

have given to equipment and machinery, because they, too, represent our future.

I did not support this last tax cut, and I did not support the tax cut of 2001. I have supported tax cuts in 1993 and 1997 when we balanced the budget. We did not make it an either/or choice.

We can do right by our children; and in fact, when we balanced the budget, cut taxes for working families and middle-class families, and helped them go to college and pay for college, and gave health care to the uninsured children of working parents, we saw a decrease in our rolls of poverty. We saw a decrease in our welfare rolls.

Those are our values that have been enshrined in this country. When we speak to those common set of values that define who we are, we can do right by this country, right by our children, and have those parents dream the American Dream for their children. We should not turn our backs.

What happened here the other day is a shame. People now are pointing fingers. Rather than having pointed fingers, if they had the common decency to think of the children of America, of American families who also, like other families who will get that tax credit, these children deserve the tax credit. They deserve to be held up with the same type of respect that we have held up for corporations that needed to deduct for SUVs, corporations like Enron that needed to be taken care of, corporations that went overseas or deducted for their SUVs.

These children deserve our care and protection. We have not provided them the health care. In fact, we withdrew the money from the States to provide health care for the children of working parents. We do not have a health care plan for the 45 million uninsured. We do not have an agenda for the \$300 billion in unfunded assets.

We have a higher education tax credit that will expire in 2005, just at a time college costs are going up at 10 percent annually. We have inflation in health care rising by 20 percent. Yet all we did was provide corporations a way to depreciate their interest or other forms of tax cuts, but we left 12 million children of working parents out.

Those are not the values that my mother raised us to have, and those are not the values that hold us together as Americans. We can do better. We need to do better. We can put our children first and leave not one of them behind. When it comes to compassion, more than millionaires need compassion; our children need our compassion.

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

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

#### REPUBLICANS' BID TO PRIVATIZE MEDICARE WILL DEGRADE IT

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Members may have read in this morning's Roll Call about the personal videotape President Bush sent urging Republicans to seize the moment and overhaul Medicare. Even though privatization will increase costs and degrade the quality of coverage that seniors receive, the President unapologetically is promoting Medicare privatization.

Medicare is enduringly popular with most Americans, including Main Street Republicans; but Medicare is a thorn in the side of conservative extremists. They call it Big Government.

For the majority of Americans who value Medicare, the problem is that those same extremists are now in power. They are using tactics familiar to anyone who has followed the history of another public program, Federal Rail Service. For years, conservative ideologues in office have underfunded Amtrak, the passenger rail system. As train service declines, conservatives insist that Amtrak deserves less funding. Even though every nation in the world subsidizes its public transportation, Congress inadequately invests in and dutifully undermines our national rail system.

In their unrelenting 20-year-old effort to privatize Medicare, begun during the salad days of the Reagan administration, the far right has honed the Amtrak strategy to a science: underfund Medicare; make it more inflexible and bureaucratic; cut basic consumer service functions; lure, then coerce, seniors into private insurance; set this popular program up for failure; then blame any failures on the fact that it is a public program.

When Medicare was enacted in 1965, only 22 Republicans in the House and Senate supported it. Bob Dole, Republican Congressman, voted against it. Donald Rumsfeld, a Republican Congressman, voted against creating Medicare. Gerald Ford, a Republican Congressman then, voted against creating Medicare. Senator Strom Thurman, a Republican Senator then, voted against creating Medicare.

Then in 1995, when the GOP majority had its first chance to reform Medicare, Speaker Gingrich, predicting that Medicare would wither on the vine, attempted to cut \$270 billion from Medicare to make room, get this, for several hundred billion dollars of tax cuts. Sound familiar?

Then came Mediscare. This GOP campaign, launched in the late 1990s, aimed to convince Americans that Medicare is going broke and the only way to save Medicare is to turn it over to private investors. Medicare, they call it Mediscare, Medicare is no more at risk of going broke than is the Defense Department. They are both funded with public dollars.

Forcing Medicare beneficiaries into private insurance plans will not reduce Federal outlays. Per capita spending on Medicare is lower than that on private health insurance, and has been lower than the supposed "efficient" private health service for 30 years. But the push to privatize Medicare has never been grounded in facts; it is an ideological campaign, pure and simple.

Republican leadership simply does not like Medicare. The idea of luring seniors into private health plans grew out of the Medicare+Choice experiment. The +Choice debacle started out innocently enough. The theory was HMOs could operate much more efficiently than traditional Medicare, so they could provide both basic and enhanced benefits for less than the traditional Medicare plan.

It did not work out that way. By selectively enrolling the healthiest seniors, HMOs earned a windfall on the taxpayers' dime. Eventually, that windfall was outstripped by the cost of providing extra benefits. HMOs turned around and asked Congress for more money. The Republican Congress then poured more money into these private managed-care plans, which never covered more than one-sixth of the population, leaving less for the 86 percent of seniors who are enrolled in traditional Medicare.

In other words, Republicans invest more in seniors who agree to join private plans than in six-sevenths of the people in the Medicare plan who stay in traditional Medicare.

President Bush has embraced the Amtrak strategy with even more abandon than his predecessors. Get this: he has proposed establishing a new Medicare prescription drug benefit, but only for seniors who agree to leave traditional Medicare and join private HMO insurance programs. While promoting additional dollars for HMOs, President Bush has taken steps to cut Medicare's already-meager operating funds, to curtail its consumer service functions, and to restrict coverage for medical breakthroughs.

Then Republican leaders in this and the other body dutifully berate Medicare for being inefficient, for being unresponsive, and for being too slow to adapt to 21st century medicine. The Republicans should be ashamed. Medicare has withstood a 30-year Republican effort to dismantle it, but this President is pulling out all the stops. He is preaching Medicare insolvency, he is engaging in Mediscare tactics, he is selling private plans, he is undercutting traditional Medicare, and he is managing traditional Medicare into the ground.

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Before the Bush administration privatization train leaves the station, American seniors and those who care about them need to blow the whistle.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon

(Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### WHAT INFORMATION LED US INTO IRAQ?

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, not many weeks ago, we sent our sons and daughters into a war where many lost their lives, and in fact, our soldiers are currently under threat in Iraq, and just last week, others were killed.

There is a remaining question in the minds of many Americans as to exactly what information led us to make this decision to go into Iraq as we did, and in Sunday's edition of the Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch, there was a column written by Nicholas Kristof who writes for the New York Times, and the headline for his column is this: "U.S. Intelligence Officials Incensed Over Manipulating Their Data to Invade Iraq."

Mr. Kristof begins his column, "On Thursday, Day 71 of the hunt for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, once again nothing turned up. Maybe we'll do better on Day 72 or 73 or 74. But we might have better luck searching for something just as alarming: the growing evidence that the administration grossly manipulated intelligence about those weapons of mass destruction in the run-up to the Iraq war."

Then Mr. Kristof says this, A column that he had written earlier in the month "drew a torrent of covert communications from indignant spooks who say that administration officials leaned on them to exaggerate the Iraqi threat and deceive the public."

He continues, "'The American people were manipulated,' bluntly declared one person from the Defense Intelligence Agency who says he was privy to all of the intelligence there on Iraq. These people are fiercely proud of the deepest ethic in the intelligence world—that it should be nonpolitical—and are disgusted at efforts to turn them into propagandists."

He quotes, "'The al Qaeda connection and nuclear weapons issue were the only two ways that you could link Iraq to an imminent security threat to the U.S.," said Greg Thielmann, who retired in September after 25 years in the State Department." The last four of those years he was in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He said, "The administration was grossly distorting the intelligence on both things.

"The outrage among the intelligence professionals is so widespread that they have formed a group, Veterans Intelligence Professionals for Sanity," and they wrote President Bush this month to protest what they called "a policy and intelligence fiasco of monumental proportions.

"While there have been occasions in the past when intelligence has been de-

liberately warped for political purposes,' the letter said, 'never before has such warping been used in such a systematic way to mislead our elected representatives into voting to authorize the launching of a war.'

"Some say," according to Mr. Kristof, "that top Pentagon officials cast about for the most sensational tidbits about Iraq and then used them to bludgeon Secretary of State Colin Powell and seduce the President. The Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, has been generally liked and respected within the agency ranks, but in the past year, particularly in the intelligence directorate, people say that he has kowtowed to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and compromised the integrity of his organization."

Now, Mr. Kristof emphasizes that "The CIA is examining its record, and that's welcome. But the atmosphere within the intelligence community is so poisonous, and the stakes are so high—for the credibility of America's word and the soundness of information on which we base American foreign policy—that an outside examination is essential."

Mr. Kristof concludes his column by saying, "Congress must provide greater oversight, and President Bush should invite Brent Scowcroft, the head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and a man trusted by all sides, to lead an inquiry" in a public report so that we can restore confidence in America's intelligence agencies.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. The American people are paying attention, and the President needs to provide us with some answers.

#### CHILD TAX CREDIT

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, politics in the making of public policy is about choices. Every day we are called upon to make a choice, but a horrible choice was made by the Republican majority when they wrote the most recent tax bill, a horrible choice that works against millions of families and the children in those families as the Republicans decided that they would not allow those families, families making between \$10,500 a year and \$26,000 a year, they would not allow them to have the increase in the child tax credit. A \$400 a year increase to offset the cost of raising children, that this Congress made a decision about over many years, was proper to do with families to help hold families together, to allow some people to stay home with their children if they chose to do so, the purpose of that credit.

Rather than spend the \$3 billion on those individuals, they chose to spend it on people making over \$1 million a year. People making over \$1 million a

year will now get \$93,000 a year in a tax cut. If we had chosen to take care of those 12 million children who will not get the tax cut because their families earn less than \$26,000 a year, those same millionaires would have gotten a tax cut of \$88,000.

The Republicans made a choice. They chose America's millionaires over America's children. Somehow they decided that the children in upper-income families and middle-class families are more important than those families who are working their tails off going to work every day, all year long and still coming home earning between \$10,000 and \$26,000. They made a decision that they were going to support the Bush-Cheney class in America over the working class in America. They made a decision that they were going to support millionaires over the children of America.

They said when they were caught at these shenanigans over the last few days, when the press discovered what was in the legislation, they said, well, we designed it only for those people who are paying income tax; they are the only ones who should benefit from that. It is rather interesting because they decided they were also going to give the tax benefits of this bill to a number of corporations who pay no income taxes, corporations that have fled America, changed their corporate citizenship for the sole purposes of not paying taxes, and yet we would give them additional tax breaks under this bill.

They wanted to say that they wanted to end the double taxation on dividends and that corporations that paid taxes could get a deduction for dividends. By the time the bill was done, corporations that have paid no taxes will get a deduction for dividends, but if someone were a poor family, if they were a poor family and they are working every day and they are making between \$10,000 and \$26,000 a year and they have children, they are not going to get the increase in that deduction. But these people do pay taxes.

The Republicans have it all wrong. They have it all wrong in fairness. They have it all wrong in greed. They have it all wrong in the value of our children and our families in this Nation. This is an incredibly harmful policy to those families who are struggling in and around these wages.

The Republicans will not increase the minimum wage to help them support their families. They will not give them the child tax credit to help them support their families. They will not increase the Earned Income Tax credit to help them support their families. Poor people just are not entitled to this. What they get to make is they get to make an increased sacrifice on behalf of the rich.

Somebody once said, one would think the Republicans think that the rich have too little money and the poor have too much. It is an incredible policy. The Republicans rail against class