

should show spending increases clearly. Under our current baseline budgeting, we automatically include inflation adjustments for Federal programs. This should be replaced by a straightforward comparison of last year's spending compared to proposed new spending.

Our seventh principle would block spending outside the budget. We need to update the pay-as-you-go rules in the budget that would allow a point of order to lie so that any Member could prevent consideration of a proposal that did not also include offsetting cuts to pay for itself. Our eighth principle is that we would review government programs and set up another Grace Commission, which worked so effectively in the 1980s, to eliminate wasteful and duplicative spending.

□ 1245

Our ninth proposal is to have an enhanced rescission power by the President so that he could identify critical programs, probably pork barrel programs, that he did not support spending on, send up a package to the Congress, which would then ensure a rapid up or down vote on the President's spending rescission proposal.

Our 10th proposal is to have a clear presentation of the government's full debts and liabilities. The Federal Government must account for its full share of accrued costs of covering pensions, retired pay, and other health benefits so we make sure that we know exactly financially where we stand.

Our 11th principle is that we should have a clear presentation of the debt owed to the public. An intergovernmental debt should be separated from other public debt in disclosures.

And our final, 12th, principle is that we need to enforce the rules of Congress. Points of order raised against proposals intended to lift the uncontrolled deficit or to waive these restrictions should be unwaiverable as several other provisions in our rules allow. This would help us control the deficit. It would help us bring this problem together, and now it is our job to reach across the aisle to make this a bipartisan proposal.

MEDICAL ISSUES AFFECTING OUR SOLDIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, listening to the last speaker here on the floor, I almost had the feeling he was a Member of the minority, as though enforcing the rules was something that on his side there was not the possibility to do.

But I digress. I really came here to question the war. I have questioned the war in the past, and I really am here to stand and question what the Pentagon is saying and not saying about medical

care and about medical issues affecting our soldiers.

The Pentagon has claimed no ill effects from the use of depleted uranium. I have piles and piles of information that comes out of the Defense Department or the War Department, whatever one wants to call it, that says that there are no problems with depleted uranium. Over the weekend British newspapers reported that the British Army, the British Army, our allies, are telling their soldiers in Iraq that DU, depleted uranium, can cause ill effects. They give them a card that tells them that they can go and have their urine checked, and they have a right, they should ask about it if they are having any problems whatsoever.

Now, one has to wonder about our War Department sending our troops out there into war and continually denying that there are problems with depleted uranium in the face of the effects that we have seen among Iraqi women and Iraqi babies in southern Iraq as a result of the 1991 Gulf War. A 600 percent increase in leukemia among children, a 600 percent increase among women delivering children having deformed babies, 600 percent, and our government continues to decide that they can say there is no problem.

Now, the Brits, for whatever reason, are more honest with their troops. They are not saying there is not danger out there. They are saying there is danger and here is how they can check to see if it is bothering them.

I know as a doctor that the evidence is not conclusive. The issue needs to be studied. It needs to be directly gone after to find the answer.

Today I picked up the newspaper. One can learn a lot, as Yogi Berra said, if one reads the newspaper. If people read the newspaper today, there is a story about a G.I. from Tennessee, a nice young kid from Tennessee who went to war and got his shots like everybody else and nearly died from an anthrax vaccination. We have had arguments with sailors and Marines and soldiers for the last couple of years that there were some problems with the vaccinations. But, in fact, no, no, we are told they are going to war, they have got to have one of these. And the fact is that we now have the evidence that some of the fears of our troops were legitimate. Just because somebody is a corporal or a private or a lance corporal does not mean that he does not understand or that he cannot be right. One does not have to have a colonel's eagle on their shoulder or stars for a general to be correct. And we have treated our troops as though it was in their minds or, I do not know, some explanation.

This young man has not recovered yet, but his medical claim is still pending. They do not want to blame it on the vaccination even though it happened right after. And there are other stories. I could go on with stories. But they remind me of my experience since 1968 in the Vietnam War when we

sprayed defoliant all over the trees and it fell down on the troops and everybody said Agent Orange is no problem, Agent Orange is no problem, and we really did not deal with post traumatic stress disorder.

On Thursday night when I got home I finished up what I was doing, and I turned on the TV at 10 o'clock, and I caught a program called Without a Trace. It is a story of a young man who comes back from Iraq. His business has gone to pieces because his brother has not been a very good businessman. His girlfriend is having a relationship with her boss. And he is pretty depressed, and he goes out and gets involved in a couple of armed robberies and tries to straighten his life out. That, my friends, is post traumatic stress disorder, and it is coming as the 100,000 people come home. We must be prepared to deal with that and acknowledge it when we see it. It is our duty to the people that have served for us.

THE CURTAILING OF INVESTIGATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I was deeply disturbed last week when I read that the Speaker of the House may use his authority and his power in the House not to extend the investigation into what happened before 9/11, what it is we did that was right and what it is we did that was wrong, what it is we knew and what it is we did not know that led to the tragedy of the World Trade Center and the tragic loss of life there and the largest terrorist attack against this Nation on this soil. I was deeply disturbed that somehow the investigation into that would be curtailed, that the commission would not be given the time that it believed professionally was necessary to arrive at those answers, when I think about the families and how important those answers are as to what were the real circumstances under which their family members died and perished in the World Trade Center. I was deeply disturbed that the President said that he would only talk with two members of the commission, that there apparently is a concerted effort to take those members of the commission that appeared to be the most intent on getting to the bottom of these issues and these questions on behalf of our Nation and on behalf of our security and on behalf of the families, that they would not be allowed to talk with the President, to interview them, that they would not be allowed to share their notes, those who got in to see the President.

It is very troubling because the image of 9/11 and the tragedy of 9/11 is absolutely seared in the mind of every American, those images and that tragedy. And for us to suggest that in any

fashion this commission's work would be curtailed, not be given the time or the documents necessary, this is a matter of our national security so that it will never ever happen again. This cannot be about people in various agencies of the United States Government covering their tail because of something they did or did not do that may have helped us detect that act before it happened or have us understand what we need to do in the future.

As I see that effort by the administration to curtail this, and now apparently it is going to go forward, they are going to get the 2 months, I am also deeply concerned that I see the administration involved in some dramatic rewriting of history. When David Kay came back from his search for the weapons of mass destruction, in his meetings with the House and the Senate he told the American public and these two bodies that we all had it wrong. I am not sure that is quite accurate, because there in fact is a whole body of evidence that has been developed within the Intelligence Community, within the international Intelligence Community, within the State Department, and elsewhere that was present at the time suggesting that in fact maybe many of the reasons and the conditions in which this administration said we are going to war did not exist. They certainly did not exist in the clarity that the administration presented them to the Congress or to the American people or to the international community. And now it appears that the President is trying to say because he got it wrong everybody had it wrong. That is just not the case. That is just not the case. And yet we now have commissions to look into that matter.

Tragically, this administration again is trying to curtail what those commissions can look at and not look at. The Senate may be allowed to look at one piece of evidence but not other pieces of evidence. The House may or may not have access. And then the President has his own commission which is supposed to investigate the administration but has been appointed by the administration. A little bit of a conflict of interest there. But these commissions are important, and these questions are important because, again, it goes to our national security.

And there is another set of families, just as there are the 9/11 families and those communities that suffer that tragic loss of those thousands of individuals, there is another set of families of those who have been sent off to fight in Iraq, over 500 that have been killed, thousands that have been wounded, so many that we have visited that are multiple amputees, that have lost their arms, lost their legs, lost the sight of one eye, that their life is changed forever. They are entitled to the answers and understanding how is it that this decision was set forth to go into Iraq when in fact we see substantial evidence suggesting, and as said by the

CIA Director, "We never said this was an imminent threat." The President wants to suggest that if we make that the test, the real threat against the United States, before we commit the lives of young men and women in this country, that somehow the only other option is it will surprise us. No, that is not the test, Mr. Speaker, but we will have more on this. But I think the American public ought to start to consider the level of interference that is being engaged in by this administration to keep these commissions, both congressional and civilian commissions, from getting to the bottom, to the real answers that are directly related to the future security of this Nation.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: As we await the unveiling of spring's beauty, O Lord, we stand in the bright promise of Your presence.

Warm our hearts with sincere love and our efforts of reconciliation, that we may be ready to engage in the seasonal battles of justice and the work of restoration under law.

Guide the President and all the Members of Congress, that they may be Your instruments of renewal in the strength and security of this Nation.

We long for the full revelation of Your power and mercy, now and forever.

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 New York (Mr. McNULTY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. McNULTY 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 PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

COMMEMORATING THE 184TH BIRTHDAY OF SUSAN B. ANTHONY

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, this month we commemorate the 184th birthday of a great woman in the history of our great country, Susan B. Anthony.

Susan B. Anthony was one of the many exemplary feminist leaders who is now known not only for her fight to gain women the right to vote but also for her great courage in her stand against abortion. She saw abortion as a great offense against human dignity.

She recognized the incomparable worth of every person and realized that whatever goes against life, whatever violates the integrity of the individual, whatever insults human dignity is a poison to society.

Susan B. Anthony fought tirelessly to safeguard the dignity of motherhood, which she believed to be an inherent right for all women.

So as we honor Susan B. Anthony, as a pro-life feminist and suffragist, I ask my colleagues to remember those who have fought to respect, protect, love and serve life, every human life.

SCHOOL LUNCH STIGMA

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

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address an issue many low-income school children face every day as they go through the lunch line: embarrassment. Embarrassed that their parents cannot afford to pay for daily meals so they are singled out in the lunch line in front of their peers as participants in the free or reduced lunch program.

I was encouraged to see a program in one of my local school districts, Lake County, Florida, that uses technology to enable every child to go through the school lunch line without being identified as a free or reduced school lunch recipient. Regardless of family income, every child has the exact same debit card which either their parents deposit money into or is funded by the program.

Today, I am introducing the Pride in the Lunch Line Act, which will amend the National School Act to allow schools access to existing Federal funds to purchase technology like that used in Lake County. It will reduce the stigma for students, and it will reduce the paperwork for our schools.