

should not be doing that. We need to see how we can make it affordable.

What angers me, and I know what angers Americans, is that that same pharmaceutical company that sells those products that contributes to the politicians up here and contributes big bucks and puts those ads to thank those Congressmen for nothing basically because they did not accomplish a darn thing except the elections were coming up, those are the same companies that choose to sell those medicines in Canada and elsewhere for half the price, for one-third of the price.

The sincereness of their efforts, it is a crime what they are committing, and it is sad that we have got to this point that those same products can be bought in Mexico and Canada for much less, and it is the same company, and it is unfortunate that the ones that are having to pay because they claim that they are doing that for research purposes, and yet who are they sticking it to? Our most vulnerable, our seniors, who buy a large percentage of the prescriptions.

So I am hoping that we can come up with a realistic plan, and the people in this country, they are not stupid. They are going to see right through the President's proposal on prescription drugs. It helps a few at the expense of everyone else, because most people, at least the constituency of the Hispanic community, the only thing they have is Social Security. They do not have any other pension, and if they do, it is a small one. They do not have additional money to dish out \$300 or more for additional coverage, and even though they get additional coverage, the private sector is not interested because if they do get sick they do not make a profit.

We have all understood that, and that is why we need to come up to the plate. This is no way to treat our seniors after they have given of themselves. This is a time for us to reach out to them and provide whatever assistance that we can and to be able to make it also in a way that is accessible and affordable.

So I wanted to once again thank my colleague for what she has done, and I want to also share that in health care somehow we have not come to grips because we do have a lot of Congressmen out here that basically feel that the Federal Government should have no role in health care, and apparently they feel that way and they feel that it should be just privatized. But we understand that people get ill and cost insurance companies, and we know that the insurance companies, as soon as a person gets a serious illness, will dump them if they have the opportunity, despite the laws that we have tried to pass.

That was happening in the 1960s, when we established Medicare and Medicaid, and that is happening now, so the companies are there, and for good reason, they are there to make a profit and provide access to health care

but they are there to make a profit. So a person does not have any problems while they are young and healthy, but as soon as they get ill and they need them, that is when they start having the difficulties. Anyone who has gotten ill understands that and recognizes that.

So their main priority is to be there to make a profit and secondary is everything else, and that is why the Federal Government has a role and a responsibility. The health of this country depends on the quality of life for our constituency.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for being here this evening and sharing his thoughts and words.

Again, I just want to underscore why we are celebrating here tonight, to talk about the real issue, and the real issue is that there is so many millions of Americans that are uninsured, 40 million, and we need to change that, and we need to do more here in the Congress and work together on both sides of the aisle to see that we come up with some remedies that can be taken care of this legislative session.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ). I want to thank also other speakers that came here tonight representing the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), and also the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT). I am very privileged.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

THE FORGOTTEN DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURNS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, tonight I am going to talk about two very serious issues for this Congress, for this President, certainly its effect on future generations and current and future retirees.

First, I am going to talk about defense spending, the overzealousness of Washington to continue to increase spending two, three and four times the rate of inflation, and what that means is increasing debt that we are going to leave to our children.

So what I have titled the first part is "The Forgotten Deficit," and though, right now overshadowed maybe by national security and the conflict in Iraq, this year's budget is very important. We must reverse the rapid descent into deficit spending that we have seen in the recent years.

Let me give my colleagues an example. From the \$236 billion surplus that we had in the year 2000, the budget situation has deteriorated to a projected \$436 billion deficit. From a \$236 billion surplus 3 years ago now we are looking at \$436 billion Federal funds deficit for this fiscal year and the same for next year. This is a swing of more than \$600 billion in a \$2.1 trillion budget, and this deficit is going to be much larger because this deficit from CBO does not include any money for the defense supplemental that is coming. It does not include any money for the extra cost of whatever we might do in Iraq, and it certainly does not include the effects of any tax cuts.

It should greatly concern us all that government spending is growing explosively as revenues decline. Discretionary spending has been at least 6 percent each year. The increase in discretionary spending has been at least 6 percent each year since 1995 at about 7.5 percent each year since 1998.

The chart I have on my left shows the projected increases on out after 2003, starting in 1993. So fairly flat from 1993 to 1997 and then a dramatic growth in spending, and we are looking at a situation where the discretionary spending growth will average at least 7.5 percent each year since budget balance was reached in 1998, about this level.

This spending increase, compared to what families are doing, how they are dealing with their possible increases in their budgets, is too dramatic to sustain, and it is leaving us huge challenges and huge problems for the future.

The President proposed a budget increase for 2004 of 3.5 percent, but even so, even though this is a smaller increase than we have seen over the past years, is still an increase in Federal Government spending, about twice the rate of inflation. This includes some needed spending on defense after September 11, I admit that, but we cannot excuse unrestrained nondefense spending which should not be increased during the challenge in the war situation that we are now in on terrorism.

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Tomorrow, our House Committee on the Budget is going to mark up a budget resolution. I just stress, as strongly as I can, that it is important to the future of our economy and to the future of this country to start having the intestinal fortitude to hold down spending, to prioritize some of the spending we do. Some of the spending we do is much less necessary. Probably much of it is unnecessary.

As we ask the American people to do with less, as States all over the country are cutting back their budgets and suggesting that people are going to have to do more for themselves during these tight times, the Federal Government goes merrily along spending, and I will not give any comparisons to sailors or anybody else because I think we