have low interest rates, a strong economy, low unemployment rates, and, importantly, low inflation rates, because inflation robs people of their hard-earned money.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that though I believe that this economy is so strong, that there is a lot to be proud of, an economy is a fragile thing, and we need to continue to hold the line on spending, we need to continue to work toward balancing the budget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. COBLE]. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CLEAN MONEY, CLEAN ELECTIONS BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TIERNEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon just to speak briefly on the issue of campaign finance reform.