

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, it is that time of the year again, April 14th, the night before April 15th, the tax deadline. It is a bittersweet day for a politician. On the one hand, we are forced to confront the painful truth about how much the Federal Government takes from its productive citizens in the way of taxes. On the other hand, it is a tragic reality. It serves as an useful reminder to Republicans for what they stand for as a party.

To Republicans, taxes are a freedom issue. We believe that people should be entitled to the fruits of their labor. Slavery was a great evil because slaves were not entitled to the fruits of their labor. That was wrong.

The question for Republicans is one ultimately of choice: Who decides how to spend the money that Americans earn, those Americans or the government? We believe that people should have more power and more control over their lives, and the government should have less. That is the significance of April 15 to me.

THE SHAYS-MEEHAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM BILL IS AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill, and urge the Speaker to allow this important piece of legislation to get onto the floor for debate and a vote.

Shays-Meehan, which will stop large corporations and wealthy individuals from pouring hundreds of millions of dollars in soft money into both political parties, will not solve the crisis of campaign financing that we face today, but is an important step forward.

Mr. Speaker, one of the great tragedies of our time is that the American people are in large numbers giving up on the political process. In the last election, only 36 percent of the people voted, and tens of millions no longer believe that this Congress represents their interests. Rather, they believe, not without justification, that big money interests, through campaign contributions and lobbying efforts, develop the agenda here and call the tunes.

Mr. Speaker, let us tell the middle class and the working families of this country, the folks who do not contribute hundreds of millions, that we are listening to them. Let us pass campaign finance reform.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT COLONEL MANUEL FERNANDEZ, JR., UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

(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, today I rise to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Fernandez, Jr., upon his retirement from the United States Air Force after 22 years of distinguished service to our great Nation. An American hero, a decorated military aviator, Lieutenant Colonel Fernandez has served with distinction, including service as a squadron commander at several locations worldwide.

Most recently he served with honor and great distinction to the United States Congress as the deputy chief of the House Liaison Office. In this position Manny, who is known to his friend as Manny, excelled at providing information and service to Members of the House of Representatives. His intelligence, his charm, keen wit, and a can-do attitude made Manny Fernandez a pleasure to work with.

Because of Manny's credibility and good will, the Air Force and the Department of Defense will long reap the benefits of his tenure here on Capitol Hill.

On behalf of my colleagues, I wish Lieutenant Colonel Manny Fernandez and his wife, Susan, the very best as he enters retirement.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues today to support the campaign finance reform and the filing of this discharge petition. I am proud that my signature will be among the 218 needed to bring H.R. 417, the bipartisan campaign finance reform measure offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), and other measures as well, to the floor for a vote.

For me as a new Member of this House, this is a truly defining issue. The money chase must end so we, as servants of the people, can spend our time doing the people's business. I believe that it is what our constituents want from us. It is certainly what I would prefer to do.

Nine out of 10 Americans support campaign reform. Let them know we are listening to them. Now is the time to move forward. No more delays, no more bickering, no more excuses, just let us vote.

LET US SUPPORT NEEDED RESEARCH ON RETINAL DEGENERATIVE DISEASES

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, there is a saying, nothing is so strong as gentleness, and nothing is so gentle as real strength.

I can think of no better person who personifies those words as does my constituent and friend, Betti Lidsky. Yesterday, before the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, Betti testified about her experiences as the mother of three children, Ilana, Daria, and Isaac, who are stricken with retinal degenerative diseases.

Betti and Carlos, her husband, came to deliver a message that is not only close to their hearts, but close to the hearts of the millions of family members across America who have a loved one who suffers from this disease, for which there is no treatment nor cure.

Let us help give the Lidsky family and indeed those families across America who are impacted by this disease hope by supporting, promoting, and funding research through the National Eye Institute and the Foundation Fighting Blindness. Working together, there is a cure in sight.

URGING MEMBERS TO SIGN THE DISCHARGE PETITION TO ALLOW DEBATE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, there is a line forming down here in the well. Its purpose is to provide a discharge petition which will put on the Floor a fair proposal which will make it possible for this House to vote and to work its will on a piece of legislation to reform one of the great scandals in this country. I am talking about excessive expenditures in campaigns.

It will for the first time in years make a meaningful reform in terms of how money is spent and how much money is spent. It is something which will attack a problem that has been corroding the confidence of the American people in their government.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides to join together in signing this discharge petition, putting on the Floor of the House a piece of legislation which will enable the people to return their confidence to their government, because we will be eliminating one of the great abuses, excessive expenditures of money on public elections, something which is corrupting the public business of this Nation.

I commend the framers of the discharge petition, I join in signing it, and I urge all of my colleagues to do likewise.

□ 1045

BUDGET RESOLUTION

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I come here to speak about the budget, but I cannot help but respond a little bit on campaign finance reform.

The issue should be how do we make those in office live by the rules that are already on the books. I question whether more laws, more rules will make people any more honest.

But we are here at a proud time, to think that we are going to pass the budget resolution on time today. I ask my colleagues on that side of the aisle, do not throw up roadblocks. Come along. Let us do the budget resolution as the law requires by the 15th.

It has got some great things in it. It strengthens Social Security. It keeps the caps so that we keep our commitment to balance the budget. It provides money to help make Medicare more secure. Education will benefit under this budget resolution. I only see one dark cloud.

Vote yes on the budget resolution. It is a good agreement.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

(Ms. SANCHEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues realize this is an important week for Federal education policy.

Today we on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce will be holding our first hearing on Title I, the section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that is designed to get Federal resources to the poorest of our Nation's children.

I will also be meeting with our Superintendent of Public Instruction of California, Delaine Eastin, today. She and I have worked together on several education issues, including the concern for Title I and other programs.

Title I is a very important program. In particular, it affects my district, and I would like to tell my colleagues how. First of all, Title I is for the poorest children in the Nation. Fifty percent of the students in the school must qualify for the free and reduced lunch in order to be a Title I school.

In our school district, in Garden Grove Unified, for example, 57 of the 64 schools qualify for Title I funds. In Anaheim City School District, over 50 percent of the schools qualify.

This is an issue that is of great concern, and I hope that my colleagues will work to ensure that Title I is there.

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON THE BUDGET

(Mrs. KELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have proposed to do something that should have been done a long time ago. The Republican budget plan puts 100 percent of the retirement surplus into a safe deposit box to be used exclu-

sively for Social Security and Medicare.

The retirement surplus, that is, the surplus from FICA taxes taken out of our paychecks, is the only reason that the budget is not in surplus. If we did not count the money in the Social Security Trust Fund, the Federal budget would still be in deficit to the tune of about \$20 billion.

Social Security and Medicare have really divided the parties this year. Talk about Medicare. Republicans propose a lockbox and a willingness to debate the Breaux Commission's finding on Medicare reform.

Democrats ask for continued raids on the Social Security Trust Fund, more IOUs, and a veto of the Breaux Commission out of hand, no system reforms of Medicare.

They would rather scare seniors once again instead of trying to solve the problems. Our seniors, Mr. Speaker, deserve better.

GENOCIDE AND ETHNIC CLEANSING WILL NOT PREVAIL IN KOSOVO

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, today, along with the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD), I am introducing a bill which will provide \$25 million to arm and train the KLA, the Kosovo Liberation Army. It is similar to a bill put forward by Senators MCCONNELL and LIEBERMAN in the Senate.

If we do not want to have the NATO troops on the ground, and let me say I think troops should be an option here, because we must win the war and show Milosevic that genocide and ethnic cleansing will not prevail.

But the only alternative to NATO troops or perhaps to supplement NATO troops on the ground right now is the KLA. In my opinion, we ought to be air dropping anti-tank weaponry to them. In the long run, we need to build them up as a viable force to fight the Serbs and to drive the Serbs out of Kosovo. Ethnic cleansing cannot prevail.

Milosevic is the problem. He is not the solution. We should not be negotiating with him. He is going to try to widen this war. We have to win this war. We must do it now.

In the long range, independence for Kosovo is the only solution. No partition of Kosovo. I was one of the Democrats that supported President Bush in the Persian Gulf War. We need to have great support right now for the President. I regret the remarks of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS). We need to rally around the President, not divide ourselves.

SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between the President's proposal to reform Social Security and the Congressional Republicans' proposal to reform Social Security.

Under our proposal, 100 percent of the retirement surplus will be put away to strengthen Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt. The President uses part of this surplus for Social Security, part for Medicare, and part to pay for new Washington spending. But do not take my word for it. I urge Americans to verify for themselves the facts at issue and compare the two proposals.

The President's plan includes so many Washington accounting tricks that even Houdini would have been impressed. But accounting tricks do not make an insolvent program solvent.

The President's proposal double counts Social Security to the tune of \$2.4 trillion, hardly a recipe for saving Social Security from bankruptcy. I urge my colleagues to join us on a bipartisan basis, to protect Social Security and Medicare.

PRAISE FOR LOCAL HEROES IN ATLANTA

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise courageous fire fighters in the City of Atlanta.

On Monday afternoon, members of the Atlanta City Fire Department fought a raging fire through the historic Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill in southeast Atlanta. Mr. Ivers Sims was trapped on a crane 220 feet in the air. As I watched this human drama unfold from my office, my heart stopped.

Demonstrating extraordinary courage and skill, fire fighter Matt Moseley lifted Mr. Sims from his dangerous perch like angels from the heavens. They saved his life. This brilliant rescue has made the City of Atlanta, the State of Georgia, and our Nation proud.

The fire fighters and Mr. Sims have my profound respect for their raw courage and extraordinary calm and determination under the most dangerous of circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to praise fire fighters throughout the Nation who put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our communities.

HONORING CAPTAIN ROBBIE BISHOP

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

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American