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No. 11

## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT).

### DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
February 9, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JUDY BIGGERT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

O God, our hope for all the years, our faith by You is bold, You help us face unwanted tears, our hands with You do hold.

You promise life without an end. You pledge the gift of love. Your peace and grace forever send, all gifts from heaven above. Amen.

### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. RILEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RILEY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 245. Concurrent resolution to correct technical errors in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 764.

### SERIOUS BUDGET CONCERNS

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues to express my serious concern with the President's budget proposal that was released earlier this week.

With the surpluses that this Congress has created, the President now seeks to renew the era of big government by expanding the size and the scope of the Federal bureaucracy, including the creation of \$350 billion of new government spending.

Madam Speaker, furthermore, the President failed to provide hard-working Americans with meaningful tax cuts and instead included a \$181 billion tax increase.

I am seriously concerned that the President's budget proposal will actually raid Social Security, rather than safeguarding it for future generations.

Madam Speaker, we need to pass a responsible budget, not one laden with irresponsible spending increases and pointless tax increases, a responsible budget like the budget supported by my Republican colleagues here today that will fund essential government programs, provide necessary tax relief, and protect Social Security while paying down our national debt.

I yield back the President's big budget government proposals which rob Peter to pay Paul.

### AIRING OF SUICIDE PROGRAM RECKLESS AND IRRESPONSIBLE

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

Mr. RILEY. Madam Speaker, last week the public-access cable television channel operated by the Community Television of Lane County, Oregon aired a program that is shocking to the conscience of a civilized society. The program in question is a new do-it-yourself video that is a step-by-step guide to committing suicide based on the book "Final Exit" by Derek Humphry.

Mr. Humphry gives a video demonstration on what he claims is "dying with dignity." I do not believe that suicide is synonymous with dignity.

Madam Speaker, it is a sad day indeed when we make readily available on public television a step-by-step guide on where to find lethal drugs, with or without a doctor's prescription, to be mixed with chocolate pudding or applesauce to bring about death or how to use a bag or mask to commit suicide. The airing of this devaluation of life is nothing short of reckless and to me irresponsible.

### A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE PARMA SAMAD

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

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, Cincinnati has said good-bye to a wonderful lady and great teacher, Parma Samad, who died last month after a long, courageous battle with cancer.

As a student in Cincinnati's Catholic schools, I had the privilege of being taught by many outstanding teachers.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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My sixth grade teacher at St. Catharine's, Parma Samad, Miss Fierro at the time, was simply the best. Over her career, she taught in both the Catholic and public schools.

Madam Speaker, our entire community has benefited from her selfless dedication to her students. And she will be long remembered by those whose lives she touched over her 39-year teaching career.

Madam Speaker, I know that I am joined by many in Cincinnati who knew and admired Parma Samad when I offer my sincere condolences to Parma's husband, Ron, to her parents, Cosmo and Agnese Fierro, and to all her family. Parma will be greatly missed.

There is no question in my mind that she is looking down on us right now from a better place, and that she is smiling.

#### DISAPPOINTMENT WITH LACK OF COOPERATION

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, I was disappointed to read last week a Roll Call story entitled "Democrats Feel Cocky After Big Speech." It said basically that House Democrats feel it is going to be "their way or the highway going into November."

When Mr. HASTERT became Speaker a year ago, he gave a speech in the House that reached out to our Democratic colleagues offering to meet them halfway, and that he expected them to meet us halfway. Now the Democrat leadership seems determined that there will be no legislative progress this year, preferring to sit idly by. The Speaker said, "Stalemate is not an option. Solutions are."

The American people want us to pay down our debt, they want us to give relief from the marriage tax penalty, to ban the raid on Social Security, to renew inner cities and to provide seniors with affordable prescription drugs.

Madam Speaker, I hope the President will reject the foot-dragging tactics of the House Democrats and work with us. I am disappointed they do not want to work, by their own admission, in behalf of a productive agenda.

#### TIME TO END MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, tomorrow the House is going to vote to end the marriage penalty. Right now married couples pay more in taxes than two single taxpayers living together. That is not right. It is just not right.

Washington must stop penalizing the cornerstone of our society, the Amer-

ican family. We should encourage marriage, not penalize it. We are restoring family, children, and the American dream.

Last year President Clinton and his Democrat allies labeled marriage penalty relief as risky, and the President vetoed it. This year the Democrats are encouraging him to veto it again.

In my district alone, this bill will help end the marriage penalty for over 150,000 Americans. The President and his Democrat friends should stop playing election-year politics.

Mr. President, it is time for you to help us help American families.

#### VIRGINIA LEADERSHIP DOES NOT GET IT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, yesterday the Virginia legislature just said no to the citizens' efforts to try and control the problems of livability in their community. It is sad that the new leadership in Virginia just does not get it.

Smart growth is good for the economy. It helps declining and distressed areas, and it does not force the Hobson's choice of dumb growth. But the State of Virginia refuses to deal meaningfully with the transportation and finance problems on a State level and at the same time, refuses to give local governments tools to handle it themselves.

I hope that the citizens of Virginia, as I hope that citizens around the country, will hold each elected official responsible on all levels for their efforts to give the tools to make sure that our communities are more livable so our citizens can be healthy, economically secure and safe.

#### SUPPORT THE LEAP ACT

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

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise as a sponsor of H.R. 3429, the LEAP Act. We all agree that immigrants should come to this country legally, and LEAP will remove the magnet that brings undocumented workers to the country in the first place, jobs.

LEAP will improve current employment verification programs so that businesses can make sure that employees are legally authorized to work in this country. Right now, employers are in a catch-22 situation. Under the law, they cannot hire illegal immigrants; but they do not have all of the tools necessary to hire legal workers.

The bill is not anti-immigration. I certainly recognize the many benefits that legal immigrants bring to this country. Most people who come across the border without proper documenta-

tion only want to improve their lives and the lives of their families. But we must remember that there are a lot of people who also want to come to America and must wait years, perhaps, to come legally. It is not fair to them if we do not enforce the law.

Madam Speaker, I hope all of my colleagues will support this common sense approach to discourage illegal immigration.

#### KEEP SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE SOLVENT

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, early this morning the Steve Forbes campaign called me and said that Steve Forbes' wife flew into Michigan late last night; and sometime between 12 p.m. and 5 a.m. this morning, the family made its decision that he would be withdrawing from the presidential race.

As one of the Michigan cochairmen for Steve Forbes, I was disappointed, because what Steve Forbes brought to the podium, to public discussion, was detailed plans on where this country goes, where we go, in terms of fixing Social Security, where we go in terms of fixing Medicare, both insolvent.

In my 5-minute speech today under Special Orders, I will be talking about what could happen on paying down the debt, but probably that it is not going to happen, and that what is really going to happen is a tremendous burden on our kids and our grandkids if we do not wake up, if we do not pay attention, if we do not come out with some of the solutions to make sure that we keep these important entitlement programs solvent.

#### A FAIR MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam Speaker, tomorrow the Republican majority starts on their march to trying once again to pass over a \$1 trillion tax cut, the same tax cut that Governor Bush offers his candidacy for President. They begin, instead of offering it as a whole, by dividing it up. They will start with the marriage tax penalty.

The fact of the matter is we Democrats also want to end, not just adjust, we want to end the marriage tax penalty; but we want to do it in ways that not only value the institution of marriage, we want to do it in ways that value other issues, such as extending the life of Social Security and Medicare, the values of our seniors, and such as improving the quality of education for children, the value that we hold of our children.

This Republican bill is too expensive than it needs to be. It makes no attempt to pay for itself; and lastly,

many middle-income families with children will not get any tax relief because the bill promises a lot more than it provides because they ignore the minimum tax when writing their bill.

In fact, we need to have values that, yes, take care of the marriage tax penalty and reward marriage, but, at the same time, take care of our seniors, take care of our children and extend the life of Social Security and Medicare.

#### SAN RAFAEL LEGACY AND NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA ACT

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

Mr. CANNON. Madam Speaker, today I will introduce the San Rafael Western Legacy and National Conservation Area Act. This legislation sets up a process to preserve the remarkable area famous for such outlaws as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

Over the last 3 years, people in Emery County, Utah, the off-road vehicle users and sportsmen came together with county officials, landowners and the Bureau of Land Management to approve the plan I am introducing today.

This bill would place 2.8 million acres into a legacy district to be managed for the conservation of the region's historical and cultural resources. This bill will allow management that will guarantee the preservation of the dramatic canyons, wildlife and historic sites of the San Rafael Swell.

Additionally, this bill will set aside about 1 million acres as a National Conservation Area, withdrawn from future mining claims and providing increased protection for primitive and semi-primitive areas. The Secretary of Interior, in conjunction with an advisory council, will develop a management plan for the National Conservation Area that will provide for various land uses and the preservation of these amazing natural resources for future generations.

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#### ELIMINATING THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, over the last 3 years, many of us have asked a pretty fundamental and basic question, and that is, is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code, 25 million married, working couples pay higher taxes just because they are married. In fact, the 25 million married working couples pay an average of \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married; and 1.1 million of those American working couples live in Illinois, married couples who pay higher taxes just because they are married.

I have with me a photo of Shad and Michelle Hallihan. They are an average couple suffering the marriage tax penalty, two public schoolteachers in Illinois. Michelle points out the marriage tax penalty for her would buy 3,000 diapers for their newborn child. It is real money for real people.

Tomorrow the House is going to vote on a bipartisan proposal. Madam Speaker, 241 Members of the House are now cosponsoring H.R. 6, legislation which will essentially wipe out the marriage tax penalty for the majority of those who suffer from it. Let us set aside partisanship, let us work together to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Valentine's Day is next week. What better gift could this Congress give 25 million married, working couples than passage of this legislation tomorrow to wipe out the marriage tax penalty for couples like Michelle and Shad Hallihan.

#### HOROWITZ SUDAN RESOLUTION

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

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, today I will introduce a resolution which commends Michael Horowitz for the public statement he made last week by protesting the lack of action that the administration has taken in actively addressing the situation in Sudan. Mr. Horowitz also used this forum in hopes of raising the awareness of the American people to the plight of the Sudanese at the hands of the northern totalitarian regime in Khartoum.

Madam Speaker, the civil war in Sudan has been raging now for over 17 years with close to 2 million dead. The United States should be doing all it can to support the intergovernmental authority for development, or IGAD process, in hopes of bringing this horrific chapter in the lives of the Sudanese to a close. Until peace is finally reached, we should also be supporting those in the south who are fighting to keep the iron, long-reaching fist of the northern regime from crushing their beliefs and way of life.

Furthermore the administration should address and work in conjunction with others who are leading a campaign against companies such as Talisman Energy and others who are using American capital to support their oil operations in Sudan at the detriment of the southern population. Mr. Horowitz's act of civil disobedience was done in hopes of bringing light to the inaction and bland policies of our government towards Sudan, for it is time we truly addressed this regime and the policies of terrorism and destruction it brings to the table with it.

#### RESPONSIBLE TAX PLAN FOR AMERICANS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, American families deserve a responsible plan for the surplus that strengthens Social Security and Medicare, that pays down the national debt, and that gives tax cuts that directly benefit the middle class. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership seems determined to pass an irresponsible tax cut before it develops a plan for the long term. Last year they tried to pass a trillion dollar tax bill that would have benefited the richest in our country. This year, they are trying to pass that package piece by piece.

Madam Speaker, we need to eliminate the marriage penalty; and I support a proposal to do that. But this Republican scheme is irresponsible. The bill helps working families, middle class families very little, yet it gives huge tax breaks to the wealthiest couples. Millions of American families with children will get absolutely no relief at all. We must instead support a Democratic alternative which will both alleviate the marriage penalty and strengthen Social Security and Medicare while paying down the national debt.

We need the surplus to be used in a responsible way that strengthens our country, not for another political gimmick, that the American people have already heard and have already rejected.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH 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 Washington (Mr.

NETHERCUTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NETHERCUTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### PAYING DOWN THE DEBT

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot about the talk on paying down the debt, and I think it is very important that American citizens understand some of the terminology that is used here in Washington.

This chart represents what would happen to the total public debt. The total public debt of this country right now is \$5.7 trillion. That includes the debt that we owe the Social Security Trust Fund and the debt that we owe Wall Street or the debt held by the public, plus the debt held by the other trust funds. I think this represents the potential good news of paying down that debt if we were to stick with the caps, the budget caps that we set in 1997, but that is not going to happen.

Yesterday in the Committee on the Budget, we heard the director of OMB say that those caps are unrealistic and presented the President's budget. The President's budget, by the way, increases taxes and fees over the next 10 years by something around \$250 billion. Next year alone, his tax increase is \$9 billion. So he is expanding spending for a lot of people and a lot of programs with approximately 80 new programs and a considerable extension and expansion of another 155 programs.

So those increased taxes and fees are what is paying for a significant increase in the size of the Federal Government. He is able to say that he is going to pay down what he calls the debt of this country. But I think what we should be very careful in understanding is that what he is talking about paying down is the debt held by the public.

The bottom portion of this chart represents the debt held by the public, starting now in the year 2000, and what is going to happen over the next 10 years. The middle portion is approximately 112 trust funds that we borrow from in addition to Social Security. That is the Medicare trust fund, the Medicaid trust fund, the transportation, highways and all of the other trust funds. The top trust fund of course is what we have been concentrating on, and that is the Social Security Trust Fund.

So when it is suggested that we pay down the debt of this country, what we are talking about is that portion of the total Federal debt, approximately \$3.6 trillion; but the way we pay it down is when the cash dollars come in from the Social Security tax, there is more money coming in right now from that withholding tax than is needed to pay out current benefits.

So what is being suggested is we use those dollars, we take the cash dollars from Social Security, we borrow it, we write an IOU, and we use those dollars to pay down the debt by the public.

However, what happens to the total Federal debt of this country is the debt continues to increase. So we are looking at down the road in the next 10 to 15 years of having the current debt go way over \$6 trillion, even if we were to stick with the caps.

Here is why I think it is so very important. It is not just the debt and it is not just paying down the debt but it is the structure of our entitlement programs that are going to be very, very difficult for our kids and our grandkids to pay off.

Right now the FICA tax, the withholding tax on payroll is 15 percent of taxable wages. Right now, approximately 75 percent of the workers in this country pay more in that FICA tax, that payroll withholding tax than they do in the income tax. If we do nothing, within the next foreseeable future, our payroll tax will have to go to 40 percent of payroll if we do not fix these programs of Social Security and Medicare, 40 percent of payroll. Then we add income taxes on that for all of the rest of the Federal programs, we add another 20 percent of pay that goes to State and local government; enormous taxes are there, and the potential is a huge disadvantage for the ability of this country to stay competitive with the rest of the world.

Some people say well, can this happen. All we have to do is look at Europe, look at Japan. Already many of those countries are 40 percent. In France, the effective payroll withholding in France is now 70 percent. I mean it is no wonder they have a tough time competing. If we do not do anything in America, we are headed down that same road. That is why looking at entitlement, that is why I am disappointed that Steve Forbes has withdrawn from the race, because he is one of the few candidates that laid out a precise, exact solution of what he thought was the way to go to keep Social Security solvent, to keep Medicare solvent and still have the choice of doctors.

Madam Speaker, I think as we move ahead this year, and moving ahead with this budget, I think we need to challenge ourselves very aggressively to looking at the problems of entitlements, because that is going to be the huge challenge of America and this government in the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania 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 gentle-

woman from Idaho (Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REPUBLICAN MAJORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, I look back over the last 5 years and I think of when I was first elected in Congress in 1994, what were the big issues of the day. The Democrat Congress and President Clinton had just enacted the biggest tax hike in the history of this country, raising our tax burden to its highest level ever in peacetime history. We had massive deficits of \$200 billion to \$300 billion a year as far as the eye could see, and there was a proposed government takeover of our health care system. The American people did not necessarily like that situation, and they gave the Republicans the opportunity to be in the majority for the first time in 40 years.

We said that we were going to meet the challenges, we were going to balance the budget, we were going to cut taxes for the middle class, that we were going to reform welfare, and, of course, pay down the national debt. I am proud to say that over the last 5 years, we have accomplished many of those goals, in fact, every one of them.

We balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years; we cut taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years. In fact, 3 million Illinois children benefit from that \$500 per child tax credit. The first welfare reform in a generation has reduced our Nation's welfare rolls by one-half, and we overhauled the IRS and paid down \$350 billion of the national debt. Those are great changes. On top of that, this past year, we stopped the terrible practice, probably Washington's dirtiest little secret, and that is Republicans put a stop to the raid on Social Security. This past year, for the first time in 30 years, we balanced the budget without touching one dime of Social Security, protecting that retirement income for our seniors.

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Those are great accomplishments. Of course, this year we are working to continue our effort to save social security and Medicare, to pay down the national debt, to help our local schools. We also want to bring about tax fairness. I thought I would take the next hour to discuss the issue of tax fairness.

One of the most fundamental questions of fairness that I am often asked in the South Side of Chicago, the

South suburbs, the rural areas that I represent, is, is it right, is it fair, that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples on average pay almost \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married? Does that seem right, that under our Tax Code, that 25 million married working couples pay \$1,400 more just because they are married than an identical couple with an identical income, identical circumstances, who live together outside of marriage? That is not right, is it?

This House over the last few years has been working to eliminate what we call the marriage tax penalty. We sent to the President last year legislation which would have wiped out the marriage tax penalty. Had it been in effect and not vetoed by the President, it would have provided marriage tax relief for 25 million couples this year.

We are back at it again. In fact, tomorrow this House is going to vote on a stand-alone bill, a clean marriage tax elimination proposal, H.R. 6, which I am proud to say has the bipartisan cosponsorship of 241 Members of the House.

The State of Illinois that I represent has 1.1 million couples suffering the marriage tax penalty. I have a photo with me of really a fine example of a young couple in Joliet, Illinois, two married schoolteachers who suffer the marriage tax penalty.

This is Michelle and Shad Hallihan. They teach in the Joliet schools. They suffer the marriage tax penalty. In fact, Michelle pointed out to me, "We just had a baby." Of course, they benefit from the \$500 per child tax credit that we enacted just a few short years ago, but they suffer a marriage tax penalty.

Michelle shared. She said, "Tell your friends in the Congress that if you wipe out the marriage tax penalty for the Hallihan family, that the money that otherwise would have gone to Washington in extra taxes because we are married would buy 3,000 diapers to help us care for our child."

In the South suburbs of Chicago, \$1,400, the average marriage tax penalty, is one year's tuition at Joliet Community College and other colleges in Illinois. It is 3 months of day care at a local day care center. It is real money for real people. We are going to be voting on legislation tomorrow which of course wipes out the marriage tax penalty for a majority of those who suffer it. It is legislation that helps 25 million couples.

It does several things. First, we double the standard deduction for joint filers. The marriage tax penalty results from filing taxes jointly. Michelle and Shad Hallihan, two public school teachers with incomes that are nearly identical, are similar to this machinist and schoolteacher. What causes the marriage tax penalty is a married couple files jointly. When you file jointly, you combine your income. If you stay single, you do not. So when you combine your income, that pushes you into a higher tax bracket.

There is a case here of a machinist at Caterpillar. Say he is single, making \$30,500, basically the identical income to Shad and Michelle. If he stays single, he stays in the 25 percent tax bracket. If he meets a schoolteacher in Joliet with an identical income of \$30,500, their combined income of \$61,000, because they choose to get married, file jointly, pushes them into the 28 percent tax bracket. As we can see from this example, they pay basically the average marriage tax penalty of \$1,400 just because they are married.

Madam Speaker, it is just wrong that under our Tax Code this hard-working machinist and this hard-working schoolteacher who made the choice to live in holy matrimony pay higher taxes just because they are married.

Mr. RILEY. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WELLER. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. RILEY. Madam Speaker, I come here today to compliment the gentleman for his hard work. In the 3 years that I have served in this House, I do not know of another individual that has put in as much time, spent as many hours, on any one issue as the gentleman has. I want to come here and compliment the gentleman for his diligence, his tenaciousness. I am sorry we did not get this signed into law last year. I have gotten to the point now that I have seen this so often that I feel like I know the gentleman's couple.

On a more personal note, I have a daughter that was married back in September. It is amazing how her ability to understand the marriage tax penalty has dramatically increased since she now is married and they are filing a joint income tax.

The President has talked about giving relief to married couples, at least for the last 7 years. In his State of the Union this year he addressed this very penalty. Now we hear from the White House that he may veto this.

I would like to come forward today and say to the President, if he ever has an opportunity to live up to his word, to do what he has said he will do, if there is an unfair tax out there that is more egregious than this, I would like to know what it is. This is his opportunity to live up to the promises that he has made to the married couples of the country.

There is no one, there is no one that I know of that can defend this. We hear, especially on this side of the aisle, so often, "This is only a measure to help the rich."

There is one thing about this that is dramatically different. In this bill, as part of this marriage tax penalty relief bill, this year we are going to increase the amount a person can earn by \$2,000 before they are prohibited from filing for the earned income tax credit.

So this time we are not only talking about middle class and lower class taxpayers in this country, we are talking about a broad spectrum of America

that we are able to help, not only to right a wrong and to quit paying lip service to families and to dramatically do something for them for a change, but this is a time when the President can show some leadership.

I appreciate what the gentleman has done, and I appreciate what the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MCINTOSH) has done. The Members have worked on this so tenaciously for the last 3 years. I do not know of another item like this.

When I do town hall meetings, when we do web site surveys, and I ask, what is the most unfair tax in this country today, without exception, by an overwhelming majority, every survey that we have done said that we need to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, because I think most people in this country understand, if there is one thing in this country that we need to protect and support, if there is one thing in this country that undergirds our very society, it is marriage. It is the family. Anything that we can do to help that family we need to stand ready to do.

Again, we have 241 cosponsors. We will pass this tomorrow. I think we will send it to the President. But I think it is going to be up to each one of us to continue to carry on this dialogue with the American people, because this is the President's last year. He has said, standing right there in his State of the Union Address, he wanted to do something about the marriage tax penalty. I hope this president realizes this time we need more than a promise, we need more than rhetoric. We need his signature on that bill.

Mr. WELLER. Reclaiming my time, Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. RILEY), for his leadership as an active member of a team of Members of the House who have been working so hard over the last several years to eliminate what we consider to be the most unfair consequence of our complicated Tax Code, and that is the Tax Code's bias against marriage.

Our goal with the H.R. 6 legislation we will be working to pass tomorrow, and has 241 cosponsors, as the gentleman pointed out, 30 Democrats have rejected the pressure from their leadership and are cosponsoring this legislation because they agree, it is time we help those 25 million couples.

Let me share just very briefly what this proposal contains that we are going to be voting on tomorrow. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, which is a nonpartisan or I should say bipartisan committee that gives those of us in Congress advice on tax matters, I asked them the question, when it comes to those who suffer the marriage tax penalty, and we are looking at 25 million married ones, who are they? And of course, they pointed out not only is the marriage tax penalty about \$1,400, but half of those who file jointly and suffer the marriage tax penalty itemize their taxes. The other half do not. Middle class taxpayers who

itemize their taxes primarily itemize their taxes because they own a home.

So as we look at how we can eliminate and wipe out the marriage tax penalty, we have to keep both homeowners and those who do not itemize their taxes in mind.

There is another consequence in the Tax Code with the earned income tax credit for the working poor. It is a program created by Ronald Reagan back in the 1980s to help those in the work force who are kind of right on the edge so they can get by and raise their family and stay in the work force at the same time. We address marriage tax relief there.

So essentially what we do in the proposal that we are going to vote on tomorrow, and I hope receives overwhelming bipartisan support, is we help those who do not itemize their taxes by doubling the standard deduction for joint filers to twice that of singles. For those who do itemize, and frankly, those are basically homeowners, one-half of married couples, we widen the 15 percent bracket.

Every one of us, every American, the first part of our income, if we make as a single about \$25 or less, it is taxed at 15 percent, and if one is married, under our proposal, that person can make up to about \$50,000 as joint filers, combined income, and of course paying the 15 percent bracket.

So we widen the 15 percent bracket to wipe out the marriage tax penalty for those who itemize their taxes, and for the earned income tax credit, as the gentleman pointed out, we raise the income eligibility threshold for joint filers, so we wipe out the marriage tax penalty for those who participate in the earned income tax credit.

We also have an adjustment in this proposal so no one affected by this legislation is impacted by the alternative minimum tax.

So we double the standard deduction, widen the 15 percent bracket, help the earned income tax credit, we provide protections against that horrible alternative minimum tax, and we wipe out the marriage tax penalty for almost 25 million married ones.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WELLER. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, the gentleman from Florida has been a real leader in our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. The gentleman has been a real leader, as he is here today.

Like the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. RILEY), I have a son married here recently. Every young person who gets married now all of a sudden realizes what we are talking about is very real. And it is very unfair, as the gentleman has been pointing out today, to have a couple, where one earned \$30,500 a year as a single person and was paying a relatively modest amount of taxes, pretty much in that 15 percent bracket, and then they get married to somebody else

who is earning another \$30,500 a year, and all of a sudden they are bumped up. They have a 28 percent tax bracket, which neither one would have been in to the degree they are if they had been not married, if they had been single still.

What we are doing and the gentleman is doing tomorrow, what we did actually in the bill that the gentleman helped us with so much last year, the tax bill the President vetoed, was to try to correct that problem.

It is fairly straightforward, that we want to treat married couples, especially those which we consider moderate to middle-income married couples, equally and fairly, and the low-income people too.

What is amazing to me, and the gentleman pointed it out, I want to make sure I am correct about this, what the President has all of a sudden come to, and he has gotten religion on this, he is saying, I am for the marriage tax penalty for the first time, but he does not do the itemized deduction, as I understand it right now. He phases it in. He would double it, but it would be over 10 years. We have ours come in right away, as soon as this bill gets into law.

I would ask the gentleman, am I not correct about that?

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, the President in his proposal, his marriage tax relief essentially is 10 years from now. He phases it in over 10 years. He only does the standard deduction, which only benefits those who do not itemize. If you are a middle class working married couple that owns a home and itemize your taxes, the President's proposal, even after the 10 years it takes to fully phase it in, would provide zero relief.

I would also point out that the President's proposal after it is phased in after 10 years would only provide relief for about 9 million couples, versus the 25 million who would benefit from our proposal to double the standard deduction, widen the 15 percent bracket to help those who itemize, as well as the earned income tax credit.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, the point the gentleman is making is our proposal, that we are going to have down on the President's desk hopefully shortly, would take effect on the itemized deduction portion immediately.

There are phase-in features to the 15 percent bracket issue, but we come right in and provide immediate relief with regard to doubling that itemized deduction, do we not, I would ask the gentleman?

Mr. WELLER. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman from Florida is correct. We double the standard deduction immediately, so for those who do not itemize, they provide immediate relief. Then we begin phasing in over a short period of time the widening of the 15 percent bracket to help those who are itemizers, such as homeowners. The earned income tax credit is immediate, as well.

One thing I would point out to the gentleman from Florida is the primary beneficiaries of the proposal that we are going to vote on tomorrow are those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$75,000 in combined income. A married couple with a combined income of \$30,000 will see almost 97 percent of their tax burden eliminated when we wipe out their marriage tax penalty. A couple making a combined income of \$75,000, and most people do not consider that rich today, will see about 10 percent of their income taxes wiped out by wiping out the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I am very much aware, as the gentleman is, that the total at the end of the day that the President is proposing, once it is even phased in, which is a 10-year phase-in just for the itemized deduction, is only about \$45 billion, and ours is \$180. He is only giving tax relief, if you will, of less than one-third of what we are proposing to do, and at the same time, as the gentleman pointed out so well, he is only reaching those who would itemize. He is not reaching those who otherwise would be wanting to claim, he is reaching those who do not itemize.

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He is reaching only those who take the standard deduction. We reach those who itemize as well in this proposal. So in essence, A, the President is not giving nearly as much relief in dollar amount; B, he is delaying it, not giving it immediately like this bill would do; and, C, he is not beginning to reach the number of people that this bill reaches, the young people in the categories that have been described.

I think that makes this an extraordinarily important bill to pass, to become law; and I hope and pray that it does. I certainly commend the gentleman, again, for what he has done, and I strongly support it.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I again thank my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM), for his leadership and hard work and effort as we work to wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples.

Let us be frank here. Of course I am a Republican and we have been working as Republicans to wipe out the marriage tax penalty over the last several years, but I was pleased the President had a change of heart. Last year he vetoed our effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty, and he made passing reference to it in the State of the Union speech. So there has been a change of position, because it broke the hearts of 25 million couples when he vetoed it last year.

He has come up with a proposal, as we said, as the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) pointed out, that takes 10 years to phase in. So essentially 10 years from now, those who do not itemize would see their standard deduction doubled. So it barely keeps

up with inflation and only provides about \$210 in marriage tax relief for those couples, 9 million couples.

The proposal that we are bringing to the floor tomorrow, H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Elimination Act, has 241 cosponsors, including a dozen Democrats. We provide, as we essentially wipe out the vast majority of the marriage tax penalty, up to about \$1,250 in marriage tax relief for married couples. We benefit 25 million married working couples.

Think about it. What is \$1,200? That is several months' worth of car payments, 3 months of day care for a family with children that are in a child care center. It is, of course, a down payment on a home. It is a contribution to an individual retirement account. It is real money for real people. So this is why it is so important that we work in a bipartisan way.

That is why I really want to salute my friend, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Ms. DANNER), for her leadership as a Democrat, our chief Democrat cosponsor of H.R. 6, and for her efforts to make this a bipartisan effort, because that is what it should be. Politics should not stand in the way of our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Madam Speaker, I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for yielding, and also I congratulate him as we stand, I think, on the threshold of a wonderful victory. I am a freshman, obviously, but I can say this, that from the first day that we met over a year ago, the gentleman has been preaching the gospel of eliminating the marriage penalty; and finally it has become a chorus, and I think again we are poised to do great things. I congratulate the gentleman for his hard work. I think we are poised to do great things.

Something I would like to add to it, why this is especially appropriate to take up right now, the President in the State of the Union speech talked about all the wonderful things that are occurring in the American economy, and he should. There are a lot for all of us, Republican and Democrat, to be proud of. Unemployment is at a 30-year low. Inflation is relatively low. The economy is growing at historic levels. Wonderful, wonderful things.

There is a dark side to it. We also have to understand that so many American couples have to have two wage earners. Now, if families decide to make that choice, that is one thing; but so many families have to have two wage earners just to make ends meet in this economy. So there are so many wonderful things.

The tough side is that many families do have to have two wage earners. If, in fact, economic reality is forcing that, then it is particularly unfair that we have a Tax Code that punishes that. So it is especially important right now, as

we have this economy, as we have so many two wage-earner families, that we do take on eliminating the marriage penalty.

I think it is awfully important. We talked a bit about the tax relief it provides, but to me it is a matter of fairness because we do have so many couples who are forced into two wage-earner situations. As we all know, the Tax Code and the IRS suffer a lack of respectability.

So many of us do not have a high regard for the Tax Code and all the absurdities in it. This perhaps is at the top of the list.

When we talk to our constituents about what they dislike most about the IRS code and paying taxes, this is it. People are willing to pay their fair share. People are willing to work with a Tax Code that is fair; but when we take a look at how we punish these working couples, obviously there is nothing fair about that Tax Code.

Finally, I think the gentleman boiled it down to its most important element, the type of tax relief that we are poised to provide, hopefully on a bipartisan measure and hopefully the President will give in and sign this, in very practical terms it will make an important difference. Whether it be affording health insurance or affording day care, this is real money and this is a real difference for working couples.

The timing could not be better. It is critically important that we not only pass it, but pass it through both Houses and get it signed as quickly as possible, so the great prosperity that we all point to with pride can be enjoyed by working couples all over America.

Once again, I congratulate the gentleman for his hard work. He has done a great job, and I am real excited about what is going to happen tomorrow.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) for his leadership as one of the new Members that has joined our effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) really pointed out a really important point. This is all about fairness. As we have often asked in this debate over our efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million American working couples who pay \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married, is it right? Is it fair?

I do not believe that there is one American who believes that the marriage tax penalty is fair; that our Tax Code punishes 25 million married working couples. That is 50 million Americans who pay higher taxes just because they are married. That is not fair.

My biggest disappointment, as we go into this debate tomorrow, is that the President says that he only wants to help those who do not itemize their taxes. So is it really fair that if there is a young married couple or older married couple who pursues the American dream and buys a home and, of course, many itemize their taxes because they

own a home, that they still have to pay the marriage tax penalty? That is not right.

I know tomorrow and later today we may hear a debate from the Democrats saying they do not want to help homeowners. They will just say they only want to help those who do not itemize. Well, I know of thousands of middle-class, married couples who are homeowners who itemize their taxes in the district that I have the privilege of representing. One half of married couples, and there are 1.1 million married couples in Illinois that suffer the marriage tax penalty, so over 500,000 of them itemize their taxes because they probably own a home or they give money to charity or their church or synagogue or temple or mosque, or they have college expenses that are paying off student loans. Those folks itemize and the alternative that the Democrats are going to call for tomorrow will not provide marriage tax relief to them.

They will just say, sorry, they still have to pay the marriage tax penalty, and that is not right. It is not fair.

Madam Speaker, I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), who has been another leader in our effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. THUNE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for yielding.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) has been an outspoken advocate. I have cosponsored his bills in past sessions of Congress, at least in my first term in Congress as well as this current one, and the gentleman has spearheaded and led the effort to remove this crushing burden on married couples in this country, and so I credit with him that, and elevating it to the level where actually we are going to have a vote on this, which I think is a remarkable accomplishment. Again, it is a great credit to the hard work and effort the gentleman has put into it.

I think it is entirely appropriate. Moreover, it is a moral imperative that we get rid of the marriage penalty and the Tax Code. A lot of people, I think, who probably listen to what comes out of Washington as we talk about this whole issue probably think to some degree that it is a discussion like a lot of things in Washington in the abstract; this is some theoretical thing. The reality is, this is a real issue which affects real people in a very real way.

Think about the number of married couples who are out there. The marriage penalty strikes hardest really at middle-income families. Most marriage penalties occur when the higher earning spouse makes somewhere between \$20,000 and \$75,000 a year; and I will give an example of someone who came into my office a few weeks back who fits right into that category. They are a young couple who live in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. They have two children. One of them works, makes about \$46,000 a year, the other one about

\$21,000 a year. As they sat down and calculated their taxes this year, they came to the harsh realization that they were going to pay \$1,953 more for the privilege and benefit of being married.

That is flat wrong. That is something that needs to be changed, and I could not help but sympathize with his situation because I think it is typical of many throughout this country, throughout America, certainly throughout my home State of South Dakota, where there are a lot of hard-working couples who have children who are both working, trying to make ends meet, trying to put a little aside for retirement, trying to put some money aside for their kids' education, pay the bills, raise their children, live their lives and who should not have to be penalized for doing that.

Frankly, that is exactly what has happened over time is this marriage penalty has become more and more of a burden in our Tax Code. As this drum-beat continues to go on in the effort that the gentleman has led to move this issue forward, to elevate it in people's minds across this country, I think we have gotten to the point where, in fact, we may even have a President who when this reaches his desk, and hopefully it will soon, he will be forced to sign it because his pollster is going to tell him he has to. The President obviously has shown a great aptitude for seizing on issues which meet with public approval, and I think this is a case in point. I think he has sort of co-opted it.

What the President proposed in his effort to address the marriage penalty in the Tax Code is small. He has basically come up with a quarter of the plan that we have.

The President has essentially proposed marriage without the honeymoon. He is going to give people a little bit of tax relief from the marriage penalty but, frankly, only addresses about 9 million couples where the legislation that the gentleman has authored and which we will vote on tomorrow helps 28 million working couples in this country, eliminates this crushing burden, this punitive burden from the Tax Code and, frankly, I think restores some level of fairness to the Tax Code.

So I would hope that as we have this debate and hopefully as people across America hear this debate over the course of the next several days that the pressure will build, it will mount. People are realizing what this is. I had an opportunity to visit with a tax accountant this week and discussed with him what we were looking at doing. He could not have been happier to see that. As I shared with him some of the particulars of the people who have contacted me about this, he says that is exactly right.

I said I cannot imagine that someone in a middle income at that time category with two young children, who are both working, are going to pay \$1,900-plus dollars more in taxes this

year for the benefit of being married. We all know that marriage is a costly proposition at times, which certainly should not be added to through the Tax Code and he said that is exactly right. That is about the level of taxation that the marriage penalty would impose on a working couple in this country.

So it is long overdue. This is something which we just have no choice, no alternative, but to deal with. I would certainly hope, as we move forward in this debate, that we will see some movement on the part of the White House.

I appreciate the fact that there are folks on the other side of the aisle who have seen the wisdom in taking care of this issue, have cosponsored the legislation of the gentleman, and will be helpful I think as this debate ensues in, again, driving home the point that this is something that just as a matter of fundamental principle, an axiom of fairness in the Tax Code, needs to be addressed.

So I am happy to participate in this effort, to be a cosponsor of the legislation, and will work vigorously to see that this burdensome, onerous, crushing burden that we have in the Tax Code today is removed once and for all and that we liberate married couples in this country in a way that will allow them to provide for their family's future and restore some level of fairness in the Tax Code today.

So I appreciate again the effort that the gentleman has made and would just say to him that on behalf of the people that I represent in the State of South Dakota, this is certainly going to be a very welcome thing. It is a very real issue which affects real people in a very real way on a daily basis.

The gentleman alluded to earlier the things that could be paid for if it was not costing an additional \$1,400 a year to pay for the cost of this marriage penalty, from child care, to college, to car payments, to school clothes for the kids, to a family vacation perhaps. Health insurance is something that we have been trying to address, free up additional resources so that people in this country can afford to have health care; a down payment on a home, perhaps putting money aside into an IRA or retirement plan. There are so many things that if we look at it in the overall picture, where this is tremendously beneficial to the people that we really want to help in this country, and those are those folks who get up every morning, the people that I represent in South Dakota who get up day in and day out, work hard to pay the bills, to make that living and hopefully put a little bit aside for retirement. This is one way that this Congress can help, in a very profound way, them get that job done.

I think we are in a position to do this because of a lot of the decisions that have been made in the last couple of years in the area of fiscal responsibility on behalf of people in this country getting spending under control. We

have seen now that as the surpluses start to mount up, a lot of it has to do with the measure of fiscal responsibility, fiscal restraint, the resolve that the class of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), when they came to this Congress and took over the Congress in 1994, and those of us who joined them later had in order to put us in a position where we could make this change.

It is a fundamental issue. It is an issue and a matter of fairness. It needs to be done. As we move this through the House tomorrow, I hope the Senate will act on it and the President will sign it into law and we can end this burden once and for all.

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So, again, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for the leadership effort that he has made on this issue and again would offer my full effort, support, anything that I can do to make this become a reality.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I want to thank the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) for his tireless work on our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

As the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) pointed out, it is all about fairness. As we work this year to pay down the national debt and help our local schools and strengthen Social Security and Medicare, we also want to work to make the Tax Code fair. A lot of us believe that the most unfair consequence of our complicated Tax Code is the marriage tax penalty suffered by 25 million married working couples who, on average, pay \$1,400 more just because they are married.

Now, tomorrow we are going to have an opportunity to vote on legislation which will essentially wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million couples. I am disappointed that those on the other side, particularly the Democrat leadership and some of the bureaucrats down at the Treasury Department, only want to help about one-fourth of those who suffer the marriage tax penalty.

In fact, they say if one owns a home and itemizes their taxes, they do not want to help one. I do not think that is fair either. If we want to help those who suffer the marriage tax penalty, we should help everyone who suffers the marriage tax penalty.

I find, whether I am at a union hall, the steelworkers' hall in Hegwish in the south side of Chicago, or a grain elevator in Tonica, or the Weits' Cafe in my hometown of Morris, Illinois, regardless of folks' background or what they do for a living, if they are filing jointly and they are married and they both work, they suffer the marriage tax penalty.

We should help everyone who suffers the marriage tax penalty. The proposal we are going to pass, hopefully with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of support tomorrow, will wipe out the marriage tax penalty for a vast majority of

those who suffer it, helping 25 million married working couples who suffer from the marriage tax penalty.

It is all about fairness. Let us be fair to everyone who suffers the marriage tax penalty, those who itemize, those who own a home, as well as those who do not itemize, those under earned income credit all benefit from our effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), and I appreciate very much her leadership and her efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I am glad to join my colleagues who come to the floor of the House today to talk in support of eliminating the marriage tax penalty. As the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) said, it is unfair and un-American penalty.

I want to thank Speaker HASTERT and the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER), who is doing a superb job in his final year in service to Texas and the Nation, and certainly the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) who has been a tireless advocate for marriage tax penalty relief.

There are a number of items in our Nation's Tax Code that are un-American and unfair and in need of immediate reform. But I cannot think of a tax that is more offensive or unfair than the marriage tax penalty. When couples walk down the aisle to say "I do" to each other, they should not be saying "I do" to the IRS.

I am also pleased that President Clinton has come around to our side in favor of fixing this tax. After all, how could anyone argue that it is fair to require couples to pay more tax simply because they choose to get married? We are not talking about rich or wealthy couples. We are talking about regular, hard-working couples that have no choice but work as husband and wife to pay the bills together, to make ends meet, and to save for a house or start a family.

Twenty-five million American families have to pay an average marriage tax penalty of \$1,400. In fact, over 60,000 couples in my district alone, in my congressional district, the 12th District of Texas, pay that penalty. Couples should not be penalized because they chose to commit themselves in the holy bonds of marriage.

The legislation that will pass the House tomorrow provides four times more relief for working couples than the President's proposal. In fact, the President's proposal will provide up to \$210 in tax relief per couple. But our legislation, H.R. 6, provides up to \$1,400 in tax relief per couple.

The President's plan would double the standard deduction for married couples over 10 years. Our plan would double the standard deduction next year, make it immediate. The President's plan would help about 9 million American couples, but our plan would help 28 million American couples.

I want to take a moment to talk especially about how this tax is unfair

often to women. The fact is that the marriage tax penalty is biased against the spouse that has the lower income, which, unfortunately, oftentimes is the wife. This happens because the marriage couple's income is pooled, and the first \$43,050 of combined income is taxed at 15 percent. Combined income above this amount is taxed at 28 percent. That is highly unfair, because if the married couples were single, both incomes would be taxed at 15 percent. The House bill fixes this problem by doubling the single earner deduction for married couples.

I look forward to passage of H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Penalty Elimination Act, and I look forward to voting that and going back to my district and saying, I have done something to make this Tax Code fairer. I think it is the first step in other steps that we need to provide a tax that people understand, they believe is fair and equitable.

I appreciate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) very much for his leadership in this stand.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) for her leadership and efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty. She has made a very important point that those who really suffer the most from the marriage tax penalty tend to be working women. Traditionally, and it is changing, but traditionally the second earner has been a woman. Now it has changed where more women are becoming the primary bread winner, but traditionally that has not been the case.

Right now, if a woman is in the work force, that causes a marriage tax penalty. It is just not right that she is punished, as well as her husband, if she goes into the work force because they want a little extra money to make ends meet and care for their children.

So, clearly, as we work to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, there is a lot of people who benefit, 25 million married working couples who benefit from our efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

As the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) also pointed out, the primary beneficiary of the legislation that we are going to vote on tomorrow are those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$75,000 in combined income, joint income between husband and wife who suffer the marriage tax penalty.

With the legislation we are going to pass out of the House tomorrow, hopefully with an overwhelming bipartisan support, and I would note that there are 30 Democrats that are cosponsoring, along with a total of 241 bipartisan cosponsors, almost every Republican is a cosponsor of this bill, that we wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

But also for a couple making \$30,000 a year, we essentially wipe out their tax burden entirely. In fact, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, a bipartisan tax advisory panel that gives tax advice when it comes to tax issues

to the House Committee on Ways and Means as well as other Members of the House and Senate, if a married couple has a combined income of \$30,000, which is a pretty moderate income, they would see almost 94 percent of their tax burden wiped away as a result of this legislation. If a couple has a combined income of \$75,000 between husband and wife, they would see about a 10 to 11 percent reduction in their tax burden as a result of wiping out the marriage tax penalty. That is real money when we think about it.

The average marriage tax penalty is \$1,400. It is just not right that marriage couples pay an average \$1,400 more because they are married compared to an identical couple with identical couple who are not married and may live together.

Back in the south suburbs of Chicago and the area I represent, there are 1.1 million Illinois married couples who suffer the marriage tax penalty. Fourteen hundred dollars is 1 year's tuition for a nursing student at Joliet Junior College, our local community college. It is 3 months of day care for a family with children with a child in a local child care center. So it is real money for real people.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) who has been a real leader in our effort to bring fairness to the tax code by eliminating the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and especially for this special order and all that he has done over the last several years to call the public's attention to this.

I was thinking, if one had been Rip Van Winkle and had fallen asleep 40 years ago and one woke up and one realized how much this government, the Federal Government the State government, the local government, how many different taxes they lay on people and have imposed over the last 40 years. We finally reached a point where the average family, according to the Tax Foundation, the average family in America now today spends more for taxes than they do for food, clothing, and shelter combined. I mean, who would have thought that 30 or 40 years ago?

But more importantly, who would have even imagined that we would have found a way or Washington would have found a way to tax marriage. I mean, it really is almost preposterous on its surface to even think about a fact that married couples pay extra taxes just because they are married.

I have to tell my colleagues a story. My wife, Mary, and I have been married 27 years. Okay. And she has been dealing with me for all of those years. We probably do not have all that complicated of taxes. But she is a much better accountant than I am, so she does our taxes. We have actually gone to tax preparers. We have had CPAs do our taxes in the past. The truth of the matter is I think my wife, Mary, does

a more thorough job than anybody else.

Well, this weekend, she did our taxes. She was not in a good mood. Because she also works part time as a teacher in a nursery school in Rochester, Minnesota, and she loves the job. In fact, she does not do it for the money because, after 12 years, I think she is up to about \$10 an hour, something like that. She certainly does not do it for the money. She does it because she enjoys the kids, she enjoys the work, she enjoys the school.

But after doing our taxes and realizing how little she gets to keep of her paycheck at the end of the day, she said, "You know, it is time you guys eliminate this marriage penalty tax, because if I were taxed at the 15 percent level for what I do, it would be at least worth it."

I think the illustration the gentleman from Illinois has of that attractive young couple there, I want to make a couple of points. The President, and I think many of us, have been talking about the importance of education and why we need to attract more good people into the field of teaching.

But if we really look at this, we found out with some research in our district, for example, this marriage penalty affects 70,000 married couples in the First Congressional District of Minnesota. The interesting thing is, and we do not have the hard evidence yet, in the discussions that we have had and the phone calls we have had in our office, and extrapolating some things, we have come to the conclusion that one of the groups that is punished the most by this marriage penalty tax, the ones who have to pay the extra taxes more often than anybody are teachers.

It is interesting how many teachers, if one gets into it and goes into a school system, one finds that the art teacher is married to the English teacher or vice versa, or the principal is married to an elementary teacher. Or in many cases one may have one of the spouses who works at a local plant and a teacher who works.

But if one stops and thinks about it, one of the groups that is affected more than any other single group are teachers. If we want to attract people into the education profession, it seems to me the last thing we ought to do is punish them for getting married.

So this is about fundamental fairness. I know that the President and some people say, well, what we need to do is just tinker around the edges, and we want to provide some relief to certain targeted groups. Well, in my opinion, if something is unfair, we ought to pull it out by the roots.

So I am going to congratulate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and all the Members of the Committee on Ways and Means for the work they have done to try and eliminate this unfairness. It should never have been allowed to happen in the first place. Now is a chance to, on a stand-alone bill, to

allow the American people to understand what this means to them, their families, their future.

In some respects, this is a debate about fairness. But at the end of the day, it is also a debate between the family budget and the Federal budget. Since the gentleman from Illinois and I came here in 1995, we have really had a battle on our hands to control Federal spending.

There is a lot of good news. We have moved from a \$220 billion deficit to now, for the first time in the last 2 years, we have had real surpluses here at the Federal level. That happened because we recognize that if we dramatically slow the rate of growth and Federal spending, it was not that long ago Federal spending was growing at 6, 8, 10, 12 percent per year. Well, the last several years, Federal spending has been growing at a slower rate than the average family budget.

In fact, even this President, and we have to congratulate him on this, the budget he submitted the other day calls for an increase in total Federal spending of 2½ percent. Next year, we believe, and the economists we talked to believe that the Federal budget should grow at somewhere around 2½ percent. But the average family budget in America is growing at 3½ percent.

Now, that is a tremendous success story. If we can keep that kind of momentum going and limiting the growth in the Federal budget to less than the growth in the average family budget, it means we are going to see real surpluses. Those surpluses can go to pay down debt. Those surpluses can go to make certain we protect Social Security and have generational fairness.

But I think also some of that surplus ought to go to correct some of these unfair inequities in the tax code. One of the most glaring examples is this marriage penalty tax which married couples have been paying.

I also want to say this, in this debate between the Federal budget and the family budget, I know the Federal Government, and I know the family, and I know the difference. I know who can spend that money smarter. If that young couple or some of the people that I have talked to in my district has an extra \$1,400, \$1,500, \$1,600 a year, I believe that they can spend that money a whole lot smarter than the Washington bureaucrats can. I think they can get more value for it. I think in the end of the day, if we allow those people to keep, spend, or invest their own money, we are going to keep this economy growing and stronger as we go forward.

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So it is about generational fairness, it is about fundamental fairness, it is about the difference between the family budget and the Federal budget. And if we continue to control Federal spending, we can provide this kind of tax relief. We can do it this year.

In fact, the only argument I might have against the bill that will be on

the floor tomorrow is that it ought to be retroactive. I believe we have the money in the budget this year so that as people are doing their taxes this year, as they are beginning to fill out their tax forms, there ought to be a way we might be able to do something retroactively. Not just for next year but this year. Let us eliminate this marriage penalty now.

Finally, let me say this is not a debate between the Republicans versus the Democrats. This is not even right versus left. This is a debate of right versus wrong. And it is simply wrong to make married couples pay extra taxes simply because they have a marriage certificate. The gentleman knows this, I know it, and the American people now know it.

In fact, if anyone wants to visit our Web sites, my own Web site is [gil.house.gov](http://gil.house.gov). That is [www.gil.house.gov](http://www.gil.house.gov). And if people go to that Web site, Members or people who might be watching this, if they go to that Web site, there is actually a calculator there. It takes a few minutes, but they can see if they are a married couple, both working, how much they are currently paying in terms of a marriage penalty.

The idea of saying, well, we are going to do this for people who do not itemize but we will not do it for people who itemize, in my opinion, that does not really solve the problem. In some respects it makes the unfairness even worse. So I congratulate the gentleman and the members of the Committee on Ways and Means. As I say, it is not a debate between Republicans versus Democrats; it is not even right versus left. It is right versus wrong. The system is wrong, we have a chance to correct it, the surplus is there, and part of that surplus ought to go to changing this glaring error in the Tax Code. So I congratulate the gentleman.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota, who has been a tireless advocate for wiping out the marriage tax penalty and speaking out on behalf of families in Minnesota. I appreciate very much his leadership.

The gentleman from Minnesota made an important point. He said that the legislation we are going to pass out of the House of Representatives tomorrow, hopefully with an overwhelming bipartisan vote, is a stand-alone bill that does one thing, and that is this legislation wipes out the marriage tax penalty for couples like Shad and Michelle Hallihan, two public school teachers from Joliet, Illinois. If we think about it, last year, when President Clinton and Vice President GORE vetoed our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, it was part of a package. There were other tax unfairness issues we were trying to address. And President Clinton and Vice President GORE said they would much rather spend the money than bring fairness to the Tax Code.

This year there are no excuses, because we are going to send to the President a stand-alone bill that does one thing, wiping out the marriage tax penalty for those who suffer it, and that is 25 million married working couples who pay higher taxes just because they are married. It is not right. It is not fair.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP), who has been a tireless advocate as well in our efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I especially thank the gentleman for all the work that he has done. He is the bulldog around here for marriage tax penalty relief. It is many years he has been working day in and day out to bring us to this point. Tomorrow we will actually have this significant vote. We have even brought the President to this issue. And I think there is now some bipartisan support around marriage tax penalty relief.

But I wanted to make four points today about this very important initiative. First, the marriage tax penalty is a penalty. So when people say tax cuts, and we have had all this rhetoric about tax cuts, this is actually a penalty. So we want to do away with penalties. This is an equity issue, a fairness issue.

Frankly, I think it is very similar with the death tax. I think the death tax is grossly unfair. Since that money has already been taxed while an individual is living, it is grossly unfair when they die the money is taxed again. And so those really are the two linchpins of equitable taxation, is to eliminate this marriage tax penalty and to eliminate the death tax. I think we should try to do both, and I am very encouraged that we are bringing Democrats and Republicans together around this first step, which is marriage tax penalty relief.

Also, I want to remind everyone in this House that when I was born, in 1957, the combined State, local, and Federal tax liabilities of the average American was less than 10 percent. My father reminds me of that often. Ten cents on the dollar. Down South they have that bumper sticker that says "What is good enough for Jesus ought to be good enough for Uncle Sam." And that is the 10 percent figure. Today, though, that combined tax liability for working Americans is approaching 50 percent.

Now, we have held the line on taxes for the last several years and that is good. We have a good economy, and there are many economic benefits of what is going on in this country. But we must recognize that the trend towards higher taxation is not a favorable trend. And if this continues, the young people in this country will be saddled with so much of their take-home pay going back to the government in taxes that they will not be able to survive.

Frankly, there are many families that have to have two income earners

now, and now those two income earners are working multiple jobs. It squeezes the time that we can spend with our children. There is a real crunch there. We have got to give the American family some tax relief. This is one step in that direction. We must roll back the layers of taxation on the American people, and we must have a tax program that encourages marriage and encourages families.

The third point. We need to advocate pro-family tax relief for the institution of marriage and the institution of family. We need to go beyond this. We need to look at some of the systemic problems with early childhood development, to use our Tax Code to give families the ability to stay with their children more in those early formative years.

This past year I was vice chairman of this bipartisan working group on youth violence. We found many things through that great process, and other Members in this chamber today were part of that process; and one of the things that was undeniable is that violent behavior or any kind of adverse illegal-type behavior manifested among teenagers is actually traced back to their loving, tender care at an early age from their parents. If a teenager is violent, they were probably neglected or abused or mistreated as a small person. There is a direct connection with a loving, caring parent and good behavior later in life.

We need a Tax Code that really encourages the stay-at-home opportunity for a mom or a dad, or whatever the family chooses, so that our young people have more family time with their parents. So this type of tax policy, one that eliminates the marriage tax penalty, one that encourages families to spend more time together, quality time, and allows families to economically stay ahead but also spend more time together in bringing our children up in the proper way in this country is at the heart of a great society.

We should be a great society. In order to do that, we need to come together in a bipartisan way and pass this with overwhelming support and send a message to the President that it is time now to sign marriage tax penalty relief. And I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, I want to reclaim my time and thank the gentleman from Tennessee for his leadership in helping families. He has been a tireless advocate in making the Tax Code fair. That is what it is all about. Our goal is to make the Tax Code fair for working families, those who work hard, pay their bills on time, and pay their taxes on time. They all tell me they pay too much in taxes, but they complain even more about how unfair the Tax Code is; that it is too complicated and that our Tax Code punishes marriage, it punishes family, it punishes those who are entrepreneurs and create small businesses.

Clearly, a decision has been made by our leadership, under the leadership of

our House Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), that we are going to do something that is a good idea. We are going to send to the President a stand-alone bill that does one thing. So there are no excuses. There are no excuses for Bill Clinton to veto this bill this time. And that is we are going to send to the President legislation that will help 25 million married working couples by bringing fairness to the Tax Code, that wipes out the marriage tax penalty.

The proposal we will vote on tomorrow does several things. It helps those who do not itemize, by doubling the standard deduction for joint filers to twice that of singles, and that will take care of about 9 million couples. We also widen the 15 percent bracket to help those who itemize their taxes. And as we all know, the primary reason middle-class families itemize their taxes is because they own a home. So if we want to help those other couples, and we are going to help 25 million couples, we have to help those who itemize; those who own a home and pursue the American dream. They should not have to continue paying the marriage tax penalty just because they are a homeowner. That is wrong.

We also help those who participate in the earned income credit, the working poor. Those who are at the edge that need a little extra help. Of course, Ronald Reagan created the earned income credit program back in the mid-1980s to help families that are working poor and of course want to be in the work force and be able to support their children and raise their families in a good quality of life.

So we wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples, we help those who itemize and suffer the marriage tax penalty, and we help low-income families. And under our proposal, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, the biggest beneficiaries are those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$75,000. In fact, for a couple making \$30,000 in combined income, 97 percent of their Federal income tax is wiped out when we wipe out their marriage tax penalty. For those making \$75,000, we reduce their tax burden by about 11 percent when we wipe out their marriage tax penalty.

I think of young couples like Michelle and Shad Hallihan, two public school teachers in Joliet, Illinois, who suffer the marriage tax penalty. They both teach in Joliet public schools. They just had a baby, and they are excited about that. And as Michelle told me, she says if we can convince the Congress and the President to wipe out the marriage tax penalty, what the marriage tax penalty means to couples like Michelle and Shad Hallihan is about 3,000 diapers for their newborn child.

The marriage tax penalty is real money for real people. It is \$1,400 on average. Twenty-five million married working couples suffer the unfairness

of the Tax Code when they pay \$1,400 more in higher taxes. In the south suburbs of Illinois, on the south side of Chicago, the area I have the privilege of representing, \$1,400 is 1 year's tuition at Joliet Junior College, the local community college. It is 3 months of day care. It is several months of car payments. \$1,400, the average working tax penalty, is a significant contribution to an individual's retirement account, those IRAs. It is real money for real people.

Tomorrow, H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Elimination Act, will be brought to the floor of this House to be debated. My hope is it will pass with an overwhelming bipartisan majority. It is all about fairness, bringing fairness to the Tax Code. My hope is Democrats will join with Republicans in wiping out the marriage tax penalty.

I am pleased that thanks to the leadership of my colleague and friend, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Ms. DAN- NER), who is our chief Democratic cosponsor of H.R. 6, we have 30 Democrats that have joined as cosponsors as part of the 241 that are in support of this bill. Tomorrow is a big day. Let us wipe out the marriage tax penalty. Let us bring fairness to the Tax Code. Let us have a strong bipartisan show of support for H.R. 6, wiping out the marriage tax penalty and bringing fairness to the Tax Code.

#### CONDOLENCES TO THE HONOR- ABLE LOIS CAPPS AND FAMILY

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I would like to rise on this day, while many of our colleagues are participating in a service for former Speaker Albert, to take this time to extend my condolences to our colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) and her family members.

Obviously, they have gone through a real struggle, with the tragic death of our former colleague, Walter Capps, not long ago, and now the loss of their daughter Lisa, a young woman 35 years of age, a professor in California, who is the mother of two young children. And I would simply like to say that during this very difficult time, I know that our colleagues would join in extending our condolences to the family members.

Last night I spoke to a close friend of the family's who said that, obviously, they are dealing with a very difficult situation; and I would simply like to say that personally my thoughts and prayers are with the family members, and I certainly wish them well as they deal with this great challenge.

#### NATION'S FISCAL AND FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TAN- NER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I know all of us here join with the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) with regard to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) and her family.

Madam Speaker, we have some Blue Dogs that are going to show up down here on the floor in a few minutes. And as many of the Members know and some here know, the Blue Dog Coalition is a group of around 30 Democrats who have concentrated for the last 3 or 4 years on budgetary and financial matters that this country faces.

We are going to talk for the next few minutes about our Nation's fiscal and financial integrity and, as importantly, what it means to the young people in this Nation as we are poised today really at a crossroads.

I hope that those who listen will be somewhat informed or enlightened after we are through. I am joined by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURN- ER) at the moment.

Before I recognize the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), let me take just a minute, if I may, to talk about our Nation's financial picture.

Madam Speaker, most observers agree that our national debt is about \$5.7 trillion. That \$5.7 trillion is composed of two separate and distinct different types of debt. The \$1.7 trillion is the amount of money we, the people, owe to we, the people. It is a book-keeping entry. It is represented by assets of the Social Security trust fund, the trustees gift to the Treasury, monies that come in under the FICA tax and the Treasury gives to the Social Security trustees a non-negotiable instrument, bill, note or bond; that represents about, that and other debt, Federal Reserve holds some of it, about \$1.7 trillion.

We, the people, do not actually write checks for interest on that part of the debt every year. The other part of the debt we do, that \$3.7 trillion or \$8 trillion debt, we actually write checks every year for interest. Last year, almost \$240 billion of interest paid on monies that have been consumed by people my age and older.

Madam Speaker, to give you some idea of how much money that is, \$240 billion a year, it is the third largest item of the Federal budget only behind Social Security checks and Nation's defense. Said another way, it represents 13½ cents of every dollar that comes to this town. Said another way, we have a 13½ percent mortgage on this country simply because we have not had the willpower to retire this debt. Instead we just roll it over and continue to pay interest on it.

Put another way, and this is staggering, a third, fully one third of all the income taxes that the American people, individuals and corporate America, pay every April 15 goes to pay nothing but interest on it, the national

debt, this \$3.8 trillion dollars of hard debt that we owe.

Madam Speaker, we are going to in this House tomorrow, I guess, start taking up individual pieces of tax measures that are all very, very popular. All in my judgment or some of them need to be done.

You know what? We do not have a budget. I do not know where the marriage penalty fits in to anything. Is it more important than raising the pay of the men and women in the uniform service of this country that risk their lives?

Is it more important, is it a higher priority than doing something for the veterans who we promised we would do something for years ago, if they would give us their productive lives? I do not know.

We do not have a budget wherein we fit priorities. Is this a higher priority than, for example, medicine? We know that rural providers in this country are having a hard time keeping the doors open. Some of them will close if we do not do something about that. And you know what happens when some of them close? Somebody, maybe your father or my father or somebody's brother or child, is going to die because that clinic in that small town in rural America or that hospital closed and they had to drive 50 miles to get to a suitable medical facility. I do not know where it is going to be, but I see it is going to happen.

I see the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) over there. He can tell you that it is going to happen. Because sometimes seconds make the difference between saving someone's life who is bleeding to death or having a heart attack or a stroke.

So is the marriage penalty a higher priority than saving some child's life who has happened to cut his hand? I do not know. But I do know this, without a budget resolution where those decisions can be made, we are not, in my judgment, fulfilling our stewardship at this point in time to the American people as it relates to retiring, not just rolling over the debt, retiring the debt so that the money saved, the interest that you young people here will have to pay some day, is less.

We are not, in my judgment, exercising proper businesslike stewardship of this Nation's monies if we do not have a budget that provides for debt retirement, for the past promises we made with respect to Social Security recipients, for the past promises we made to the veterans, for the past promises we made to Medicare recipients. Those things are important. Promises made and obligations kept, that is a value that we cherish in this country.

Until we have a budget where we know where we are, where we know what fits in this piece and that piece, it seems to me that one could argue from a businesslike standpoint that it is not only unwise but it is irresponsible to start bringing tax bills to the floor

without some way of knowing where they fit in in terms of our priorities as a people.

Now, let me stop here and recognize the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) who has been a leader of the Blue Dogs. As I said earlier, we are interested in the financial integrity of this country and our ability not only to meet past promises but future obligations; and he has been a leader on that.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding. The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) always does such an outstanding job on trying to be sure that we stay on a fiscally responsible course in this Congress through his membership on the Committee on Ways and Means and his leadership of our Democrats who are members of the Blue Dog Coalition, which, as the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) mentioned, is a group of Democrats, about 30 of us, who meet together every week and talk about being sure we keep this country on a fiscally responsible course.

Now that is the main mission of the Blue Dog Coalition is to be sure we are fiscally responsible. And it is hard to understand how we can be here in the second full week of this Congress and have the Republican leadership come to the floor tomorrow with a marriage penalty tax cut bill.

Now, all the Blue Dogs are united in favor of tax cuts. And the marriage penalty is one issue that we believe very strongly needs to be dealt with by the Congress. The problem is the Republican leadership have decided to take the same old approach that they provided in the trillion-dollar tax cut that they proposed last year that we Democrats opposed and the President vetoed, they have decided to take that trillion-dollar tax cut and cut it up into little bits and pieces and roll them out on the floor in one little bit and piece at a time. The same old proposal.

Now, the House rules provide very clearly that you cannot consider a tax proposal, a tax cut, a tax bill until the Congress has adopted the annual budget. And that rule makes a whole lot of sense. You do not put the cart before the horse.

The Committee on the Budget in this Congress has the responsibility to adopt a framework for the fiscal affairs of the Federal Government every year and to adopt a budget. Once we have adopted a budget and have decided how much we are going to allocate for the various spending needs, how much we have to pay down the national debt, how much we are going to apply to tax cuts, then we are ready to come to this floor and pass individual pieces of legislation, appropriation bills and tax cut legislation, to fit within the framework of the budget.

For some reason, I guess in a complete abdication of fiscal leadership, the Republican leaders have decided they will just forget about a budget and they are going to bring the first of

a series of tax cuts to the floor beginning tomorrow.

Now, the truth of the matter is we all believe in cutting taxes. But the American people spoke loudly and clearly last year when, throughout my district, they told me they believe that the first priority of the Congress is to pay down that \$5.7 trillion national debt. If we divide that debt out among all the families in America, for a family of four, it is about \$84,000 per family. Now, that debt was run up over the last 30 years.

When I came to Congress 2 years ago, 3 years ago now, one of the objectives I had was to be sure that we do not pass on that \$5.7 trillion debt to our children and our grandchildren. And what better time to try to pay down the national debt than right now when economic times are good. This may be our best opportunity to deal with the national debt that, as the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) pointed out, takes about 13 percent of our budget every year just to pay the interest on that national debt. The debt is too big.

We have had expert after expert come before this Congress and testify that the best tax cuts we can give the American people is to pay down the national debt. Because when we pay down the national debt, we take the Government out of the business of borrowing so much money and that means there is less demand for funds and interest rates all across this country will be lower.

For most families trying to make ends meet, pay off a home mortgage, buy a car, send their children to college, and most folks have to borrow the money to do it, a lower interest rate will mean more to them than reduced taxes.

When the trillion-dollar tax cut was brought to this floor and passed in this house, the Democrats unanimously proposed a better option. We said take 50 percent of our estimated future surplus, which we hope will be there, nobody knows for sure, but let us take 50 percent of the estimated surplus and let us use that to pay down that \$5.5 trillion national debt; let us take 25 percent of the future surplus and use it to save Social Security and Medicare, which is going to be under great stress when folks my age begin to retire about 15 years from now; and let us take the last 25 percent and dedicate it to a good tax reduction that will benefit average working Americans.

Mr. MINGE. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TANNER. I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. MINGE. Madam Speaker, my colleague has been emphasizing the importance of a tax cut in terms of paying down the debt and what that can do to reducing interest rates. There are a couple of charts here which I think would be of interest to our colleagues in this respect.

One chart shows what reducing the debt means to America's families. And

as my colleague has pointed out, when the Federal Government is in the market borrowing money competing with the private sector for that money, it drives up interest rates.

It has been calculated that if we can reduce the publicly held debt from \$3.7 trillion down to \$1.3 trillion, which is possible if we show the type of discipline we have been talking about, that interest rates on homes are projected to climb by 2 percent and that this would reduce the monthly payment that America's families have on an average home of \$115,000 a mortgage of that size by approximately \$150 a month.

So there is a dividend right away to America's families. It is building on what my colleague talked about.

Secondly, we can look at students. And if we are looking at students, they would receive a dividend that is estimated to be \$35 a month on their student loans if we would reduce the national debt in that fashion.

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So this interest rate dividend has been projected and has been calculated, and I thought that this would be a very good way to illustrate with some specific numbers the exact point that the gentleman just made.

So I would like to thank the gentleman for making that point and yield back.

Mr. TURNER. That point is certainly well taken. I think the benefits of paying down the debt maybe are not quite as obvious to the American people as we need to try to make it. Most of the people I talk to in my district are fiscally conservative folks that believe if you owe \$5.7 trillion dollars, you ought to try to pay that down. They do not believe in owing money. Many folks do not realize in addition to paying down the debt, as the right thing to do, that we will get an interest dividend that the gentleman from Minnesota talked about.

I really believe that the important thing for us to emphasize to the American people is that our Republican leadership, beginning tomorrow, is coming back with the same \$1 trillion tax cut that they tried to pass last time and that the American people realized was just a ploy to try to show who could be for cutting taxes the most, and now they are breaking that big \$1 trillion tax cut down into little pieces and trying to roll them out here on the floor, because it is harder to vote against a little tax cut than it was that \$1 trillion one, hopefully forcing the Members of this House to vote for a tax cut.

We are going to vote for a marriage penalty tax cut as Democrats, but we are going to do it in the context of a budget that reduces the national debt, that saves Social Security and provides the kind of tax relief that average working Americans need.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I want to take

this time to recognize another Texan. Being from Davy Crockett's district, I have to recognize these Texans, as you know, but one of the leaders in the House on financial matters and fiscal conservative business-like principles that we are trying to advance here, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

Mr. STENHOLM. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding. I thank the gentleman for taking the time today and giving the Blue Dog Democrats and perhaps others hopefully on both sides of the aisle the opportunity to engage in this debate before we get into the political debate of tomorrow.

It is difficult to be perceived as being against a tax cut, particularly when you agree that the marriage tax penalty should be corrected, but it is not difficult to oppose a bill that not only corrects the marriage tax penalty, but also gives a marriage bonus to those that are currently getting a bonus. I am sure in the limited time tomorrow we will not have an opportunity to fully debate that.

But the real purpose for which we take this hour today is to talk about why paying down the debt should be the number one priority for this Congress and why some of us on this side of the aisle feel so strongly that not following the regular order of determining the priorities of the Congress is a drastic fiscal mistake.

We now have the opportunity to pay down this debt we all talk about if, and this is one of the big questions, if the projected surpluses materialize. That is why we and the Blue Dogs have been saying now for quite some time, let us not spend projected surpluses as if they are real money, surpluses that may or may not occur in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010.

Is that conservatism? Are we going to go back to the same fiscal policies that we followed in the 1980s when we borrowed over \$3 trillion pursuing a fiscal policy that did not quite work out, unless you perceive that borrowing money by the Federal Government, taking that money away from the private sector, is a good investment.

We do not. We happen to believe that paying down the debt and the fact we are now going to be in our third year of seeing our Federal debt, that which the Federal Government is borrowing, be reduced, is good fiscal policy and has contributed to the fact that we now have the longest single economic recovery period in the history of our country, economic expansion; that unemployment has now hit and gone below 4 percent; that we have more people working in America than at any other time in the history of our country. We think that is the result of something that we have been doing right, and that is that we have been living since 1993 on a course that has gotten us into the position now of actually being able to debate what we are going to do with projected surpluses.

To those that suggest that we start out with a tax cut, you are in fact say-

ing that the plight of rural hospitals is of secondary importance. The fact that we have over 250 representatives from rural communities all over the United States in Washington as I speak begging us for additional investment in hospital care in rural areas, that that is of secondary importance, and we are not even going to discuss that until later, and perhaps never get there, because when you make the argument of a \$1.3 trillion tax cut, you will find there is no money available in the budget for additional investments and needed investments in any program.

To those that suggest that we should start with a tax cut, you are saying that we do not need to invest any further in the defense capabilities of this country, that there is no need for us to do anything but freeze defense spending for the next 10 years at current levels; and anyone knows what that will do to the ability of the United States to defend ourselves against what might happen in the next 10 years.

Why are we not debating what the priority investments should be, along with how we shall deal with our Tax Code?

It is no secret we have real problems in rural America in the farming sector. The President has proposed putting into the budget debate an investment, an expenditure, if you please, of taxpayer dollars. Should that not be debated, and if the majority of this House feels that is not a prudent investment, have it voted down? Should that not be considered in the budget process?

When we talk about spending, we have those that believe, and sincerely believe, that all Federal spending almost is a waste of money. They choose to close their eyes to the fact that we, the Congress, in a bipartisan way, over the last 4, 5 or 6 years, have done a pretty darn good job of restraining discretionary spending, a pretty darn good job. Can we do better? Yes. Should we do better? Absolutely. But can we do it in a way in which we say we are going to freeze and continue cutting in the area of defense, of agriculture, of health care?

I repeat, if we cannot find it in our wisdom to recognize that rural areas are being substantially penalized to the degree that we will have to close hospital after hospital after hospital unless we can find it in our hearts and in our judgment to increase spending in this area, then we have to be prepared to suffer the consequences.

Now, I do not think that is what the Congress will do. But my question is simply this to the leadership: Why did you choose to come with the first bill of the year with a tax cut that is politically attractive? Why do you choose to ignore the budget process that we all say we believe in and in which we will make tough choices? Why do you short circuit it? Unless it is, as some suggest, a politically attractive way to get to the \$1 trillion tax cut without anybody ever having to face up to the realities of what we are talking about.

I think we are making a bad mistake when we do that.

As Members before me have said today, I support dealing with the intricacies of the Tax Code that penalize couples for being married. That is ridiculous. Let us fix that part. But let us do it in the context of a total budget approach that will not jeopardize the economic recovery we have been in now for the last 7 years and that we have all indications we can continue if we just manage to stay on course.

I want to repeat again, and then I will yield back: we are in danger, if we choose this road that we start tomorrow, we are in danger of saying to our rural communities, I am sorry, but there is no money left for investment in health care in rural communities. That is the choice. We are in danger of saying there is no money to be used for increasing the durability and longevity and strength of the defenses of this country, which most of us agree need to be done.

Why are we not having that argument first? That is our question. We will have a motion that will provide that we can do everything everybody talks about, if it is possible to do it within the context of a budget and tough decisions. One of those needs to be being a little conservative with our first bill out of the box. I hope that we will find a way to do that.

One last point: I get real concerned when I see the leadership of the House of Representatives continuing, continuing, to ignore the need of making changes in our Social Security system and our Medicare system for the future. I get very concerned when I continue to hear the finger pointing of the House of Representatives leadership towards the administration for not dealing with Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid, when everyone knows we can do it in the House of Representatives.

Why have we not spent one second talking about the future needs of Social Security in the context of the budget? If we are going to fix Social Security for the future, so our children and grandchildren will have the same benefits that we have today, those on it today, it is going to require some changes; and it is going to require changes that will cause the need of utilizing some of those surplus dollars we are talking about. But we completely ignore that, and I think that is a shame.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, last year I said when we have projections, and I think the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) is going to talk about projections in a minute, that no reasonable business person in this country that I know of would spend 80 percent of a 10-year projection on anything. That is what we were asked to do last year with that \$800-some billion tax bill.

We are for tax cuts, but to obligate 80 percent of a 10-year projection? I do not know what the price of cotton and

soybeans is going to be next week, and these people in Washington try to talk about 10 years like it is real money. It is not even here yet.

Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) to speak on what the surplus may or may not be.

Mr. MINGE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, we have an opportunity this morning to discuss here with our colleagues the context in which we are considering a tax cut proposal. It is a tax cut proposal that deals with the problem that all of us agree needs to be addressed; and the question is, what is the most effective way to address it, and what is the appropriate time in this process to address it?

I would like to start out by echoing the comments of our colleagues from Texas in terms of the timing. I serve on the Committee on the Budget. We do not yet have even the beginnings of a budget resolution, and that is the primary task of the committee on which I serve. Indeed, the chairman of that committee, our colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH), has written a letter to the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means expressing his concern about bringing up legislation dealing with tax reductions prior to a budget.

This is not a situation where one party is trashing the other party. This is a situation where even the Republicans recognize that the tax cut proposal ought to follow the development of a budget.

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So when the Chair, the Republican Chair of the Committee on the Budget is saying to the Republican Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, let us do this in a logical process, just like any business organization would do. I think that is an admonition that we ought to take seriously.

Now, we have also mentioned, and so have our colleagues from Texas, the difficulties of projecting what is going to happen in terms of Federal spending and revenues over a decade, and where do we actually stand in terms of the amount of money available. This chart shows what is really available in terms of a surplus and when it becomes available. There is an anticipated surplus if we look at the old figures that were used in 1997, there is an anticipated surplus of \$1.85 trillion over 10 years. Now, that is deceptive because as everybody knows here in Washington and actually most people around the country, the so-called budget caps that would generate that kind of a surplus have been broken with regularity over the last 2 years.

So if we simply assume that defense spending, spending for education, for health care, for agriculture, and for a range of other things that all of us recognize as priority matters, that that spending is not going to be cut here in

the year 2000 and in the years to come, but instead, there is enormous pressure to simply maintain this level of support for Federal programs and increase it at the rate of inflation. Over half of that surplus disappears, and that is the blue portion of this pie chart, Mr. Speaker; \$1.021 trillion disappears.

Given the very strong advocacy on behalf of the Defense Department that is going on today on the Senate side and went on yesterday on the Senate side, and what I know is going to come on health care, and our colleagues have already talked about health care, and what we know is going to come on environmental programs and on education and so on, it is fair to say that this blue portion is truly not a surplus, and that leaves us with the orange and with the green.

Now, the orange represents the extension of tax reduction measures that are currently on the books, and also farm aid legislation that represents some sort of a compromise or a mean between what was done in the early 1990s and what has been done here in the late 1990s in terms of dealing with the very serious problems in the farm economy. If we assume that we are going to extend these tax reduction measures which are currently on the books like the research and development tax credit and others, then this original portion disappears and include with that the type of farm programs I just mentioned. That leaves us with the green portion. That is about \$607 billion over 10 years, \$60 billion a year.

Now, it is important to note that \$200 billion of this is actually surpluses in the Medicare program during the period of time before the baby boom generation retires. I submit that that surplus in Medicare, just like the surplus in Social Security, should not be used for current expenditures. So that brings us down to \$400 billion, and this is what we have available over 10 years. The first bill out of the chute would expend almost half of that for one tax problem alone, ignoring all of the other tax reductions that many of us think ought to be considered and also ignoring program priorities and debt reduction which my colleagues have talked about. I submit that the debt reduction component is a powerful consideration and a portion of this surplus ought to be devoted or committed to just straight debt reduction.

We have already talked about the interest rate savings to America's families, to students, and others if we reduce the debt.

Well, this chart, this pie chart I think is important for all of us to clearly understand as we move ahead and determine whether we should take up a tax reduction measure before the budget has been developed and before we know the full dimensions of these matters.

Well, there is a great deal that we need to cover here this morning, and I would like to thank the gentleman for the opportunity to cover this portion

of it which has become very clear to those of us on the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Let me follow up on something that the gentleman said about the uncertainty of this budget projection, this surplus; and I want all of my colleagues to listen to this. If the CBO estimators are wrong in guessing or in predicting what the rate of growth of the economy of this country is going to be for the next 10 years by just one-tenth of 1 percent, if they say over the next 10 years, the rate of growth of the economy is going to be 2.7 percent a year, and it is 2.6, do we know how much money the surplus is reduced just on missing that 10-year guess, one-tenth of 1 percent? It is \$211 billion. It is huge, because it is geometrical.

I would submit to my colleagues that no human being, Alan Greenspan maybe excepted, but no human being can tell me or anybody else in this country what the rate of growth of the economy of this Nation is going to be for the next 10 years, and that is why we ought to err on the side of caution as we go forward here, rather than pretending like this is real money that is already here. It is not.

I would like to take this moment to recognize a young leader in Congress who is from the great sovereign State of Louisiana (Mr. JOHN).

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, my neighbor from Tennessee, for managing this hour. I also want to thank Minority Leader GEPHARDT for granting us an hour, the Blue Dogs an hour to actually talk about our plan.

There is bipartisan, bicameral, universal support for a marriage penalty tax deduction or tax decrease. The President has it in his budget, the Democrats have it in their recommittal substitute that we will see tomorrow, the Republicans have it. Truly this debate that we are having here today, and that we will have tomorrow, is not about a marriage penalty. Everyone agrees, everyone has a plan. We will talk about the differences in the plans, but everyone agrees that there needs to be a correction. It was an unintentional glitch in a tax law that happened several or many years ago. So I think that the true debate is about how do we go about it?

Let me give my colleagues a scenario. We come up here a lot, go back to our districts and come up here a lot and we talk about how we ought to run government more like a business. Let me give my colleagues a scenario about where I think we are today in this debate. When a CEO of a company goes out and talks to potential investors asking them to invest in his company, in his idea, do we believe that he will be successful in gaining some financial support from potential investors if he just says trust me, I do not have a plan yet, I cannot see the big picture, I am not sure where we are going to be in 10

years, but I just need some money, because I have this little bitty plan or this notion that is out there. I suggest that this company will not make it very far.

Let me take it one step further. What would have happened under the trust-me notion if this Congress would have passed the \$1 trillion tax cut last year? Everyone agrees that after we look at discretionary spending caps, we look at some emergency spending that we only are going to have a projected \$780 plus billion surplus over the next 10 years. Think about that. If we would have passed a \$1 trillion tax cut last year, we only have \$780 billion projected today, and it has only been 6 months. We would be running a deficit before the tax cut even was fully engaged.

So I beg the Republican majority to take a look not at the fact that we need a tax cut. I am going to vote for a marriage penalty tax cut. The America people will have a tax cut bill that will have a marriage penalty decrease in it. I feel good about that. I am almost confident that that is going to happen. But let us put it in an overall budget frame. Let us lay out our plan. That is the responsible thing to do.

We have been very disciplined fiscally over the last several years. That is why we are here today. That is why we can enjoy and have this debate which I guess several years ago we would not have even had about the problems we have with the kinds of surplus that we are predicting.

We need to continue, and I beg the majority to show us a road map. Give us a plan. We want to cut taxes. I am going to vote for it. The Blue Dogs will vote for it, the Democrats will vote for it, and everyone wants it. It fits in a plan. But we ought to spend half of whatever that surplus is in paying down the debt first, 25 percent in a targeted tax cut that should include the marriage penalty and will, I believe, and 25 percent for priority spending.

We have heard my colleagues talk about some of the other spending needs that we have in this country. How do we know if they are more important than something else until we look at the business plan. There is not one person, businessperson in America that could go to the bank and borrow some money today and say I do not have a business plan, but I need some money. Show us a plan. Keep us on the road to fiscal discipline. Keep us on the road of good economies across America, but make sure we do it in the whole picture.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the gentleman for his leadership.

I will recognize another young leader here who is from the State of Florida and who has been very active with us in trying to do something with regard to a business-like approach to our Nation's financial picture, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD).

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Tennessee for yielding me

this time, my colleague, who is a leader in our Blue Dog Coalition, in coordinating this hour so that we are able to talk a little bit about the surplus and debt reduction and some of the issues that are important to us.

Mr. Speaker, when I first came to Congress 3 short years ago in 1997, I saw something happen that was truly miraculous I thought, having heard all of the bad things about Washington, the partisanship that exists here. But what I witnessed in 1997 was an agreement where the majority leadership, the Republicans in Congress sat down with the President, a Democrat, and actually negotiated in good faith, and those negotiations led to a budget agreement which has provided us fiscal discipline that has produced 2 consecutive years of budget surpluses. It also provided \$250 billion in tax relief, and it extended the life of the Medicare program. We were able to do that because of bipartisan cooperation and people sitting down in good faith and negotiating from each side of the aisle.

Fast forward a couple of years to 1999, and we will see that all of those lessons learned from bipartisan cooperation seemed to fly out the window. The majority leadership of the Congress rammed through a totally partisan budget without any input from the President or the Democratic side of the aisle. That partisan budget cornerstone was \$800 billion in tax relief and very little for anything else. We all know that this was totally rejected by the American people and actually, this failure to construct a bipartisan budget resulted in that tax bill being vetoed and left Congress and the President haggling over the 13 annual appropriations bills that this Congress must pass.

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Actually, we ended up, as you know, rolling the last five or six into one omnibus appropriations bill, which is never the best way to do it.

Unfortunately, it seems that my friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the majority leadership of this Congress, have not learned from last year's mistakes, and have not recalled the success that can be had when they act like we did in 1997.

Instead of building on the 1997 balanced budget agreement and forging another compromise with the President, what we have this year is an attempt to pass major tax legislation before a budget is even written.

How much of a surplus do we think ought to go to debt reduction? Well, nobody knows because we have not done a budget. How much should go to reforming the social security and Medicare systems that my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), spoke so eloquently about?

We know that is the major, major social problem for this country moving into the 21st century, the viability of the social security and Medicare system. How much of this surplus will be

required to deal with those problems? We do not know. We do not have a budget. We have not written our budget plan.

How much should go to our other priority programs that have been spoken of here, such as defense? Maybe the most important function of a Federal Government is defense of its borders and its people. Well, we do not know. We know that we have drawn down defense funding over the last decade, and in the last couple of cycles we have actually begun to increase that again. We know that we will continue to have to increase defense spending to keep up with modern weapons and readiness, and pay our men and women who are in the service like they should be paid.

How about veterans and military retirees? Certainly that is one of the hot button issues now on the minds of everybody that is a Member of this Chamber. This country has gone back on its promise to provide lifetime medical benefits for those who have served their country and retired from the military. There are over 60 percent of the Members of this Chamber who are cosponsors of a bill which will deal with that issue, and we do not even know how much it will cost yet. It might cost \$6 billion, \$8 billion, \$10 billion, but 60 percent of the Members of this Chamber are cosponsors of that bill.

There is a major commitment to deal with that issue, but yet, we want to advance a tax bill before we write a budget dealing with military retirees and veterans' health care benefits.

My colleagues in the majority on the other side of the aisle will tell us they are for paying down the debt. I believe many of them are. But the sad truth is that the Committee on the Budget had not even had its first hearing this year when the legislation was scheduled for a floor vote that would include a \$182 billion tax bill for the marriage tax penalty. Where is the plan for debt relief? Us Blue Dogs, those of us who are Blue Dogs, believe that ought to be the cornerstone of any surplus plan.

So Mr. Speaker, it is not too late to do the right thing. If we really want tax relief to become law, my suggestion is that the leadership on the majority side sit down with Democrats in Congress and the President and let us develop a bipartisan budget agreement. In that agreement, we will deal with the social security issues, the priority spending, we will deal with debt reduction, and we will deal with tax relief. Those of us who are Blue Dogs feel very strongly about that.

I want to again thank my friend, the gentleman from Tennessee, for allowing us to have this time.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) for his comments. I hope we will be charitable to the Gaters next fall in Knoxville when they come to see us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield again to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM). He has done as much as anyone in this

Congress in the last 10 or 15 years on the budget.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Let me just kind of sum up what I think I have heard, listening to my colleagues today. What we are suggesting is that the conservative thing for this House to do is to make the tough calls on the budget and put the tax cut within the confines of what we can agree in a bipartisan way is the blueprint that will allow our economy to continue to grow as it has in the past 7 years.

We get very, very disturbed when we hear people talking about, well, there is a \$4 trillion surplus, and we can give one-fourth of it back to the people because it is the people's money.

If only that were true. Well, it is true, it is the people's money, but it is not true that we have \$1 trillion to give back, unless we are prepared to say to the 55- to 65-year-olds today, "We are going to let you worry about your social security check when it starts coming due in 2014. We are going to let you worry and let your children and grandchildren worry even more about it."

The problem that many of us have with expenditures, spending programs, of which we are also opposed to the creation of new entitlement programs, very strongly. We should not create new spending programs, any more than we should have massive tax cuts at this time, based on projected surpluses.

Here are the numbers, a \$4 trillion surplus. \$2 trillion of it is social security. Fine. Put that towards paying down the debt. That leaves \$2 trillion, of which some say \$1 trillion should go to a tax cut. All right, let us assume for a moment, fine, let us do it. Then that means that all of the rest of government is basically going to live at current expenditure levels for the next 10 years.

Here is where I have a problem, because in the defense area alone, I do not believe for one second we can prepare this country for the future threats that we are going to have if we assume that defense is going to stay frozen at year 2000 levels. I do not believe that. But that is what we are going to get into if we follow this path.

How much can we cut back from the current baseline without allowing for inflation? That is something we ought to debate, and we ought to do it program by program.

Let us assume for a minute that we let defense grow at the rate of inflation. There are many of us that say that in itself is not enough because we have allowed it to trend downward too long and too far. But these are the kinds of discussions we ought to have first. We ought to deal with the spinach part of the budget before we deal with the dessert.

In the area of health care, this is one thing that is getting overlooked. How many of us hear from our senior citizens and others, young people, young working families who are having a difficult time paying their pharma-

ceutical bills? Are we going to ignore that very real need in this budget? I think not.

I have mentioned agriculture. We can mention veterans. We can mention the rural hospitals again. Why are we not doing the regular process? Why are we coming in with what someone perceives is a politically attractive marriage tax penalty, with which we all agree, we ought to deal with the penalty, but why should we also give, under the name of a marriage penalty, a bonus to those who are already getting a bonus in the tax cut because they are married, also? I do not understand the logic of that.

I have a little rule of thumb: If it meets the West Texas tractor seat commonsense approach, then it is a pretty good idea. That does not meet anybody's commonsense approach, it defies logic, except somebody has decided it is a good political move.

I hope the House will show the wisdom of saying, we are for it. Let us put this bill back into the committee. Let the committee deal with it in the confines of the overall budget. Let us deal with a marriage tax penalty, but let us not do so at the expense of social security and Medicare, because that is the basic, fundamental choice we will make.

Once we start down the path of saying that we are going to have tax cuts, one piece of cake at a time, and if we have 12 cuts or 10 cuts or 5 cuts at \$182 billion, we are soon going to spend \$1 trillion. When we get into that, we are going to see that we will have jeopardized the very thing all of us have said we will never do, and that is jeopardized the future of social security and the Medicare program.

That is the fundamental choice that we will make if we start down this politically attractive path without dealing with the tough decisions that we need to make, and we can make in a very bipartisan way.

Mr. TANNER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, we will be back to talk about debt retirement, to talk about the priorities of this Nation, every time that we have one of these bills before we have a budget where we know where we are.

I voted against the \$800 billion tax cut last year. It would have been good for me. People say, well, you all are against tax cuts. It would have been good for me. I would have had a tax cut. I could have voted for it. But it would not be good for my kids and grandkids, and everybody knows that, not when we have a \$5.7 trillion national debt, paying \$240 billion a year in interest alone.

It is a generational mugging to them, to all the young people in this country, to not pay our bills and to retire, not roll over, this national debt.

I do not want to leave this Nation in my productive years here, I do not want to leave a Nation where the water is so polluted that fish cannot live in it and kids cannot swim on it. I do not

think Members want that kind of country either for their children. I do not want to leave a country to our kids where they have to wear a surgical mask to ride their bicycle across town because the air is so foul and so polluted. That is not the kind of country I want to be proud of when I leave this town.

I do not want to leave our kids a country with a 14 percent mortgage on it, one that is going to strap them every day of their college career and productive lives to do nothing more than pay interest. That is as paramount to me in terms of what kind of legacy we leave to our kids that come along after us than any other single thing.

Clean air, clean water, and a country that is financially strong, that is what we ought to be talking about, rather than doing these things. We are going to have this tax bill up here, we do not have a budget, we do not know where it fits, but this is going to be real good for some of us politically. No sane business person in this country would go down this path. Yet, that is where we are facing.

Mr. Speaker, I genuinely appreciate the opportunity that the Blue Dogs have had to discuss these matters. We feel very strongly about it. Hopefully we can engage again at a future date.

#### TAXES, THE NATIONAL DEBT, AND OUR NATION'S PRIORITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WHITFIELD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I had not planned on talking that much about taxes today, but we will have a tax bill come up on the floor tomorrow, so in light of the last hour's discussion on taxes, I might as well give my opinion on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, prior to coming to Congress, I was elected in 1994, I was a reconstructive surgeon in Des Moines, Iowa. I had been in solo practice for 10 years. I took care of women who had had cancer operations, farmers who had put their hands into machines, babies who were born with birth defects.

I enjoyed it very much and I still do. I still go overseas and do surgical missions. I expect that some day I will probably return to that.

So people would ask me, why are you thinking about running for Congress? Are you tired of medicine? I said, no, I am not tired of medicine at all. I love it. It is a way to solve problems. But I will say, Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of problems that I was really concerned about.

I was concerned about a welfare system that I thought was not working. I took care of 14- and 15-year-old young mothers who would bring a baby with a cleft lip or palate into my office. They would be on welfare. There would almost never be a dad there with them,

because the system was set up so that they only get benefits if a dad is not there. I did not think that was right.

One of the things I am proudest of since coming to Congress is the fact that this Republican Congress reformed welfare. It is working well. It is giving a helping hand, it is helping people get education, it is providing for child care during that training period of time, but it also says that if you are able-bodied and you receive that helping hand, then you ought to take the responsibility and get a job.

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The welfare rolls are down by 50 percent all across the country, and part of that is due to the economy but part of it is due to the Welfare Reform Act that this Republican Congress passed. We had to place it on the President's desk three times before he signed it, but I am proud of that.

The other reason that I ran, that I decided to leave my medical practice for a period of time, was because I was very concerned about our national debt. Remember what it was like back in 1993 when I decided to run. We were looking at annual deficits into the future of over \$200 billion, as far as we could see. We were looking at trillions of dollars of national debt.

I have three children. I was worried about what kind of legacy we were going to leave for them. The bigger the national debt, the more our kids will have to pay for it. Then we look at the baby-boomers, the age wave coming down the track. I am 50 years old, right there at the beginning of that age wave. In another 15 years, every 8 seconds a baby-boomer is going to be retiring and our kids are going to have to cover that.

So the other main reason that I ran for Congress, that I left my medical practice, was to do something to get our national finances in order, to eliminate these annual deficits, to reduce the debt.

Mr. Speaker, with this Republican Congress we have put some fiscal restraint on Federal spending and part of the reason that we have a vibrant economy now is because there is not just a perception but a reality that this Congress has slowed down spending. That is good. In 1994, I ran against a very nice gentleman from Iowa who had been here 36 years. He was the chairman of Labor HHS Appropriations, which probably accounts for a lot of his votes, but we had a disagreement. The incumbent that I beat never saw a spending bill that he did not like.

We have put some fiscal restraint on this Congress. This brings us then to last year's tax cut, Republican tax cut. I am one of four Republicans that voted against that tax cut. That is not easy, let me say. I talked to the Speaker personally. He wanted me to vote for that bill. The Speaker is a fine man and a good friend. I had to turn him down.

I spoke to the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), who I love dearly. He is a good friend. I had to turn him down.

Why was I one of only four Republicans that voted against that \$780 billion tax cut last year? Well, Mr. Speaker, it is because when I looked at the numbers, the projections for the surplus, they were based on two assumptions that are false. The first assumption was that we would stick to the spending caps from the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, and that is false because they are already broken.

We have already gone beyond those spending caps. Those spending caps would require reductions of 30 percent over current spending in the next several years. That will never happen. The second assumption was that there would be no emergency funding for 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that on the average this Congress has spent \$12 billion to \$16 billion a year on emergency funding. There is no way that we would not have any emergency funding. Emergencies happen. There are hurricanes that come up the coast. There are droughts. There are natural disasters. Furthermore, even this year we are looking at emergency funding for military operations in Kosovo. That should not be an emergency item. We know that we are there. That should be budgeted, but that will be stuck into an emergency supplemental bill.

So those two premises upon which that \$1 trillion surplus, above and beyond Social Security, was made are false. It will not be that much. I pray to God that our economy continues to do well, that we continue to have government revenues come in as they have under this wonderful economic expansion, but I do not know that we can bank on that.

So I did not think those premises were true. I did not think we were truly dealing with that big a surplus, and I am a Republican who came to Congress, as I said, in 1995 to balance the budget, not to vote for a bill that could put us back into deficits.

Mr. Speaker, I will match my economic score card for fiscal conservatism with just about anybody in this House of Representatives. I am a fiscal conservative.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to believe that it is conservative to be careful and not to vote for a bill that could put us into deficits, not to vote for a bill that could increase our national debt. I think it is conservative to pay down our national debt first.

What should our priorities be this year? I think we ought to pay down the debt, for a couple of reasons. Number one, we are currently spending about \$240 billion a year on interest payments. When times are good, my parents taught me, one should reduce debt so that when times are bad they do not have to service that debt.

I think we ought to know what our expenses are going to be this year, and I would agree with my Democratic col-

leagues that the process should be, first, get your priorities in order; pay down the debt. Second, know what your expenditures are going to be and, third, then you know how much you have available for a tax cut.

I am going to vote tomorrow for a marriage tax relief bill. I think it is a matter of inequity. I do not think that a couple, both of whom are working that earn \$75,000, should pay more in taxes than a couple where only one is working and they are earning \$75,000. That needs to be fixed.

I am in agreement with fixing the alternative minimum tax. That tax was designed for millionaires so that they would have to pay something in taxes; but unfortunately, because of historical trends in income, it now affects the middle class. I think we ought to do something to fix that so I am going to vote for this tomorrow.

What are we going to do later in the year when we have a minimum wage bill come up and we attach tax provisions to that? How much will those tax provisions be to help small businesses? What are we going to do if we want to address access to health care with a Patients' Bill of Rights that is coupled with an access bill? I firmly believe there is bipartisan support in Congress to extend to 100 percent deductibility for the self-insured for their health premiums, make it effective January 1, 2000. That would help a lot of individuals afford health insurance, but that could be a major coster in terms of decreased revenues to Congress.

Where does this all fit in together? Where does it fit in with what we think we will need to spend for government programs? My colleagues from the other side of the aisle pointed out that there are a number of Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle that want to increase spending on defense. We may be looking at some additional agricultural relief.

My point of this is that we need to have a process ahead of time so that we understand where we are going on this budget. If it is the intent of my leadership to simply take last year's \$800 billion tax cut bill, divide it into little pieces and just bring them one after another to the floor, then I think after the first one or two they will find out that they no longer have support because people will start to get concerned about are we going to end up at the end of the year dipping into that Social Security surplus. Are we at the end of the year actually going to be able to say we reduced the debt.

When I talk to my constituents back home in Iowa, I can say something. Almost unanimously they say our priorities should be reduce the debt. Among the elderly, they want us to reduce the debt because they intuitively know that if we have a lower debt that in the year 2013, when the baby-boomers move into retirement, that gives us a bigger cushion to handle those entitlement programs.

The younger people want us to reduce the debt because they know if we

do it we will reduce interest rates so that they have to pay less on their home payments. Reduce the debt, figure out what an accurate budget should be and fit your tax cuts into that. That should be the process by which we go through here.

I am in agreement with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on this. I think we are going to be looking at some legislation down the road this year that is important, and we need to know where we are going to be on this issue.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I am as fiscally conservative as just about anybody in the Republican caucus. I do not enjoy being at odds with my leadership on this issue. I happen to think that our leadership, in talking now about debt reduction, is getting the message. I happen to think that we can go out and we can be honest with people and we can say, look, the conservative position on this is, number one, do not vote for a bill that has the potential to increase deficits and increase debt. Pay down the debt first.

#### PATIENT PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, in my remaining time I want to speak a little bit about patient protection legislation. We have been working on this issue for 5 years now. Back in 1995 when I first came to Congress, reports came out about how HMOs were writing contracts that had gag clauses in them, in which they basically said that before a physician could say to the patient what their treatment options were they first had to get an okay from the company.

Now think about that for a minute. Let us say that a woman with a lump in her breast goes in to see her doctor. The doctor takes her history, examines her, and knows that there are three treatment options for this lady; but one of them may be more expensive than the other and because he has this gag rule written into his HMO contract he has to say, excuse me, ma'am; leaves the room goes to a telephone; gets on the phone, dials a 1-800 number and says, Mrs. So and So has a lump in her breast. She has three treatment options. Can I tell her about them?

I firmly believe that patient has the right to know all her treatment options and that an HMO should not censor her physician. That is a blow right to the patient/doctor relationship. That should be outlawed. So I wrote a bill in 1995 called the Patient Right to Know Act. I went out and I obtained 285 bipartisan cosponsors and, Mr. Speaker, I could not get that bipartisan bill to the floor, which would have passed with over 400 votes.

My leadership, the Republican leadership of this Congress, would not even allow a simple bill like that to come to the floor, despite promises that they would.

So the next year came along, and we wrote a more comprehensive bill because we also knew that in the meantime HMOs were refusing to pay for emergency care.

Let us say a patient has crushing chest pain. We have just seen on TV that crushing chest pain can be a sign of a heart attack. Pass go, go immediately to that emergency room because if one delays they could have a heart attack and die on the way. The American Heart Association says that.

So people would have crushing chest pain, break out in a sweat, know that that could be a heart attack. They go to their emergency room. They would have a test, and some of the time it would not show a heart attack. Some of the time it would show severe inflammation of the esophagus or the stomach instead.

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The EKG would be normal. So ex post facto, the HMO would refuse to pay for that emergency room visit, because, you see, the patient was not having a heart attack after all.

Well, when word of that type of treatment gets around, people start to think twice about really whether they are going to go to the emergency room when they need to, because, after all, they could be stuck with a bill. Is that fair? Is that just? No. But it is one of those ways that HMOs have tried to cut down on care to increase their bottom-line profits.

Well, we had hearings on patient protection legislation. We had a hearing back in May, 1996, 4 years ago. Buried in the fourth panel at the end of a long day was testimony from a small, nervous woman. This was before the House Committee on Commerce. By that time, the reporters are gone, the cameras are gone, most of the original crowd had dispersed. She should have been the first witness that day, not the last.

She told about the choices that managed care companies and self-insured plans are making every day when they determine what is known as "medical necessity." Linda Peeno had been a claims reviewer for several HMOs. I want to relate her testimony to my colleagues.

She began, "I wish to begin by making a public confession. In the spring," now this is a former claims reviewer, medical reviewer for an HMO. She said, "In the spring of 1987, I caused the death of a man. Although this was known to many people, I have not been taken to any court of law or called to account for this in any professional or public forum. In fact, just the opposite occurred. I was rewarded for this. It brought me an improved reputation in my job. It contributed to my advancement afterwards. Not only did I demonstrate that I could do what was expected of me, I exemplified the good company employee. I saved half a million dollars."

As she spoke, a hush came over that room. Mr. Speaker, I think you may have been in the room when this lady testified. The representatives of the trade associations who were there averted their eyes. The audience shift-

ed uncomfortably in their seats, alarmed by her story. Her voice became husky, and I could see tears in her eyes. Her anguish over harming patients as a managed care reviewer had caused that woman to come forth and to bear her soul.

She continued, "Since that day, I have lived with this act and many others eating into my heart and soul. I was a professional charged with the care or healing of his or her fellow human beings. The primary ethical norm is 'do no harm.' I did worse," she said. "I caused the death. Instead of using a clumsy, bloody weapon, I used the simplest, cleanest of tools: my words. This man died because I denied him a necessary operation to save his heart."

This medical reviewer continued, "I felt little pain or remorse at the time. The man's faceless distance soothed my conscious. Like a skilled soldier, I was trained for this moment. When any qualms arose, I was to remember, I am not denying care. I am only denying payment."

Well, by this time, the trade association representatives were staring at the floor. The Congressmen who had spoken on behalf of the HMOs were distinctly uncomfortable. The staff, several of whom became representatives of HMO trade associations, were thanking God that this witness was at the end of the day.

Her testimony continued, "At that time, this helped me avoid any sense of responsibility for my decision. Now I am no longer willing to accept the escapist reasoning that allowed me to rationalize that action. I accept my responsibility now for this man's death as well as for the immeasurable pain and suffering many other decisions of mine caused."

This is testimony from a medical reviewer for an HMO before Congress in 1996. Congress has dilly dallied for 4 years and has not done anything to fix this.

She then listed the many ways that managed care plans deny care to patients; but she emphasized one particular issue, the right to decide what care is medically necessary.

She said, "There is one last activity that I think deserves a special place on this list, and this is what I call the smart bomb of cost containment, and that is medical necessities denials. Even when medical criteria is used, it is rarely developed in any kind of standard traditional clinical process. It is rarely standardized across the field. The criteria is rarely available for prior review by the physicians or members of the plan."

She says, "We have enough experience from history," we have enough experience from history, I think she was referring to World War II, "to demonstrate the consequences of secretive, unregulated systems that go awry."

After exposing her own transgressions, she closed urging everyone in the room to examine their own conscience. She closed by saying, "One can

only wonder how much pain, suffering, and death will we have before we have the courage to change our course. Personally, I have decided that even one death is too much for me."

At that point in time, the room was stone-cold quiet. The chairman mumbled, "Thank you."

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about some of the real-life people that have been affected by HMO abuses. It is important, when we talk about the details, the technical details of some of these bills, that we remember that there are actually people involved with the consequences of HMO decisions.

It has now been about 4 years since a woman was hiking about 40 miles east of Washington here. She fell off a 40-foot cliff. She fractured her skull, broke her arm, had a fractured pelvis. She was laying on the rocks at the base of a 40-foot cliff, close to a pond. Fortunately she did not fall into that. Her boyfriend who was hiking with her managed to get her life-flighted to a hospital.

This was that young woman, Jackie Lee, being trundled up, put on the helicopter. She spent about a month in the ICU. She was really sick. She had severe injuries. She was on intravenous morphine for pain.

After she got out of the hospital, her HMO refused to pay for her hospitalization. Why was it that her HMO would not pay? Well, the initial answer was, Jackie had not phoned ahead for prior authorization. She had not phoned ahead to let them know that she was going to fall off a cliff and be injured. Boy, I would tell you, you would need a real crystal ball to get care from that HMO. Or maybe when she was semi-comatose, lying at the base of that cliff, she was supposed to, with her nonbroken arm, pull a cellular phone out of her pocket and phone a 1-800 number and say, hey, guess what? I fell off a 40-foot cliff. I need to go to the emergency room.

Well, then after she contested that, then the HMO still refused to pay for her bill because they said, "Well, you were in the hospital for a while. You did not phone us within the first few days that you were in the hospital." Her rejoinder was, "I was in the ICU on a morphine drip. I guess it did not enter my mind." That is one of the examples that we are dealing with.

Under the bill that passed the House of Representatives a couple of months ago, this woman would be taken care of because we have a provision in that bill that says that, if one needs to go to the emergency room, and if a layperson would agree that this is an emergency, would anyone not agree that that is an emergency, if a layperson would agree that that is an emergency, then that HMO is obligated to pay the bill. We passed that provision for Medicare patients. We still have not done anything for all of the people in this country.

Well, what about HMOs like this medical reviewer talking about making determinations of medical necessity

that are contrary to what one's own doctor or physician consultant would give.

This woman was featured on the cover of Time Magazine several years ago. She had cancer. Her doctor and her consultants all recommended a type of treatment. Her HMO denied it. There was no specific exclusion of coverage for that type of treatment or contract. But under Federal law, her HMO can define medical necessity in any way they want to.

If one gets one's insurance from one's employer, does one's State insurance commissioner have any say in that? No. Congress took that away from State insurance commissioners 25 years ago. Under current law, HMOs that make decisions, medical necessity decisions, through employer plans, can define medical necessity any way they want. Even though this woman's doctors all recommended that she have this treatment that could have saved her life, they said, no, and she died.

Let me tell my colleagues about another type of medical decision that an HMO made 5 or 6 years ago. About 3:00 in the morning, Lamona Adams was taking care of little Jimmy when he was 6 months old. He had a temperature of about 104, 105, and he was pretty sick. She looked at him, and she talked to her husband, and they thought he needed to go to the emergency room. So they were good HMO clients. They phoned that 1-800 HMO number. They got somebody 1,000 miles away who knew nothing about the Atlanta, Georgia area where they lived.

The person said, "Yes, I will authorize you to go to an emergency, but you can only go to this one emergency room." Little Jimmy's mother said, "Well, where is it?" The voice at the end of that 1-800 line said, "Well, I do not know. Find a map."

So at 3:30 in the morning, Mom and Dad wrapped up little Jimmy, got into the car. There is a severe storm outside. They start their trek to this authorized hospital which is about 70 miles away, 70, 70 miles away. They live clear on the south side of Atlanta, and this authorized hospital is on the north side. So they have to go through all of metropolitan traffic.

On their way, about halfway there, they passed three emergency rooms that they should have been able to stop at. But they were not medical professionals. They knew he was sick, but they did not know how sick. They knew if they stopped at one of those unauthorized hospitals that the HMO would not pay, and this could be really expensive.

Unfortunately, before they got to the authorized hospital, Jimmy's eyes rolled back in his head, he stopped breathing, and he had a cardiac arrest. So, imagine, Dad driving like crazy, Mom trying to keep her little baby alive. They finally pull into the emergency room. Mom grabs her baby, jumps out of the car, screaming "save my baby, save my baby."

A nurse comes out, gives him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. They start the IVs. They give him medicines, and they save his life. But they do not save all of this little baby. Because of his cardiac arrest, his decreased circulation, he ends up with loss of circulation in his hands and his feet, and gangrene sets in. Both his hands and both his feet have to be amputated.

Here is James after his HMO treatment, without his hands and without his feet. I brought him to the floor of Congress when we had our debate. He can put on his leg prostheses with his arm stumps, and he gets around pretty good, and he is a great kid. He will take a pencil, and he will hold it with his stumps, and he can draw and write like that. But I would submit to my colleagues that this little boy will never play basketball or sports.

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This little boy when he grows up will never be able to caress the cheek of the woman he loves with his hand. Do you know that under Federal law the HMO which made that medical determination that he had to go to that hospital that caused this to happen is liable for the cost of his amputations?

Mr. Speaker, if he died, then they would not have been liable for anything. Is that justice? Is that fair? Is that the type of system we ought to have that covers 75 percent of the people in this country who receive their insurance from their employer? I think not.

Let me give you another example of the problem with HMOs being able to determine "medical necessity" in any way that they want. Here is a little baby born with a defect, the type of which I fix; this is a cleft lip and a cleft palate. It is a birth defect. This is not a, quote, "cosmetic defect." This is a functional defect.

This little boy when he eats has food come out of his nose. This little boy, because he does not have a roof of his mouth or a palate, will never be able to learn to speak normally.

So what is the standard treatment for this? Surgical correction. We can go a long ways towards making these kids whole again and able to go out in public and able to speak and able to eat normally by a surgical correction of their palate.

You know what? There are some HMOs that are defining medical necessity as the "cheapest least expensive care," "the cheapest least expensive care."

Mr. Speaker, you may say in this age of cost containment, what is wrong with that? I will tell you what is wrong with that: the standard of care for this little baby born with this birth defect is surgical correction of his palate using his own tissues so that he is able to eat and speak normally.

Under that bizarre definition of an HMO, they can give his parents a little piece of plastic to shove up in the roof of his mouth, what is called an obturator, a plastic obturator. It would be

like an upper denture. Yes, that would keep food some of the time from going up his nose. He might be able to garble out some type of speech. But you know what? It would not be an optimal result.

Under Federal law as it currently exists today, that HMO can put that definition into their health plans, something in the fine print that none of you would ever know about. They could totally justify this, and you would have no recourse, other than maybe going to your newspaper and exposing them. That is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, this House passed by a vote of 275 to 151 a strong patient protection piece of legislation called the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Act. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), a very conservative Republican, and I, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) wrote that bill. We have had two motions to instruct for our conferees on this managed care patient reform bill to follow the House bill.

This House voted on the Senate bill, which is a do-nothing fig leaf bill, where the fine print is worse than the status quo. This House voted on that. You know what? This House voted by a vote of 145 for the Senate bill to 284 against the Senate bill.

We have a chairman of this conference who says we are going to stick to that Senate bill. Mr. Speaker, we can do better. We can do better for this little baby. We can do better for James Adams. We can do better for this lady and her family. We can do better for a woman who falls off a 40-foot cliff and is told by her HMO, sorry, you did not notify us before your fall.

We have waited on this legislation too long. It is time to fix it. The President has said put that bipartisan consensus Managed Care Reform Act, the one that passed this House with 275 votes, put it on my desk, and I will sign it. We should do that tomorrow, because I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, there are people out there at this very moment that are being harmed by HMOs that are being denied necessary medical care, who may lose their hands and feet or their life because of arbitrary decisions.

I call upon Members of both side of the aisle to work hard to bring a real patient protection bill out of conference to this floor and put it on the President's desk. If the conference brings back that unsatisfactory Senate bill, then I am just afraid we are all going to say no. Let us fix this problem, and let us fix it now. People need their care.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. RILEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE, for 5 minutes, today.

#### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Administration, reported that that committee had examined and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2130. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act to direct the emergency scheduling of gamma hydroxybutyric acid, to provide for a national awareness campaign, and for other purposes.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 10, 2000, at 10 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6089. A letter from the Under Secretary of Rural Development, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RIN: 0570-AA05) received December 21, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6090. A letter from the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Food Distribution Programs: Implementation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Welfare Reform) received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6091. A letter from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Authority and Issuance—received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

6092. A letter from the Associate Solicitor for Legislation and Legal Counsel, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule—Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Department of Labor (RIN: 1290-AA15, 3209-AA15) received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

6093. A letter from the Director, Corporate Policy and Research Department, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule—Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing Benefits—received January 24, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

6094. A letter from the Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Irradiation of Meat Food Products [Docket No. 97-076F] received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

6095. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Oxygenated Gasoline Program [PA074-4094a; FRL-6501-2] received December 10, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

6096. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Protection of Stratospheric Ozone [FRL-6503-7] received December 7, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

6097. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and State Operating Permits Programs; State of Missouri [MO 082-1082; FRL-6506-2] received December 7, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

6098. A letter from the Secretary, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Recission of the Guides for the Law Book Industry—received January 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

6099. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Framework 31 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan [Docket No. 991217342-9342-01 I.D. 120199D] (RIN: 0648-AN15) received January 21, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

6100. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule—Retirement Eligibility for Nuclear Materials Couriers Under CSRS and FERS (RIN: 3206-A166) received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Government Reform.

6101. A letter from the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule—Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination of Endangered Status for Two Larkspurs from Coastal Northern California (RIN: 1018-AE23) received January 24, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

6102. A letter from the Director, Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule—Arkansas Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Plan [SPATS No. AR-035-FOR] received January 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

6103. A letter from the Associate Bureau Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Revision of the Commission's Rules To Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems [CC Docket No. 94-102 RM-8143] received January 20, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

6104. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No. 991223348-9348-01; I.D. 012700D] received February 3, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

6105. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No. 9912223348-9348-01; I.D. 012700C] received February 3, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

6106. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Aircraft Belts, Inc. Model CS, CT, FM, FN, GK, GL, JD, JE, 4JT, JU, MD, ME, MM, MN, NB, PM, PN, RG, and RH Seat Restraint Systems [Docket No. 98-SW-33-AD; Amendment 39-11460; AD 98-25-10 R1] (RIN: 2020-AA64) received December 13, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6107. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Model Mystere-Falcon 50 and 900 Series Airplanes, Falcon 900EX Series Airplanes, and Falcon 2000 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 98-NM-266-AD; Amendment 39-11452; AD 99-25-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 13, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6108. A letter from the Attorney, Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Rules of Practice in Proceedings [Docket No. OST-97-2090] (RIN: 2105-AC48) received December 20, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6109. A letter from the Associate Administrator for Procurement, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Implementing Foreign Proposals to NASA Research Announcements on a No-Exchange-of-Funds Basis—received January 24, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science.

6110. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Deductions for Transfers for Public, Charitable, and Religious Uses; In General Marital Deduction; Valuation of Interest Passing to Surviving Spouse [TD 8846] (RIN: 1545-AV45) received December 7, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6111. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Subtitle S Subsidiaries (RIN: 1545-AU77) [TD 8869] received January 24, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6112. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Administrative, Procedural, and Miscellaneous Cash or Deferred Arrangements; Nondiscrimination

[Notice 2000-3] received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6113. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Section 162.—Trade or Business Expenses—received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6114. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Recharacterizing Financing Arrangements Involving Fast-pay Stock [TD 8853] (RIN: 1545-AV07) received January 7, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6115. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Section 1. Purpose and Nature of Changes [Rev. Proc. 2000-3] received January 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6116. A letter from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Purchase Price Allocations in Deemed and Actual Asset Acquisitions [TD 8858] (RIN: 1545-AZ58) received January 12, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

#### PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. CANNON (for himself and Mr. HANSEN):

H.R. 3605. A bill to establish the San Rafael Western Legacy District in the State of Utah, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mrs. KELLY:

H.R. 3606. A bill to authorize appropriations to reimburse State and local police and sheriff's departments in the State of New York for certain security-related expenses arising out of the new residency of the President and First Lady in that State; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LAFALCE:

H.R. 3607. A bill to amend section 255 of the National Housing Act to waive the up-front premiums otherwise payable by elderly homeowners for insurance of home equity conversion mortgages the proceeds of which are used to purchase long-term care insurance; to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. LARSON, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. ALLEN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. McNULTY, Mrs. JONES of

Ohio, Mr. WEYGAND, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut, Mr. BALDACCI, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. SWEENEY, and Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD):

H.R. 3608. A bill to provide the Secretary of Energy with authority to create a Fuel Oil Product Reserve to be available for use when fuel oil prices in the United States rise sharply because of anticompetitive activity, during a fuel oil shortage, or during periods of extreme winter weather; to the Committee on Commerce.

By Mr. SANDLIN (for himself, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. BERRY):

H.R. 3609. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to exempt certain silviculture activities from permits under the national pollutant discharge elimination system; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin:

H. Res. 420. A resolution expressing support for a National Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD) Month; to the Committee on Commerce.

By Mr. TANCREDO (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey):

H. Res. 421. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in commending Michael Horowitz in his efforts to raise public awareness of the atrocities being committed by the Government of Sudan and the perceived complacency of the Government of the United States to take a firm stand against this totalitarian regime; to the Committee on International Relations.

#### ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 218: Mr. EVERETT.  
 H.R. 220: Mr. SIMPSON.  
 H.R. 353: Mr. MCINTYRE and Mr. HEFLEY.  
 H.R. 739: Mr. EVANS.  
 H.R. 1070: Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FLETCHER, and Mr. DOYLE.  
 H.R. 1304: Mr. KANJORSKI and Mr. BORSKI.  
 H.R. 1532: Ms. SLAUGHTER.  
 H.R. 1644: Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin.  
 H.R. 1885: Ms. KAPTUR and Mr. POMEROY.  
 H.R. 2289: Mr. FOLEY.  
 H.R. 2562: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.  
 H.R. 2655: Mr. NORWOOD.  
 H.R. 2680: Mr. BLAGOJEVICH.  
 H.R. 2780: Mrs. THURMAN.  
 H.R. 2979: Mr. LATOURETTE.  
 H.R. 3003: Mr. GEJDENSON and Mr. KOLBE.  
 H.R. 3155: Mr. MURTHA, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. OWENS, and Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania.  
 H.R. 3439: Mr. CRAMER, Mr. HAYES, Mr. LEWIS of California, and Mr. RILEY.  
 H.R. 3525: Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE, Mr. CAMPBELL, and Mrs. FOWLER.