

where we buy it is no one's business but our own, and the unauthorized use and abuse of our social security number must stop. I urge all my colleagues to cosponsor and to support this legislation.

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#### MEDICARE

(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. Madam Speaker, normally when I hear people talk about March madness, I assume they are talking about the NCAA college basketball tournament. However, this year I am afraid this expression is better applied to Democrat party plans to actually expand an entitlement that is already going bankrupt. This is clearly an example of political madness.

The fact is, Congress worked together with the President last year to take the first step toward reforming a program that was within 4 years, just 4 years, Madam Speaker, of going bankrupt.

The reforms we passed together on a bipartisan basis, although essential, merely postponed Medicare bankruptcy until the year 2010. It is around 2010 that baby boomer bankruptcy is going to hit big time. If this madness persists, we can kiss talk of budget surpluses good-bye, we can forget about proposing any new government programs, and worst of all, we can forget about giving the middle class some long overdue tax relief. It is now April. This March madness talk of expanding Medicare must end.

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#### GOOD TAX POLICY: THE HOME MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION

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

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, there will be a lot of rhetoric today, since it is tax day, about the Tax Code, and surely we can do better. It ought to be simplified.

But there is one facet of it that I think is good public policy. That is the home mortgage interest deduction. It is simple, straightforward, far-reaching, and over 24 million Americans benefit from the home mortgage interest deduction. I believe that whatever happens with the Tax Code, we ought to continue that as a matter of public policy, because all of the things that we all know as American citizens that we derive from home ownership are a good goal for this government. So I would urge that we continue to support the home mortgage interest deduction.

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#### THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES HUGE TAX INCREASES

(Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address

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

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, April 15 and lights are burned late across America as people have completed the agonizing task of paying their taxes, and believe it or not, at a time when taxes are at an all-time high in America, the President has proposed to increase taxes \$172 billion on the American people. Believe it or not, at a time when surpluses are projected out as far as the eye can see, the President has proposed increasing taxes on the American people \$172 billion.

The Republican majority fought and won a balanced budget in order to discipline spending and to prevent tax increases. We have now created a level of economic growth unprecedented, and this is the opportunity to now lower the tax burden on our hardworking citizens.

I oppose the President's tax increases, and I support disciplining spending in order to reduce the tax burden on our folks.

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#### EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S CHILDREN

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, we cannot prepare our children for the future with an educational system from the past. We cannot lift our students up by sending them to schools that are falling down. These are simple facts which must be addressed, and they must be addressed now.

Communities like the ones I represent in Brooklyn and the Lower East Side of New York are in need of resources to build and improve schools. In fact, the Sunset Park Community of Brooklyn does not have even a high school.

The result of the problem can be seen in dropout rates among minorities which is 13 percent among blacks and 29 percent among Hispanics. Unfortunately, Republicans want to ignore these realities. They want to spend the budget surplus on expensive tax cuts, instead of helping our children prepare for the future. They do not want to join Democrats in fixing schools, providing technology, and hiring more teachers. They want to leave the future of America's children to chance.

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#### A STAND AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS TO RAISE TAXES

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

Mrs. KELLY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the issues that all working families have on their minds, taxes. Americans pay too much of their hard-earned money in taxes. Almost

everything we do today is taxed: everything we wear or eat, medical expenses, our homes, our savings, our income. When we die, the government will again take another bite out of everything we have accomplished in our lifetime.

I have been working to reduce this astounding tax burden on the American people, and believe we are working in the right direction with the year 2000 budget that we passed yesterday. It was just inconceivable that the President requested \$172 billion tax increases in his budget proposal this year. It is no secret that working families are having a hard enough time these days without having to make do with less.

Some of the Members of this Congress stand against the President's efforts to raise taxes. I am one of those. In a day when we are running a surplus and beginning to pay down the massive debt, it is the government in Washington that needs to tighten its belt, not the American taxpayer.

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#### CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION

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

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, today I join with the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. MARGE ROUKEMA) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PHIL ENGLISH), co-chair of the Real Estate Caucus, in celebrating the achievements of the mortgage interest deduction in America.

Today the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) is introducing her resolution opposing any further restrictions on mortgage interest deductions. Despite the fact that there is no current proposal on the table to cut back the homeowners deduction, this is an important effort that serves as a device for all of us to pause and remember how important this tax incentive is for the country.

Currently 67 percent of the households in America live in homes that are owner-occupied. Even more amazing is the fact that 67 percent of foreign-born naturalized citizens who have been in this country for at least 6 years also now own their own homes. The greatest growth in home ownership today is among minorities and first-time homebuyers.

Madam Speaker, I believe home ownership remains invaluable in our society, both in terms of our economy, but also in terms of how we think and organize ourselves as a society. I want to lend my support to the efforts of the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) today, and urge other Members of the Congress to sign onto this legislation.