

## TAX CODE NEEDS OVERHAUL

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, the President referred to the proposed overhaul of the Tax Code as irresponsible. He went on to say that the Republican effort to reform the Nation's current income tax code would be simply reckless for the economy and families.

Mr. President, I respectfully disagree. In my opinion, it would be irresponsible for Congress not to overhaul this Tax Code. It would be irresponsible for this Congress to allow such an inequitable, punitive Tax Code to continue to stifle the economic growth in this country. Mr. President, I feel it is irresponsible for you and your administration to blatantly stump for the status quo when the status quo represents a tax collection agency that is abusive to innocent working men and women, intrusive into the lives of each and every taxpayer, and callous to every American citizen.

Although it is not clear at this point which type of alternative tax system would be best for this country, what is clear, however, is that the current tax system is broken and must undergo a complete overhaul. Mr. President, the only irresponsible action is your support for an unconscionable, unfair and defective tax system.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that they are to address their remarks to the Chair and not to other government officials.

PUBLIC EDUCATION PROVIDES  
OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FUTURE

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

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, America has a deep and strong commitment to public education. Education is a need for all Americans. Public education needs to be available for all Americans, not just a select few. In America we try to provide education for everyone.

Vouchers take away valuable resources from public education and provide it only to that select few. This program is not about school choice. It is about destroying the public education system and leaving the majority of America's youth without a choice and without a good education.

Today we have a fine group of young Texans from El Paso who attend public schools, who are here with us in Washington. Public education provides an opportunity for their future. It provides opportunity to many families not only in my own district but throughout our Nation who choose public education.

## MARRIAGE TAX ELIMINATION ACT

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask the question of why should we pass the Marriage Tax Elimination Act. I think it is best explained with a series of questions.

Do Americans feel that it is fair that a working married couple pays higher taxes just because they are married? Do Americans feel that it is fair that 21 million married working couples pay an average of \$1,400 more than an identical working couple living together outside of marriage? Do Americans feel that it is right that our Tax Code actually provides them an incentive to get divorced?

Twenty-one million married working couples pay on the average of \$1,400 more in taxes just because they are married. In the south suburbs of Chicago, that is 1 year's tuition at a community college. That is 3 months worth of day care.

The Marriage Tax Elimination Act now has 238 bipartisan cosponsors. It would immediately eliminate the marriage tax penalty. The marriage tax penalty is unfair and it is wrong. Let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty and do it now.

ON THE CUTTING EDGE IN  
DEALING WITH RAPISTS

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the Oklahoma Senate passed a bill to allow castration of convicted rapists. That is right. Castration. Opponents say it is cruel. Victims say it is about time. I say hats off, and anything else off, to the Oklahoma Senate. Maybe, just maybe, Mr. Speaker, rapists will not only think twice, they will start thinking 3 and 4 times before they brutalize our constituents.

I also would like to say that no matter how you slice this, Mr. Speaker, Oklahoma is on the cutting edge when it comes to dealing with rapists. For those who say, "How do you really feel, Jim?" I recommend that Oklahoma go a step further. Put it into law, then hire Lorena Bobbitt to administer the program.

I yield back whatever might be left after Oklahoma is done with rapists.

AMERICANS WANT FAIRER,  
SIMPLER TAX SYSTEM

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, on Monday the President indicated that he will not support efforts to sunset the Internal Revenue Code and to replace it with a fairer, simpler tax system. His

statement has caused me a great concern, especially since I do not know how much longer American families and businesses can afford to shoulder the tremendous tax burden they are currently facing. Taxes are simply too high, and the Internal Revenue Code is too lengthy and too complicated.

Polls prove that a fairer, simpler tax system is what the American people want. I know from speaking to the people in my district that it is not only what they want, it is what they need. I urge the President to join those of us who are working to give the American people the tax relief they deserve, want and need. It is past time for a fairer, simpler tax system in this country.

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR  
PUERTO RICO

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today is a very important day for the people of Puerto Rico, but it is a more important day for the democratic process. This afternoon the House of Representatives will debate H.R. 856, the United States-Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act. This bill sets up a plebiscite that will determine the future status of Puerto Rico.

The American people should know that this bill was designed to guarantee statehood for Puerto Rico because it was written by the party that supports statehood. I will say this again. If H.R. 856 becomes law, Puerto Rico will be the 51st State, whether or not the people of Puerto Rico want it to be.

H.R. 856 is not the result of a democratic process. By defeating this bill, we will be sending a message that we truly honor the idea of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico. I urge my colleagues not to be fooled by the arguments of the other side. A vote for H.R. 856 is a vote for statehood, not a vote for self-determination.

## BUDGET SURPLUS

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Budget Office, known in Washington as the CBO, announced yesterday that the Federal budget is expected to have a surplus of \$8 billion this year. That will be the first time in Washington there has been a balanced budget since 1969, 29 years ago.

Now, of course the liberals will be happy to have a surplus because they want to take that money and spend it on new programs and bigger social programs from Washington, D.C. Conservatives will be happy because they want to pass more tax cuts so that the middle class can keep more of their money.

Demagogues will be happiest of all, because they can tell more lies about