

that family members know our wishes, as relatives will be contacted and asked to sign a consent form upon our death.

Most Americans support organ donations. Nonetheless, only about 50 percent of the families asked to donate a loved one's organs have agreed to do so. Americans traditionally have strong values and share the spirit of giving within ourselves, within our communities, and in our Nation. Yet most Americans do not realize that the loss of one's life can result in the gift of life for many others.

Our corneas could give sight to two people, our kidneys could free up two people from dialysis, our heart, lungs, and liver can literally save the lives of patients who are in desperate need of a transplantation.

There is no greater gift than the gift of life. We must encourage this giving and work to leave a lasting legacy to prevent the needless and tragic deaths of thousands of Americans.

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MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing the south side of Chicago and the south suburbs in Illinois; and I am often asked about a fundamental issue of fairness, whether I am at the steelworkers' hall in Hegwisch in the City of Chicago, or a legion or VFW post in Joliet, the Chamber of Commerce functions, a coffee shop in my hometown of Morris, or at a grain elevator, and that is the fundamental issue of whether or not it is right or it is fair that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples on average pay \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married.

My colleagues, the folks back home, whether they live in the city, the suburbs, or the country, have all told me that they think it is just wrong that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples pay on average \$1,400 more just because they are married. They think it is wrong, and they want Congress and the President to do something about it.

Let me introduce Shad and Michelle Hallihan, two public school teachers from Joliet, Illinois. Shad and Michelle chose to get married a couple of years ago. They just had a little baby, just a couple of months ago. But Shad and Michelle are a typical example of the 1.1 million Illinois married couples who suffer the marriage tax penalty. Now, if Shad and Michelle stayed single and decided just to live together, they would avoid the marriage tax penalty because the marriage tax penalty results when two people get married and they file jointly.

So, for example, Shad and Michelle have identical incomes of \$31,000. Michelle is making \$31,000 a year.

Under our Tax Code, if she is single, she pays at a 15 percent tax bracket. But when she and Shad chose to get married, and suppose that Shad has an identical income of \$31,000, remember he is in the 15 percent tax bracket as well, but when they get married they file jointly and their combined income pushes them into the 28 percent tax bracket. So they are now paying a 28 percent tax rate on that same income. Is that right? Of course not. It is time that we do something about the marriage tax penalty.

I am proud that this House this past week, last Thursday, voted to wipe out the marriage tax penalty with the passage of H.R. 6, legislation that wipes out essentially the marriage tax penalty suffered by Shad and Michelle Hallihan as well as 25 million other married working couples who are punished just for getting married under our Tax Code.

H.R. 6 passed this House with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Every House Republican and 48 Democrats bucked their leadership and voted to wipe out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples. That is a big momentum. Of course, our hope is the Senate will follow our lead.

One thing that I am so proud of our leader, the leader of this House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the House Speaker, I thought made a very smart decision. He made a decision to allow H.R. 6 to come to the floor as a stand-alone bill, a bill that only deals with one subject. A clean bill that wipes out the marriage tax penalty and that is all it does. No extraneous issues.

Remember when the President and AL GORE vetoed our effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty last year? It was part of a package, tax-related legislation. And, unfortunately, they used the other provisions as an excuse to wipe out our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

My colleagues, we have a great opportunity. And my hope is the Senate will follow our lead and move quickly to move H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Elimination Act, through the Senate as a stand-alone bill. No extraneous provisions, no riders, no poison pills. We need to keep it bipartisan. Let us keep partisan politics out of our efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty.

Over the next few weeks, 25 million married working couples like Shad and Michelle Hallihan are going to be back home watching to see if Congress and the President do something about the most unfair aspect of our complicated Tax Code, and that is the marriage tax penalty. We have a great opportunity, and it is all about fairness. Is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples pay on average \$1,400 more just because they are married? Twenty-five million couples just like Shad and Michelle Hallihan.

Let us wipe out the marriage tax penalty. The House has done its job.

My hope is the Senate will do its job, and my hope is the President will keep his word. Because, remember, in his State of the Union address, he mentioned the marriage tax penalty and the need to do something about it. We have an opportunity. Let us keep it bipartisan, let us get the job done, let us bring fairness to the Tax Code and wipe out the marriage tax penalty once and for all.

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RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 11 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 57 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 11 a.m.

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□ 1100

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN) at 11 a.m.

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PRAYER

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

O gracious God, whose mercies are without number and whose spiritual nourishment is available without limit, we place before You our petitions and prayers. May our hearts be more sensitive to the needs of the poorest among us, the hungry and the homeless, those abandoned and those alone. May we do what we can to share the wonderful blessings of liberty with those who have no freedom or who suffer from the ravages of conflict.

May Your good spirit, O God, that spirit that brought the world into being and gives light and hope to the world, be and abide with us and all people, now and evermore. Amen.

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THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.